



Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Trust Oral History Project

Interviewer : Dini Sobukwe (DS)
Interviewee : Reverend Nancy Charton (NC)
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Transcribed : Dini Sobukwe & Gaby Cheminais

DS: Can reverend open our interview with a prayer?

NC: Alright. Oh heavenly Father we thank you for the Sobukwe Trust, we thank you for Dini and Gaby, and we pray that you will be with them in this work of recording the past and raising consciousness about our past and our future. We thank you God that you have always been with us in the past and we pray that you will be with us in the future, and that this may be a part, a small part, a very small part of the consciousness that will carry us forward into the future you have in mind for us, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

DS: Reverend Charton, we have come for the chat, and you can be how really you want to structure it, what we had in mind is a life history, and a eh particularly your involvement with the church, the politics of the time, and eh your life in general, and Graaff-Reinet, your knowledge it , and the area in general.

NC: Good... Well my life in Christ begins in Graaff-Reinet, so my faith and Graaff-Reinet are totally intertwined. I arrived here in 1950... I think it must have been 4, never too certain of the date, in a state of total disillusion, I was suffering from eh.. a very acute depression, and I was pregnant and I had 2 small children and we came because my family was here, my mother was here and brother farmed in the district and I thought if well anything happened to me that Godfrey who had no family in South Africa, would have some support, and so we arrived here in a state of disarray. And I came back to faith here (pause) literally as a last resort, and eh my mother used to go to church ,, I come from a home, family that really didn't have any faith, my father was an atheist and he was eh

GC: We've got some people. Alright sorry

NC: And so they, you know, we were an atheistic or agnostic household but I was sent to DSG in order, DSG is an adult a school for girls or to become a school for girls in Grahamstown in order to become a lady in the manses they were certainly unsuccessful with doing that I hated it then eh and then in my matric year I ran a club for Jesus and I decided that's... it was a lot of superstition I walked out of church on Easter Sunday out of the cathedral and said that's it (laughs) And then I came back thinking well perhaps it works and the church refused to lay hands on me because they said that it only happened in the new testament it didn't happen in 1900. Can you believe it, the church was terribly sold on Rationalism. And eh, I read Mary Baker Eddy book on Christian Science all about healing so I was into healing, anyway and so I ended up in Khumani Hospital and I, my husband said to me you must write to me and I said I'm not writing to you because I will just write all this nonsense that I, it's no good I am not writing and he looked so crestfallen and sad and I said never mind each night we'll pray because we used to pray with the children every night, I took religion seriously, and I said when you pray with the children, we'll all pray together, 8 o'clock. So at 8 that night, that first night, I'm stiff with anxiety, I was almost catatonic and I'm just so sick. The sister said: ooh! we are always like this and I said no, not always, and I knelt by the bed, my neighbour was there when I prayed, but I did. And I prayed, and I stood up I don't know how long later but the depression had lifted I had come out of that black cloud and it was, so far as I was concerned it was a miracle and...a month later I went back, I came back here and I was more or less met on the doorstep by the National Council of Women who had made me their secretary when I was at my worst and eh I was immediately incorporated into the, what you could call the English speaking aristocracy of Graaff Reinet I didn't know it at the time, very exclusivehaven't got it there this time but then they took me under their wing. And my (cough) The development of our faith and the development of our social and political commitment ran together the one was the reflection of the other I believed what my faith me and my faith told me I had to live the gospel and I had to live the gospel in this period which was from 1959 onward when apartheid was really beginning to get a grip. And then the National Council of Women was standing in the bridge and trying to witness to a different kind of political and social order and Andre Luscum who was then chairman/president of the National Council of Women, she was my first president, and she taught me how to be a community worker. And on the other side of the river at uMasizakhe was, was (Yes yes close the door) Ernest Sobukwe who was priest at.. resigned as inspector of schools because he couldn't handle the education department, he'd been accepted by the Anglican church and been priest at St Phillips which was then subordinate to St James, it wasn't a parish on its own. I loved Ernest, and the church drove me mad because it was so hypocritical. At one level it was pretend the gospel all the basics were saying the all right things (laughs) and on the ground it was like the just like the rest of South Africa and living the very worse of the gospel. So it really drove me mad and I said to my rector: why is it that St James has no relationship with St Phillip; we never meet them we never see them. And to my understanding that's not what Jesus Christ is about. And the rector said to me, yes he admitted it was all wrong and he had when he

