The first question is what was your background that led to your interest in housing.

Well, I got interested in housing purely by chance. I went to Swarthmore College. I dropped out after the first year because I had worked for a summer, just before going to Swarthmore, for Senator Joe Ball of Minnesota. This was back in 1943. And Joe was the chief sponsor of a bi-partisan resolution to commit the United States to involvement in the strong international organization after the end of the Second World War. And I had gotten all wrapped up in that and had become tremendously interested, as a result, in lobbying and political activity and politics generally.

Then I went to Swarthmore and Swarthmore seemed terribly ivory tower. So I dropped out after my freshman year and spent two and a half years working for Ball in his senate office. Then I went back to Swarthmore and got my B. A. degree and decided that what I wanted to do more than anything else was to work on Capitol Hill or get into politics directly.

I spent two years in Germany in a job that's irrelevant to this history, and came back and got a job working for Hubert Humphrey. My job working for Hubert was the coals to Newcastle job to end all coals to Newcastle jobs; I was writing speeches for him! If there was anything that Hubert Humphrey didn't need, it was somebody writing speeches for him!! I came to admire him tremendously because, not only did I write speeches which he never delivered as I wrote them, but I also edited his speeches and also would prepare 4x6 cards with notes that he could use in speeches, which he did brilliantly. But I found this a rather sequestered life; I wasn't interested in sitting in a little office which happened to be on the top floor of the Library of Congress, writing a speech, or doing notes one day on one subject and another day on another subject, and sending them off in the blue, as it were.

So I started looking around for other work, having a B. A. degree and three years' experience at that point, counting what I'd done in Germany, and writing. And I kept getting the same answer, that people would have writing jobs but since I didn't have any experience in anything other than writing, why, they weren't interested in considering me for any other kind of job. And I wasn't interested in another writing job because that's why I wanted to leave.

So, I went to a high school reunion. The principal of the
high school I went to, the Park School in Baltimore, was one of the founders of the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association of Baltimore, and had been its president since the time it was founded. They were a very small, struggling organization; it had a one-person staff plus a secretary. They'd just decided that maybe they should add another person.

So Hans Ferleger said to me; "Say, Cushing, I know just the job for you. Are you looking for a job?" And I said, "Well, as a matter of fact, I am looking for a job." He said, "Well, we're looking for an assistant director of the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association."

Well, I'd had a mild interest in housing; I remembered some editorial page features, op-ed features in the Baltimore Sun when I was in high school on atrocious housing conditions in Baltimore. So I thought, "Well, you know, that wouldn't be too bad for a little while". I'd also written a speech for Hubert Humphrey to give at the National Housing Conference, and that was just about the sum total of my knowledge of housing.

So I went to have the interview. They were offering a salary, I think, of $3,000 a year which was not very much. And so I thought, well this will be fine because it was a chance to do a little of everything, to meet with community groups, to do some organizing, to do some writing, to do all the things one does in a citizens' housing group. And so I thought, well, I'll do that for a couple of years and then I'll have some experience that isn't just writing and I'll leave housing and go do something more interesting. And so I went to work for Citizens' Planning and Housing Association in 1952, and I never found anything more interesting. That's how I got involved in housing.

The second question is, how did it happen that you became involved in housing in Philadelphia?

That wasn't by chance. There was a small group of local housing organizations, a Citizens' Planning and Housing Association in Baltimore, and a Philadelphia Housing Association, obviously. There was a group in New York City and a group in Chicago and there might have been one or two others. Now these groups kept more or less in touch with each other informally, so I had come to meet Dorothy Montgomery on a number of different occasions, particularly when the executives of these groups got together, which was something that Francis Morton, my boss there, had initiated this in Baltimore. And so I had gotten to see Dorothy there and at meetings of the National Housing Conference, and had come to admire her tremendously. And I thought, "Gosh, the Philadelphia Housing Association would really be the housing association to work for if you're interested in working in housing." I wasn't pursuing this actively because I was heavily involved in Baltimore, and enjoying what I was doing, but one day in early 1956, I guess the NAR Journal or some housing publication had a little item that said that the Philadelphia Housing Association was looking for a met-
ropolitan consultant. And so I wrote to Dorothy and said I would be interested in being considered. I really was not particularly interested in that job at the Housing Association, but I was very much attracted to the idea of working at the Housing Association, and working for Dorothy.

(WMP: You knew her pretty well by then?)

No, I didn't. I knew her professionally and I had, I suppose, been in maybe half a dozen meetings with her, something like that. Dorothy was always a pretty vigorous person at any meeting she came to, so that even though it was only half a dozen meetings, I had a pretty good picture of what her views were and how she thought housing associations ought to operate and her general view of the nature of housing needs and housing policy. And as I say, I admired her tremendously and so I had very few hesitations about going to work for her. I must say this was given a bit of a boost because Louis had been working in Baltimore during the spring of 1956, and he and I had gotten to know each other rather well. I went up to Philadelphia for the interview and came back, and Louis was away for the weekend and came back. And we had lunch together on the Monday following all this, and Louis asked me if I'd marry him.

But I was obviously interested enough not to be averse to having a job in Philadelphia, which was where Louis was based, even though he hadn't popped the question. That was another factor which made it very easy to consider leaving Baltimore and going to Philadelphia right about that time.

(Mr. Dolbeare: And since I'd worked for Dorothy, of course, I couldn't exactly be discouraging to Cushing.)

(MBP: You had worked for Dorothy?)

(Mr. Dolbeare: I worked for Dorothy from '49 to '52, so it had been four years before.)

(WMP: That was in Philadelphia, wasn't it.)

(Mr. D.: Yes. I was just in Baltimore for a six-month job as a planner; I was free-lancing at that point. I went down to work for a group that was set up to tell the city government and housing authority what they had already decided they wanted to hear. They had a big, high-powered panel of people from around the country, and I did the back work, which included interviewing community leaders. We had to have lots of meetings to discuss things. They got to be more and more detailed as time went on. Cushing gave me all sorts of leads because she knew the community very well. It was all very legitimate.)

Part of my job was knowing everybody there was to know who was involved in housing in Baltimore, so it worked out very
Actually, I took Louis's old job. Louis came to the Housing Association to fill the position of metropolitan consultant.

(WMP: You didn't know him until then?)

We met in Baltimore, or we'd met twice very casually, I guess, before Louis came to Baltimore on this assignment, so that he knew who I was and I was one of the people he looked up when he got there. But we really didn't know each other until he came down to Baltimore on this assignment. He had been metropolitan consultant for the Housing Association. I guess that was a new job in 1949, wasn't it, to begin to have some outreach beyond the city of Philadelphia, recognizing that one shouldn't confine efforts to deal with problems within artificial city boundaries. And so Louis had more or less created the job of metropolitan consultant, and then Howard Hallman was there for four years, working in Delaware and Montgomery County, organizing local housing committees. And Howard was clear that he was ready to leave and do something else. Dorothy was not sure when I talked with her whether the United Fund would, in fact, continue supporting the metropolitan part of the Housing Association's program, so I came with the understanding that I would start as a metropolitan consultant, and if the money came through from Penjerdel which was just in the process then of getting organized and was the great hope of some funding for this operation, I would continue as metropolitan consultant. And if the money didn't come through, then the Housing Association was planning in any event to create the new position of assistant director so that I wouldn't be coming for six months and then find myself out of a job; if I couldn't continue as metropolitan consultant, I would become assistant director, which was fine with me, because really, I would have preferred to be assistant director rather than metropolitan consultant, because my interest has always been more in inner city problems than in metropolitan problems.

