

Interview with: Haydee Feliciano (translation)

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Tape 1, Side A

002: There were not many [PRs in the community]. "It was a pleasure to go outside and hear Spanish. Everything was English. She came 5/8/56. They lived at 65 Main St. The first who came in the 1940s were her older brothers, to work in tobacco. Tobacco was number 1, and then the nurseries, trees. Her brother suffered a lot in the camps, a lot of discrimination, bad food and salary. "They would go to PR and make...many promises of money and then when they came here the first thing that they had to reimburse the bosses for was the plane fare...Everything compared to today was very cheap. But almost everyone who traveled here were men...looking for a more stable life for their families. They would leave their wives, their children in PR, and that was difficult for them in the beginning. They suffered a lot for lack of...English, the culture, the food, there was no rice and beans like there is today...Today a PR comes and finds everything."

030: Her brother came when he was already married and had a child, through a friend of the owners of Weaver's Chicken, which they called "los pollos." "The tobacco camp had 2 races. You would find Puerto Ricans and Jamaicans. And through a Jamaican he got to know the...managers of the Weaver's company here in Htfd and they invited him to see if he wanted to work in Weaver's." Her brother said yes because he would earn more money. Weaver's asked him to get more workers like him from Puerto Rico. "And my brother started with the next brother, the next brother, the next continued sending for people." Their family were farmers, they lived in a *barrio* of San German, her mother was widowed when she was young and had 9 children. She had 22 children, HF was number 20. "My mother never wanted to leave PR, but by then everyone was here." The only ones left behind were her mother, her younger brother, her older brother and HF. Her brothers wanted to come to the US. Her mother was still in mourning for her father who had been dead for 9 years when the family migrated. HF was six years old when he died.

061: Her mother left the coffee farm to HF's uncle, and the house. The family came to the US in 1956. They lived at 66 Main St. The first thing her mother asked HF's brother was where the school was. Her brother had stayed in PR to finish junior high. Then he came here and began to work when he was 17. He didn't continue high school. Her mother "always told us that there were 2 things she wanted to leave to us. Two riches. They were religious faith and education. Because she never went to school." HF became her mother's teacher when she began school. "Everything that the teacher showed me in school I came home and practiced with her and I showed her how to print and to read the newspaper...She wanted to learn to read so that she

could read the Bible." Another thing she wanted was that her children be honorable, that it wasn't a sin to ask, but it was a sin to rob. It was very important to be truthful and always behave honestly even if it killed you.

097: Her brother had studied English till 6<sup>th</sup> grade. HF went to St. Peter's Catholic School that was close to where she lived. The tuition was \$5 without the uniform. Now it's almost \$3000. She went to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade [there]. Because she didn't know English she had to go back one grade. Her younger sister knew a little more English than HF did because her godmother had a bilingual daughter who had studied in NY. HF's sister came in 1957 and was in the same grade. There were very few PRs. "The streets where you would find the most Puerto Ricans were 60, 66 Main St, 44 Lawrence St, 1723 Main St and there were quite a lot of families... around Kennedy, Russell Sts, all that is gone now because they knocked everything down. There were many places to live there...in the Hartford of that time that no longer exist.

133: Her mother earned the family's living. "Many young men came alone from Puerto Rico, without wives, without mothers. So my mother spent all her time washing, ironing, cooking for single men who needed that kind of help. So they paid her... We didn't have a washing machine. At that time there was no television like there is now." It was a luxury. "My mother washed the clothing... by hand... in the old bathtub and she dried it outside. In the winter it was hard for her because you couldn't hang the clothes outside like you would in PR... And she also took care of the children... of my 2 brothers, she took care of 5 children."

150: In the school there were none of those govt pgms like there are today like lunch, breakfast. They had an hour for lunch to go to their houses and eat. Her mother was epileptic and diabetic. HF began to take her to the municipal hospital, Omar Cooke. Many years later the disability program came into being and she qualified, began to get a pension from the state govt.

165: In one apartment lived my brother and his wife with their children, and us and on top of that three [of my] single brothers... There were 3 bedrooms... We decided to get our own house... We went to... 5 Florence [St.]. When we got there, the first thing my mother looked for was the church. St. Peter's was close and the school required that their students and their parents go to the church every Sunday. They went to St. Peter's for a year.

189: "By that time... we were friends with doña Olga Mele since we came. She was always looking out [for us]... She lived on John St. But se, when we came, she had some compadres that lived next door to us. Next door in the same bldg... She was the kind of person who just as soon as she knew that a family had come from PR, she went [to see them] right away, she introduced herself, and she took you on with that affection and she got to work if there were needs and always with all the families that came, that way we began to make a community."

202: "In 1957, well, there was this priest, Father Andrew J. Cooney... He was at St. Peter's, and there he saw the needs of the community and he had an ongoing conversation with Archbishop O'Brien." He went above the pastor's head to the archbishop. "The archbishop assigned him to Sacred Heart... He would go visit the [tobacco] camps and he saw the needs. So that was when he got the idea to begin an office to serve the community. But he didn't have money... as a priest he didn't have a source, but... after the archbishop... accepted... The first office was opened which was the San Juan Catholic Center on Albany Ave... When I came that was already in formation... he was fighting and... it opened about a year afterward... He asked... to be able to

give the Mass [in Spanish]...[Father Cooney's] Spanish was very broken...He'd gone to visit PR with Olga Mele, and...he told us children that he went to PR..." [thought is lost because of dog interruption]

238: Her first brother came here in '52 to work in tobacco. There were still Jamaicans working there. "We formed many friendships with the Jamaicans, Jamaican families who, like the PRs, left the tobacco farms and came to the city...Often...the PRS who were already working in the city and the majority here...there were many factories like Royal, there was Underwood, [where they made] typewriters...There was Weaver's Chicken...it was number one with the PRs. Because since...the '40s, well, they had been getting...PR workers...My brother brought more than 40 men from San German to come work at Weaver's...He wrote to them and then they came and they had work. When they came they already had the jobs...All my brothers worked at Weaver's, my 7 brothers."

244: Their [?] knowledge of English grew. Her brother sent for brother, cousins, friends, afterwards he worked with the state, with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, he retired after more than 40 years of service. Afterwards others left Weaver's for different jobs, better [jobs] with better salaries, the majority factories. My brother...didn't want to continue high school, he worked in tobacco and then when he came of age he began to work in a restaurant, the Htfd City Club...After the tobacco and 'la chicken' as they called it...most were dishwashers. Dishwashers in restaurants...it was the only thing they could get. And then afterwards as dining room waiters [*servidores*]...My brother...stayed there until Colt's...Industries began to take [people] and that brother began at Colt's, then also all my brothers...worked at Colt's. And my husband, my...brother-in-law."

