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Dennis M. Corso
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION THROUGH IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
OF THE NATURE AND MEANING THAT ADOLESCENTS FROM
VARIOUS SOCIAL-RACIAL-ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS MAKE
OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN A YOUTH
PARTICIPATION PROJECT

A Dissertation Presented
By
DENNIS MICHAEL CORSO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
February 1984
School of Education
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Approved as to style and content by:

Patrick J. Sullivan, Chairperson of Committee
Philip Eddy, Member
Myron Glazer, Member

Mario D. Fantini, Dean
School of Education
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank the members of my committee: Phil Eddy for his long and constructive support, Mickey Glazer for sharing his deep insight and compassionate criticism, and especially my chairman Patrick Sullivan who over the long process provided me with the intellectual challenge. But of even more significance, through his actions he helped me to understand the following:

There is no need to run outside
For better seeing,
Nor to peer from a window. Rather abide
At the center of your being:
For the more you leave it, the less you learn.
Search your heart and see
If he is wise who takes each turn
The way to do is to be.

Laotzou

Finally, I owe my greatest debt to my wife. Without her help, skills and love, this document would not have been completed.
ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Examination through In-Depth Interviews of the Nature and Meaning that Adolescents from Various Socio-Racial-Ethnic Backgrounds Make of their Involvement in a Youth Participation Project

February 1984

Dennis Michael Corso, B.S., Central Connecticut State College
M.Ed., University of Massachusetts
Ed.D., University of Massachusetts
Directed by: Patrick J. Sullivan

The purpose of this study was to explore the thoughts, impressions, and meaning a group of adolescents made of their shared involvement in a youth participation project. The youths were drawn from different socio/racial/ethnic backgrounds. Youth participation projects provide adolescents with an alternative educational activity which reflects their concerns. This study offers a unique opportunity to learn how youth from various backgrounds view the nature of their involvement.

A series of three in-depth interviews were conducted with fourteen inner-city and suburban youths, ten were presented in profiles based upon their own words. The data from the interviews was analyzed in light of the pertinent literature and the researcher's reconstruction of the social dynamics which shaped the participants' lives.

The data indicates that the youths, regardless of their backgrounds, viewed their involvement and the meaning they made of it in a positive way. All the participants corroborated the stated educational
and social goals of youth participation projects. Despite the fact that these youths varied greatly in their home surroundings and their attitudes toward school and society, they shared a capacity to identify collectively with a youth participation project which concerned their needs and which amplified their powers.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This dissertation originally set out to shed new light on the relationship between a youth participation project and the nature of the involvement of its key participants, both adult and youth. The first approach focused on the organizational nature of a youth participation project. This writer had the advantage of being a key advisor to a youth participation project for nearly three years. I was in a position to conduct a study as a participant observer with the additional knowledge of the history of the project, its personnel, leadership, and decision-making apparatus. To begin, I drafted a history of the program based upon a journal, official correspondence, internal memorandums, and other documents. The next stage was to be a set of structured interviews with the adults who had helped to create the informal organization upon which the project was based. This approach was abandoned when it became apparent that it was the nature of the youths' involvement which was at the center of this writer's intellectual curiosity.

It was at this juncture that I returned to an earlier area of study in which I had spent three years researching. That study dealt with the individuals who had helped create the Progressive Education Movement. It was from this body of literature that I concluded that the intellectual impetus for youth participation projects could be
found. I reasoned that what I had helped create in the youth participation project under study was similar, in theory, to the experimental learning movement's activities of the 20's and 30's, the major difference being sophisticated video equipment in one and kite building and other activities in the earlier days. Although more than fifty years separated the technology, the educational underpinnings seemed to be significantly similar. The one element common to both periods was the capitalization of the interest of the participants. An early work by John Dewey seemed to hold some of the answers.

Written in 1895 in the Herbart Yearbook, Dewey's essay "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will" discusses the topic of interest. Some eighteen years later, Dewey would redraft the article into the book *Interest and Effort in Education*. In the original work, Dewey was concerned primarily with moral training and used education in a lawsuit to illustrate this point. The case was interest versus effort. The verdict was clear. For Dewey and the many who followed in his footsteps, the issue of interest, and its place in the learning experience, was settled. The task before the court was to create the right conditions upon which to build. Dewey himself handed down the decision:

The genuine principle of interest is the principle of the recognized identity of the fact or proposed line of action with the self; that it lies in the direction of the agent's own growth, and is, therefore, imperiously demanded, if the agent is to be himself. (And then Dewey offers a course of action.) Let this condition of identification once be secured, and we neither have to appeal to sheer strength of will, nor do we have to occupy ourselves with making things interesting to the child. (Dewey, 1975, p. 9)
In the end, it was not a case of interest versus effort, but rather that of releasing and channeling the effort and interest the child inherently possessed. The implication for schools could have been profound.

The public schools are faced with the difficult task of determining the degree to which a student's interest is to be incorporated into the formal learning experience. Generally, interest is secured in schools by seeking ways to make the subject matter more interesting for the student. One example was the case of the New Social Studies of the late 60's and early 70's. As Howard Mehlinger points out, "The teaching approaches embodied in the new materials simply make social studies far more exciting that what it was before" (Mehlinger, 1976, p. 5). The goal was to make the subject matter interesting without determining what was of interest to the student.

The question of interest, as it relates to the public school, is that it has little bearing on the student's own interest and is more an attempt to get some hold upon the student's attention. Interest, in this sense, is a tool to involve the student in the subject matter because he may not perceive or appreciate its relevancy. Concerning this concept of interest, Dewey said: "I know of no more demoralizing doctrine--when taken literally--than the assertion of some of the opponents of interest that after subject-matter has been selected, then the teacher should make it interesting" (Dewey, 1975, p. 23). It is small wonder that James Wheeler makes the following observation in the preface to the 1975 edition of Dewey's *Interest and Effort in Education*:
A rereading of the book sixty years or so later leaves one with the same impression, but one's enthusiasm is tempered by the fact that so little chance in "educational procedures" and "classroom methods" has occurred in the intervening years . . . there has been no "active acceptance by teachers" of Dewey's analysis of the meaning of the terms "interest" and "effort"; there has been no correlative redirection to attitudes and methods essential to good teaching. (pp. vii-viii)

To move closer to the topic of this study, it is necessary at this point to explain the role Dewey's book had on this writer. As a new teacher in a public school and as a young graduate student, the discovery of Interest and Effort in Education had the effect on me not unlike that of a student's of Zen with the correct response to his or her Koan (Koan is what might appear to be an unanswerable question, which if answered correctly, offers enlightenment). The book removed this writer's doubts concerning what the proper role for the teacher was, the basis for curriculum development, and the ultimate purpose of education. Dewey seems to be saying that learning should be an adventure in which the interest of the individual is the driving force with the role of the teacher being that of a facilitator. I also found that Dewey had intellectual allies.

J. W. Getzels, from the University of Chicago, writing in School Review, makes the following observation: "Human beings need not be driven to explore, to think, to learn, to dream, to seek out problems for solution; they are intrinsically constituted to do just this" (Getzels, 1974, p. 536). The position Getzels takes is in keeping with Dewey's assessment of the ideal learning situation:
If we can discover a child's urgent needs and powers, and if we can supply an environment of materials, appliances, and resources--physical, social, and intellectual--to direct their adequate operation, we shall not have to think about interest. It will take care of itself. (Dewey, 1975, pp. 95-96)

Writing in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Jerome Bruner bases his observations upon scientific studies of how children learn and tentatively aligns himself with Dewey and Getzels, in spirit, if not totally. He states:

The hypothesis that I would propose here is that to the degree that one is able to approach learning as a task of discovering something rather than "learning about" it, to that degree will there be a tendency for the child to carry out his learning activities with the autonomy of self-reward . . ." (Bruner, 1961, p. 26)

These three visions of the learning experience place the individual at the center of that experience. The first stresses the intrinsic drives of the individual, the second combines individual needs and powers with the appropriate environment, while the third emphasizes the need to allow the individual to play the most significant role in the learning experience. In such a context this study set out to explore the thoughts, impressions, and meaning that adolescents made of their involvement in an alternative educational program; one which was outside the public school, one free to establish a program of learning unencumbered by the bureaucracy, conflicting philosophies, and ubiquitous goals inherent in most public educational institutions.

Edgar Friedenberg (1965) points out that the primary arena for the "naturalization" of the young is the public school. But, histori-
cally there have been a host of other programs outside the school whose goal was the same: to construct educational opportunities for the young to enable them to make the difficult transition to adulthood. These programs range from the early citizen education projects of the 40's (see Patterson, 1960 and Russell, 1954) to organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, church groups, junior achievement, and scores of informal community activities. It is from the latter category of youth involvement projects that one could turn to to find educational activities involving the young without the constrictions associated with public schools.

Writing in The Report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee (1974), J. S. Coleman makes a strong case for the development of even more programs outside the school. He observed: "With every decade, the length of schooling has increased, until a thoughtful person must ask whether society can conceive of no other way for youth to come into adulthood" (Coleman, 1974, p. vii). Coleman may be overstating the problem, but in an attempt to address the concerns raised in his report, new approaches to meet the needs of the young, which were not being addressed in the schools, emerged. One such approach became known as youth participation projects, and it is within this category that this study set out to explore the meaning a select group of youths placed on their involvement in such a project. Unlike public schools, youth participation projects can offer participants activities which are not affected by many of the rules and issues that permeate the classroom. Whereas in schools it is difficult to
establish a curriculum based totally upon the students' interests because of state mandated requirements and school board directives, youth participation projects are at least purportedly based upon the interests of their participants (McClosky, 1974; Kohler, 1981). In schools students are treated as less than equals (Holt, 1974; Gross and Osterman, 1971; Silberman, 1970; Friedenberg, 1965; Goodman, 1956). Schools impose severe limitations upon their students to assume meaningful responsibility. Youth participation programs exist to give the young the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and to allow them to have important decision making roles (see Kohler, 1981 and Abarband, 1979). Youth participation projects offer a unique opportunity to examine the personal motives, expectations, and values that youth place on an educational experience more in keeping with Dewey's concept of interest and learning.

The National Commission on Resources for Youth, an organization which has done a great deal to promote youth participation projects, claims to have over three thousand examples of active, successful projects. In 1974, NCRY published the book New Roles for Youth. This work describes over fifty exemplary projects scattered across the nation in detail. In its "Forward," Ralph W. Tyler points out that the most important characteristic common to all the projects in the book is that they "have overcome [the] blockades and enabled young people to participate in productive adult activities and to assume real responsibility for what they do" (The National Commission on Resources for Youth, 1974, p. vii).
New Roles for Youth describes a wide variety of projects based upon case studies. Teenagers in Richmond, California, a Mexican-American community, were concerned about the children of immigrants who fell behind their classmates and so undertook a tutorial program. The Bilingual Tutorial Program was launched as a result of the teenagers' concerns and willingness to volunteer their time and talents. Because of the teenagers' effort, the Richmond School District recognized the need the youths were meeting and offered their own more formal program after years of neglect and indifference. The school program has replaced the youth one, but only, according to the book, because of the "dedication, enthusiasm, and inventiveness that its young Chicano founders originally invested in it" (p. 56). From California, one can travel to Philadelphia and find a Catholic high school for girls involved in running a drug rehabilitation and crisis center. They operate their program out of a room called the Unwinding Room. Teams of adolescents work with their peers who are in trouble and who find it difficult to go to their parents or school officials. The adult supervisor points out: "What seems especially welcome [for troubled girls] is an opportunity to talk about [problems] privately . . . with persons who are the same age, persons who are sympathetic . . ." (p. 211). All the case studies reported in this book indicate that adolescents had the ability to provide important services, handle meaningful responsibility, and work in a cooperative relationship with adults.

Youth participation projects are also highlighted in a work published by The United Church Press titled We Did It Outselves (1976) con-
cerning over thirty projects. All involved teenagers serving their communities. One learns that in Phoenix, Arizona a group of teenagers volunteered their time to visit and read to the elderly; in Adams, Minnesota high school students worked with handicapped children. The Adams group's involvement ranged from learning how to administer physical therapy to raising money to build a bowling ramp. They also received special training to help the handicapped children compete in the Special Olympics. In the lower east side of New York City, a group of teenagers published The Fourth Street, a community newspaper which allows teenagers to express themselves. Another group of teenagers in Burlington, Vermont helped run the Do Unto Others Program which provides manpower for individuals in need. The programs labeled as youth participation ones help the young channel their concerns into meaningful action.

This study set out to explore what meaning a group of youths made of their involvement in a youth participation project. A description of the youth participation project this study is based upon follows.

This research is based upon a youth participation project that used a television series as its vehicle. Set in a large urban center, one of its primary objectives was to bring youths from the suburbs together with those from the inner city: Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics working together to share a rewarding, cross-cultural experience. The project when through many stages from a public broadcasting affiliation to a community-based cable access facility. Throughout the history the project the goal was to involve the participants in a mean-
ingful position of responsibility. The adult advisors, represented by the board of directors, insisted upon maintaining youth involvement at all times. As one learns from this study, the matter of the degree of involvement is open to varying interpretations.

Another of the project's primary objectives was the training in television production. Decisions concerning format and content were made by the participants. The project became an alternative educational program. The project involved thousands of hours and dollars. It produced eight, one-half hour, broadcast-quality programs which have been aired on various cable networks. The youths involved in the project were offered a unique opportunity to express their creativity, concerns, and skills. They were also being exposed to careers in television.

The combination of these opportunities was something few of their peers had access to. This youth participation project was one of many attempts to give youths from across our nation an opportunity to learn about the adult world and to prepare themselves for taking their rightful place in that world. The youths who took part in this study used video cameras, portable video-cassettes, character generators, and all the other hardware associated with television production. Yet like their brothers and sisters involved in different youth participation projects, all shared the problems of adolescence and the primary focus of this study--interest and learning. Only they can tell us what we need to know, but first we need to take the time to listen, and that is what this study set out to do. By focusing on the participants and
their perspectives, the study allows them the opportunity to present their understanding of the nature of their involvement and to voice the concerns that were important to them.

The Nature of the Study

The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the nature and meaning a group of adolescents from different social, ethnic, and racial backgrounds made of their involvement in a common youth participation project. The study set out to bring into focus the role of interest in a youth participation project by examining the thoughts, impressions, and meaning a group of youths made of their involvement.

The question of interest and its rightful place within the learning experience is no stranger to the educational community. What is lacking are in-depth accounts of what role interest plays from the learner's point of view, not whether they consider their interest important to learning, but rather what meaning they make of educational experiences connected to their interest. If one pursued only the former, one would remain on the surface where for the most part the debate over interest has remained. This study is primarily concerned with the thoughts, impressions, and meaning the individual made of his youth participation project experience.

The idea for this study grew out of this writer's role as an advisor to a number of alternative educational programs over a fourteen year time span. I was simultaneously a classroom instructor in a large suburban high school. From these two vantage points, I was struck by
the great disparity between those students who were able to act upon their interests as opposed to those who were operating within the school system's curriculum. It had been my experience to see students unable to function effectively in the classroom find success in this youth participation project. And students who did do well in school found the youth participation project more challenging and rewarding. There was something about being involved in an educational activity that did not reflect the extrinsic rewards of the classroom that had a positive effect on the youths involved. As the advisor to the project, I had subject matter to impart: research techniques, script writing, camera operations, and other television production related skills. I found that the youths involved in the project eagerly pursued that subject matter. Except for a handful of exceptionally bright students, I found this to be a rare occurrence with the subject matter designed for the classroom. Yet, even with these students, I did not have the feeling that they were doing it for themselves as much as they were trying to please me or some other adult. There was a difference in the attitudes of the youths involved in the youth participation project that were radically different from those I had witnessed in the classroom setting--something that had to do with how they perceived what they were being asked to learn.

The research tool I employed for this study was in-depth interviewing which allowed the researcher to gather large quantities of highly personal data. The main focus was the youth participation project. The interviewing process, described in Chapter II, generated
data about the everyday life of the individuals. Because the youths were drawn from various social, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, their stories offered a unique opportunity to examine how a group of adolescents from various backgrounds viewed the process of growing up. The participants' social and economic conditions created grave hardships for some and great opportunities for others. Family stability seemed to be a primary factor in how the various youths moved through their lives. As Chapters IV and V will show, having a family unit concerned with their welfare, one that took an active interest in them, and one that provided positive role models, seemed to be the key difference among the participants' lives more so than any economic difference.

The lives of these individuals offer a means of commenting on the complex world of adolescence. The interviews revealed their different frames of reference while at the same time pointing out their shared concerns and hopes. At the onset of the field research, this writer was primarily concerned with the topics of Dewey's idea of interest and youth participation projects. As the data was collected and analyzed, it became clear that the participants tied their thoughts, impressions, and meaning concerning the experience under study to their on-going lives. To focus the study only on what they had to say about their involvement in the youth participation project was to miss the larger context and meaning of the data.

This study is about young people who tell their life stories and their thoughts, impressions, and the meaning they made of an alternative educational program. One learns from these interviews much that
confirms certain well-documented concepts about adolescence as well as raises questions about the validity of others. In the commentaries in Chapter III following each group of profiles I explore a number of issues which reflect the popular view of adolescents: docility in school, influence of peers, and their ability to handle responsibility among others. The interviews also enabled this researcher to confront substandard housing, violence, and the drama of human struggle. One does not find here many clear answers, simple solutions, or stories that are easy to forget. The process of conducting a study of this nature required a great deal of listening. It was not easy to remain silent, but the ability of the researcher to do so enabled the participants to communicate those feelings and thoughts which are usually reserved for those closest to them. A Zen saying states it this way: "With no bird singing, the mountain is yet more still."

The Significance of the Study

This study offers a unique opportunity to look into the private lives of a group of adolescents from their own frames of reference. The world of the adolescent has been extensively researched, with the bulk of the literature dealing with the problems of adolescence as seen by the adult community. Except for the work of Robert Coles (1964), Thomas Cottle (1967), and others, one finds few examples of adolescents being allowed to express their concerns or being asked to describe the meaning of the events that shaped their lives. The scholarly treatment of adolescence is devoted to society's concerns with the process of
reaching adulthood.

There have been studies which analyzed the physical developments of adolescents (Carron and Bailey, 1974; Tanner, 1970), while others have reported on what is commonly described as the "storm and stress" inherent to the adolescent world (Muuss, 1975; Mead, 1970; Hall, 1904). Social critics have discussed society's treatment of adolescents (Holt, 1974; Friedenberg, 1967, 1965, 1959; Goodman, 1956) and there are also studies concerned with schools and adolescents (Buxton, 1974; Krug, 1972; Rogers, 1969; Conant, 1959). Developmental psychologists, along with sociologists, have probed the adolescent's social/psychological development (Dusek and Flaherty, 1981; Erikson, 1968, 1965, 1959). Adolescence has been researched to determine how these young people fit into the work place (Coleman, 1974). Even early adolescence is afforded its own niche (Coles and Kagan, 1972). Research has been conducted into what has been called the "adolescent society" (Coleman, 1961). There have been longitudinal studies (Carlson, 1965; Engel, 1959) and cross-sectional ones on adolescence (Wylie, 1974).

The traditional approach to the study of adolescence is based upon an analytical process associated with quantitative inquiries that utilize statistical breakdowns, the compilation of survey results, or the invention of mathematical formulas. This study involves a different approach, one which revolves around the personal thoughts and impressions of the adolescent. The methodology is based upon the participants taking an active part in creating the issues rather than primarily reacting to those concerns identified by adults. This study did
not set out to answer a specific set of questions, but instead intended to follow the flow of questions and observations generated by the participants.

Placing the adolescents in such a pivotal role has seen only limited use (Feezel, 1980; Luchterland and Welher, 1979), but there have been attempts. The work Two Blocks Apart (1965), edited by Charlotte Mayerson, is one of the few examples of in-depth interviewing of adolescents. In the early stages of this study the book had special significance. In Two Blocks Apart the two participants were from different social and ethnic backgrounds and described how they viewed growing up in the city in their own words, but the book does not offer a scholarly analysis. Ronald Gross and Paul Osterman, editors of High School, utilized student essays, poems, diaries, and interviews to establish the central thesis of the book, which is that high schools should be redesigned to fit education to the students' needs.

This study is, in many ways, a pilot undertaking. The process itself of conducting a study of this nature revealed valuable information. The research helps to illustrate the value in allowing the subjects of the inquiry, that is, the participants themselves, to help in identifying what issues they feel are important.

The most significant body of knowledge in this work is the material about the private world of the adolescent. The popular media is full of grave statistics--suicide is up by 400% in twenty years, unwanted pregnancies are at the highest level ever, and according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse/University of Michigan survey, eight
thousand teenagers will die in 1983 in drunk driving related accidents. What could be more important than a better understanding of what is on the minds of adolescents and what meaning they make of the experiences that affect their lives? This study provides an example of an alternative approach to understanding the world of the adolescent. Its most significant contribution is not only to the area of youth participation projects or interest and learning alone but also regarding what these young people tell us concerning the things that are important to them.

Overview of the Study

The goal of this study is obviously not to make claims of a quantitative nature but instead to reach beyond the surface as defined by the rhetoric of youth participation projects and to penetrate to the meaning the participants made of their involvement. The issues this study is interested in do not affect only one category of youths. They affect all youths, regardless of family background, racial identity, or academic abilities. It would be insufficient to limit the study to just one category of youth. In addition, youth participation projects are to be found among all categories of young people. To reach its objectives, this study employed the research technique of in-depth interviewing of a select number of adolescents who were involved in one particular youth participation project. The study was concerned with probing the thoughts, impressions, and meaning the youths made of their involvement. The methodology used in this study will be discussed in Chapter II.
Chapter III presents individual profiles drawn from each of the participants in the study using their own words. The profiles were developed from the audio-taped transcripts and are presented in narrative form being grouped by the topics the individual participants discussed in most detail (see the introduction to Chapter III). The profiles themselves are arranged into groups around central themes which link certain participants. There are three groups of profiles. Following each set, this writer shares his observations and discusses the pertinent literature in an attempt to deepen the participants' perspective and to understand the social dynamics which helped shape their lives.

This study was conducted under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions. An overview of the process of conducting in-depth interviews with adolescents, especially with inner-city participants, will be offered in Chapter IV. Based on notes and personal observations, this writer will discuss the topics which affected the conduct of the study. Chapter IV will provide the reader with a detailed account of what I learned about conducting the cycle of interviews.

In the final chapter the study returns to the issues concerning this youth participation project and the world of adolescents with a critical mass, the thoughts and impressions of the participants. The goal of the methodology was to diminish the walls which separated the events, their context, and the perceptions and feelings of those most directly involved. What the participants reveal concerning their lives and their involvement in the youth participation project is difficult to gather with the traditional tools of educational research. The
final chapter will address what this researcher determined to be the most significant links between the youth participation project under study, its participants, and the concepts of interest and learning.

**Limitations of the Study and Select Review of the Literature**

This study was interested in examining the effects one experience had on the lives of a group of adolescents. There was no attempt to determine the merits of the project in relation to similar activities, nor were the participants asked to pass judgement on the adults who ran the project. Also, the quality of the programs produced by the participants was not a subject for review. The activities in which the participants took part fall within the tradition of alternative educational programs. This study did not concern itself with the larger field of alternative education except under the rubric of youth participation projects.

A major limitation of the study's research design was the number of its participants. Fourteen individuals were interviewed, each for a total of four to four and a half hours. A larger sample would have aided in the process of generalizing the findings. The question of the number of the participants had two considerations, one being procedural and the other being more technical. The study sought, first and foremost, qualitative data which required an extensive amount of planning and coordinating. A larger number of participants would have made the collection of this type of data beyond the scope of the study and the
resources of the researcher. While it is acknowledged that a larger number of participants would have offered clear advantages, the opportunity to work in greater depth with a smaller number of participants afforded this researcher results which were consistent with the objectives of this study.

A certain portion of the literature associated with this study has been identified earlier in the chapter. The literature described below is concerned primarily with the topics of race, class, ethnicity, inter-group education, and adolescence in contemporary American society. One aspect of this study is the fact that the participants came from different social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. The participants came to the project with the attitudes and values associated with their backgrounds. The literature I utilized helped me put their thoughts and impressions into a larger context and also aided me in the appreciation of the participants' individual perspectives and backgrounds. The following works were utilized.

The works *Ethnic America* (1981) by Thomas Sowell and Stephen Steinberg's *The Ethnic Myth* (1981) provide a commentary on the history of minority groups, including the more recent arrivals, one of which played a significant role in this study. The works *Race, Class, and Power* (1963) by Raymond Mack and *Class, Race, and Labor* (1968) by John Laggett and *The Social Reality of Ethnic America* (1974) edited by Rudolph Gomez offer insight into the economic realities of being a minority and the conflicts various ethnic groups and classes confront in the workplace and community. Arthur Mann's *The One and the Many*
(1979), Strangers Next Door (1964) by Robin Williams, Jr. and Two Blocks Apart (1965) edited by Charlotte Mayerson address the various ethnic groups' attempts to cope with the realities of the pressures of cultural pluralism. Finally, the book The Ethnic Imperative (1977) by Howard Stein and Robert Hill explores the new ethnicity and the American dream from within the Black/White perspective. With the exception of Two Blocks Apart (1965), the books do not speak specifically to the topic of adolescence, but they do offer a basis to identify the realities of modern society and ethnic, racial, and class differences. In addition, they collectively offer insight into the factors which help shape values and attitudes the participants brought to their involvement in the project.

The concept of intergroup education can be traced to the works of William Heard Kilpatrick. In Intercultural Attitudes in the Making (1947), Kilpatrick makes the first serious arguments for the use of intergroup education. The educational and social theories the project was based upon grew out of the theories Kilpatrick put forth in The Project Method (1918) and his concept of whole-hearted activity (1929, 1937, 1951). Combined with the goal of ameliorating prejudice, Kilpatrick's works offer a point of departure for exploring the concept of intergroup education through a shared activity. The body of literature in this field is not excessive and are generally case studies of successful programs. One exception is Jean Dresden Gramb's Intergroup Education (1968). She offers nearly one hundred pages of bibliography and a list of materials and methods used in intergroup education.
The final body of literature associated with this study is society's treatment of adolescents. The authors whose works were carefully studied include: Edgar Friedenberg's *The Vanishing Adolescent* (1959) and *The Coming of Age in America* (1965); *Society's Children: A Study of Resentment in the Secondary School* by Edgar Friedenberg, Carl Nordstrom and Hilary Gold (1967); Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* (1956); John Holt's *Escape from Childhood* (1974); and *The Greening of the High School* (1973) by Ruth Weistock. Those works offer insight into the world of adolescents and the pressures they face growing up. Erik Erikson's *The Challenge of Youth* (1965) deals primarily with the private world of the adolescent and helps to explain the complex process of identity they go through. Of special significance was Erikson's *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968). Ralph W. Larkin's *Suburban Youth in Cultural Crisis* (1979) takes the reader through the world of a suburban high school and offers insight into the nature of adolescent culture of the 1970's. I refer to Larkin's book in Chapters IV and V. Finally, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's *The Good High School* (1983) explores the world of contemporary American high schools through a series of case studies and interviews. Lightfoot's book introduces the reader to a unique commentary free from rhetoric and polemics on a major social issue.
CHAPTER II
THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to investigate the nature and meaning of a group of adolescents from different social, ethnic, and racial backgrounds made of their involvement in a common youth participation project and to relate my understanding of their experiences to the issues of interest and learning as described in Chapter I. To achieve my goal, I used the methodology of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing suggested in the works of Michael Quinn Patton (1980) and Leonard Schatzman and Anselm L. Strauss (1973). In this chapter, I will describe the rationale for that methodology and the following specific aspects of the research process: selection of the participants, contact and access, the interviewing process, and working with the data gathered from the interviews.

Rationale

The use of the qualitative research design in this study reflects the nature of the data to be collected, the participants, and the researcher's understanding of how it is that one knows. In addition, the methodology offered an opportunity to investigate the world of adolescents without resorting to a linear, mathematically based equation common to most research associated with youth (Larkin, 1979). The world this study set out to investigate required a research paradigm more artistic than scientific. Elliot W. Eisner (1981) helps to illustrate why this is so:
Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. What art seeks is not the discovery of the laws of nature about which true statements or explanations can be given, but rather the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected, or made more secure. (p. 9)

A major consideration of this study was that it was to enter a world of perceptions, interpretations, and subjective meanings. The methodology offered little in the way of absolutes or means for the researcher to become the sole arbitrator of reality. The world of the participants in this study can be viewed as a maze of confusion and fear tangled in hope. Truth is fleeting at best, and always elusive. To enter this private world, to move beyond the surface is to abandon all notions, convictions, and most importantly, the need to examine a world where "... there exist definable and quantifiable 'social facts.' These facts are amenable to being collected, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted" (Rist, 1979, p. 18).

In the place of standard quantitative data gathering tools such as questionnaires and structured interviews, this study substituted probing, listening, and recording. Its intellectual underpinning is faith in Max Weber's (1964) concept of verstehen, which is to gain understanding of human behavior from the actors' own frame of reference. In the case of this study, the actors were adolescents from different backgrounds involved in the same activity. In a journey of this nature, the degree to which truth can be revealed is in direct proportion to whose truth one is prepared to base reality upon. In this study the
truth of most concern to this researcher is the impressions and interpretations of reality as understood by the participants. To gain access to their reality in-depth requires an artist's touch and freedom from the known (Krishnamurti, 1975). Once the data was collected, it was analyzed in light of the relevant literature and this researcher's understanding of the social dynamics of the participants.

The field of research methodology is not unlike a mine field. In both cases it helps to know where others have trampled, and the world of qualitative research is no exception. The works of Patton (1979, 1980), Filstead (1970), Becker (1970), Stake (1975), and others present persuasive arguments, research techniques, and the means to work with the collected data. For the most part, the issues they raise are based upon the distinction between types of knowledge and the most productive way to retrieve this knowledge. For the purpose of continuing the explanation behind the use of a qualitative design in this study, the work of Douglas Roberts (1982) offers a somewhat different approach which comes closer to the essence of the thinking which went into this study.

Based upon the work *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Pepper, 1942), Roberts built a case for using not just one type of research technique; he instead probes the larger question of interpreting reality. He suggests, as Pepper argued, that there are six metaphysical presuppositions concerning reality. They are described as a coherent set of common sense terms or "root metaphors" "... which people use in thinking about reality; criteria for establishing truth; and what kind of evidence, if any, is admissible in the system" (Roberts, 1982,
The six world hypotheses are animism, mysticism, formism, mechanism, contextualism, and organicism. For our purposes here, we need only explore the concepts of contextualism and organicism.

Of the two, organicism is the most germane to this study. Organicism is based upon a wholeness, or what is understood in the research community as holistic. Michael Quinn Patton (1980) describes the concept in these terms:

> The holistic approach to research design is open to gathering data on any number of aspects of the setting under study in order to put together a complete picture of the social dynamics of a particular situation or program. This means that at the time of data collection, each case, event, or setting being studied is treated as a unique entity with its own particular meaning and constellation of relationships emerging from, and related to, the context within which it exists. (p. 40)

Organicism is a preoccupation with "integrated wholeness" (Roberts, 1982). It seeks to understand how pieces fit together into an organic whole. Roberts' rather unequivocal conclusion is that "organicism relies on--rather, demands--qualitative data" (p. 279).

This leads to the second root metaphor, contextualism, which is "a system of thought that focuses on the event in its context" (p. 279). According to Roberts, it is not enough to know the form of the event, or even the mechanism, that is responsible for it. One should also consider the specific context under which the events occur "in the totality of people's lives, stressing warranted conceptual linkages between event and context, context and totality" (p. 289). Both contextualism and organicism require the seeking of ways to move beyond
the surface of events in order to probe their inner world. They focus attention from the inside out. The means available to researchers interested in what participants perceived and what meaning they brought to and took away from the events revolves around the use of qualitative techniques and perceptsives.

There are, of course, limitations. By stressing terms like inner world, self, individual, and the like, there is a danger that the researcher could come to believe that the social world can be reconstituted from individual consciousness and that their observations are synonymous with social behavior rather than serving as the basis of social behavior.

In his work "Skepticism and Qualitative Research" (1980), Richard Smith raises a series of questions concerning what he sees as the shortcomings of qualitative research. He offers a number of examples, including the inability of social phenomenologists (his term) to adequately account for those determinants of human behavior which lie beyond the actor's consciousness. He also raises the argument of Giddens's (1976) concern of "background expectancies." (Researchers develop ideas about what is happening in the context according to what they are told by the participants.) The issue Gidden raises is whose background expectancies are operative and whose get recorded as the basis for "vicarious experience." For those using the qualitative approach, this argument raises the issues of objectivity, validity, and credibility.

The majority of criticisms and shortcomings credited to qualita-
tive research (Sharp and Green, 1975; Young and Whitty, 1977) raise questions, but also identify the very strength of the qualitative approach--human issues, problems of what is the basis of reality, perception, and truth--all issues which need to be discussed and certainly investigated on human terms. The strength of qualitative research is that it seeks to do just that.

Of all the criticisms directed at the use of the qualitative technique, Giddens's argument of "background expectancies" is the most cogent, especially for this study. This researcher had to be sensitive to this issue because of his relationship to the participants and to the events about which they were being asked to discuss. One of the first questions asked about the nature of in-depth interviewing concerns the issue of objectivity. If successful, the interviewer has done his or her best to insure that the participants share their own views and not those they think the interviewer wants to hear. Patton puts it this way:

The common characteristic of all three qualitative approaches to interviewing is that the person being interviewed respond in their own words to express their own personal perspectives . . . The interviewer never supplies and predetermines the phases or categories that must be used by respondents to express themselves. (1980, p. 205)

There are not complete answers that will silence all the critics, but the debate that does take place helps to encourage dialogue and experimentation with alternative research approaches. This study set out to probe the private world of its participants. It chose as its tools,
qualitative brushes and an artist's sensitivity to his subject. Eisner provides on over-arching perspective when he writes:

Each approach to the study of educational situations has its own unique perspective to provide. Each sheds its own unique light on the situations that humans seek to understand. The field of education in particular needs to avoid methodological monism. Our problems need to be addressed in as many ways as will bear fruit. (1981, p. 9)

**The Methodology**

**Selection of the participants**

The individuals selected to participate in this study were all involved in a common youth participation project. They were selected on the basis of the length of their involvement, place of residence, and their social, racial, and ethnic background. The project had a pool of fifty adolescents upon which to draw.

At the onset of the study, the goal was to secure a maximum of twenty-five interviewees using a random selection formula. This number was considered adequate to afford an opportunity to draw qualitative comparisons of certain variables. This was to be accomplished by insuring that the various categories of youths would be represented based upon their percentage of their group's involvement in the project. During the course of the selection, it became apparent that certain modifications would be necessary.

This researcher did not anticipate the difficulties he would encounter in the planning stages of securing inner-city youths and their
parents' cooperation. Nor did he expect to find locating the participants to present as difficult a problem as it turned out to be. In addition, there was a tendency for inner-city parents to hold a negative attitude towards educational research. Nearly half of all the inner-city youths contacted who initially agreed to take part in the study withdrew their involvement upon reflection or withdrew due to lack of parental consent. Of the inner-city youths who followed through on their commitment, two terminated their involvement after one session without explanation. This pattern of indecision or lack of interest did not materialize with the suburban youths, all of whom along with their parents cooperated fully. The problems of working with inner-city youths have been documented by E. Luchterhand and L. Welher (1979) and J. D. Feezel (1980). More extensive comments on specific aspects of the methodology of in-depth interviewing and inner-city youths will be dealt with in Chapter IV.

Contact and access

The researcher was familiar with all the participants before they were contacted to take part in this study due to his involvement in the creation of the youth participation project and his continuing role as an advisor throughout the same. The youths knew him, and in some cases, had worked with him for three years. This relationship afforded the researcher their addresses and phone numbers. In spite of this familiarization, one most difficult task was locating the participants (to be discussed at length in Chapter IV).
Once contacted, each participant was informed of the study's purpose and the time commitment. The majority of the suburban youths' parents asked for an explanation, while on the other hand, the researcher had to arrange a meeting with the parents of the inner-city youths. These arrangements required a number of days, and in two cases, the parents did not speak English which further complicated this phase of the study.

After having made contact with the participants, a preliminary meeting was arranged with each during which the participants and their parents were encouraged to carefully read a detailed written consent form which had been prepared for the study (see Appendix A). The primary purpose of the form stemmed from federal regulations concerning the rights of human subjects in research. In addition to that, the consent form helped the participants and their parents share the serious commitment to the work which was about to begin with the researcher. In the case of at least two Hispanic participants, the permission form acted as a hindrance, because the parents refused to sign the form out of fear, misunderstanding, or both. No attempt was made to question parental authority or to place the parents and the youth in a confrontational posture with each other.

Interviewing process

The research design was structured around a sequence of three in-depth interviews with each participant in the study. Each interview in the series lasted for at least one hour. The interviews were normally
spaced two to three days apart. In some cases, two interviews were held back to back. This became necessary in the case of inner-city youths who had difficulty making appointments. All the interviews were audio taped and then transcribed.

Each of the three interviews had a distinctive purpose and focus. The first interview concentrated on the lives of the participants before their involvement in the youth participation project. They were asked to describe the events in their lives which revolved around home, friends, and school. The second interview focused on what they actually did in the project. They were asked to reconstruct what they actually did in the project and discuss the people with whom they came into contact and the activities they witnessed. The third interview focused on the meaning each participant made of his or her involvement in the project. They were asked to reflect on the significance of their involvement and its importance to other youths.

The interviewing sessions were open-ended to insure that the participants would feel free to take the initiative in describing what they felt was important. The researcher asked questions during the sessions to help explain or clarify events. There was not a set of prearranged questions, but rather there were topics that the researcher would introduce during the course of each interview. It was the participant's responsibility to bring his own sense of importance to the topic presented. The researcher was cognizant at all times of the need to allow the participants the freedom to express their understanding of the importance of each topic as it related to their individual lives.
The methodological goal in the interviewing was to have the participants reconstruct and reflect upon the concrete details of their lives. Because of their ages, their involvement in the project constituted a good portion of their life's story.

Working with the material

After a careful reading of the fourteen sets of interviews, ten were selected on the basis of their depth and thoroughness in addressing the topics which form the focus of this study. The interviews of five inner-city youths and five suburban youths were selected. In order to retain the unique nature of the data, the transcripts were turned into narratives which were based entirely on the participants' own words. A question or a word or a phrase would be included where there was a need for transition or continuity to enable the reader to follow the flow of the narrative. Brackets were used on these occasions in order to signal the interpolation of the researcher's words.

Once the profiles were completed, a second and third reading was undertaken to identify themes reflected in the profiles. The objective was to identify links between the various participants and their involvement in the youth participation project used in the study. The major themes which emerged were school and responsibility, inner-city youths' attitudes towards the future, and cross-cultural expectations. Because each of the participants shared a great deal of their life experiences, sub-themes pertaining to the issue of growing up in contemporary America were interwoven into the major themes. A commen-
tary follows each group in order to take full advantage of the data and to extend and deepen the impact of the individual stories. The commentary offers the reader the opportunity to examine the lives of the participants with the additional benefit of a context provided by the researcher. It is understood that others reading the profiles could easily select different themes to analyze and comment on, such as the role of the family, the influence of peers, and the attitudes towards adults. It is this unique nature of the data that enables the reader to supply his or her own interpretation and insight. The commentaries which are presented reflected the major concerns of the researcher in furthering the understanding of the role of interest in youth participation projects. Beyond this primary objective, the commentaries are intended to bring to bear the full impact of the lives of these individuals as they confront the difficult task of growing up—one of the primary reasons for the creation of youth participation projects in the first place.

In the following chapter the profiles and commentaries are presented. In addition to editing the profiles as described previously, steps were taken to disguise the identity of the participants. Although I cannot insure that someone who desired to learn the identity of the project involved could not, to protect the anonymity of the participants I either changed or eliminated the names of persons, places, and institutions. I gave the participants pseudonyms and took additional steps to mask their identity when necessary.
In the first group of profiles and commentaries we meet three participants who represent the vast differences in the lifestyles and economic backgrounds of the youths who took part in the youth participation project under study. David Chapdelaine, a pseudonym, as are all other names herein, lives in a comfortable suburban neighborhood surrounded by advantages: thoughtful and caring parents, financial security, and good academic ability. His father is a member of the school board. At the time of the interviews, David was in his second year at a major university. Luis Lopez is an inner-city Hispanic whose young life reflected many of the social ills that accompany poverty, substandard housing, and family breakdown. During the interviewing cycles, he was involved in a serious domestic dispute with his mother concerning her live-in boyfriend and was on the verge of leaving home at the age of fifteen. Richard Carter is from a working-class family in which formal education beyond high school is not a priority. The oldest of all the individuals interviewed for this study, he was also the most involved in the youth participation project. As a result of his long association with the project, he is now actively pursuing a full-time position in television.

These three participants offer insight into the complicated world in which they and the other participants search for their identity. David and Luis have radically different school experiences which were
shaped by their opposing social and economic backgrounds; yet, they share the similar desire for independence from the constraints found in schools. School was of little consequence for Richard; the project became his vehicle to escape his non-academic background.

Despite their differences, these three individuals were cognizant of the social need to develop constructive opportunities for themselves and to have rewarding cross-cultural experiences. Their profiles demonstrate that youths can share similar dreams regardless of their social or ethnic backgrounds or how differently their lives unfold.

The second group of profiles and commentaries introduce four participants whose school careers illustrate just how significant school is to certain adolescents. The first three individuals we meet are actively pursuing their high school careers. Michelle Warren, Victoria Brown, and James Wheeler are all high achievers. They are all members of the student council from their respective high schools and are all involved in numerous extracurricular activities. These three also do well academically and were about to enter their senior year at the time of the interviews. One other similarity among them: all come from stable homes in which both parents emphasize high grades and achievement. Victoria, who is Black, raises concerns which reflect her racial status. The fourth member of this group is Brian McDonald who was less involved in the social aspects of school but was nevertheless equally adroit in making his school experience work for him.

Collectively, these four participants provide an opportunity to view how a group of students who are successful in a public school re-
act to an informal, less structured, alternative learning experience. The commentary examines their views on school; while in Chapter V their thoughts, impressions, and the meaning they made of their involvement in the youth participation project is linked to those of the other participants in the study.

The final group of profiles and commentaries brings one of the most difficult components of this study into focus. In this group we meet Terrance Milliner, Anthony Hill, and Edelmyra Perez, all persons who lived in the inner city. This youth participation project was a unique program in that it was not targeted towards one group of adolescents. Youths were brought together in a joint effort who under normal circumstances might never have met. The goal was to help ameliorate any negative views one group might harbor towards another. On the other hand, one aspect which escaped the creators of the youth participation project was their own prejudices and stereotypes. They had a belief founded upon the popular notion that hardcore, inner-city youths would not be as motivated as the suburban youths and that through their contact with the suburban youths they would develop more positive attitudes towards work and society.

The three participants presented here prove the danger inherent in generalizing based upon an individual's place of residence or family background. Terrance and Anthony were both subject to similar family, school, and neighborhood experiences; but as we learn in their profiles, they emerge as two very different young men. They were both sixteen at the time of the interviews. Terrance was about to leave his mother to
travel to an even larger urban area in order to locate his estranged father. Anthony survived in the streets by his wits with little emotional support from home. The exterior of their lives is disturbing, and yet they view their futures with hope. Edelmyra is a youth who comes from the same physical environment, but her close family mitigates those surroundings. This is reflected in her attitudes and views on life.

The profiles that follow were taken verbatim from the audio taped transcripts. Much material has been omitted: the interviewer's questions, various portions which were not pertinent to the major themes of the study, and repetitious material. Sometimes thoughts or sentences are joined to further the reader's understanding, although at no time was the original meaning sacrificed. Brackets are used to alert the reader to a word or phrase this researcher added to maintain clarity or completeness of thought. The actual words of the participants are presented as spoken. Certain passages may be difficult to follow due to some of the participants' word usage; but in order to remain faithful to the methodology and the participants no attempt was made to alter them.