So I arrived at the Housing Association as metropolitan consultant, and then became assistant director in, I guess, the spring of 1957. It looks as though I've answered the next two questions here; the third one was what was my first official position in connection with housing in Philadelphia and I have just answered that without really looking at it. And then, what other positions did I have before I joined the Housing Association? To recapitulate that quickly, I dropped out of Swarthmore College after my freshman year, spent two and a half years working for Senator Joe Ball, and went back to college, finished up and graduated in 1949. And from 1949 until 1951 I was in Germany...the only job one could get in Germany at that time was with what had been the military government, European Command of the Department of the Army. And I was what they called a historian for two years, and then came back in the fall of 1951, began working for Hubert Humphrey, and remained there until, I think it was the end of June 1952, and...
took two months off in Europe and started work with the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association as associate executive secretary...remained there until the end of June 1956. Louis and I got married on July 1st and took a two-month honeymoon in Europe. So I started at the Housing Association right after Labor Day of 1956.

(WMP: Who was the executive then, Ed Bacon?)

No, Dorothy. Dorothy became managing director in 1944, I believe. So she'd been there a good many years by the time I arrived. Ed Bacon was there only quite briefly. Dorothy was before '44 then, because Dorothy succeeded Ed Bacon. Dorothy must have been '41 or '42.

(MBP: '42, probably.)

I've got that, if you need it.

Number six. As assistant director of the Housing Association, what were your main interests and responsibilities?

The main responsibility that I had was staffing the committee on housing law enforcement. The Housing Association, as you probably know, had gotten started in 1909. And it started in 1909 around the concern that some social workers had had in Philadelphia about terrible housing conditions. And the first thing which the Housing Association did...which this not-yet organization did, was to draft a housing code which was presented to the state legislature and adopted by the state legislature as a housing ordinance for Philadelphia...was then not enforced, and so they had a second round, which I think led to a housing code being adopted in 1915, which was then enforced by the city of Philadelphia.

The reason this was a state law is because at that time there wasn't sufficient home rule power in Philadelphia so that it couldn't be a city ordinance; it had to be a state law applying to the city of the first class.

Anyway, the impetus was there for the Philadelphia Housing Code which came out of this group which decided that you stay in existence to make sure that the law was enforced and that became the Philadelphia Housing Association. For much of its history, actually until Dorothy Montgomery arrived there, a large part of the Housing Association's budget and staff went to having housing inspectors on the staff and the Housing Association would receive complaints from citizens and go out and make an inspection, and then refer the complaint, if it was a valid complaint, to the Health Department. And the Health Department would follow up on it, which was apparently the only way they thought the Health Department would do anything. And my impression is that the Health Department relied sufficiently on the Housing Association so that if a Housing Association inspector reported a violation, they'd pretty much
take the Housing Association's word for it.

Well, by 1954, or '52, the housing code was well out of date, still being that 1915 code. And one of the things that Joe Clark did, when he became mayor, was to say that he was going to revise the housing code and he asked the Housing Association if they would assemble a group of people to rewrite the Philadelphia Housing Code, which was done. This was a broad group of people that included a couple of slum property owners and some neighborhood people and lawyers and others and the Housing Association did, in fact, redraft the city housing code. And the code, after a long fight over the provisions on overcrowding and whether they should apply to single-family housing, was adopted by City Council in its revised form in 1954.

The Housing Association then established a committee on housing law enforcement which included many of the same people who had been on the committee that drafted the code, to try to see that it was enforced. One of the really inventions, I guess, of the Housing Association was the proposal that instead of waiting for complaints to come in, the city designate areas and enforce the housing code in those areas through house to house inspections. This sounds like old hat now, but nobody had ever done it before the Housing Association proposed it and the Clark administration adopted the idea.

The committee on housing law enforcement was set up as a citizens' committee to monitor what was being done in the code enforcement program and to try to see if it was done right. Well, my responsibility, arriving in 1956, was to pick up the staffing of that committee, which I did. I'm trying to think what else I did there. That took a fair amount of time. The Housing Association at that time was also involved in a number of other efforts that I was not quite so closely working on, but as assistant director I participated in one way or another in practically everything the Housing Association did.

The staff of the Housing Association at that time was Dorothy Montgomery, who was managing director, I was assistant director...there was a...I forget what his title was, but there was a young man on the staff who was a social worker whose responsibility was to staff two area housing committees; one in West Philadelphia and the other in North Central Philadelphia. And I was the link between Dorothy and David AntebiX, who was staffing these area committees so I had some responsibilities for seeing how well the Housing Association and in turn, then, how well the city responded to community efforts in North and West Philadelphia to deal with the very critical housing problems in those areas.

Howard Holman was a consultant to the Housing Association and undertook a number of special projects while I was there. And I worked also with Howard. And in an office that is that small, everybody, of course, pretty much knows whatever anybody else is doing. Oh, I forgot Elfriede Hoeber. Elfriede was research director.
Elfriede had been there I suppose five or six years by the time I arrived and was there most of the time that I was there. I forget when Elfriede left.

It's going to be easier for me, rather than talking about my interests and responsibilities...because it's a while ago now, to talk about what the Housing Association did during that period that I thought was important, because I was really involved in most of it and Dorothy Montgomery was involved, of course, more centrally in all of it and that's probably what you want anyway.

When I got there in 1957 there were two major concerns, policy-level concerns, that the Housing Association was involved in. One was the whole question of public housing site selection. What kind of public housing program did we have, what kind of housing program should we have. The Housing Association and the Citizens' Council on City Planning had had a joint committee on site selection, which had been reviewing and commenting on proposals for public housing sites. And that committee had developed some site selection standards against which to evaluate the proposals as they came along. Pretty much, I would say, rational, conventional planning standards. The effort of the committee was to see that public housing was as much like any other housing as possible and that they didn't build housing projects which were clearly identifiable as low-income housing or which concentrated low-income people together, or located them on the other side of the railroad tracks, or all the things that tended to happen to public housing in every city in the country.

That committee had reached pretty much a point of loggerheads with the city administration.

Well, when I arrived it was near the beginning of Dilworth's first term. The problem wasn't so much the administration as the difficulty of handling this program in any city in an adequate way.

The public housing program at that time was the only program that was available for providing housing for low-income people, the federally assisted program. It was in a way a step-child, because the urban renewal program was kind of a glamour program; that was where most of the interest was, that was where most of the money was. One of the main emphases of urban renewal was to try to bring...try to make inner-city land com-
petitive with suburban land so that all new development wouldn't be carried out in the suburbs, but some of it would be in the inner city. Low income housing didn't quite fit that pattern. So under the renewal program, land was cleared and the cost was written down so that a private developer, theoretically at least, could obtain land for building housing or whatever else, in the inner city that wouldn't cost him any more than it would cost him to go out somewhere in Montgomery County or Delaware County or Bucks County and build there.

(WMP: Aren't you really talking about redevelopment there?)