272: "Going back to the opportunities for PRs in the '50s, it was very difficult. For example, doña Olga Mele, she had a scheme [*proceso*] where she took someone who knew a little English [to a factory]. Then when they told her, but he doesn't know English, well she told them but everything is manual and visual...if this guy learned [his job] he could communicate enough...They took him. They gave him the job because she...is a woman who still...continues...fighting in the community for those who need [help]...After she took 2 or 3 who didn't speak English and because of that they couldn't get work...This is at Royal...When they told her oh but they don't speak any English she told them but the one I brought you last week can be their interpreter. So 3 more entered. And that's how we went on."

296: "By '58, '59 Father Cooney saw that there was such a need in the farm camps that he then got in touch with the PR govt, the Dept of Agriculture, and then they sent...a representative here to CT...That office still exists which is La Casa de Puerto Rico...Before it was called the Office...of the Commonwealth of PR, this man named Camacho came to work there...He began...to continue to fight for the rights of the farmworkers...Well it was the govt that gave them permission to migrate..."

321: "Almost everyone who came here it was because they had to, not because they wanted to leave their homeland."

328: "My childhood in PR is...a life that I miss. Because it was a very peaceful life, very disciplined, everyone in my house had something to do...some responsibility...For example, we lived in the country, there was no drinkable water, no electricity, no electric or gas stoves, so for

example... Where my mother cooked the food is what we called a *fogón*, where each little oven [*hornilla*] was made of 3 stones, and the gas was wood. Because if you wanted to have coal well you had to make the coal... And it was a lot of work to make coal... The fogon was made of... 3 stones... You had to get the water from a well which came from a spring, and the whole family went and got it... I had the responsibility for example to go to the well with my brother to bring back the water. My day, well, it began by 5 in the morning... By that time we were all up... We had animals such as cows, horses... hens... My mama... planted for our food... She sold coffee, but she worked, the same as my brothers, mostly harvesting coffee, picking it from the trees, processing it... washing it, taking off the skin in a machine, then drying it in a *glasi* [?]. A *glasi* is a frame that they make... very large. In the house [?]. I would say that it was like 50 feet by 50 feet, no, more... It's cement. So they put the coffee there to dry... My mama worked at that with my brothers. My responsibility was the water and to find food for the animals. So... we had to go look for fodder [*hierba*] to bring back to the animals."

393: "When the dry season came, well... it was very difficult. When it was dry, because we didn't have food for the animals... Then what my mama did was that she kept a fenced in area [areas] of grasses for the animals. So she would put the animals in one place, let's say the cows, the horses... while the other grew. So when they'd eaten in the one, they'd go on to the other."

395: "My childhood was very wonderful. We didn't have a bathroom inside the house, we had the bathroom in a stone floor, the toilet as we say here... it was outside in a latrine... I had a life of responsibilities but we... played... many games. There was a lot of contact between the children, all the neighbors. I had a lot of little friends [*amiguitas*] and my brothers had a lot of little friends [*amiguitos*], besides which we had relatives, nephews and nieces [*sobrinos*] and cousins. We played a lot of games outside. But one of the loveliest things that I always remember about my life in PR or in the country where my house was... on flat land. Then there was like... a hill and there on the hill was where there was a lot of grass... and especially on fall and spring afternoons we went there at night and lay down. When night was beginning to fall. We lay down with our arms behind our heads... to look up at the sky and we played games... with the clouds. Who saw the first one... I saw all kinds of animals. I saw elephants and I had never seen an elephant except in school books.

434: You know the royal [*yagua*] palms?... the fruit that it produces we called a *yagua*... All the branches of the palms, so instead of little coconuts they produce the *yagua*... It's very flexible when it's green... From those *yaguas* they made laundry baskets. Then they also made boats... for grass, no water... [she draws the shape].. They were left to dry. When they were dry like this [something hard]... we went to the hill. That was a game. We got in, the driver of mine was my brother who was 4 years older, and I was the passenger. But what happened is that on the hill there were guava trees. And when they got big since it was where the animals ate... my mama sent [people] to cut the trunks... One summer when my mother sent for the trees to be cut because they were already quite big and the trunks were quite thick... The man who cut them cut them very high up... We did it when the grass was very high. But it was like... skiing on snow... and what happened was... that afternoon there were like 15 [of us], all of us with our driver, my brother was my driver and I was his passenger. Why did they play that game? Because to get from the country to the city we.. you had to take jeeps because where we lived there were no highways [*carreteras*]... When the children went town with their papa, with their relatives, well, they were the passengers and the jeep always had a driver... That summer, well, when my brother launched himself [*se tiro*], when his car began [to move], what happened. It

went straight to where they had cut the guava trees and it crashed. I tumbled over him and I fell on my behind on the tree trunk... I have the scar here... From that time on I stopped riding with my brother."

497: "There was another [game] that... was called the *villalba*. It's a little dangerous. There was another... the donkey... That was really nice. That was done with the palm tree, since... it's hollow inside, right? Well then you made a hole low down. Then here put a stick [she draws it]... that could hold you... One person got on here, another here... Here there was a round piece of a tree whose point was inside the tree. Then... someone pushed and turned around... Then in order to turn very fast they put *caillo* leaves. *Caillo* is a plant in Puerto Rico which many... grandmothers, great-grandmothers... used to wash the dishes... because when you scrub with it, it becomes like soap. The leaf is very slippery... So when it's green... you would put it inside the palm... on the stick, and you got one here, another here... So when... it had a lot of *caillo* you didn't have to do more than push once, we kept going. And that was so much fun... One time my cousin [*prima*] from the city... She didn't like the country much, she went, and she wanted so much to get on the donkey, and what happens. They put in a lot of *caillo* leaves, and the palm moved so much... and she went rolling down a hill... she fell in the coffee plants and said, I'll never ride the donkey again."