Finally, to reemphasize that in order to maintain the anonymity of the participants, the names ascribed to each is fictitious. They do reflect the participants' cultural, ethnic, or racial backgrounds. The names of other persons, places, and institutions appearing in these profiles were also changed.
Well, I was born in a nice quiet neighborhood where I've lived ever since. Friends were all around. My parents were always involved in peace movements, local politics, and there was a big peace march in Washington, April of 1970. I have the poster in my room still. And we went down the evening of the 23rd and slept on the lawn of the Lincoln Memorial. I recall we were sitting at the dinner table the Saturday night before, or the Friday night before, and my father was heading out and he was gonna leave us. And my sister, who was the oldest, said she wanted to go, and we all wanted to go. As I said, it was on the news [the peace march], and I was impressed by that and I think my friends were, too, but you can only be so impressed at seven years old. The whole thing was part of the family, but we'd been to political things around town before and worked in elections in '68, McCarthy. I remember my grandparents thought it was a terrible thing to drag kids to a protest. Like a vacation. I remember going to Washington. It was just another thing I did with my family. Not a big deal. Nothing that we really talked about. We used to go to the water every once in a while, various lakes, car drives. [In my family], you didn't really go out for a picnic on a Saturday. You were more likely to go the Democratic headquarters and stand in the mall and hand out bumper stickers and pins at six years old, or stuff envelopes or put stamps on envelopes to mail out. Sometimes just trumping along next to my father when he was going door to door. People see this little kid and it made him look more like a family man. I recall doing things like that more with my father than throwing a baseball around. I'm still not a very good baseball player, and I'm a government major. It must've directed me somehow. I think [my interest in government is] just something that was around in the house and whether I developed an interest in it, I don't think it was because of him. I had no great desire to become an engineer or anything that he does for a living, but it's just an interest. I remember we were interviewed on the news. Twice actually. My brother and I [were interviewed] separately once and the family once on CBS evening news with Walter Cronkite. I can remember standing in line waiting to go to the lavatory the next Monday morning at school. Mr. Bell who was later my fourth grade teacher, came up to me. I was first in line, which was a coveted position, and he said, "You were on the news last night." And I can recall being impressed with someone else
outside of my family who saw it, like maybe it's gotten out. My state-
ment, something to the equivalent, "War is bad." I think that was out
of Viet Nam. A big local hero out of one teacher.

The relationship with my parents has always been comfortable, I
think. I can never remember being in deep trouble with my parents. I
wrecked up the car when my parents were in Europe and did four thousand
dollars of damage and called Dad in Spain and said, "Remember your new
Honda?" And he takes it pretty well. And I have a friend who lost his
muffler on his father's car and he got hell for that. I'm the youngest
and they're [brother and sister] away at school the last two years I
was in high school, so I lived alone with them [parents]. So, I might
not be closer, but might know them a little bit better. I guess I see
them as people, not as a guardian or someone to sign my life away, tell
me what I can do. They've always given me a lot of room. In high
school I never had a curfew, but I always was checked up on. I could
go anywhere as long as I said where I was going, when I was gonna be
home, and who I was going with. And if it was 'till four o'clock in
the morning or overnight, it was all right as long as they knew where
I was. And they never gave me unreasonable boundaries. But those
boundaries that I did have, if I said I was coming home at four and I
came in at four-fifteen, I'd catch hell for that. But as long as I
stayed within the boundaries.

My brother and I used to do things together a lot. We'd always
play baseball in the neighborhood and we would be two of the neighbor-
hood kids, although we'd be separated. We'd have our own groups of
friends, but often they'd get together and play baseball. She [sister]
was older enough than me to be almost like a mother, four years older.
We didn't do things together as much as she would take me places. We
got along probably better than my brother and I. My sister had a big
heart problem. She had open heart surgery when she was eight and that
wasn't hidden from her, what was being done to her or from the rest of
us. Later, medical problems were openly discussed. She was eight. I
was four. I guess these are my first clear memories. Going to the
hospital to visit her. It was [a large city] and I can remember the
ride. My mother temporarily moved [there]. My grandparents moved
there. I think almost the whole family had kind of two homes, here
and there, and spent a lot of time out of [the city] to visit her.
That was a daily thing and went on for quite a while.

I never felt [family problems]. My father travelled a lot. It
was normal for me and I can remember, and I probably ended up closer to
my father because of that [his travelling], 'cause I can remember before
school going to drop him off at the airport and then picking him up
three evenings later and then going out to dinner with him and I think,
I don't know if he felt guilty or what, but he would always spend more
time with me when he came home. We'd end up talking about his trips
and that would be a big family deal when he came home. I don't know
if I want to say guilty. I don't know. He was gone a lot. That's what made my parents' relationship better, because they got a vacation from each other once a week, a couple of times a month. And it was ordinary things. My father would disappear, and we'd eat sloppy joes for supper instead of having a real meal. My mom hasn't worked since she got married and all through my high school. She never did.

The kids I go to school with can't tell you how much their fathers make and I think I always could from the time I was aware of money. We were aware of the money coming in, and there was only a limited amount that could go out. Then in later years, I got to realize how much better off I was than my friends are. Money was always openly discussed. It wasn't my parents' problem, although they dealt with it, but it was considered a family thing. Well, I guess that's more when I got into the high school level, talking about college and was really aware [that money wasn't a factor] when I didn't have to look at costs, and another friend, his family wasn't gonna give him a dime and his best bet, they said was to go into the military. He ended up two years in college and then had to drop out. I kind of kept it quiet [the fact that they had money] and we lived like everyone else does, you know, just probably more money that goes into other things. Probably even friends that I know are a lot less well off have more things like air conditioners and dishwashers. I guess my parents aren't big on instant gratification. It's always used cars, never new cars. It's not big spenders. We weren't the first to get a color TV, one of the last probably. I never wanted anything, but it wasn't given to me, either. I think everyone around here works tobacco. All the kids, when they hit fourteen, fifteen, that's what they do that summer. And I wasn't any different, 'cause most of the feeling around here is if you don't work tobacco, you're a momma's boy or you're lazy. That's the thing to do, to finally go out and make money, 'cause nothing was really given to me. I don't know. It was just a normal kind of thing. My brother and sister worked there. Everyone else in the neighborhood worked there. It was my time and I worked there. I guess now, thinking back, like especially in high school, I was just like everyone else. Comfortable. I saw that in Hampshire [College] one day, all my friends talking about, one kid's a millionaire who lives on Park Avenue and a third father who lives in the Caribbean and uh, friends bought a dock there. And he's talking about his mother works at Harvard and his father works at Yale, how they split up, and someone else is talking about their mother on drugs. And when everyone looked at me, I got kind of uncomfortable that I was the Brady Bunch.

I always had a best friend. We used to do things like go fishing, play baseball, pretty ordinary kinds of things. In elementary school I don't think we tended to have those [personal] problems. I had one friend whose parents were divorced when we were in fifth grade, and at
the same time, he was going around the corner to the new school dis-

At the time I really didn't fit at all, and I don't know if I
ever did fit as time went on or just developed my own little ... I
don't know. I'm not sure that I was so different than everyone else or
that I am all that different. I don't know. I couldn't help that I
wasn't interested in the same things. I guess I wouldn't just blindly
follow into something that I didn't like. I couldn't listen to the
ear-piercing music that to me, at the time, was just noise. At the
time I couldn't tell you. It was more just not feeling like I belonged,
but I know as time went on, in high school, with the peer pressure of
people trying to get me to do things, what they were doing bothered me.
And the more they would try to get me to drink or do drugs, the less I
would want to do it. But at the time I don't think I had that kind of
reasoning, because I don't think there was all that kind of pressure.
Alcohol was never a big deal, it wasn't forbidden, but at the same time
I never drank either. It wasn't "Don't touch that stuff," and then,
by this time, I think more going into the sophomore year, getting into
the high school, my brother and sister now completed the system and
they stayed out of trouble. And I don't know why they stayed out of
trouble. No one else in the house was in trouble with the kind of
stuff and I wasn't gonna be the first. I think it's probably 'cause
my brother and sister didn't get into drugs and wild women, well my
sister didn't.

First grade was a little bit rough getting away from home. When
I was home alone with my mother, we'd go shopping all the time, be
away. I remember being walked to school with my mother and not particu-
larly wanting to leave home and being quite upset. The first day I got
switched in my seat away from my friend. We always talked about coming
home in the afternoon, what happened at school, what did you do today,
that kind of thing and then we'd have to get dinner for my father. It
was good. I always felt that my parents knew what was going on, that
they were involved in school and knew what I was doing and kind of felt that that was a part of our home, going out to school. They were interested in what I was doing. I can remember them going to the conferences yearly, and then waiting to see if I was in trouble when they came back and . . . I don't know why, but you always feel like parents talking to a teacher is you're gonna be in trouble. My parents were always happy to do something rather than go to school. If I had something better to do than go to school I was kind of allowed to do it.

I can remember going to seventh grade was terrible. I hated the school. I hated the teachers. I hated the people. When I was going into seventh grade, the summer before and during, my friends that I'd be hanging around with, we all kind of got split up into different places in junior high and I was alone in the building without friends in my classes. And I didn't like school, and at that point was growing away from the friends that I had had in elementary school. And I can remember more hanging around the house, not liking that. Because it was a big change and I didn't know anyone. All the kids I knew had gone to the same elementary my whole life, I knew everyone, and I was put in a junior high that I didn't know anyone at all, I don't think. I didn't like school and at the same time I was kind of growing away from the best friend I had. I kind of went through seventh grade pretty miserable. And then in eighth grade, it kind of became more routine. I started to develop friends at school, although they lived all the way across town. There was Algebra I, but that was just math which I'd always had a problem with, and it was getting a little bit tougher, and that was my first D. [Attitude towards D was] nonchalant. I ended up having to take Algebra I, 'cause it was the only thing that fit into my schedule.

By ninth grade I had a Russian history class that was really good. Ended up going to Russia the following year because the cost was so good. And in the class became really interested in school again. Looking forward to going to that specific class. All the others were kind of routine, but that class was something to look forward to. It was finally something that was new. I had enough of Paul Revere in second grade, and more Paul Revere in third grade, and more of him in fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth, and now finally, a little choice and something I didn't know anything about and combine it with the fact that the teacher had good rapport with the students, moved around a lot, talked a lot. There's been a lot of criticism that kids like to be entertained rather than taught and I've always felt that I do better when I'm entertained as well as taught. And everyone, it wasn't just me. The worst students in the school and the best all liked that class and all went to that class and no one said a word while that teacher was speaking. And in that class, even though we didn't talk during the lectures, I met, finally, a friend again, a good friend.
That was really good [the transition from ninth grade to tenth]. I was happy to be out of the building, the junior high school building. I remember the first day of sophomore year being able to walk across the parking lot, being able to leave the building, and I wasn't confined, and I didn't have to be dismissed from lunch. One of the first things I did, was I joined the drama group and that was a push for me. 'Cause my brother and sister were in the drama club, and they did well in it, and they liked it, and they said, "If you're gonna join something, join this." I'm out now, but it was nine o'clock, ten o'clock, and it's something to do in the evening besides watch television and just hang around the house. My brother and sister had gone through it and so whatever feelings were along before I was aware of it. I think I was probably pushed by them to join. The first thing I did was to make sure I dragged this friend along with me. I wasn't feeling comfortable enough that I wanted to be on stage and I wasn't. I was behind the scenes. So it was going out and joining a big group like that I'd never done before. I guess I was getting what I wanted. I still had the friends and that's why I really stayed, because that was the way to go out on Tuesday and Thursday nights. It was something to do and it was a way to be with a group of people and go and get something to eat afterwards. I met more people my sophomore year than I met ever since probably. I was pleased with that that I ended up joining the newspaper and there was a certain class of kids in those that became a real center of friends. If you want a label, a renaissance, if you want to put it. They all seem kind of phoney, but yeah, it was getting out. Well, now I was beginning to know the teachers, too, which I'd never done. I just liked him [Russian history teacher], no dialogue. And now I knew teachers that I didn't even have classes with, and we even had nicknames that we could call teachers to their faces.

I'm starting to look at college [in my junior year] and I'm starting to look at the grades and how it's gonna look at a college. How the SAT's were coming along, worrying about the scores, how to keep them up. My sister went through high honors and went to Tufts University cum laude, and she went through it real well. And my brother, it was easier for him than it was for me, although he didn't study at all, so my grades ended up better although I worked at it a little bit more. I wasn't "if" you go to college [but] "when" you go to college.

I was hanging around the S.S. Lab that period in high school -- the social studies laboratory. A lot of people hung around there a lot, and some of the kids had been involved in the original [project]. I'd kind of heard about it in there. The show that they had done, the general opinion was that it wasn't very good, and they were gonna start over again. Well, when they started the second pilot, if there's such a thing as the second pilot, I was asked if I wanted to participate by you. At the time I was still thinking that I might like to go into
journalism, and so I kind of thought television journalism might be something to get interested in. At the time we were being told by teachers and whoever, to get credit from various things, not high school credits, but to get involved in things to apply towards college to make you look good. This was a chance to move into something that no one else in my house had done and do something different. The major attraction was probably just being asked. I assume that I would have discussed the show with my parents 'cause it's the kind of thing that I would talk to them about. I remember leaving my jacket and having to go back. I know that was a topic of discussion at home. I think I was going [to the project's meeting] to kind of sit back and watch what was going on and see if it was something I wanted to get involved in.

There was about fourteen of us or so. A lot of people from other schools, but mostly Northfield kids that I'd been vaguely associated with and then a couple of my friends. [The meeting] started out like throwing out ideas and not too organized when Boland kind of took charge and put up a blackboard, and said, "All right, what do we want?", and went systematically and listed things, sequences that might be in the show, regular parts of it, and probably led us a little bit, but kids threw out ideas and some of them would get vetoed down. We got a big list that we finally got down six or seven items. It was just agreed that the show was gonna move quickly, segments not lasting more than six minutes, seven minutes. They were gonna have some regular features and one of the regular features being a magazine feature that changed to give variety and a movie review whenever.

At the meeting, I expected to, um, still sit back, but that wasn't the case, 'cause Boland said, "Okay, we're gonna do this. Now we've got to have leaders. Who's gonna take charge? All right, how about you?" And someone might kind of clamp up and it got down to the last part of the editorial which I was most interested in, and there were only three or four of us who hadn't been or hadn't volunteered for a part, and so it was "How about you?" Me. And I was hit with it point blank and just accepted to do it.

I think we had agreed, and I don't know why, but we agreed that the editorial was gonna be on t-shirts. It was gonna be about obscenities in schools, what was proper attire. It was an editorial segment. I guess the segment was Face Off, where we were going to have two people, maybe three people, from various sides of the issue talk about it and then me come in and give an off the wall point of view. My best friend ended up being the host. I still preferred to sit back and I was even a little hesitant with my role. I didn't shoot my hand up to get a big part. We did work together well and got along and we had a good amount of fun. The format of the show was decided and who was gonna do what. I was still planning on sitting back and I wanted to get involved probably, but I wanted to get involved running a camera or doing some editing, things I didn't know anything about. 'Cause it
was supposed to be student run and all the input was gonna come from the students. Supposedly, we were gonna be trained. But I still thought it would be kind of interesting to hand around the studio. I'm not even sure if we knew who was gonna do it, if it would be PBS, or if it was with Channel 36, and the cable company came along later. The feeling was that it would be professionally done, and it wasn't gonna be like things we worked with in Northfield.

I had done some work for the newspaper, some editorial kind of things, so in that fashion I wrote a script. It was short. I was told to keep it short, but in a lot of ways I felt I kind of knew how to do the written part, although I wasn't sure I knew how to present it orally and come off that way. But I could write what I wanted to. I had the veto power, not veto power, but suggestion power at the meeting and being able to say, "I don't like this," but I wasn't creating. I memorized my script. I guess I didn't have a reader, a prompter.

We had one day to do our on-location shots. Budget reasons we were given. We were given one cameraman and director, producer from the PBS station. I knew that we were limited to that one day and that we had to move along, that we had to set up quickly. It was chance to get out of school and do things, travel around, and finally something was actually going to happen, 'cause a couple of weeks, maybe a month or so had passed now between the first meeting and this point. I think it was the last segment of the day. We filmed in York coming down, or coming up north, stopping in South Whittney, stopping in a few York locations and Hillbrook which is West York or on the line, then I think South Whittney and Northfield for our last stop at the high school where I did my segment on the hill. I gave my introduction. When I finally saw the tape I was disappointed in the professionals because they were supposed to be zooming in on my t-shirt, and they more zoomed in on my stomach, and I don't think they gave it the care that they should have or would have, or maybe even that we would have. We wouldn't know how to do the professional fade-ins.

We had our studio time and it seems like it was after school. I can't remember, but somewhere along the line, the intro had been kind of worked out, what was gonna be done, and we still had to move kind of quickly when we got to the studio, but we had figured out how things were gonna work when we got there. The host and hostess were supposed to come dressed, supposed to be casual, high school-ish and Paul came like he always dressed in a jersey, tie, sweatshirt and a pair of jeans. Shelley came with dress, stockings, high heels. But then, that would work as a good contrast. We had discussed dress, about how everyone was gonna dress and when she came, it was kind of like, "Oh, she blew it." But then, we never said anything to her, probably because we didn't have time, but we really thought it would work out. It [the editorial] wasn't something I felt all that strongly about. I thought that the editorial came out pretty well. By this time I had seen the
introduction, which I was disappointed in 'cause I didn't stand up straight, and I didn't look as good on camera as I wanted to and I wasn't given enough practice time. We were rushed. We had one take outside and couldn't look at it and to do it over again probably would've been a practice tape using the Northfield High School video stuff. We've done a lot of things several times since we were in the studio, but again, I'm on the end. I was at the end of the show. The second to the last segment. And by this time we were running late and we've gotta be out of the studio, and I was told, "Do as many takes as you want. Keep the first one kind of casual." I think there was something I wanted to change, but he said, "No way, we're out of time." It was good enough and we had to do our ending segment which was a plea for people to get involved in The Project. [I was feeling] a little bit of pressure 'cause there's people and professionals around, but not as much as I would have felt if I knew I only had one tape. Had the teleprompter which helps a lot.

There was a segment about what people from various areas, kids, do on Saturday nights, and we got a kid from Savage Nomads, a gang in York. This was our feature show, Saturday night, the Savage Nomads. We met him in the north end, and the Savage Nomads which is supposed to be a real mean group and their symbol was a swastika which we could see painted on the building where we were waiting for him and supposed to meet him. Carlos, I think his name might have been, showed up in a suit and tie and was better dressed than anyone else. He didn't seem all that savage, and we were kind of looking over our backs and all, wondering what was gonna happen to Jews. His friends were gonna show up too, supposedly, but I think he kept it quiet, the stage to himself. I don't know, you take that kid against the Hillbrook kids or the Kennedy kids, the suburbs and then the rich kids, he was a whole lot more concerned with what he looked like and looked a whole lot better than anyone else did. It was a bigger deal to him than to any other kids, except possibly the kids at Horton who are all Black kids who came in suits and ties and were even better dressed than Carlos. Well, at first it was kind of a disappointment. I kind of wanted a kid in jeans to show up with leather vest and to growl at the camera and not be very intelligent. It'd be an interesting contrast. I don't know if the contrast ever came out on television, but it came out for me that there was a contrast and it was exactly the opposite of what I expected from the suburban kids, and that interested me, Carlos did. That was unusual. It struck me. Watching the program I caught it, picked up on it. [It was profound] that the city kids, they're looking for a way out. When they get the opportunity, they jump on it and make the most out of it, rather than just scoffing it off like the suburban kids. I didn't expect it. We wanted him to be a little more redneck than he was, so we used the camera to make him look that way. Well, I don't know if it was Rich who was into editing or even you who did something to make it better. The segment, he gave his opinion, which was a little
bit middle of the road, maybe a little bit right, but he ended the seg-
ment with "All right" talking to the camera and rather than cutting
that it was left in to make it kind of like, "All right with you," like
kind of an authority looking down, and I don't think that's how he
meant it, but it looked that way when we were done. It might have been
wrong, but I liked it a lot, and I was in full favor of leaving it in.
I wasn't too involved in that editing session with what was gonna be
kept and what was gonna be thrown out.

Originally, I wanted to get involved in the editing, and in the
next studio we did do a lot of redoing, and I don't think it was a
problem in editing, but there were things we had to do over again,
tapes we had to show thirty, forty times to get things right, to get
things to synchronize and that's what I was most interested in doing.
I was thinking the future shows were something I wanted no part of.
Too time consuming, too boring, too repetitive, but I kind of liked be-
ing in the camera. I still wanted to learn to polish it a bit more,
and I wasn't happy with how it was coming out, but I thought it was pos-
sible that I could take over that segment. Everyone was working to try
to make it work, and it was supposed to be a professional quality stu-
dent program, and as far as I know, has never really been done before.
And even afterwards, I don't know if it met our full expectations. I've
never seen anything after the original. It was pretty good quality,
but still had its rough edges. I saw it on tape a couple of times.

Well, now we're looking for a place to air the program, and Chan-
nel 36 didn't have enough extra time and it wasn't worth their while,
and PBS, I don't know why they kind of copped out on us. It [the or-
ganization of the Project] wasn't something I had to worry about. It
was someone else's committee, you and the people who were working with
your connections at the PBS station and various other places. You ar-
ranged studio time and travel. There were letters out to the Traveler's
or other big-type companies that often people like us could get money
from. It was interesting in getting a wider of variety of kids, and
it was more dominated by Northfield kids still. We had gotten a woman
who works with the Y or something like that, to get a few other kids
in. It made a lot of sense to get funded and it made sense to get
other kids besides Northfield. Not numbers, but different types. It's
hard for me now to remember any full fledged meetings with the whole
group after that show was done. I think we were going to another studio
and I think we were really playing around with the equipment, um, it
seems to me a couple of months later. I don't remember that much. The
Project isn't that old now, can't be too long. The cable company was
gonna take over for us. They were supposedly gonna let us do more,
less people hanging over our shoulders and doing things, doing the film-
ing, and we were learning how to do graphics on the screen. Now given
a chance to play around with the equipment, that seemed again like
something I might like to do, hold the camera. It was fun to play
around with the stuff. I remember by the time we really started working on the second show I was getting out of the school system and graduating.

It wasn't that [my involvement] just died out, it was more that time just went on, and by the time the second show got a chance to get out, it was the spring of my senior year and just not a time to get involved in it. It was really just not the time. It was just kind of getting under way [with other people], I guess. As I would talk to you and other people then and some people I might run into in school, I'd ask what was happening with The Project, if they were gonna make it a television show like it was supposed to. To the best of my knowledge, it never made it to over the air television, but The Project continued. I'm glad that it continues, but it's not something I'd get involved in again, but I'm glad to see it continue.

I don't know if I'd really watch it. I kind of do feel if you didn't know someone or weren't involved, I kind of do have the feeling that you would switch the channel. It's kind of like a new show of sorts, feature show, but the features aren't the same as Sixty Minutes which teenagers probably wouldn't be interested in, but it's not the same significance maybe? I don't know if I'd want to watch to see what other kids do on Saturday night. I don't know if I'd really care. Well, as the television show going out, I don't know what its value is, I don't know if it's strong enough. There's so many viewers. It must have touched someone or maybe it will make an impression or get someone involved, but I'm not sure. I guess it would give parents a chance to see teenagers as they are, but on a television program I'm not sure if it would show teenagers the way they are, because we're all, Shelley dresses up and Carlos dresses up and almost putting on a space, I don't know if we gave a good impression of our own personalities. When you talk, you write out a script and you're talking polished, probably not really how you would talk. But, being involved, the stories, they meant something. To seeing Carlos and to meet Carlos, the kids from York. It was good to be able to work with those kids and get a taste of something that was really a profession. It wasn't the drama group at school. [That] was really kind of amateur in working with amateur equipment, but now with this, with dealing with professionals and working with professional studios and really getting a feel for what it would be like to do that. There was an effort to make it perfect, to make it professional. I do think it's valuable to work in it, and it may be valuable outside of that, but for me it probably wouldn't be. There's only so far you [teenagers] can go. You get stopped short. When you go to a delicatessen, you're the last one to be called on if you stand next to this old woman. Well, [teenagers] do seem to feel no one understands when they can't relate to adults. [The Project] may show that they're competent, but it doesn't really show what they're like. I don't say that it shows they're incompetent, because to pull
off a television show is something big. But I think teenagers are impressed by other teenagers who do big things, like Brooke Shields, even though you may not watch her.

[My involvement with The Project] gave me some insight into that broadcast journalism, whether that's what I really wanted to do, and it turned out not to be. 'Cause my interests seemed to change a bit, but it still feels good to kind of feel like I know what that might be like. And I do feel like I was involved in a professional production, and I was involved in the professional world for a while which was good. I feel it was worthwhile for me. It was a big help getting into school. The school I applied to, I had to send a tape or a written work of something creative that I did, and I sent a tape of The Project, and I got into school with no problems and a note written across my acceptance form "Fine job."
Luis Lopez

(Luis Lopez is a fifteen-year old inner city youth. He was interviewed in various locations in the city he lived in during the summer of 1983.)

I was born in Puerto Rico. My father was sick and moved to New York. He had cancer and everything. He died of cancer in New York and buried in New York. I was nine months old when he died. He was sick and needed a good doctor so he went to New York so he could get special help. He was twenty-four years old, I think. I was nine months old and my brother was one. After he died we lived in Fischer Park [in York]. We came to York because there was nothing left in New York for us. We had no family there, but we did in York. My mother found a boyfriend. He lived at Fischer Park about nine months of the year. My mother had problems with her boyfriend, so she left him and came to Bowles Square [also in York]. We lived in Bowles Square for eight or nine years.

You don't live in places like this. I live in a low income project where rats, roaches, mosquitoes. Everything is in the house. I hate that. I think one reason [I live here] is that my father died. That caused problems for the family. We don't have like a father. I'm like an orphan. My mother can't take care of us, and that is why she like is a mother and father at the same time, and that is very hard on her. Right now, Bowles Square is not a good place to be in because of all the gangs. They are Puerto Rican gangs. They are like trying to take over places and things. If you join the gang, you start smoking pot. You get to be a drug addict. That's all they do. They go to parties and they smoke reefer. They use cocaine. It is not me. I want to, like, be right. I don't want to be drug addict. They get into gangs, because... They don't want to be home. When in gangs, you know, they do their own thing. Well, gangs are like a belonging feeling. They go places in cars and have fun. For them it is fun, because they go places in stolen cars. They get chased by cops and get into rumbles with Savage Nomads. That is the gang that doesn't like Latins.

I consider Black people, not Black people, but some Black people that I grew up with as low income and everything, and they got to steal and do bad things to make a living. Like to me, I don't belong in that section. I belong in a section like White people. They're peaceful.
They go places. They leave their house open and nobody breaks in. Where I live at, we've been broken in two times in a row. Maybe I'd feel like a little jealous [of a White kid from West York], because like where I live, it's not like West York that has houses, people all around, and there's nice places. When you live in a neighborhood like Bowles Square and you live in York, it's not like a White family living in East York and owning their own house and car and stuff like that. I have been in a lot of fights due to my environment. I get in fights, because people where I live at they like bullies. I can't stand for that. I'm really a nice person. I am what I am supposed to be, a peaceful people. People that like to have fun and do things right. But where I live at, it is not that way. When I go out at night, I go out with a lot of people I know. I know you. We would have a lot of fun. [Speaking of The Project] Blacks and Hispanics together. Real nice we work together. When I get out of work, things change. People aren't very violent, but it is the way they live. You put like a Black violent person or a violent Puerto Rican person in an environment where there is only people that are peaceful, nobody to bother, they change immediately. They know that there is no one to bother them. Nobody there to pester them or to molest them, do things wrong to them. They will be peaceful. They have a family, real nice. You put the worst person in Bowles Square in a house like in the White neighborhood, they would tell you who they were, and if you need anything, I would be there to help. They would change real fast. Very fast. The way you live is the way that you act.

I have a terrible temper, and if I don't fight, the anger stays inside me and I will take it out on somebody else. I took it out on my mother sometimes. If I can't fight, and I have to control my temper, I kick things or beat on somebody. I have a bad temper. That runs in the family. My family, they all have bad tempers. My mother gets in fights with her brothers. When we have a reunion, they get beer, wine. They eat and drink and start playing. They have a little fiesta. Sometimes they go overboard drinking and start fighting. It isn't always, but sometimes when they drink too much. He [brother] is quiet. He is shy. He is short, but has a bad temper. He looks shy and helpless, but when he gets angry, he fights a lot. My brother is just like I am. We got into fist fights so much at home, and that is kind of weird, because he is my brother and I love him, and we get into fist fights over silly things. He dropped out of school at sixteen. He's going to be seventeen.

I got three brothers. I am the second youngest. The youngest is two and a half years old. I'm sixteen and my older brother is seventeen, but he dropped out of school and is now going to night school. I got three sisters and one is in the middle school. She is a seventh grader and is fourteen. Another one is in elementary school and she is twelve. My youngest sister is four and a half. We are all not from
the same father. After my father died, she had problems. She had boy-
friends, and they didn't work out, so she now has a boyfriend and has
two kids from him. She has the boy, two and a half, and the girl,
four and a half. We don't call them stepsisters, but all sisters and
brothers. That created good things. If it wasn't for my little broth-
ers and sisters, I wouldn't be like I am. I have to be a good example
to them. [I have to set a good example] because my stepfather. He
used to be a nice guy. He still is, but he kind of has a problem. He
is an alcoholic, and he doesn't want to admit it. When he gets drunk,
he likes to pick on people. I got into a lot of fights with him. My
mother had to run away a couple of times. I don't want my younger
brothers and sisters to get into a bad habit of seeing my stepfather
drunk. He wants to marry my mother, but I tell her it won't work. I
don't think it will work out. He stops for two or three weeks, and
the drinks very, very hard. She met him when Carmen was around five
years old. Ever since, he has been living with us. Couple of prob-
lems, but he is all right.

I made a lot of decisions on my own, because, at one time, I ran
away from my house twice. There were some problems at home. My mother,
she is kind of like, when she gets nervous, she drinks a lot of coffee.
She doesn't smoke or drink. She is kind of nervour. She embarrasses
you in front of other people. She hits you for silly reasons. We had
friends at the house, and she would say take this food, and if you
don't want to eat, she hits you. She says eat and I say no. Then she
smacks me in front of everyone on the house, so I went to the room.
She came back about fifteen minutes later and said, "Luis, eat." I
sort of screamed and left the house to run away. Well, across the
street is a railroad track, so I would go there and walk for a real
long time. I will go to my uncle's house. He is like the answer to
my father. We have a happy family sometimes, on occasion. Like when
my mother likes to go out, my stepfather doesn't, they start arguing,
screaming, and everything.

My uncle. He is nice. He is not on welfare. He is like my
answer to a problem. He gives me advice. He is like a family man.
He doesn't drink. He only drinks on special occasions. A couple of
beers. He knows his deadline, when to stop. He has four kids, three
girls and a young boy. He brings everything home. He takes them out.
He gets paid. He is like a happy family. I go to him sometimes. The
second time I didn't come home for about three days. She [mother]
didn't know where I was at. I was at my aunt's house. I stayed over
there. My other uncle spoke to me. He works for the government. He
controls all the food that comes into York. He inspects farm food that
comes into York. Right for me is like you have your own family. You
work for your family, not on welfare, and you have a nice family. You
go to places. You have the kids, and you don't say like, "Do your
homework or you get punishment." I want a family who, like a happy
family like my uncle's. They love them so much, they don't want them to go outside after 8 o'clock or after 9 o'clock, so they get into gangs and start smoking.

When we first moved to Bowles Square, I didn't go to school. She signed me up for school when I was around four or four and a half. We started school with my brother and had a few problems. I was always sick. One time I ate breakfast in school and got sick. I got a stomach ache, and I still have that problem now. My stomach muscles are swollen, because I can't eat in the morning. They took me to the hospital from there, because I keep getting these pains. So I can't eat in the morning, I just got to skip breakfast.

I had a lot of problems in school. I have a bad temper. I had problems with teachers in school. I don't really like school. I go to school, because my mother wants me to go. Right now, I'm fifteen going on sixteen and I am in high school. I have already been suspended four times, for fighting. Fighting is a very big part of my life. I had fights with students that tried to pick on me 'cause I was small. Once, I had a fight with a boy named Nelson, I was small, around fifth grade. I had a matchbox car jacked up, and he tried to take it, so we had a fight, and he kept bothering me since then. One time I brought a knife to school and some chains. We got into a fight and almost stabbed a teacher, because I was so mad that I wanted to get back at Nelson for bothering and bullying me. The teacher got in the way, and she almost got stabbed. She just stepped in the way. After I nearly stabbed her, the teacher came from in back of me and got me in a hold and took the knife and chains. He took me into a room, and I started crying because I was so nervous. I got suspended. I never got suspended too much. My mother came to the school to talk, 'cause I got in trouble. I was scolded and couldn't go out for two weeks. When I graduated from Sands, from sixth to seventh, my first year there was all right.

[I was] around eleven years old [when I first displayed anger in school]. I had a fight with my teacher. We got into a fist fight. He was my science teacher, and he was a good teacher. I liked him a lot. He left out of the room for a couple of minutes and I like to play around in class. Something like a class clown. I like to make people laugh. At first, a friend and I started wrestling in class and got into a headlock, and it looked like we were fighting. The teacher grabbed me around the neck and threw me into the locker. He hit me, so we started fighting. I had like these Chinese shoes on, and I just started fighting. He had glasses on and I knocked them off. I punched him and he punched me back, like a street fight. Then he got a hold of me and pushed my face all the way to the office. He came behind me and slammed me. I had a mark on my shoulder and it bothered me. They had
these combination locks on the lockers, and he slammed me on one of those, so it was really black and blue. So he took me to the office, and he had a meeting with some parents, and he had me screaming, and my science teacher said, "Take your best swing" in front of the other teachers. So he created a problem.

I go to York High School. The population there is mostly Black and Hispanic. There is probably like five White people in the school. I think it is bad. The White people there feel embarrassed, because everywhere you go, and you don't want a White person there. You feel uncomfortable. It is mostly Blacks and Hispanics. I go to places and you are the only White or Hispanic person there. It makes me feel funny. I don't like that. Like I'm saying I don't belong. I mean, like a group and they all belong to the same race. If you're the only White or Hispanic and you go outside and they are all Blacks, you don't belong to that group. You feel funny.

School for me, like gives me something to do, because I dropped out of school one time, and I, that was this year, I had nothing to do. I stayed home all the time. I didn't find that enjoyable. It was boring, so I went back to school. That gets me out of trouble. For now, without a diploma, you don't go nowhere. So school is necessary, now. I want to get a diploma, because my mother always says, "Luis, I want you to be somebody." Most of my family, the only one that has done anything is my uncle. Like he works and everything. He got his diploma and is the only one. A lot of my cousins dropped out. They stay home. But now, my cousin and my brother, they go to night school. They want to get the diploma. Well, I wanted to [go to night school], but I wanted to keep going to day school, because if I go to night school, I'm bored from like 11 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock. I have nothing to do but play basketball. Most of the White people that I see and know have diploma. They live very nice.

I got involved with The Project as a summer job. I didn't think I was gonna get a job doing a show. I thought I was gonna get a job like maintenance. The group was CETA. CETA is like a summer program for kids in York, and it gives you a chance to work and make money over the summer, so, um, all I done was send an application and from then on they told me they had no jobs, so I went to this lady who said the only thing she had was on T.V. production, so me and Ramon signed up for it. I thought it was like making little shots with pictures, taking pictures. That's what I thought it was. The first day on the job I went to the YWCA. I met you and a couple of others, young men, and some youngsters just like I am. And we talked about it. And we had kids from York and from other cities. So, they told us how it was gonna be like and got down to it.
We met some kids from some suburban places. They were all right. They were there just like we were to make money and make pictures. [On the first day] I felt kind of like nervous, 'cause the first thing I saw was a lot of kids I didn't even know. They were like from other places. I thought I was in the wrong place. No problems. There was no problems. Everybody got along all right. Like in the first meeting, we kind of went to Bowles Park, and everybody went with their partner, and they'd know what age they were, and what they'd done, what was their hobbies, so they'd know one another. That was successful, 'cause at first, I didn't think anybody was gonna agree on that. So everybody got a partner and everybody went out, stayed out about fifteen or twenty minutes or half an hour talking to your partner to see what they were like, and when we came back, the person you were with had to tell you what you were like and what you like to do. And I was supposed to say what he was like and what he liked to do and where he was from. I remember there was this little guy that he was legally blind. They was kind of like country people. They liked pets like rabbits, birds, chickens. They were not like from town. They were like from the country. Nobody had problems, except me and Paul. He was kind of bullying people. 'Cause he tried it with me, and he almost got his face busted. One of the kids that he thinks he's so tough. He really comes on to it, and you tell him, "Well, if you're supposed to be that tough, then come down and do something." Like chicken out. The toughness just go away. That was the only trouble I had and anybody else had, just with Paul. I made a lot of friends. I made friends with suburban kids. They liked me, I liked them. They had problems. We went out there and helped them.

When we first started, it was cable television, and we asked if we could use their equipment. Before that we had a meeting to see what the show was gonna be like. We all just sat around and thought about a show that could've been done. People thought about different things like music, like sex, drugs, shows like that. The goal was to make a show with teenagers. I seen shows like Kid's World. Like youngsters going across the world interviewing people, interviewing groups, stuff like that. I thought they were crazy, 'cause I had no experience in the line, so I didn't know what to do. They told me what to do and I done it. We started talking about it until we said we'd get down to it and make a try.

We had meetings, we went places, asked questions to people, so we could make, get things together, how we were gonna do the show. We all sat around and got big topics. So everybody started giving topics, until we got the right one. Everybody agreed on a couple of topics, and that's all we did. Out next thing was how we're gonna do it and how we're gonna organize it, put them in order. We talked about where we were gonna go to get the equipment, and we talked to the people who owned the place, so we could get the equipment there. I know that some of the equipment they had I never seen before in my life. I didn't
know what to do with them. I didn't know if you stuck them in your ear or anything, so I freaked out when I seen some of the equipment. They had cables, electronic things, lights, more control equipment. I didn't know what to do until they started telling me how to use it and how to control it.

We went to cable television and we like sat around and they put up a wall on different segments like, um, in the beginning we had all of us at the wall writing at it or standing next to it like it's a street wall. It was like a brick wall in the background to make it look real. They [the participants] wrote their names. The wrote names, they wrote groups, they wrote their nicknames, they wrote The Project, they wrote, um, they write the, they wrote a lot of things. It was part of our job, so we had to do it. So that's what we had to do, and we started. I felt like I was on the street doing graffiti on the walls and stuff like that. It was fun, 'cause we all got to do things that we like to do. I, for myself, like to write on walls. Yeah, but when you write on this wall, you can erase it. So everybody got down. Before, when the other show came, we had to wash everything off of it, so they can get it clean, because there were people before us that used it and didn't clean it. So we had to clean it and let it dry up so then we can write on it. They [the participants] all cooperated, 'cause, um, there were people that couldn't reach where there was writing and people that were taller helped them out.

Well, in the studio it was fun 'cause there we were with movie cameras taping the show that we never seen before and all of a sudden we were working with it and we knew what we were doing. My part was to talk about my neighborhood and the history of the place. I had to make up my own lines and sayings. I'd memorize my own lines. You'd have to memorize them. I thought the whole thing was nice. I'd never done nothing like that. It was a new experience for me, so I kind of went along with everything they told me to do. Oh, the first thing we filmed was, um, kids talking about the environment. We filmed one another. We talked about our neighborhood that we lived in, and we filmed it at one another. I was just thinking how am I gonna do this, if I remembered all my lines and always rehearsed a lot. We rehearsed a lot and we just kind of like had to rehearse on our own and say it like we didn't read the lines. The hardest thing about it is learning your lines. And acting. I enjoy it 'cause it takes a lot of time and cooperation of your own. The cooperation that was needed for the job was like it was only teenagers and a couple of adults. And those adults, they couldn't do anything. They can only give you ideas. But the cooperation that we had was like we taped them, what they were doing in their neighborhoods. Like we helped them tape their neighborhood, helped them with their lines, and we taped them at the same time. And we cooperated in using the cameras. If there wasn't cooperation, there wouldn't be nothing. No cooperation, no jobs, no nothing.
When teenagers don't cooperate, they don't have like, they don't have fun. 'Cause if you don't cooperate, you don't have nothing. You need cooperation with everything. No cooperation, no nothing. When you want to play a baseball game, you have to cooperate. Do your job and everybody else does their job. You cooperate, you win. No cooperation, you don't win. Like cooperation comes from people getting cooperative and making stuff right.

We had to do other people's neighborhoods, too. We had to do ours. We had to do Bowles Square, Bowles Park. I know a couple of people that were less than honest. I know the places where they lived. I know the places good. Some people kind of like covered up, make the place like a palace, and when you really come down to it, it's not really a palace. It's just like a real dump. They were ashamed of the place where they lived. [I don't feel ashamed of where I live] 'cause they [parents] can't afford any other place to live than try to stay where we live now. With the neighborhood we had music sections. I think it was rock music. I think that's what it was, rock music. They interviewed a group from over there. They talked to the leader of the group.

I kind of like took it both ways. It was important and I had to do my best, because it was a job. It made it important 'cause we were getting paid to do something. We had to talk about our place that we lived in and that kind of like was important to me. I felt like important when we first went out and I started saying my lines on camera. I kind of like, I didn't like fit in, 'cause I was kind of like nervous. My lines were getting mixed up. I jumped from one line to another, and we had to stop a couple of times. I was feeling nervous. I never seen or had a camera taking me on camera. [What I was saying] was important, 'cause what I was talking about was talking about the neighborhood. How it was, how the people were acting, the community, people, where they lived, how they act. I was trying to make it honest. My environment's just not one place that anybody should live. They got rats.

It's worth it. I just think it's worth it. I just think it was a good way of people making money and learning experience. I just think it's worth it, 'cause kids never had the experience of doing something like that. All you see now is shows about adults. You don't see like kids' shows. You only see shows of adults, shows like The Price Is Right, The Family Feud. That's all adults. You never see a show like young people. There's a lot of need for shows for teenagers, 'cause teenagers have experience that people never even heard of or seen. A lot of people from around here have experience, but they don't have a chance to show it. It's a valuable thing, 'cause like if they have experience and nobody knows it or sees it, it's being wasted. What's the use of people having experience, if they can't show nobody
they have it. [The Project] helps teenagers show what they have. It shows people that teenagers have or are in need of people giving them a chance to do something. Most kids, given that chance, will do a good job. They would act as they live. Like, The Project gives teenagers like, uh, a chance to make something of themselves. Like, if you go along the street and talk about this, talk about that, or see somebody that just finished a show and comes up to you, "Oh, are you finished doing a show?" and people be impressed.

The Project's important because it gives you experience. It gives you an opportunity to do something important that you can pick up as a career. Like, in other words, The Project gives teenagers an opportunity to make something that they never even heard of, like a show. They get an opportunity to do that. Like if The Project wasn't there, they would never have an opportunity like that to do a show like this. Never heard opportunities in other places. I never heard of anything like that. I only heard of it like The Project. There's programs in school. They have like history, Puerto Rican Discovery Day. That's not like The Project. The Project is experience. It was fun. All put into one.

They thought I, well, to me, my family, they thought it was important. You know, me and my cousin making a show that's gonna be on television. Nobody's ever in my family been on television or anything like that. They thought it was neat. They liked the idea of us being on television. Oh, my uncle said that the experience that I'm taking now I can use it for the future, use if I want to go into TV productions. It can be valuable, like me taking pictures at cameras. Like no other teenager is taking that up 'cause they don't have the opportunity. Only at The Project. I would like to do it as a job. It was fun. If you know how to work with it, you earn good money. You could use a lot of equipment you never dreamed of, or it's fun, and you get to meet a lot of people. You get experience in cameras. You get to make new friends. And you just make something of what you got now. I was treated fair [by the adults in the program]. They told me what to do. I done it. They asked me my opinion. I gave it. It was like a person that, "Oh, Luis, you gotta do this, like it or not." It was just like a counselor and your boss at the same time.

[The Project] made me feel like I was a grown person that has a career. I had it [the feeling] before in things I done at school. Like we done a program at school. It was a classical show that you call "Porgy and Bess." We done it in school, and everybody had their own part. They was dancing, singing, everything. So, that's how it made me feel, like it was a career in acting and singing. It was interesting, 'cause I always wanted to act and sing. So to me I felt good when I was doing it. It took a lot of work practicing and all that stuff. I felt like it [The Project] was just like they were giving me money, 'cause I enjoyed doing the show 'cause that show was kind
of like experience. If they'd not have paid me, I still would have
done it, 'cause I had nothing to do over the summer. The camera's
fun to work with. It was fun. It was valuable to me, 'cause I didn't
do it like I was getting paid. I thought I was doing it for fun. It
felt nice having a lot of people that you never knew and making friends,
doing the show. Everybody was having fun.

