

Code 700014
Subject William Merriman
Date 4/21/2010
Interviewer Lisa Caunter

William Merriman is the Deacon at St. Patrick's Church on Bridge Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. He talks about his upbringing and what brought him to Cleveland. He also discusses his involvement in neighborhood development particularly the development of community.

Abstract

Tags

Special

Notes

Minutes:

St. Patrick's Church, Detroit-Shoreway

0 Biographical information-Name and place of birth.
Grew up on Chicago's South side in a typical
1 working class neighborhood.

2 Yes and No.

Talks of when his parents would visit him and his
wife in Cleveland also talks of time spent
3 overseas.

Lived in poor areas all over the world and felt the
4 need to help people here

5

6

Arrived in August 1969 and has been here ever
7 since.

8

Talks of the history of the church and how it
9 always served the poor in the area.

Family of 18 Liberians moved into his old house
10 when they arrived from the Ivory Coast.

11 "They remind me of who we were in the past."

12

He saw a need in the community for fresh
13 vegetables.

Saw difficulty in acquiring jobs thought the
garden could help them meet people and
14 perhaps gain better employment.

Talks of how he learned of the grant program and
15 how he thus proceeded.

Questions

Tell us your name and where you
were born?

Can you tell us about the

neighborhood you grew up in?

Do you see any similarities to the
neighborhood you grew up in
and where you live now.

Why did you choose Cleveland
and he Detroit-Shoreway
neighborhood in particular to
settle down in?

How many years do you think
you've been here now?

How did you come to be involved
with St. Patrick's?

Can you tell me how St. Patrick's
got involved with the Liberian
Refugee Community?

How do you feel about the
Liberian Refugee Community?

Why did you write the grant?

Can you tell me about the
project?

Had experience with community gardens about
16 25 years ago

"The primary crop of community gardens is the
network of people who get to know one another"

These are people who most likely would not have
17 met.

18

19

6614 Wakefield is centrally located to the
Liberian Refugee Community. Feels the short
walking distance will aid the development of the

20 garden.

Why did you select this location?

21

Yes at markets. Mentions market at W 65th and
22 Clinton.

Are you going to sell the extra
produce and where?

Individual buyers and local restaurants are also
potential buyers of extra produce grown in the
23 community garden.

24 Right now to get things going, to break ground.

What are your plans for this
project? What do you hope for it?

25

26

His parents and Grandparents had backyard
27 gardens.

Hope that through the garden the Liberian
28 community can meet people and network.

29 Lot of neglect in the area around Wakefield.

NPI did a series of workshops in
the summer of 09, did you attend
any of them?

30 Talks about one that he missed that was at CSU.
Trinity Cathedral when program was first

31 introduced.

Forum at Great Lakes Brewery, he met a woman
32 from the Eco-Village

Talked with a woman who ran a community
33 garden on Madison

How did you hear about grant
program?

34 Realizes the financial issues

Thinks NPI's assistance is critical; they couldn't
35 get by without their help.

Do you think NPI could do more
to encourage the development of
these programs?

36

NPI is a good monitor of resources, thinks they
have a good perspective and that they are in
touch with the spirit of the programs that are
37 rebuilding cities like Cleveland.

38 Time, says that he tends to over commit himself.

What are your needs and do you
feel there are needs not being
met?

Asked for a fence but there are problems with
39 zoning
Once the health and leadership issues are
40 worked out they can get started.

For right now just getting started and then having
41 a good season.

42 Not going to worry about next year yet.

Knew the family of the woman who lived on the
43 East side of the lot.

Uncle was an old timer. They were ok with the
proposal just requested a part of the area nearest
44 their house for their own purposes.

45 End

When funding ends what are
your expectations for next year,
what about the next five years?

How did you get your most
reluctant neighbor on board?