547: "We played hide and seek, the blind hen... You made a circle, and then in the middle you put the blind hen. Well then she had to go and look for who had... we used any little thing... And she had to go along guessing who had it but... with a rag covering her eyes... We did it in the *batey*, which is the yard... We were poor in the sense that we didn't have much, but we had more than others... Because the house was wood, we had... 3 bedrooms... Because my mama inherited that from from my grandfather. So because with my father she had bought more... land... We played mama and papa... My mother didn't like that because we would go to work making cakes, the meal, rice and beans but we gathered the dirt. We would measure it... we would wet it [till it was] very damp... We would get to work like the grandmothers... the *surrullos*... Candelita. That we did in the *glasi*... So that the coffee would get air... On the edges, they made an edge like... 5 inches high. And about 2 inches wide... Everything was [made of] cement... It was like 5 by 5. You could easily walk on it. So for Candelita, there were 5... A child at each corner, 4 children on corners... The one who asked for Candelita. The child, his mama had sent him to look for a candle, or it could be a match... The way we chose who would be Candelita, well, you... would think of a number... The one who guessed the number went to each corner till the one who was last... Each child though of a number, the 5. But there was one who was the one who decided which number we were going to pick... The one who didn't guess well he became Candelita. You had to start asking. The game went on while... he asked for a *candelita* from each child in each corner, the 4 children had to keep changing our corners. If while we were changing he touched us, well, the one he touched, you are Candelita. And we would do that for hours and hours and hours. They could never catch me... It was a really good game because... you got exercise, you were in the fresh air, so you can imagine, compared to life today, why I long for my childhood in PR.

652: I had another responsibility which was, my mother sold milk. So we would deliver the milk, my brother and I... By 6 in the morning everyone had gotten the milk that my mother sold. My mother made cheese [*quesos del pais*] ... and we also... delivered the cheese orders. And that was how she supported us. Besides that she sewed handkerchiefs... for a factory... in San German... The Talleres Palmieris... They were of Italian descent... The Antoprietis... were of

Italian descent... Those 2 families in San German, in the country, they were the owners of... a great deal of land where the main crops were [sugar] cane and coffee... In other towns in PR you found coffee. In San German, cane and coffee were number one."

694: Since she was small HF hemmed the handkerchiefs by hand. She went to school till noon. "In my opinion... because the children also had to help the parents out in the house."

### Tape 1, Side B

014: For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade she went to a school donated by the Antoprietis--they donated a piece of land and had a 2 story bldg put up on it. 2 classrooms. Classroom is 'aula' in Castilian Spanish. The bldg was alongside a little mountain. The Antoprietis were completely into coffee, thousands of acres of coffee. Their biggest glasi was on top of that mountain [she draws]. To get to the second floor classroom, a cement stairway. She did first grade on the first floor, second grade on the second. "Afterwards I had to walk on foot going up... mountain... like... almost 5 miles... After I finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to another school. That was going downhill until you came to a road [*carretera*]. Everything was made of dirt... Since we didn't have too much, we., I went down to the school... with my little shoes... on my shoulder... When I got close to the school, well, there was always water collected [*pozada*] because it had rained a lot... So I would wash my legs there and put on my shoes, they were... sandals.. And that's how we made our school shoes last. We had a pair for school and a pair for the house."

060: The school was in the country, 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. After 9<sup>th</sup> you had to go to the city for high school. Her younger sister went to school in town because she had ended up living with her godmother and her godmother sent her to a private, Catholic school, and that's why she understood English when she came [to CT]. Her godmother's daughter had polio since she was a girl. She traveled a lot to NY for operations, she was from a family that had money. The godfather had a stand in the market square, the godmother was a seamstress. HF's mother got sick when HF's father died, with measles. HF's sister was 15 months old. HF's sister who was 10 years older took care of the little ones. Her sister's godmother came because HF's mother was in Ponce district [hospital?], 6 months with measles. The godmother came to the house and when she saw the older sister taking care of the others, and her younger sister had chicken pox. The godmother took the baby until HF's mother got out of the hospital but then she got attached to her because her own daughter had polio and she didn't have any other sisters. When HF's mother went to get her sister [her godmother] said to her, comadre, leave the little girl with me.

103: "The one who decided to come [here] was my older brother, Bienvenido... He was already married, he had... a son. Afterwards he came back to Puerto Rico and when he came back [here] he had 3 [children]... He was living in his in-laws' house... He wanted to make a house for his wife and children... That's how he came... here. He saw that here there were more work opportunities, to get ahead, than what he would have in PR. Because when they got married, well, they were going to have their own house." Bienvenido is the second son. The oldest had gotten married and had his own house. He also came, in '57. "Bienvenido... wrote that it was very good here and there were... a lot... of people who traveled to NY. Now the story of how my brother came to CT. It was through a friend in PR who had come here... and who had stayed here in Htfd... Because that friend had written him that there was work here, that you could earn

more money... At home yes, we had the farm... but when it came to work the only thing that there was for the PR man, for the men in my family where I lived was the [sugar] cane or the coffee... And this only lasts 6 months. You would pick the coffee and at the same time there were other jobs that you had to do on the farm, but when it came to money, well, since he was already married... He had to provide for himself and for his family... But the very first who came in '40 was my uncle, a brother of my mama, to NY. He came by steamship... He was the first one of my family who came." He got married to an American girl, they returned to PR but she didn't like it because of the language. She returned to NY, he stayed in PR, then she had a baby [girl].

153: HF's mother came from a family with money but when her grandfather [HF's?] died her grandmother got married to another man who began to throw it all away. That's why she had the farm when she got married to HF's father and they bought a little more. It had 7 acres. When HF's brothers got married the only job, just a little money and really bad [was in agriculture]. They wanted to get ahead. So they came and they came, the last ones were her youngest sister, her oldest brother, and her youngest brother. In '57 the last ones came, but in '50 they began to come, and her uncle in '40.

171: When HF arrived: "I remember that when we came at that time we didn't have... Bradley Field Airport. Everyone had to go get their families at the NY intl airport... The thing that impressed me the most was-- the people who came back to PR from NY. Because... the Puerto Rican began by coming to NY. So they would talk a lot... about how in the United States you would pick up money in the street... And as I little girl, I said, what?... And we dreamed of going to that place where you could pick up money in the streets. When I came to NY, my first impression was of the noise of the language. Since I came from the country, I associated it with a swarm of bees... When they change from one hive to another... they would swarm through the air, everyone would hide... Afterwards when we came [here] on the old highway, the Merritt Parkway, I loved it. Because there were so many flowers, flower trees. It was the spring, May... When they came to get us in the airport, they had to bring a thermos of coffee, food, McDonald's didn't exist, they didn't have the gas stations that they have now, there was no place to buy things on the road... We stopped to drink coffee... My brother stopped the car, there was like a little hill... and there were some family houses. And there were some German shepherds... that came out barking. But when I got out of the car, I put my foot on the ground, I see something white on the ground... I'll tell you the truth. I went along looking for the money in the streets. Nothing, not even a penny... So, when I bent over... it was cold, it was snow... even in May... My handprint stayed on the floor and I said, uyyyy. And then my brother said to me, silly, that's snow... I was 11 years old... I had read a lot in school about snow, the skyscrapers, and I wanted to see those skyscrapers... It's not the same to read, to hear about something, as to see it... I felt like a tiny little ant [when I saw the skyscrapers], it was really nice."