There's a lot of good things [regarding kids from different
places getting together]. People from other places got experience from
different places. They have experience in computers. Some teenagers
got experience in computers, some from playing ball, playing football,
basketball. So a lot of people have different experience in different
places and things, so like, to find that out, you gotta have coopera-
tion so you can find that out. It [prejudice] can be helped, because
uh, in The Project there's Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Whites, and other
races in it. So when you all cooperate and do it on that show, you
kind of like cooperate with all the race groups. Cooperate with friend-
ship, cooperate with doing the show, and you all get into it, and you
know what you're doing, and all different kinds of races in there, so
you got to cooperate. It is a good thing, 'cause you see people around
here, Black people, they, see White people coming along, so the first
thing they always do is jump 'em, next rob 'em. It's not like we're
doing. We're cooperating. We do something, they don't. They see
somebody a different color, they want to rob 'em. A lot of problems.

It's a good thing [for people to see the show on neighborhoods],
because they see different neighborhoods, different people, different
races, and you know, they kind of like, they think a little. They
start thinking, "Oh, these teenagers made a show, all Whites, Blacks,
Hispanics, and everything." It was run by teenagers, so they gotta
think something. They gonna think it was hard for us teenagers with no
experience to do this show and took a lot of cooperation to do this
show. It's important, 'cause a lot of adults don't see young people as
doing stuff like that. They see young people as playing basketball,
football. They don't see 'em as like doing television stuff. I think
you should get credit for what you do. When we went to Brookside Vil-
lage to tape my cousin, my uncle was there and he kind of like freaked
out, 'cause he thought the only thing I could do was play basketball
and football. He didn't think that I could run a camera that I had
never even seen or heard of, to run a camera just like that with ex-
perience like not even two months or not even a couple of weeks of
knowing what it was. The family seen me in the show. They thought it
was nice. They never saw anybody they saw on television. I felt good.
I liked the way they came up to me and said, "Hey, Luis, I seen you on
this show. Oh, you were good. You were talking about your neigh-
borhood. That was nice. How did you get into this?" I tell 'em about
it. They kind of look up to you as a person who knows what he's doing
on television.
It's important to me 'cause when I didn't know how to take a job, make a show, I didn't know how to do that. But it was important to me, 'cause it makes me feel good. And it gave me experience at the same time. They don't see me like a young man drinking beer, doing drugs. They see me as looking forward in the future as a technician using cameras as a way to it. What I'd like to see happen is more people involved. There was more money, so people could work all around, year round, so you people can get more experience from that, get paid. It helps in a lot of ways. It helps them: 1) it gets them off the street, 2) it gives them experience with the equipment that maybe they ain't even heard of or seen, 3) it gives them experience that they can take further or take up as a job.

I'm interested in the cameras, taping. I'm interested in like taking the camera and when you interview somebody I'm the one that gets the camera. I'm the one doing the camera. I'm thinking technical, as going to college. So if I know what it is taking advantage of it now, when I get into college I'll know a little bit of it. I would be interested in the technical, 'cause people now, like they're dropping out of school, they making nothing, they want to go into jobs 'cause they need the money. People, like now, they not interested in going to school. They interested in just getting jobs, but they just don't know that jobs now are hard to come by, because people now are needing technicians and computers. That's mainly the thing now. Well, like The Project took me off the streets, 'cause if it wasn't for The Project, I would've been home probably playing basketball, smoking reefer, drinking. It would've took me on to that. The Project gave to time to make a show, gets money for me, gives me money, gives me experience, gives me all that. So I just take it up. Uh, I would do it. If The Project came with me as a full-time job, I would take The Project like it was something. I'd be interested [if they didn't pay me]. Like me, I'd be interested, 'cause they'll probably take it in the future. But people right now, they would like to do it, but they need money at the same time. But so, if they say they want you to do a show but they can't pay you, they'd kind of like back off. You know, they kind of like, you just wasting your time.
Profile

RICHARD CARTER

(Richard Carter is in his early twenties and is a free lance video editor. He was interviewed once in a parking lot and twice in his home during the spring of 1983.)

Well, my family is pretty average I guess for the town I live in. My father has a job at a restaurant, and he likes to work on cars. My mother has a job in an office. She likes to come home after work and watch TV, I guess the average thing to do. My brothers all go to public schools. One of my brothers goes to college. Sometimes we are a little under pressure because of money and leaving lights on and we have to conserve a little bit on the electricity bill and the water bill. Most of the time we are pretty happy. I think the most important goal is to just get a good job and try to be happy. I think I get along with both of them [parents] good, but I get along with my father a little better, just because we have more of the same interests. Like we both like to work on cars and go to car shows. They [parents] seem to think they are not prejudiced but sometimes I feel they are. Some of the things they say, they seem like they are. I don't think they have any bad feelings toward people like that [on welfare]. Once in a while we eat at the supper table together. Once in a while we would go on a vacation together or something. I have a good relationship with my brothers. Well, the brothers that are more closer to my age. Like my younger brother, there is a five year difference in our ages, so we probably don't have the same interests, but my older brothers there is only a one or two year difference.

My neighborhood is middle class to lower class income-wise. Most of the families are now older. When we first moved in 17 years ago they were young families with kids. The houses are single family houses with a lot of space between each of them, well, sort of a lot of space. They all have backyards with trees around them. The traffic is not heavy on my street. My family fits in. I would have some type of recreation for kids to do except for sports, or walking around the mall. That's not very good for kids to do. I think I would like to live there, not because there is anything to do, but because it is kind of quiet and the crime is not big and it would be kind of nice. It is not like a city where everything is made out of concrete. The crime is low. The air is cleaner, a little cleaner. There aren't cars all over the place and a lot of noise. There is more unemployment in the city. That is an advantage for my town.
I guess when you first meet somebody that can really tell you if they can really be a friend or not. You can share the same interests, and just the way you talk to the person can tell how they react. You should do things together, you know, like go to the movies or drive around in your car. It's important. You have to have friends. To talk to them and share the same experience. We [his minority friend] were in a drum corps together. I think it taught me a little bit about discipline, because you have to practice to be good. It was different than school life. We had the same interests, because we were in the same drum corps. And we went on trips, overnight trips for the different competitions and stuff. [We never got to be friends in a larger sense, because] we live far away from each other. We live like ten miles away from each other and neither of us had a car or license at that time. Most of my friends we don't meet that often [once or twice a week]. Just the racquetball club. If a friend told me to do something just because he wanted me to do it, I wouldn't. So they really don't influence me. The only way they influence me was if they told me what they thought, and then I might take their view into consideration before I made a decision on it.

School is important because you have to know how to read and write and do arithmetic. Well, if you want to get ahead in Spanish, then it teaches you how to do that. I don't think it teaches you how to get ahead in life or anything. Some teachers are good, because they take an interest in the student and other teachers and they go to their college so they can teach and earn their money. They don't make too much money, and I don't know why anyone would teach to make money. I'm an average student. My grades were like B's and C's and maybe one or two A's. The whole social life in school is great. You have a lot of acquaintances. The biggest thing [in school] was probably learning about television.

[My most important goal is] trying to get a job that I like. Well, to get a job in producing television shows, because it is fun and I like to do it. Plus a lot of people can see your work. I think they are going to be as good as I want them to be, because if I don't try to reach my goals, then I won't reach them, but if I try really hard, then I will. I never plan on going to college, because I haven't got the money first off, and I just can't get into going through all these courses just to learn how to run a TV camera. I don't think I need any more math or anything that I already have to learn to push a button and run a TV camera. With The Project it is hands-on experience and you get to run the camera and find out how a professional television show is put together. After doing these shows for a while they are starting to be come almost professional quality. It is really hard to do a show but not hard to do it. You're not going to learn in a television course how to go out and put with all the bull____ you have to go through. It
[The Project] was a lot better than school. You learn by doing a project, not by reading it out of a book or looking at a slide show of it. You learned by doing. I probably would end up working in a grocery store or something. Because of The Project, I think I have enough experience, so that after I graduate from high school I could probably go out and find a job. At a TV station or something like that to start off, and then maybe do some free lance work on movies. It gave me hands-on experience with equipment that I would never have gotten a chance to touch. Sometimes not even a chance to touch if I even went to college, because they probably wouldn't have the professional quality equipment that I had used through The Project and the cable companies.

In the early stages I was not involved, because I was an intern at the PBS station. This means that I would go to work at the station for nothing, and in turn, they would train me on camera, lighting, and audio, and things like that. First, I went there because I knew a little of the technical side of things and I wanted to learn more and help teach. Then I got involved in doing some of the scripts and getting on camera and things like that. Well, I first experienced The Project at a meeting at the YWCA in York. There were about fifty people there and most of them were teachers and stuff like that. There were not too many kids there. We talked about ideas for the show and how the show would work and who would be involved. Things like that. I was thinking that, or hoping that, we could get something together, so I could get a little experience in television.

We had more meetings and sort of got together and kept talking how the show would go together, and then we had a bunch of kids to get together, finally, after the grownups got through talking about. There weren't too many York kids there. They were mostly Northfield and Andover kids. Most of the kids that were at the meetings the person who would be the loudest would probably get their way, because somebody else might not say anything, then they would just get one opinion from one person. They would get their way with whatever they wanted to get done.

We have a set for the show which is a big brick wall--it is not real brick, it is made out of panelling but looks like a brick wall. For each show we put different graffiti on the wall with chalk and we have a big discussion at the meeting about just the wall and what they put on it, and each kid has something that they want to put on the wall, and if they don't get it on they are disappointed.

The host was like the person who would hold the show together on camera and they would introduce each one of the segments. They would
be the main person the audience would see in the show. Some of the kids they wanted certain people to be the host--their friends. Because if the host was good, they might get asked to have a job somewhere on a show that will pay money. The person might want to get a job and might be a good way to get a resume tape. Most of the kids that were there that wanted this certain person to be host were from a drama club, and if they were in drama, they probably wanted to land a career in drama. If they even showed up at the meeting they probably had ideas in their heads to go out and get on TV so people can see our drama then they would. It wasn't fair, because that is not how we wanted The Project to be. We didn't want just to show off these great kids that could do drama and would use it so they could get a career in drama. We had tryouts to see who was the best host. It came down to one person who did not have very much drama experience and another person who did. Of course, the one with the more drama experience was the better, plus she had all her friends backing her.

It made it like two sides. People from the drama club against the people that wanted to have a show that would be fair. The first show, it was all drama people. The second show was a little bit better, because there was less drama people, because they had their turn in the first show, so we decided to have more people that were not in drama. We thought that that would be stupid and we needed a change. After the first show some of the kids started to come out of their shell--the kids that didn't have any experience. They had now seen how it worked, and they started to get more comfortable talking and everyone became sort of friends. So on the second show there was more people coming up with ideas and things and a lot of the kids decided that there should be more of them in it not just the kids from the drama class. There was more of a balance with the kids involved. I guess the kids from the drama club didn't like that too much. Well, they came up with a skit on the draft. They had all their kids in it, and the parts were for their kids only. They came up with a script and gave the script to all of these kids that were with them. They needed one kid to play a Vietnam vet, and they thought they should have a Black or Puerto Rican in there. They didn't have any from where they came from that could do it, so they had to pick one of the kids from York to do it. After the first show I thought that certain things needed to be changed around because this didn't work. All these goody-two-shoe kids on the show just up there because their parents had money. Because they were more aggressive than the other kids. These kids knew how to act. They wanted it all for themselves. I knew they were doing it because of that, because it was obvious. They needed seven kids in the skit and it was supposed to have kids from York and I know that York isn't all white kids. This is what we wanted the show to be. We wanted to give York kids who don't have a chance to get on TV or get up in front of a group or express themselves very often, if at all. We wanted this Project show to be a way to do that.
Well, by the third show there were a lot of kids from York and the show was very balanced. They really had a big say on what was going on. The kids from the suburban town didn't really like it much. They wanted it all for themselves, and they finally began to back down. Finally, they just piddled out to nothing, because they wanted it all, but couldn't get it all. We did their skit on the draft and we didn't use it for a while and then like a year later we decided to use it and the kids from the suburban town didn't want us to use because they thought it was theirs even though they were doing it for The Project. They did it with our equipment, time, and without The Project, they couldn't have gotten that skit done.

It seems to surface with kids with once they get the experience of doing it then they find out that they like doing it, want to be the star. They seem to want to continue to be the star. If they are the star once, they want to be the star again and again and again. They don't like to give other kids a chance. It happened to one of the girls who was host from York who was Black. Well, she was the host for one of the shows, and then we decided to have another show after the one she was host of, and she just assumed she would probably be the host for this one, but she assumed wrong, because we had wanted to give someone else a chance to be host. She didn't really like that too much and ended up doing nothing. When we had the CETA project, most of the kids were getting paid. It was hard and most of the problems were because the kids didn't know what they were getting themselves into. They just thought they were going to wash floors or something. They didn't realize they were going to produce a show. It is a lot of work and takes much more than washing floors or washing windows. They just wanted a summer job where they would do just that, so we really had to work harder to have them work hard too.

I became friends with the kids from York. If you have a friend, you have things in common and the thing we had with my friends in York was that we were involved in The Project. That is basically what we talked about.

With starting any new project, there is going to be disorganization at the beginning. I think for the years that we have been doing this that it is becoming more organized than it was in the beginning. The real organization came in, or started when, we had this guy Mr. Boland involved. He really helped us come up with a format, and before it was just a jumble or big mess all piled into a half-hour, and he came up with a format that would work and we could expand on the ideas. Then it really got organized when we got started with CETA. Then we had the format and the kids that would work had to put in a commitment of a whole two months. Before that they would have a job to do and wouldn't show up for the next meeting and we have to adjust everything. We had a little trouble getting the kids to keep coming to all the meet-
ings. If a new kid came, the first reason he would lose interest is because he didn't really know what was going on. He wouldn't know what to do, so he would have to be trained. That is one reason they might not come back to a second meeting. After a while we decided that after each meeting, we would give out assignments and they had to come back to the next meeting with your assignment done.

All the kids treated each other equally and got along well together and would share information. The adults on the outside, they were a little stand-offish. I think adults tend to judge kids on all the bad points and never on any of their good points. Every adult I know, well, almost every adult, thinks that every kid is out there drinking beer in the back alley somewhere, or smoking pot, doing drugs, and raising hell. But it is only a small percentage of the kids that are really doing it. Adults don't like to take orders from teenagers. So of course, when you're doing a TV show produced by teenagers, call a person on the phone for an interview and a teenager is talking to them, they question who it is that is talking to them. Is it some joker and a prank call or something? Most of the times when us kids call to set up an interview with somebody, we would have to have one of the adult supervisors call them back just to make sure. They will call back and ask to talk to the person in charge and you would tell them that you are in charge and they won't believe you because you're 16 or 17 years old. They will ask for a supervisor, and we would have to let them talk to the adult supervisor. Then when we show up with the equipment, sometimes we don't have an adult supervisor around, and we end up at the place with the equipment. Their attitude toward kids changes in a split second when they see kids setting up $20,000 cameras and $300 tape decks and a set of lights that might go for $1,500, stuff like that. Then they think these kids must know what they are doing and must be mature. It shows adults that all teenagers can really do something if given a chance.

One time we did a thing in the Civic Center where we wanted to film inside the Civic Center and the union guys that were setting up the equipment for the band wouldn't let us film in there, because they just didn't like the way we looked. I don't know. It makes you feel, here they go again, these union guys are putting down us kids, because they don't think we can do it. They didn't want us in there, because in order for us to set up a light which anybody can do, we had to hire an electrician from the union. The union had to make money out of the deal. All these guys, they see a camera and they all want a piece of the action. They all figure there will be big money so we will get a piece of it. I wasn't aware of that stuff [unions]. I didn't think something like that would go on. I didn't know that we would have to pay a guy for half a day and pay him a $100 just to plug in a light
and is the same kind of outlet that is on any hair dryer. I can't see why we would have to hire a union guy for that. It teaches you more about the real world than a school would, because you are out there experiencing it yourself and not sitting in a classroom being told what it is going to be like. You find out that a lot of people are out there to make a buck off of anything they can no matter who gets trampled in the way. When we were filming stuff at the Civic Center, we had all kinds of hassles. People don't expect teenagers to have a camera for one thing, and they don't expect teenagers to be doing anything productive, so no matter where an adult sees a teenager, they think they are stealing someone's pocketbook or writing on the wall with a magic marker or something.

One time the adults, not the adult supervisors, they were cool and everything, but some of the people on the outside like the people at the cable company and stuff like that. One time we went in to run some equipment which was like a training course. We had about half White kids and half Black kids, some Hispanics and the people at the cable company, not just because we were minorities, White and inexperienced, it was just because we were kids that they had prejudice against. They said that they set a limit to the number of people that we could put into a studio to learn to run the equipment. I really think they did that because they thought we were going to rip them off. Maybe they thought we were going to steal their microphones or break something. They wanted a limit so that they could keep an eye on all of us, because they really didn't trust us.

Kids never do a project that has some importance and I think The Project has importance. It is important that there should be a Project because kids don't really have the opportunity to show their opinions, and through The Project you're able to show your opinions, if you do in the right sort of way. Also, it is good in that it has significance. It gets kids together that probably would not normally get together. It gets the kids from the city together with the ideas from the suburbs working together, working on something. For more than three-fourths of the last shows we had kids from York and kids from Northfield and Methuen working together with the kids from York to produce the show. At first when they get together, they are quiet, but once they get together, they sort of get to be friends, and they talk to one another just as they would if they were kids from the suburbs getting together with kids from suburbs, or kids from the city getting together with the kids from the city. It seems as though kids are the same even though they think they are different. If kids didn't know that all kids are the same except for other than the fact that some live closer than others, some live in the city and some don't they are going to think that there is something wrong with the kids from the
city and that they are minorities and then think that there is something wrong with minorities and that they are not the same as them and there would be all kinds of prejudice when they grow older, because they would carry their views into adulthood. But if they get together and work together, then they will know that they are the same kind of people and where they live doesn't make that much difference. They are the same type of people.

One time we did a segment on different schools around the area, and we wanted to show how the different kids from each different type of school [an inner city school and a private school and a suburban school and a kid that didn't go to school or just quit school] and how they felt and what they thought about life. One of the kids, the one that quit school, he was a Savage Nomad [a gang]. We expected him to show up with chains and knives hanging off of him. We interviewed him at where the gang hangs out, and so we were waiting for him, and he showed up with a suit and a tie on. He looked like he belonged in the private school with his parents paying all kinds of bucks for him to be going there. So I think that he thought that, "Wow, this is important and better dress up." He must have thought this was important because he was going to be interviewed, so he wore a suit. He didn't even want to be known as a Savage Nomad, because when we asked him what he wanted on his credit or his title underneath his name, he said he didn't want it to say that he was a member of the Savage Nomads. He made me feel like, "Wow, I guess we are doing something important here, if a guy like this would think it that important to come out in a suit to be on television."

We did a show on the handicapped and most of the people that we interviewed were adults who wanted and thought that a show be done on the handicapped and The Project did a show. I guess not too many big stations did not want to touch that subject, because they thought it might have been too touchy or that there wouldn't be an audience for it. Our audience is kids and we thought that there would be an audience for a show on the handicapped. A lot of adults got involved with it and they gave good interviews and stuff like that. I know the kids that worked on The Project care about things like that because that is what we discussed at out meeting. We discuss on what topics we would consider, and these are the topics that come up--the handicapped, what do you do after high school for a job or career, stuff like that. I guess because you could draw the conclusion that the kids that are working on The Project want to tell people about these topics that the other kids would want to hear about it, because the kids from The Project are no different from the kids in the audience.

I think when the kids get together and they are working on something together, the want it to be good. The kids help each other out and stuff like that and if something isn't good we will tell them and
they should do it a little different. If somebody is not as good as somebody else, we don't all laugh at him but try to help him out. The Project is important because it teaches kids a little bit about the outside world that they wouldn't learn in school and gives them an opportunity to get some hands-on training with real expensive equipment that they would never really see for most of the kids. It teaches how to get along with kids from the inner city and suburbs and it shows you that there really isn't much of a difference between the kids in the city and suburbs.

It could grow. The Project could be a PM Magazine-type show. PM Magazine is all over the country and each stations does their own, and if it is a good segment, they sent it to Chicago or something. There are kids all over the country, so it could grow. The biggest that I can see The Project is broadcast on cable TV and each community has its own part of The Project. They would do local stuff, and anything really good that they would want the whole country to see, they would sent their segment to Los Angeles or somewhere like it. PM Magazine can do it; why not The Project?
Commentary: Group I

Historically, public schools have not made major efforts in the area of cross-cultural learning experiences. When the issue has been addressed, it has followed a curriculum-based approach (Grams, 1968; Kilpatrick, 1947, 1951). The approach used by the youth participation project under study regarding this issue was informal, and what we learn from the results of this type of cross-cultural experience is that the receptiveness of the participants is a key factor. This is especially clear in the profiles of Richard Carter, Luis Lopez, and David Chapdelaine.

These three individuals do not easily mirror the popular views concerning adolescents. One of the striking features of the profiles is how they point out the dangers of "type-casting" people based upon their age, place of residence, or family background. This is especially true in the case of these three participants. They are products of their socio/economic backgrounds, but their views of the events in their lives are not typical of those backgrounds and reflect more how they see the world than how the world sees them.

David and Luis live less than fifteen miles apart, but the worlds they inhabit are separated by more than miles and can only be measured by the quality of life they represent. They reveal how their experiences in school are tied to their social and economic backgrounds more than any other two participants. Their private thoughts disclose their shared quest for independence and the development of their own identities despite the difference in their school related experiences.
David is the product of a model affluent white suburban family in which both parents work very hard to provide a stable and comfortable surrounding. As we learn from his profile, he is quite aware of his advantages. He summarized his impression of his family and his life in a comparison to those of his peers' in college when he observed that his family was the "Brady Bunch." It is clear from David's reconstruction of his early life that both his mother and father played a significant role in his life. His admiration for them is apparent and is reflected in their close relationship. Much of the tension that is common between parents and teenagers is missing. The confidence he has in himself and in his abilities mirrors the love and positive role models he found in the home. His biggest challenge in growing up was to take advantage of all that his safe world had to offer. This textbook version of the American dream is in stark contrast to Luis's world of rats and cockroaches. Luis's challenges are real and constitute living conditions that are far removed from David's. He lost his father at the age of nine months and now finds himself surrounded by violence and poverty. The outer world in which he is forced to survive is matched by the inner turmoil that swells his stomach muscles and helps to ignite the violent temper that is his constant companion.

Luis's school life is nothing but problems. His reconstruction of his experiences in school are confined to serious incidents of fighting with fellow students. We learn that he once almost stabbed a teacher who tried to break up a fight. School for Luis is not a world of books but is one of one violent confrontation after another. In one
story that he relates, he is embroiled in a fist fight with a teacher he likes. He describes the fight as a street fight with him getting the worst of it. What we learn of Luis's experiences in school is a pattern of violence that mirrors the other elements in his life from the street gangs that control his neighborhood to his home environment where from an early age he felt the need to protect his younger siblings from his mother's alcoholic boyfriends. (At various times in the profile, he refers to his mother's boyfriend as his stepfather.) Luis knows the world of violence; yet, for all his difficulties in controlling his temper and adjusting to the school rules, we find that he is not unmindful of the importance of school for economic success. He tells of his admiration for his uncle who is the only high school graduate in his family. The uncle appears to be the only positive adult role model in Luis's life. Everything Luis finds missing in his own life, he witnesses in his uncle's. Luis is most taken with his uncle's family life. Luis associates the uncle's stable family with the uncle's high school education and his good job, both of which Luis has decided to pursue. He is convinced he needs a diploma, and therefore, he remains in school. Luis views the diploma as his ticket out of his world of rats and roaches which, like his violent temper, are never far away.

School was not a battleground for David. At its worst, it was just boring. He is cynical and quick to point out the inefficiency of teachers and their methods. Whereas Luis used his fists to express his frustration, David learned the technique of questioning authority without resorting to violent confrontations. He was introduced to protest
early in life through the context of his family's anti-war sentiments. His shared family experiences equipped him to feel comfortable with his views even when they don't conform to those of his peers or teachers. David would not be the ideal candidate to illustrate the effectiveness of schools in teaching docility and respect for the hierarchy that Bowles and Gintis (1974) talk about. Throughout his school career, we find David seeking ways to exploit what schools have to offer him. We learn of his high regard for a Russian history class, because it offered him a break in the routine. School becomes the backdrop where he struggles for his identity through his involvement in clubs and alternative programs.

In the 60's and early 70's a great deal of criticism was directed at the public schools concerning their manipulation of feelings, motivations, and human relationships. In one such work, High School, the editors point out: "The students are old enough to take care of themselves, old enough to reject the illegitimate authority of adults, old enough to love and fight and truly learn" (Gross and Osterman, eds., 1971, p. 9). David provides ample evidence that students are as capable as those who advocate greater student freedom believe them to be (Hold, 1974), and yet he was able to maintain his integrity and sense of purpose in the very structure the critics would replace.

Both Luis and David confront school with neither reflecting the passivity associated with the observations made by Charles Silberman in his work Crisis in the Classroom (1970). Their experiences in school are as dramatically different as are their social and economic back-
grounds; yet both shared the view that Ralph Larkin (1979) observed: youths view school as a gateway to the world of work. For Luis, getting a diploma will insure a better life, while in David's case it is college "not if, but when." They both cling to the same end; but as we have learned, this society makes that nearly impossible for one and hard not to for the other.

Richard Carter was the oldest of all the participants but recalls little in his school experiences that aided him. The only experience that he mentions is directly tied to his involvement in the youth participation project. Unlike David and Luis, school seems to be a footnote in Richard's life. His arena for his search for independence and identity was his involvement in an alternative learning program. Born into a working-class family, he viewed school as a ticket to a future working in a grocery store. Richard sees his life as having been radically altered by his involvement in the project.

Primary to Richard is securing a career in television. His involvement in the project afforded him that opportunity. He was not academically inclined, so college was not an option after high school. His life revolved around his growing involvement in the project. He was one of the project's first members and remained throughout the three years under study. By the end of this period, he had become a technical advisor to the project and played a key role in training the other participants.

It is clear from reading Richard's profile that little else in his life matched his involvement in the project or received as much of
his attention. He strongly identified with the goal of the project and
with the project's potential to secure a career in television for him.
From his vantage point, he witnessed all the various phases the project
went through. His perceptions, feelings, and impressions of what took
place are a mixture of his personal goals and apprehensions concerning
his future. On one hand, Richard had the most to gain if the project
received on-going funding, while on the other, he stood to lose valuable
time in launching his television career if the project failed. He be¬
gan his involvement as a teenager and became an adult while still ac¬
tively involved. Rich's profile offers a unique view of an individual
growing into maturity involved in a project that depended upon his in¬
creasing technical expertise.

The theme that links these three participants is their views con¬
cerning cross-cultural learning experiences. Rich's profile shows his
awareness of the conventional wisdom behind the project. He explained
that if a person never had the opportunity to interact with individuals
from different social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, then they may
have negative attitudes without knowing why. Richard sees youths who
never get to know other youths from different backgrounds entering
their adulthood the worse for it. He occupied a responsible position
in the project and was critical of the other suburban youths who did
not share his concern for increasing minority involvement. He was more
cognizant than any other participant interviewed of the project's goal
to bring all types of youths into the project. What makes his views
all the more critical was that he was in a position to make it more
difficult for newcomers; yet, he was one of the strongest advocates of maintaining the project's objective of intergroup education.

David recalls how an encounter with a member of a street gang affected his perception of minorities. This incident was also mentioned by Richard. The value of the project's attempts to help youths have cross-cultural educational experiences is clearly illustrated by David's reconstruction and his impressions. He states that he had never encountered a member of a street gang, nor had he had the opportunity to personally meet a member of a minority. While he was preparing for the interview of a street gang member, he was aware of his prejudicial attitudes as reflected in his belief that this person would be a very dangerous individual. David learned that his fears were not well founded, and as it turned out, the member of the gang was more concerned about his personal appearance and what he had to say than David had ever imagined. This experience was very clear in David's memory and appears to have had a positive and lasting effect on his attitudes toward minorities. The role of television also seems to be a significant factor throughout the profiles as an experience which helped individuals forget their different backgrounds, and in the case of intergroup education, provide a neutral world in which doing one's best was all that mattered.

Luis was impressed by the degree of cooperation he witnessed between the different groups of youths. He was especially taken by the project's capacity to enable youths from different backgrounds to share their skills and life styles. What makes Luis's observations poignant is his all too clear appraisal of his own surroundings, and yet, his
desire to share that world with others in the hope that youths from more affluent environments would learn what it's like to live in a ghetto. Luis carried his views on the value of youths from different backgrounds working together to the larger arena of adults who could benefit from a lesson on cooperation by seeing that youths from different backgrounds can work cooperatively on a television show.

For these three individuals, as well as others, the opportunity to work with youths from different backgrounds was a positive experience. The problems that Richard mentioned with some youths from the suburbs who were unwilling to relinquish their positions in the early stages of the project is not unlike the inner-city host he referred to who also did not like the idea that she was not to have that particular job on a permanent basis. In both cases, the youths who did not choose to work cooperatively left the project voluntarily. What we learn from these profiles is illustrated by Luis's observation that it is not always the fault of the individual for doing the wrong thing, but rather, some of blame lies within the environment in which the person finds himself, and if that person was placed in a different environment, he would act differently. If one carries his argument further, then there is much to be gained by giving people from different social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to work together. Luis is uncomfortable in his high school which is comprised mainly of Blacks and Hispanics. He knows it would be better for all concerned if society could find a way for everyone to live and learn in an integrated environment. Luis's private dream of peaceful neighborhoods in which
Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics live together is a dream worth dreaming, and it would appear that his involvement in the project helped make a small portion of his dream into a reality.
Profile

MICHELLE WARREN

(My family and I moved [to Northfield] nine years ago and we've lived in Northfield. A middle-class family. We've been pretty well off for a while and my father had a pretty good job. All happy-go-lucky. We lived in a house which was something for a lot of people. To own our own house. Before we had lived in apartments and rented, but this was, is, our own. [The apartment we rented] was in Massachusetts. It was a townhouse and everybody had the same type of house. And there was this one girl that lived near us that had a regular house and everybody sort of looked up to her. She had her own yard and she didn't have to share [her room]. I think they [parents] looked around the town [Northfield] to make sure that things, like a good school, would be available, 'cause they're always concerned about things like that. The house looked gigantic even though it really isn't. The backyard looked like nothing we've ever seen. It was so big, because my father grew up in Boston and we had grown up there and the yards are not anything really big. My mother's from Washington, D.C., so they didn't have large yards. So it was something very different. To walk to school was something big. We had always taken buses to school. [We moved when I was in] third grade and I had gotten close to some of my friends, but I guess it wasn't as hard as somebody moving when you're in high school or something. We were told we could get a dog, which we could have never had before. It was just things like that, to have our own rooms. My sister and I never had. We had to share all the time.

I guess I've always been lucky to grow up somewhat with the arts, going to art museums all the time. My grandmother was a singer and my mother sang when she was young. They were always interested in the arts, like drama and the movies and films. I'm very much into films and I just sort of picked that up from them. Then one of my babysitters when I was younger was into drama and that's what I wanted to do. It was always actress ever since I had been little. I was always putting on plays for my grandparents and very much involved in watching old movies and looking at people like Katherine Hepburn. It was always something that I wanted to do, then reality came in. Probably ninth grade and realized that it would be too hard to make an occupation out of that, uncertain. [By uncertain I mean] it looks like it is more luck and I don't know if I have that kind of luck or how long the luck will last. Sometimes it is hard work, but some people that I see, it seems to be more luck than any good talent. [I want to do] something
that is not as uncertain as acting. I thought [our life] was going to be the same. I never thought it was going to change [but when my father lost his job] it started me thinking that maybe find something that will last longer than it did for my family.

My father's very much involved in town and state things. The Jaycees used to be very important to my father. When he first started, he had his job and the Jaycees and between them it took up quite a bit of his time. The family had to adjust and get involved. Either get involved in our own things or mold to what he was doing and do whatever he did. Helping the town and stuff became very important. Sometimes it was the way to see our father, because he was so busy. So we'd become interested in his job and activities, so we could see him. The funny thing was that at one time, before my father met my mother, he was going to become a priest. But he stopped going to church along with my mother. They both thought the money to give the church was getting out of hand. That's what they said was one of the reasons. People down the street would ask me to go to church with them. And I'd get quite a bit, every weekend almost. I had started going in elementary school, but now it was more on my own. I didn't always have to go with the family. I'd go on my own. Then my father came back and we became very close to one of the young priests that came to the church. He had long talks with this priest we became close to. Now he is more willing than I am. There's some mornings when I won't get up, and he'll say, "Come on. We have to go." He got involved in different church activities. When my father came, it was something we could do together.

[My mother] wasn't like a housewife. She wouldn't be with the Women's Club or anything. She just didn't enjoy that. She had a few jobs. She worked in Casual Corner, for an airlines at one time. Before we had moved, she worked in book stores. It was more because she wanted to work. It wasn't because we needed the money so much. She'd just work to have something to do.

I could always have money. My parents didn't dish it out to me; I always had to work for it. There was allowances and stuff like that. It wasn't anything like, "I'm really sorry you can't get this." If it was within reason, I could get it. My father left his other job and got one that doesn't pay as much and he is not as happy. My mother had to work now for the money and not just go to work. So she almost needs the other job she had with the airline that she had that she enjoyed to get an everyday job and not the kind of job where they would use her when they needed her. That changed our lives, because we couldn't travel as much as we had before and was hard for my mother because her family lives [far away]. We couldn't go out to dinner if we wanted to because we had other things to use that money for. We used to go out quite a bit, but now, that has changed. Well, I got a job, and I'm not exactly sure if I would have gotten one as soon if this hadn't happened.
In junior high, it seems like the kids seemed to follow me. I've always been very close, especially in junior high, to my teachers and in junior high you have four teachers and you have those teachers for two years and you become like family. Even after I didn't have those teachers anymore, we were still very close. I loved it. It was just like a family. I was involved in the Drama Club and the chorus. Generally, anything that had to do with the school. Sporting events I always attended. I always wanted to do everything. I'm always afraid that if I don't do something, I'm going to regret not doing it. I don't want to get out of high school and say I wish I had done something. Now, it's getting to the point where it's school or activities sometimes. The activities interest me more. Student Council, very important to me. The Drama Club is extremely important to me. Right up until junior high it [academic life] was very good. In junior high I picked subjects that I really liked and then I'd do those as well as I could. When my grades weren't good, [my parents] would get upset and call the teacher, put restrictions on things like television and activities. "If you don't get your grades up, you won't be able to do this or that." That helped sometimes, because those things were so important that I'd do it, because I was afraid of losing it. In eighth grade I had a very hard teacher for science. He cared more than anybody about my life. I never did very well in the class. He would yell or something, but it would make me work harder. He didn't have any children. If he ever had a girl, he was going to name her after me. He wanted her to be just like me, even though my grades weren't good. I guess it was my personality or something. There're some teachers that it doesn't matter how nice you are, it's going to be the same. I was sort of pleased in what was going on. The pressures weren't like they are here. College right around the corner. You didn't have to worry so much about everything.

High school was hard for me at first, because I didn't have those teachers that I had had for three years. They had become so close that it was hard for me to leave them. Then I got here and it was awful. It was hard. None of the teachers would get as close as the ones at the junior high had. They were always sort of distant. There were some teachers that were friendly or would always say hello or ask how things were going. It wasn't something where if I had a problem I would go to them and talk to them. A lot of them I couldn't, some of them I'm sure I could of.

The high school was different, because kids started going to academies or to the other high school in town. That was hard, because I had some good friends, and now I just don't see them anymore even though it's the same town. The ones in junior high are the ones I've become very close to. Most of them aren't involved in alcohol, drugs, anything like that. Maybe [the reason is] the classes. I might have took harder classes and some of the kids were not into that stuff. I
don't know if that was part of it or not. Student Council came on in high school, because I was never elected in junior high like you had to be [in high school]. So that showed another thing--that I wasn't as popular as some of the other kids. In high school I'm getting along and getting to know a lot more kids, kids that are on sports that I didn't even know. I guess in high school that is important: to get to know kids like that if you want to get into a group or something.

It's very important for me to have people like me. Sometimes the kids at school kiddingly say, "Brown-nose teachers." I just like to be friendly. And sometimes at work, they think that I do that for brownie points. Sometimes I think it makes life a little easier to be friendly, to get along, and it's not just to get farther. You can't always be really nice and expect something. I don't do it for that. I just like to be happy. Well, the circle of friends is getting bigger than it was in elementary school. Not as popular as a lot of kids in the school. People know who I am, but I'm not in a click or anything. Maybe [it's because of] my appearance. It's not like some of the other kids. I'm not beautiful, which sometimes makes you popular. I just became more involved and sometimes the time is divided between everything and there still isn't time enough. There is still stuff that I want to do, and that is hard. [My parents] helped me, but they would say like, "Why don't you drop something?" But at this point, I have become attached to everything and it is too hard to drop.

[My initial experience with The Project] was in York at the YWCA and I got there and there was a whole lot of kids. One of the first things is that they were all buying T-shirts that had "The Project" on it. So I could tell they were really into it to want to have something like that. They [kids] were all different. A few of them had a lot of make-up on, different clothes that I wasn't used to. They were just clothes that, you know, were unusual. New York fashions. It shows that maybe that is how they have to be in their school to be accepted. Here we don't have to. Maybe we all dress the same and everything, but maybe it is just from a different part of the state and if they came up here they may think the same. There were kids from Northfield, middle class; kids from West York, a little higher; then you got the kids from York that some of them are lower-middle class. Then there are some kids who are sort of poor. I didn't notice any tension. I didn't know anybody, but they all seemed to know each other. When I got there I was sort of outside. I went there for the experience a lot of the times just to be able to do something like that. That was the main thing. To talk to the kids was important, too, it was hard to get to know somebody. They were not as open. They would check you out first and make sure you were all right, then they would accept you. With most of them I think I did [get accepted]. I didn't get to know all of them, because I didn't work that much on it, but I think I passed.
They all seemed pretty excited about doing the shows. After the meeting I really wanted to get involved and I told my friends at school and told my parents about it. I was just excited about wanting to be a part of it. [I was excited] meeting kids from parts of the state that I wasn't familiar with, to get to know about their lives and to be involved with making like a TV show. That sort of excited me and should excite any teenager. It was just those few things that were exciting.

[My parents] thought it was really good and knew I was active in other things and this was something that kept me busy. Well, it wasn't spelled out exactly at first what was going to be going on, so, you know, they asked different questions. "What will you be actually doing?" "How much time is it going to take?" "Is it going to be on TV?" Things like that. I told all my relatives and my mother and father would bring it up. And I had to go to an awards thing at Channel 2 and my mother and father are there telling everybody, "She's on TV." It sort of helped, because they were there talking to the director of the news of Channel 2 and I spent the day with her, and because of the show, it opened the doors for me. I was able to meet real professionals that were on the news and to find out what went on. So it helped me.

I was always looking forward to it. It was maybe that I could do something else or learn something new. There were meetings every Sunday that I would go to and we all discussed what we wanted to do a show on and we would write out these things step-by-step as to what we would do, so we all worked well together. I think it was very effective. It gave everybody a chance to put in what they wanted and each of us could say, "Well, maybe that's not going to work. Why don't we try it this way." Or, "Yes, it will go that way." There were things like one person would be host or something, and then you would find out maybe they couldn't handle it and it would have to be done by somebody else, and I didn't know how that affected the other person. You would start filming the person and you would start laughing. It was things like that. You would look at the person and say, well, she is not acting like you would want her to act. We were all teenagers, but at times, we were trying to act like adults. Sometimes the teenager could not make the transition. I remember seeing films of one girl that started laughing and tried over and over all these retakes. She was probably so nervous that it was all she could do was to laugh.

[The group] changed quite a bit. There would be somebody there and you would ask what happened to this person. Well, he ran away or he decided to quit or he is having problems at home or something like that. There were a few of them that I'd see all the time. They were regulars. And then every week there'd be one or two other people that I knew and sometimes they would stay and other times you'd never see them again. Sometimes it [the changes in participants] helped, because you were always getting new people in, but other times you would have things arranged and all of a sudden that person would be gone and you
would have to do something else because he wasn't there or she wasn't there to work with. We all seemed like we could get along and things like that and to hear that their schools are so different. They didn't seem that different that things like that should happen. There were stories that I heard about things that different kids did. Like when one of the kids just ran away. Nobody knew what happened. The other kids would be talking, and I would just sort of pick up. They would all talk and I would pick up things about what their school was like. They would say things like there were police at their school, and they got locked into the school, and it seemed like a prison. Things like that I would pick up on. You would find out that you were different. When we would bring kids home afterwards, there would be houses, and neighborhoods seemed different. You would have to be more careful, not like you do in Northfield. It opened my eyes. It showed me that Northfield is not the only place in the world. You're not always protected like you are here. You have to get to know different kids. I would come home and tell [my parents] the differences and think they were surprised about the schools being like a prison. It made everybody involved that wasn't from there to appreciate what they had. I think it showed the other kids that it is not always going to be like that. They won't always be in that type of atmosphere. When they eventually grow up and have kids, they don't have to stay there. They can go other places. They might be able to go other places because they had this experience and they can do something with their lives. For somebody in York, it was a new opportunity. It gave them something to do when kids from this area have other things to do to keep them out of trouble or whatever. And kids from York don't have that many activities.

I was in two or three shows--one about rock concerts. Well, I got to see how a business, the York Civic Center, worked--things like whatever the event, how things were set up, and the exchange of money. [During the interviews] it was important that you didn't look just like any other kid. Like when we went to the York Civic Center, they were all older than us and we couldn't act like little kids doing this interview. We had to try and act on their level so they would take us seriously. Oh, it was great. Everyone wants to go to a rock concert and see behind the scenes, and that is a really big thing for a teenager. There were only two of us that went to the Civic Center, and we both went to school together, and it was really something great to go to a rock concert, and you could go to school and rub it into your friends. Like, "I got to a rock concert and I got to be right up close."

The other show that I did was on teenage suicide. I don't know if that subject was something that you would go around saying things like, "Wow, I got to go to a hospital and see these kids that tried to kill themselves." To me, when I went to the hospital to see these
kids, it seemed like I had my life more under control than they did, but when they started to tell you about all these things, you begin to think. It made you stop and think as to why they are so different from me. We are the same age and we even live in the same area, but why would they do things like that. Doing things like that would make you think more than like going to a rock concert.

One time we had to do a thing at the hospital and these kids, a couple I had never met before, and so I was rehearsing or trying to practice my script and I would have to work with them and I didn't know exactly what would happen. I was given the part to be the host, and so I had to memorize the script and interview some people in the hospital, patients and doctors. Being host of the show I thought was a big thing. You were a little in charge as to what was going to happen, what you were to say, and things like that. I had to go outside in front of the hospital and start off the show, and it was really cold out, and I had to look like I wasn't cold, and it seemed important. I acted very professional. Well, I couldn't go on the air and say, "You know, it's really freezing out here, but I'm going to say it anyway." You had to appear as though it didn't bother you, and what I had to say was very important. It told about death and suicide among teenagers and I had to go out there in a serious manner. With the mike and camera and everything, it seemed very professional, even though it was kids. I knew that eventually it would be seen by other people, and so, you couldn't look unprofessional. I did some interviewing and things like that, but I was not sure what happened in the end. I heard that it was on cable.

Even if one person sees that show, and they were thinking about it, they may change their mind, and something like that is important. Because I had heard about kids in school that have tried it, and I think it is such a waste because you are so young, and things might be going wrong, but there is always time for change. For somebody to see a show and find out that there are people out there to help them or things are going to get better, I think it is important, because you may save someone's life. When an adult tells you that so many kids are dying, it might not make you stop and think, but when someone your own age says so many of us are dying, and the kids will realize that they may have the same problems that I have, and I don't think I can cope with it, but they're coping with it, and they are showing me people that can help me cope with these kinds of problems. When an adult tells you, you don't seem to listen.

[The most significant thing about The Project] was, in a lot of cases, the kids my age had a lot in common. It doesn't always matter where we live or what kind of environment. We have a lot of the same problems and a lot of the same things that go right for us. We're not alone growing up. They cared what happened to the show. They didn't
just go and say anything. What they said, they spent a lot of time
thinking about. They put meaning behind it and cared what the show was
going to say. With the theater group you have to be disciplined, and
with The Project there were times when you had to memorize your lines.
You had to do some research. It showed something for teenagers that
they were willing to take on a responsibility like that. Maybe once in
a while you would say it was nice to see yourself on television and
that is why they did it, but it seemed most of the time they were in-
volved in it because it was something they really liked to do and it
wasn't just to be on TV but to be with the other kids or to get exper-
ience. I think they wanted to be successful, because anything that
you are involved with you want success for it. It gave them a chance,
and maybe some kids that were in the middle of being so-called "good"
or "bad" they saw that The Project brought them together because they
didn't have to do drugs. We didn't have to be in certain cliques or
whatever to fit in, because we were all giving each other our ideas.
We were all trying to work together. We were all from different places
and some of us dressed different, and it didn't matter that you dressed
a certain way to fit in. It had nothing to do with it. You were here
to work on the show and it was important that you add your own self.

