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Interview with Carol and Fabien Contreras

Carol Contreras

Fabien Contreras

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Excerpts from an interview with Carol and Fabien Contreras
October 12, 1998
by Darleen Feldman and Abby Kennedy

AK: This is Abby Kennedy. And I am with Darleen Feldman. We are in Fredericktown, the address is 15539, Old Mansfield Road. We are interviewing Fabien [and Carol] Contreras.

AK: Can you tell me about your background?

FC: Well, I was born in San Diego because my father was in the navy. My father was from Mexico, but when WWII started he joined the service, so that automatically made him a citizen. And when I was about 3 years old he was wounded in the Navy and he had come back home, and we went back to Arizona, because they were from New Mexico, by Lordsburg, New Mexico and Tucson, Arizona. So, we went back to Tucson while he was getting better and that's where I grew up until 1960 when I got out of high school. Just from when I was growing up??

AK: Everything, everything you want to tell us.

CC: Tell them about your Grandfather.

FC: My grandfather was a scout for the Indians and was also a soldier for Poncho Ria (sp?) when they burned down Columbus, New Mexico. They sent Black Jack Pershing (sp?), and I think 2 divisions to punish them for that. They said he was a bandit, and he said if they didn't leave him alone he would come into the United States and burn the town down. Well, they didn't believe him so he burned down Columbus, New Mexico. But my grandfather was involved in that. My Grandfather lived to be 75.

(count 65)

FC: My father is a Yaki Indian. He's from Northern Mexico, which is just south from New Mexico. And when they closed the borders, before Poncho Ria burned down Columbus, New Mexico, the borders were open, you could just go back and forth. When they closed the borders the people that were in Mexico had to stay in Mexico and the people that were in the United States had to stay in the United States. Well, the families were all split up, because people worked in the mines in New Mexico and other people worked on the ranches in stuff like that, and other people worked in Mexico. Everything got split up. My family happened to be working in Silver City, New Mexico which is just up from Northburg, on the silver mines. So they had to stay in the United States, and half o them was in Mexico. My aunt, everybody had passed away except for my aunt, my father, and I had an uncle. I met him once and another aunt.

(count 93)

(count 123)

On my mother's side, my grandmother and my grandfather. My grandfather on my mother's side was from France. He didn't have enough money to get to California, so he got off in

Mexico and he came across Mexico to get into the United States. Well, he met my grandmother whose family was from Spain. And they got married and they had kids and they finally came up this way. Mexicans are what came about between the Spanish and the Indians. And then my father was a Yaki Indian. So that makes me... I can go either way, either an Indian or a Mexican. They just bring it down to Mexican because everyone is from Mexico. **(count 142)**

served in Vietnam (1965-7)
talks about childhood out West
met wife in October, 1968
got married in Joliet, Illinois in 1969
3 daughters, Winnona (oldest), Francesca, Chavarla

(Count 218)

We've had our ups and downs. Because, like when we first came here, to Ohio, I had never been in Ohio before, I came back here with her. Out west was a little more free, with the people, you know. They didn't tolerate blacks going out with whites, and they frowned on Mexicans going out with whites, too, but not as much as they did blacks.

AK: Is this in the West, or in Ohio?

FC: Out West. Then the farther west you got, like in California they were a little bit more lenient. We had a lot of problems with people, they thought I was just a little old dirty hippie and everything else when we were coming back. This was in '68, '69. But nobody really ever started anything, they just said nasty things, wasn't anything I hadn't heard before, so it didn't bother us. When we came here, I didn't know that the only people that had long hair were the students at Ohio States. And they didn't go anywhere because people would beat them up, throw rocks at them and, it was really bad. Well, I wasn't going to Ohio State, I was a worker, a welder. So it took me a long time to get a job working because people... I would talk to them on the phone and they would say come on down, because they'd ask my experience and I'd tell them. But when I'd go down there they didn't want to talk to me because I had long hair. And they would say cut your hair and we'll talk to you. I said, what's that got to do with it. And they'd tell me things like our customers won't buy our products if they know you're working for us, and I'd say, but nobody will ever see me, I do welding. Then it got worse when they found out I was a Vietnam vet. From '69 to about 1980 before things started calming down that you could tell people you were...

