Interviewee: Mitchell, Ellen

Interview: February 2, 2006

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Interview with:	**Ellen Mitchell**
Interviewed by:	**Leigh Cutler**
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[Begin Tape 1, Side A.]

LEIGH CUTLER: This is Leigh Cutler interviewing Ellen Mitchell on Thursday, February 2nd, 2006. The interview is taking place at her home at 11543 Riverview Drive in Houston, Texas. This interview will be deposited in the Oral History of Houston Project.

If you could giive me some brief background… Are you from Houston, or if not, how and when did you get here?

ELLEN MITCHELL: Came to Houston in 1970, from the Northeast. Early on, probably '72 or '3, became involved with the Interfaith Hunger Coalition. And so community gardens became an outgrowth of that. So it was just kind of a trail, a natural trail that I followed along.

CUTLER: What is your educational background? What kind of training led you to, for example, the Interfaith Ministries?

MITCHELL: I have a high school education, some college. One of those people in the

fifties who quit college and got married and raised a family and became involved in community. So wherever I've lived, then I've jumped into something, and hunger was a big issue at the time, and it seemed logical. Also had to do with representing my church, my congregation, on that board and then Interfaith Ministries board and so forth.

CUTLER: And what church was this?

MITCHELL: Christian church, Disciples of Christ.

CUTLER: Okay, here in Houston.

MITCHELL: Here in Houston.

CUTLER: That was in the early seventies?

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: Was that when Houston was beginning to see hunger problems?

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: That a need was there?

MITCHELL: It was, it was. And the Hunger Coalition came about because there had been small groups that had recognized the problem and decided to join together to make a bigger presence. Presented themselves to Interfaith Ministries and said, "Can we be housed here?" And that led to some additional contacts with congregations, so our first project was to set up pantries all around town that were networked together and that were aware of each other, and all the benefits of that kind of thing.

CUTLER: And were you a volunteer from the beginning with Interfaith Ministries?

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: Okay, so all along, you were volunteering with your work.

MITCHELL: Yes, I volunteered up until the mid-eighties, I think.

CUTLER: What kind of commitment was that? What kind of hours did you put in?

MITCHELL: Oh, I've forgotten about that. Well, I suppose at the beginning it would have to have been something like once-a-month meetings, and then, as there became offshoots of the interest and of the groups, I became involved not only with the Hunger Coalition, which was a separate entity, but also drafted to the board of Houston Metropolitan Ministries, which is now Interfaith Ministries.

CUTLER: Right.

MITCHELL: But I still refer to it, I guess, pretty much as I knew it then. So I suppose it was meeting times a couple of days a week every week there was.

CUTLER: Okay. And when did you become involved on the board of Houston Metropolitan?

MITCHELL: Oh, dear. Seventy-seven, I think.

CUTLER: What was it like, being involved there? Was it mostly working on anti-hunger projects?

MITCHELL: No, no, no.

CUTLER: Or did you do other things?

MITCHELL: No, the board of HMM oversaw a wide variety of projects. Only the

Hunger Coalition concentrated on the hunger problem and reported back to the board about its progress.

CUTLER: Okay, so that was a separate entity—

MITCHELL: Very separate.

CUTLER: —within the organization.

MITCHELL: Very separate, yes. And in fact started out not as a part of the entity but associated with, sheltered by—the original agreement was that we had inexpensive housing for office space, and we could operate under their 501(c)(3) without having to go to the expense and the time of getting one separately. So it was an odd arrangement, and that evolved over time because people eventually didn't understand the odd arrangement. So we did in fact become a program of Interfaith Ministries, but it was very gradual. It was an evolving process.

CUTLER: Who did you work most closely with there? I think [Dr. Robert] "Bob" [Randall] mentioned Pam something

MITCHELL: Pam Duff, probably.

CUTLER: Duff, okay.

MITCHELL: Yes. I don't know whether—

CUTLER: Yes, he couldn't remember—

MITCHELL: There were a couple of Pams.