The Project helped me work with kids my own age and it showed
that something like that could be done. Sometimes you think about it
and you say how could something like that be done. But it was done.
I think we did a good job on it. Teenagers know more than they are
given credit for. Sometimes adults don't think of that. They say,
"Well, I'm thirty-five years old and how is a kid going to know half of
what I know? They haven't lived the kind of life I did." Working on
a show like this, you pick up more things because you are sometimes
working with older people and you don't have to be thirty-five or what-
ever years old to know certain things. A lot of times kids are just
passed over and they are not given enough credit, and people think that
you have to be old to know certain things, and you don't always have to
be. With this we could show other people that we are not as dumb as
you think we are. We have to learn a lot more in life, but we already
know a lot. When we worked in the hospital, the doctors treated us on
a one-to-one basis. It wasn't like they were talking down to us or
anything like that. When we worked with people at the Civic Center,
they really treated us good and not like kids. I seem to be able to
get along with adults and there have been times when they don't always
talk to you on the same level. There are relatives or friends of my
parents and teachers who have dealt with me on an adult level and not
as a kid. Well, The Project worked with both adults and kids where a
lot of my projects worked with one or the other. Student Council, for
instance, you work basically with students. Sometimes you worked with
faculty or adults in the community, but on the most part, The Project
with some of the shows you worked with kids and some you worked with
adults. With most of my things, I worked with one or the other.
Sometimes adults are thinking about things that concern them now. Money. Their job. They say they are concerned for the future, but it doesn't always seem that way. It seems that they are only concerned about what is happening in their lifetime and not always thinking about others. Teachers, I think, are different, because they are concerned about the future. Most of them are. Obviously, they must have some interest if they are teaching the people of the future. They're teaching the kids. I think teachers are different. I think they are special. They care more than some adults. Not all of the adults are thinking about themselves. A lot of them are willing to help and to give teenagers a chance now so that they can use these resources.

Kids know what other kids want to know. If an adult is doing the show on rock concerts, they are not going to know what teenagers want to know about rock concerts. An adult would be concerned about how much money is being made or something, but the teenager might be interested in the sound system and adults just wouldn't know. Adults would have to work with some stereotype of a teenager. We are all different and we can contribute to each other and say that is what everybody would want to know. We needed adults to teach us. We didn't need a whole bunch of adults. There would be somebody who would work the cameras and teach us how to do this, but we could learn how to do it. We didn't need to have an adult run the camera. Kids are competent and we couldn't live without adults. We do need them because they have lived longer than us and they will know a few things more, but we all have to learn from each other.

It gave me the kind of experience I never thought I could get, and to be able to, at this age, have the experience is something that I thought I could never get. To be able to work with really nice kids that I would have never met had it not been for this project. It seemed to give me some kind of outlook as to what I might like to do in the future. I think some of the kids, you know, they saw that, "Wow, I can use a camera and maybe I can get a job." Some of these kids were from York and stuff like that, and maybe if there hadn't been something like this, they wouldn't have been able to get what they could out of their life and they probably would just bum around or whatever. But now, they can see that they could be in TV or I could write scripts or do anything like that. I was getting to learn, once in a while if I had free time, a little about the camera, so maybe eventually I could use it. But you learn different things. You learn how to write up a script for yourself, and you get some discipline, because you would have to memorize it and sometimes in a short period of time. You would have to get along well with people because you would be talking with them.

I would have liked to see it go on and on, but it was money. It was an adult problem affecting us. That was one of the things I felt sorry for, that we couldn't continue and thought that something would
go on, and it had trouble going on. [The show should be on] important teenage issues. Maybe one on careers, because sometimes teenagers are so confused when you're in high school. You don't think about it until you're in high school. You don't think about it until you're a senior, the last couple of months. A show on jobs that would be open would be interesting. Maybe we could work with other states, maybe even other countries, if it got to be real big. Maybe we could have it work like an adult show almost. Have reporters that are in different parts of the world. I don't know. Show different areas of the world and show the similarities and differences. [Teenagers need] unity. Something like that, it could bring peace, maybe because if we start young rather than grow up and all of a sudden try to help each other. If we start when we are younger and just keep working up, we might be more together on our ideas. We would understand each other better, because somebody from China is not going to know something about York, or you're not going to know about some other country, and you might know more than you seem, but you have grown up listening to your parents or listening to other adults saying that they are so different. But we don't have a say in that and we might not be as different as everybody thinks we are.
Profile

VICTORIA BROWN

(Victoria is a Black inner city high school senior. She was interviewed three times in her home during the summer of 1983.)

Well, I guess I'll start at the beginning. I was born in London, England and when I was about six years old we came to America, United States. We have family over here, and my father wanted to come over. First we went to New York and then we ended up coming down here to York. My grandfather is White. My mother's father. My mother's half White and half Black. It doesn't make any difference. Color doesn't make a difference, not to me. People are people and if I don't get along with somebody, it's nothing to do with color. It's just that I don't like their attitude. I usually get along with everybody. Doesn't make a difference [within my family either]. They don't regret it. They don't, well, nobody could tell that I was ... I'm just saying, you know, this one's not White. I don't know, I guess because he's in Jamaica so they don't have that problem over there. Jamaica. It was nice. Too hot for me. It was nice, though. [Did you feel like you were going back to your roots?] Mm, not really. Just it was different, because I was gonna meet people I never saw before. That was the first time I ever seen my grandfather. He was real quiet. He wouldn't talk; he just sits there. He used to, I don't know, now he's just, he still has like a lot of land. He used to have animals over there. They don't have like, now they started having all these things about occupation. Back then everything was just farming. Well, my mother wanted to move and my father ended up over there [England]. They knew each other from Jamaica, but then when they moved over there that's when, I guess, they fell in love and got married. Everybody from Jamaica always liked to go to England first 'cause that's ... If they ever go back anywhere, it'd be to Jamaica. I don't like it over there [Jamaica] too much. It's more advanced over here. [Less prejudice in Jamaica?] Yeah. They don't care about, you know, White and Black getting married or just having kids. Whatever, It seems like they really don't, 'cause I never knew there was such a thing before as a White Jamaican. But in England, I remember, it was mostly Whites, 'cause I used to go to go to school, like nursery school and church. Everybody was White.

Well, in New York it was pretty nice, but it was too hot. It seemed like when the summer came, it was really, really hot, but it was nice over there. When we came down here, I liked it better. After a
little while we bought a house. It was nice. It was just that we
didn't like the neighborhood too much. It was kind of wild, people
hanging around the streets, all hours of the morning and lots of things
going on. Fighting. It was kind of fun living in a neighborhood like
that, you know, things always going on, but my mother didn't really
like it, 'cause you know, people break into our house, used to break
into the house, you know. Things like that. We used to have chickens
and roosters across the street. Pig. We had a pig at one time. The
neighbors, not us, the neighbors. That was what was the craziest thing.
This lady had about fourteen kids. They all lived across the street.
[My parents] thought they were crazy. They always used to get in argu-
ments, 'cause they were bad, some of them. David was bad. One time,
like we had a real big garden, and one time somebody went over there
and stole some corn and some stuff and it ended up that it was him.
And my father used to get into arguments with them. That's another
reason why. We really didn't get along with them too much with them,
'cause they were too bad and he [father] didn't want me being anywhere
really near them, 'cause they were bad. They did everything. They
smoked and... Smoked everything--cigarettes, marijuana, everything,
and he didn't really want me exposed to that kind of stuff.

Even though it wasn't in a really, really good neighborhood, we
had a house and we had a car and you know, it was all right. It was a
big house. That's what it was. It was just like the only thing I
didn't like is like, sometimes I just wished you could just take the
house and put it somewhere else. The neighborhood was kind of shabby
sometimes. It was the house across the street that really did it.
They were old. When you say old, like the youngest kid was around
thirteen, twelve, so it was like everyone was teenagers and older.
They really didn't care how the house was. You go in their house and
everybody had graffiti in their room with spray paint. I felt funny.
Like God, my mother would kill me if I write on the wall, you know.
It was like their mother didn't really care because the things they did
when they were younger. One of them was having a baby. She was like
fifteen, and the other ones, they smoked and they came in when they
wanted to. They just did what they wanted to do. I think a mother
that would let the kids spray paint all over the ceilings and walls
and just do what you want to do, she really don't care too much.

Oh, at first we were living at the other house, but we bought
this one also. So he bought this one and he had the other one, and um,
after a certain amount of time, like they, that's what made us move.
They're redeveloping the whole area over there. They tore down all the
houses, but they weren't tearing down just the little street we lived
on, and my father said, "Well, since they're doing this, we might as
well move" and he sold it to the company that was next door, and then
we just came and moved over here. Plus he wanted to move over here,
so he could what was going on with the tenants and stuff. That way he
could keep an eye on stuff. By the time we moved over there I was in
ninth grade, tenth grade. Started going to public high school.

Moving here was different 'cause the houses are nice inside. They're cleaner, no roaches, that much, you know. That's one thing I can't stand is roaches, and in the other house we exterminated and exterminated, but you can't get it. But when you live in a neighborhood where they next door and everything, you can't get away from 'em. And it was just, they had rats next door also. And you gotta be real careful. It's just that my mother wanted to move over here. This one is quieter. There's not that many kids in this neighborhood. The people around here are like older. Like just husbands and wives, kids grown and gone. And you hardly ever see kids coming from school. There's not that many friends. Like over where I used to live everybody had kids our age, the same age. Over here I have like two friends. One of my friends moved upstairs. I didn't want to leave my friends, but since my mother and father said it would be a better neighborhood... Better, I mean, just looking. Better looking neighborhood. More peaceful. Looking? Yeah, [that's important to me]. I don't mind all the noise. When I say noise, it's kind of fun living in a place where, you know, everyone seems happy. Well now, I don't know about my parents. They were happy enough, but I mean, it's fun where you see everybody playing. If they working or just playing together, everybody gets along really good. But it's not so fun socially, you know [in my new neighborhood]. If you wanna have fun, you go somewhere else. When I get older and have my house, I don't want to live no way like that either [on welfare, poor]. I just want to have my own house in a nice neighborhood. That's because as a child you don't think about things like that. You think about, you know, your friends. You just want to have friends. You don't really think about, well, this neighborhood is... It was just that when I was younger I thought that I'd rather be in a neighborhood where all my friends are and have fun. It was just that I always felt that I'd rather be there with my friends being happy than move out to somewhere where the snobs are. That's how I felt.

Yeah, it was a good decision. Almost everybody moved now because they tore down most of the houses over there 'cause they building a mall or something. Over here is more peaceful, but maybe that's good. Having a lot of friends around you is good and it's bad 'cause sometimes you don't want to do your homework. You want to go outside and play. Have fun, you know. Over here there's really nowhere to go except, you know, upstairs. Now that I drive I can go. So you know, so we just moved here. In the sophomore year in the summer. I thought it was gonna be boring, but it was all right. I got in the CETA program with The Project which was good.

I think I was around seven, about then, seven or eight, and I was going to Kaufman. First teacher was Mrs. Norris or something like that.
It was hard going there since I still had an English accent. So funny with all these people talking different, 'cause everyone's talking with a different accent than you are. You feel out of place 'cause everyone talks different. Then I lost the accent. I was really into my schoolwork. I used to get good grades all the time. Used to get about straight A's all the time and my mother was kind of strict about my schoolwork, you know.

In seventh grade I went into middle school. I took the bus. We, um, took the yellow school bus and that was with Project Concern. Used to go way across town and go to ... That was different. I really didn't want to go there, but my teacher, well, 'cause everybody was going to Fischer Middle. Because in sixth grade, I had a teacher Mr. Murri and we were like the accelerated class and he felt that we would, you, know, get a better education if we went [there] instead of going to Fischer. I really didn't think about that. It's just that everybody else was going practically to Fischer. I was kind of happy [to be a part of the program], but it was just that I didn't think that I was going to know anyone there. I was glad that somebody felt that I deserved to go over there, you know. [My parents] wanted me to go there.

The classes weren't all that hard. I guess, you know, just what it was was really, it was like SAT for sixth graders. It was sort of like that. And what it was, we all took like a test and I had the best down there. But it wasn't like we were anything all that, you know, special, it's just. . . This was junior high school, seventh and eighth grade. They were all right [faculty]. Their attitude. You know, it was not like they were just there, you know. The teachers good-by, you know, leave, you know. They talked to you. They understood you, you know. They taught, also, but you know, they didn't just act like it was a job, "Oh, I can't wait to go." [The school] was nice. Nobody ever heard of it, but like you say Kaufman and nobody ever heard of it. Just like, maybe it's in the boonies. Um, it went up to eighth grade, so I had to go to high school.

You know you have different levels of classes and they just figure, well, you can deal with this, you can deal with that. And they make up the schedule and send us to whichever high school. My mother said I should go to York High, because she knew we were gonna move around here sooner or later and that way it's real close. Most of the people went to Horton. I really didn't want to go to York High either, because everybody in my neighborhood went to Horton. But my mother sent me so by the time we moved over here I just won't have to change and everything.

High school. I didn't like that. I did not like that. I did not like high school. I didn't know no one up there at all. I don't know. I just didn't like it that much. Freshman year was real hard.
That was just what I didn't like. I didn't think Kaufman prepared me that much for high school, 'cause when I got to high school, it was like, freshman year was real hard. I had this teacher Mr. Woodard that he was in the army. If he put your name on the wrong side of the paper, You get an F. I didn't like it that much. I thought they were too hard on us. My sophomore year were over here, moved over here.

Be starting junior year, I guess, this year. Look forward to going back to school. This year was also a good year. I did pretty good in school. Got involved with cheerleading and student council. I wanted to be a cheerleader, so I tried out at the beginning of the year. I made it. Stayed through football and basketball season. Felt good, 'cause we went on all the games, and you know, it's like we were important to the team. I was the treasurer [on the student council]. Well, I think I wanted to start participating in other activities. Good for your record and other things. I'm kind of popular in school. You had to be [popular] to get elected. Just being friendly, having a lot of friends, having different kinds of classes with different kinds of people, you meet people. [All that is important to gain popularity.] I'd rather be treasurer, 'cause you know than vice-president or secretary 'cause you have a lot of responsibilities as vice-president and I work and stuff, and I didn't want to have any problems. Plus I was a cheerleader also at the time, so I just stayed something that was, you know, mediocre. I was kind of proud of myself, 'cause I never used to get involved in anything much.

Only thing I had a problem with was one of the teachers I really didn't like 'cause she was prejudice. Everybody know it. Okay, first of all, she really didn't like Black students, 'cause it was obvious. Example? It's just that she would treat us different. Like we would be in the classroom and just attitude. Like when someone overdoes the fact that they like a certain person. It's so obvious that she don't. Like "Oh, I just love Black kids," you know. That kind of stuff. That's just, "Why are you exercising if you know we don't care?" But she was kind of, she left after a little while. That was my English teacher at Fischer. That's an integrated school, but Kaufman was mostly White. Fischer had Spanish, White, everything. It was like a mixture. But then when I went to Kaufman I felt a little funny 'cause almost everyone was White. Most of them were awful. Some of the kids were awful prejudice, 'cause I guess they never really been around Black people. Like, um, I remember this girl named Susan. She was prejudice. She used to like, um, we were like, we all had industrial arts class and I remember she used to, um, I mean I think she thought it was gonna rub off on her or something. She was that far gone. I remember one time asking her to use her pencil, and she said, "Oh, I don't have one" and then this other girl Janet she asked her the same thing, and she goes, "Yeah," you know. And it was just, it just clicked in my mind. It was other things she said and did. It's some of the things they said, plus they tried to play it up 'cause they know you
can't just go around saying, "I'm prejudice" you know and not get in trouble. But you get people really upset.

I got along with mostly everyone except the people that didn't really like Black people. I haven't faced too much. I haven't faced any prejudice since I got in high school or just thinking about things. I like being a Black person. I'm serious. There's a lot of things going on in this country, you know, that there's still a lot of discrimination. Things aren't all the way equal. Not yet. Things you read about, just hearing, you know, like that election business they have with that mayor in Chicago. And all they make is such a big fuss about, gosh, a Black person is running. They act like big deal, you know. They act like the world is gonna come to an end. I should probably start seeing prejudice when it comes to getting a job or doing things. When you get older, you probably see it. But right now, I really don't.

We had fun all the time. I had Sandy and Renee. We used to roller skate all the time at night on our street. We all used to sit out on her proch. There was one porch everybody used to sit on. That was Sandy's porch. I don't know. It was just like that was the hang-out. Everybody just sat on her porch at night, you know. We used to have fun. We used to have block parties. I remember those. I forgot who sponsored it. And everybody would be out there dancing. They would have music and everything.

I saw it [smoking], of course. Can't really hide anyone from that. If you don't see people doing it, you're gonna see it in school a lot. That was worse. I thought it was stupid. I don't know. What is smoking? Burning paper. I don't know. I can't explain it. It doesn't make sense [either smoking marijuana or cigarettes]. Mess up your lungs. [Peers don't have influence] not for smoking or anything, you know. Maybe staying out late or something, "Come on, let's go here or something." Not smoking. When I was like seventh or eighth grade, well, that's when I started hanging with that girl, Sandy, the one that we always used to sit on the porch with, you know. I always used to go over there. We used to not really go out, but you know, just hanging around. Well, at Kaufman we were supposed to be so, I don't know, goodie-goodie, but people over there were just as bad. I remember one girl. She used to all the time smoke, and not cigarettes you know. Marijuana. She would say, "Don't you wanna try this?" She was also in the accelerated program too. We were friends. She was kind of crazy. You just say no. We became good friends though, 'cause she couldn't smoke in school. Sometimes in the back you'd see her smoking maybe a cigarette, but, you know, outside of school she was all right. Like after school I would see her, but like we lived on totally different sides of town, 'cause I got bussed over there. 'Cause those were your closest friends, the ones who came, the people on the bus and those became your good friends, you know. Every day traveling to and from. So
you made good friends on the bus, and like, there was three of us. They always, they gave us all our classes, well not classes, but some of us, some of our classes like homeroom. They put us together by last names and we all became good friends. Oh, I had friends like that [academic].

When it comes to school I know that I do my work and things like that though. You know, I wanted to be able to go out more and stuff, but I couldn't. Not strict, it's just that I never really used to go out that much. I was younger and I didn't have no brothers or sisters so I stayed at the house and read or did my homework or whatever. She [mother] always used to say, "You better do good in school." I used to could tell when I used to get my report card she'd seem to be happy and, "I hope you keep it up," and she always asked me do I do my homework. Stuff like that. She used to always make sure that I had it done. She used to talk to the teachers. [My parents] want me to make good. They like me being involved in things like that [cheerleading, student council]. You know, I wanted to be able to go out more and stuff, but I couldn't. You could say arguments with them more than discussion, but I didn't say too much. I had joined a volleyball team for a while. I was just starting to get away from the house, and you know, you get sick of it after a while, staying in there all the time. I felt that it, well hey, if I do my own work and stuff, I should be able to do things, 'cause if I'm doing something that is supposed to be good and all I should be able to like, to a certain extent, get a reward. I should be able to do things. [My parents say], "Well, when you get older you can do this." Everything was "when you get older." But then you're getting older and you still ain't doing anything.

I always wanted to go on television, even when I was a kid. It's work, but it's not "work" work. It's a fun work. It was a lot like you were having a big party going on. I first got involved with The Project through the CETA program in the summer. They [CETA] have like a summer program, I know they have it in York, that you go to and fill out applications and at the bottom they ask you what you want to do and on there they don't have The Project or anything. Like you know, library, and do you like taking care of kids better than cleaning the streets. They had that, too. I was surprised [that the job was working on a television show]. I mean, at first I didn't know what to expect, but I was kind of glad. It was all work, but it was a fun type of work like art and things that took all that time planning, things would be where, and how's it gonna be done, when are we gonna get a chance to do it, and setting up, and the people not coming. Work, yeah, but I can't explain it. It's not like working. It's different. It's work, but it's fun, like you know, everyone working together, you know, ideas and . . . Some of them [participants] were nice. Yeah, some of them [were from York]. They were nice. [How did kids from the
suburbs react differently to the show from kids from the inner city?] To me it was the same, but I don't see like really a big difference between the two. Seemed like people from the city were a little less shy. Yeah. I didn't see that much of a difference.

The hardest part was planning it, 'cause it took a long, long time to come up with the topic, but then after that we made little sketches of what we think. Everyone had different ideas. Kept going over it and over it and over it 'till we finally got it right. Then we picked the parts that people were gonna do. The first time we thought it would be a good background where they had graffiti [in Pope Park]. We were gonna do it around the big tree and make it look nice, but then... It was about music. It was fun. It seemed like an interesting part [being the host]. That's why I thought I could do it. That's what I wanted to most to do anyway. I couldn't overdress, like you know, but I had to decide something in between that looked real nice, 'cause people gonna see me and for the show's purpose. Nobody really told me what to wear. I knew myself not to overdress.

[If someone didn't show for an interview or something], you'd have to find someone else or try to get back in contact with them. Finally get someone so you could get the show done. We got in contact with The Crew [musical group]. Well, we knew [the show] was about music so we knew some people that were in the area in York that they were really good and they were good at giving a hand. And they're supposed to be making a record, and I know some of the other people on The Crew. They go to York High and got in touch with them. I saw one of them. It was like four of them. I think I told one of them that we had a new show, The Project program that was about music and we wanted you to participate if you could just come and sing and stuff, and they said sure. It was like sure, TV show, right, they didn't believe me. I just called and said did they know me and afterwards Vinnie helped too, 'cause their manager, he's kind of involved that he does things with other people, so he helped get some more [kids] over there, finally. Not even near the end it seemed like it wasn't gonna get started. It got done finally. Everybody started hustling. Everybody started, you know, forget about these people, get these people. And certain things weren't getting done, because it wasn't that many adults that were in there, so it wasn't their fault.

Yeah, after that [summer] I came. After that we started meeting Sundays. Almost everyone left who was from the summer people. A lot of people had other things to do. Other people were there just for the money. [I continued past the summer] 'cause when I first started I said I'd do this without getting paid anyway. That's just the attitude I had, because I liked it. It was important to get the opportunity, 'cause it's good to have a little bit of experience and know something about it. We had less time [getting a show together in the Fall]. It was supposed to be on suicide. Most of the people there were already
there, but not from the York group. Only a few [problems]. Yeah, there were some people there I didn't meet before, but we got along okay.

I been there [cable company] a couple of times, but going there was different. It seemed like all the people that was working, 'cause you know, everybody there was . . . They don't seem nice. Only a few of them. Only one man. I didn't know his name. Like when we would get there early or something like about a quarter of six, or say something like, he'd say, "Aren't you supposed to be here at about six, you know, does anyone know you're coming?" Like he dislikes kids. I don't know [if his attitude was directed at minority kids] 'cause there was a lot of kids. Like when we interviewed. A few of them [adults] acted like changed people. You can't depend on some of them. You call them three or four times and they say they didn't want to be in it. They probably thought they'd never get on the air. They probably thought it was something that they wouldn't want to be a part of.

Well, the program was stopped. [We had meetings] I think right afterwards [after the summer], but right after that you all said the money was dried up. But then after a while I think they said they weren't gonna have the meetings for a while or something or another. Then it was about a year. Not angry, you know. I wasn't very happy about it. Didn't have funds or whatever it keep it going. Well, that's life. I think it was David. He said something about that they didn't have enough money. Not to pay, you know--not have enough money for the equipment and some other stuff.

"What were you doing on TV last night?" That's almost the same thing they all say. "What were you doing on TV?" It was good. It felt good, you know. I felt good for me myself, but then, you know, the idea of recognition I guess. I can't really explain. It's good to be recognized for just a lot of things, you know. Joining things helps you. Just being known.

[The show] helped me 'cause first of all I got experience that I never had before, and that was good because nobody come to me and said, "Well, you know, you wanna be on TV?" That was how it helped me. It helped me meet other people from all over and how to work with people. About how to do a lot of things that I don't know about. I learned that it wasn't just, you know, we get on there and talk, 'cause we had to plan everything. And you had to get in contact with a lot of people. There's a lot of things that people don't see when you just looking at the TV set. Have to try to get everything on time. Like I said, just the happy experience I had. And I had the chance to try it out, 'cause a lot of things you never try out to see if you like 'em or not. That's just one of the things that was good. It was a good experience. It's good because it gives you learning experience like you read about, you know. You ask someone now, they might not say the
same thing about it. For me it was just learning a whole lot of things that I never knew. Learning something new was a good experience, 'cause not a whole lot of teenagers around here are just hanging out learning stuff about television, how to work it, besides maybe in school, and they really don't go into all that in school. At least not at our school they don't. It just taught me a lot of things. It gave me a chance to be with all kinds of people, what they like and don't like. It helped me be more sociable with all types. Yeah, it was a good experience. Met a lot of people and got to work with all different types of people from different places. And you just learned about 'em and got to become friends. It's always important to have a new experience. You know, you gotta grow, 'cause you know, just try the things. You'd be limited if you don't. I think that's good 'cause like I thought I wanted to go into that field that'd help me. We had to learn, but it really wasn't really stuff like it. I mean, we didn't really have to rack our brain to think of things like in English class or something like that. You have to use your brain all the time, but I mean the writing and stuff, 'cause it was summertime and we didn't have school. If we wasn't doing that, we wouldn't be writing or things like that.

[Other teenagers] feel good [when they watch the show]. They say, "Hey, look at these kids our age doing something on TV," 'cause usually it's all adults. 'Cause you see young teenagers, they like actors and you know, and stuff for "30 Minutes," I think. I guess they get a lot of money to supply all that stuff. It shows, you know, how to get something. The most important part of it is what you learn from it and what you get from it. To everyone there it may be different. Some people may have just gotten money. Some people may be there just to be there. But you get a good feeling inside after you do it. That's one of the things that's important. You feel like you accomplished something you never did before. You were a part of making it.

We [teenagers] need to have something to be proud of, 'cause if we aren't proud of something, ain't nobody gonna be proud, because a lot of people feel that teenagers, you know, oh, they just listen to music, and you know, they just hang around and do nothing and that's not true. They [society] treat 'em kind of different. Certain people think, I can't just pin down some people, but like, some people like to, you know, some just don't really like them, 'cause like I said, they think all they do is sit around and don't want to work and stuff like that. [The Project] kind of shows that teenagers are able to do something worthwhile. It's something to be proud of.

The [general public] would think [the show] was good. I think so, because it was like a lot of different segments and was like all different types of music, all different types of people, and all differ-
ent color kids. So, it looked like no one could be saying "Well, it's only this way and it's only that way, 'cause there were all different types music and all different color kids. We had rock, punk rock, soul, Hispanic music, and Jazz. Everyone listens to music, even if it's different kids, teenagers. Everyone had a chance to like the show. They couldn't have said, "All it had was soul music so I didn't like." People would've tuned off. 'Cause it was all different parts, because since there was all different parts people was attracted to it.

[People] don't give [other people's music] a chance. The people, I don't know, the people at the top, I don't know who it is. Okay. For example, radio stations. You listen to every radio station, they almost all rock or slow, but you never hardly hear soul. WCRN and WFOR, those the only two. And if you hear soul music, it's at night. Late at night. Otherwise, it's all taken over mainly by White people because you could associate some and not really, can't do that 'cause everyone listens to all types of music. Not everyone, but most people. You mostly associate White people with rock, Black people with soul, Hispanic music. That's how it is.

[The Project] showed that all kinds of kids could work together without being prejudiced, without having all these problems. [One problem, however, was] everybody wanted an important part. Like, you know, you said who wanted this part and then there was two or more people who argued. That's the only part that I know. Everyone try to get the better things. That's how it is in anything. Somebody say, "Okay. I give you a limo or I give you this piece of junk, you gonna want that piece, but you gotta argue for the limo." [Cooperation] That's real important 'cause if you have something as a group when it's people in the group that's not really getting along, like you can't be, seem, appear as one, 'cause that's what you gotta be to get it together. If people in the group aren't getting along, you know, you'll be able to tell. Like all this fighting and killing each other and all that stuff. [The show] shows that we can get along together. Well, that's because people always have attitude problems. Not kids, grown-ups fight. Most of the people in general are grownups and killing each other, but it's because of attitudes. Some people just kind of, it's just some people got struggle and some kids get another kind of chance and all they know is struggle. There's a lot of reasons why. It's not all of us that shouldn't say, well, you know, all teenagers, but some people have that kind of attitude. But not all. There's always some of everything.

[Sometimes adults make teenagers feel they're less than they are], especially like when you get in the color problem, especially like Black teenagers and Hispanic teenagers. See, it's hard to talk about teenagers in general, 'cause they separate. They put the Blacks and the Hispanics, and then they put . . . ["They" meaning] on TV, any
place. Hard to talk about teenagers in general. Like when they talking about unemployment, you never hear them say teenagers in general. They say White teenagers and then they have a section for Black teenagers and Hispanic teenagers. It make it seem like, you know, it's a big difference. I can't explain. [I never felt like that in The Project] because the majority were Black and Hispanic. It was a mixture. [That] was a positive part, because you couldn't say, well, they all Italian and most of the prejudice.

It starts way, way back to slavery days ever since the White man seemed to have got ahead of us. We just kept this up. Part of the reason, it's hard to explain. Nobody can really explain it. They've been trying to figure it out for a long time. But if people like to stick to the ways they was, like I said, back in slavery days. From then on Whites started viewing people, as you know, Black people lower class. And then they [Whites] kind of got ahead 'cause they were the ones, you know, they got the education first and stuff. So they got a chance to establish themselves and start taking over, so everything in their minds, most of them, their attitude is that they have to control mostly everything. [Hispanics are in the same category] with the Blacks.

[Black and Hispanic teenagers have to work harder in life to be successful.] That's true, because just like I was saying, it's like they got there and they said, "Well, we gotta try to keep everything mostly to Whites," you know. Now since there's a lot of things and people going on, you know, laws and stuff, you can't be openly prejudiced, but you see it in everything, you know, companies and all that. Whites all over. [I experienced prejudice] in school once. You can see it everywhere. On TV. Talking about it. It's just so obvious. You see, okay, all the companies, a lot of these companies, a lot of people when they say unemployment, when they separate the Whites from the Blacks. Who got the higher unemployment? The Blacks. A lot of things like that you hear going on. You know, it's just like, I hear, like you hear things like about maybe one day there will be a Black person running for president. It's just this thing of like White people are supposed to stay ahead. It makes me feel like well, we're just gonna have to work real hard and get ahead. That's how I see it. Some people take other action like the Klu Klux Klan. I think they're real stupid, if you ask me. Walk around parading and talk about White supremacy. That's the thing, and then they put this into their children's minds and they teach this to little kids, and then they grow up with attitudes like that, and it goes on and on. It's getting less and less. Lot of people, you know, Whites going to school with Black people. It's getting better, but it's always gonna be there because they gonna pass it to their kids and their kids gonna pass it to their kids and they're really gonna preach it.

Schools are becoming integrated, but there's a whole lot of prejudice still here. It's just now it's not so talked about and not
so . . . 'cause you can't show it now, because especially if you're an employer or something. Can't show all that. It's getting better, but it's always gonna be a lot of prejudice and they always gonna be ahead, I think, because all those years to catch up is a long, long, long, long time. When I say catch up, it's like y'all got a head start.

It's like since we were in slavery and stuff, they had reading and writing in schools and everything. Now, y'all have your status, nothing to do with status, upper class mostly. That's what it is. And now we still struggle to get from being, you know, classes, you know, lower human beings, lower class. Now, we getting up there and that's good, but we have a long way to go. Because I think the day when I see a Black man running for president that'll be something, because a lot of people say he'd get killed real quick and that's true. It's true. If a Black man ever ran for president, he would probably get killed real quick because the Klu Klux Klan could not, I know they wouldn't go for that. The day when they see that, I think they'll all just get together and . . . see, Martin Luther King got killed. But they [Robert Kennedy and King] were both, you know, he was White. He was also though for Blacks. He understood. He wasn't really, you know, a racist. If he was a racist, I'll bet you, against us, oh, they would've loved him. He would've still been alive. There's always something like that. Every organization or whatever, there's always usually a White leader. That's what I'm saying. They have the advantage. Just have to wait to find out. You can't really just, oh, one day, you know. You just find out as time goes by.
Profile

JAMES WHEELER

(James Wheeler is a suburban high school senior. He was inter¬viewed three times in his home during the summer of 1983.)

I moved to the Northeast when I was ten years old. We moved into this house here, and we haven't moved since. The things that made it different were: we have a pool here. I think there's a lot more free¬dom here than there was in Dayton. Living where I did all you had was the school. The playground at the school was limited to a slide and swings; the basketball hoops had no nets. When we moved here we had a choice of going to any of the pools. There was no public pools in Day¬ton. The school had fields, all we had in Dayton was cement. Here they had basketball courts with nets. They had baseball fields, in Dayton we didn't. Here they have pools we can go to, recreational parks, movie theaters, library that is within walking distance, a shopping center. Maybe it's my age, when I was here I was older and I was able to do more.

I liked Dayton a lot. I think it was important for my growth to move here, because of all the things I experienced. I had never seen the beach until we moved here. I excelled in more sports, I never knew what soccer was until I moved here. I had also never known what la¬crosse was, and I didn't play hardly any tennis at all. There's a tennis court right up the street. Maybe it's because there's more schools around. The kids were really nice in Dayton. That's what attracted me there. I guess that is what I look towards. All this freedom--the sports and the availability--really wasn't important, because my friends were. The overall attitude of the kids in Dayton was a lot better. I can remember times we would be playing football, and if I got hurt everybody would crowd around and try to help. Moving wasn't so bad be¬cause my friend had moved a couple months earlier before I moved here, maybe a year. That really hurt. I cried and cried. He called me while on the road. He called me when he got there, and I called him and wrote letters and really kept in touch. Then we fell out of that because I guess when I went to visit him a couple of times when he moved to New Jersey and I moved to Massachusetts. When I went to visit him, he wasn't the kind of person I thought he was where we were living when we were friends. Maybe his friends, his friends there and my friends here, we had different attitudes towards things. I really liked Dayton. The friends that I had there are really special to me and they were really good. I remember playing football after school. We would go home, do some homework and then play until supper time.
I was very close to Mrs. Farrell at the time. It was her style of teaching. She was very nonchalant. She was more abstract, random. She didn't really care how things were done, just as long as you got them done. She was really nice and really liked my potential. I was never a really bad student--that came later in seventh grade. I always got really good grades. I used to compete with my best friend there. We used to compete for grades to see who could get straight A's. This is right before we moved. He had another teacher. I can't remember her name. They were both fourth grade teachers. Mrs. Farrell used to always show me off and his teacher used to show him off. She then seemed very special. I came in and my mother came in to tell her we were moving and everything and we went to breakfast.

It started in seventh grade [problems in school] and I got my first D and I got that D in English. I seemed to remember working real hard and I talked to my teacher about it and I retook a test a couple of times. I got that grade up to an A. I got a D in science. I didn't want to go to a Catholic school. That was the last thing I wanted to do. I really liked the public schools. I told my mother I would go in ninth grade and she was edging me on in eighth grade to get used to it. Well, my mother [wanted me to go to parochial school]. My father didn't really care. She went to one. She always thought it was a great experience for her and thought it should be something I should have. It would help my grades--improve my grades. My friends would be different. The kids at the public schools were more harsh. She came a couple times to the school and she saw the kids dancing on the desk and not letting the teachers go by. I remember having an in-school suspension for doing something that I had permission by parents to do but my teachers didn't agree with it too much.

I remember my first day there [in the parochial school]. I walked over and I was all dressed up in my tie and shirt and my pants. I went in there and was just standing there and I could hear the kids talking: "Who's that? Why is he here?" That sort of thing. They had all come to school here before. They have been to school since first grade and this was eighth grade. I came there, and it was different. I was from public school. The Catholic schools are more secluded. I went into class and I made a few friends right away.

My grades just don't show my responsibility. What I try to stress is my grades aren't the only part of me. They [parents] keep saying that that is what makes your life. It is overall. If I don't apply myself, I get bad grades. By bad grades to them are C's. My potential is much higher than just C's. Freshman year I had all A's, B's and C's. My sophomore year I had more C's and few more D's. It seems the more popular I get and the more things I get to do, the worst my grades become. [If my grades are not good, my parents punish me.] Punishment. You want to see punishment? You haven't seen punishment. I have no
use of the phone. This is before. They don't punish me now that often. My mother and father have just sort of given up, sort of speak on my grades. They feel that you are old enough now and you know what is going to make or break you and you are old enough to understand that, but they used to punish me. I used to have no phone, no TV, not allowed out, only one night on the weekend and only until 11:30. I had to do a certain amount of studying. If I had all A's I would be much better off. That is just something to do with me. I could get all A's; I just don't work hard enough. I don't know if I am rebelling against them or what, I just don't want to put that kind of work into it. It would make life around here so much easier. If my grades are better, then my relationship with my parents would be better.

Ninth grade I only had the friends I went to school with in parochial school. I didn't know anyone else. I met two other kids that I became friends with, but they seemed more the burn-out type. I dropped their friendship slowly. I went from St. Thomas to Central Catholic in ninth grade. It just meant that there were more people to get to know. Right now I am at the height of my popularity. In ninth grade I did nothing. I wasn't part of the student council. I got all B's and few A's and a couple C's for grades. I tried out for baseball. I didn't make it. I tried out for football. Didn't stay with that a lot. That didn't do much for me. In tenth grade I tried out for soccer and made the soccer team and that was a big plus for me. I was on bowling. I took up, because I was part of the TV show, I decided to go out for the ATV. I was on that for a little while. I was on a few things and later tried out for tennis and didn't make it. This year I have changed a lot. I am captain. This year I started varsity instead of just playing JV last year. In soccer I was voted captain this year and part of student council. Next year I will be president of student council. I am campaign manager for the president and he is soon to be president.

I don't know how old I was, but I started baseball and football real early. Yes, this is for the town. I remember playing baseball. I wasn't too good at it being out in the field, playing with the rocks while they played. I never paid all that much attention to the baseball game. In football I never put out the kind of energy that I was expected to, or that I should have. Football, to me, was more my friends playing nerf football. My father got into a little bit of coaching, too. He showed me my faults and what I could do to improve on my game. He explained to me why the coaches were angry. He told me that I wasn't putting out what I should be putting out. I didn't start organized athletics until eighth grade. I played baseball at St. Thomas. My coach saw me in gym and in recess and saw how I pitched. He just said, "You're on the team." I started pitching and was short stop and I could remember having a pretty good time with that. I then got taken off because I was caught with alcohol in school.
The big trouble was we had a play. We were doing "Bye Bye Birdie." After rehearsal we would talk about how much fun it would be to be drinking. None of us had ever experienced it before. A couple kids were chewing smokeless tobacco. They would put clumps in their mouths. I guess this is the time when you just experience all of these things. I don't know, I just got into this with a friend. He bought me some alcohol. And this wasn't the group that I hung around with, this was the other group that I did athletics with. There were two groups: an athletic group and an academic group. I hung around with the academic group, but the athletic group was considered the ideal group. I guess it was my way of getting to be friends with these guys that I only talked to when I played sports with them. I never hung around with them or did anything outside of school, and so I bought the alcohol and I gave it to them. Well, he gave it to me and I had it and I hid it out in the back, in the back of the school behind some trees. Then someone went out and got it and brought it into the bathroom and we all started acting like, "I'm not going to have any. You gonna have any?" Or "You try it." "No, I don't want it. You try it," and so on. So, it ended up that none of us had any. I don't know how we got caught. One of the nuns said to me, "I hear that you are responsible for it all." I said, "Yeah, I am." I was honest. She asked me who else was involved, but I wouldn't tell her. I told her she would have to find out from someone else. I didn't want to let everybody down. I didn't want anybody else to get in trouble. I figured I was the cause of it so nobody else had to get in trouble. I had to call my parents. My mother was all upset. My parents came in and had a meeting with the other kids' parents. The other kids' parents were really vicious. They were saying, "My son would never do anything like this. It's all your son's fault, he came from a public school."

Prejudice in our school is very heavy. You know I was brought up, my foster brother is Black. My mother's best friend Myra in Dayton that she worked is Black. I have been brought up to think that prejudice is not right and that you love Black people. You don't consider them Black, but just that they are White underneath. But then I go to this school and there is prejudice like you wouldn't believe. The Blacks have one corner and the Whites are all over. If you go to a dance, you don't see one Black kid or Hispanic kid. You see the Black kids take over in the sports and the White kids do their own thing. It just becomes a problem. I never thought of it as a problem until now. I find it tough to be friends with Blacks. I have a couple Black friends, but it is tough because when your friends say, "You talk to them?" But you know, you joke around. I stick up. Maybe people's own ignorance. My mother has talked about it and it is easier to say to minorities that I am better than you because I am White and you're Black. So if a White person has someone to look down on, they can find it easier for themselves. They feel like they are not the worst in the world.
I have a job. I am only allowed to work on the weekends. I used to work Friday and Saturday night but that shot my social life, so I am only working Saturday nights now. I make good money. I bus tables. I like it and I get along real well with the waitresses there and the hostesses and the other bus boys and the cooks. It's an experience that has helped me a great deal. Being that this is my first job and my liking it so much, I tend to think that working isn't so bad. I know it's different.

I heard about it [The Project] from my mother who started the program and my understanding of it was just for any teenager who was interested at all in TV production and equipment and stuff. Well, my mother had no babysitter for us and I guess I was dragged along. And she had taken me and my sisters and we all just went and I sat listening to the meeting while my sisters ran around with this dog. I don't think I would have heard about it. Well, she didn't care whether I listened or not, I could've sat in the car for all she cared, but I thought it was pretty fun, you know. It was interesting to get to sit in there and listen and talk to the kids and stuff, 'cause she really didn't make me or get me in a position. She really didn't make me do any of it. It was all what I wanted to do and I took the choice to go into the meeting and took the choice to follow up and become involved in it. I think she would've, but she just didn't want to push me into it. I think she really wanted me to get involved. If it was something that she would've pushed me into, I might have rebelled and shied away from just because she wanted that.

I thought the kids were really nice and I thought they knew what they were doing and they liked getting out there and actually working with the equipment. It was at Tom's. Tom Boland's and I really liked him. He really knew what he was talking about. He was just very impressive with his knowledge and the way he told us that the first few seconds of the program is really what people look at to see whether they're gonna watch a show or not. I just sat and listened as he went around the room asking questions to each person. I gave my input, too. I didn't do too much or say too much. There's something to it, learning. Like I wasn't bored and I just really wanted to get involved at that point. They [the participants] were mostly older. I was, I think I was fourteen or fifteen, somewhere around there, and they were older. And my first impression was well, you know, I'd like to be, just like maybe a little help around with the equipment and stuff, then I'd work my way up. And the kids were really nice and they were nice to me, and I don't know, they helped a lot. Just their attitudes and the way they were.

We just had other meetings that I went to and I put my name down on the list for getting involved like working in certain areas. It's
unclear what happened after that. It's just the meetings kept going and going. I thought they were great. None of them seemed too boring to sleep through or something, but they all seemed to have something interesting in them. A lot of the things in the meetings were repeated a lot, like the outline, and the form for the show, and how we were stressing it was for and by teenagers. And I think that's what hit me the most, was, it was you know teenagers were responsible for the shows. The kids would decide the topics for the show. It was brought up during some of the meetings in front of the kids and everyone would vote on it. The productions all went sort of like, we broke the segments up. The segments of a show. And we took who, what the show was gonna be about, the format. There were disagreements; there were problems, but they never seemed to present much of a delay in the show or not getting a show off. They seemed to get along okay, most of them anyway. A couple of kids didn't get along with other people, but most of them got along and were nice to each other.

One summer we came through a group in York. They and Black kids and minorities from York were brought in to help us with a show and to be paid. They would all get their wages, and they seemed to like it. They seemed to help us out a bit and they were interested in it and they didn't take it as just another job. They really did like it and most of them stayed with it, but not everyone got along too well. I think some of the minorities still had problems with some of the suburban kids that came across kind of snobbish, or they came across knowing a lot or taking charge too much. I think they didn't want, or they didn't need, that here on the show. They did at some points present a problem and nothing really major.