was installed as minister here, had invited Ernest to be his chaplain eh or the bishops chaplain yes got all wrong. And eh people had threatened to walk out and he said, so I feel can't do anything. We help them financially we administer them but we don't have any social relations. Well I said that's all wrong. Fortunately for me that rector was made Dean of George and promoted ? and we got someone called Mack Wiley who was my mentor and who.... the previous one had refused let me to Sunday school I don't know why, I had married a divorcee, and I gathered he couldn't bless that marriage because I was living in sin anyway, whatever the law said. Eh, and my husband said to me: why do you worry with it? God has blessed our marriage anyway so let's not worry about what the church does and doesn't do. Eh, but Mack came, and they had refused to let me teach in the Sunday school. So eh, Mack came and within two weeks he was on my doorstep saying: guess he'll be needing me at Sunday school. And I started my church career, as it were, as very humble, ignorant Sunday school teacher but committed to training committed to learning and within a couple of years I was running the whole Sunday school and we had a big one because we had the whole boarders because in those days, boarders spent the whole weekend in town so we got everybody in church and eh, I was really enjoying it. And then they advertised for a Sunday school supervisor in George and I applied, much to my husband's disgust.

"How are you going to do this, why do you want to work for the church for?"

"Why shouldn't I work for the Church? "?"

"Well they pay you peanuts"

I said never mind the peanuts I'm not interested in the peanuts. We didn't have lot of money we lived on.... It wasn't interesting to me, but what was interesting was the work and the preaching the gospel and I got a very enthusiastic response from the chairman of the board in George and I thought here we go and then didn't hear anything for months and I went to eh back to my rector Mack and Mack said I don't know anything about George and we never did know anything about George here we are beyond the mountain. And eh So eh finally we were going down to holiday at Plettenberg bay we used to go down to Luscum's house there during some school holiday when they weren't using it and I said to Godfrey can we go and see the Bishop because I want to find what's going on, and so we go and to see the Bishop and Godfrey is complaining miserably and saying all my life just seat and eat cucumber sandwiches with the bishop and so, anyway, we did eat cucumbers in the garden. And I said why have I not been appointed because the response was so positive and I was there, had everything going for me and the Bishop said well he didn't know he wasn't at the meeting (laughs) and he didn't know which was a very unsatisfactory reply, I mean either it was they thought I was mentally ill still, which was a fair enough I had been in therapy? for 5 years or I was married to a divorcee and not really forgiven although I had been accepted back at communion eh it doesn't add up nothing added up. I came back devastated. And eh Andre Luscum phoned me, and she heard my voice, and she said Nancy I'm coming in to see you. She came all the way in up from Vrede a long way and we sat under our lemon tree,

having tea. And she said to me. Now Andre was, in her own words, an unbeliever, she's the best person I have ever met but she was an unbeliever. Nancy do you have a calling in the holy spirit, so i said no no no no other people have the holy spirit. Well, she said: do you think the bishop has a holy spirit and well I said he's supposed to have it. Well she said I think it's it would be a very bad idea for you to stop working doing this job there are very many more important things going to happen in your life than be stuck in away in the diocese of George's Sunday school superintendency. And you know she just pulled me out of the trough. And then we had an art exhibition here which we used to get the triennial, we were already functioning in those days I mean the triennial art exhibition was big stuff and we'd had it here and then, we had an exhibition of Prince of London or something I took it to Spandau High School and Mkhondo was there when I was doing it, anyway she said: "you are a born teacher" I'd always said I don't want to be a teacher and eh, she, we went, we spent Easter, Easter weekend with the Luscum's out at Vrede at.. eh... the farm above, not Vrede, it's up the valley, anyway and we were sitting there in the shadow of Tulbagh and she, Andre said; Nancy you have got to be a teacher you wanted to work, you are gonna be a teacher. Well I said I don't have a teaching degree, what am I going to teach? Politics (laughs) Not only that by now no one would have wanted me to teach politics, anyway.

"Well I have to do another degree."

" Well you can do another degree."