CC: Yeah, almost clear through the '70's. We had trouble with people considering us an interracial marriage, which they thought really was awful. And if that wasn't bad enough, than the fact that he had long hair made it even worse. We moved into this one apartment when I was pregnant with our 2nd daughter, that was in '71. And the entire apartment complex, before they even got to know us and see if they liked us or not, took up a petition to get rid of us. To have them make us move out.

DF: This was in Ohio?

CC: Yeah, it was in Columbus. Over on 61. They took a petition up, asking the landlord to get rid of us, asking to make us move. And there I was, I was a new mother, I had a year old baby girl and was expecting another. And I was naive about the way people were feeling. I was taking cookies around to the neighbors, trying to get to show them I wanted to get to know them, and here they were sending a petition around trying to get rid of us. I didn't even know it. I wanted their kids to play with my little one year old, out in the common yard. That was kind of rough. We just couldn't make friends because nobody wanted anything to do with us when we came back to Ohio. But, every time we moved back out West, thinking it would be better out there, I got so homesick for my mom and for my family. He's say, well you want to go home, don't ya? And I'd say yes, so we'd come back and try it again. So by the early '80's it was starting to get better. It was becoming more common to see blacks and whites dating, or even married. So nobody really paid too much of attention to us, after that. We thought that was all behind us...

Take dog, Eddie, out

DF: Do you find people here in Fredericktown to be accepting?

FC: No. When we first moved here, we bought this place. We never got a welcome wagon.

CC: I went, did the same thing. I went down the road, tried to meet some of the neighbors. And they made it very plain that they didn't want to meet us. We tried to join in at the PTA and different things like that. Our daughter wanted to be in the band. Everything we did it just seemed like they were whispering behind our back. And this one woman I met, that was pretty nice because her daughter and ours was the same age, she told me. I said, I always have the feeling that as soon as me and Fabians leave a room, or the PTA meetings, or whatever-- a football game, that everybody gets talking about us. And she says, well your feelings aren't too off, they are. She said there's quite a few people that feel like because you have moved into the school district, now all kinds of minorities will move in and they don't want that to happen. Because Fredericktown, I think they've only have one black student there in the 12 years that we've been here, and he didn't stay very long. And they didn't like the fact that they had 3 young, Mexican girls in their classes. And people were getting real upset that we moved up here. So that made it hard for our daughters to make friends. And he and I, over the years, little by little, when people would behave like this, he and I became more and more recluse, to where we just didn't try anymore to make friends. So we made my mom and my family, my immediate family, our entire social circle. And she died last year, and he and I haven't been anywhere, except maybe once to my brother's and once to my sister's, since then, because we don't know any people. We know David and Phyllis over in Gambier, they're old friends of ours, so we see them a lot. But, you know, they don't have children so they travel a lot, they're gone a lot. So, he and I, it's just the two of us. We don't see anybody else. Just over the years it developed like that.

FC: Fair weather friends.

CC: By living in Ohio during the '70's and '80's, it kind of created an isolation pocket that we

live in. And now that we're older and things seem to have changed quite a bit, it feels like it's too late to do anything about it. You don't feel like you can make long-term friends when you're in your 50's. I don't know. At my age and his age, it feels like if you didn't at least start making friends when you were in your 30's, then it's kind of hard to start doing it at this age.

FC: One of the things that's hard about is most of the people this age, their kids have left, and it's just the man and the woman, so they're readjusting, like the way they were before they even had kids. Like us, it's been over 30 years since we haven't had kids here in the house.

CC: Over the years, we've just gotten to the point where we always have our guard up. We were always anticipating trouble. So that makes you live on a higher stress level all the time, because you're expecting things to happen.

FC: Yeah, we used to have the police come over here and tell us, we had a report for a suspicious person in the back of your barn, and we'd like to go back there and investigate. Well, I knew what they were doing. They just wanted to go back and see if I was growing dope. Because when I moved here they thought that I was the biggest dope dealer out of Ohio.

CC: There were all kinds of crazy rumors going around Knox County. They had thought we bought this property to set up a big marijuana plant and grow it. And they had a plane fly overhead periodically, checking out the back property. And this neighbor of here, the Bartlets, they were scared of us. And I went over there and met them, and after they got to know us, because I kept persisting, because I thought, well, they're the only neighbor that has even let me throw the door. So, they know us now, and they really like us. But we don't socialize with them because they're a lot older than us. And they have their family and everybody in the area. When we first moved here the police would come over and they'd ask, do we need a search warrant or will you let us walk out over your property. So I thought well, if we start demanding, you know I want you to have a search warrant, then they're going to get even more suspicious. So, we let them go back there. And after awhile, it just go to be a pain in the butt, them coming around. You know, you're in here making dinner or doing something, and then here they come again. But that eventually tapered off.