At one of the meetings I remember signing up for a committee. There were lots of committees or lots of roles. I can remember taking one of them and just working on that with a couple other kids. And from there I moved on to other things like, I think they had one person running a camera and stuff, and when we went to the meetings at the cable company to learn how to run the equipment. I think each person took care of a certain section of the production, of the show. And then from there, they would make the interview possible. They would set up the date for the interview and where it would be held. I was co-in charge of one of these interviews at the University of York and we interviewed some guy who worked with movies all the time. I guess he was a professor and I helped in organizing the interview and interviewing itself and setting up the equipment and stuff and I remember he seemed to be pretty good with us, though. He seemed to take it very seriously and he really liked it. I remember being really scared that I was gonna muf everything up. I remember being, you know, not sure whether things were gonna turn out the way they were supposed to or what we were gonna do or something. I was really scared and nervous and that stuff, but I think that helped me out with my next one. I
think I was less nervous for the next one. I still think that no matter how many times you're on camera, you're still gonna be nervous. There's still gonna be something.

I wasn't really that excited for my next interview. I mean, I really liked this one, but I think what I would rather have done is just worked with the camera. I really like working with the cameras and stuff. Maybe my problem was not wanting to take these responsibilities for fear of messing up, which sounds kind of wrong, but I just like working with the cameras. I worked with the cameras more than I interviewed and I liked working, you know, using the cameras to film. I remember filming a judge in South Warrington. I remember setting up the camera. We went in and we set up the lights and figuring out just how they would look on film and setting up the monitor and the audio and the visual and I really liked.

All productions took a long time to do, probably took a couple of months for one, but after we got started working on two at a time, three at a time, as long as we had what our format was and the outline set up. We started working on different things and people were assigned to different parts of the show.

I felt, well, there were different times, like riding over there I felt important. We were all in the car and I felt like we were all having a good time and I was with friends and I was with people that I liked and people that I also worked with, and I didn't feel pressure at that point. I felt everything was going smoothly and I didn't have to worry about it. Then during the time that we were filming, whether I was the interviewer or the cameraman or even just the audioman checking to see if the sound was coming over, I felt like I was being responsible for this production being taken place and I felt like I was actually accomplishing something important. I had the same impressions all through the whole time I was with The Project. I really thought it was a good program. I thought it was gonna help kids and prove to kids that kids are worth something, that they can do something.

Well, my school grades were never too good anyway, but my family was supporting me. They really thought it was a good show and they thought it was important to go and a couple of times my parents let me, you know, miss school to go on things that we needed to do during the day. It made me feel important to be in a show or in some kind of activity that would take place during school. Well, I never got a sense that they [parents] were really surprised or that they really appreciated my involvement. My father got mad a couple of times when I missed school on occasion. 'Cause my mother was sort of pulling for me because she was part of the program and she knew how big it was and my father sort of didn't realize or grasp the importance of the program or what it was really doing. He just thought it was like another activity and I think without my mother being there and helping me out,
I don't think I would've been able to go on the association trip 'cause I had to miss school to do it.

I don't know. I guess my interest just declined or that I thought the whole movie thing was just going into the dumps, that the whole production was just going into the dumps, too. I thought, for one thing, I was being less responsible. I wasn't taking responsibility in a lot of things and I wasn't, you know, I wasn't keeping in touch with other people and no one was calling me for things anymore and I wasn't calling anybody for anything anymore. It just seemed like everyone's interest just was declining and I think we stopped production for a while and we couldn't get the show going anymore, for a little while. It just seemed like it all went down and that it would all be started again, but it would all be started with new kids and stuff and a few old kids would stay there. I just didn't think about it anymore. My role just started to decline and my grades started to drop and I had to drop somethings, and um, I couldn't do as much in the program because of the other things in school or because of sports or because, I don't know, a lot of homework.

I think I was talking to friends about it and I think, I remember talking to one of my friends about it who I wanted to get involved, and he just said a couple of times as we were talking about [it]. He said, "Well, you've been telling me that this is what you want to do and this is where you want to go, but you haven't reached that in a long time and this has been a couple of years and you've, you seem to do the same thing over and over again." And I said, "Well, yeah, I guess you're right." I tried to pay more attention at the meetings and I saw that people's interest was really down and I saw that the adults were taking more control. I don't think I ever remember any of the kids going to any of the meetings at the cable company. These were meetings for the cable company, the managers at the cable company and then you and my mother and Donna that would go, too. I don't know exactly what was said at the meetings. I know that they were about funding for the programs and they were about what the expectations were of each party involved--The Project and the cable company. And the cable company won at certain things and we won at certain things and we just never got everybody situated. It just seemed like we were going around in circles from place to place trying to find someone that would give us what we wanted without having to give up everything that we didn't want to give up.

I thought about that [why the show wasn't funded] a couple of times. I think one of the problems is that the whole background of the show is to be for, by, and about teenagers. And that would mean that the teenagers run everything, from getting it on a station or from filming it to getting it on the station. I don't remember any kids or
any teenagers ever contacting any of the big stations or any stations or going to any of the meetings or anything. I think that instead of the adults going to the meetings, well, not instead of, but with the adults going to the meetings, there should have been teenagers that were involved. And with the adults driving all over the place to get us here, to get us there, and making arrangements with other people, I think teenagers should've been involved. I think there's a lot to be blamed on other people, too. The people that we interview, they're not taking us really seriously, but I think we could've worked around that. I think we did work around that a lot.

I think that the kids didn't take enough of a role in the show. I think that it was for, by, and about teenagers and I think we did accomplish that to some degree. The teenagers did take a big part of it, but I just think that the adults made a lot, or sacrificed a lot, or did a lot for the show. I mean, it was an adult that started it. It was an adult that got the funding. It was an adult that made contacts with the kids. It was an adult that showed us how everything was supposed to be done and how everything was supposed to be run. It was an adult that took responsibility for the equipment and the legalities of the show and, it's just like it seems the adult was the background of everything. I thought it was wrong, like at the meetings, that none of the kids were there. And I thought it was wrong that the adults were doing a lot for the show. I think for some things like the legalities, legal purposes, we need adults, you know, in one way or another, for like insurance purposes or something, we need adults. But I think they should just be there to say yes or no, not to say, "Well, look, I think we should be doing this," or "Look, I think we should be doing that," and I thought I saw a lot of that going on. I don't know, I may be wrong or other kids may not feel the same way, but it never really bothered me 'cause I sort of liked it and I liked the adults that I was working with. One of them happened to be my mother. I like her, too. It seemed to go really good. And I liked the show and I think it still has a lot of potential and I think it could work, if we can get more teenagers involved. I don't think, you never do have enough teenagers. I think you have a lot of teenagers and I think you have some that'll do this, some that'll do that, but none that'll do it all. I mean, we had over, I'm sure, over a hundred at some point, you know, throughout the whole thing.

I don't think you can place it [fault] in one spot. I think there was lack of stick-to-itiveness in the kids. I think the kids wanted something to happen right away and I think I was at fault at that, but I think I stuck with it longer than some. And it just seemed like everyone wanted something to be happening, something to happen right away. They wanted like to be right on TV without too much hassle, without working too much. And I did want that, too, but I think I waited long enough to see that and I never saw that. I didn't expect
us to get out there and put on a show like PM Magazine right away, I expected us to work our way through it, work out our problems, get better as time went on. And you know, these were all long range goals.

Well, it was money, too, that was a big problem. [Money is] very important. Too important. It's too important. If you, we, didn't have the money to have good equipment, we had to rely on the donations of the cable company and which wasn't too good. I mean, there were always problems there with the equipment, being accused of breaking this, being accused of breaking that, or getting equipment that was broken or the batteries were all worn out and they claimed they were in good condition, and all that, they had recharged the equipment. And it just seemed like if we had a lot of money, we could have, you, we would probably have ... It definitely would've been more successful, 'cause the kids would've been, we would've had money to pay the kids. No, I didn't find it critical. I mean, I had, I didn't even have a job then and I didn't care about the money. The money never bothered me. I mean, it would've helped. It would've been nice, but I don't think it would've motivated me anymore. But I think it would've for a lot of kids, for a lot of kids it would've kept them on.

Again, it's the adults' lack of trust in our abilities, I think [why money has been difficult to come by]. I may be wrong, but I think, you know, I'm sure there's a lot of corporations out there that they could part with enough, with the money that we would need to put the show on and not miss it. And I think that if they would trust us a little bit more . . . I just feel that they don't agree with our way of thinking. They think that teenagers won't be able to handle this or won't be able to handle that. I think there should be a couple of teenagers there [at the meetings]. I think the corporate heads should direct his answer, his statements, right to teenagers and see how they would feel, 'cause I would be sure to stick my two cents in.

Well, there were adults that I knew like my mother and Donna and then like I got to know you and I got to know the people that I interviewed and the people that we talked to. We didn't get to know them too well, but there were people we worked with, the adults we worked with at the cable company. I think that the more they got to know us, the more they found out how responsible we were and how willing we were to work and get a show off, the more they were willing to let us have more responsibilities. Like in school. They have you so set apart from the teachers who are the adults. And the way the teaching is done in school is, you get the teacher standing up in the front of the class and sort of the mediator between the learning and the playing, and you can't, they say when you can do this and they say when you can do that and stuff, and they don't, there are a few teachers that really get into talking with the kids as, you know, like one-to-one. I have a few teachers that'll talk. I don't really see it [lack of trust in teen-
agers] in our school 'cause even our student council and our clubs and athletics and stuff, all the adults get along really well with the students and we all really have the cooperation of the adults in the school. Get a lot of things done. I think that my setting is exceptional. I think that not many people have this kind of atmosphere where they have a lot of adults that feel the tangent is important too. Maybe going to a Catholic school is different, you know, than most of the public schools or even in York where a lot of the teenagers are thought to be really bad. I think it's a stereotype that's involved when adults picture teenagers as a kid in a flannel shirt and a bandana around his head and neck and wearing boots and a leather jacket and out to kill and listening to hard rock music and not working, you know. I think they see kids maybe not well dressed in suits and ties or dresses, but I think they see in a group that's not out to do something bad, but they're actually out to do something good and they set their goals high and they're out to achieve that goal and they're willing to do a lot of things to get that.

We went a couple of times when we were out at the Civic Center and we were interviewing the people that come to concerts, and like, there was one lady that was sort of the head of the ushers and she seemed to be really interested and I remember at the time I was only with one other girl and we interviewed a couple of people and we just talked to her and she showed us around and I felt really important to be part of it, at that point. I don't know why, it just hit me that I was doing something, it was just me and this other girl and we were gonna actually be part of this program that a lot of teenagers would be interested in 'cause it had to do with concerts and that's the big thing.

I thought they [adults] would think it was good that teenagers can work together and pull together to put on a show that previously was done by just adults and that no teenagers had ever done a show like this. I think they were rooting for us in their own way. I think a lot of adults think that teenagers aren't capable of handling responsibilities or capable of working together or putting out something of the same calibre as adults do. I think they think we have a ways to go before we can be called adults and do what adults can do. And I think that's a lot of what's wrong. I think a lot of teenagers can do a lot. Just like when you call to make an appointment for an interview or when you, even if you've ever gone up, like when you're a kid, and you've gone up to buy something or you've gone up to like walking in a store to ask a manager something. You got all these adults come in and out and asking him and he asks them if they want help and he asks everyone if they want help and you're sort of like just standing there. And then that's sort of like the adults preferring to talk to other adults.
At the time when I was part of it and playing a big part of it, I never thought about it, I never sat back and figured out why is it so important. Why do I really like the show or why do I work hard or why do I go to all the meetings and stuff. But even now I couldn't really tell you. It was just something about it that I really liked. Maybe it was feeling privileged, feeling that I'm on the squad of The Project and being part of a TV show, you know. Everyone watches TV. You go to school after it's aired. I mean it was aired on the channel no one watches and a lot of kids saw it then. First I was surprised, then I was sort of happy, and then they started asking me about it and I really felt really good. I felt like I was real important. I felt like I was special. I'm sure they [the other participants] had the same kind of feelings. I really don't remember talking to them about it. I remember a couple of people saying, "Did you hear that the TV show was on?" and it was never a big deal, maybe because it was never on a big channel. I remember being asked by a couple of people what was going on, when was the next show on of The Project.

I don't know, I felt that my involvement in it helped [my feelings about myself] along a bit. And it helped me, you know, understand a lot of the things that go on behind the TV camera and behind the scenes, and how many people it takes to get a show, and I learned to appreciate the time and the money was involved and the TV program. It showed me how well teenagers can work together. It showed me how incapable some adults think we are and the reality of some adults not willing to work with us. I still like working with equipment, with my hands and my mind and I like computers and I like, you know, I like working with the TV cameras and stuff. But I don't think that's the kind of field I want to get into. I don't know. My field has always been like physical sciences and stuff, which still would require using the equipment. But um, other than that, I don't know where it's affected me or where it could help me along.

I think it helped a lot of kids out. It gave them something to do over the summer. You know, it gave me some place to go, something to occupy my time during the summer, something that I enjoy doing and it helped me to understand a lot of things about television. It gave some kids a sense of responsibility. Gave some kids, like me, I felt like I was doing something important. I felt like I was helping other teenagers by putting on this show to be aired to teenagers primarily. These are the people who are gonna be watching it. I learned more about the topics that interested me and my, you know, my colleagues that I was working with and to show other teenagers the background and stuff. Like we did shows on like the music world. We did a show on concerts and stuff, and um, then I've always wanted to know what went on behind the concert and what, how many people attended it and how many guards were put on duty and what all it took to put on one concert.

It's just a different type [of responsibility]. It's a responsi-
bility that they take on their own. It wasn't forced or nothing. Well, each person joins The Project because of a particular interest in it themselves and they stay with The Project because they like it or because they have friends there or because there's something they want to get out of it like the camera that they want to pursue and each person gets a different thing out of it and each person takes the responsibility for something inside the show. Teenagers need responsibility to keep their lives in line. Like if they don't accept responsibilities, when they grow up . . . I felt when I took responsibility it scared me. It scared me to death 'cause maybe the interview that I was supposed to make wouldn't be on time or it wouldn't come right, the impressions I wrote wouldn't be good enough, or even when I was running the cameras that I moved it too much or that the lighting wasn't perfect or that the color didn't come out right. But you need to take those, you know, to handle the responsibility, so you can go and handle bigger, more important responsibilities. I just think that if, like I take a responsibility, that's something that's getting me one step further and making it one step easier every time I take the responsibility and every time that responsibility is followed through and done correctly, it's a lot easier to take my next responsibility and to move. I think to feel like you're important is to accept the responsibilities and to handle them well and I guess that gets back to the responsibility role and what it takes in the show and in teenagers themselves. But when you feel important you feel like an adult, I guess, something like that. I felt important when I went to student council meetings and when I played a big part in it and I shot out a lot of ideas. Now I'm part of the Safe Rides Program which is important to me and it helps a lot of other people.

Feeling important? I guess you have to be important to know. When you get out there and you do something or you handle something, like when I stay home or when I work, I feel important. I feel like I'm accomplishing something and I feel like I'm working with other people and getting a job done and accomplishing something makes me feel important. Not just accomplishing anything. I can accomplish tying my shoes, but if I can accomplish something that helps other people . . . I think The Project was more important to me than student council or soccer or tennis.

Every time we went out on location to film something you had to work with other teenagers to get to know what to do, you know, what to say, to know how to set up, to know how to, you know, get everything organized to film, or the interview, or whatever you were doing and the same thing holds true at work where I work and the other teenagers that are involved in it. It's just a sense of cooperation that you have to do. I don't know, I sort of, a couple of times I accepted too many responsibilities to try and show off that I was, you know, that I was there longer, that I knew what I was doing more than other teenagers,
that I wanted to prove that I could do this and do that. I guess that's competition in a way, 'cause I messed up too, and they messed up and I could see the same thing happening to them that happened to me later when I was a senior member of the show and I was there longer than the other kids.

New York. I want to see us go to New York. CBS. I think our show could be as big as PM Magazine or Evening Magazine or whatever they call it or Hour Magazine. Just for teenagers. I mean they have Kids' World, but it's just, I don't think, there again I've seen parts of it where the adult is on there too and he's, they're always, you know, adults are backing it or running it or something. And I think this being the only show for and about teenagers, it could be a great opportunity for the teenagers to express themselves and prove themselves to be adults. And I think it would help teenagers use their extra time usefully, you know, and get out there and do something that will help other teenagers and help other people, too. [The Project] helps teenagers. It helps each individual that takes a part in it, and it helps society in one way or another.
(Brian McDonald is a sophomore at a state college majoring in corporate television. He was interviewed three times in his home during the summer of 1983.)

Except for the first six years, [I] lived here [West York] for fourteen years. [Moving] wasn't that big an impact at all, 'cause we were all pretty young, but I was only about six years old and all I knew is that on my street there not that many kids my age at all and it was not really that close to a lot of schools. We decided it was time to move. They checked a few towns, but they knew they already had friends here that lived in West York [and] because we heard there were a lot of good schools in West York in general.

My brothers are, one's six year older than me, one's nine years older than me, and in general, there was more of a separation when I was younger between me and them. I mean they were off in junior high school and I was still on the elementary school level at that time. And they, generally you know, there was less of a type of communication situation. There was brotherly contact, but um, it's just that they were a lot older than me, so they hung around with each other more than I really hung around with them, 'cause they had older friends and everything, and it just turned out that way. I think out of my brothers I'll probably be the most successful one because I have, well, they both are pretty, they're both smart and they both have drive and ambition in general, but I think that out of the three of us though, I have a certain, more of a hidden inborn drive in achieving and being more successful, 'cause like I won't say which one, but in high school, they didn't take it seriously as I had taken it, and I even come out higher than them in the end. Not that they couldn't, they probably could've. I know at least one of them could've come out way higher than me, but they didn't take it seriously like me, and I've always taken life so much more seriously.

Well, I'm going into television now as a major in college, and I think the reason why I chose television is because all my life I've been involved in some type of technical aspects of various hobbies and things like that, such as, as long as I can remember. When I was a little kid I used to work with electronics and gadgets, and my parents used to be amazed. As I got older, I even did a little looking into reading and learning about electronics in itself and I never really got
seriously into it, but it became a hobby. At one point last year I was going to Radio Shack, in my senior year of high school, like maybe, twice a week or so. I was picking up parts and supplies, and I'd make gadgets ranging from FM microphones to flight-controlled battery operated switches, and, you know, gadgets like that. And then I got into television. I liked to use my hands, in general, and when I, in doing anything, in making things and doing my work in general, I don't think I could really be a desk worker or something like that. Just working with a pen and a pencil and all that, 'cause I have to use my hands, and um, the reason why would be, uh, because I have in me, my parents noticed when I was little, like an inborn drive where I'm very, very stubborn. I never ever give up, and if I don't know how to do something, if I couldn't figure out how to make something into a gadget or whatever, I would keep on pushing and pushing and pushing until I finally did it or got as far as I could. And that's an inborn drive where ... I never give up.

Started becoming more interested in [electronics in junior high]. My parents bought me this big Radio Shack thing. It was this, um, type of kit in a box, and it had transistors and dials and had numbers and things, you know, the meters and everything like that, and you know I made a lot of gadgets and things and it fascinated me that just by taking wires and connecting them to all the various little parts with just something like a little battery cell, the amazing things you can do in this world with electronics, and it just fascinated me and I followed it on 'till then. I haven't had much time though, now in my college years, to do anything with it, plus not the money funds. Most of my work in electronics was on my own, and I never really took it seriously enough. I probably could, later on in my life, taken courses in it. I probably will wind up doing that someday, if I ever try to make a career change. Don't know yet.

I don't know exactly where it [interest in electronics] came from. It was probably from the child who used to tinker with things. This is kind of a little off base, but it's kind of funny because, uh, it's a known fact that a lot of your famous inventors like Edison and famous people like Einstein and all of them, they all had like a hidden drive in them when they were younger. That was interesting. Like some of them weren't even passing school, and I was average in school. But they had like a hidden drive in them where they, I didn't mention it this way, but I always got possessed with a project or something. I guess it came from the fact that I was always stubborn as a child and ... Once I started a project or something, I refused to stop it. And the funny thing is after that project I had to do more of that kind of project to the point where I even got possessed with just the idea of keep on doing that. I think I've taken everything apart ever since I was little. I took apart, um, some little radios, transistor radios, AM radios, about a hundred of 'em. Naw, I think that's an exaggeration, but AM radios, um, clocks, little toys, gadgets. I played with it [a
toy], but eventually I usually took it apart.

Naw, I didn't play baseball. I hated it, because I was never any good at it as a little kid, and I always hated picking up the bat 'cause it wobbled around like this when I was a little kid, and it just was a heavy bat, and I just didn't like playing baseball. I was terrible at it. I was good at whiffle ball, and I used to play kick ball, and all stuff like that, but I was rotten at baseball. Oh, yeah, I played baseball and football. Also, a child that young wouldn't be extremely coordinated either, and I wasn't particularly that good in sports. I just spent a lot more time, you know in general, with my hobbies when I was younger. It [lack of skill in athletics] definitely did contribute to it 'cause that factor caused me to look for other outlets and in my writings and the expressing in things that I do and being stubborn about any projects that I started and always finishing them. I think that took a lot of time. Of course, I didn't have a normal childhood playing baseball, whiffle ball with all the other kids in the block and stuff like that.

I've always been stubborn. I think at first it might have emerged in school in general. I did get some help. I was a smart student, very high IQ in general, but um, I did get some extra help in general, because I had problems in mathematics, learning situations, and that was about it. And, I don't know, I just have a hidden inborn drive. I think it was expressed in other forms, in other things. You know, it would be expressed in writing. Even when I was little, I used to write, and they just noticed the idea of expression in general that whatever I did was expressed dramatically, in a way. I think junior high school was a confusing time where I got more into electronics during my junior high years.

When I was in junior high school, I was a late maturer in a lot of ways, mentally and in other ways as well. See 'cause a lot of the other kids when I was in my junior high school years, my early years, acted a little bit older than me, and it was just because maybe I was a little more immature, and it took longer to become older in general and um . . . Yeah, um, because I was more, um, not childish in general when I was first starting . . . because I was, you know, more childish in general. Well, let me tell you. When I was in my young years in junior high school, I didn't get along too well sometimes, and, just in my earlier years, got picked on more than the average kid would've been picked on, and that was an indicator. But as ninth grade came along, I started acting more sort of like my age as I got older. But all kids went through that. I just went through it a little longer, being teased or made fun of in situations.

Everyone was excited to [go into high school]. They just wanted
to get out of junior high school. At the same time I felt the same way as everyone else. We all were a little afraid, because now we were big ninth graders, and this was before the change in the system of ninth grade being in the high school. It was the last chance to be ninth grade in junior high, as a matter of fact, and we were all at the top of the row. We were the king of the hallways. Nobody could push us around. We were up on the top of the pedestal. No, I never pushed anybody around. I was a nice kid. Oh, this is how we all felt in general. You gotta understand that when you move me in seventh grade, you know, like at the bottom of the pile there, and then we moved up to ninth grade, we were at the top of the pile and nobody could push you around or pick on you or anything, and you felt like you were the big in-charge person. You know what I mean? 'Cause then we went into high school, and you get in there in your freshman year and you're talking about being at the bottom of the ladder again.

I was just thinking about how it'd [high school] be interesting, because um, I had friends in junior high school in ninth grade like I said, but I didn't have as many as I wanted, and I felt that when I went to high school, it would be a better chance because there'd be so many different people from various backgrounds and various schools from around the town that you'd meet more people. I looked at it in a positive way, but I also looked at it in the fact that you'd be in the bottom of the totem pole again. But I figured we were all gonna be in the bottom together, so it's not so bad. The transition wasn't that much. I think the biggest effect of it was when we got there. Um, because in your freshman year of high school it's in this big, huge building they stick us in. We don't know anybody and there's all these older people around us and we don't know where anything is and we felt lost in the crowd and . . . Yeah, I felt confused. I was never a leader. I was a follower.

The classes got tougher. I did good in my ninth grade year, my tenth grade year I did okay, my junior year I did pretty terrible, and my senior year I did fantastic. I think tenth grade was a confusing year, because everyone was so interested in to know everybody. I don't think I did much socially at all then. Oh, actually, I did. I used to hang around basically with some sickly group of friends that I had in junior high school. You weren't being babied anymore as in junior high school. I mean, this is the real world. You gotta do your work and everything and it was hard. Well, see, I was prepared for it, because as I said, I had problems with mathematics and I received extra help, and that was the only thing I had a real, real big problem with and was worried about, but um . . . It [tutorial help] was through the school. And I knew I could count on it, if I had any trouble in that, and if I had trouble in other subjects, I could have that as well, but it was mainly for mathematics. I didn't have time for that [electronics and stuff]. I think I got more into that in eleventh grade, and that's why
my grades weren't quite as good in eleventh grade, I don't think. And as I had some friends from school, and I have a few other friends outside of school that I hung around with. I never, as a little kid, I didn't have like, well, we didn't have that many kids our age in the block.

I think the type of friends that I generally had in high school, um, they were nice, clean-cut kids. Kids who don't walk around in dungaree jackets and t-shirts and long hair. I really can't hang around with kids like that. [My friends] were more in car mechanical stuff, but they weren't gear-heads. They were more into doing mechanical stuff with machines. You had the jocks, you had the preppies, you had people who were gear-heads, you had average clean-cut kids, like these people I was friends with, and then you had people who were generally intellectuals who didn't do anything basically. I was friends with them for a while, but then as eleventh grade came, I wasn't really friends with them anymore, and there was a friend of mine who I knew off and on from junior high who went to high school, and I became friends with him. I didn't do much clubs at all in high school. I was basically the kind of person who's quiet, does a lot of work, and didn't do quite as much socializing as most people. I did more socializing as I got out of high school and college in general.

Well, I'm going to the State University now. I'm majoring in corporate video communications. What I see is that I was first thinking of going into motion pictures, then I realized the fact that you just can't get anywhere unless you know anybody. It's like forever. You have to take a two year unpaid internship there, if you even get that lucky to start off. And then I thought of commercial television. Commercial television is so jammed up, and it's like a dog-eat-dog world, and everybody's out to get everyone else. Everyone's down everyone's throats. So, I'm gonna go into corporate video, and what that's gonna entail basically is that, um, it's working in corporations' video type departments such as the Nestle Corporation. For instance now, they don't even have an advertising agency anymore. They do their own. The credit says Nestle Corporation Incorporated. [My future] is either advertising or some type of audio visual work within corporations. Yeah, well there is another reason why I want to go to college, too. Because I want to get a solid education in business. And corporate video, you gotta have a master's in it, and you also have to be trained in business skills, as well as college. And the good thing is, if I go this route, I can go either way. I can go into business or I can go into television or I can combine both. Most people who go to college now are trying to hold two majors. Those are not your majors, by the way, it's one whole new major or trying to hold two majors would teach you more than one route, because you can't count on one career anymore. You gotta have training for at least two things to get anywhere, because you can't count on one career. But I never really got
any serious training for it [electronics]. That's something I've always been yearning for, a serious training. And um, that's what I'm gonna do in college now.

The way that I got involved in The Project was that originally I had been working an internship for high school credit. That was like two years ago, um, at the PBS station in York, and they had a very unusual show they worked on a few times. It was on the master copies of the schedule called The Project and it seemed interesting and I was working for PBS at the time and I saw a lot of people coming in, kids and everything, and found out what it was all about and all that. And I met a lot of the people that were working on it, 'cause they usually worked on crew for some reasons, but they had so many kids there who knew what they were doing and everything that they were pretty much doing crew work as well. So I talked to a lot of them and learned about The Project and one particularly, Rich Carter. Talked to him about it, because I was looking into becoming in television as much as I could. And I also mentioned to him something about York Cable Access in West York using them for facilities, 'cause we had problems with, at the time I heard, where the PBS station wouldn't give The Project anymore free production or something like that. So he said come to one of our meetings.

I thought it was a really neat idea. I mean it was something like a concept that had never been done before. [The first meeting I attended] was at the York YWCA, and um, it was really interesting and right off the bat people had everything. They seemed to be organized. They had, for instance, no paper, but the coordinator of The Project was writing out ideas for plans and things, and it seemed like it was a really good flow-through operation. People would get some basic ideas or opinions, or also we'd ask if anyone had any new ideas for any other themes we could do, and it was all basically around one theme for a show. We also voted that in: what the theme would be. It gave a very good first impression.

There were a few meetings. I came in towards the middle of [a] show. When we started the next show, we got really involved into it. It was on handicaps, yeah. It was me and another member, Jim. Um, we interviewed some type of professor or something or other which involved some kind of knowledge of handicaps in particular. Oh yes, we made lists of questions, and then we broke them down, and I think we said them at the meeting and decided what would be the general. And we, you know, took instructive criticism of the questions, if they seemed like they would be too long or something and changed them around and took a lot of good advice from other members of the group in general. We had pretty much control over the questions, pretty much completely. It's
just that we were seeking professional advice from someone who knew more about it than us. If they thought the questions were a little too long, or if they needed to be more lengthy to fit the show... 'cause we're not professional writers or anything. It was pretty neat. It was all right. But I think that the interview, unless you meet the person interviewed, unless you had a particular interest in it, really should be, it was a little more boring than I thought it would be. It was a really good experience in general.

We had, I think, one camera in the office, and we talked to Dr. Taylor, and uh, we had, you know, the mini microphone hook-ups and everything. It was a basic and simple operation. There was only one camera in there. I was nervous about it. I had never done it, I had done TV, but I hadn't done an interview before, and I think I was a little too, you know, unrelaxed about it, but um, I was a lot younger at the time as well. That accounts for a lot of it. You had a kid there that was doing something at nineteen, and he's never interviewed someone before, and he was going, "I don't know if I look good." We had a good crew. Well, we had generally one person out of the whole group who did, um, most of the technical work, and, I think, he's had the most experience in it.

We interviewed this kid who was a real, real true success story. He had a handicap, I think he had muscular dystrophy or something like that. He was confined to a wheelchair with an electric thing on it to go forward, backwards. Um, I knew a teacher who knew him, 'cause he'd been in a few of my classes. I confronted him and asked him about it and he said, "Oh, I'd love to." I set a time up, and we met at the high school which I attended which I met him at, and um, we did a real nice shot of him in filming him out in the school field. I think it had something to do with the fact that in the building we had problems with the room size and getting permission to use certain areas of the building, and in general, the staff wasn't very helpful. Yeah, you gotta understand that, um, it was just near ending hours of the day. There was one period left in the day, and um, I guess they were just doing their job in general, to keep order in the school. There were certain rules they had to enforce, even though the fact is I think a lot of people in the high school system sometimes, the upper staff, over enforce a lot. But that's their job and that's what they have to do.

[The filming was done] right out in the field on the side of the school, and I think it was a better effect than indoors. It was a very, very windy day, and that gave a nice effect to it, and we all were literally holding onto ourselves so we wouldn't blow away.

Um, we did another piece which I think was a really, really important piece but didn't turn out so well. It was in general about the running of a movie theater. Uh, well, I set up the interview at the movie theater in West York, and we were gonna interview the manager there of the movie theater and we were gonna hear what it was like to
run a movie theater, and uh, the cost associated with it, what you could make the most money on, you know, just about everything you want to know about a movie theater that no one would ever tell you about. And the two people we were interviewing weren't that easy to interview at all. We ended up doing it with, they were very giggly. Here was these two girls from New York and all they could do was giggle at the camera. They were in their early twenties, and I couldn't believe it that they were giggling at the camera, and they're going, "I can't do this," and they're managing this big, multi-movie theater. About four or five people [made up the crew]. Just one camera. [We interviewed them] in the upstairs portion of the theater where they were showing the movies, the little square box in the wall. And we did the intro for it in the lobby. It was kind of fun, kind of amusing too, 'cause there was this big, open section to the mall and all the people standing around, even on the roof like this was major television. I did [the intro]. I got a lot of responsibility out of it. I thought I did a good job on it, too. It was fun. We finally got the interviews done with them. They were like just a little nervous in the beginning, and I don't know where it happened, but somehow the tape got erased. After we did the interview and the intro and everything, the tape was given to the editor and somehow it got misplaced with the other tapes we had erased, and so . . . I was steamed. Because I wanted that piece to go over the air, and they kept bugging me every time I went into the mall, "When are we gonna be on TV?", and I never had an idea. I couldn't go to that movie theater without being bothered for three months. "What happened to our piece?", "When are we gonna be on TV?", "Well, I don't know, there's a technicality in it."

Um, I played a small role in some other ones when we went out in the street in York and asked people questions. It was fun, but I found that you've got to watch yourself out in the public. People don't always like being put in the camera. We had this one guy who was yelling, "Do not point that camera at my face. I do not want to be on it." Maybe he committed a major crime or the FBI was after him or something. They [people on the street] kind of look at you like you're crazy. And people out in the real world, out in the city, are not expecting people to walk up to them and ask them questions. It's like, in New York you try something and they say, "Get away from me, you nut." Something like that. [People were] kind of shocked or dismayed or giggle and laughing. Didn't expect someone to actually come up to them and ask them a shocking question. It really got people off the ground. We got some really interesting responses. Yeah, that's it. That's double the shock [the fact that we were teenagers].

Yeah, we did a story on rock concerts, and how kids basically in going to rock concerts go there. They get high, and just the purpose of going there is to get high, to get wasted. How dangerous they [rock
concerts] are in general. Basically, what we were dealing with was a very, very big story. I think they broke us up and may have wanted us to all learn something out of it. They set it up with different people who had different jobs at running this particular, uh . . . We were broken up into various groups, so we could learn about the various facilities. They gave us little passes to get in and out. Kind of like, "Oh, I'm Mr. Bigshot." You'd go to the door, bang on the door, show your passes to the window, and they let you in, and all these people come crowding behind you, and they slam the door shut. We were such a, you know, small operation compared to this huge story we were trying to undertake. I mean if you took CBS and they did the story, they'd have the clout. They know that they have the power, and if you don't agree with them in this place and let them do their filming and something, they can bend you around and make you into such a rotten story you wouldn't believe it. We were rinky-dink. No, we were never rinky-dink. We were a good organization, but compared to this story, they considered us rinky-dink. That was the biggest problem. Yeah, I felt that, because uh, personally, because of the way the director, how it seemed, and how everyone was treating us in general. They were just trying to push us around in various corners. I hate to say it, but like I said, if we were one of the major networks, and we had what's known as fear, they would've probably been much more agreeable with us in doing these productions, because I hate to say it, but if you've got fear and enough power to out-power them, then they'll comply with you. Basically, no one's gonna listen to kids nowadays.

We had some practice work in the studio, but I didn't do much at all in the studio work at all. When we got involved in West York Access Television, I was doing some camera operating work in the studio. I found working with the people I worked with normally fine, but I found the people who were running the studio access in general, can I say this? I found them to be, except for maybe one or two were nice, but the majority of them, especially the directors, I found them to be the rudest bunch of people I ever worked with. Well, they [experiences in the studio] were positive in what we did, but the attitude from the people who ran the studio, didn't make it as positive as it could be. We just learned the fact that these people, um, were not used to having a bunch of kids in the studio. They were used to having one man come and say, "Hey, can I borrow the camera this afternoon?" and go in this pet shop and put a little show on about pedigree animals or something. They weren't used to anything like this at all. And I think they wanted to keep it small or something. I think they were mainly shooting for a nice, little neighborhood television show. We, basically, played along, 'cause they were running the facilities, and we didn't want to blow it. Yeah, I think it was [communicated] mostly through The Projects' advisor, and um, the members of the group were instructed to just be cool about it and get along with him and just remember that you're the one that's being right and he's the one that's being obnoxious.
I think The Project affected [me] very positively. From the minute I started in The Project, I wanted to continue in it. I thought it was an extremely good concept. It was just beginning when I got into it. It was an organization that dealt primarily with situation problems and subject matter geared to teenagers in the fourteen to sixteen or seventeen year age ratio. And um, the crew itself was made from people that age or people a little older than that, I'd say from fifteen to eighteen, and that was the unique thing about it. It was a show done by kids, for kids, through the eyes of kids, and it wasn't anything like "Kids' World" or something. It was a really organized show, and it dealt with very, very solid, good topics. It just gave me a chance to express what I really felt about the television in general and my ideas and things of that sort. It made [my life] much more positive in a lot more ways. It made you feel like you had a feeling of accomplishment, that you were doing something very important, and you were doing something original that nobody else had tried before. [It gave me an opportunity] to express my knowledge in television. [The show] gave me a lot more experience in television and showed me what it was like to produce, not exactly produce, but make a television in general. It showed me responsibility in organizing things, make sure things are organized, um, showed me how to put something together like a show, and take responsibility. It gives a person a feeling of accomplishment, because everybody in the world needs success of some form, of being able to be successful in what they do, and seeing that they did something like The Project right out in front of you makes you feel like, "Hey, I'm getting a real good start in life. I really could use something like this." The Project is a fantastic concept. It's a fantastic idea, because in getting involved you can actually make television shows, get publicity for yourself if you think of a segment to do, and you get a true responsibility in making something, in general, working on a project, and that it could be a real boost for you later on using it on an application and things like that for a reference. Getting into colleges, in particular. I used The Project I think in four resumes and got into give colleges.

It did have some of its problems. I think all the problems centered down to one single problem. You're basically dealing with a group of teenagers and kids, who as I said, were within a certain age group, who were at a certain time in their life, depending, high school, and they have all kinds of obligations and things like that at home, and they're all spread out in various talents, and kids aren't quite as reliable in that age group, and um, getting everybody together was a big problem, and keeping organized, 'cause you had people spread all over the place. I think a lot of people from Northfield were involved in it, and because they were in a closer range, it was easier to, um, get this information done and everything. And any problems we had at all were connected with the fact that you were dealing with young kids in various spread-out areas. That's the problem, getting everybody to-
gether. It was no one's fault. It was just the set up of the group, really. And um, the training would take place by getting people together for training sessions, let's say, three nights a week. Unless you'd get truly dedicated people, like I thought I was kind of dedicated 'cause I never wanted to miss a meeting, and um, I remember once we just couldn't get enough people together on one particular night, 'cause let's say person A would say, "No, I can't do that. I've got a tuba lesson Tuesday night." Or person B would say, "I can't do that. I've got a test on Wednesday." And like I said, you're dealing with kids with such busy lifestyles, in general, that it's hard to get them together. Like for instance, when you're doing the big, when the big major TV shows made for network season people, you are talking about who are dedicated to this as a career, and the show is the only thing they have which is a major obligation, like, but kids basically have so many other obligations. I think [The Project was] somewhat time consuming sometimes and take me away, let's say, certain times on weekends, but I could work around it, basically. [It affected my social life] only a little. You would just have to maneuver it around school life, especially 'cause I was in public school at the time and getting out of public school for meetings, we'd have to do it in the night or afternoon, and if you had a professional TV crew of people who were much older or already graduated, degrees and everything like this, and work with people like Universal or something, you could get them anytime of the day from morning on and have it all done in three days.

I think it'd be very good for educational programs, possibly with some of the serious topics. In the lower school levels like junior high school and eighth and ninth grade level. You know, when you do a show on the facts about alcohol, the facts about drugs, the facts about what rock concerts are like and what they should be like, things like this, and if you show kids at a younger age, and you gear it towards them at a younger age . . . This would be kids telling kids, 'cause if you hear something from a kid or someone your own age, it's a lot better than hearing it from an adult, because adults in general have a different life-style. They see things in the world differently. They don't understand kids who have not yet seen or know completely what it's like in an adult world, and they see things differently, and they can get confused and things like that, and hearing something like good advice from another kid or someone a little older than them who know the facts can be very, very helpful. It is one of the important things about The Project. Kids talking to kids. Kids talking to kids.

I think there's a need for these kinds of shows, because um, young people aren't quite heard enough in this society, and because they're still growing in general and in attitudes and learning about the real world in general. Adults don't listen to them quite as much as they should, and um, I think there's a need for shows like this so they could express their attitudes, opinions. Let people know that they're there, that they want to have an active say, and they're like
dedicated members of the group who want to really have a say or a part in things, and let people know that they're serious, and they're saying, "We really want to make something of ourselves," and you know, I think it's a good way for people to express themselves who are younger, who can't really be heard by society as much. See, television is a very powerful media.

Um, contract with CBS. I'm being serious. If managed right, it could have been a completely successful organization, and I think it was managed pretty well, but there'd have to be more. It could be an entirely successful show. No, I think the show should spread out more. Into a lot of areas in the Northeast. From what I've heard now, it's really grown tremendously from when I was in it. I think it's been getting better and better, a little better as the years go on, and I think eventually there's gonna be a major break in it where somebody's gonna pick it up into something important, like network or something like that. In other words, if it keeps up long enough, somebody's gonna get a grab of it. Yeah, I'm pretty positive about it, 'cause if it's lasted this long, it's gonna eventually have something major come into it. And who knows, if this works out well enough, and it works up to the point where they get a big break, the people who work on the crew may end up getting paid for it. Well, that would be an influence, slight amount. I hate to say it, but when you throw money, people will go for it. But that's a long way off.
Commentary: Group II

The major themes linking this group of individuals together were their attitudes towards school and their views on responsibility. Youth participation projects were created, in part, to give adolescents the opportunity to assume responsibilities they could not find in the classroom. A number of educational critics (see Bibliography), in addition to a Presidential Commission (1974), have argued that much of the negative, acting-out behavior found among adolescents is due to a changing society that no longer provides adolescents with as many roles to learn about and assume responsibility. As we learn from the profiles in Group II, the issue of assuming the major responsibility for the production and content of the shows was a feature of the project of which the participants were well aware. The creators of the project placed great emphasis on providing the participants with what they believed to be a significant amount of responsibility.

Three of the participants whose profiles appear in Group II share much in common regarding their attitudes towards school. Primary to their young lives was their successful involvement in school activities. These activities help to illustrate how schools provide certain youths with a feeling of accomplishment. The first of these individuals is Michelle Warren. Like the other two in this group, Victoria Brown and James Wheeler, she is very active in school activities and comes from a stable home environment where her parents take an active interest in her school performance and activities. Michelle is very concerned about being popular and shares an awareness of the pressure of students
to belong with Victoria. She is also aware of what Larkin (1979) found to be the tendency of adults to maintain their distance. Michelle wants to be close to her teachers and have a warm relationship with them, but finds that high schools are a difficult environment for students and teachers to establish meaningful relationships.

Along with Victoria and James, Michelle's attitudes concerning school reflect the findings in the works of Gordon (1957) and Coleman (1961). Her concerns emphasize the non-intellectual aspects of school life. She is concerned about her appearance, personality, and extracurricular activities. It would, however, be unfair to limit Michelle to the above. She is a very sensitive individual who expresses concerns about human relations which are indicative of an individual who thinks deeply about her life and the people with whom she comes into contact.

Victoria follows Michelle's pattern very closely. She, also, is a good student who is involved in many school activities. Unlike Michelle who resides in the suburbs and is white, Victoria does her achieving in the heart of the inner city and struggles to understand our society's inability to resolve the question of prejudice, a subject that affects her directly. Dominating Victoria's life is school. She defines success in school as a means to a successful life and recognition. Her expressed concerns with the importance of education is in keeping with those who have studied the Black community (Fischer, 1966; Sowell, 1981; Segal, 1972). Like Michelle and James's parents, Victoria's play a significant role in her life encouraging her to do her best.
As in Michelle's case whose concerns are not just limited to school, Victoria's views on the issue of prejudice reflect an individual who has spent time questioning what she doesn't understand. She is sensitive to the attitudes of her white peers and critical of some of her teachers. Discrimination is a real issue for her, even though she has not personally experienced a great deal of it in her living situation. Erik Erikson (1959) describes this "sense of identity" with one's ethnic survival as "inner emancipation." Victoria has a well-developed pride in her race. She is concerned with institutional as well as historical racism, and is quite outspoken on this subject for a person of her age and her relatively sheltered life. What one does not find in Victoria's observations is a sense of activism. As Larkin (1979) points out, the youths of the late 60's and early 70's live in a society which rewards normalcy, not confrontation and Victoria reflects this in her wait-and-see attitude. One does not read a great deal of optimism in her appraisal of our society; there is more futility and despair than hope. What Victoria and Michelle have in common is making school work for them. They do this through their talents, supportive families, and a sureness that points to individual success. The grave issues so dominating the youths of the 60's have all but faded having been replaced by the pressures to be successful, to fit in, and the ultimate goal, to land a good job.

Similar in attitude concerning school and experiencing the same type of success is James. Like Michelle, he also is a member of the student council and very active in extracurricular activities, especial-
ly sports. And also like the other two participants in this group, he comes from a stable home in which his parents encourage school participation. He is aware of how important his parents feel school is. James struggles with the need to maintain good grades, while at the same time taking part in the school activities which help make him popular. These three individuals follow very closely to the findings of Coleman (1961) and Gordon (1957): their school involvement is at the center of their lives. Schools seem to work for students who enjoy the rewards of an active school life, possess athletic prowess, and have parental recognition and encouragement. These three individuals from different high schools in different social settings indicate just how similar the youth culture is in public high schools. They fit in.