245: "But I thank God that my brother came to CT. Because if we had come to NY I believe that my mama wouldn't have stayed even a week... She loved CT because there were many trees, many flowers, it was like a little PR. More or less the country [in the 66 Main area]... We lived as if we were in PR... The whole building, 60, 66, we were... 16 families, and we lived like one family... My mother cooked, she took the food to the neighbor [*vecina*], the neighbor took whatever she cooked to my mama and so on. We went to the church... almost all of us... We shared, we celebrated for example birthdays among the families. Everything in the house... Everyone was working, all the children were in school. And what I loved the most was

that there was so much help to make sure that a child was in school... For my mama that was especially wonderful because in PR most of the children left [school] because they had to work, to help their families, and of necessity because of lack of clothes, well, they would leave school very... young. Or they weren't sent to school, there wasn't what there is today, the law that says the child has to be in school... The only thing that was very hard here, we didn't have the space that we had in PR. Especially for the children. The adults, well, for example the men, well... they played dominoes, that was number one... They went out for walks, they went to... the bar, because at the beginning it was really difficult for a PR to go into the bars. For example... the building next to where we lived, there was a bar there, and a man... who had moved into the first floor, well he went... since he thought that since in PR... you went to what they called a *cafetin*, which is out in the open air... He went, it was summer, to get a beer. He had barely gone inside the door, and I saw this with my own eyes because... we kids were playing in the park... across from the building, Barnard Park. Which also... the family that were owners of this house, they had that park in memory of them and the Barnard Brown School... When that man entered, suddenly, I remember, I see three very tall men with very wide shoulders... They picked him up like he was a little doll and they threw him into the street... Naturally that made him angry, and so he got up... from the street and tried again. So they threw him out and they were kicking him."

318: "In those days another thing we had were the policemen with their nightsticks on foot, walking the beat. And there were a lot of them... Thank God that a policeman came, and he went and helped the man. If he hadn't, I believe that they were going to kill him... That was... after a year, the second summer that I spent [in Htfd], when I already spoke quite a bit of English."

327: "My experience in school, that was very difficult. Because since I didn't speak English... the teachers... were all nuns. They sat me in the back of the rows of students, the last seat in the back, as a listener, nothing more. And already 3 months later, we read a poem. And I wanted to participate because in PR, well... I liked school. And I felt so, so alone, I couldn't communicate... Johnny Mele... was already in high school. So the only... other Puerto Rican was this girl, *doña* Olga Mele's daughter, Lydia. But Lydia spoke a lot of English... And she was 2 grades ahead of me, she was in 7<sup>th</sup> and... they put me in 5<sup>th</sup>... After 3 months the teacher, the nun, said, who wants to read the next line? And I remember that my little hand trembled... and I raised it... I know she [the nun] was dying for [*loca porque*] me to participate. But she was waiting for me to take the initiative, and when she saw my hand up in the air, I was going to put it down, and she, "Ida" "

358: "My name is Haydee... When the principal asked my brother what my name was, he said Haydee, and she said Ida, and my brother said, yes, yes... All my school records up through college say Ida Montalvo... The game that the girls played with me, and I loved to play, was 'Idaho Potatoes.'... Jumping rope... And later we had a class reunion. And I said to [a former classmate], 'do you remember when you... made fun of me?... Do you remember when you used to trick me?... They were being cruel. And the teachers believed that I was enjoying it-- I was! I was enjoying it. I didn't know what Idaho potato was... And I always turned the rope and they jumped... One day I said, 'Wait a minute... I don't want to jump.' And they were, 'Oh yeah, yeah, Idaho potato,' all of them, all of them... Everyone in the St. Peter's schoolyard, you heard, 'Idaho Potato's jumping.'... And they applauded me. And I believed that I was a star. I didn't know that they were... laughing at... my name... Then when I went to go to the market with my mother, and I saw a bag of potatoes and it said Idaho Potatoes, I said, 'Oh my God.' Ah hah, that's what we



have here... When I went back to school on Monday, I said to them, very seriously... 'My name is not Idaho Potato. My name is Haydee, and if you cannot pronounce Spanish, that's too bad... And my teacher [applauded]... because I started defending myself, I began to be... assertive, because... I was trying to please them. Because I wanted friends... and after that, they never again... called me Idaho Potato."

416: After St. Peter's she went to Barnard Brown, when the family moved to Florence. From there they went to 2411 Main St. She went to Weaver High. "One thing that is very strange. All... 3 bldgs where my family lived in Hfd, none has been knocked down. All have been renovated and rented once again to families... They have torn down so much, so much, because there were so many places to live here. For example Front St, Windsor, that whole area... where I-84 East is, and 91 South, North... all that was places to live, 4 story houses.

438: [returning to earlier story] "When the nun said, Ida... You had to stand up. And I remember that my knees trembled. From my arms the shaking went down to my little legs. And when I got up and I read the verse, because it was only one sentence that she wanted. And I continued, I finished the paragraph. What applause. And the thing was that the applause they began to give me, you could hear it all through the... first floor of the school. Because the other nuns now knew that I had started to participate. And it seems that my teacher had said to the others, when you hear the applause, Ida is participating. And... all the classrooms, because the doors were open... and me, oh my God... that's all I kept saying... And the girl... who was the one who had started the thing about Idaho potato, she sat next to me, and she got up and gave me a hug... I'll never forget that day... It was in... November of '56... And from then on I continued to participate."