They spent all morning, my husband and Andre, talking to me about being a teacher. I finally agreed that I would do another degree, provided I could do biblical studies as a teaching subject. I thought I was quite savvy, didn't think it would exist. There into Graaff- Reinet I used keep a UNISA yearbook, because I used to help people. And eh, looked up the UNISA yearbook. And I could in fact DO Biblical studies as a teaching subject. Haa!!!! Hooray! and that's how i started. I was 3 or 4 years, I don't know, maybe a bit more I finished in 1959 or 1960, yah ..eh... and eh..., no I started in 1960, my mother died in 1960 so we had a little bit of money and I could actually afford the fees for UNISA and I started on my degree. And then I started my teaching career at Union which nearly killed me. Union is a tough school, well it was in those days. It's a fascinating school I am heavily honoured to tattle up,... I can't ... It ...was fantastic headmaster that he was.... his staff was totally expendable it was all on the side of sports and the boys, I mean, and the pupils, so I didn't get much support and I had all the B classes and I was teaching them relief teaching and in those days the classes were streamed(laughs) so yah. Anyway. I managed to defeat all them except 7B. 7B, I had 3 weeks of hell. I discovered afterwards my eldest who was still in standard 11 didn't want me teaching at Union at any price he used to stand under the window and say 'go for it boys, go for it boys'. I couldn't imagine what the hell it was. I went to bed for 3 days after I'd had 3 weeks of that and I said to my husband forget it, if you can't , if you don't have authority to teach you don't teach, you must have discipline. Godfrey said, very wisely, I'm warning you that's just Union High, don't bother with it. And then I tried get, to do my teaching

diploma because they paid you peanuts if you didn't have it, teaching diploma, never mind that you had not 2 degrees behind your name. So I finally wrote to Rhodes, and they accepted me. So we sold up the house and moved to Grahamstown, to do a teaching diploma with the object of teaching in the schools and revolutionising

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....Revolutionising the teaching of religion in schools because it was appalling (laughs) how wrong can you be. Anyway then so then we moved to Grahamstown, in the meanwhile I had been doing my initiation as a community worker here and we had the grace of good moved St James Church which was extremely conservative to granting book bursaries because in those days no black student got books all had to pay for their books the whites all got their books free, that really insulted me. We got book bursaries and so we tried, at least one of the priest is still here, Simon Booi. Eh, and then we started a feeding scheme, Ms Delahunt and I, it came backing of the council at St Phillips, school because we had a connection there, it was our own mission school. And we started very properly, we weighed all the children and then we did the feeding and then the next term we weighed them all and incredible and the teachers said they all got more attention and that's in the middle of apartheid. So I think. We also started a ham industry and we went to Ernest and said would your women like to, yah we had, we just knit jerseys for the poor and someone in the Women's Association stood up and said no, she didn't knit jerseys for the dissident poor. So (laughs) I was very cross and I stood up and said: well madam chair would so and so be prepared to teach the dissident poor yes, yes, we should do that we should teach them to knit, we are not going to work for them so we started a home industry and I went to Ernest and said would your women like to could he tell the mothers union about it now if you know the mothers union you know priests have to be very careful when they work with mother's union just don't tell the mother's union what to do. Ernest was very uncertain but he said anyway I will get you the St Mary's Guild, these are the teenagers, the girls. So we started with St Mary's guild in St Phillips our church on Rothman Street, a low clipped building, dark, small, cold, sitting on wood benches, no telly no electric light and we realised if we bought the wool we used from Uitenhage on special rates and you knitted one for the church for charity and one for yourself or your family. Well after six months Ernest came to me and said the women are now mad to participate so now we needed to bigger premises so we go back, it was, summer came, and I, we go back to the Women's guild we say and we can we have the, um, the hall, St James well, ohhhh!!, Says some, that's totally illegal and of course it was. But then fortunately I had been experienced by this stage with the National Council of Women and we'd had Dr Nkomo from Pretoria down to talk and I'd learned that the first thing you do is go to the head of police and you say I have Dr Nkomo coming and he says, well, just check out all the neighbours, and if they don't make any problem and I won't make a problem but if they make a problem I've got to make a problem ok so Vel Rug???? who lived opposite the hall and I said well we've just the got to fix the neighbours and then we fix the police and we are ok oh and and Vel pops up Vel Rug??? pops up and says, she