Their individual lives are not trouble free, however. Like all teenagers they must confront problems. In their cases, problems range from a father who loses his well-paying job to understanding why being Black can make life more difficult. In school, they were not model students; grades did not just happen and one faced suspension. But all were able to make their school experience a rewarding one. They are successful with the key to that success being the ability to fit in. For a long time, this writer viewed public schools as having far more negative than positive impact on students. Unlike this writer who did poorly in school, these individuals make the most of the experience. Moreover, this writer believed that those who were successful in school paid the price with their individual identities. These three individuals do not reflect people who allow schools to alter who they are as
much as schools enable them to make the most of themselves. In a society which is increasingly being divided into winners and losers with formal education being one of the determining factors (Larkin, 1979), these three have a good start towards ending up winners.

The fourth member of Group II, Brian McDonald, is similar to the other three in that he comes from a very stable home where his parents also take an active interest in his school career. Brian differs from the others in that he doesn't share in the same popularity or academic achievement. In other words, he does not fit in. School is more a battleground, not of violent confrontations as much as gaining the acceptance of his peers and adjustment to the impersonal nature of schools. Brian describes himself as a loner with this trait creating difficulties in his relationship with his peers, but this doesn't stop him from following a different route which leads him to the same end as the other three. His journey through school is more private, but no less successful.

To compensate for his inability to compete with his age group in sports and popularity, Brian developed a strong interest in electronics and gadgets. This follows J. M. Tanner’s (1970) observation that emotional attitudes are closely related to physiological events. Cut off from his peers, Brian finds outlets in reading and writing with parental support boosting his self-confidence. He had difficulty making friends and being accepted by his peers throughout his childhood. He describes himself as a late maturer. Brian seems as cut off from the social life of school as much as the other three in this group were in-
olved. Some have suggested that the influence of the peer group is the most important determinant of the adolescent's self-image (Coleman, 1961). Brian reflected a very positive self-image which would seem to contradict this finding. By the time Brian reaches his final years in high school, he is involved in school activities and takes on the responsibility of an internship at a television station. Brian's attitudes toward life and his adjustment seem to illustrate a large body of research that suggests that the peer group may not be stronger than the family as a reference group with respect to basic values and choices (Riley and Moore, 1961; Musgrove, 1963; Douvan and Adelson, 1966).

These four individuals help to illustrate the role of school as one arena of adolescent life. For three of them, the school offered the opportunity to find success. The school provided an environment of which they could take advantage. The last individual found ways to fit himself into the school's social life and like the other three was able to make school a rewarding and productive experience. School worked for them because they had determined that it was important, plus they had the necessary skills to be successful. They all exhibited a high degree of responsibility towards their families and their schools.

One central factor for these four adolescents was their close relationship with their families. Their parents encouraged their involvement in school activities. Each of the participants indicated an awareness that their performance in school was recognized by their parents as a source of pride and an indicator of their growing maturity. I now examine what they tell us about the issue of responsibility from
within the context of their involvement in the youth participation pro-
ject under study.

Michelle was involved in more school activities than most adoles-
cents, but she felt that these school related activities were too limit-
ed. She was impressed by the way the adults and youths involved in the
project worked on a more equal basis, something she had not witnessed
in school. In spite of her leadership role in school, she is concerned
that society does not recognize the ability of teenagers to handle more
responsibility and sees the project as an ideal vehicle for allowing
them more responsibility. Michelle feels that the project overcame the
problem of separating adolescents from adults, therefore, the project
was in keeping with Friedenberg's (1965) position that adolescents
should be afforded more opportunities to work with adults on an equal
basis. Michelle sees the value of a television series for teenagers,
run by teenagers, because adolescents would then be more responsible to
each other raising concerns that are important to them rather than by
adults who tend to be more concerned with money and like matters. Her
views on the value of youth productions is not shared by all the partic-
ipants in this group. One questioned whether other teenagers would
even bother to watch a show that was not produced by adults.

Expressing yet another view on responsibility was Brian who came
to the project much like Michelle with a significant amount of experi-
ence handling responsibility. He compared the responsibility he had
while involved as an intern at a local TV station to the amount he had
when involved in the project. We learn that Brian was drawn to the pro-
ject, because he felt it would provide him with the responsibility that the TV station position could not. Throughout his involvement in the project, he was not disappointed.

Like other participants in the study, Brian was critical of the adults with whom he came into contact who did not share the philosophy of the project. He especially notes the professional staff at the cable company. In another episode concerning a taping at a movie theater, he is quite cognizant of the responsible behavior of the project's production crew as opposed to the immature behavior of the adults who ran the theater. Like Michelle and others who were interviewed, Brian feels that because they were responsible for the show's content and production, what they achieved would serve as an ideal model for other teenagers, and that teenagers are more responsible than they are given credit to be.

One reoccurring theme for both the inner-city youths and the suburban ones is that the adult community sees teenagers as only acting out negative behaviors. Their involvement in the project was significant because it helped to dispel the poor image most adults have of teenagers. The comments of the participants tend to support those who have argued that high school age students should be given a larger role in their education. If this group could be used as an example, they all felt that they were capable of making difficult decisions and acting in a more responsible manner than they were given credit for.

James, more than any other participant, was attracted to the project because of the feeling of responsibility it offered. He liked the
idea that he was in charge and that his fellow participants made some of the decisions. He goes into great detail to explain the need for teenagers to have responsibility so that as they get older, they are able to handle larger responsibilities. Later, he makes a direct connection between those individuals who had a real interest in the project, and therefore, stayed with it and took on the necessary responsibilities. Important to James and others interviewed was feeling like an adult. Unlike Michelle he sees other activities in which he was involved, such as student council, as other arenas where he learned to deal with responsibility, although he, too, feels that the project offered more responsibility than the school activities. He also expresses what each of the participants in the interviews felt was the unfair stereotype adults held of teenagers.

James was the only individual interviewed who questioned just how much responsibility the participants actually had. He points out that none of the teenagers were involved in organizational decisions. He feels it was a critical mistake on the advisors' part not to include input from the project's participants when seeking funding. James feels it would have been more difficult for corporate heads to turn down teenagers. He also thinks that one of the reasons the series did not continue was because adults did not have confidence in the teenagers' abilities. Both James and Michelle expressed a rather insightful view for the need for adult involvement, while at the same time maximizing ways to increase the participants' responsibilities.
Profile

TERRANCE MILLINER

(Terrance Milliner is a 16 year old black youth whose whereabouts at this time are unknown. He was interviewed once in a park and two interviews were combined in the back of a building during the summer of 1983.)

Well, when I was about five year old, that's when my mother and them got divorced, 'cause they had, you know, fights a lot, and they just got a divorce, and my father moved away, and my mother moved away. They moved away from each other. It was rough. I ain't got no father. My father wasn't there all the time to correct the things that I was doing wrong. [I did] a lot of bad things you could say. Never do what my mother say. I was wild. She was sending me to school, but sometimes things get rough, but sometimes I would stay home when my mother would go out and wouldn't come home. Something was wrong. I don't know what. My sister would always take care of me--my biggest sister.

My neighborhood was rough. Every neighborhood I lived in was rough. Bowles Square. I used to live in Bowles Square. When I was about five I lived in Bowles Square. That is when I had my father, too. Rough. The kids was rough. I was rough at that time. A lot of fights I had. People down the street used to beat up on my sister a lot, and I was too small to do anything about that. So my father he had left, you know. When he left, that when they started beating up my sister, because nobody didn't like my family, because we wasn't like them type of people. We was like friendly people. We weren't like them. Them kind, the people that I am talking about were the kinds who deal with guns and a lot of violence. You know, fighting and like street guys, street boys. They lived rough. The lived any kind of way. They don't sleep on nice beds. It was rough in this neighborhood, because I didn't have no big brothers at that time. I am the biggest male in this family. That's important, 'cause when I was small I didn't have nobody to take up for me. I was always getting beat up when I was small. And my father wasn't there, you know. When he was there, it didn't happen like that. When he was there, he would always settle things up, but when he left, they just went berserk on me. When he left I was about eight or nine years old. [My neighborhood] used to go berserk. Beat me up everyday, and I don't know why. I never ran my mouth, you know, or nothing like that, for somebody to hit me, but they just did hit me. They just didn't like me.
My mother and father used to fight in front of me when I was real small. Yeah, when I was real small they used to fight in front of me and I was real tense. I still am nervous. I was thinking like shit and fight. I learned all about fighting. When they started fighting, they would start hitting each other. I started to crying. Yeah, I wanted them to stop fighting, because I never saw nobody fight when I was that young, you know. I never saw nobody fight in front of me like that, the way they was fighting. They was fighting like they didn't know each other, you know, and I was like scared. I am always scared when I see somebody fighting. After that [the divorce] my mother she kinda stood where we was at, but she moved. But she moved to another boyfriend, then another boyfriend. The one she is living with now you could say he is going to be my stepfather, 'cause they are going to be married, too. I didn't react to the boyfriends that she had either, 'cause they strict. Stay in you room, do bad things. They beat on me a lot.

I got two sisters. I mean, I got three sisters and two brothers. I got a step-sister, too. The older sister is the one who had the boyfriend problems. The guy came after her with the gun. She's grown now. She had one baby. He died, the first one. She had another one. Now, she's got a boy. She had another one now. It's a girl. She's on her third one now. The first one, you know, is dead. She didn't get along too good [at home]. My father used to beat her a lot even though he ain't even her father. She got fed up and just left. That made me feel bad, because Dad, my father, that was not his daughter to be hitting her like that. You know, that's another man's children. That's not my father's. I mean he was beating her like that was his daughter, you know. All he wanted was for her to do right, but she wouldn't do right. You know, have a lot of boyfriends and come in the house late. He didn't like that. He ain't that type of man.

Well, my mother and father got divorced. My mother she kept moving a lot. Moving from house to house, you know, a lot. My sister kept getting on her nerves with her boyfriend. And they fight all the time and my mother beating her all the time and they fight all the time. They [sister and boyfriend] tear up a lot of things. My sister and her boyfriend fight all the time. My mother didn't like that. She'd come home from work everyday and something would be wrong with the house, so my sister had to get out. I like her, but I didn't like her boyfriend and what he would do to her a lot. I didn't like that. She came back to the house and she had a second baby and I guess he got mad or something, so he started going crazy and stuff, pulling out gun, shooting through the house. He almost shot my mother, you know. He came one day. I had to go to the garbage can with some garbage. I happened to see him come up the stairs with a gun. He pulls the gun on me. I was I would say about fourteen. He pulls the gun on me and when he did that, that [made] my real father mad. My real father heard about it, 'cause it was all in newspaper, 'cause you know they had reporters
there. My mother called the cops. I guess she wanted to put him in
the newspaper, you know. He [the boyfriend] kidnapped the baby that he
had. His baby. He gave it to someone who was down the street that we
didn't even know and they brought it back up to the house. And the
cops they were looking for it a lot. They caught him and he went to
jail for a long time. And he got out. And when he got out, he came
back and he started fighting again. He found them [my sister and baby],
but she wanted to accept him in the house again, which she shouldn't
have done, 'cause everywhere they moved they get put out over fighting.
My sister dropped out of school when she was seventeen. She was in the
ninth grade. She dropped out then. From then on she had jobs. She
had jobs you know, working at hospitals, but she couldn't take care of
babies, you know, and have a job at the same time, plus a boyfriend
acting up on her. She loved him, but he is probably using her, using
her to stay in her house. You know, just have babies all the time.
She, I feel, that I am going to make it. I can at least try to help.

My bigger sister had this boyfriend problem. She couldn't take
care of my little brother. My brother [was] acting up in school.
Getting suspended. He could never stay in school. He was nine. My
little brother just fell into, you know. Because my little brother is
like, he's at the point where he is at where I was at when I was small-
er, but there is more crazy stuff going around now. He's around the
badder kids. When I was small, the kids was bad, but they wasn't as
bad as what's coming up now. He's into like this time, you know.
That's rough. I try to talk to him sometimes, but he wouldn't listen
to me. He won't listen to me, because sometime I hit him when he do
tings wrong. He steals from my real father. He stole at one time
when he was small. He went to live with my father for a little while.
This was like a couple of months back, but my father was like out. He
goes out a lot. I was back with my real father, but my mother wasn't,
but me and my brother was. We was like staying in my mother's house,
staying at my father's house. I am pretty sure if my mother sent my
little brother with my father, he might change. When my mother sends
my little brother with my father, if he acts up, you know, he will send
him back. If he gets sent back, it will be the end, 'cause my mother
is planning on leaving this state. My little brother, when he comes
back, she can't put up with it. She is going to put him in a home.
That's the only place for him.

The next sister, she is going to have a lot out of life, too.
She's okay. This is her last year of school. She will be graduating
next week. From Horton High. She is going to college, plus she is
going to join the Army. The next sister is terrible. She is just like
my little brother. They both the same. She is going on seventeen.
She has been in a home all her life. Women's home, home for girls.
She's been in there you can say half of her life. She has ran away
from her mother. She don't do nothing, her mother, not my mother.
That's my step-sister. That's my father's daughter. I see her around, but not that often. I see her living with house to house. You know, living with friends. She went to stay with my father for a while, but she started acting up, and he had to send her back. She has been around the crazy crowd all her life, too, the same crowd my brother is falling into. She's all right to me. She talks to me a lot. She pays a lot of attention to me. She don't give me no problems. But it is just the way my family tells me the way she is. You know, I don't really know the way she is, but that's what they tell me the way she is. I see her around a lot of people I don't even know. I don't even see her with her mother no more. She don't even talk about her own mother no more. She's on the street. She makes her money on the street. That's where she lives at, on the street. She ain't got no specific house, you know.

Me, I'm success. I know it. And the biggest sister, like I say is half and half. Something good may happen to her, something bad may happen to her. I just don't know. But probably if I get on my feet and make some money, I may end up helping her. She is a nice, intelligent girl. She is all right. She is nice, but I just can't get along sometime with the boyfriends she goes with. She loves them, she likes them a lot, but they are a funny relationship. It's kinda like going crazy and being lovable sometime. That's how they is. But I don't know what's his problem. I think he got a problem. Something is definitely wrong. He blames her with things that she don't even know what he is talking about. He blames her with being with other boys. You know I never see her with nobody else but him. She still stays with him. He went to jail for even having a gun, but they didn't catch him with nothing. My mother pressed charges, 'cause he had the gun in my face and pulled the gun and shot at her, so she know she pressed charges. My sister dropped her charges. Everything she had against him, she dropped, 'cause she liked him, you know. She didn't want him to stay in there, but my mother didn't care too much about him. He stayed there for about a year and a half and I guess he don't like her. He comes over sometime and say hi and by and he's gone. For now, I haven't heard that much about them. I guess it's going a little smooth now, but sooner or later, it will break out again. Something will go wrong again.

My older sister and mother have something in common. My mother loves her a lot, 'cause you know, it's her daughter, but if she is going to be stubborn and not listen to my mother. Why she should have dumped that boy while he was in jail. She should have dumped him then, but she still wants him. He is going to kill her sooner or later. She is pregnant now and they is still fighting. She has one kid already, the first one died. Pneumonia. The second one she got is still living now. So this will be her third baby she is having now. The first one wasn't his. It was somebody else's, so he scared the guy away. He never came back. You know his baby died. So this boyfriend
she has now, this will be his second one. She loves her kids a lot. She keeps them clean and everything, but she can't just continue on having babies and having problems at the same time. She can't take care of a house full of kids with her husband beating on her all the time. And she still has him and still having babies by him. I can see now that the little boy that my sister has he is just like the father. He is just like him. He bites people. He's mean just like him. His future is going to be rough. I can tell he is going to be just like his father.

When I was in school, I was missing a lot of days. Getting suspended sometime. I missed school. I was about six, five years old [when I first remember missing school]. Stay around the house. Sit outside. Stay around the house. Probably do something around the house for your mother. I was going. You could say I was going, but sometimes I would miss days when something wasn't even wrong with me. Somethings like my mother, she would go to work. Something like that. Some boys would get me to skip school or something like that. I would not hardly go sometimes. [I would go] downtown. Downtown. Hang in the park. You know. They [the school] would sooner or later catch up on you. Call your house. Tell you mother that you skipped school. Mother comes down on you. [When I was twelve] I was home. I helped my mother do a lot of things, 'cause then my mother stopped working. My little brother started acting up at school and she couldn't go to work and he gets sent home from school and my sister was home from school. My bigger sister had this boyfriend problem. She couldn't take care of my little brother.

I was like quiet at times. I didn't really come outside at that time [between the ages of ten and fifteen]. I was in the house a lot. Stealing, cars, drinking, smoking, which I didn't do. I avoided it by staying in the house. Staying around the house. That is the only way I could avoid it. The only time I saw my friends was at school, and they used to do it before they went to school. They have already had babies, and into drugs, stealing, girlfriends that are pregnant now. They don't even hardly know them. They just met them. My mother stayed on me about what could happen if I go to homes. She would not let me stay in there. I know I would not want to stay in a place like that. If I was caught doing something, she would put me in a home. I don't have any record. They blame me for something one time and they dropped the case, 'cause I stay in school and not . . . When I got a little bit older, I learned to stay in school 'cause I wanted something out of life.

My mother always stayed on my back about certain things I did. When I do something, she will correct me, you know, and I would not do
it again sometime. But my little brother, it just goes in one ear and
into the other. But my little brother he needed a man at that time.
He needed a man. I started, you know, talking back to her. Then I
stopped, 'cause you know she couldn't deal with two problems at the
same time. Me and my brother were, you know, problems. But when he
started the problems, he got too deep into problems. I don't need my
mom at all. I don't really need her for, you know, lectures, talks,
you know. I did at one time. It helped me a lot. 'Cause then when I
realized the problems she was going through, she telling me to straighten
up, that's when I straightened up. She was like, you could say she
was miserable. She is a miserable person now. I see my life as a
miserable one when I was small. Coming up it was all right. When I
got to come up a little bit, when I first realized what she had been
through, that when I started helping my mom a lot. I went to the
grocery store for her, mop the floors, and do a lot of things around
the house for her. I stay home from school and help her. Sometime I
stay home and help her so she can go to the bank or get her teeth fixed.

When I was ten years old, about ten, I started getting interested
in boxing, but I couldn't find no, I was young, you know. I didn't
know my way around, you know. I never walked into a gymnasium. I
didn't have nobody big enough. I didn't have no brothers in my family.
You know a guy needs to know of a place like that. I was in Bowles
Square at the time, but I didn't know nothing about boxing at the time.
I didn't know nothing about it. You could say when I moved then I
started wanting to know about places, but I didn't have no big brother
or nobody to guide me to no places like that, so I just stopped thinking
about it. [I got interested in boxing through] television. I
didn't really stay on the streets a lot when I was young. My mother
wouldn't let me stay on the streets a lot. I was like in the house.
I am always the type of person who likes to stay around the house at
times. So when I got fifteen I was like, you know, boxing at Dukes
at Bowles Square, but he wasn't training me. I can play other sports,
but the one I am interested in is boxing, 'cause I like it. I like it
as a sport. Really, I could say that if I could have learned boxing
when I was small, I would have been able to defend myself, but I didn't,
you know. There was no way for me to get around. To know 'bout it.
When I was a bit older, I didn't feel as though I needed it, but when
I was younger, I felt I needed it. I was in karate and other sports,
but I liked boxing the best. My mother didn't like me to look at it at
times. She didn't like me to do that, when I used to sneak to see it
a lot. I had to sneak over to my friend's house, 'cause she never used
to like it. She still don't, but you know I am old enough to plan my
own career, you know. When I first started off at a gym, I started
where I am now with the man I met now. For me, I am planning on boxing
when I get good enough. Then I will get married and have kids. I'll
be set then. I can put money in the bank. My kids will be just like
me. They wouldn't have kids until I can. I won't have kids in this
town. I want to be a boxer, so that when I retire I will have something to retire, something to back up on. Probably have a trade. I'm pretty sure that I am going to be a pretty good boxer. I know I got my mind set. I am going to be a boxer. I am going to be a good one, too.

Success is something or someone who says they are going to do something and do it. No matter what it is. Well, they [bank robbers], if that's what my brother wants to be, that's what he will be. That's probably success for him, but not for me. Success is for me to keep on training like I am doing now and never miss a day yet. I am pretty sure I will be all right. I just want to sit back and relax. Yeah, I am pretty sure when I get old enough, I will retire. I will have enough money. I can just sit back. Money to me is important, because I feel I should help my mother a lot when I start into making money. I should help people in my family who really need, like my sister. I believe she really needs it. In school now, I am taking up electronics now, so after if I don't box, I will have a steady job. So if I don't box, I will take up a trade, you know. I am not going to college. I might go to college, might not. [My friends] don't want to do nothing that they don't like. If they don't want to do nothing that they don't like, they don't. I won't be like that. Almost every friend I be with will be like that. They probably be like that now. That's just they way of life. That's the only way they know. I'm pretty sure if they knew another way, they would try and to something about it, but Whew!!!

Well, Leroy, I guess he told me. He was in it. Yeah, he said it was all right. I hear him telling my friends a lot. The television show, you know. At the Y. Leroy, he said it was good. I didn't know what this was television show at the Y, but Leroy said. I didn't, you know, I didn't remember what I thought 'cause I never done that, you know.

Sunday, maybe Saturday. No, Sunday 'cause the meetings were, you know, on Sundays. I don't remember who. Well, you was there. Richard, other kids, about maybe ten. You know, just talking about the show. And they was all different, 'cause Leroy he the only one there I know. But nice, they were like nice. All over York, outside the city. They were hard, no not hard, serious. They were all talking about lots of things and somebody was writing what they said on the blackboard. I didn't think I should, you know, maybe I shouldn't be there 'cause I didn't know what. They were serious. No fooling. They were all talking and what they were doing. [I stayed because of] Leroy. He was my friend and he knew them and they got along and it was something to do. It was good, you know, having everybody working like they were getting along good.

We had a lot of kids. Some of us, you know, come from York and
a lot most kids were from places not in York. Outside the city. They didn't want us to do nothing sometimes. Like one problem was who was going to be the host, 'cause this girl she didn't want to do nothing but she wanted to be the host always. She and her friends wanted her to be that again, and it wasn't, you know, she was good, but others wanted it too. You could say they wanted it to themselves and there were other kids. Other kids were there and they wanted to do it. You said we should all do it, not just them 'cause they was smart, but we had to do it 'cause that was it. At our meetings you said it 'cause we talked about that. The show was for all of us not just them 'cause, I mean, she wasn't the only one, 'cause others wanted that. To be the host. That's what Leroy said 'cause he was at it in the start and that's what Leroy said that they wanted everything. Then they just didn't come to the meetings. Everybody was glad, you know, they left and didn't come. They were only causing trouble and always wanted it their show. Nobody said nothing. They just stopped coming and new kids came anyway. New kids were always coming. We, everybody, was glad to see the kids go. This was the summer and when school started we got a new show and new kids. The other kids they weren't, you know, we didn't need them so we didn't have that problem no more. The new show. Everybody was from York now so we got along good in the new show. Yeah, but they [kids from the suburbs] were different 'cause they helped us and they didn't, you know, try to do everything.

[The Project] looked like work and Leroy he was my friend and so I wanted to help him 'cause he was my friend and he was glad. There was a lot to do so I was there. Well, you were like talking, like in charge of stuff, and everybody talked and then we got, you know, something, and everybody had a job that they do and then get ready 'cause we taped when it is done. That's it. You talked a lot there. Everybody listened when you talked and you always had the equipment with you. Is that what you mean? The Y was [running the show] and you worked for nothing. Right? I don't know [where the equipment, tapes, etc. came from]. Coming up with ideas. That was tough. You had to really think. Everybody had different ones and I remember we didn't want the same ones so, you know, it was tough. Sometimes we had to vote 'cause everybody had different stuff. I don't know, but well, I wasn't at all the meetings so maybe that's when it happened 'cause I wasn't there all the time. I don't know how. [As the program evolved] mostly the kids changed and some adults. The kids really wanted the show to be successful 'cause everybody worked hard. They didn't stay where we was at, 'cause you know, the shows got better every time. More interesting. [Was the show a success?] That's hard to say, but people liked it. People who saw them, they said that. This guy where I live saw it 'cause he told everybody they was great and then teachers, too. 'Cause we did it and it was just us that did the shows. I mean, you know, people probably don't think we can do that, so yeah, that was good, right?
I went to a taping. Somethings I don't remember, but I remember I liked it 'cause it was interesting and I never did that before. Street Talk was what we did on the streets talking to people just walking on the streets about music. Street Talk was part of the show we did. We talked about what we should talk about to the people and then go on the street and mall and then just ask them about what they thought about music and stuff. It was fun 'cause everybody thought that's all right when we were there. It was like we were important. They would ask where they could see it and stuff. They thought we were a real television crew. Sometimes a friend would go by, and I felt, it made me feel good to be with the show.

[I also] worked on the "wall." We had this wall where we put names and things and the show on this wall and everybody put something on it. It was lots of fun, but sometimes you got mad, maybe bent out of shape 'cause they did it wrong and some put their boyfriend's names too big and it wasn't right. We had a few problems. Well, then you'd go and just sort of go over and take them off whatever you didn't like. You did it right 'cause you had to 'cause of the show.

It was fun [the studio]. The PBS station was where I went one time. The show we did was what kids did Saturday night. I never was in one [a studio] and I, it was all new so I didn't know too much. They wasn't nice to us, you know, not friendly and it was big and the equipment was expensive. We was there for two days, and by, no three days. It was very good. It was very good, but I didn't do nothing 'cause I didn't know, but I did help with stuff and looked at things and I learned about stuff. Yeah, I learned a lot . . .

Things just stopped 'cause like I don't know. Things just stopped. The meetings and everything. We had these meetings and we did shows and then the meetings they stopped and nobody called at my house. And I moved and my family we moved to another house so I thought that was it. The shows was over. That's what I thought. Television is very important, like my boxing, 'cause you can make it there. Some kids wanted to be the stars and didn't care what they were doing. They just wanted to be stars. That's all. Not me, 'cause it was fun, and I, you know, I got my boxing and I didn't talk much anyways, so I didn't think about that 'cause I liked just being there and doing the stuff.

Most adults don't like kids. You walk into a store and everybody thinks you going to steal something, you know. They think kids do just drugs or mug them and they don't think we do any good. Teachers think that a lot, too. It's like different when they see the show 'cause they think different and maybe we ain't so bad. It shows them we can do things. They never think we do things like that. The show made people see kids could do something 'cause we're not what they think we're like. It's hard work doing the show and it makes us look all right. Well, once in the studio we got some shit from this guy. He
was the, I don't remember what he was doing, but he was uptight about us. He just gave us some shit and the way he looked at us. Yeah, these people just don't trust us kids, and you know, think you do bad things all the time but that's not right. They don't see us doing good things and important things and here they are with this equipment that costs a lot of money and we ran it, too, so that made them see us different. Well, I remember going to this college, you and me, and waiting like all day for this jerk 'cause he was really a jerk. But the camera I know wasn't right 'cause there was something wrong about the color and we had to get a new one, and so we were in a hurry. Late, right? He was acting like he was better than you and me and everybody. I didn't like the way he talked to us and he was a tight-ass guy who knows everything and treated us like we didn't know nothing. No, this guy wasn't nice, friendly. But others treated us okay and nice.

Like everywhere, people don't always get along and always there's somebody who wants to do it all. That's what was happening. I could see that. You, but you were different and like I didn't know where you were coming from. You know, you were White and had a nice house and I thought you'd be for the White kids. I wasn't sure, but you didn't. You weren't like that. At the meeting, you never pushed nobody around. Everybody could say anything and you let them say it. I thought that was all right, but they didn't. I could tell they didn't like it, you much 'cause you looked pissed at them. Like one time that part on the draft and the Black guy. You were going to punch that guy you looked so mad. I didn't know, but I know you were mad. I don't remember what happened, but I know you were pissed. I don't think they came anymore. That was okay 'cause once they gone, we were all right and like everything was all right. They weren't good and liked to make trouble. They just made trouble all the time. There were other problems, but not with us, you know equipment broke and sometimes people didn't come, and that girl she kept forgetting what to say, but those things didn't stop it. Oh, yeah, it could of stopped it [problem with the suburban participants]. You said that. I remember you said that 'cause the show was for all of us and not just them. It would've been different.

When we were doing the shows, I thought like that, but now I don't know. Boxing is important to me. I'm boxing more and I got a trainer now and well, my father he's down in D.C. and says he can fix me up in a gym. So it looks like I'll be a boxer. But I learned a lot [about television], so someday, you never know, you know, it's hard to say. I learned a lot. I don't know how to put it. [Trying to convince new kids to participate in The Project] I'd tell them it's a lot of fun and he'd learn something. I guess I'd say it's a chance to do something he never did and that's important. Television is important, kids want to do right but like they never get to. I'd tell um The Project made me feel different, you know special and stuff and that's important to feel you are special. Kids need that.
(Anthony Hill is a 16 year old Black inner-city youth. Anthony was interviewed twice in a park and once in a school playground during the summer of 1983.)

I was born in Pennsylvania out of Pittsburgh. I was only about one when we moved [to York]. Well, it's five of us now, but my brother stayed out there with my grandmother. So she adopted him, 'cause there's too many of us for my mother to raise, so she had my grandmother take care of him. [I see him] about every two years. That's the only time we get to go out there. We got more relatives out there in Pennsylvania. That's where most of my family's at. It ain't fun [having three sisters]. I gotta hit them beside the head a lot. 'Cause. Just little stuff. I guess I don't like living with three sisters. None of them are older. We moved on some street. I don't know the name of it. We lived there with some friends of my mother and father for about two years, then we moved to The Heights. I lived there for about twelve years. Still living there.

Well, there's five of us, but four of us got the same father. But the one that's still in Pennsylvania, well, he ain't got the same father as us, so my mother wanted him to stay there with my grandmother. And my father was like too mean to him or something. I don't really know the story about that. Well, before we moved from Pennsylvania it was, let's see, three of us that moved back. But then there was another when we came to York. I had another sister born. After my sister was born, about a couple of years later, my father moved out. He lives away now, 'cause my mother and father they used to fuss a lot. [I don't see him] too much. I don't even like him that much. I guess 'cause when we was little he used to beat us a lot. I remember he used to beat us a lot. And he don't hardly take care of us no more. My mother and sister don't go over there. They don't want fighting or nothing. He used to send us child support and all that, and he just stopped. And my mother just sort of stopped going over there. My father, I don't know. You'd come in with grass stains and you'd get a whopping and everything. He just wanted us to grow up and be nice people, I guess. Sounded like to me. I don't know. I remember when I stayed back in second grade. My teacher told my father. He didn't like that playing around. That's another time I got a whopping. I guess I deserved it, didn't I?

I was glad to see him go. I guess she was glad he was gone, too,
'cause they used to fight a lot and I never did like that. That's one reason I'm glad he left. My father used to always hit my mother. That one time he choked her. That got me real mad. [I did] nothing, 'cause, oh man. She used to always yell to me, "Go next door. Tell my neighbors to call the cops." But if I used to go, then once my father said something like, "Get back in that room!" that was it. I just got back in the room. We used to cry a lot. Everybody just used to cry, just try to call him back names in our minds, but there wasn't really nothing that we could do. She did. She packed up a couple of times, but I don't know. 'Cause every time they used to have a fight, my mom used to pack up a lot. She'd be gone. She'd be ready to go, but my father just make her come back. She'd tell us to pack our clothes and stuff, but my father'd just yell at us and tell us to put that stuff back. We'd just put it back. I don't know [why she didn't go to Pennsylvania]. I guess everything's be cooled down. It wasn't fights all the time. I knew they had to love each other.

[Because my mother isn't strict like my father], I get to go a lot of places without asking, but not too far 'cause I always tell her where I'm going.  Like if my father was still living here there's a lot of things I wouldn't be able to do. Like, I could like go downtown without asking everything, you know. Come in with grass stains now. [Even though I'm older and my father would have probably given me more privileges], still I'd be inside. I'd like be real shaken up out of his words. But I think it is better that he's gone. Yeah.

Uh, she [mother] never worked 'till my father moved out. Well, we needed clothes a lot. She had to pay rent. She went on welfare for about a year. She's been off it now. Only thing I'd say, it was kind of hard 'cause we couldn't get everything that we used to get when my father was living there 'cause he used to be a police. I guess he used to make a little money. I guess that made him more stricter [being a policeman]. He was a policeman out here in York and Whittney, I think. I don't know what he's doing now. I know he manages Wendy's and he works somewhere else. I don't know where else. Well, for one thing, I couldn't have everything everyone else had [after my father left]. I used to wear cheap sneakers and that made me feel real bad. Everybody else had All Stars and Pro Keds. People they talked about [my sneakers]. Yeah, 'cause everybody else'd be wearing the good sneakers. Like I said, Pro Keds or All Stars were the best ones back then and I used to go to Zayre's to try to get the cheapest sneakers. She'd just say most of the time, she'd say she got to pay the bills and she can't afford it. Naw, the teachers never said nothing. It'd just be everybody else. That made me feel even badder, 'cause when your friends talk about you, 'cause they'd be wearing nice clothes while you got to wear bad clothes, and you know, it never was holey or nothing, it's just clothes I never liked. Cheap clothes and all that. About in eighth grade, not seventh, clothes was all right then 'cause I used to go to golf courses [and caddy] and buy my own clothes.
I liked him [mother's boyfriend] 'cause he used to give us money. He still do give us money. And he ain't mean or nothing, I guess. I don't know, but I'd rather have him for a father than my father. I don't never [argue with my mother] 'cause I respect her. She's nice. She's tried to get us everything we want, and with my father, he just buys what he wants. Even if we don't like it, he still buys it. But my mother, she like right now, she just gives us money and we just go get what we want and all that. She just yells. She don't hurt us or nothing. She just yells.

I got a lot of friends. Once you got a lot of friends in classes all you do is play around and talk and everything. Then you don't want to do work, skip school. [When I skipped I] probably go to the library and fool around or go to Pope Park, walk around and that stuff. We don't ever do nothing bad like steal. Nothing like that. Yeah, I know a lot of people that did, like smoking, but that stuff didn't really thrill me. [Kids learn about drugs] mainly if their mothers and fathers smoke it. But my mother, they don't smoke it. But that's how kids usually come in contact. Or friends, like pressures. They'd be trying it, you know. I had that a lot, but that don't change me. I ain't gonna never try it if you ask me. Well see, I tried it at first, but it don't do nothing to me. It just makes me cough, you know. [I was] in my neighborhood in the park. And everybody was smoking it. I wasn't gonna ask if I could have some, but everybody said, "Hey, man, why don't you try it?" And that right there, you don't want to be . . . Probably thirteen. And I tried it again this year. Just took a tote, but . . . It ain't nothing to me. I don't really listen to that [pressure from friends], 'cause most of the time I be riding my bike. To tell you the truth, it ain't, I ain't really like smoking. I just took a puff and I ain't never held it, and I just puffed it in and blew it out. Naw, [it didn't have any effect]. Not really, really heavy, but they smoke it now and then. They get high. It's crazy. That's one reason I don't want to smoke it. It's just something I don't really want to get into.

I could say my kindergarten Miss . . . [was nice], 'cause she was the nicest one. She was White. She was like, I don't know. I guess she really liked kids. She's still up there now. She's been up there a long time. Everybody likes her, all my sisters, everybody's been in her class. I can't remember my elementary, just kindergarten. Belcher was all right and Horton. I don't really like none of those teachers. Well, I know in eighth grade I made the honor roll one semester, so I guess I improved a little. She [mother] was happy 'cause I was saying if I ever made the honor roll would you give me some money and she said, "Why would I give you some money to do better?" Anyway, I don't know. She was happy. I was glad to get out of Belcher, 'cause, I don't know, you just don't want to stay in the same school for too long.
I liked it, but I was just dying to go to Horton 'cause that's the high school. I knew a lot of people in the high school.

I do my homework anytime now. I'm starting to do a little better in school 'cause I don't want to be in there too long. I'm ready to get out and my mom she don't believe in dropping out. If I drop out I know I'm gonna have to leave the house, so I ain't planning on doing anything like that. 'Cause she told us. She told us we better get a diploma. She tell us a lot. Like when I'm, like sometimes I don't go to school or something. Like anytime I say I don't want to go to school she figures that I'm ready to drop out or something, I guess. She just wants us to finish, 'cause she's mainly talked to me 'cause Horton ain't too good, but Belcher is all right but Horton ain't too good. I got suspended a lot last year and this year.

I thought I'd have a lot of fights. That's one thing, 'cause Horton, when I first heard about it, it was a bad school. The first year was all right, 'cause I never did too many of the stuff I do now that's messing me up. Like I never skipped it or nothing. I did my work all the time. But once you move up, you start doing different things, 'cause the older kids they skip. So when I got to the tenth grade, I tried it one time with my friends and ever since then I started skipping. Yeah, they ask for a note. That's if you want to make up for that day, but you don't have to bring a note or nothing. I ain't never bring a note. [School work] was easy. I passed. Easy. But when I got to tenth, I stayed back again this year. I made a lot of friends. I guess that changed the second year. They're the ones got me started acting up in class and skipping and everything.

I know I used to fight a lot. Serious fighting. Everybody fought. Just like if somebody like came back and says that somebody said something. You fight over anything, 'cause you had to fight. If you didn't fight, everybody'd take control over you and stuff like that. Take your money and everything. I don't ever pick a fight, but it's just people start trouble. You don't want to look like no punk or nothing. Cats like to throw paper and stuff in class and somebody hit me in the head one time and I like turned around and said, "Who did it?" And this dude stood up and said, "I did it and I'd do it again." And he did it again. So I walked up to him and punched him in the face. Most of the fights be during school. Yeah, [I got suspended]. You gotta go outside and you gotta come back with your parents. [My mother called my father after the first suspension.] He came over to see me. He was mad. He talked about I'm getting too old to get a beating now, so he had to put me on a punishment and just said don't get suspended no more. But still I got suspended about four more times.

Second [suspension] was for a fight, too. It was over a girl. This dude had felt her butt, you know, but she ain't tell me about it. Her friends told me about it. So I had confronted the dude and I asked
him did he do it and he said yes. He said, "Why?", you know. That got me mad right there for saying "why," like I ain't gonna do nothing about it. But that's my girlfriend, so I just picked him up and ... Most people don't be thinking like that [to fight after school rather than in school]. Whenever it happens, you know, it don't make no difference where you're at, you gonna fight him. Like it'd be a lot of people around, and you know, they just fight and get it over with. You know, like that. And if you say you gonna wait after school, watch him run and all that. I'd just rather get it over. The other dude didn't get suspended, because I started it. Like if you throw the first punch, it don't make no difference what they do there, you get suspended. I got suspended both times 'cause I threw the first punch. [My mother] just said stop. But next time you get suspended I ain't gonna buy you nothing 'cause I always want clothes. But she just say I ain't gonna buy you no clothes or nothing. See, I like cooled down for a while. Got suspended about a couple of months later.

[The third suspension] was for acting up in class and all kinds of stuff. Talking out of part, you know. Mostly talking, chewing gum. That's why, in a way, I wouldn't mind going to another school, 'cause I got too many friends. The teacher just get tired of me. Well, first you probably have to be in detention a couple of times. I stayed after a couple of times, but I just don't learn. I just keep acting up. Well, my principal, he told me a lot of times that I better cut it out 'cause I'm on the verge of getting expelled. "You get suspended another time, you get expelled, or you keep acting up." [The fourth suspension was for] the same reason. Acting up in class and fooling around, coming to class late. Like you might be in the hall and you hear the bell ring, but feel like, keep talking to your friends or just look in classes and stuff. I didn't do that everyday, come to class late. No, [I didn't get sent to a social worker]. They just told me the next time I acted up, they'd have a conference or something. But I didn't never had a conference.

I think about [the future] a lot. I stayed back twice. I could've been graduated next year. I think about that a lot. But still, I don't know. I cried over there a couple of times, too. I might sit in my room and start thinking, like if I got homework, I'll probably say I ain't gonna do it, then I'll be like thinking, you messed up two years, you still messing up. Ain't doing your homework and skipping and all that. I just start thinking. It makes me sad inside, but still I just keep on doing it. No, I don't never talk to her [mother]. There's some dudes I could talk to about it. They like tell me, "You better start, you know." 'Cause some dudes, I got a couple of friends, you know, they understand. I just go and talk to them about it, 'cause they kind of do good themselves and they want me to do good. They still in high school, too.
Mr. Davis from [the Boy's Club] told some of us who were hanging around about it. He said you were coming there to tape and if we wanted to be on television. You came to interview for the show. Mr. Davis asked us to play basketball 'cause you could see what we do there and me and some other guys played and the kids on The Project taped us. Not much, we just shot around and that was it. I was talking to this kid and he told me to go down to the Y to be on the show. So like, I guess it be that Sunday, I went just to check it out and see if maybe I could've done it. I like television and you said we'd learn stuff for jobs someday. It looked good and I didn't have nothing to do, so ... I thought we were gonna do a show like, what're those shows? A lot different from what we did. It was good, though, what we done. At the first meeting that was like all right. I met new people, some around me lived in York, others from suburbs and stuff. I ain't have no idea about it, what it was like, but it was good meeting new people different from over here. Getting to know 'em. The first meeting I talked with 'em. It was like I was gonna get along with 'em really, really good. Yeah, I talked about it at home, about you and them and stuff like that. I felt like I was treated good and somebody like called and I decided I'll go back 'cause I wasn't doing nothing, just hanging around.

The next time we talked about what [the show] was gonna be on. Everybody came up and give his idea. There was a lot of different ideas from everybody, so we had to decide what was better, what would work better. We did it on neighborhoods and music. We went to different parts (of York) in the north and south, Brookside Village, um, Village Square, and um ... Yeah, we looked at York and what it's like in the neighborhoods, the problems here. All that and we went on the street to ask people things. I went around asking 'em what it would be like if we didn't have teenagers. They gave us a lot of funny answers. It was asking would it be better without teenagers or with 'em. When we did Street Talk, we did part of the set-up of a unit, set up all the cameras and all this. We took pictures. They helped us. Now I know how to take pictures with the camera real good. That teach us a lot.

[Being on the camera], that was the best part, being on camera and the reaction of how you are on camera. Like when you say it, when you have it in your mind. I was thinking of learning them so when I say the words, the lines, I'd say 'em like I wasn't reading 'em. I would just say, like when you ask me a question, right off the bat, I tell you the answer. Sometimes I have my sisters help me.

[Regarding the neighborhoods] some said stuff that ain't true. Not everybody was honest, 'cause if they said something bad, some dudes might come after 'em saying, "You say this thing about our place? Did somebody tell you to say this?" One person was not honest about his neighborhood, 'cause some of their neighborhoods are good and he wanted
to say it was bad. He wanted to say he lived in a rough neighborhood and it wasn't. It's not. It was a good neighborhood for a while. Even a football coach lived in his building. [When we went into the neighborhoods filming] I was feeling like I knew everything, not like in school. And there was no fooling around, 'cause it was important, so we didn't fool around and act up. Made me feel good, like I knew everything, like the cameras. I knew everything. I was with the camera and this is the crew, you know what I mean? Everything. We were gonna do a show, like here we are. We're gonna get a show going.

That [studio] was strange at first. All these cameras and big lights and controls in the control room and all different stuff. Strange. The first time being in a place like that. I never seen anything before like that. I seen cameras and stuff out in the streets, you know, and news and stuff, but going there and seeing the [control] room, seeing all these TV's and lights and everything. . . . I liked that the best. Yeah, working on the show, we learned how to run the camera and learned words like hand and truck, words like that that deals with television, and stuff like that. The part that sticks in my mind, the part where we learned how to control the camera and stuff. I remember doing that and Street Talk. 'Cause I think I'd like to get into that. Now to get a job somewhere, to go into a studio where you work cameras and stuff if you don't have any experience or anything, but if you can say, "Yeah, I know how to work the camera, work with . . ." It [The Project] gave me experience, 'cause I know a little about that kind of thing now.

Not between us. Like the first time Blacks get together with people from the suburbs, I thought it was gonna be something else, not getting along, but it ended up the opposite way. There was lots of people and we got along good, really good. Maybe 'cause they're not around each other so often, you know. Usually Blacks and Whites don't get along so good. But we all were together. We all got to know each other. We went around the neighborhood together. They all came around my place. They seen what it's like. We talked about it. The fun, yeah, we had fun together. Everybody. 'Cause you don't never see Blacks with Whites 'cept when there's trouble and fights. The show helps 'em get along better. Them working together helps you to get along better. When we were working together, we'd joke and talking to each other and fool around together.