467: The schedule was different then from today, you went from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. One hour for lunch. After dismissing the students, HF would stay with the teacher for an hour. The teacher taught her English. After that she had to take speech class, she had a lot of trouble with the 'v.' The St. Peter's experience was really nice. They taught her a lot about the Catholic faith, religion classes, she began her first catechism group. When she was 13. For all the children who lived at 60, 66 Main St. Those children were at Kinsella, the public school. "But my brother saw the building [St. Peter's] with the word 'school', and he took us there... We didn't know the difference between a public and a parochial school until later." She realized that the other children went to another school. Because they [her family] had to pay \$5, which is like \$1000 today. She practiced with the children and everyone thought she was going to be a teacher. "And my thing was always like that of doña Olga Mele. She was what you would call my mentor who got me into social work... And seeking the rights of those who didn't know their rights, always working with the community."

533: "As soon as I began to speak English [I began to work with the community]. The PR woman is very emotional and anxious. Many people went to the municipal hospital with epilepsy. They didn't know English, they ended up in the mental hospital in Norwich. If a woman had an anxiety attack, they took her to Cooke Hospital, because it was free, and then she ended up in Norwich." When that happened, HF went down with the family, spoke to the [hospital personnel] and got them out of there. Since HF's mother was epileptic and diabetic, she began to take her to the doctor. So that's how she discovered what was happening to people who didn't have interpreters.

581: Father Cooney had the San Juan Catholic Center. 2 social workers, but that wasn't enough. They needed interpreters in the courts, hospitals, police headquarters. "Each time they... arrested [someone]... even for crossing the street because it was against the law... jaywalking... the ended up in Morgan... the police headquarters, arrested... In the summer of '56, my mama sent my brother to get... a liter of milk. Back then everything was in glass. You had to take the bottle and they gave you another bottle of milk... My mother and I were eating spaghetti and meatballs for lunch for 6 months, because it was the only thing that my cousin knew how to ask for at the store. You had to ask for everything... It was a snack bar in a little grocery store on the corner of Wyllys and Main... It was Saturday morning... My brother was... dressed... but he hadn't put on his shirt... He had his t-shirt [on]... He went out by himself to the corner to get the milk for my mama. When half an hour had gone by he hadn't come back. An hour went by, he didn't come back... I went out and when I went down the stairs, one of the neighbors was coming up and I asked him about my brother... And he said to me, *ay nena*, your brother Jose, the police took him away... They put the Puerto Ricans in... the police car in which they carried prisoners, the dog catcher's van [*perrera*]. Because in PR they go around the streets with... a truck like that... picking up stray dogs wandering around the city streets... Since they didn't know English, they called the paddy wagon 'la perrera.' "

655: "When the man told me that... they had taken him away in the perrera, I didn't know what the perrera was... My other brother... had a car... he went to Morgan and they had arrested him because he was naked from the waist up, in a t-shirt... My brother... paid the fine... a dollar or 2 dollars..." Nobody could walk barefoot in the street, without a shirt. "But we noticed that they didn't arrest the English-speaking Americans. It was the Puerto Rican and... the black. Because we knew a lot of Jamaican families... through... the tobacco farms."

686: When HF was 14 she wanted to work to help her mother out, to buy her clothes, etc. "I went to work in the tobacco. And I had a very sad time because we students worked with other students who came from other places... They came from North Carolina, from Florida, all black girls [*negritas*]. And so... they didn't want us whites to... get together at lunchtime with the black girls. And we were all little girls 14 years old... I didn't understand. I came to know discrimination here... I made friends with a black girl from Florida and I sat under a tree to eat lunch with her. The supervisor came and she grabbed me by the shoulder, she said to me, come, you go with your group... They were all whites... I am Puerto Rican. The Puerto Rican is a mixture of races. For example I have French, Spanish, and Taino ancestry." Her mother looked like a Taino Indian.

### Tape 2, Side A

001: "The supervisor didn't want me to be with the black girls... I said to her, but why do I have to go with my group? What are you trying to tell me? She said to me, no, because the blacks can't be with... the whites... I remember that I said, what?... I said to her, I am Puerto Rican... She says to me, that doesn't matter, but you're white. I said to her... what do you mean, white? And she says to me, well, never mind... If you don't want to lose your job, obey [me]... I didn't obey, and she dragged me, she pulled me and she took me by force... When I turned around, like this... my black friend was crying. And I say, when I got to my house... in the afternoon, I said to my mama, mami, I don't understand... And my mama said to me this, remember that the children of God are God's garden. Like we have gardens where we like to have different types of flowers,

that's how we children of God are. If you like the rose, and your supervisor likes the carnation, well, tell her that she can keep her carnation... The next day, at lunchtime, I went with my friend. A little further under another tree. And when the... woman came, again to take me away, I said to her, don't you dare put a finger on me. I am blind... She says, you crazy?... I say, no, I'm not crazy. I'm colorblind... about skin. If you want me to separate from her, you have come to separate me from them [too]. Because we Puerto Ricans also have African roots. Not because they wanted to come to PR, but because they were taken as slaves to PR by the Spanish... And if you want me to lose my job, fine, but... I'm going to the Department of Labor and I'm going to talk to them about this because it's unfair. This girl, my friend, she is not black to me. She is human and she is my friend."

061: "This woman left, she never came back. Then the other girls were encouraged, and when we finished the summer, we didn't know who was from Florida, who was from Htfd, from E Htfd, from Manchester... That was the only thing that 14 year old students could do. And my husband worked in tobacco here. And my son worked in tobacco here. Because we wanted him to have the experience of what the tobacco is. Because the child who is put completely under [?]. . . becomes dependent... [his] first bicycle, a paper route... [her son went] to Park St to get the bus to go to the tobacco [farms]."

081: HF's husband was raised completely differently. He lost his mother when he was 4... HF lost her father. HF's mother took the place of his mother and his father took the place of her father. HF's father died from alcohol. When he didn't have alcohol in his system he was a saint, he was a Jekyll and Hyde. HF's son is almost blind, he had an eye disease when he was 12. But he's working, he has 3 daughters. "The same thing that... my mama did with us and my father-in-law... with my husband, we've passed down to them... to keep the culture, the 2 languages, and he's doing [that] with his daughters." His daughter got married 2 years ago, she is 31 years old. She works as a teacher in the school system.

106: HF has worked in the community since she began to speak English. She got married when she was in HS. She stayed in the house, her husband didn't want her to work. Father Cooney had to close the San Juan Catholic Center office, because of the rent and salaries. He continued [it] in the church, in the basement. "Which I called the dungeon because it was like that... There a desk, an archive, telephone... I was about 5 months pregnant when... Father Cooney knocks at the door, that he needed me. Because the woman who was doing the office work of the SJ Catholic Center... had to... return to PR for an emergency and she wasn't coming back." HF spoke with her husband, she wanted to work, she began to work, they started St. Vincent DePaul in the basement, in a closet "I collected rich people's clothes and they brought me their clothes, their furniture, and I would make lists of needy families in the community... In... a station wagon I took them the clothes myself."