was a very new little bride, Vel Rug? pops up says ohh she says oh we wouldn't mind. I don't think it bothered with the rest of the neighbours. So we started and this was very successful. And the lady who didn't want to knit for the dissident poor was very happy to come in and drink tea with the dissident poor and teach it was fantastic. Oh we even had a- because they were excluded from the agricultural show- and the domestic things, you know, that they used to exhibit sewing and no non-white, horrible word, because they weren't allowed there so we had our own show it was fantastic because people like Mrs Huffkie and them. Fantastic work. So that was one of, just one of the aspects. I learned to be a community worker I learned to wed my faith to my actions which for me is being exactly what Jesus didn't not only preach he didn't only attend worship services Jesus lived what he preached in spite of the society into which he born all the.. it was the people who were in the margins that he kept pulling in. So that is where we had to go and that's where the church had to go. And praise God that's where the church went, by and large, but, I mean, we've had conflicts with the church ever since really. We've been conflicted with the church. OK, well, that was my initiation, that was the beginning.

We go to Grahamstown to do the UED, and.. eh.. I found- I think it is all going to wonderful because I've had a such good show here, I've been accepted- Grahamstown is different; if it was not the 1820s, my people arrived here in 1819. Eh... my husband was retired, say, he didn't have a social, he didn't have a social .. but find a place to get into society, I was there as a student we didn't have any money we had nothing going for us. Offered to work with ... which was the yah the basic, the most important NGO in Grahamstown, and they did fantastic work, offered to do, a bit ..with food parcels but I wasn't, wasn't eh ..accepted. Anyway, within a very short time, when I was um. At the end of that year the professor came to me and said there is a job for you at the training college teaching English, go and see the principal. So I go and see the principal who was Nanny, Sister Nanny, she was a lovely lady, very,very forceful. So Sister Nanny says: Well now yes we want an English teacher. And I say: Well I really have the job to teach the bible. Oh no she says, the Sisters do that, yah. So eh well, the English Literature itself is teaching the gospel so eh? So English literature? No no you will be doing first year, so you will really be doing remedial English and analysis and that sort of thing. Oh crikey, I couldn't, imagine the boredom of teaching those sorts of things, I heard only that and said, no I'm sorry. I'm sorry. If I don't get a job I don't need a job and my husband will have find a way to pay the bond, I can't help him. So, they were very cross with me, the professor included. And one evening, Godfrey was reading Groffords daily mail or that weekly or whatever it was weekly mail, and he said they are advertising for a politics teacher at Rhodes I said listen Godfrey forget it I'm how many years out of date and I have only got my master's degree, forget it, No said Godfrey, well you can apply, you just have to fail, there isn't, why don't you apply. Now the alternative of teaching Latin at Graham (laughs), if you know anything about Graham College you would know that teaching Latin would not be the most exciting thing you could possibly do. So I said let me apply. I'm eh. So 3 weeks later I am astonished. Telephone call from the registrar, Please can

you come for an interview. Go for the interview now I'm eh. In looking back and knowing what the structures of the university are, I'm astonished, because the vice chancellor is head of the interviewing committee which he never used to be, then there is the vice principal then there's the head of philosophy which was part of the politics - Politics department is part of philosophy. Nigel Westhuizen, he was a Graaff Reineter, em, and a good Dutch Reformed Elder, but not a Nationalist and various others, formidable. Plus Terrence Beard who was the politics man, and it turns he'd got himself banned by that stage, he was in the dog box, and I am interviewed, and the Vice Chancellor says to me: Mrs Charton would you rather teach, em, politics or English? Oh! I said English Terrence nearly falls off his chair. Obviously hmm and at the end the Vice Chancellor, chairman of says well how would it be if we try each other out, we take you on for a year, if you like teaching politics that would be fine if we like you, it was all very accessible I mean because if they take you it is always on a year's trial anyway