FC: It took about 4, 5 years though.

CC: After that many years of marriage and always watching out for what people are doing, you know, what they're coming after you with, you get kind of defensive. And our daughter, ever since she was a little girl, our youngest daughter, Chavela, she loved the color red. And she would take a red crayon in all the magazines and color big red lips on all the women. So when she was 17, a senior, February of her senior year at Fredericktown, she told me she admired this one model she had seen in a magazine and loved her hair. Well, Chavela had her hair long, and she decided to go get it cut, bleached out, and turn it bright, cherry red. So she went to school the next day and they had a fit. They absolutely had a fit. And the principle came out and said you go home and don't come back until you've fixed that mess on your head. So he wouldn't let her go to school that day. And he called me and said your daughter is out of here until she does something about that hair.

DF: This was only a few years ago, right?

CC: Yeah, a couple years ago. And I said, oh come on your kidding. And he goes, no I'm very serious, I won't have that in my school. And I said, well I've been up to the school, and I've seen girls with purple girls with streaks down the side, you know, one on each side. And I've seen boys with their hair bleached blond and then the tips have purple or green tips on them. So I said what's so much different then that? He said, this is just way over the top. He says, this is way too much. He says, I'm putting my foot down. We're not going to have that here. So she came home and she was like, now what am I going to? I'm not putting my hair back to brown! I love this. I said, and you shouldn't have to, Chavela. So when Fabians got home we talked about it, and he said, I'm tired of people backing us into a corner and expecting us to say, yes sir, no sir, we'll be good, okay, whatever you say. And he said, I'm sick of it, I'm not doing it. So, we called the school the next day and we said Chavela is coming back to school and she is not going to change her hair. And they said, well we'll meet her at the door and bar her entrance. So she tried to go to school the next day and they wouldn't let her in the building, they turned her away.

So she came home and told me. So then I got worried about her education and thought which one was more important-- the red hair or finishing her senior year. Because she is already enrolled and accepted at Ohio State for the fall. So we went down to Columbus and bought her a wig, a plain brown wig. And she put that on everyday and went to school. But in the mean time, I felt like they were being so unfair to her, because they didn't make the girl with the purple streaks go home and change it or anything. And I knew the principle had a problem with Fabians being Mexican. And I just had a feeling, and I tried to tell myself you're just being paranoid because you've hit this wall so many times. I said, no, no this feels like one of those times when I'm right, when I'm dead on. So, my sister, I was telling her about it and she said well why don't you call one of the T.V. stations? And I go, well I don't know. Well, she didn't tell me, but she called Channel 10. Well, Channel 10 called and said could we come up and interview your daughter? And I said, well, yeah, come on up. She was in town, she worked at Ben Franklin, and they fired her that same day. And when she came home, I had news and she had news. She said I fired because I had red hair. And I said well Channel 10 wants to send Kurt Ludlow and Eve Muller up and interview you. So they came up and interviewed her. Boy, before all of this ended the ACLU came to town and went to the school board meeting with us and told the school if you do not let her back into school with her red hair then we will take you to court over it. And said the Contreras's, it will all be paid for because it will be paid through funds of the ACLU. Well, the Mount Vernon newspaper, the headline that day said, "Red Head brings ACLU to town". And we were getting hate mail here at the house. People saying, you know Fredericktown was nice town to live in until people like you started moving in. They were very hateful. But I guess the school's lawyers finally told them if you do not let her back in school, you're going to have the ACLU on you, and said, you won't know what hit you. So they finally backed off and let her finish her senior year with her red hair.

FC: Yeah because they told me they were going to lose the lawsuit before they even went to court. And the damages and whatever else they got would bankrupt the school district. So, they let her back into school. I mean, we didn't want any money, all we wanted them to do was let her finish school.

CC: Let her finish her school year with out that wig on. I told him, you know if we push this, letting the ACLU come to town and everything, all the people that don't want anything to do with us, they're going to have even more reason to give us dirty looks at the gas station and stuff. And he says, well, it's just been me and you for 30 years, I think we can carry on for a little longer. I still sometimes if I write a check, they'll look at it and say, Contreras, oh the red head. And I'll go, oh, my daughter, and they'll go yeah. Kind of still thinking about it and...