Yes, right. I forget just exactly...these programs are all the same and they change their names over the years. I came on the scene when most people were talking about urban renewal and I tend to use that term rather than urban redevelopment, but one program blended into the other, really.

Public housing was confined to the same sorts of sites because the prejudice against low-income people meant that it was very difficult to get the kind of local approval that was necessary if you were going to build on a vacant land site. Philadelphia had a lot of vacant land sites, many cities didn't. But in Philadelphia there was the Northeast, but the only major housing project that was ever built in the Northeast was the first one, Hill Creek, which was built back in 1934, in what I guess then was almost open country. So you didn't have neighbors around who would protest that low-income people were going to move in and ruin their neighborhood.

But by the '50s, poor people was a problem and race was a very major problem. People assumed, probably quite correctly, that if public housing was built, in any area, that the people who moved into it would be black. Which meant in Philadelphia that no white area wanted any public housing built anywhere near them, with the possible exception of housing for the elderly, which wouldn't necessarily be black. So that the Philadelphia Housing Authority was unable to find any major sites for public housing in white areas, at least attractive white areas. There were places like Abbottsford which were kind of back eddies where nobody was terribly interested in building even though it was white.

But basically the Housing Authority in Philadelphia was not able to find any sites, except sites which were in what was already slums and had to be cleared. There was no federal hand-out under the urban renewal program available for public housing because the Republican administration at that time, the national administration, said, "Gee, this would be double subsidy. You have one subsidy for public housing, you have another subsidy for the land."
There was a limit in public housing on the amount that could be spent per room. And that had to include the total development cost. Well, if you were paying slum property owners the advertised cost of the income stream they got from their property, regardless of the property, and that was what you were paying under the eminent domain laws, on the theory that it's a willing buyer and a willing seller, and that's what a willing seller would sell for, you're paying enormously high costs for acquiring housing of relatively little intrinsic value. Then you have to clear the site and prepare the site. And in public housing you have to fit all that in under a statutory per-room cost limitation. And the result is that the only kind of housing that you can build is very high density housing and high-rise buildings.

The joint committee on site selection had decided, or...everybody knew that was undesirable; I don't think there was ever an advocate of building high-rise housing on the grounds that it was better housing than other types...than low density projects or smaller housing projects would have been. I'm not aware that anybody ever advocated that that be done because it was desirable housing. The battles that were fought were really fought on the basis of the Housing Authority and, I guess, Ed Bacon and the city administration, Bill Rafsky and so forth, taking the position that if we wanted any public housing at all that was the kind of public housing that was going to have to be built because of the constraints, and the joint committee on site selection saying, on the other hand, that this kind of housing is so unsatisfactory that if that's the only kind of housing that can be built under the public housing program, then it would be better not to build any public housing at all.

(Mr. D.: Who was represented on that committee?)

The committee was....I'm not sure. I know it was the Citizens' Council on City Planning and the Housing Association that sponsored it, but the committee had gone out of existence by the time I arrived at the Housing Association. So I don't remember now who was on it; at the time I'm sure I knew who was on it.

All this is by way of background to the effort of the Housing Association, when I became active in the Philadelphia scene, as opposed to being metropolitan consultant out in Delaware and Montgomery Counties, early in January 1957. The joint site selection committee and the Housing Authority in the city had really reached an impasse. There just weren't any sites that the city was proposing that the Housing Association and Citizens' Council would approve, other than a few scattered, relatively small projects.

(WMP: There were a few in the far Northeast.)

There were a few very small ones.
Well, the joint site selection committee and the city had reached an impasse over what to do about public housing. There were a few sites which the city was able to put together, or propose, which were satisfactory, which then ran the political gauntlet and actually got built. But that was a relatively small proportion of the total number of public housing units that Philadelphia had available to it from the federal government. There was really an impasse.

And meanwhile, there were other problems emerging with the public housing program, so that the Citizens' Council and the Housing Association decided to try to get out of this rather sterile conflict between them and the Housing Authority over sites by undertaking a fairly fundamental examination of what's the role of public housing, how should it be developed, how should it be managed. So they set up a joint committee on public housing development policy which Howard Hallman, in fact, did the staff work for, which produced a really major policy document, sometime in the spring of 1957. It confirmed the view of the Housing Association, that these high-rise buildings would be so bad that they really shouldn't be built, even if it was the only way of getting public housing.

There was a sociologist named Anthony F. C. Wallace, who I believe was at Penn, who did a report for the Housing Authority which, really, Dorothy Montgomery and the Housing Association were behind getting done; they said, "Look at the implications of high-rise living". And that report really made the point that high-rise public housing would be unliveable for families with children. And that report had an important bearing on the Housing Association's conclusions about public housing. And the effort of this committee was to say, "Okay, if we can't build high-rise public housing, what can we do with public housing?"

The report made two major recommendations. The first was that you really didn't need to build a lot of new public housing. At that time in Philadelphia there was perfectly good housing for sale all over the city in relatively nice neighborhoods that people were moving out of as they were able to purchase new housing in the suburbs. And it would make a great deal more sense for families with children to purchase these houses as they came on the market, have the Housing Authority own and manage them and rent them to the families. So we proposed that.

The other thing that the committee did was to suggest that maybe the old idea of rent certificates wasn't such a bad idea after all....that where there was enough room in the housing stock, that it might make sense in an exploratory way to provide a rent certificate program, rather than to have all housing that was publicly subsidized for low-income people owned and operated by a public body.
A rent certificate is really something which a landlord can cash in, so that it's a way of providing subsidies to low-income people to obtain their own rental housing on the private market. And one of the historic battles in housing starting with the beginning of the public housing program in 1937 when the real estate people thought it was a form of socialism and opposed it tooth and nail, their counter-proposal was "you don't need to build any public housing; you can just use rent certificates and we'll provide the housing on the private market and it'll all be much better and less costly and so forth". The public housing people fought that successfully or moderately successfully. One of the reasons the public housing program was so small and so inadequately funded was because of the opposition of the realtors and for a long time, the homebuilders. The homebuilders didn't shift to being supporters of public housing until sometime in the late '50s or the 1960s.

Yes, the homebuilders are now very active supporters of subsidized housing programs because they build those units too. The homebuilders really don't care who's buying the units as long as they can build them and find a market for them. So while there're some very conservative homebuilders,...the recent past-president of the homebuilders is a Republican national committeeman from Indiana, and so forth,...the present president is also a relatively conservative California Republican, the homebuilders over the last ten to fifteen years, at least, have been active supporters of subsidized housing. In my current incarnation, I work very closely with them on a variety of issues, because they have a lot of political clout from a constituency that the National Low Income Housing Coalition doesn't have any political clout with. That's a bit of a diversion.

Anyway, the two major recommendations of this report were what later came to be called the Used House Program. The idea of purchasing housing......

*** Interruptions due to technical difficulties ***

I was talking about the used house program and the concept of buying them. The Housing Association's practice, when it had reports like this, was to put together a tentative draft and then share it with whatever agency it was writing it about, and have them react and then deal with the comments. So that we had a series of meetings with Walter Alessandroni and some of the people at the Housing Authority to talk over our recommendation. And their response to this recommendation was simply to dismiss
it out of hand, and say, "Well, it might be a good idea, but it's impossible; we can't do it that way because of all these regulations and the program just isn't designed to work that way. So it's silly of you even to put it in the report, but if you'd want to, we can't stop you and we won't try to. But there's just no point in that."