'Cause if we didn't have The Project, they [adults] wouldn't pay any attention to us. It's [The Project] is a positive thing, 'cause like, say like teenagers get together a real lot, have a group with somebody like you and go around like not just TV, but radio, newspapers, cameras, then they start paying attention to teenagers. What they are like. Like when we went around with the cameras, they were looking at us saying, "Strange kids working with cameras." Like they never seen that before. They thought it was unusual to them. They ain't never
seen kids working with cameras before. Made me feel, it made me feel like I knew everything, like I said working with cameras, handling the cameras. Then they can realize some of us could do stuff that they could do. When they see me with the camera, they was impressed when they looked at it. They was impressed. When you were asking the questions to them, that's when I knew, was aware. Yeah, hardly every single one of the started looking at us. They said, "Teenagers?" It [The Project] can tell people that kids could do a lot of stuff if they get really, really into it, if they had adults to help 'em, to help 'em out.

Yeah, a couple of kids at Horton say they seen the show on [the PBS station] and cable. Made me feel like I wanted to go back and do the show. Well, the first thing I said, "You seen the show" and I said, "I ain't seen it," and they said, "Yeah, it was on PBS," and they said it was good and the stuff we did was okay. 'Cause they liked it. Their impression was a good impression what they talked about. Yeah, it's important, 'cause it made me feel like I did right from what they said. That I did right. You know, like none of 'em really been on TV and did a show and saw it all with all the people and cameras and stuff like that. All these kids from TV, they see me. What did it do for me as a person? Gave me more stuff I know. I think I'll be able to do it [as a career], because I have some, not a lot, but some experience with cameras and it won't be such a big deal like in the beginning because the camera I be, "What's it for, what's this do?" Now, to myself, I know what's it for, so it won't be no big deal like before. I would like to be in it again. More training with the cameras and let our own selves do it and put it together. Like we had a lot of help from you and Richard and Allen. First, to get more time with cameras and stuff, and then we do all of the other stuff, the other stuff of TV.

I think they [adults involved in The Project] wanted to see what it would be like working with the kids and see how good they do with teenagers to help 'em out. Probably what they get out of it, out of the show or out of the kids. Not sell the show to make money. I'm saying some of 'em [adults] came out to see what they could do or what they could get out of it. Could've been good or bad. I don't know what happen or why [The Project ended]. We stop having the meetings and I was really, really getting into 'em, 'cause everybody had something. Money. The money had a big part, I guess. Nobody said nothing about it, and um, when nobody called I thought this is it and there's nothing I can do. Yes, I'm still interested. Is it gonna start again?
Profile

EDELMYRA PEREZ

(Edelmyra Perez is a 17 year old inner-city high school senior. She was interviewed three times in her home in the late summer of 1983.)

I was born here in York and the rest of my other family was all born in Puerto Rico. My father was here first, then after a while when we got more money, he brought my mother over here and my other brother and sister and then they all came to live here and by that time we lived in a project and there things started getting rough between my mother and my father, and so they got a divorce. I was a baby, four years old. My mom says, "Well, there's something that's gotta be done." My father just took off like that, and my mother didn't know any English. She had three little kids and that's when she said, "That's it," you know, like there's something to be done. From there we moved to St. James Avenue. It was right across the street from the school. I was around four. I remember 'cause I wasn't in school yet.

And then from there we moved to Fairfield Avenue. I remember there was this nice candy store right around the corner and this old man always used to give us money to buy candy. He was a very friendly man. Oh, we had these friends. They lived on the first floor. They were really close. Her daughter grew up with us. We went to camp together. We had a lot of fun at camp and stuff. From Fairfield Avenue we moved to the Heights which was when I was about eight years old. We moved there and then I was still going to the same school. My sister was beginning to go to her junior high school and there this girl lived with us ever since she was thirteen. She used to take care of us when my mother was at work, you know, in the summer she used to take care of us. And then she got married and stuff. While we was in school, she was working, and when she got home, we got home from school afterwards. She would take care of us, she would iron, and clean, and all that stuff. I was still going to Alvord School.

And then by that time we had moved. I went to Belcher, Belcher Elementary. It was a very good school. I loved that school. I finished the junior high school there, the school, our house is right around the corner from the school and we didn't have to take buses or anything, any kind of transportation, so we were always on time for school, and I just had a lot more friends. That was when I really started opening myself and talking more to other people, you know, starting to learn.
We were living in the Heights which is a project. It's not a very bad project. It's a very good project. There's the good ones and the bad ones. This is an all right one. When my mom was working one summer, me and my sister were in this program. Um, it was like a summer school. It was like a co-op program, something like that. And there they taught us these little things. They taught me how to tell time and all these other things, just growing up and stuff. I was around eight. [Edelmyra then relates why the family found it necessary to move from the Heights to another neighborhood.] One time this guy, my next door neighbor, had gone into my mother's room, and by that time my brother and my dog was upstairs watching TV. He didn't know, our neighbor didn't know that Ramon was upstairs. So the dog kept barking and barking, you know. It was like, "Come downstairs, Ramon." You know, he was like trying to tell him to come downstairs. My brother was just telling the dog to shut up or he would just push him out the window. So finally my brother went downstairs and he caught this guy. He said, "David, what are you doing here, what are you doing here?" He goes, "Get out of here, get out of here. What are you doing in my mother's room? What are you doing? What are you doing?" So by that time, you know, he had gone. He had just left. He took off and stuff. You know there was nothing valuable missing, just some quarters, you know. But just the fact that he was in our house and that he didn't take anything this time, he can see what else is around and see what else there is to take the next time, if he had tried that again. So then the following, a few days passed and my mother's car windshield was broken. So she said, "That's it. I'm gonna move out of this neighborhood." So now we had gone to Belcher Elementary to Cooper Street.

I was in the sixth grade. I was shy and I didn't. I was scared and you know, I had a new neighborhood, new house, I had to meet new people whether I liked it or not. That was where we was gonna stay. And so from there the days went on, and we lived in that house for a while. That house, like my uncle owns it. He's the owner of it. He used to live downstairs, and we used to live on the second floor, and from there we always had our little dog with us and stuff, and then our dog died. And um, that was a very sad thing, especially for me, 'cause I grew up with the dog. I had the dog ever since I can remember.

And from there I got my first job when I was fourteen years old. It was just the fact that I was fourteen years old and my brother and sister were working at the time, and I picked up from my brother and sister whatever I learned from them. I learned everything they did. So they were working, they were making their own money. My sister bought a television, and so I said, "Oh, wow, next year when I'll be old enough to work I want to buy my things. I'm tired of Mommy buying me things, and it's about time I started doing things on my own." So, I went out for a job, and my older sister found me a job. It was a CETA job. I was tutoring little kids. It wasn't a bad job. I loved
that job, 'cause you take care of kids, to show them you know. It was just for the summer, like summer school. And then every Wednesday we would always go on a trip. That was a lot of fun. That's when I saved all the money I had and went on vacation. We went to Florida, and then we stayed there for a week. The whole family. We all stayed down there. We went to Florida, and we had a really good time.

Then the following year, you know, I was going to school. September I was going to school and in March I turned fifteen and everyone at home was working. My brother's two years older than me. My sister's three years older than me. Everyone was working. And I did the same thing. I went to school. I got good grades. I came home. Cooked dinner. And that was my life. I was tired of that. I said, "Mom, that's it. I don't care. I know I'm young, but I'm gonna go out and get a job." So I was fifteen in one month, 'cause I was born in March. I remember it was April, and I went out, and I got the job at Friendly's. I've been there for over two and a half years now, and you know, it's okay. I've been making decent money, you know. It's clean money, and I buy my own things. A lot of times me and my sister, one time, when I didn't have a job and things like that, my sister used to let me use her clothes and stuff and that's when I decided I wanted to buy my own clothes. I said, "Okay, I'm going to do this. I'm going to buy my own clothes." And I went out and I bought my own clothes and I got my own clothes.

At the time my father left my mom had reached the age where she saw my brother and sister grow up, but she never had the chance to see me, just because of the fact that she did have to go to school and have to make something of herself. So at that time, my mom never saw me growing up, and you know, that didn't, like later on in the future I'm like, wow, my aunt always took pictures of me so my mother could see me. It was very hard on her. She didn't know English or anything. She had to go to school and she got education. She was working, going to school, and all that other stuff. My mom finished her high school, and she got her GED, whatever that is. She's got all her education and she's going to college. She never stops. She never gave up her education, 'cause she says you're never too old to learn. So she would always learn. I just picked that up from my mom. That's when I started opening my eyes and saying, "Oh, I want to be like mom." She knows what she's doing. She started from scratch, and she's working very hard. It was hard having one parent only, but she did it. We always had what we wanted. Every time we needed something, she got it for us. She would struggle. She had two jobs, plus going to school and stuff, and she would struggle. She would always have a parttime job on the side.

She would ask me if I ever needed any help. Don't bug her. No.
She was there if you needed any help, you know, "You know where I'm at. I'm always here." She made sure we went to school everyday, even if she had to walk to school. Even when it was winter and she couldn't drive her car, she would've walked us to school. Make sure we'd get there, no matter if it was raining. 'Cause some kids, they used to not go to school when it was raining, or if it was a thunderstorm of anything. They would not go to school. It it was snowing, they wouldn't go to school. My mother always told us we need an education, so she made sure we got to school. That was the most definite thing. I remember this one time, I was six. [My mother said], "Edelmyra, what do you want to be when you grow up?" I said, "I want to be a good mother." Like "What? That's it? You gotta do more than that. You gotta prepare yourself. I'm an example."

I was Catholic. Did my first communion in church and my brother, and we used to go. When I was in eighth grade, I started to go to church by myself. Every Sunday I would go to church. My mom was working two jobs, so she wouldn't have the time, and this and that. She didn't have anything against it, but she didn't have the time. She was always making sure we had everything we need to get us through--shelter, everything else--so she never really had the time to go.

When I was thirteen years old my mom wanted me to work [with her]. She had this parttime job in City Hall only on the weekends. There she would just sit there all day from nine to nine and just sit there answering telephone calls. You know, people asking her about their heat complaints and all that. This was in the winter only, from November to March, I think it was. And right there she goes, "Edelmyra, I need some company 'cause it's boring just sitting there from nine to nine, so why don't you come by and keep me company." I didn't mind. I loved it. So I stayed there to keep her company. That's when me and her started getting real close. So anytime I would have any questions or anything. I would do my homework there and everything would be fine. And then she used to pay me.

My mother would always speak to me about those things [peer pressure], and any time I would have any questions or anything I would always come to her and at that time me and her got real close. Anything happening, anytime I had to say anything, she was always there to listen to me and give me advice. She was a good example, so I just couldn't go wrong. If they [my friends] would ask me, "Edelmyra, come on, I got herb here. Let's take it. Let's kill it." I say, "No, thanks." "Well, why not? Come on, Edelmyra. Let's kill it. Let's kill it." "No, I'm not in the mood. I got something to do." And I would always make up an excuse just to get away from them, 'cause one time my brother was asking my mom about that, and my mother goes, "Oh, if I see you doing that, I'll kill you." You know this was the thing. I know my mom's against that and I was always out to make my mom happy of me.
Well, I skipped grades and stuff and teachers were always pleased with me. My mom never got any complaints and my brother and sister stayed back and I never did, so far. I didn't have problems at all 'cause as the baby of the house I learned from my older brother and sister and I picked up their habits. Like whenever they did something wrong, I'm like 'No, I'm not gonna do that. I'm not gonna be like them.' So, I learned from their mistakes. They had my mom and I had them. I was going to school and I was learning from my brother and sister, so I was a very smart kid. I always learned from them. School-wise, you know, whenever I didn't know anything, I'd go to big brother or sister that were always there to help you, explain things thoroughly. The teachers weren't around and, "Help me do this," and my sister would always help me. I always had a big brother and sister to look up to and they were always there. I [still] do well in school. I was a B student. I was always doing good. My brother's a brain. My sister, she's there.

Junior high school was a combination 'cause it was an elementary school plus they had seventh and eighth grade in there. So we were all treated the same. It was all right. I liked the idea of changing classes, not having to stay in that one particular class all day, but I guess I started being a bad girl, I guess. My grades are slipping. I hated English and social studies. Oh, I hated it. It was the teacher. I didn't understand what he was saying. It seemed like every time he was talking he was mumbling, and every time I would ask a question, he would get smart with me. I didn't like the teacher. [But] I felt secure because there I had my brother and sister. Yeah, I would always follow my brother and sister. As a matter of fact, now that they both graduated I'm by myself, I feel bad. But I would always follow my brother and sister. My sister would say, "If you have any questions, or you get lost, just come to me." She would give me her schedule and all these other things.

Sometimes I would hate [being in their shadow]. Every time my sister would go out and do something bad and things, you know, say go out with some friends and not let my mother know where she was going, my mother would put an influence on me and just blame me for it. She would say, "Oh, I hope you won't be like your sister. If you be like your sister, I'll break your neck," and all these other things. She would just give me the third degree without me even doing anything, [but] I got my head on my shoulders. I don't do that. [If I get angry or frustrated] I bite my lip. I count to ten before I speak, before I strike. I keep it to myself. I try to avoid it. I remember my first fight in high school, first fight. I was a freshman. There was this one girl. She pushed me around and I was tired of being pushed around. I would ignore it. She would call me all sorts of names. I would just ignore it, you know, but there was a certain limit. When we got outside and she had a big crowd I said, "Okay, this is it, you know." She did her first move. I didn't bother to hit her. I was walking away,
just ignoring it, walking away. She had grabbed me by my side, and she pushed me, and all these other things, and so I had an umbrella at the time. I banged her with the umbrella, and I killed her. I hit her so bad. That was my first, my first and only fight. My only fight. Yeah. My sister, she would always have problems in school. When my sister graduated you'd think my mother deserved half of the diploma. My mother went to school more than my sister did. All the trouble that she was always in, all the skipping and all those other things and she went to school anytime she would ever have any trouble. My sister always had trouble in school, just one of those things, I guess.

[I didn't have any trouble because] I'm a quiet person and that's one of my sister's mistakes. She would do some crazy things and I wouldn't. I said, "Well, I don't want to be like that. I'm going to be myself." I remember this one time [I did have trouble though]. They locked the bathrooms in school. God, they were having a heart attack. They locked the bathrooms because some girls were writing all over the walls and all these other things, so they just had to punish them and lock the bathroom. Anytime you had to go to the bathroom you had to go to these hall monitors. You had to get the key, open the door, and then you can go to the bathroom. And I thought that was so stupid. I mean, God, oh God. So I had to go to the bathroom and I had a substitute. The substitute says, "I will not let anyone out of this room. You're gonna stay in this room. I'm not gonna let anyone go to their lockers." 'Cause usually when you have a substitute all the kids will roam around the halls. And so from there, I don't know, there was this guy. He goes, "Oh, well you're not gonna leave the school." I said, "Well, could I go to the bathroom?" He goes, "No, you're not gonna go to the bathroom." I said, "Well, could you give me a pass to see my VP?" He says, "No, now you're really not going anywhere. You go right sit down, young lady." I kicked my books and marched right out of there. I said, "Have a good day, sir," and I just shut the door, you know, nicely. You know, I wouldn't slam the door, I wouldn't cuss at the teacher. It was just, "Okay, sir, have a good day." I would take my books and I left. I sent to see my VP. I said, "I want a pass to the bathroom." He gave me a pass to go to the bathroom. I went to the bathroom. The door was locked. I went, "What the hell is this? By the time I get into the goddamned bathroom, I would do it all over myself." I said, "The hell with this." So I had gone to my VP again. I was crying. I'm like, "The door is locked and I don't find anyone to open the door." I was like in pieces. I went to the nurse. I went to the bathroom. Everything was okay. I was crying. I was so frustrated. I said, "Mom, come pick me up from school." She's like, "What, what're you talking about?" I said, "Come pick me up from school. If you don't pick me up, I'm gonna leave, therefore I'm gonna get suspended, and you know, I'll just have a couple of vacation days, okay? If that's what you want, you know, do so. But I wanna go home now, so either you come pick me up or I'll leave. So my mom, no the VP goes, "You're not going nowhere, young lady. You're
gonna stay right here." I said, "I wanna call my mother 'cause I want to go home." She says, "Why, you're not going nowhere. You're not gonna call your mom." I said, "I'm gonna call my mom." So I picked up the phone, I called her, and I told her all these things, and so she goes, "I'm taking her home with me." And so she's like, "Oh, wow, the girl's actually gonna get what she wants?" I meant that's different you know. So my mom came to school. She came to pick me up. She goes, "Okay, I'm going to sign her out." She signed me out, and I was out of school. So then there we sat in these chairs. She said, "Well, tell me what's your problem?" I said, "I don't know." You know, I was just so frustrated. She goes, "The only real reason why I came here to pick you up is because you're not like your brother or your sister. You always think before you say anything which is very good. You never have any problems in school and that's the only reason why I'm here. I just hope this doesn't happen again. If you have to to to the bathroom, hold it." I said, "Okay." But I mean, it's stupid. She said, "If you have any problems now, go to the doctor. If you want to go to the doctor right now, I'll see what I can do, make an appointment or something." She was real calm about it 'cause I never had any problems in school. I was always, you know . . .

My mom first heard about it [The Project]. My mom was in the newspaper and in television and she's always in the radio doing her nutrition programs, and so there she was always, you know. "It's fun to do and at the same time you'd be learning a lot about, you know, how people actually earn a living. You know, people actually do this for a living." She [mother] was giving some programs in the YMCA and there I think she met James's mother, and she told her about it [The Project], and so my mother goes, "Oh, Edelmyra, you're an outgoing person. Why don't you and your sister go check out this program. There you'd be making a lot of things, a lot of shows. You'd be learning a lot. So why don't you go down there and see what it's all about. See if you like it or not. I didn't think it was realistic, really. I thought it was all phoney, all acting. It was weird. I needed to go see what it was all about. When I got there at the meeting at James's house, I got introduced to everybody and I was scared. They were all staring at me. I don't know. I just felt nervous and it was like a group of kids. Some of them were sitting on the floor. Others weren't. There was food on the table, like "Well okay, we're gonna come here and eat. Okay, fine." At first I thought it was just gonna be a boring meeting. You know like the boring meetings that my mom usually goes to and she wants me to find out what these meetings are all about. She just dropped us off there. Well, she stayed for about maybe five or ten minutes and then she just left. The majority of them were White. It was like two or three Blacks.
That other guy, I forgot his name [ran the meeting]. I think he had something to do with it. He was letting us do all the work, but at other times he would just speak up, you know, and help us out and things. But he was like letting us prepare it, letting us do everything. I said a few things but not much. I was nervous, scared, shy. At first you're always like that, but then after a while you begin to be outgoing and stuff. They were nice people. They were very nice. They were friendly. They wanted to be your friends as soon as you walked right in that door and that made me feel good, you know. These people want to be my friends, okay. It was good.

Well, we were all into separate groups. We all decided to go into separate groups, and we all had papers and pencils in our hands and we were writing down some names and things. They decided to have two hosts, the Street Talk segments in this meeting. There was a reason for that 'cause they felt if one person was gonna be all nervous, then you'd feel more confident with someone else there by your side. Even though the camera's right on you, but they're there, and you feel that you have more confidence with them. You can say more. They were making all the decisions, and I was afraid to speak up. At first, I guess I felt that there was people in front of me. A lot of people were saying a lot of things. What was that guy's name that had that store, that market store? He worked in that store. He was saying a lot of things and I thought that I had to listen to him. I guess I was still nervous and still very quiet at that time. They knew what they were doing. I felt like I enjoyed it. Like, "Wow, when is our next meeting?" I told her [mother]. I said, "Oh, Mom, I met a lot of people and we're gonna be producing shows, and we have our next meeting and I'm looking forward to going there, and I met a lot of nice people. They're very nice. They don't make me feel as shy."

We were going to those meetings at the Y. We were talking about disabled kids, and I remember my sister was late 'cause she couldn't get out of work until quarter after. You [were there]. Richard was always there. And James. There were some new kids and there were some kids from before that I hadn't seen. I think they had them [meetings] every week or maybe two times a week. Sometimes in the middle of the week and sometimes on Saturdays. It was something like that. Everyone was always there to listen. Maybe some people would disagree with what you were saying, but then they would tell you the reason why they would disagree. Like maybe at one time in a meeting this guy would say something, "I don't think that's right because maybe if this happens, this other would happen," and he would back up what he's saying. So I don't think there was any arguments or anything.

I think I had the Street. Did I have Street Talks? I don't know. I think I had Street Talk. I loved that. We went around the street asking all kinds of people what it would be like if they were disabled, and we got a lot of responses. Most people wanted to be on
TV. [We did it] near the Civic Center. I felt like a newscaster. Coming out of the news, you know. You've seen those ladies standing there, "Here we are in front of this place," and I felt like one of them. That was a very good feeling. I felt like, "Wow, the world's gonna watch me now." You know, I gotta make a good impression. At one time I was nervous, but then once he got me going, I just kept going.

I wasn't involved in any interviews, but one time I did remember going down to the recruiting thing. This was the film on what you're doing after high school. We went to one of the recruiting things. That was interesting. I met this guy there. He was so cute. I went there and I got all these people looking at me and looking at all of us. It was like, "Wow, where are these people coming from?" [They were looking at us] 'cause we had the cameras, and there was a whole group, and they knew that some kind of thing was going to be taped or something like that. We filmed this guy. I think it was Richard that was interviewing him. I was helping carrying some equipment and that's when they towed your car.

I remember the time we went to the Civic Center. We were doing this rock group. We all went backstage and things. That was fun. I liked that. I didn't get to see the program 'cause my mom wanted me home. I didn't get to stay for the show, but we were all backstage, and I don't know what went on afterwards, but I know we saw the whole auditorium and the whole place, where they were gonna be standing, and how the camera should stand, and if they're give it some kind of angle on them. You know, that was interesting. I liked that.

[I remember filming once up by the school.] Okay, I was the host. I didn't know my lines. I was going crazy. It was me and Janet. I think it was. I'm not sure. I was a nervous wreck. I had to go to work. I was thinking about going to work early or what, coming in late. I made it to work though. Oh, I loved it. I had a lot of fun doing those things. I would always say, "Mom, I can't wait 'till we get cable. That way we can go and see these things." And sometimes I would go over to my aunt's house to see if they were giving it and turn all the channels at all different times and things to try and find if I was there, but I never say myself. But people actually came up to me and said, "Edelmyra, I saw you on TV the other day. You did all right." I said, "What was I talking about? What did I look like? What did I have on?" They would tell me and say, "Oh, you looked all right and it seemed like you had a lot of fun. How'd you get involved in this program?" I said, "Oh, it's a very good program. We had good things and all." People would always ask me. [The] school choir. Um, the choir. They all wanted to know when they were going to be on TV. They were very much interested 'cause they would always ask, "Edelmyra, are you still in this television program?" "Well not now, but I'm hoping to be." Then we moved and everything and I lost all my papers and I didn't have much to go on.
I always talked about it, especially when I was at Friendly's working. People would come up to me saying, "Edelmyra, I was you on TV," and I'm like, "The Project, my God, where are they? They don't call. They don't do anything. I mean, like are they still existing?" And then they used to have some shoe sales at the Y, so every time I would go down there I would ask about The Project and they'd say, "No, The Project isn't here right now." There would still be shows on the air, but you guys weren't having any meetings. So, I didn't know what to do. Tried to forget about it, but it was hard 'cause I was always being told that they saw me on TV. As a matter of fact, the day before you showed up, seems like the week before, I was talking to my supervisor about The Project. She said, "Really" That sounds interesting." I said, "Yeah, as a matter of fact, I want to go back on there." And I called last night and I said, "I was thinking about staying overtime at work," but then I said, "No, wait a minute. I gotta be all rested up 'cause this guy's gonna come interview me from The Project and I wanna go see it." She goes, "You're kidding! You actually heard from them?" I said, "Yeah, this guy came over to my house one day when we were about to have dinner and he actually paid to have our addresses down and all these other things to find out where we lived 'cause we had moved and we had changed our [telephone] number and everything else." And so, it was like a miracle. He was talking and at the same time you were here.

They [cable company] weren't happy with us. I don't know, for some reasons they weren't. They would always try to push us around, and they didn't like the way we did things. Maybe 'cause we were kids. I never really did find out. They would just say things sarcastic. I don't remember anything. Don't ask me to give any examples. I don't remember anything. But they would say things sarcastic, you know, really start to think about it, dig it out, you know. At times I felt bad, but I just don't think about it. I remember this one time. Was it my sister or was it me? I don't remember, or somebody else. I think it was Vee. She was talking. I don't know who it was. I can't remember the name, but um, they were talking, and then they just started laughing. Maybe it was me. I don't know who it really was. But then he goes, "This is no joke. This is no joke. This is serious, so stop laughing." She goes, "Oh, well, I'm nervous." "Well, don't be nervous. There's nothing to be nervous about. Just look into the camera and just say what you have to say." Just the way they [cable company] act towards us. We were young and they wouldn't give us the time to train us on how to use any kind of machines and stuff, and I guess that's probably why they didn't like the way we presented ourselves.

The Project went down the drain. Well, at one time I started working, you know, the weekdays, and sometimes we had meetings during the weekdays. That's when we stopped having connection. And I had to
go on working. I would get phone calls. Anybody from The Project [would call] and just tell us [about the meeting]. I guess for the summer [The Project was being run] and then that's all I can remember. Oh yeah, I heard someone was calling me from the York Stage Company [Edelmyra should have said that someone called from The Project], but I never, but I do remember someone calling me. They gave me the message. "Oh, Edelmyra, some guy from The Project calling you from at the Y." That was all they told me and I couldn't leave from that place. I was afraid to lose my job. [Edelmyra had a CETA summer job with the York Stage Company and was offered a transfer to work with The Project through CETA. She chose to stay with the stage company.] [So in Edelmyra's mind, The Project] just stopped making shows and went down the drain. [It went down the drain] 'cause of the money. There was something happening about the money and the cable company was being... I did [call the Y]. I did that. I did that. And they told me that they weren't having meetings there anymore, so I guess at that time you guys weren't really having meetings. [Maybe] they lost our number?
Youth participation projects can be very diverse, but one feature common to most is that they offer regular opportunities to learn new skills and to explore possible careers (Kohler, 1981). More so than most programs, the project under study was an informal, alternative educational project. Training was provided in the area of television production. For the organizers of the project, the activities surrounding a television series were an ideal vehicle to motivate the participants. The goal was to encourage positive attitudes towards work and community service. Because a television production is a complicated undertaking, the advisors hoped to instill the willingness within the participants to exert the time and energy required to master the various difficult skills.

One of the most challenging tasks the creators of the project faced was working with youths from such different backgrounds, many of whom the advisors assumed held negative attitudes towards school, work, and society in general. The project's literature stated that the activities would have special attraction for those youths who dropped out of school or for those who were not interested in the activities offered in the public school.

Basic to the project was the popular position that attitude change was possible through direct experience. It follows then that youths with negative attitudes would acquire more positive ones as they experienced activities and feelings that bring positive attitudes to life.
What the creators of the project did not understand nor does the literature address was just how varied attitudes can be despite similarities in background. The profiles in Group III present three inner-city youths who grew up in similar neighborhoods. However, after exploring their private lives, one comes to understand the differences in their attitudes.

Anthony Hill and Terrance Milliner have the most in common. They are both Black, come from broken homes, live in poverty, and have poor school attendance. On the surface, they were ideal candidates for a program designed to instill positive attitudes. They shared a world which offered little in the way of emotional or physical support and both grew up in neighborhoods that harbored more negative attitudes than positive ones. The overriding force in both their lives was the violence they encountered on an almost daily basis, and not only violence on the street, but that from within their own families. At an age when children from the suburbs were in classrooms, they were learning to survive in the streets. They grew up surrounded by turmoil, and school was anything but a refuge. Both moved through their lives with similar emotional and environmental handicaps.

Anthony and Terrance are products of what G. Franklin Edwards' describes as family life based upon disorganization represented by structural breakdown (1966). Edwards goes on to detail a pattern of divorce, desertion, and separation which plagues the Black urban family. Thomas Sowell's (1981) research indicates that the problems associated with Black urban families in the 1950's and 1960's have increased in
the 1970's. Sowell points out that the "proportion of one-parent, female-headed black families increased from 18 percent in 1950 to 33 percent in 1973--from double the white percentage in 1950 to more than triple the white percentage in 1973" (p. 222).

The problems Anthony and Terrance must face living in poverty and in broken homes are the same conditions under which 70% of all Black families live (Sowell, 1981). There is little in their lives that would suggest that they should have anything but a negative attitude towards society. Michael Harrington (1962) calls them the "other Americans." They are the victims of social injustice and a society that would rather build space stations than a decent neighborhood in which all its children could grow up.

What one learns from these profiles is that Anthony and Terrance have two very different attitudes regarding how to cope with their lives. Terrance is a quiet young man despite his large frame and extreme appearance. He looks like a movie version of an urban terrorist with a preference for head bands and a T-shirt cut off at the shoulders. He talks about fighting his way out of his circumstances, but not fighting against society. His dream is to become a professional fighter, and he takes his fighting seriously, working out daily and seeking professional training. He is optimistic about his future and expresses concern for his siblings who do not have his desire to be a success. He is also critical of his peers who do nothing but hang around and do dope. In spite of the social realities, Terrance places a great deal of value on achievement and hard work. He voices displeasure with his
sister who takes advantage of welfare and has no goals. He has even less regard for his setp-sister who works the street and has no place to call home.

School does not play a major role in Terrance's life, but he is very aware of the need to have an alternative skill to fall back on if his boxing career fails him. Terrance indicates little, either in thoughts or actions, which would suggest negative attitudes or hostility towards society. He is, in fact, the opposite, indicating an individual who cares about his family, thinks seriously about his future, and shows confidence in his ability to make it in society.

Anthony faces a very violent world, substandard housing, and poverty, but unlike Terrance, he turns to negative, acting-out behavior, especially in school. We hear little from him about his future or concern for his sisters. He defines his manhood through his numerous violent confrontations.

When not skipping school, Anthony is in school to socialize or fight. He, too, speaks with his fists, but does not use them as a tool for a possible career. Instead, his fighting is the only legitimate way he knows to demonstrate to the world that he is not a punk. The only behavior Anthony seems to excel in is negative. Despite his almost boastful manner and pride in his delinquent behavior, we learn that he regrets not being able to modify his behavior. In one moment which seems out of character, he indicated just how much his poor academic performance bothers him. He tells of crying when he is alone, because he feels so helpless in changing his behavior and worries about
his future. Anthony remains in school only because his mother would force him to leave home if he drops out. He is aware that his chances of overcoming the realities of his life are remote, but he is unable to formulate a strategy in his present situation. His school, friends, and neighborhood are not gateways to a brighter future. Not an outwardly threatening individual, Anthony's comic manner is the only device he has to avoid more tears. One can only speculate as he moves toward adulthood if his tears and few dreams will turn to bitterness. We as a society pay a high price when the young of our inner cities drown their dreams in silent tears.

Both Anthony and Terrance demonstrate how different individual attitudes can be even when people share similar backgrounds. Their profiles offer insight into the factors that affected their lives. I will explore how the various attitudes of all the participants are reflected in the meaning they made of their involvement in the youth participation project in Chapter V.

The third individual in Group III is growing up amid the same physical surroundings as Anthony and Terrance. She experiences similar financial problems and also endures the hardships of a broken home. But for all the similarities, one very special feature of her life is different. Thomas Sowell points out this aspect of Edelmyra Perez's life which is characteristics of her ethnic origin: "The family was important, and the numerous children loved and protected . . ." (1981, p. 233). The significance of the family in the Puerto Rican culture is substantiated in Judith Kramer's work (1970) which describes the family.
as "the most significant configuration of Puerto Rican life" (p. 179). Kramer raises one point concerning Hispanic children which did not materialize during the interviews of Edelmyra and other Hispanic youths for this study. She states that the traditional patterns of socialization are breaking down and that Hispanic children resent their parents' conservatism and refuse to respect their authority (p. 180). Nothing could be further from the truth in Edelmyra's case. The respect she had for her mother as head of the household and as her primary advisor was quite apparent.

Throughout the course of this study plus the three years this writer was advisor to the project under study, I have worked with a number of Hispanic youths, including some who had problems at home, and not one showed near the amount of disrespect toward their parents that I have witnessed while teaching in a suburban high school. One other point Kramer makes is that when Hispanic parents are in despair, they "abdicate responsibility for disciplining children, believing that government agencies will assume formal authority over them" (p. 180). When reading Edelmyra's profile, one realizes that the last thing her mother is prepared to do is to turn the responsibility for her children over to anyone else, especially a government agency. Edelmyra's mother does not hesitate to utilize government programs designed to enrich her children's lives and experiences, but she remains in firm control of her family at all times.

In fact, it is her mother's role that makes Edelmyra's life so different from the other two in this group. Edelmyra is surrounded by
the feeling of love and protection with which her mother and siblings provide her. A good student in her own right, she draws upon her sister and brother's experiences and doesn't hesitate to take advantage of their help. Her mother takes an active part in Edelmyra's schooling by providing her with encouragement and close supervision. We learn that no phase of Edelmyra's life is unaccounted for. She is exposed to the world of work by spending time at her mother's job, working for CETA, and finding a job on her own as her sister did.

Edelmyra's youth offers numerous ways to mitigate the harsh realities of her surroundings. One does not sense the alienation found in Anthony's attitudes toward life. In spite of the uprooting from one bad neighborhood to another and the economic deprivations, Edelmyra is afforded the opportunity to avoid the premature adulthood Terrance faced and the sense of despair with which Anthony lives. At the core of Edelmyra's attitude concerning school, work, and the community is her family.

Edelmyra has, to her way of thinking, a bright future. She is a very out-going person who plans on a career as a secretary. When interviewed, her family had just moved into a new home. Even though it was small in comparison to most suburban homes, it was obvious that both she and her mother took great pride in their accomplishment. While sitting in the living room, it was hard not to compare their home to the others I had been in during the course of my research. It was the most comfortable one I had had the privilege to spend time in. To me, from my cultural background, it was strangely furnished reflecting
Spanish characteristics similar to other Hispanic homes I had visited. Untold numbers of pictures of family members covered every inch of wall space radiating a special warmth. Their home appeared to be filled with love and concern. As an aside, their home and the other Hispanic ones I visited were all extremely neat and clean no matter how run down the apartment building.

It was upon reflection and reading Edelmyra's profile in the context of Anthony and Terrance's that this home atmosphere dramatized the central point of this set of profiles and commentary. These three individuals came to their involvement in the project from similar neighborhoods, but each possessed a different point of view on life. It would be academic arrogance or just plain folly to think it possible to know what an individual's attitudes are based solely upon their place of residence. Until one comes to understand the circumstances of their lives on a personal basis, each individual carries a range of possibilities within himself. The things that matter most to Terrance and Edelmyra are family, success, and hard work. They, however, arrive at these similar attitudes under different circumstances. Just how they do is in part a mystery. We can look for patterns, speculate, and offer theories, but the unique nature of each individual far outweighs any data we could possibly collect. The issue that the final group of profiles and commentary addressed is best summarized by the following axiom used to describe man's relationship to nature: "It is not more complicated than we think, it is more complicated than we can think." Just what effects an individual's home environment, school, personal
relationships, or experiences has on his attitudes is difficult to determine. What one finds in these profiles are possible leads.

The book Two Blocks Apart (1965) is one of the few attempts to record the thoughts and impressions of adolescents using their own words. In it, Juan Gonzales, an inner-city Hispanic youth, shares his dream for a better future. He says, "... I would build my house in a nice spot in the country in the shade of the trees. You know everybody thinks of a paradise for themselves and I think that's mine" (Mayerson, ed., 1965, p. 105). This is not a grand dream in the sense that great wealth is required. Like Edelmyra, Anthony, and Terrance, Juan struggles to make sense of a world where dreaming may be the only reality they cannot afford to abandon. The building blocks of attitudes, like the stuff of dreams, lies deeper than our tools are designed to go and our ability to explain. The existence of an individual's thoughts and feelings and dreams and attitudes is not the issue, but our never-ending need to appear as if we can account for them is.

Existence is beyond the power of words
To define,
Terms may be used
But are none of them absolute.

Laotzu
CHAPTER IV
WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING

Introduction

In Chapter II I outlined the basic methodology that was carried out in this dissertation. To review briefly, I conducted three one hour to one hour and a half interviews with each of the participants. In the first interview they were asked to talk about their life before they became involved in the youth participation project under study. The participants were encouraged to return to their earliest memories, and because their ages all ranged between fifteen to twenty-two years, their life stories ensued. In the second interview they were asked to talk about their involvement in the project. The emphasis here was on what they actually did, where they went, and what they experienced during their involvement. In the final interview the participants were asked to reflect upon the meaning of their involvement and the significance of the project.

The methodology employed in this study required the researcher to enter into the private lives of the participants. As we have learned in Chapter III, the participants came from very different social, racial, and cultural backgrounds. The conduct of the study and the views of the researcher were significantly altered by the various lives the study examined. This chapter is intended to put into scholarly perspective the nature of conducting in-depth interviews of adolescents from very different backgrounds. It is offered as a complement to the
chapter on methodology, and taken together, they should provide a more complete sense of the methodology. The narrative and analysis contained in this chapter is based upon extensive field notes and a journal of the process. The idea for the chapter was conceived before the field work began and is also offered to expand and amplify the unique nature of the profiles for the reader. Finally, it is also offered as an aid to others who may utilize a similar methodology of in-depth interviewing. How this study unfolded in the field is directly related to the type of information this study set out to investigate. The story of how the study was carried out helps connect the profiles with the study's conclusions which follow in Chapter V.

**Background**

One of the few studies devoted to adolescents based upon interviews in Ralph W. Larkin's *Suburban Youth in Cultural Crisis* (1979). Larkin offers an explanation in his Appendix for his selection of the methodology and describes his experiences in the field. In the following I refer to Larkin's observations to clarify what this chapter is not about. I then present an in-depth reconstruction of what I experienced immediately before and during the field phase of this study.

Larkin states that his "major method of gaining information was to hang out and record what students said to me" (p. 241). He describes his approach as "loose," with only two students being formally interviewed. The rest of the students were interviewed in the field "where some of the most startling revelations were given" (p. 241).
He makes no apologies for his unorthodox interviewing techniques, such as interviewing in situations with heavy distractions or uncontrolled conditions. Larkin summarizes his data gathering philosophy: "I used any technique I considered necessary at the time to get information" (p. 244).

Larkin describes how he avoided certain students he labeled "greasers" because he feared for his personal safety and that of his equipment. He relates that he fantasized being attacked by gangs despite the fact that he was gathering his data in an affluent suburban high school during the school day. He ascribed his fears to "the prejudices all researchers bring into the field" (p. 243). He does not explain what it was like for him to "hang around" with adolescents. We learn that he was afraid of a certain group of students, but we don't know how that affected him, only that he avoided them; yet, in his Chapter III which is based on the social structure of the school, we meet a few "greasers" and learn how less fearsome they are than the "hard guys" of the 50's (p. 79). Larkin tells us that they defend their actions in terms of the legitimate rule structure of the school (p. 80).

Between his field experience as described in Chapter III and his observations included in the Appendix, one is left with questions as to the actual nature of the field experience.

There is no reason to believe that Larkin intended his effort to be anything more than an appendix to a fascinating look into the world of adolescents. As he states in his conclusion, his study has its weaknesses, but he felt it was the best way he could go about doing it. He
does not suggest anywhere that others follow a similar path.

Unlike Larkin, a trained sociologist, I entered into the field phase of my research with relatively little practical experience. More to the point, I lacked a sensitivity to the complexity of the undertaking. I had become familiar with the various qualitative research techniques, but I was not cognizant of the ethical and social issues that flow from a study based upon in-depth interviewing. I did come across one work in my reading which alerted me to issues I was to experience firsthand, but I was a neophyte and unable to incorporate that information into my thinking at the time. I was too eager to get about collecting data to ponder the larger issues for which my actions were to be accountable. It is only now in reflection and further reading that I can understand the issues raised in the book. At the onset of my field work, the salient issues presented in that text were overshadowed by the book's title which fed my enthusiasm to get started.

The book in question is _The Research Adventure_ (1972) by Myron Glazer. This work puts the role of the researcher in a qualitative study into perspective, not as a detached investigator concerned only in securing sufficient data, but as an individual who must hold himself accountable to those he is investigating. This is a significant consideration for anyone considering exploring the private lives of strangers. If you are faithful to the methodology, then you cannot avoid becoming involved with your participants. This point is also made in Leonard Schatzman and Anselm L. Strauss's work _Field Research_ (1973). They speak in the more formal language of sociologists, but the concept
is the same. Glazer, on the other hand, bases his observations upon personal experience and the case material of other researchers. The basic message is that if one becomes involved in the private lives of others, then that carries with it serious ramifications. The researcher must be aware of the possibility of raising issues which may cause embarrassment or emotional harm to the participants. This was especially evident in the case of the inner-city youths in this study when they talked about certain aspects of their families and environment. In order to overcome my own uneasiness, in addition to helping them reconstruct their lives, I encouraged them to speak in broad terms with less emphasis on details in areas of a sensitive nature. An example of this was Terrance Milliner's sister who was a prostitute. Terrance uses the phrase "living on the street" to describe his sister's situation. I had to take into consideration that I was dealing with young people who were articulating feelings about their families and surroundings for possibly the first time. My concern was to avoid causing them any undue emotional strain or add to any negative feelings they may have already had. I had to maintain a balance between my legitimate research objectives and the well-being of the participants. If I was in doubt, I sided with the latter.

The issues Glazer raises in his book were to become more than academic considerations and were to grow in importance as my field work intensified. The issues of acceptance, penetrating the private world of the individual, and reciprocity were at the heart of my methodology. The lives of the participants, their homes and neighborhoods, were real;
and I felt less like an investigator and more like a privileged guest who was there to absorb light and help redirect it.

As I became more proficient in the interviewing sessions, I became aware of a different role for the researcher; the need to control the flow of information had dissipated. This is a critical element in qualitative interviewing (Filstead, ed., 1970). The first set of interviews were conducted as pilots and under the guidance of my dissertation committee. It was based upon these experiences that I began to understand and trust the process of allowing the participants to become the primary source of light. I began to see my role as one of helping them organize and focus their thoughts and not one of directing them or of imposing my views onto them. Larkin said he "tried to remain neutral and interested" (p. 24), and that was a significant breakthrough when I could do the same. At the core was a feeling of trust that needed to flow in both directions.

Basic to this trust is the question of acceptance: without it a qualitative study based upon in-depth interviews is like the man who asked the Zen master why after all his hard work and good deeds he had not attained enlightenment. The master remained silent. Schatzman and Strauss state it in this manner: "... how one gets in and manages to stay in will shape, if not determine, what one gets out of the site and its host" (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, p. 22).

In the following, I will reconstruct what I experienced in the field as well as refer to selected literature that addresses the problems I encountered. I begin with the problems of locating potential
participants and move through the various stages and incidents which shaped my research adventure. I have separated the suburban and inner city experiences since they present a different set of conditions.

Locating the participants

The issue of acceptance begins with the problems associated with locating the participants. I had a list which included every youth who had ever taken part in the youth participation project under study. This afforded me their addresses and phone numbers during the time they were associated with the project. In the case of the suburban youths, it was simply a matter of checking the list and calling their home. Things were not that simple when it came to the inner-city youths. In the intervening years between their involvement in the project and my interest in interviewing them, over half had moved and left no forwarding address, left school, or ran away. This lack of permanence is graphically illustrated in the profiles of Edelmyra, Terrance, and Victoria.

The problems associated with locating and maintaining contact with inner-city youths when engaged in research presents a formidable challenge. Luchterhand and Wehler in "On Reaching Out-of-School, Hard-to-Reach Youth: Notes on Data-Gathering" as reported in Adolescence (Winter 1979, pp. 747-753) determine that the difficulty of locating and sustaining the involvement of inner-city youths is one primary reason there isn't more in-depth interviewing in this critical area. I found that it became necessary to follow the living situations of certain inner-city participants during the five month cycle of interview-
ing. For instance, the last time I met with Terrance, he was leaving to locate his estranged father in Washington, D.C. He told me that he had delayed his trip so as to complete our last interview. Another participant, Luis, had run away from home; yet, we were able to work out a means to complete the interviews. Faced with the personal crises which are so apparent with inner-city youths requires that the researcher establish a close, working relationship with them. Sometimes, however, the weight of just surviving in the inner city can bring a study to a premature conclusion. The scholarly nature of research with its long range implications are of little solace if one's immediate world is overwhelmed by problems. When faced with the difficulties of living in harsh surroundings, a youth's commitment to take part in a study has to be balanced by the day to day decisions he must face just in order to survive. If the profiles of the inner-city youths in Chapter III reveal anything, it is that surviving in the inner city can be a full time job which makes finding the time or the reason for being a part of a research project difficult.