FC: Can we see some ID? Can we see a finger print?

CC: So, it's been hard living in a small town community being that we're different from everybody else.

FC: It's just like I rented an apartment. And I told Carol, I got a job and an apartment. Well the job I got was at a rendering plant. If you're dead they'll hire you at a rendering plant because all they do is bring in dead animals. Well I got a job welding at their shop, working on the truck because nobody else would hire me. And we were living in Lancaster, and, that was a real stickler living in Lancaster. The 30 years we've been here, we've never been able to rent a place in Lancaster when we were looking for a place. We'd call them up and when we'd drive down there and they'd say, oh, well we've rented it already, my wife rented it already. So then I would just let Carol go down, pay the down deposit and everything else. And when I showed up, all hell would break loose and we'd have to move out. And I got that job and got an apartment, it was a duplex, \$85 a month, this was in 1970, wasn't it? So, I was feeling really good about that. And then when I told Carol, she said where did you get that at? And I said 25th and Cleveland. Everybody said, you don't want to live in that neighborhood! And I said why? Because I grew up out west, and out west the blacks and the Indians-- unless you weren't in the district, you got along real good. You don't want to live there, there's too many blacks there. And I said well they're no different than anybody else. You know I figured we'd be easier to get along with them. Well, I moved in there, and I fought a black person every week for about a month, wasn't it? A month and a half?

CC: They did not want us in their neighborhood. They felt like we had invaded their area.

FC: Physically. Ya know, when I go to store, walk down to the store or I drove home, I always got in a fight. People were raising hell because we were living there. Well, this little boy was with his father and they had one of them ice cream wagons going through the neighborhood during the summer. Well, he was getting the ice cream and he was holding my little boy's hand who was right next to the road. Well, when he let go of his hand, the little boy turned around. And when he turned, he turned into the street and about that time this car was coming and hit him and drug him underneath the town. Carol was on the porch and I was in the back of the house. And she hollered for me and I came around the corner and I'd seen all the people over there. And she told me a little boy had been run over. So I went over there and they were trying to drag him out from underneath the car, just physically drag him out, and I made everybody get away from him. And I made everybody get away from him and got some of the biggest guys that were their hold up the car so we could drag him out. And then we took him out. And he had a hole in the front of his head and a hole in the back of his head, and his teeth were knocked out. He was

mangled pretty good. But he was conscious. And his mother grabbed him and tried running around and got real panicky. And I took him away from her, and I laid him down. And I made them bring towels and a blanket. And I talked to him, and put pressure on the holes in his head and stuff... **(End of Side A)**

And then I had them call the ambulance, but I kept him there and I kept everybody... because I had already been in Vietnam, I had already seen all of this. It was nothing that bothered me because it was something I lived with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Dead people, burnt people, parts of people. So they brought the ambulance over and took him to the hospital and nobody ever said anything to me. They didn't bother me, but they didn't say anything to me. And then we he got out of the hospital he wanted his father to bring him over to talk to us. He wanted to show me his scars, he had a bandage on his head. He was Okay. I mean it wasn't life threatening, but he was going to have some scars. And he always told me he remembered that he was going to be the badest dude in school. He took on a car and won.

CC: But after that on the front porch, we'd come home and there would be a basket on the front porch with homemade bread or something in it. It seemed like every day somebody would leave something on the porch. And then after that we were just part of the neighborhood. They never hassled us after that for living in their neighborhood. Because had a front porch and you shared it with the other half, and there was a lady that lived in the other half. She had piled big plants and everything up so that she wouldn't have to look at me when she'd come out. And after that she got to talking to me and gave me some of her clippings off of her plants and we got along fine after that. But it took something drastic like that for them to accept us into the neighborhood.

FC: We moved from there up to Ambleside (sp?) up on 161 and that's where all of the people took up a petition to have us thrown out of the apartment complex. But I never saved no kid up their so we had a hassle up there until we moved.

AK: So when did you move to Fredericktown? What's the date on that?

CC: In January of '87. So we've been up here almost 12 years.

FC: And we tried to bring our daughters up so that they'd be liberal. You got water boiling?

CC: Oh yeah. Forgot about it.