135: The need still existed at the municipal hospital. The mayor was Kinsella. The PRs fought to have someone to help the people in the hospital. One day the mayor's secretary called her, she wanted her to translate the exam into Spanish. HF's son had been born by that time, her mother took care of him. She said to Father Cooney that she was going to get a person for his office and then she was going to take the exam. In the Centro San Juan HF was the interpreter in juvenile, municipal, circuit court, city welfare, state welfare, she helped all the Cuban refugees. Always working with Olga Mele.

164: One time in the circuit court an old man came out to look for something in the house of a son on Main Street. There was a curfew, a policeman came and took him to Morgan, on a Saturday night. The old woman came to the office Monday morning. "I closed the office and I would go to where they needed me." She went with the old lady. The city had hired a person to be a court interpreter. A PR man, with a salary. "When I arrive with the little old lady to serve as interpreter for the little old man, I see this man, in a 3 piece suit, wearing a vest [*enchalinado*], and I see a woman by his side crying... The man says to her, well, look, if you don't go to my church, I can't be your interpreter... I thought that... I had heard wrong... There were 2 men behind this woman, this is in the hall, outside the courtrooms and he gave the same message to those 2 men... A young man who had begun a Pentecostal church here... in a storefront... He was soliciting members for the church in exchange for serving as interpreter for them.. There is a policeman in the state court... I asked him, who is... this man in the suit? He says to me that is the interpreter... who begins today in the court... Who pays him? The city of Htfd... I go, and he's about 6 foot 3, and I'm 4 eleven. And I say to him, may I speak to you, sir? And he says, oh, yes, yes, sister, of course... I say, but, in private... We go into a little office... I closed the door and I said to him, tell me something. Are you a Christian? Oh, yes, yes, I am the reverend Santiago... And you are working here? Oh yes, yes, I am the interpreter... very full of himself [*echon*].. And I say, who pays your salary? Oh, the city of Htfd... [Felipe Santiago]... And I say to him, well, look, I'm going to tell you something. I am also an interpreter here for the needy. And for our own... I don't have a salary because I do it voluntarily... If I hear you saying again to those who need an interpreter that in exchange for them going to your church you will be their interpreter, they'll go to your church but you will lose your job. You are here to give a paid service. You are not here to be selling religion... I am a Christian, Catholic, and I'll tell you something, I don't know which God you're serving, because it's not the same one that I'm serving. And my name is Haydee Feliciano... He is... pure Taino... and he was so shocked..."

254: HF went to the court session, the little old man who was her client came out first, trembling. Afterwards she got him a job as a porter at her church. She explained to him what had happened, he didn't know about the curfew. They left. "Then I stayed sitting in the back. That man sweated that day... I stayed for the whole session. And Father Cooney was very worried because I was on the verge of giving birth to my son." HF got Julia Malave for the office [Jesus Malave's mother] Afterwards the man changed, he gave the service he was supposed to, always looking for members for his church but he didn't behave that way any more. HF later told the state police[man], keep an eye on him. I didn't want him to lose his job, but it was unfair to do that especially to frightened people, outside their element [*fuera de su cultura*], and put a person between a rock and a hard place." Later the porter was the person who translated the exam for the municipal hospital. [He was] Portuguese, and the exam was more Portuguese than Spanish. They got Jose Garay, HF, about 14 people. She didn't want to leave the [SJ] Center, but 2 weeks later the mayor's office called her and told her she had scored the highest on the exam. When doña Julia took her place at Sacred Heart and HF went to the hospital, for 3 years. After her mother died. In the hospital HF had 5 jobs. She covered emergency, the credit office--accounts receivable, the clinics in the back of the hospital. After a year she left a note for the superintendent, please buy me some skates. She was also in the operating room, to explain to the patient so he would go into the operation calmly, what was going to happen to him, and to talk to the family. Sometimes she came home at 9, 10 at night because of an emergency. Also the psychiatric ward. When she retired to have her daughter, and her mother who was her childcare had died, the superintendent sent her a memo that he would [she should?] begin to look for people-- in plural--to take her place.

341: During that time the radio station began. Half hour on Sundays. A small station in Windsor. The first announcer was Pedro Garcia. Works now at the station in Newington. During the time that Father Las Heras came, the same day HF got married, in '64... she thinks it was around '66 or '67. Pedro Garcia is Puerto Rican, the friend who invited her husband to come to CT. Her husband was born in Aibonito, when his father was widowed when he was 12 they went to live in Patillas where his father had family. Her husband's sister, Maria Feliciano, married Pablo Garcia, Pedro's brother. They lived in the same barrio in Patillas, grew up together. Pedro came here in the '50s. She got to know him in '58. The owner where she lived on Florence, a Jewish family, they would go to NY. A brother in law of the owner, Manny Goldman, went from house to house selling clothing, jewelry, bed linens, everything he could carry in his car. HF was 13 and MG asked her if she wanted to make Christmas money if he brought Spanish greeting cards. She and 2 of the neighbor's boys, they carried the boxes and they went where Puerto Ricans lived. They go to Asylum Ave and there Pedro is visiting. He had a girlfriend, he bought a card from HF for the girlfriend. HF's brother lived on Enfield St, the oldest, with his wife and children, and the sister of HF's husband came from Puerto Rico to live in the apt next door. That's how HF knew her sister in law years before she knew her husband. She met her husband in '61 when he came to live in his sister's house at 2431 Main St. HF's family lived at 2411. 3 buildings away. HF knew her husband for three years before being his girlfriend. Pedro Garcia lived at 2421 Main. There were like 4 multi-family bldgs. A married sister of Pedro Garcia, Pedro's brother. But HF's family was the first PR family to move into that area. The owners of those buildings were the Montanaro family, the first market with Hispanic products, on Windsor St. Afterwards they moved to the corner of Kennedy and Main.

440: The Hispano Market on Park St was owned by some Portuguese. "You couldn't find anything... like the typical coffee of PRs... the beans... the rice... You had to go to NY to look for a lot of things." She knew Pedro first. Mother's Day of '63 she was in her second yr of HS. They went to Riverside Park. In the youth culture they go to a party, they dance and everything but always with the adults. HF went with her single and married brothers, 5 cars went to the park. Pedro went with them and some of HF's friends. He wanted to get his friend, HF's husband, she met him that day. She had seen him from a distance when she went to school on the bus across from where he lived. Her husband said afterward that he thought that her family was in high society here, because they had grown up here and he was a poor boy from the country. He didn't know that she was a *campesina* also. Everyone at Riverside had a partner to go on the rides except her and him. HF spent the time playing the games with her mother.