So we said all right and we put it in the report anyway; we still thought it was a good idea. When the report was ready, we sent copies to Mayor Dilworth and to Bill Rafsky and to Bruce Savage who was the commissioner for public housing in the Housing and Home Finance Agency under the Eisenhower administration. Well Bruce Savage got the report with, I suppose, a fairly conventional covering letter saying here's the report and we'd like you to consider our recommendations, and read it and got to the used house program and thought, "Gee, this is just marvelous!"

So he called up...I forget whether he called up Dilworth or Alessandroni and said, "I just got this marvelous Philadelphia proposal." And I think the response on the other line was, "What marvelous proposal?" "This proposal to acquire housing on the existing housing market instead of building new public housing projects."

Well, they really didn't know what Bruce Savage was talking about because it wasn't. Anyhow, Dorothy Montgomery got a call from Alessandroni saying that Bruce Savage was very much interested in the proposal and wanted the city and the Housing Authority to come down from Philadelphia to a meeting the following week to talk about how they might implement it.

So Dorothy and Howard Hallman and Walter Alessandroni and Bill Rafsky and Dick Dilworth all went down to Washington and met with Bruce Savage. And Savage said, "This is a fine idea. I will waive any regulations that need to be waived so that you can do it. And we'll give you an initial allocation of 200 units so that you can get started on the program."

So it wasn't quite the response that the Housing Authority had anticipated, but they couldn't very well say no, we won't do it either.

There were two different points of view there that again came into conflict. The Housing Association's notion was that the Housing Authority really would act more or less as a real estate investor and management agent. The Housing Authority would take the money, would find good housing buys, and would buy those houses and would operate them as public housing.

Well, Bill Rafsky's philosophy, acting as...his title I guess then was development co-ordinator...his philosophy was that the city had such limited resources to deal with the problems it had to deal with, that one of his most important responsibilities was to maximize the usefulness of those resources,
and therefore he did not want to just use the used house program in a way which simply transferred the ownership of perfectly good housing units from private hands into public hands because Philadelphia had major problems with abandoned housing and no good way of dealing with it. So his idea was to take this bonanza of a used house program and get some additional good out of it, aside from just providing housing for public housing families.

Well, they began with a program in the Haddington area which was a neighborhood conservation area that had some abandoned housing in it. I think they began with fifty units or something like that. Well the problem was, of course, that as soon as you had a guaranteed market, even for fifty houses in a small area like Haddington, instead of the Housing Authority being the beneficiary of market competition and falling values in those neighborhoods, you had a small area and a known buyer and so prices went way up and you lost part of the usefulness of the program.

The other thing was that Bill Rafsky wanted to see the program used in North Central Philadelphia because that's where the problems were and that's where housing abandonment was and this was the only program on the horizon that could conceptually deal, or could actually deal, with the problem of picking up some of those abandoned units and restoring them to the housing stock and stemming the rising tide of housing abandonment.

So the Housing Association and Bill Rafsky found themselves at odds again over how this public housing program was carried out because Rafsky wanted to use it in North Central Philadelphia which was one of the worst areas, and the Housing Association's idea was that it be used in a very flexible way outside of the worst area. We didn't want to see it limited to Haddington.

Well this was an argument that went on over most of the early years that I was with the Housing Association...how this used house program was developed and actually implemented. And what happened, ultimately, after they did the Haddington program, was that most of the units did, in fact, go into North Central Philadelphia; they designated a very large area, they streamlined the program so that they really made it into a "restore abandoned houses" program. They set an upset price, I think, of $2,000 a unit. And they'd buy any unit for $2,000. They discovered that the procedures which they had to use were so complex that...and this was partly the federal standards, the federal government had to review everything that was done so that you just couldn't go in and rehabilitate a house or even make moderate repairs. The Housing Authority had to buy the house and make a proposal and then, if the Housing Authority then owned the house, put it out for bids and get five different sets of bids for plumbing and electrical work and this and that. It just turned out to be horrendous!
(Mr. D.: You said that the first allocation was for 200. What was the eventual number?)

Eventually they got 5,000 units. 200 in Haddington, the first one. Then, I'm not sure quite how this went without checking some of the records.

*** Interruption in the taping ***

We just got off onto a conversation about the relationships between the Housing Association and particularly Dorothy Montgomery on the one hand, and Ed Bacon who was then director of the City Planning Commission and Bill Rafsky as development co-ordinator on the other hand.

And the relationships were absolutely fascinating because, on the one hand, the three of them were all a part of the reform movement, and therefore, I think, felt that they should regard each other as co-reformers, and theoretically, at least, all trying to do the same thing. Dorothy and Ed saw each other socially as well. I don't think there was much being invited back and forth to parties and so forth at each other's houses, between Dorothy and Bill Rafsky. But the personal relationships were intended to be cordial, I think. They were regarded from the outside as sort of all the same. Whereas the Housing Association's posture and role in the city and the role of any organization like the Housing Association was, I guess, best described in terms of, at least during the Clark and Dilworth administrations, the loyal opposition. The Housing Association spent a great deal more time and energy, at least during the time that Dorothy and I were both there, in raising questions about city policy, raising questions about overall housing needs, making proposals for new and better ways of doing things....generally trying to prod the city administration into doing things that it otherwise wouldn't have done, and being extremely critical, intended in the positive way, of what the city was actually doing.

So that Dorothy and Ed Bacon and Dorothy and Bill Rafsky would have very serious disagreements among themselves. And a great deal of the time the Housing Association spent in dealing with city government was spent in trying to either keep Ed Bacon or Bill Rafsky from doing something that we didn't want them to do, or to get them to do something that we did want them to do. So that that was the general tone of the relationship. And, of course, all of the people who were involved did it in a fairly objective way, I think.

(WMP: Very maturely.)

There wasn't any effort to get Ed Bacon out of office or get Bill Rafsky out of office or whatever. But there were certainly....I would say that the relationships got fairly strained
from time to time, simply because if you look at it from the other side of the fence for a minute, that you're a city official trying to get things done and dealing every day with the constraints of how much you can do, whether they're funding constraints or political constraints or whatever other constraints. I think that a lot of the time both Ed and Bill felt that the Housing Association, gee whiz, with friends like that, I really don't need any enemies!

(Mr. D.: But how about overall critical questions in which they'd close ranks and work together?)

Well, I'm not sure how many of those there really were, at least after I arrived on the scene. I think there were many more during the Clark administration when there were a lot of things that could be done and they all worked together. I think that by the time I got there which was, I believe, the first year of the Dilworth administration, maybe the second year, the things that could be done that they'd close ranks to do had already been done. And the things that were left undone were the things, a lot of them where they didn't close ranks. Bill and Ed, I think, agreed, for example, philosophically, that the Housing Association was right in opposing high-rise public housing. But on the other hand, Bill Rafsky particularly, wanted to get public housing. He felt very strongly about the need for providing better housing for low-income people and he felt so strongly that he felt that high-rise public housing was indeed better than no additional housing at all, if it came down to that choice. And he regarded the Housing Association, I believe, although I don't think he would ever have said so even privately, but if he didn't he wouldn't have been human, if he didn't regard the Housing Association as a terrible itch instead of an organization that would be supporting what it ought to be supporting.