FC: And it was really hard for them. Winnie and Chaka, Winnona is the oldest, and Francesca is the middle one, we call them Winnie and Chaka. They said that the high school in Fredericktown was really rough and they felt bad because Chavela was going to be going to school there from first grade on, because she was the youngest. **(count, 579)**

discusses how was brought up by parents to not speak with an accent in order to be less obvious
she didn't realize he was Mexican when she first met him, but didn't matter
mother raised her to accept people for who they were-- thought everyone was

raised like that

(Count, 659)

CC: So we've raised our daughters to be the same way [accepting of others]. To be easy going with other people, to give people the benefit of the doubt...

FC: But keep them at arms length because if they get a chance they'll hurt you.

CC: I think we have done that somewhat. Even though we didn't mean to, I think our isolation that we put on ourselves sort of carried over to our daughters. So they didn't really go out and become what we used to call social butterflies. **(Count 669)**

Chavela doesn't go out much at Ohio State (inward person)

(Count 691)

FC: It really hurt us financially because I could never get a good paying job. You know, I always had to get the job that was below the laborer. And then prove to them what I could do and stuff like that.

CC: And that got to be tiring, having to prove yourself again, and again, and again. No matter how good a person you were or how nice you were, you just constantly found yourself having to prove it to people over and over because as soon as they knew that he was Mexican, that seemed to put a barrier up. And it was twice the effort just to get them to talk to you.

FC: See, and I've got a skilled trade. I'm a welder, I'm a certified welder by the government and I couldn't even get a job doing that. So I'd always wind up working 2 or 3 jobs so that I could make enough money for my family.

CC: I think life would have been easier on us if we had stayed out West. But that was mostly coming from my side. I was so devoted to my mother I just couldn't stand to live away from her. And I would get so homesick that he would say, you want to go home, don't ya? And naturally I did. The last time when we came back to Ohio, he and I agreed, that's it. We're just going to stay put. I think if we had lived out West, if I hadn't been that connected with my mother. If we had lived out West, I think our whole live would have been different. I think we would have ended up at this age having a lot more friends, a lot more connections with the community that we lived in, I think my kids might have grown up a little bit more ethnic than they are.

FC: But you know, another thing that's really strange about that, too is when we were living over by the rabbit store...

CC: East Columbus, on the East side, yeah.

FC: There were starting to be some Mexican people moving in to Columbus and they had this

organization called Raza Unida, the United Race. Carol called them up and told them about me, being from Arizona and everything. And they said they'd really like to meet me. And then when they met me, they acted the same way that white people did. Because I wasn't an ethnic Mexican. I didn't have an accent. I spoke good English, I had been to school, I had a skilled trade.

CC: Yeah, it was like they wanted a poster boy. They wanted Speedy Gonzalez or Frito Bandito to come in. They didn't want an ordinary guy who had a wife and kids and went to work and didn't have an accent. He wasn't a good enough image for them.

FC: I wasn't enough of an ethnic Mexican. So here goes from one way to the other. Growing up and when they find out you're Mexican they don't want to have anything to do with you. And then you go to the Mexicans and say, well maybe we should go back to the people and you know. And then they shun you because you don't have an accent. You're not an ethnic Mexican. I said, well it's not my fault. My father is the one who said, no Spanish allowed.

CC: Well and the nuns where you went to school, too. They'd carry a big old ruler around. And his mother told me, if the kids spoke one word of Spanish, whack, they got it. Because they would not allow the Mexican kids to speak Spanish at school.

FC: So we always had calluses on our hands from them slapping us with the rulers.

CC: To me that was just imprinting in them that there was something bad about being Mexican. That everybody was saying, well we can't undo the fact that you're Mexican, but we can kind of cover it up a little. Get rid of the accent, have you dress like everybody else. **(Count, 762)**

talks about time in Vietnam and how prejudices were lost b/c saving each other
went to visit member of troop afterwards, and prejudices were back
talks about life after Vietnam and how he was going downhill until met Carol
in Arizona rent apartment under her maiden name, daughter called "beano"
by other children who didn't want to play with her

(Count 925)

FC: But it kind of throws them because I don't have an accent. And then when they find out then they act the same way because it's just the way they were brought up. Which a lot of times I don't blame them because that's the way they were brought up. You know, I was brought up different and they were brought up the same way and they think that's...