500: She was working in the first dept store, Topps Dept Store, she was the supervisor of the cashiers. She began on the popcorn machine. She worked at night, the first store that was open until 10 at night. She went to school during the day, worked at night and all day Saturday. That day was Sunday, Mothers' Day. When they were leaving Riverside there was a snack bar. She was waiting for the rest of her family, he stood at her side and asked her what was the matter. She said that she wanted to eat a candy apple but she didn't want to break her bill because it was for the school bus and for her lunches. He said if you want I'll buy it for you, but you have to share it with me. She said jokingly, buy it for me. He bought it for her and they shared it. When she got out of the car, he touched her hand gently. She already knew a lot of his life story through Pedro's and his sister's family. He suffered a lot because of the custom of going and asking for her hand.

574: "When he want to ask my mama for my hand she ignored him...Because my mother wanted me to continue in school...In the old days in Puerto Rican culture the boyfriend went to visit the girl in the house for one hour on Sundays. So my mother...said to me and my sister that she wasn't going to spend 5, 6,7 years receiving visits from men every Sunday, that...the day that we fell in love with the person we were going to marry, we shouldn't be engaged for years...For me he was...The one who God had destined for me...The girl has to let her parents know that they're going to get a visit from a young man who's going to ask for her hand. And my mama didn't want to go back in the car to return from church to the house..." He came at the appointed hour, drank coffee, but her mother didn't begin the conversation even though she knew why he had come. A friend of HF's husband had gotten married and he came to live next door to HF's family. He had told her mother jokingly that the boy who was in love with HF had left a girl in Puerto Rico with 3 babies. And her mother believed it because the guy and HF's husband had grown up together. HF had checked out the information with Pedro Garcia's relatives in PR, etc. He went to ask for her hand in May, and until the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, he saw her from a distance at church.

645: "Sacred Heart was the house of the Hispanics after we started the first Mass, it happened...the 8<sup>th</sup> of May of '57. It was Father Cooney who began it...at 10 in the morning because the other services were earlier. And the head pastor didn't want us. Because Sacred Heart belonged to the Germans...We have kept all the windows, all the memorials below...they're written in German...It's a very old church...It was stone upon stone, it wasn't easy. And they also came and suffered I believe even more than we did, the Germans...And now...the PRs, we are more advanced and there are...other groups that are coming, suffering...discrimination."

679: HF graduated from HS, went to the university with a scholarship. She decided to get married in order to go to school [?]. Her son came quickly. HF's brother had to intercede [to help them get engaged]. Since their father was dead the older brothers took the place of the father. When the child comes home or is going out, they ask for a blessing from their parents, their aunts and uncles, their grandparents, godparents. "Wherever they are, the greeting is the blessing [*bendicion*], godfather, bendicion, grandma, bendicion mami, bendicion papi.' Her grandchildren still say bendicion, grandma. Many families have forgotten those things.

### Tape 2, Side B

007: On July 4<sup>th</sup> her family always had a picnic. That year they went to Willimantic to her brother Bienvenido's house. HF told her mother she wasn't going to the picnic since her boyfriend couldn't go. That made her mother very angry since [the picnic] was a family custom. HF was almost 18 but she wasn't allowed to stay by herself. And her boyfriend lived very close by. Her older brother came from Willimantic. HF in her room and her brother asked her what was the matter, that their mother had said that she was in love with a boy who was no good for her. HF explained to her brother, told him which family [her boyfriend was from] and he said, calm down. He went out of the bedroom saying, pray for me, he thought that his mother would run him out of the house with a broom. He asked their mother how old she was when she fell in love with their father, and she asked, why are you asking me that question? He asked how old HF was, but their mother was resistant. Her brother said that she should get to know the boy, that she should give him a chance. Bienvenido called their other brother, Jorge, to go find HF's

boyfriend, that he should come and ask him [B] for her hand. Their mother shouted that she was head of this household, etc. HF's husband came, he was very timid. Her brother asked him what he wanted with HF. He said that he wanted to go out with her, etc, etc. He asked him several times if he was sure. "He made him sweat. And he was the godfather of our wedding. And the day of our wedding, since you couldn't eat anything before going to Mass in order to take communion, my brother fainted at my wedding, at the altar." Father Cooney married HF. Father Las Heras came to the NY airport that same day. He came from PR, was a prisoner in Cuba for 3 years.

080: So HF's mother had to give her permission. They went to the picnic although HF's husband stayed behind out of respect for her mother. He worked for Gold Bond Mattress Co. on Windsor St. They moved a few doors down from her mother, an apt at 2620 Main St. HF was always watching over her mother because of her illnesses. She told her husband that she would marry him but he had to let her be near her mother. Afterwards her mother said that she had 7 sons and one more who was the best, HF's husband. On July 25<sup>th</sup> they will be married for 36 years.

102: In the tobacco: "When we students went to work the plants were already quite high. So we had to tie them below with a string... You had to cut this string with your finger... You had to put on a tape... It was kneeling, you had to be kneeling... through the rows... of tobacco... for miles, tying each plant... Going down and getting up, down and up, and very carefully so as not to touch a leaf, to bend it... After it was tied... They plant it and you harvest this part first, then another, another... So that when we are tying the plants on one side there's someone who's already harvesting to take [the leaves] to the sheds... Then you have to... sew the leaf... From working the land... we went afterwards, the last 3 weeks of August... to sew the leaves... bundling them [?] [*embarrillando*] by machine... You put on the machine, someone holds the bundle [*la barrilla*], there are covers on top of the machine. Then two crossed saws come. And you would put 2 leaves... sewing the leaves... 3 people did it. One on this side, another is putting the leaves... very carefully on the table, and the person who is sewing takes one from the left, one from the right, and puts them together. Then those 2 saws come. They're needles but they're like... little saws, and they sew... on the tip of the leaf, and then the leaves automatically fall onto the pole [*varita*], on the thread. Then you tie them."