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N.C.:79(?) I got the job. Now that doesn't happen you know, you walk out of the committee and they say 'We'll let you know.' And I stand, and if you know Rhodes lobby, you look down High Street and at the end of it its the cathedral and I say to God 'I've spent all these years doing this degree with UNISA to teach the gospel and now I am going to teach politics! I don't understand.' And it was, it - ah, a great sense of peace about this. There was the cathedral and I didn't know what it meant. Only in retrospect did I know God was saying 'you're going there - just wait. (smiles) Just do this'. So then I went. And I had spent in my UED (?) year, I had spent a term really teaching at VT (?) which was an all girl school, very good school, it was excellent. She didn't have problems, she said they said I was cute. So I arrived at the girl's school. And but the experience of teaching didn't inspire me there, if it did. I had the literature classes, so I was teaching things I really liked. I had both the A stream and the B streams and I found to my astonishment, the A stream, teaching JC, English assisting them poetry, Oh, they were all into imagery and all that sort of thing, analytical sort of thing. The B stream were all into response, the gut response to the poetry which really fascinated me and I began to be interested in, Ja, why people are in the B stream. So I learnt a lot that year, that, that three months. But I also don't, I never wanted to teach in an all girl's school because the staff room was unbelievable! (laughs). There was two big tables in the staff room and the one table if you sat there you didn't talk to anyone at **that** table. Everyone was (gesturing with her hands) and we had a wonderful headmistress. So anyway when I got job offers from St., ah I think it was St. Andrews, at the end of the year, and I had to get a job because I had to pay the bond - Godfrey had seen to that, um, I just said I don't want to teach at an elite school which Godfrey thought was nonsense. Ah, and then I had applied for this teaching job at Rhodes, I got it. Well! and then I had to teach politics, I had left with political philosophy and government. And I had Pretoria, I had had a guy from (?) who was a graduate of London University, Laski, a Laski pupil, Laski was a famous professor of politics. So I had very good grounding in governance

and philosophy which I didn't fancy much. But I'd gone now, Terence said to me 'Will you will do English governance in the first year and you will do your first year African politics' and I said 'I really don't want to teach philosophy. It's all out of date. I really don't want to go there.' And then Terence said 'Well we will have to start with political sociology now.' I had never heard of it. (laughs) I said 'What do I do?' He said well go and see Garvey van der Merwe who was the, one of the Sociology lecturers and Professor Erving. So I started on doing political sociology. So it was very challenging and I started with very small classes on the African side but the first year was big - big classes. But I'd had six months and then I remember walking up, with Terence up to our little shack where we used to have our offices, under the blue gum tree and I saying to him 'I never want to go back to the school system, I love the freedom of teaching at the university where I can have a hand in devising the syllabus where I am free decide what I am going to use to teach that syllabus and where I am free to interact with the students on an, on an equal level. Because I always maintain that with teaching, if you are not learning as a teacher, you are not teaching. You have to be open to learning from your students. And I, I really, I was really fascinated with the freedom I had, in **my** department, not always, in my Department at the university. And then I had the support and whenever I struck anything I didn't, couldn't understand then Terence would say 'Lets have a seminar, let's have a seminar and we'll invite so and so and we will discuss it' And he had the whole philosophy, we were part of the philosophy department. And in my first year, it was actually when I was still doing my **UED (?)**. I don't remember, (indistinct) (phone rings)

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N.C.: and an Anglican as member of the Church Council. Les Martin had been made a lay minister by Mac Wiley who wanted to extend the ministry in Kroonvale. And ah he was such a lovely person. And he should have been on the Council. And I knew that. So we spent two years, ? Macabe and I started organising, and talking to people, saying 'Les you know ...' Les was very popular, amongst everybody. Everybody loved him and Petronella. And I got phoned, sometime in March to say 'Nancy, Les was elected non-con' (claps her hands) OH, Halleluya, miracles! So Les is on the Council. She arrives on my doorstep sometime in April, she had grandchildren at Kingswood, tears streaming down her face 'I've come to tell you, they have kicked Les off the Council.' 'WHAT' Someone had come from England, an important member of the congregation and said to the priest in charge. 'Well, Les has to be asked to resign or else I resign and if I resign my money goes.' Now I understand people in this town and I am not judgmental because they have grown up like that and its like, like that is just the way they are. But that the priest could say to Les 'Would you please resign' that I could not accept. I was absolutely livid. And I said I'm - that is the end of the Anglican Church. I cannot handle that sort of hypocrisy. That a member - the -the guy who stands there in the leadership can actually allow that to happen! So ah Godfrey is now very worried: 'So where are you going to go to church'. 'Well, I'll go to the Methodist' 'Well, they are just as bad, you know that. 'Yes, I know that' 'Well I'll find somewhere but I am not