CC: And I always find it surprising that I could be growing up like I did, in Ohio, on just an old farm where we had to work hard. And that my mother could make such a difference in our lives in an area that is that prejudiced. Because she always raised us not to be like that. And my one brother he married a girl from Korea when he was stationed over there. Another brother married a black girl from Canada. And I married a Mexican. My mother when she'd have a big family get together all the time, we had a little bit of everybody there and it didn't seem odd or out of

place to us because we just never thought anything of it. But other people always did. I don't know how my mother did it in the 40's and 50's and 60's like she did. **(Count 943)**

talks about Fabians's father experiencing prejudice during WWII-- signs saying, keep your daughters in, the Mexicans are out
times in 60's in South

(Count 974)

CC: It seems like it's coming back. It seems like these prejudices and hatreds for minorities is coming back. I think it's getting stronger.

FC: I think part of the reason is because the whites are going to be the minority.

CC: And not only against ethnic, but I see this acceptance of hatred in people's attitude toward gays, too. They think it's okay if they see some guy who's gay, let's go beat up on him. Like that poor kid in Wyoming that got murdered. Half the people felt real bad about it, but then there were an awful lot of other people that were like, well he had it coming, he was gay. And I can't tolerate that kind of attitude. I just can't stand it. I mean our daughter has a roommate down there on campus, her roommate is a gay young gay.

FC: It makes it worse for him because he is a gay young guy who's a Mexican.

CC: Yeah, poor kid.

FC: So he's got it rough.

CC: So he's a terrific guy and I'm just crazy about him. And I cannot understand people that know something about you, say they don't like the fact that you're black, or Mexican, or you're Jewish, or you're gay. They find something about you and they go, oh well that means I can't have any respect for you, I can't respect your right to live or anything else, because there's this one thing about you. How can they justify thinking like that. I just don't understand that way of thinking.

FC: See like now, since I don't have any hair-- I shave it off and my beard is white-- they can't tell I'm a Mexican. Unless I tell them and I usually don't tell them.

CC: Except other Mexican. I've always found that curious. Other Mexicans-- if he's at the mall with me or we go somewhere-- someone who's Mexican will home right in on him with out a word being said and they'll know he's Mexican.

End of tape 1

(Tape 2, reset counter to 000)

stories of getting into fights over racism in Chicago
priest didn't want to marry them in Joliet (because mixed relationship)

woman said should have child taken away from her (shouldn't be allowed to breed)
even barriers from hippies in California
goes to Fiesta Mexicana and talks Spanish (doesn't remember all that well), only contact
he has with Mexicans
(Count 460)

AK: Do you think there are any others in Knox County?

CC: I haven't seen any. I've never met any.

FC: I've seen them here a couple times over at the Krogers. But I've never talked to them. I've just seen them when they went by in the car or walking in the store.

CC: I think a lot of them are still migrant. They come in here and they work in the crop seasons. And then they leave.

FC: Well see there's a lot of migrant farm workers up in Fostoria and Finley, up in that area.

CC: Yeah because Campbell's Soup buys all of their tomatoes up in that area so that's a big, big labor area.

FC: Yeah I think up in Fostoria they have a *tortillaria*, it's a bakery. And *tortillaria* is tortillas. Well, when all of the migrant farm workers up there they have a dance hall in the back where they dance on Friday and Saturday night. It's all Mexican music. It's all Mexicans. And then they have a bakery in the front, a curio store, something else I think stays open year-round. But the only time the dance hall is open is when all of the migrant farm workers are there.

AK: How far away is that?

FC: Fostoria? 15 miles? **(Count 475)**

had to learn about each other's food

(Side B, tape 2 of 2, Count 500)

(Count, 537)

FC: Now, people say hi to us, we say hi back. Other than that, we don't have anything to do with anybody. You know, this is our place now. We were going to move and we kind of mentioned it. And it got around and everybody was really happy, 'cause after mother died she didn't want to live around here anymore. But we thought about it, thought about it. Now when she came in and pulled in the driveway and saw this place she said, this is where I want to spend the rest of my life. And I said I don't have any desire to go back out to Arizona. Wherever you're at I'm at. I like this old house and I like the property. So, we're going to stay. But we'll never be friends with the neighbors, and go to Christmas parties-- I always wanted to do that. Where you had

neighbors, you know...

CC: Oh every year I'd go, I wish we'd get invited to a Christmas party. Because you'd be coming home and you'd see all of the lights on and you'd see in the window, people having cars in the driveway, people having Christmas parties. And we never got invited to any of them. That used to bother me, anymore, I was just like, whatever. So I twisted Dave and Phyllis's arm this year, told them they have to have a party.