143: They didn't sew the leaves, the machine did it automatically. "The seamstress is the one who takes the leaves and puts them through the machine. Then... those saws go around... In those saws... they cross those 2 leaves by their... stems. Then, well, it turns around, the machine is round... the 2 saws come back again. In the time it takes for the... saws to go around you pick up another 2 [leaves]. You have to be very fast... That is one of the jobs. Then there is another that is [for] the grown men... They... put the poles in the sheds... From the grounds we go to the sheds... In the sheds they put the poles up high, from the ceiling downward, in order to dry... the tobacco leaves. So there was a young man who was very thin. And he was the one highest up to the ceiling. So his eyes were fixed on... a girl who was a student... He began to look down and he got dizzy, and... he began to fall... The girl who was giving me the leaves on this side saw that he was falling, she let out a yell. When she started yelling, I forgot myself and left my hand up... The saws came and they crossed over... this finger. When I saw it, the saws were just like this, this way [movement]... I don't know how that doctor put my nail back..." [index finger of right hand]. They took her to the hospital and then to her house and she missed 3 weeks of work. But she worked in the field and in the shed. After that she began working at Topps store.

182: "The work was very dirty, and if it rained you still worked... If it rained today, well the next day when you got there it was muddy. [the pay] 50 cents an hour."

197: She shows us the photo of the group with Mrs. Anderson who visited the Hispanics' houses. The photo is in front of Central Baptist Church on Main St., across from the federal court. It was an Easter Sunday, she went around the community, invited all the Hispanic families to come to a breakfast. After coming out of the church basement where there was a big hall, she asked them to stand in front of the church for a photo, '57. HF shows us herself and others. Mrs. Anderson would bring food, clothes, helped a lot in the community. Throughout the whole Htfd community.

230: She shows us other photos [note on other tape]

248: "When they gave Father Cooney permission to give the first Mass, we came... early, they had told us that at 10 in the morning the Mass would begin. So what happens when we get there... We were a little group of 14 people. Among the 14 people 7 of us were children. The oldest would be me, more or less... We stood at the bottom of the stairs but on the side. Because Father Cooney had told us that we should wait until the English Mass finished so that the parishioners would leave, then we could go in... When we saw that almost everyone... had left... We were going to go up the first steps... Father Otto came down. I'll never forget it, he was very tall... with his black clothing, his arms crossed like this, very serious, he walked down. At the same time doña Guillermina Ortiz had her son who she had gone many times to ask for him to be baptized, he was already 3, here in her arms. And while he was going down, she was going up... As I looked... she was going to go up the next step... with her son, he was going down, he went like this to her with his elbow. The woman lost her balance, with her son, and my mother was going to lose her balance and I... went like this, and all of us grabbed each other. And he continued walking. He didn't have to walk down that side, because he could have gone down the other side to go to... the rectory... I didn't understand why he did that." The woman had about 12 children, one policeman, another fireman, they have their own houses, they came very poor from PR but they plugged along, they never lost their faith. They go to St. Michael's.

299: "That was the first incident of discrimination that I saw." Afterwards in the tobacco. In Catholic school everyone was white, the only thing that the students asked her was where PR was. They thought it was part of Italy, that she was Italian, with her brown hair. There were a lot of Italians in that school.

323: The woman with the baby began to cry, she explained that the priest hadn't wanted to baptize her son. Father Cooney did it. [HF can get us doña Guillermina's number]. She remembers the Melendez family, one of the first families. She remembers Julian Vargas, Andres Vazquez came from PR, worked in the tobacco, suffered a lot, came young and alone. He lives here. As an adult he finished high school, went to the Univ of Htfd, he has a lot of history. He goes to Sacred Heart. Andres's wife is Jesus Malave's sister. Mariano Cortez, he was one of the ones who came to work in 'la chicken' in the '50s. He doesn't have formal education. He lived at 44 Lawrence St where the Hispanics first lived. He was a neighbor of HF's brother Bienvenido. He worked in 'la chicken' until it closed, afterwards went to work at Avon Country Club, one of HF's brothers worked there too, they employed a lot of Hispanics. They would stay there the whole week, came back to their houses on the weekend. MC was always a mover in the community, he bought a store with his stepdaughter.



396: "I am here because they brought me. If I had been able to decide, I would rather have stayed in PR. But now I go to PR and I say no. Because it's not the same PR that I left... If we look at the families who came in those times, all, all, the dreams that they brought were fulfilled in the... next generation... For example my mother who never went to school, who dreamed that all of us would go to school well, we all went to school and thank God, we continue... We already have 3 generations... My younger sister has a doctorate and she is working in the school system in... West Hartford." She had a very bad experience in Bulkeley HS where she did her practice [teaching]. The teacher left her alone in an English class. The majority of the students were white. A black boy who was already 19. The door opens and he comes in, 3 men come in with bottles of rum, drunk, high on drugs, they close the door and come in. The young people [students] said to her, don't worry, and they ran to the front. She said, everybody against the wall in back. They began to turn over the desk, they ripped the phone out of the wall. She didn't want them to get near her students. She asked her student, why are you doing this to me? He believed that was going to give trouble to the teacher for some reason. But it was too late and the other boys began breaking up all the furniture. When she had a chance she opened the door and let out a scream. They took off running and HF's sister went running and screaming down Wethersfield Ave. She had to take a year off, then the W Htfd School system. HF had to retire 13 years ago. She has had 2 brain operations. She had started in the school system helping as a liaison between the system and the Hispanic community. Her sister had recommended her. Fox Elementary. They fought to keep it from being torn down. HF and her family lived on Webster. HF got a friend of her mother's to take care of her daughter. She went to work temporarily but ended up staying 21 years. After working with the social workers, she worked as a teachers' aide for 5 years. She had to fight for the bilingual pgm. It was good [she explains the concept] but they don't get enough instruction in English.

620: In spite of being citizens, the PRs have been more discriminated against than the blacks or those from other groups, they have been ignored, they've always had to push for opportunities. A lot still needs to be done. The students have to be stimulated, the forthcoming generations that they have the same rights as anyone else. She believes that the welfare system killed her people. She talks about a case where she visited a house where a child didn't go to school. His father worked in tobacco, had 5 children. It was an 8 family bldg, he was the only man there who worked. He said they were getting ahead, they had good cars, good furniture, he got depressed, forgot that he was giving a [good] example to his children, he left his job since he was earning very little and the rent was going up. This has happened to thousands of families. Many have come with the desire to work. The system has done a lot of harm to the poor. The PRs are not as assertive as other groups of people. Citizenship also, others have to fight for their visas, etc. Here PRs are tourists and on the island as well.