Strategies for locating inner-city participants

When my list of addresses proved inadequate, my initial strategy was to visit the neighborhood the participant had lived in during his involvement in the project. On numerous occasions I had driven them home and was, therefore, familiar with their neighborhood. But this proved to be of dubious value, since most individuals in the neighborhood were reluctant to talk to a stranger concerning the whereabouts of these youths. People refused to divulge information even in cases
where they were familiar with the project. Once, I was given a lead which turned out to be the home of a relative of one of the participants, but due to a domestic problem between the two families, again, I was offered no assistance.

My second approach was to contact the various high schools the participants had attended. I found even less success there. Although no one questioned my motives, the principal of one school had been the subject of one of our shows and was therefore aware of my role as an advisor, the question of confidentiality was paramount.

The most effective means I found for locating these certain individuals was to file a freedom of information petition through the post office. All that was needed was the individual's former address, and for a fee of one dollar with no waiting time, I was given their most current address. If I had been aware of this service, I would have saved myself much time and a great deal of frustration. It should be pointed out that if one is not comfortable in questioning strangers, or spending time in—as we will learn later—dangerous neighborhoods, being the subject of suspicion and mistrust, then it would be wise for him to examine whether he is truly interested in conducting in-depth interviews that require working with such participants on-site.

Acceptance

I undertook this study with the advantage of knowing each potential participant prior to their being asked to take part in the study. I did not come to them as a stranger as Larkin did in his study. I was
an advisor who had already worked with them in other contexts. This prior relationship aided in the process of making the initial contact and their eventual acceptance to take part in the study.

As pointed out in the chapter on methodology, one of the questions directed at qualitative studies based upon in-depth interviews concerns the researcher's objectivity (Giddens, 1979). This was a critical consideration for this study and was dealt with by having the participants concentrate on their thoughts and impressions of their involvement as opposed to their making value judgements concerning the success or failure of the project. The advantage of being familiar with each of the participants proved to be a significant factor. As Morris Zelditch, Jr. indicates: "The critical issue, therefore, is whether or not the informant can be assumed to have the information that the field worker requires . . ." (Filstead, ed., 1970, p. 223). I had worked with each of the participants on the project as their advisor and was, therefore, familiar with the length, nature, and degree of their involvement. In some cases I was also familiar with their academic and family backgrounds. Based upon this prior knowledge, I felt I could determine whether or not the participants had the information the study required.

The larger question of whether or not this prior relationship made the participants more likely to tell me only what they thought would not jeopardize our relationship or their continuing role in the project is more difficult to determine. I made every effort to separate my role as researcher from that of advisor, and I was candid with the
participants when I felt a response did not reflect their true feelings. I challenged the response by asking for more specific details or a further explanation. There was no foolproof way for me to guarantee the credibility of the participants, but the advantages of knowing each of them, in addition to the project under study, prior to the field work seemed to outweight the drawbacks or problems.

The significant variable here is the researcher's degree of sensitivity to the issue. The following may help to illustrate my point. This study was based upon a random sample of participants who represented the various social and ethnic backgrounds of those who took part in the youth participation project over a three year period. In a number of cases, I had to contact former members of the project whom I had not talked with for two years. I found that a number of these individuals viewed my renewed interest in them as their opportunity to once again become involved in the project. Sometimes, my contacting them had a dramatic effect as when Edelmyra recalls in her profile how excited she was telling all her co-workers the good news.

I quickly realized that I could arrange a first meeting by talking about our previous relationship. I learned just as quickly, though, that this approach could produce negative results. In one case, I made my initial contact but did not clearly state the primary reason for the meeting. I met with the individual and her parents to explain what I was interested in doing. All the parties enthusiastically signed the release form. This particular individual had come to the project as a member of a work experience program funded by the federal government.
and was, therefore, paid during her involvement. When the first inter¬
view concluded, she inquired as to how soon she would start being paid. She was operating under the mistaken impression that by being inter¬
viewed she was indirectly involved in the youth participation project and would receive compensation for her time. When she understood the true nature of the interviews, she no longer cooperated. Fortunately, this incident occurred early in the field phase and alerted me into taking extra care to prevent a similar misunderstanding. The incident also pointed out the need to consider the possibility that the data being collected could be distorted based upon the participant's motives. This issue is discussed further later in the chapter.

In a study that deals with adolescents, the researcher must be cognizant that they are minors and, therefore, subject to their parents' authority and protection. Acceptance is not limited solely to the participants and must include their parents who may have very different feelings concerning a study that may touch upon sensitive family matters. The role of the parents is critical. One of the most dramatic differences between the inner-city parents and those from the suburbs was in this issue of acceptance. The concept of educational research did not convey the same significance for both groups. My role as a researcher was welcomed in the suburbs as a reflection of our shared values and culture, whereas in the inner city I could be viewed as an extension of the existing power structure which exploited the very individuals from which I was seeking assistance. I was a white middle-class male in my natural habitat with one group and an obvious outsider with
the other. What was taken at face value in one context required sensitivity, careful explanation, and an element of luck in the other.

Suburban parents reacted most favorably to the study. The permission form was well received and fulfilled its role of alerting people to the seriousness of the undertaking. They expressed little interest in my long range plans for the data, nor were there concerns that I might probe sensitive family areas. These parents welcomed my explanation and voiced appreciation in being consulted. In one case where the prospective participant was over the age of eighteen and parental permission was not required, the parents appreciated being informed. At no time did any of the suburban parents present any problems, and for the most part, they were most cooperative. This acceptance facilitated the interviewing sessions; their homes were always made available, messages were invariably delivered, and participants were aware of their parents' interest. I found the question of acceptance on the part of the suburban participants and their parents to be the least of my concerns.

**Inner-city parents**

The question of acceptance was dramatically different in the inner city and jeopardized the conducting of the study. The inner-city youths were not unlike their suburban counterparts who viewed acceptance as their decision and considered contact with their parents as unnecessary or something of an inconvenience. The difference in parents was a more serious matter.
In all but two cases, I was dealing with single parents who expressed suspicion even though I was not a total stranger. The formal release form only added to this feeling. When I provided release forms in Spanish to two Hispanic parents who did not speak English, both appeared visibly uncomfortable. Prior to my meeting with the parents, I had explained to the potential participant the need to secure their mother's approval. As it turned out, my request was channeled through a male relative in one case and an older brother in the other. The problem of having to gain the acceptance of a second or third party who was less familiar with my former role as an advisor to the youth participation project seemed to increase the concerns over taking part in the study. The level of uneasiness at the prospect that I might inadvertently communicate the household's private business to a government agency may have been a factor contributing to their uneasiness.

Even in cases where I had gained permission, I found it difficult to conduct the interviews in the inner-city homes. Generally, messages were not relayed, or family crises made contact through the family difficult. Unlike the suburban youths who could rely on their homes as one possible location for our interviewing sessions, only two inner-city youths felt comfortable being interviewed in their homes.

**Interviewing in the inner city**

Willard Gaylin’s book *In the Service of Their Country* (1970) utilizes in-depth interviews of war resisters who are in prison. Gaylin states that when he began his work, he viewed the prisons only as the means of exploring who resisters were, why they went to prison, and
what happened to them in prison. But as he began to answer his original questions, he discovered that "... some of the most provocative information has been that which the prisoners reveal about the prison" (p. 319). Gaylin concludes that the real problem his study raised had to do with the process of justice in our country. My study set out to examine how a group of adolescents felt about their involvement in a youth participation project, but what the inner-city youths reveal in their profiles and what I experienced in the field raises more serious social and moral issues concerning poverty, family disorganization, and violence. In the commentaries in Chapter III, these issues are addressed. In the following, I will share with the reader how the actual setting and conditions under which the interviews were conducted reflect the larger issues this study confronted.

As has already been pointed out, this writer had worked with inner-city youths for three years, yet I was unaware of the harsh reality of their lives. Although I was cognizant of difficult conditions, they remained on the surface for me and did not directly affect me. When I became involved in the interviewing process, I was forced to enter into their lives and come face-to-face with the reality of their existence, something I was unaware of as a white middle-class advisor.

During the course of the field work, it was not unusual for me to interview one participant in a comfortable, suburban living room and a couple of hours later find myself in an alley covered with broken glass and smelling like a urinal. It was this stark contrast between the two worlds that resulted in a deeper understanding of the complexity of my
research. Except for two, the inner-city participants did not feel comfortable being interviewed in their homes. The two exceptions came from stable homes. The absence of a convenient interviewing location required that I make additional arrangements. When I probed for a reason they did not want to be interviewed in their homes, all raised the issue of my personal safety. In addition, two felt that it would not be good to be seen with me for fear their neighbors would misunderstand. This uncomfortableness on the inner-city participants' part was apparent when I arranged for the signing of the release forms, but at the time I did not make the connection.

There was a general desire not to be seen with a white male who could just as easily have been a narcotics agent as a graduate student conducting research. This struck me as strange, since I had often traveled in these neighborhoods during the course of the youth participation project. It was pointed out to me, though, that on those occasions I was in a group and the video equipment we carried eased our presence. My apprehension increased when on one occasion I was bringing Luis back to his neighborhood and he told me to let him off long before we reached his street, because he didn't want me to get shot in the face. Since I had no reason to doubt his sincerity, I followed his directions.

What struck me time and time again was that the participants were as scared as I was. They were not sure of where a safe place to talk might be and seemed to be captives of the violence that was all around them. Generally, I would arrange a rendezvous, a bus stop, the local
fire station, and from there, we'd proceed to a public park. At these times, our mutual feelings of grave apprehension had to be overcome. On one occasion, I found myself alone in the back of an apartment building wondering how long I should wait for my appointment and really just who was going to show up. When Terrance appeared looking as nervous as I felt, the idea of conducting educational research was not as immediate as it had been when I was in a comfortable suburban living room.

Deciding upon a location to conduct the interviews of the inner-city participants was an unexpected challenge. Interviews conducted in alleys or vacant lots did not help the participants relax. The ideal location for these participants turned out to be a city park away from distractions. If I was to conduct a similar study in the future, I would avoid settings that overpowered the interviews due to the physical conditions or locations.

In spite of these difficult and sometimes frustrating conditions, I found the inner-city participants to be most cooperative. When Terrance showed up for our interview, he was taking a risk. When he delayed his trip to find his father, he was following through on a commitment. Except for the two college participants, it is safe to conclude that the participants were not acting out of a well developed recognition of the merits of educational research. Their immediate lives were far removed from the process in which they were taking part. In the following section I will discuss what I have learned about conducting in-depth interviews with adolescents.
Interviewing--what I learned

When I first began the interviewing phase of my research, I worked from a list of questions. The list reflected more my insecurity than it did my understanding of the phenomenological interviewing process. Although the participants seemed to welcome the questions, their responses were short and lacked detail. I found that I was talking more than they were. The methodology for this study was selected to enable the participants to reconstruct their experiences in the project and the meaning they made of it. A prearranged list of questions did not prove to be effective in meeting those objectives. One indicator was the difference between the length of my first set of transcripts and those that emerged as I gained confidence and discarded my list. The transcripts of the first interviews were ten typed pages of the participants' responses. When the participants were allowed to take a more active role in shaping the interviews, their responses became twenty typed pages.

Abandoning the list of questions, I began to work from a set of topics for each of the three interviewing sessions. The first session proved to be the most challenging since it was the first time the participants were being interviewed in addition to being asked to reconstruct their life stories. The most common request was, "Where do you want me to start?". As the adult in this exchange I was aware that they might expect me to be the dominating force. It proved critical at the beginning of the process that I establish that I was not going to determine the content of the interviews. My response to them was,
"Start wherever you are most comfortable." Each participant chose a different starting point. As they moved through their life stories, it became my task to insure that they touched upon such topics as their family, school, and peers. This required that I listen carefully, take notes, ask for any clarification of specific events, and follow up in the next interviewing session. The second and third interviews concerned their involvement in the youth participation project. By this time the participants were more comfortable with the interviewing process and were able to reconstruct their experiences with less assistance. By following this procedure I was able to cover the topics necessary for the study and conduct the interviews on a more equal basis.

One critical factor I found in interviewing adolescents was their limited vocabulary and their means of expressing themselves. At times they needed encouragement to pursue statements which were incomplete. When I was uncertain as to what they were saying, I asked them to explain what they meant in greater detail. Sometimes I expressed skepticism with what they said and asked for clarification or examples. In this manner I was able to gain a fuller sense of what they were sometimes struggling to communicate.

The participants were very open in their willingness to talk about their lives. Throughout the profiles in Chapter III, one theme common to all is their displeasure with the adult community for its lack of interest in taking time to listen to adolescents. I believe that they appreciated the fact that I was an adult who was setting up appointments, rearranging my schedule to suit theirs, calling to con-
firm times, and working with a tape recorder just so that I could listen to them. All this attention made them feel important. I don't think they really associated this process with the goals of educational research. I think they were primarily flattered by all the attention that was given them. But the willingness of the participants to talk about personal problems unrelated to the study proved to be a serious concern. One interview of a suburban participant illustrates the sometimes delicate and potentially serious problems that can emerge between an adult interviewer and an adolescent in need of someone to listen. Nothing was out of the ordinary in the first two interviews with the interviews themselves going well. During the third and final interview, we discussed the participant's parents' reactions to her involvement in the project. It was at this point that the participant began to talk about her relationship with her father. It soon became clear that she had a serious emotional problem with regard to her father. As she proceeded to move in a direction that raised legal questions, I turned off the tape recorder to take the role of a counselor. When one is working with adolescents and probing their private thoughts, the real possibility exists that they may use the opportunity to talk about problems that require professional help. By expressing an interest in their lives, the interviewer may be signaling that he is a source of help to the youths.

The decision when a researcher should or should not terminate an interview prematurely is a subjective one. Due to the close relationship I had with the participants, I approached my research with a well
developed sense of concern for their welfare. I do not know if my actions would have been different if the participants were strangers to me. My feeling is that I would have done the same thing. One of the attractions of a qualitative in-depth interview approach was that it allowed me to interact with the participants on a personal level. It was an expression of the value I placed on the individual that dictated my epistemological approach and my actions in the field.

The most successful feature of the interviewing process was the willingness of the majority of participants to cooperate. There were a few who did not complete the interviewing cycle and there were problems of appointments not being kept and phone messages not being relayed, but once the interviewing process was underway, the participants worked as hard as I did to make them productive. They wanted to be helpful and made every effort to respond no matter how probing my request for further details was.

While going through this process, I became increasingly aware of the significance the experience had for the participants. In many cases they were not familiar with professional courtesy. They were just beginning to enter the adult world and did not always conduct themselves in a manner which lent itself to arranging or conducting in-depth interviews. Many aspects of the interviewing process turned out to be an important learning experience for them. Arranging their free time to find space for the interviews and preparing for the interviews required a concerted effort on their part. Although all the participants may not have appreciated the research process going on, all did
Working with the data

I tape-recorded all the interviews. The purpose of taping the interviews was to have a record of what each participant had to say and to guarantee the accuracy of the data collected as best I could. The tape recorder also proved to be a valuable means of maintaining the participants' interest. All seemed to be comfortable with its presence, and occasionally at the end of each session we would play portions of the tape. The experience of listening to their own words seemed to reaffirm my commitment to them to use what they said in a significant and permanent manner. My experience in the field using a tape recorder confirms Michael Quinn Patton's conclusion that "a tape recorder is part of the indispensable equipment of evaluators using qualitative methods" (Patton, 1980, p. 247).

Once an interview was concluded, I felt that the tape would be a valuable learning tool to help me prepare for the next interview as well as improve my interviewing skills, so my concerns then focused on the transcription of the tapes. My primary concern, however, was to have the tapes transcribed in order to aid in my analysis of the data. I discovered that transcribing taped interviews is a time consuming and expensive process. Based upon a study conducted at the Minnesota Center for Social Research the ratio of transcribing time to tape time is usually 4:1. It takes four hours to transcribe one hour of tape (Patton, 1980, p. 248). For the researcher who does not have a full time
secretary and who is not being funded, the process of turning audio taped interviews into transcripts is a major consideration in conducting this type of research.

In the case of this study I wanted the audio tapes transcribed verbatim, and this compounded my problems. The inner-city youths spoke with a dialect that was very difficult for the transcriber to understand, requiring her to constantly stop to replay the tapes. In addition, both the inner-city as well as the suburban participants spoke in broken sentences and in a halting manner which often made the transcribing difficult even for an experienced transcriber.

I marked the day, time, and location of the interview on the tape and had the transcriber record this information at the top of the first page of each interview. This proved to be important when I was organizing the interviews for this study. I was working with a relatively small number, fourteen completed cycles which yielded forty-two transcripts plus two incompletely completed cycles for an additional four transcripts. A lack of organization for even this small number can present problems if steps are not taken to avoid them at the onset.

As the secretary transcribed the audio tapes, she substituted initials for the names of the participants and others mentioned in them. She left the names of organizations and institutions intact so that I would be able to identify what the participant was referring to. At this time the only outside readers were the members of my committee. I did not feel I was breaking my pledge of anonymity at this point, and as I moved closer to the final typing of the dissertation, further
steps were taken to disguise the identity of the participants. The names of all persons, places, and institutions were changed. When I felt material was too personal to be recorded on tape, the situation was handled at the time of the interview as explained earlier in the chapter. Because I was aware of the participants' vulnerability once the material was made public, I tried to maintain my commitments as outlined in the permission form each participant signed (see Appendix).

By the time I had all the tapes transcribed, I had over one thousand pages of transcript with which to work. This number is significant in that it reflects the importance of the next stage of the process. I did not fully anticipate the number of hours involved in working with qualitative data generated by in-depth interviewing. Under the direction and guidance of my dissertation committee a decision was made to present the results of my research primarily in the form of profiles in the participants' own words. This was based upon the view that this mode of presentation was most compatible with the method of research utilized. The goal of the study was to explore the thoughts, impressions, and meaning the participants made of their involvement in the project from their own perspectives. The most effective way to do this was by using their own words.

One area that I would now handle differently is to include additional readers for the transcripts. I was the only one to read the transcripts and supply the connections that are presented in the commentaries in Chapter III. Outside readers would have provided fresh insight and experiences upon which to expand the material. Because of
the volume of material and the tedious task of compiling the profiles, one's perspective can become narrow or blunted. Additional readers might have helped take full advantage of the highly personal data generated by qualitative research.

The process of selecting which participants' interviews I would develop into profiles was simplified by the limited number of participants. Of the fourteen, I selected ten which met the criteria of comprehensiveness and the concreteness with which the participants reconstructed their experiences. The process of developing the profiles was to first arrange them according to the topics the participants addressed in the transcripts of their interviews. These topics were then organized into stories to form a narrative. The narratives reflected the participants' lives before their involvement in the project, how they came to be involved, the nature of their involvement, and the meaning they made of their experience. It is their reconstruction of the factors in their lives that brings order to the events. The profile is the reader's path through the complexities that surrounded the participants' lives and their involvement in the youth participation project.

After the profiles were developed, they were arranged into groups which reflected common themes that linked individual participants. It is here that an outside reader might have added more depth and insight to the themes. These groupings helped me illustrate the complexities of the participants' lives and their reasons for their involvement in the youth participation project. The commentaries which follow each group were intended to present my views of the in-depth reading of the
transcripts with the resulting development of the profiles. I brought to bear my experiences and the relevant literature to aid the reader to a deeper understanding of the unique nature of the data and to amplify the views of the participants.

Finally, by working with the material gained through in-depth interviewing, I learned just how complex the process is of sorting the elements which shape an individual's life. The data defies simple explanations or conclusions. This lack of conclusiveness is one aspect of the nature of qualitative research which attempts to illuminate the complexity of the human experience (see Seidman, Sullivan, and Schatzkamer, 1983, especially Chapters II, XIV, and XV). This study nonetheless reveals wide agreement in the meaning the various participants made of their involvement in a youth participation project. Based upon this seemingly unanimous view of the project, one could be tempted to draw simple conclusions; but the data illustrates the complexity of the reasons that lie behind this agreement. Working with qualitative data requires confronting the range of factors that account for the meaning individuals make of an experience. In Chapter V I will identify the patterns and connections I found among the participants. The interviewing process led me to a greater awareness of the importance the participants placed on the meaning of what they were doing.
I would like to begin on a personal note. This study is a culmination of a journey that began the day this writer stayed back in the third grade. In comparison to other events in the history of the world, the single act of my staying back warrants mention only because from that moment on I struggled to articulate the concept of learning which lies at the doorstep of this dissertation.

For nearly a quarter of a century, I did not quite know what happened that day in third grade. Why should my lack of ability to learn what others decided I should have learned bring about emotional pain and leave an indelible scar on my eight-year old frame. For the rest of my academic career, I struggled against the concept that the only reason an individual learns in school is because if he doesn't, then an adult will do something terrible to him. Something inside of me was saying, however, that learning was more important than just pleasing adults. The pain of my failing went too deep.

By the time I reached graduate school, I had become familiar with a body of literature that addressed learning in ways I had suspected I knew intuitively even on that day years before. I didn't fail as much as the adults who were in charge failed me. They were the ones who based their concepts of learning on achieving levels of performance that had nothing to do with the concepts of learning that I found in the literature. My teacher's goal had been to separate the bright from the not-so-bright, and I was a casualty.
This study set out to examine an educational program, not based upon sorting but on the concept that everyone can learn, wants to learn, and if provided with the right opportunity and environment, will learn, not out of fear or because of extrinsic rewards, but for reasons that lie deep within them. To attain my research objectives, I went about the task of probing the private lives of individuals. It is a small act of reciprocity that I share my private thoughts with the reader as I approach the conclusion of my study. A personal odyssey through public education is not the issue, but for this writer, it is a factor shaping my judgements, biases, and inadequacies which have not escaped the reader of this document.

If one is truly interested in the knowledge of what lies beyond the surface of another's actions, then one must be prepared to penetrate the unknown. When embarking upon a journey of discovery, the amount of space one brings will determine how much one can take away. The following story may help illustrate my point:

Nan-in, a Japanese Zen master, received a university professor who came to enquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer contain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!" "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?" (Humphreys, 1977, p. 40)

I do not approach the conclusions to this study with an empty cup, but rather with an awareness that for all we know, it is still less than we need to know. It is with this awareness that I offer my conclusion.
A Youth Participation Project: What I Learned

Youth participation projects have emerged in the last decade; yet, many of their educational precepts, such as, learning by doing, meaningful challenges, community involvement, group activity, youth-adult alliances, and offering significant tasks which focus on the concerns of the participants (McClosky, 1971) evolved more than a half a century ago. Common links are to be found between the writings of John Dewey, William Heard Kilpatrick, and other early Progressive educators and today's youth participation projects. In addition, youth participation projects provide youths with a constructive means to address many of the contemporary problems associated with adolescence.

The participants reflected many different points of view and emphasized different aspects of the project, both of which are discussed later, but what was common to all is similar to what John Dewey had to say about genuine interest. Dewey writes:

Genuine interest, in short, simply means that a person had identified himself with, or has found himself in, a certain course of action. Consequently he has identified with whatever objects and forms of skill are involved in the successful prosecution of that course. (1975, p. 43)

What this study has helped to reveal through the thoughts and impressions of the participants is the importance of the meaning they made of what they had done. Youth participation groups exist because groups of youths are willing to make a commitment to an activistic undertaking. This bares out Talcott Parsons's observations regarding
American youth:

Broadly speaking, youth in a developing society of the American type, in its deepest values and commitments, is likely to be favorable to the activistic side. It is inculcated with the major values of the society, and strongly impressed with the importance of its future responsibilities. (Erikson, ed., 1963, p. 117)

The data indicated that the participants felt that their involvement in the project gave them the power to influence the course of events. As Friedenberg and others have noted, youths are frustrated with being deprived of meaningful power and influence. Jim Wheeler related the following regarding how the adult society views teenagers and their role in the project:

I think a lot of adults think that teenagers aren't capable of handling responsibilities or capable of working together or putting out something of the same calibre as adults do. I think they think we have a ways to go before we can be called adults and do what adults do. And I think that a lot of that's wrong. I think a lot of teenagers can do a lot.

The project's aim was to provide alternative learning experiences with which youths could identify. For a youth participation project to work, its youths have to accept the responsibility for its success or failure. If the youths fail to identify with the project, then it can no longer be labeled a youth participation project. The project's activities and goals must link with some of the youths' intrinsic needs. Unlike most school activities where the student need only supply the end in the form of a correct answer, the ends and means in a youth par-
ticipation project reflect the concerns of the participants. Dewey describes the significance for learning in this manner:

The problem is not to find a motive, but to find material of and conditions for its exercise. Any material that appeals to this capacity has by that very fact motivating force. The end or object in its vital connection with the person's activities is a motive. (1975, pp. 62-63)

What appears to be an important consideration to the participants in this study was the fact that what they were doing and what was important to them were not separate from what they were learning.

To illustrate further the significance of linking the learning activities to the learner, one could turn to a statement by William Heard Kilpatrick concerning the advantages for teachers in using the project method approach. He states: "The use of the project method would acquaint the pupils with the true nature of the relationships between ends and means" (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 25). Kilpatrick was aiming his comments towards the classroom where today the project method enjoys wide acceptance (see Ausubel, 1969). What Kilpatrick does not refer to is what separates the classroom use of the project method from a youth participation project. To understand this difference, one must examine the thoughts, impressions, and meaning the participants make of the project in which they were involved. The project method approach by itself has no more power to captivate the genuine interest of the learner than any other method, if the learner has not identified with the means and ends as his own (Dewey, 1975). As one learns from
the profiles in this study, it was not simply that the youths were involved in a project but that they identified with the goals of the project. The data reveals that working on a project associated with television was a significant factor in shaping how the participants viewed their reasons for taking part in the project and the effort they put into it.

Erik Erikson offers one explanation as to why a project based upon learning television skills is so attractive to youths. Writing in Youth: Change and Challenge, he points out that an adolescent seeks out activities "which promise him eventual recognition within the specializations of his culture's technology" (1963, p. 1). Two common themes throughout the participants' profiles were the opportunity to work on a television show for teenagers and to gain experience for a possible career in television. Luis Lopez, an inner-city Hispanic youth, ties the value of a possible career in television to the importance for teenagers to be able to put on a television show:

[It was] important because it gives you experience. It gives you an opportunity to do something important that you can pick up as a career. Like in other words, [it] gives teenagers an opportunity to make something that they never even heard of, like a show . . . Never heard opportunities in other places. I never heard of anything like that.

The creators of the youth participation project began with what they felt was the well-documented interested of adolescents in television. They also believed that today's youths were in need of a vehicle for self-expression (Erikson, 1963).
Combining television production, an emphasis on the individual's need to be heard, making a meaningful contribution, and gaining valuable vocational experience were all factors at work in this youth participation project. The project seems to have come very close to what Kilpatrick recommended for teachers in *Foundations of Method* (1925). He states that teachers should stress "... activities, enterprises, experiences which enlist the heart and soul of childhood and youth" (p. 129). The classroom is a difficult environment in which to arrange the conditions that enlist the heart and soul, but what we learned from the participants in this study, a youth participation project seems to be an ideal vehicle to do just that.

Rich Carter recalls working on a show about the handicapped. He raised the issue of the importance of the topic and the fact that his fellow teenagers cared about the problems of the handicapped:

> We did a show on the handicapped ... I guess not too many big stations did not want to touch that subject because they thought it might have been too touchy or that wouldn't be an audience for it ... I know the kids that worked on The Project care about things like that, because that is what we discussed at our meeting.

After reading the data, it is clear that working on a television production was a strong incentive for the participants to do their best. From Michelle Warren we learn how the topic of teenage suicide and the enterprise of being the host combined to reflect the suggestion Kilpatrick had for enlisting the heart and soul of youth:
Being host of a show I thought was a big thing. You were a little in charge as to what was going to happen, what you were to say, and things like that. I had to go outside in front of the hospital and start off the show. And it was really cold out. And it seemed important. I acted very professional. Well, I couldn't go on the air and say, "It's really freezing out here, but I'm going to say it anyway." You had to appear as though it didn't bother you. And what I had to say was very important. It told about death and suicide among teenagers, and I had to go out there in a serious manner. With the mike and camera and everything, it seemed very professional even though it was kids. I knew that eventually it would be seen by other people, and so, you couldn't look unprofessional.

The data reveals that the participants were also motivated to do their best partly out of a recognition that they would be seen on television by others. Victoria Brown reflected on her choice of clothes for a show and her concern for her appearance: "I couldn't overdress like, you know, but I had to decide something in-between that would look real nice, 'cause people gonna see me and for the show's purpose."

One other example. David Chapdelaine described becoming disappointed with editing, because he found it boring. He changed his mind about his involvement in the project when he went on camera. He found that he enjoyed that experience so much that he didn't mind spending time doing the tedious things necessary to make his performance more polished.

All the participants expressed positive feelings about being around television equipment, going on camera, or being seen in public as a member of the project. Edelmyra Perez expresses a common thought when she says: "I felt like a newscaster coming out of the news. I felt like one of them. That was a good feeling. I felt like, wow, the
world's gonna watch me. I gotta make a good impression." As we learned in Chapter III, Terrance Milliner has great difficulty in school and felt that some of the activities associated with the project were too demanding at times, so he "don't have much to say," but he liked being around the television related activities and went to the production meetings for six months, learned to operate a video camera, and took part in other aspects of the show.

The data also reveals that a television project for adolescents can have serious negative effects. Rich Carter, who was involved in the youth participation project for over three years, describes in detail the diverse role television can play. The primary source of tension was which participant would get the lead for the on-camera parts. According to Rich, groups took sides along social lines: "All these goody-two-shoe kids on the show just up there because their parents have money. They wanted it all for themselves." Rich continues but now contradicts himself by pointing out that it wasn't strictly a class issue:

It seems to surface with kids with once they get the experience of doing it then they find out that they like doing it, want to be the star. They seem to want to continue to be the star. If they are the star once, they want to be the star again and again and again. They don't want to give other kids a chance. It happened to one of the girls who was host from York who was Black.

The study indicated that television is a powerful force in attracting youths but that it also can generate division and create conflict. One interesting omission emerges from those participants in the study
who joined the project later. One finds little mention of the problems of one group or one individual trying to take control over another group. By the time Jim Wheeler became involved, those problems were just something he heard about but did not witness himself. It would appear that while television can create serious problems, this youth participation project was able to learn from the experience and take steps to lesson or eliminate the problems altogether.

Beyond television production, a number of the participants identified with at least one of the project's major social goals. In part, the project was launched to give youths a voice in the community. The role of spokesperson for other youths was mentioned by half of the participants as a significant aspect of their involvement. They seemed to share Friedenberg's view (1974) that youths have too few legitimate ways to be heard and that the adult society is oppressive. There are similarities between the thoughts expressed by the youths in Ralph Larkin's 1979 study and the youths in this study. The major difference between the two groups is a sense of alienation in one and, as we learn from the profiles in Chapter III, the feeling of making a substantial contribution in the other. Larkin concluded that the youths' "... lives are pervaded by a lack of purpose and meaning ... and feel themselves coerced and 'hemmed in'" (p. 160). The youths in Larkin's study were not involved in a project in which to feel that they were making a significant difference to bring about constructive resolutions to their concerns. An important distinction in the attitudes between the two may well be the sense of being involved in an ac-
tivity outside the confines of the school setting versus being forced to cope within a school environment in the other where, as Larkin says, "... they are acutely aware of the arbitrariness of their lives, [and] much of their behavior is a reaction to this pervasive sense of oppressiveness" (p. 160).

The data in this study indicates that adolescents are sensitive to the treatment they receive from the adult community. A feeling of uneasiness when around adults was a common theme. The participants felt especially frustrated when they were involved with the personnel from the cable company. The general feeling was that the adults who worked in the studio there neither trusted nor liked adolescents. In the same vein, Terrance recalls visiting a college campus and felt that the adult to be interviewed there made the crew uncomfortable by being less than cooperative. More in keeping with Larkin's conclusions, three of the participants in this study were student council members and were very involved in school activities intended to give adolescents the opportunity to hold leadership positions. The three felt that the various council activities were limiting and that their positions were based upon popularity to begin with. Michelle expressed concern that the adults in school tended to avoid meaningful relationships with adolescents in addition to not listening to the so-called student leaders.

Nearly all the participants believed that their involvement in the project was important in showing the adult community that they were capable of handling responsibility. Brian McDonald explains the need
I think there's a need for these kinds of shows, because um, young people aren't quite heard enough in this society, and because they're still growing in general and in attitudes and learning about the real world in general. Adults don't listen to them quite as much as they should, and um, I think there's a need for shows like this so they could express their attitudes, opinions. Let people know that they're there, that they want to have an active say . . . and let people know that they're serious.

Richard Carter expresses a similar view in the following manner:

People don't expect teenagers to have a camera for one thing, and they don't expect teenagers to be doing anything productive, so no matter where an adult sees a teenager, they think they are stealing someone's pocketbook or writing on the wall with a magic marker or something.

Rich continues, talking about being in charge during the interviews of adults. Because the project was their show, they were in the position of authority, and that, he recalls, made some adults uncomfortable.

The participants' belief that they were serving a genuine need for both society and adolescents was also viewed as an important way to break down prejudices, a topic dealt with in detail in the commentaries of Group I. A number of participants felt that other youths would benefit by seeing them and their accomplishments as an example of what they themselves could do. Luis offered the following observation:

[The Project] helps teenagers show what they have. It shows people that teenagers have or are in need of people giving them a chance to do something. Most kids, given that chance, will do a good job. They would act as they live. Like, [The Project] gives teenagers like, uh, a chance to make something of themselves. Like if you go
along the street and talk about this, talk about that, or see somebody that just finished a show and comes up to you, "Oh, are you finished doing a show" and people be impressed.

With television as a driving force, the feeling of providing a role model for adolescents was a strong motive in the nature of the participants' involvement.

Once the youths made the connection between means and ends, they were motivated to learn the content which would enable them to create a television show. As Dewey said, "Interest will take care of itself." Mary Conway Kohler, the former chairperson of the National Commission on Resources for Youth, states: "Actually, the best learning usually occurs when students are motivated by present needs, when they see the link between what they study and what they do" (1981, p. 426). One could also quote Kilpatrick in support once again as far back as 1925 where he says that the project method is "... the process whereby the individual shares more intelligently in the active direction of life about him and accordingly grows in appreciation of existing patterns ..." (p. 8).

Both these statements emphasize that if the student is enfranchised to act as an individual, then he will be more inclined to learn. The critical factor is the emphasis on the needs of the individual to connect the learning to his life. In this youth participation project, as in the others mentioned in Chapter I, the undertakings reflect the youths' concerns, and they were then afforded a real opportunity to take responsibility for a solution to those concerns. The idea of the
youths taking a major share of the responsibility for the project's outcome was not an issue shared by all the participants, but it does indicate the value of basing real decision-making in their hands.

One can compare the thoughts expressed by the youths in Larkin's study on the concept of student government to that of Jim Wheeler's to understand the significance of such responsibility-taking. Larkin's subtitle is "Student Politics: An Exercise in Absurdity." We learn that in the project under study here the participants selected the topics, conducted meetings, ran the equipment, in short, were in charge of the production. But it is Jim who pursues the question of the degree of responsibility they actually had, which clearly illustrates the importance he placed on adolescents' responsibility. Jim explains that at his first meeting he was struck by the fact that teenagers were responsible for the show. He was drawn to the project because of this approach. Throughout his extensive involvement, Jim explains how he was responsible for the different aspects of the production—conducting interviews, operating the camera, editing, etc. As the project ran into problems due to funding, Jim's involvement declined during this period of low activity, and he expressed his concern with what he called the "stick-to-itiveness" of some of the youths. He describes the problem as youths who wanted things to happen without hassles, without working. The problems he was referring to had nothing to do with the production, but were instead related to fund-raising and legal considerations, two aspects of the project in which the advisors did not include the youths. These were the only areas for which the youths were
not involved. Later in his interview, Jim states:

I think that the kids did not take enough of a role in the show... it was an adult that started it. It was an adult that got the funding. It was an adult that made contact with the kids... it was an adult that took responsibility for the equipment and the legalities of the show, and it's just like it seems the adult was the background of everything.

Yet, when faced with responsibility, "... it scared me. It scared me to death, cause maybe the interview... wouldn't come right... when I was running the camera, that it moved too much or that the lighting wasn't perfect or that the color didn't come out right." In spite of all the responsibilities Jim was afforded, he wanted more. The rest of the youths in the study were not as outspoken as he was, but they all recognized that the project depended upon them and their ability to work together. The nature of television production requires cooperation. Jim was not operating alone; he was part of a larger social group. The youths involved welcomed the opportunity to work with their peers, but as was pointed out earlier in the chapter, a television project can create a certain tension among its participants.

One factor which may have contributed to the inability of certain adolescents to share the project's activities may be due to the tendency of adolescents for form cliques. Rich Carter refers to a group of youths associated with a drama club as unwilling to share the spotlight with the other participants in the project. But the "groupiness" nature of adolescents, while a factor for creating tension in the early stages of the project's development, was more significant in substan-
Adolescence is a time of heightened affiliation and identification with peers, and the conservative choice usually points towards finding friends who mirror one's attributes and behaviors. In all the high schools I visited, I was struck by the rigid definition of student groups and their internal homogeneity. (1983, p. 352)

In this youth participation project the data reveals that some of the participants were attracted to the project because it brought them into contact with youths who had different lifestyles. Michelle Warren tells us of her excitement in meeting youths who live in different places and dress differently. I addressed the topic of the positive cross-cultural experiences that were generated by the activities surrounding the project in my commentary on Group I. What the data from this study seems to suggest is that the social contact associated with the project is consistent with Dewey's observation:

... children are concerned with things only as they enter into and affect the concerns of persons, and the extent to which a personal-social interest radiates upon objects and gives them their meaning and worth. (1975, p. 86)

We do not find that the project in this study produced close friendships among the participants. They learned to work together, but their social contact was limited to the needs of the project. The data does not indicate that their shared concerns for the production were factors in lessening the rigidity surrounding adolescent groupiness. As in the case of adults who may need to cooperate in a professional setting but
do not necessarily base friendships upon that cooperation, the youths in this study acted in much the same manner. The social activity seemed to heighten their interest in the project but did not significantly alter their views on the nature of group identification.

The concepts of learning upon which youth participation projects are based do not fit easily into the public schools. It is not a question of their effectiveness as much as it is a question of utility. School systems based upon seemingly meaningless and arbitrary constraints on its students do not lend themselves to learning concepts which emphasize individual needs. Social, economic, and political realities outweigh educational reform which does not enhance what Marvin Lazerson (1973) describes as a system of education which "... reflects the values of a bureaucratic inequalitarian, racist society" (P. 269). In the commentaries I pointed out that Michelle, Victoria, Jim, and Brian demonstrated their ability to make school work for them. They were able to take full advantage of their schools' resources and activities. In ways that this group was successful, we learned that Luis, Terrance, and Anthony were not. High achievement, academic success, and respect for authority, all tools for the former group were overshadowed by the latter's violence or indifference. Where one group knew how to adjust and meet the bureaucratic expectations, school proved to be a rewarding experience. For the second group which was at odds with their teachers and administrators and did not perform well academically, school was a form of prison which was avoided by negative acting out behaviors, skipping, or dropping out.
Schools are not necessarily evil as Lazerson and his fellow Re- visionists seem to believe. Sara Lightfoot's work *The Good High School* amply illustrates the danger of assaulting the entire process of schooling without considering the complexities of the issues involved. Throughout the profiles we learn that schools have problems, but so did the youth participation project under study with its clear mandate, willing participants, and relatively nonbureaucratic structure. If the participants are to be the judges, then it is clear that schools themselves are not evil as much as they are the victims of cynicism and uncertainties. Luis's story concerning a fight with a teacher whom he "liked a lot" illustrates just how complex these issues can be. Schools work, and the data reveals that they work well for certain students. What seems to be the challenge is to make schools work better and to make them work for all students.

The meaning, thoughts, and impressions of the individuals who took part in this study offer clear testimony in favor of those educators and social critics who have argued for greater freedom of thought and action for youths both in and out of school. Offering schemes to improve the education of the young is difficult due to the complexity of the issues confronting society. This study does not present statistics, percentages, or other measurements to substantiate its suggestions. This study has explored what the youths in this study tell us.

This study looked at one youth participation project that involved over one-hundred youths. Of that number, fourteen were interviewed in-depth. During their involvement in the youth participation project,
they were asked to undertake difficult and demanding tasks. The ten
who were the subjects of the analysis felt that their involvement in
the youth participation project was a rewarding and important period
in their short lives. How they became involved varied as much as did
the different aspects of the project they identified with. The fact
that they came from such diverse backgrounds and that their lives pro¬
mise different futures indicates that the things they shared concerning
learning may be more significant than the social factors that separated
them. They wanted to learn and to make a meaningful difference in
their world, and each in their own way did.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was exploratory in nature. It examined just one youth
participation project through the thoughts and impressions of a small
number of youths who were involved in it. There are hundreds of pro¬
jects across the nation which involve thousands of individuals. As was
discussed in the limitations of the study in Chapter I, a larger number
of participants in this study would have afforded more data upon which
to base the analysis and make generalizations. A study which had in¬
cluded a larger number of youths from a wide selection of projects
would have offered a more complete image of the dynamics of particular
youth participation projects.

The use of television production proved to be a significant fac¬
tor and accounted heavily in the youths' enthusiasm for the project.
A study that explored other television related educational activities
might offer other data concerning why television production is so attractive to youths. As we move increasingly into a telecommunications-dependent world, the role of television will continue to increase, playing an even larger part in the lives of our youths than it does now. This study indicates just how strong a factor television can be for our youths today, regardless of their backgrounds. Further study into the relationship between television activities and youths may provide answers for the development of new techniques for the educational growth of our young through their interest in television.

Two final suggestions. This study interviewed individuals who through their extensive involvement had demonstrated an interest in the project. There were those who for a variety of unknown reasons terminated their involvement. It is just as important to know why some youths did not maintain their involvement as it is to know why others were drawn to those very same activities. Data gathering on those individuals who were not attracted to the various activities could aid in the development of other youth participation projects which could then take into consideration the problems these individuals identified.

Youth participation projects have not received a great deal of attention in educational research. This study's emphasis was on a specific project. An historical study tracing the educational underpinnings upon which youth participation projects are based could possibly aid in encouraging educators to consider their use. Beyond the expansion of youth participation projects, more knowledge concerning their evolution may open a dialogue among educators concerning a pedagogy
which emphasizes individuals over subject matter and a more humanistic approach to learning.
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your son/daughter was randomly selected from a pool of 50 to participate in a study of what it was like for them to be involved in the television project [XXXXXXXXXX]. The interviews will explore their world prior to their involvement in the project, during and after. The objective is to determine what effect, if any, the project had on their lives.

To accomplish the objective of this study, I plan to conduct at least two audio-taped interview sessions of an hour to an hour and a half in length. The session will be arranged at the mutual convenience of your son's/daughter's and my schedules. The interviews will be transcribed and he or she will be free to end his or her participation at any time in the interviewing process. Furthermore, within thirty days the participants may have specific material from the interviews deleted. No person's real name will be used in the resulting transcript and dissertation. Taped portions of the interview data will be included in the published dissertation. I may also use portions of this data in future publications I may write and in activities I may participate in such as lectures, films, and so forth.

These interviews are part of my dissertation research at the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts.

Your son or daughter's involvement is greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Dennis Corso

Signature of parent/guardian__________________________ Date____________

Signature of interviewee_____________________________ Date____________
FORMULARIO DE PERMISO ESCRITO

Querido Padre/Encargado Legal,

Su hijo/hija fue escogido al azar de un conjunto de cincuenta para participar en un estudio de cómo era para ellos de estar envuelto en el proyecto de televisión, [XXXXXXXXXX]. Las entrevistas van explorar su mundo antes de, curante y después de su participación en el proyecto. El propósito de las entrevistas es aprender si el proyecto tenía algún efecto en su vida o no.

Para lograr el propósito de este estudio, pleneo conducir al menos dos sesiones de entrevista grabadas de una hora hasta una hora y media. La sesión sera arreglada a la conveniencia mutua del horario de su hijo/hija y el mío. Las entrevistas serán transcritas y el o ella será libre de terminar su participación a cualquier punto del proceso de las entrevistas. Además, entre treinta días el participante puede tener material específico suprimido de las entrevistas. Ni el verdadero nombre ni apellido será usado en el transcrító de resultado y disertación. Tal vez voy a usar porciones de esta información en publicaciones futuras que escribiré y en actividades en las cuales participaré como conferencias, películas, etc.

Estas entrevistas son parte de mi investigación de disertación a la Escuela de Educación de La Universidad de Massachusetts.

El envolvimiento de su hijo o hija será muy estimado.

Verdaderamente,

Dennis Corso

Firma del Padre/Encargado Legal __________________________ Date __________
Firma de la persona entrevistada __________________________ Date __________