And Dorothy very deliberately took the position that the role of an organization like the Housing Association was to raise these questions and to make life uncomfortable for the city officials. And she realized that Rafsky and Bacon sometimes might have wanted to do what the Housing Association wanted them do to but couldn't, but Dorothy was a little bit impatient from that point of view; she didn't suffer bureaucrats' very gladly.

And I was interested...after Dorothy died, I looked up some of the material and came across an article in Charm magazine which I guess had been written in about 1958 or so, about Dorothy, which had talked about her career and mentioned that she'd started off in Washington, working for the Housing Act of 1937, and then had come back to Philadelphia. And she really liked working much better at the local level than she did at the national level. And I think part of that was just this feeling; I think Dorothy would have been miserable in any kind of job within government. She was miserable, I think, when she worked for the Housing Authority. She liked what she
was doing but she chafed very much at the constraints.

I believe it was a case of perfect match of an individual's capacities and the job that they were in. I think if somebody had said, "Gee, we ought to get Dorothy Montgomery to run the Housing Authority instead of the Housing Association", it probably would have been a disaster.

But anyway, Dorothy was never very sympathetic to the reasons that Bill Rafsky said he couldn't do whatever it was that Dorothy wanted him to do.

I'm more aware of the conflicts between Dorothy and Bill because there was a little group that met at least once a month; I'm not sure if it didn't, in theory, meet once a week, and then kind of have a lot of meetings cancelled. But anyway, Dorothy and Aaron Levine and Bill Rafsky had periodic meetings for....oh, they'd been having them for some time. I guess they had them up until about 1960 or so. I'm not quite sure when they began. After a while they fell apart because there just simply wasn't enough common ground among the three of them to make it worthwhile continuing to meet. But I think Dorothy was...at least she expressed back at the Housing Association frequently, considerable irritation that Rafsky simply wasn't willing to do things. And they frequently seemed to me to be things that it wasn't reasonable to expect Rafsky to accomplish.

(Mr. D.: As a public official.)

As a public official, yes. I guess I tend to be somewhat dispassionate in the way I view the things I get involved in. Maybe it's because that two years I spent in Germany I was really able to watch as a quote, historian, close quote. I think if you're describing what you see around you based on memoranda and so forth, that's not exactly history. But anyway, I was able to have a pretty good sense of how organizations can operate within the constraints of any organization. My parents were management consultants and talked shop all through my childhood. So I kind of grew up very much exposed to a lot of talk and conceptualizing about what it is and isn't realistic to expect organizations to be able to do. So I tend to have perhaps more sympathy than I should with the position of public officials. So if I'm involved in an altercation or disagreement, a public policy disagreement with someone in public office, I'm able to do it, I think, fairly objectively. And I think that I do it just as vigorously, but I don't hold them personally responsible for not being able to do whatever it is that I think they ought to do; I see much more our role as pressing them to do things so that you create a kind of a counter-pressure to the other pressures and ultimately give the public official more freedom of action than the public official would have if you weren't pushing him on one side while they were being pushed from the other side. I've never expected public officials to be able to yield and do what we were proposing. In fact, I've often thought if that's what happened, we probably were proposing the wrong thing and we should be proposing something that was a little
more difficult for them.

That's kind of a long diversion, but anyway, going back to the used house program, Rafsky was trying to take the used house program and make it something which he could maximize and get together. What I mean by maximizing is accomplishing the largest number of objectives that are possible with any single program. The Housing Association was interested simply in providing housing for low-income people in decent neighborhoods. Rafsky was interested in that, plus in doing something to improve bad housing in poor neighborhoods. He was trying to do two things with the program. We were trying to do only one thing with the program and do it well. I think he ended up doing two things with the program and they were done not terribly well in some respects.

Anyway, the program started in the Haddington area. The prices got bid up, it moved very slowly, and they decided to revise the whole program. By this time, it was, I guess, 1960 or 1961. And they got an allocation of 5,000 units for the program from the Federal government, and decided to do it in North Central Philadelphia, to short-cut this business of having to have individual write-ups for each house, and so forth. And they agreed on what would now be called a "turn-key operation" in housing jargon...that the Housing Authority would agree to purchase from developers houses which met their standards. And they had a set of uniform standards so that you put in new plumbing and new heating and new electrical system, new basic systems...whether or not they were needed! I mean, part of the thing was, the developer would buy a shell, rip out all the plumbing, rip out all the wiring, put on a new roof and so forth, and so the pendulum went the other way. And in order to get administrative efficiency, a lot of things were done to houses that didn't really need them, because the only way you could get volume was to do the same thing in every house and not have to negotiate with what was then HUD, I guess, about...does this house really need a new bathtub or can you leave the current bathtub in there? You just put in a new bathtub because that met the requirements.

Well, it became a very different program, obviously, and the Housing Authority would buy the finished house. So not only was it anything but buying existing houses that came on the market and doing a few repairs if they were needed and then having them occupied; it became really, a housing rehabilitation program, to rebuild empty houses. Instead of being put in areas like Haddington and Nicetown or what under the old central urban renewal area where identification of Philadelphia neighborhoods for treatment would have been "C" areas..."A" areas being the worst, and "B" being not so bad, and "C" being the neighborhoods that just needed a little bit of treatment...instead of going in the "B" and "C" areas, which is where we thought it should go, Rafsky put it in the "A" areas because he just said that's where the problem is and they need this, and this is where the vacant housing is and besides, the Redevelopment Authority had pulled out of the "A" areas because
they were too expensive and were working in the "C" areas. So this was something to do something about the "A" areas.

Well, once we got the program rolling, it had a brief period of fantastic success. The developers discovered how to do it quickly and they'd pick up a shell and they'd rehabilitate it...some of them did it well and some of them did it terribly badly, and sell them to the Housing Authority. And the result was that by 1966 or so, there was hardly a block in North Central Philadelphia, in the worst area of North Central Philadelphia, that didn't have at least one house that had been fixed up and was occupied under the used house program.

And it turned out....I think that may have been one of the major reasons we didn't have a riot in North Central Philadelphia in 1968, because there was at least one of these in every block. And you could pick them out because they were standardized; they all had exactly the same front door lights...no other house in North Central Philadelphia had the same light on the front steps. So you can still drive down and see which houses they are.

Anyway, for the first time since renewal programs had started in North Central Philadelphia, you had scattered through all these terrible neighborhoods some signs that something was being done. And I think that that was of enormous importance to the residents. They felt, "Gee, something's going on here!" And, as I say, I think that may have been one of the major reasons that North Philadelphia escaped a riot, which many of us were anticipating might happen in 1968, and it didn't. And I think it was because there was really this physical sign of government responsiveness to one of their worst problems, which was the problem of housing.

However, we're getting way off the track here. However, there was a lot of corruption involved and there were developers who skimped and didn't do what they were supposed to do. And then it was discovered that Frank Steinberg, who was then chairman of the Housing Authority, had made some sweetheart deals with some developers. And the Grand Jury investigated; I think, ultimately, Steinberg went to jail.