FC: As long as they leave us alone. We're not very tolerant of people that try to get lippy with us about anything. We're not tolerant about people anymore, period, because I don't feel that we have to be.

CC: And everybody thought we were wrong backing Chavela up about her hair. But they don't know our history, they don't know how many times we've had to bite our tongues and back off. And sometimes you've done it so often, you get your hackles up and you're like, I don't care what they say. I'm not backing off this time. And you do, you dig your heels in and you say, I'm not doing it.

FC: I worked at Flexible for 10 years and there was a lot of prejudice there. But I was making good money so I didn't pay any attention to it, besides they can't quit me anyway. But what I'm doing now... **(Count 589)**

daughter worked there, too. Men had picture of nude women up on walls, asked to have them taken down, wouldn't, so she put up pictures of nude men and put on walls, so men agreed to take down the pictures
(Count 651)

CC: It's sometimes uncomfortable being isolated like we are, but it developed over a period of time. It wasn't like one day we just said, we'll just close ranks and we won't go out with people, we won't go anywhere like Moose, stuff like that. I said we just won't be joiners. We won't put ourselves in other people's space if they don't want to have anything to do with us. **(Count 662)**

(Count 698)

AK: So how do you think Knox County and Columbus are different when it comes to prejudice and diversity?

CC: I'm real impressed with Columbus. I think Columbus has made great strides in the acceptance of gays and blacks. Back in the '60's and '70's you did not dare mention you were gay if you lived in Columbus, Ohio. And now Victorian Village and German Village and other areas of Columbus they have an openly gay lifestyle and it's pretty well tolerated which I'm thrilled about. But most black people in Columbus, although they're able to get jobs in just about any sector, I still hate to see it where so many are collected in like the East side of Columbus. It's the same thing I was saying earlier, about when I went to the Hispanic neighborhoods and I saw this feeling of stick to your own kind, stick to your own neighborhood,

don't venture out because if you venture out then you don't know what will happen. And by having that feeling, that attitude, prevents a lot of them from even dreaming of going to college or anything like that. And I see a lot of that in the black community of Columbus. Their feeling of hope, of getting out and doing something with their life, seems to still be there a lot.

FC: Plus, a lot of them have moved up by Northland. You know which was a real nice neighborhood, it's still a nice neighborhood, it's just the houses are cheaper because they're so many blacks in there. **(Count 733)**

flier from minister in Knox County saying he wanted people of Knox County to be vigilant about gays-- keep them out
daughter wrote letter to Mount Vernon news against flier, it was printed

(Count 787)

CC: There's still a lot of prejudice in Knox County. I still hear the n-word, even in a technical conversation I still can't even bring myself to verbalize that word, I call it the n-word, I won't even say it.

AK: You hear that around here?

CC: Yeah, I still hear it. And anytime anybody tells a joke with that word in it, I'll tell them I don't even want to hear it. I tell them don't even use that word around me, I don't even want to hear it. Because I won't tolerate it. And my daughters grew up knowing that if their friends came here to the house, if one of them said it, then I would reprimand them. Because as long as their in my house, you don't talk like that. But, yeah, there's still some very prejudice people here.

FC: It goes in cycles and it's going back the other way. You can see it more and more on T.V.

CC: There's more of a tolerance growing for people's prejudices again. But there's a majority of young people who are fighting prejudice in their own minds and in their own lives. I'm not saying that because you say, I'm not prejudice, that doesn't make it so. You hear it on T.V., you hear it in the movies, you see it from your neighbors, you grow up seeing some of it. So because humans have always had this attitude that because of whatever situation they're in, they have to set up a pecking order, then by verbalizing prejudice they set that in motion when you're real young. So I think the majority of us fight our prejudices our whole life and try to overcome them. It's sort of like a person who smokes, they might try to brake the habit because they know it's not good for them, they know it's not healthy, they know they shouldn't be doing it, and it's the same way with prejudice. A lot of people fight it. They know they shouldn't feel that way but it's there and so they try to overcome it. And then there's other people who have those feelings and they don't acknowledge that it's wrong. They nurture it and they accept it as being real and being the truth. And you can't get through to people like that. You can talk and talk and talk about how everybody has a right to a decent life, everybody has a right for their own choices and they'll block you out. If it doesn't agree with what they believe, they'll block you out. The

same way with abortion. **(Count 832)----- end of tape**