going to be an Anglican'. Monday I don't go to church on Sunday. Now this is absolutely astonishing because I'm always in church. So Godfrey knows now that I've got my stubborn head fixed that way. I come home on Monday from lectures at about half-past twelve and I find Godfrey sitting with the Dean. Oh .. Now the Dean was new. He had just arrived from Kimberley. He had three Sunday services at the Cathedral. And he said 'Ohh, I missed you, come to see where you were'. I said to him years ago later 'Ken, how did you know?' because I thought Godfrey had phoned him. Anyway he spent at least an hour saying to me finally 'It will never happen in the Cathedral, it will never happen in the Cathedral'. So he got me back in the Anglican church and I started on Sunday school teaching there. So that ... And so often in Grahamstown ... uh .. Graaff-Reinet when I was really angry with what was happening in the Anglican Church, I would go up to Ernest and say 'I can't handle this!' and Ernest would say 'Well how do you think I handle it!' (laughs) Ahh ... you know I want to cry when I think of how Ernest used to say 'We're really being persecuted'. And I had to understand because I ..I was also feeling that intensive persecution. So we did all sorts of interesting things here. (counting on fingers) Apart from the book bursary which was a financial committment and the feeding scheme which was a month ... it was a, it was a funding thing, they did have to help, the students had to bring bottles and wood and things like that. Ah ... but we also ... and the home industry. I was drafted into the Non-European Child Welfare, which I tried to change the name of, and we worked in Masizakhe and Kroonvale. We tried to get a pre-school going. We never succeeded in my time but I think in Miss Rharhatle (?) (5:18) time maybe we did get. So my Graaff-Reinet experience was very important. It really grounded me. I became a member of the school board. They had an arrangement here where you didn't have political fights and elections for the school board but each party put representatives on and I went, Union ... the United party nominated me, I was not a member of any party but they nominated me. So I served on the school board and which gave me an insight into how the whole education thing worked. So I'd had - I mean, the last year they had asked me the year before if I would stand for the Municipal Council and I said I couldn't possibly with all my NGO commitments and my degree and everything, so, so I didn't ever get to the, into the municipal sphere but we had, I had a really good grounding in community work. And in working with the women of the NCW we had Moira Kingwell who was convener for (laughs) Non-European Affairs ahh ... at a local level and kind of new everyone who opened and shut in Masizakhe and Kroonvale, ah .. Stella Rubridge and **Andre Luscombe (6:57)** and these were just such phenominal people. And Majory Parks who founded SANTA. People who were way beyond their time and place. And we started ... we couldn't have coloured members or black members but Moira started NCW in .. ah Kroonvale and we also had in (pointing to Masizakhe) Masizakhe and any matters that concerned them we would always consult with them. So the whole Liquor, the Liquor Bill at one stage they were doing something with the Liquor Bill, something to do with Beer Hall, I don't know, anyway, I remember we getting hold of the MP (Member of Parliament) who lived in Middelberg and him coming over to Moira and I at the Drosdty Hotel and we saying 'This is absolutely wicked, these people are asking for so many things

and you give them a bloody beer hall'. (laughs) And the church is furious, the black church is furious. Ah and then the Group Areas who wanted to pull all the Indians out and we had him here again. And he was very helpful. He was a Nationalist.

D.S.: What year was this Reverend Charton?

N.C.: Hum?

D.S.: What year was this?