But anyhow, it really killed the program. You know, you found corruption, and the program was just shut down. And what, in my view, might have been a very good program...not so much as the Housing Association envisaged it, but as a program of redeveloping the worst areas of the city, and showing for the people who were living there...which is something that no other program had accomplished yet, that I know of, the successful renewal programs in low-income neighborhoods have all involved making those neighborhoods middle or upper-income in the process. So this was a program that really would have worked for low-income neighborhoods, did work in North Central Philadelphia except for the corruption factor, which meant that the city and federal government shut it down. I guess Gordon Cavanaugh, when
he came into the Housing Authority, shut it down. So that, we'd had 5,000 units under the used house program, and that was pretty much it.

Well, that all stemmed from the Housing Association's 1957 report on public housing development policy. And it gave a big boost, not just there in Philadelphia, but it gave a boost nationally, to the thought of paying much more attention to scattering public housing around, to using the so-called turn-key type of development and to having the public housing program begin, not just to do it the way Philadelphia had done it, but there were some cities, and particularly some smaller towns, where housing authorities actually carried out the equivalent of a used house program, the way the Housing Association had initially envisaged it. There's still some of that going on. In fact, Bob Embry, who's now assistant secretary of HUD, years later, started doing the same thing in Baltimore and is now widely credited around the country because he invented it more recently than we did....with having invented the approach because he was able to do it without any corruption. So this is an approach which is now being used in a variety of ways in many cities, either through public housing or through a new program called Section 8, and through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Well, that was one of the things that I was involved in.

A second major thing that the Housing Association was involved in was dealing with renewal and redevelopment policy. Dorothy Montgomery was a member of the Redevelopment Authority. Dorothy was always very policy oriented. She really thought that pragmatism was a kind of a sin. And it was all right to take advantage of opportunities, if those opportunities fit within a policy framework. But an awful lot of very bad public policy got made by default, and would do something without thinking through its implications. And she was concerned as a member of the Redevelopment Authority, that the Redevelopment Authority and Planning Commission seemed to have projects here and projects there, and no real overall conception of where it was that this should all lead us in ten or fifteen or twenty years. And so she was the prime mover behind something called the Central Urban Renewal Area Study, which was really an assessment of the entire Philadelphia inner city, to see what kind of redevelopment and renewal treatment those areas should have.

And the report was never published, and I'm not quite sure why it was never published. I remember there were a few copies around. The Housing Association had one and the Citizens' Council had one. I'm sure that the Housing Association's copy is in the Archives at Temple because they have most of our old papers.
Oh, it was a hundred pages maybe, something like that. The critical part of the report was a map. It was based on a windshield which classified every block, and the classifications were by census tracts. And the census tracts were classified as A, B, or C. Now, A being tracts which were so bad that they would require total clearance; B areas being tracts where you could do a mixture of rehabilitation and clearance, somewhere...one-third, two-thirds...either way; C areas being areas that were basically sound, but where you had some signs of blight beginning...junkyards, a few vacant houses and so forth, and where the appropriate treatment would be conservation, and to try to keep them from deteriorating so you didn't have to rehabilitate or rebuild them after they had deteriorated.

Well, the CURA Report led to consideration of what should be the approach to urban renewal policy. And based on the report, Bill Rafsky undertook to prepare an approach, on the basis of this study, to do a reassessment of the city's renewal policy, back before 1947...because the state redevelopment law was adopted in 1947, and prior to the adoption, Philadelphia which had pushed for the adoption of it, and this was when everybody was all together, I guess, philosophically, Philadelphia's City Planning Commission had designated a series of redevelopment areas, which included most of the areas that the CURA Report later classified as "A" areas, and had begun the Eastwick Redevelopment project and some very extensive clearance projects in North Central Philadelphia around the Temple area, and a couple of other scattered projects. The rationale for the Eastwick project was that if you're going to clear the densely populated areas of North Central Philadelphia, you then have to have some place for people to go. So here's the vacant land in Eastwick with the canal through it, needing drainage and so forth, but it was an area which could be fixed up without displacing a significant number of people and you could build new housing down there. We'd call it a new town in-town, today, I guess...and then everybody in North Philadelphia could move to Eastwick and have a good place to move to before their housing was cleared.

Well, of course, there were only two things that were wrong with that. The first was that North Philadelphia had been pretty well cleared before the first house in Eastwick was built, and the second was...obviously we know now, nobody in North Central Philadelphia would have wanted to go to Eastwick anyhow. That wasn't their idea of where they wanted to live happily ever.

(MR.D.: And there were a few planes flying over, too!) Well, there were planes, there was gas...there were all sorts of environmental problems. It would never get an environmental clearance today, I'm sure. But back then, people never thought... the reformers, whether they were in government or out, really
looked at policies in terms of buildings, and had no sense of the human dynamics; it was just assumed that, of course, if you gave a family living in North Central Philadelphia, a terrible place, an opportunity to live in a new house in Eastwick, why they'd think that was heaven, and of course they'd want to go! We've learned a lot in the intervening years.

(WMP: They're not doing that anymore!)

No! They're not doing clearance anymore...very little clearance is being done. Actually, I don't think any major residential clearance projects have been generated in Philadelphia or anywhere else that I know of in the United States, since 1960....beginning in the '50s. Philadelphia was always ahead of other cities in all of these things, in part because of the influence of the Housing Association. Well, in part because of the influence of the Housing Association, and in part because of the national influence of Bill Rafsky and to a lesser extent, I think, Dorothy Montgomery. But a lot of the things that were undertaken by the city were in one way or another, I think, stimulated by the Housing Association. And because Philadelphia was doing things that nobody else had even thought of, Philadelphia was nationally looked to during the '50s and '60s as the leader in housing and redevelopment policy. And a lot of the things which started in Philadelphia were picked up and embodied later around the country.

I should get back to the Central Urban Renewal Area Study and Rafsky's effort to do a housing policy in '52 when the new administration took office. The plan had already been set pretty well; the redevelopment areas had been designated and the city had begun work on the clearance in North Central Philadelphia. These areas had been designated for clearance and by 1956 when Rafsky actually started working on the reassessment of where Philadelphia's policy was going, enough had been done and they'd found out enough about the difficulties and so forth, of doing it, so that Rafsky's policy was to say, "Well, you just don't get anywhere by...his phrase was, "providing an island of good in a swamp of bad". And so the city was going to fulfill its present commitments in the "A" areas and "B" areas, but it wasn't going to make any new commitments there, with a few exceptions, I guess, for industrial redevelopment. I'm not quite sure where that ultimately fit into the plan, but it was going to fulfill its present commitments, but it wasn't going to do anything new.

And instead, it was going to move to the "C" areas because there they figured, that for about a half million dollars, in each neighborhood in the "C" area, you could do enough so that you could get rid of the incipient blighting influences, and stabilize those areas. And then once the "C" areas...and I forget, there were......the idea was to do six areas a year for, I think, ten years...something like that....that would take care of the "C" areas and we'd be done.
And so they designated the first areas, which were Haddington, Morton, Nicetown, Whitman...I forget what the others were, and said, we'll do these as conservation...Strawberry Mansion...we'll do these as conservation areas and we'll involve the local citizens in planning what they want and identifying the measures to be taken. And we'll have this half million dollars in redevelopment money which is available for clearance and so forth. And this was the city's new approach to urban renewal.

