

<b>Code</b>	902014
<b>Subject</b>	judge burt griffin
<b>Date</b>	10/30/2006
<b>Interviewer</b>	martha eakin
<b>Abstract</b>	Judge Burt Griffin discusses in great detail the battle to stop highway construction through the Shaker Heights-Cleveland Heights area, which was seen as a threat to those communities and to the ecological and environmental balance of the Shaker Lakes nature preserve. Griffin discusses the battle, which was driven by grassroots activists (and largely by women), in the context of Shaker Heights' unique history. Details on activist strategies; relevant financial, legal and environmental considerations; and class, gender, and age dynamics of community activism are also discussed. Also of note is Griffin's recollection of the changing political atmosphere in Shaker Heights in the 1960s, when the city took a progressive stand on racial integration and fair housing.

**minutes:**

- 0 introduction and background
- 1 early memories of shaker lakes
- 2
- 3 shaker lakes nature center: involvement
- 4 the battle to stop Heights highway development
- 5
- 6 Shaker Heights Democratic Club gets involved
- 7 description of problem, bases of opposition
- 8 prominent individuals
- 9 movement consisted of "politically diverse people"; threat to heights area
- 10 the political maneuvering
- 11
- 12 mobilizing local citizens
- 13 "shaker heights was viewed as a very upscale area... [but also] very populist"
- 14 public perception outside of heights area
- 15 environmental issues
- 16
- 17 legal precedent involving air pollution on Lake Erie shore
- 18
- 19 strategy: commissioning an environmental impact statement to stop federal funding
- 20 strategy: mobilize local citizens
- 21
- 22 involvement of women
- 23
- 24
- 25 "[visible activists] tended to be male, although all the work that was done here was women"
- 26 party politics
- 27 "they really networked out to people that had some real money to contribute to the republican party"
- 28 "[shaker heights] was not a liberal democratic suburb at that point"
- 29

30 "if this nature center had not been created, the highways would have went through"  
31 "meaningful federal funding for the nature preserve"  
32 Shaker Heights  
33 Mayor Jones  
34 heights political culture in the early 1960s  
35 barriers to civil rights and fair housing  
36 "a lot changed in the 1960s"  
37 the battle to stop Heights highway development  
38 "alliances with people who lived in the city of cleveland"  
  
"there were other people in the white ethnic sector of cleveland that were going to be  
39 affected by this... but they didn't have the influence ...[or] the skills, [or] the money"  
40  
41 description of problem, bases of opposition  
42 "the primary leadership...was coming from shaker heights"  
43  
44 shaker lakes nature center: involvement, wildlife population  
45 "the professor's ducks"  
46  
47 the battle to stop Heights highway development: a selfish act?  
48 recreational use of shaker lakes  
49  
50 legalistic approach to activism "was absolutely essential"  
51 Overton Park precedent case in Memphis, TN  
52  
53 recent environmental protection precedents and legislation  
54  
55 class and gender dynamics of community activism, generational difference  
56  
57  
58  
59 "stay-at-home mothers...did all the grassroots organizing"  
60 possible interview subjects, Paul and Sonya Unger  
61  
62  
63 end