N.C.: Must have been, ah ... we left here in '64 so it was probably round about '63. We also fought the group areas act here. They had a hearing here and I went to the hearing representing the National Council of Women and the Magistrate who was Chairman said that he couldn't recognise me as being a member ah .. because I had ah.. no constituency. And fortunately the young lawyer from Port Elizabeth who was here to represent the Indians, spoke up and produced the Act and put it in front of me and said (demonstrating how he pointed in the booklet) and as well I could quote and that's what saved my bacon, cause I wouldn't have known. And ...ah ... we pleaded the cause of, they wanted to make the sub-economic houses which had been granted to the coloureds because there were no whites up, there were no whites to occupy them so they, it became a coloured suburb in, in the time of Joe Kroon's mayorship. And they wanted to keep them out of there. We won Sunnyside, we were fighting for Sunnyside and I remember being, we went on a tour and we argued that it was stupid to make the river the boundary between the coloured and the whites and that the industrial area was just there. And we were standing on top of that koppie there in Masizakhe and looking over um - and somebody says 'And there's the graveyard (laughs) and somebody says 'Well, we are quite sure that nobody will spook us'. Anyway, (laughs) it was fascinating and we won. We won not only Sunnyside! We weren't fighting for Masizakhe whom they wanted to move right out opposite ah... Spandau - right out, six miles out. 'How're you going to get the people in?' 'Awrrr that's their problem.' (laughs) We won! It was so fantastic. And that really inspired me. And when I went to Grahamstown, what happens? They got a Fingo Village Committee. They were fighting for Fingo Village. So then I'm immediately into the Fingo Village Committee and ... ah ... Ja and we fought for Fingo for years, three or four years, until finally Rodney Davenport, who was, by this time we had got the Institute of Race Relations, they had sent ... Rodney and I had arrived at Rhodes simultaneously. I was, as a - a lecturer and he as a lecturer in the history department and I was in philosophy and ..ah .. Race Relations had sent their secretary down to interview both of us 'So wouldn't we found a branch?' which, they'd had a branch there but it had floundered. So Rodney and I, new - new people on the block into this situation in Grahamstown which is very structured, NGO wise and where GADRA ruled the roost. What GADRA said went, and Mrs. Mac something or other, she was the queen of that. And she apparently had, ah, squashed the Race Relations because we were in(?)ing on her funding field. Anyway, so Rodney and I took it on not knowing what we were in for. But, ah, Race Relations got involved in that fight - in the Fingo fight. And Rodney finally got the Minister,

ah .. I don't know what he was at that stage, Plural Affairs?, Koornhof. Took him up to the top and he showed him Fingo Village. Now if you knew Fingo Village in the old days it was a lovely place, with big erven, all growing mielies and things and at the, by the 1960s it was just becoming an urban slum. Instead of mielies there were just shacks which were sub-let of course. And Rodney said, pointed out how we couldn't get money out of the government to do housing, and he was then on the Council, on the Municipal Council, and Koornhof had cried. And .. ah, finally, we won Fingo too. But we didn't do it. Fingo did it. Through the Urban Quality/Poverty Council. And ah, who was sadly despised of course. All the radical types. (laughs) But they did when (inaudible) .. we didn't do it. I went down. They signed a petition and I took it down to ... Oh .. um.. Dennis had been on, he had been the Head, the Head of the ISER at Rhodes, Institute for Social and Economic Research, he was a political scientist, reasonably *verkramp* (conservative) not very but reasonably and he wasn't very popular at Rhodes. He had, he had decided to go into politics, joined the Nats (smiles). Which made him even more popular (ironic laugh). So, when he left, he said to me 'Nancy, if there is ever anything I can do for you (nodding) I'll do it, in Cape Town'. Well, now here's for opportunity. They come to me, the Bantu Council comes to me and says will I take a petition to Cape Town and present it - to the Minister.' Ooh .. (shrugs) what do I know about this? Then I say but wait a minute, I have got a promise. So I phone Dennis and say: 'Dennis, I am going to hold you to your promise. I need to bring a petition from Fingo Village to Cape Town to present to the Minister. Please can you organise it. And ah, he said yes he would. So I went down. I didn't see the Minister - or was it the Prime Minister in that stage? But I saw the Minister of whatever it was, Bantu Affairs. And I remember sitting in front of his desk and he's got his Pretoria University Certificate hanging on the wall and I say 'I see we are both Tukkies, ou Tukkies.' 'Ohh!' (smiles) and we had quite a nice little talk and I said it's important for you to go, for you to go yourself. That's why a year or two later he came, that why ... Anyway, finally we But it was the people themselves who won Fingo and that was for me so important, that you don't do it for. They get the sense that they are doing it, that they can do it. I'm sorry its all rather jumbled time wise but Ja.

End of Interview