Well, of course, that was another thing that just didn't work. Some of those projects, I think...I haven't looked at a Redevelopment Authority report recently, but I think some of those projects are still going. Anyhow, certainly as long as I was active in Philadelphia, Nicetown and Whitman and Germantown and Haddington were all still having things done and still getting money under community development. And if you look now, probably as much money has been spent in those areas as was spent in the early days in the Temple area. So the idea which had a budget, I think, anticipated from the federal government of about $6,000,000 a year for urban renewal money, could spend most of it in conservation areas...simply didn't work!

Well, Rafsky's proposal came out in December of '56 or early '57. And the Housing Association immediately undertook to analyze it. And we didn't like it. In the first place, we said, correctly, that this idea that if you work in "C" areas, you could have a cut-rate.....

*** Interruption in the taping ***

In the first place, we felt it was wrong to neglect the worst areas which needed the help the most, and concentrate on the easy parts. And we didn't think it was going to work because if you have the forces that are at work in the inner-city's very bad areas untreated, you can't really stabilize the surrounding perimeter very well. And I think on all sides, we as well as Rafsky, were really unaware of the dynamics of urban movement and neighborhood change. It hadn't really happened before, and we underestimated until it was much too late the impact on the inner-city of the massive suburban development which the FHA finances, which made it possible, really, for any white working family to get a new house in the Northeast or the near suburbs, if they wanted to. And that made it possible for whole areas to turn over. Then industry left, so employment left, so that you had people living in neighborhoods...anybody living near a city area, unless they were sufficiently educated to get a professional job, or sufficiently working already in a good enough job so they could afford a car, were cut off from employment opportunities. You had a school system which was a disaster. And so you had all the ingredients of neighborhood and urban decay built right in there. And I don't,
frankly, in retrospect, I don't think any strategy could have dealt with it that was a physical development strategy. But at that time, all of our thinking was around the physical side of the problem, rather than the social and economic dynamics of urban problems. The Housing Association was almost as oblivious to the social and economic side of it, and the human side of it, as the city officials...Ed Bacon and Bill Rafsky. And it was simply that the state of the art hadn't progressed to the point where we realized what it was that we were dealing with. Maybe you only know what you're dealing with after you've gone through it and can look back and see where you really were rather than when you're in the middle of it.

We criticized the Rafsky proposal and Dorothy suggested instead that the project approach to urban renewal, which is really the only way you could do urban renewal under the legislation and the regulations...you had to designate projects and say okay, within these boundaries we're going to do this, and outside of those boundaries you weren't able to do anything. Instead of that approach to urban renewal, there ought to be a new approach to urban renewal. And urban renewal should really be conceived as the implementation of a comprehensive plan. And you should find a way of freeing ourselves from the constraints of dealing with project A here and project B there and Project C somewhere else. And instead, take the whole central urban renewal area and say this is our project area and here's a comprehensive plan, and so we will use the funds that we can get through urban renewal to carry out the comprehensive plan anywhere in this area.

Well, that was a proposal that we made to Rafsky in early 1957; the Housing Association had a little newsletter called "Issues". And the January '57 "Issues", which I helped edit, had an article called "The New Approach to Urban Renewal". And we did not just do that issue, but as I recall it, we did kind of a slide show and went around and gave talks and really tried to muster support within the Philadelphia community for this approach to urban renewal.

At that time it appeared to us that both Rafsky and Bacon were rejecting it. I think, in retrospect, that probably they didn't. You really couldn't do it within the constraints of the legislation and regulations that HUD had at the time. Because out of Philadelphia came a series of steps which moved us in that direction. There were changes in legislation; first there was a change in the legislation which permitted what they called neighborhood development programs. And you could take an area in the city...a fairly large area like say, West Philadelphia north of Market Street, and call it a neighborhood development area. And then you didn't have to use a project approach within that area.

I'm reasonably sure that Bill Rafsky had a fair amount to do with getting it into law because Joe Clark was a senator at that time, and Joe was on the housing sub-committee which hand-
led legislation. That's something very important that I al-
most left out. But in addition to Bill's and Dorothy's prom-
inence nationally in the housing field, because Joe Clark was
a member of the housing sub-committee there was an easy way
of getting changes made in the legislation that people in
Philadelphia wanted. So Joe Clark would simply introduce them.

And now that I've been in Washington for a while, I realize
what a difference that makes, because on most program changes,
sort of minor kinds of program changes...if you want to change
a few lines in the law, it may have major significance in how
the law is carried out. But if a senator on a committee comes
in and says, "Look, I'd just like to add these three little
words here; I'd just like to say 'in addition to projects, you
can have a neighborhood development plan' and that can be fund-
ed too", the level of sophistication on the committee staffs
is so low and the tradition of senatorial courtesy is so high
that it's very easy to get changes like that made. Every year
or so there're two or three little provisions in the housing
legislation that I've drafted and given to somebody and they've
introduced it and said it's a perfectly sensible thing to do.
And people say, yes, it's a perfectly sensible thing to do, so
if it isn't something that deals with an issue that is a contro-
versial issue within Congress, it's really very easy to get fed-
eral laws changed if you have a good relationship with a sena-
tor who's a member of the committee, unless the senator's re-
garded as a crackpot by the other members of the committee.
And obviously Joe Clark wasn't, so it was a fairly simple mat-
ter for Philadelphians to get the Title One or the 1949 Housing
Act, which was the act that authorizes the redevelopment pro-
gram, modified, so that the city could do the sorts of things
it wanted to do.

So the neighborhood development program was put in, which was
a step toward implementing a comprehensive plan. And then there
was another step a couple of years later, the Community Renewal
Program, which basically said that communities should assess
their entire needs and work out a plan for dealing with them,
and that that could then be the basis of carrying out their
redevelopment activities.

And there was a fairly natural evolution from that to the major
change which was made in 1974 when all the categorical programs
were dropped and put together in what is now the Community Dev-
velopment Block Grant program. A lot of people seem to think
that all of a sudden the old approach called urban renewal was
thrown out and we got something which was new and wonderful which
was Community Development Block Grants. But actually there was
a progression in the legislation over about a ten year period
which made this a fairly natural evolution. And cities like
Philadelphia really didn't have to change what they were doing
very much to move from urban renewal to community development,
because they'd been pushing this process anyway. And there
were a handful of other cities that were in the same situation.
But I've always felt that the Housing Association's critique of the city's urban renewal policy played a major role in the evolution within Philadelphia, away from the project approach and toward broader ways of looking at the physical problems of regenerating the inner city. And because of that and because of Joe Clark's membership on the housing subcommittee, it also played a significant role in developing the national legislative framework that made all that possible.

*** Interruption in the taping ***

(Mr. D.: Cushing was talking about the project approach. This was all Ed (Bacon) was interested in. He was interested in the physical development of the city and tearing down the Chinese Wall, and doing great big, effective physical things. And the whole idea of having a comprehensive plan applied to the whole city led to financing and to undergirding other programs and saying when they should occur and what order, and what priority of them. That was my impression of Ed's idea.)

