

Code	902005
Subject	phil hart, activist
Date	6/29/2006
Interviewer	anthony bifulco
Abstract	<p>Activist Phil Hart of Cleveland Heights, Ohio discusses his involvement in the fight against proposed highway construction during the 1960s. The construction, which would have crossed through Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights, was considered a threat to those communities, as well as to the environmental balance of the local ecosystem - particularly at the Shaker Lakes nature reserve. Hart places this local struggle within the context of a "national rebellion.. against urban freeways" and provides details on resistance to other such plans in the Greater Cleveland area. Hart places much of the blame for urban decline on policies that de-emphasize public transit and encourage the development of competing suburban communities, as typified by the actions of Cuyahoga County Commissioner Albert Porter. Other topics of discussion include grassroots organizing, political lobbying, and activist groups CSTEP (Citizens for Sane Transportation and Environmental Policy) and Stop the Stub, as well as considerable biographical information.</p>

minutes:

- 0 introduction and background, growing up in Glenville
- 1 moving to cleveland heights
- 2 Will Irwin, prof. at Case, initiates discussion on environmental issues in Heights area, 1964
- 3
- 4 streetcars, "inter-urban system" of rail transit
- 5 end of streetcar and rail era, emergence of modern highway system
- 6 government bodies
- 7 Burt Porter begins the process of lobbying for a new highway through the Heights area
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- 9 The fight to stop highway development in the Heights
- 10
- 11 naming important individuals involved in political action
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- 13 bi-partisan cooperation
- 14 description of existing highway system and proposed changes; ("a highway planner looks at public parkland like a pervert looks at a virgin")
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- 17 details of the I-480 project lead to another battle and another set of activist groups: Stop the Stub and CSTEP (citizens for sane transportation and environmental policy)
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- 19 lobbying in Washington DC: "I hope those freeways go right up your ass" says local representative
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- 21 gaining momentum
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- 23 meeting at byron junior high to stop Clark Highway (1970)

24 slide presentation of Shaker Lakes
25
26
27 grassroots organizing and fund-raising
Why fight?: "cleveland heights would have been destroyed... and almost the same thing
28 with shaker heights."
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30 more than a "a rinky-dinky duck pond"
31 success, Governor Rhodes announces cancellation of highway development plans
32 Protecting the Shaker Lakes through grassroots organizing
33
34 involve representatives of both political parties
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36 "old-fashioned" organizing
37 Balancing professional career and volunteer activism
38
39 "it's a powerful system to buck... [but] we were fighting for the life of our community"
40 "community is hard to come by. But we had it [in the Heights]... we had a purpose."
Yogi Bera: "if you don't fight for what you think is right - you're wrong"; "we took on the forces
41 of the united states"
42 estimated impact of proposed highway development on cleveland heights
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45 "a national rebellion against... urban freeways", movement for public mass transit
46 highway development issues today
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48 related issue: suburbia
modern environmental movement: "not just saving cleveland hieghts-shaker heights, but
49 saving the planet"
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52 Shaker Lakes Nature Center, Photography Club
53
54 Shaker Lakes Nature Center, successful institution
55 "I don't want to see northeast Ohio become Florida... they tear down everything"
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57 [56:50] social transformations since the 1950s that limit "sense of community"
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60 possible interview subjects
61 cooperation between shaker heights and cleveland heights
62 "cities are set up to be in competition with other cities"
63 relocating the site of Doan Brooke dam
64
65 end