Well, I think you're right. I think that getting the comprehensive plan in the first place was also a product of the Housing Association... was a product before I got there. The comprehensive plan was published in 1957. But Dorothy used her position both for Housing Association and the involvement and evolution of the Citizens' Council on City Planning, which went the same way and was started under the wing of the Housing Association. Plus Dorothy's membership on the Redevelopment Authority. So that not only the central urban renewal area study, which I was close to, but also the development of the comprehensive plan itself, was largely a result of the Housing Association's pushing and shoving to get it done.

(Mr. D.: Well, I think there was somewhere along in the middle or late '40s, Dorothy got exposed to the idea of planning the idea of comprehensive planning. I don't know who or what, what occasion or what conference she went to, but she got the idea; she took off. And when I got there in '49, she had convinced the Housing Association that they should go out on a broader level. And the immediate effect of this was to establish the position of metropolitan consultant, which is what I came down and started working on. But at the same time, Dorothy was also working on the city and broadening its approach. And why wasn't this wonderful, nationally, internationally known planning commission with its brilliant director... why wasn't it doing some of the things that she had now learned were necessary for a planning commission to do... on a planning approach?)

(MBP: How about Bob Mitchell, who was the first director. Did he have a more comprehensive approach?)

(Mr. D.: Well actually he was second; Leonard died.)

(MBP: Mitchell came first, then Leonard.)
(Mr. D.: Oh, was it?)

(MBP: Yes. And then he died almost immediately.)

(Mr. D.; Well, sure, maybe Bob was responsible for Dorothy's indoctrination on this, or certainly a factor in it.)

(MBP: But then Ed came along and had a project approach.)

Ed first and foremost is a designer. And I think it's impossible for a designer to think in terms of a comprehensive plan, other than maybe like a Hausmann plan for Paris or something, where you have the grand boulevards connecting various things....

(MBP: Or the pyramids of Egypt!)

Yes. Ed's thinking, really, I think, has evolved a good bit over the years, but it seemed to me he didn't really get grabbed by economic and social issues until sometime during the middle 1960's. There was a period, and I think it was after Dorothy left the Housing Association, when it seemed to me that all the sudden, Ed sensed that there were the same kinds of opportunities in dealing with North Central Philadelphia that he had sensed in Center City with Society Hill and Market East and so forth. But by that time, Tate was mayor and Ed and Tate weren't terribly close to each other. And then Ed resigned and left.

He gave a marvelous speech at one point in which he said that his whole career had been centered around what to do with... and this a model city, it was up in North Central Philadelphia, and North Central Philadelphia was a model cities area, and there was some altercation and he came out and met with the neighborhood group and gave this marvelous speech as only Ed Bacon can... about how his whole career, and his basic interest had really been North Central Philadelphia and the potential there, and so forth! And the beautiful thing about Ed was that he'd seen the vision and really, if you'd said, "Hey, wait a minute Ed, isn't there a place called central city that you care about too?", I'm sure he would have said, "Oh yes, that's right." But he really did get enormously more interested and engaged in the problems of North Central Philadelphia, but just at the wrong time, because at that point, the leadership of North Central Philadelphia was at the point of saying, "Hey, look; we don't want any white liberals messing around designing our part of the city!"

(WMP: You mean blacks getting into city planning?)

Well, the blacks don't want to be planned for. Actually they did get into city planning in the model cities, because one of the things that was set up was, with Ed's co-operation, and I think this was when I was managing director of the Housing Association and the Model Cities program came along. And we were instrumental in setting up a system which really was a mutual
planning system, mutual and parallel planning system, with the City Planning Commission and the community. And the arrangement was that the planning funds for Model Cities would be shared with the area-wide council, which was the community agency that was set up to do the planning. So they could hire their own people to plan and nothing would be included in the Model Cities planning program that wasn't agreed to, both by the Planning Commission, which was responsible for developing the plan, and by the area-wide council which had its own staff, so that it wasn't the situation that until then had existed, where you'd have on paper, mutual agreement, but the staff was all in the public agencies so that you couldn't get the...you had the community people always wondering what would really have been in those plans if their planners had drawn them, rather than the others. Well, that came along at the sort of height of black rejection of white involvement in things that affected them...the beginning of black power in the sense that a lot of people had...that if they were really going to find out who they were and what they wanted to do and how they wanted things, they had to cut themselves loose from the white community and work it out, and then maybe they could come back.

We were involved in getting that set up...The Housing Association was involved in getting that set up because we took a very strong position that if there was going to be genuine involvement of the community in North Central Philadelphia, the only way of doing it would be to do it that way. That whole thing fell apart and I can get into that at some point. But it fell apart because there was the area-wide council got involved, or one of the staff people at the area-wide council used the area-wide council's mimeograph machine to organize a march by some students on the Board of Education, which was right after...wasn't Dilworth head of the board then...that was that November 17th thing, when Rizzo came in and busted some heads. And it was discovered the area-wide council had been behind it, or at least it had been done by a staff person there. And Bill Meek who was head of the area-wide council refused to fire Walter Palmer because Walter'd done this on his own time. So the result was that the city wasn't about to get back to working with the area-wide council. And then HUD, which was...actually, if I'd known then what I know now, we just didn't think the Republican administration was going to be very sympathetic to local autonomy. Well, it turns out that the man who is running the program is now the treasurer of the Low-Income Housing Coalition and I think, would have been very responsive if we'd gone to him directly. He was anything but a Nixon Republican.

Anyhow, that whole process broke down over that one incident. I'm not sure it wouldn't have broken down over some other, if it hadn't been for that. It broke down a little sooner than it would have. But it's conceivable to me that Ed Bacon really did understand, or could be brought to understand, that community people didn't want to be planned for. And intellec-
tually, I think he always believed that...not that he was spinning out his plans which other people should accept, but his real interest in planning was to do what people wanted to see done. I've seen him any number of times when people got irate and said, "Hey wait a minute, we don't want this done to us". After he got over his shock, he would listen and back off and he really did a lot to try to be responsive. I think that it would have been a stormy process, but I think it was a process which could be made to work, except that also at that time there was this whole 1960's feeling of maximum participation of the poor and the poverty program and so forth. And there was a lot of reaction at the national level from the mayors, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, that these federal programs had let loose something which shouldn't be let loose on any community because how could you be mayor of a city if you couldn't control what was being done with federal programs. So there was a real effort nationally, led by the Conference of Mayors, to damp down some of these mechanisms of citizens' participation that looked as though they could be independent of city government.

Now, the Model Cities thing in Philadelphia wasn't independent because there really was a mutual agreement. The area-wide council couldn't get anything in the Model Cities plan that the administration wouldn't agree to, and the administration, in theory, wasn't going to be able to get anything in that the area-wide council wouldn't agree to.

After the November 17th demonstration, the mayor, Mayor Tate...I don't recall exactly how this was done, but anyhow, the leadership that had been running the area-wide council was effectively muted, and Mayor Tate, I guess, appointed his own citizen advisory committee and made Goldie Watson the Model Cities administrator. And that sort of ended that and it all became wrapped up in the Tate machine. And the people who'd been at the area-wide council...the area-wide council was de-funded and dismantled. And there were a few people who got co-opted and a few people who stayed outside, but the whole thing dis-integrated.