CUTLER: —her last name, but it was someone—

MITCHELL: With the Hunger Coalition?

CUTLER: I think in the mid-eighties that you were working with?

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: Okay.

MITCHELL: Yes, before her, Rhina [pronounced RYE-nuh] Rosenberg.

CUTLER: And these were also volunteers?

MITCHELL: No, they were paid staff. They were both paid to be directors of Interfaith Hunger Coalition. Started several things. It's an interesting evolution, to me, because we did begin as a group of volunteers, just knowing that this was a serious problem in Houston; it needs to be addressed. Hunger Coalition came about and got organized probably more quickly than a lot of other large cities, so we became a model for different places. Los Angeles had volunteers who came to see how we were working and putting together this network, and a couple of other cities in Texas. So the Hunger Coalition at that time began to have connections across the country to find out what was happening.

CUTLER: And those volunteers that were coming, were they involved with other, similar organizations?

MITCHELL: Yes, or wanting to set them up, right. Or wanting to know our experience and how it had worked, how you go about getting churches. There are churches that are too small to do this by themselves; how do you make coalitions for those churches?

CUTLER: Oh, okay.

MITCHELL: And that became my first job with the Hunger Coalition, was to set up coalitions within various neighborhoods in the city.

CUTLER: What's your first recollection of being exposed to community gardening?

MITCHELL: Well, also, this was a part of the evolving process. You get to a point where you say: Okay, the volunteers are putting out a whole lot of effort all across this city, and this is not the answer to the problem of hunger. We've got to do other things.

CUTLER: The answer was not food pantries? Is that what you mean?

MITCHELL: It's not the only answer. It's not a solution to a problem; it's an emergency, an immediate response. But when we started this thing, we thought: Okay, we're going to see this through, and in a year or two people will shut the pantries down and it will all evolve. Well, that's not going to happen, and we finally realized that: That's not going to happen. There is a permanent group of people who are hungry in this city, and we need to address that issue, so one of the obvious ways to do that is to grow food, and then all the other benefits that come along with that, having to do with fresh produce and having to do with more nutritious, and having to do with not relying on foods that are transported from long distances and all that that involves pollution-wise and consequence-wise. If something happens to that source, you have people who know how to maintain themselves. So that was our idea to begin with, that people would be encouraged to join together in groups to support one another, to help one another, to learn what grows here, because that's a specific bit of knowledge, too, and thereby be able to introduce another way to alleviate hunger in the community.

CUTLER: And so was this concept beginning in the early eighties?

MITCHELL: Yes, I think that's probably fair.

CUTLER: What kind of support did you have initially for the efforts? For example, how did you learn about proper ways to do this? Was there training for volunteers?

MITCHELL: Ah. Well, that's where we went to Arnold Brown. We looked to the county to be able to provide the information that a person would need to be able to do that, and tried to get things stirred up ourselves, and we're not terribly successful until Pam was director of the Hunger Coalition and it became possible to get some VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America] volunteers.

CUTLER: When was this, do you remember, that the VISTA volunteers came in?

MITCHELL: I could figure backwards. If you know when Bob said he came on board, it was about two years prior to that.

CUTLER: Like, '86 maybe? I guess that's when he—

MITCHELL: He might have started to volunteer then, because I think he jumped in as a volunteer with our first VISTA volunteer, or VISTA worker. So we assigned Jean Joslin to that project, and Jean had no clue about gardens. [Laughs.] You know, "Okay, here's the plan. You're going to figure out who knows about gardens and pull together as much as you can that's going to make this work," so that's when we became—come here, Bo. [Name of dog in room].

CUTLER: How did they go about finding out who does [sic; did] know about gardens at that time? Volunteers.

MITCHELL: That's a good question, and I don't think I have an answer to that. I know

certainly she went to Arnold Brown, and he was not new to the concept and had some good advice as to where we might start and what we might be doing. That was not in immediate conjunction with what he was doing. For instance, in the Third Ward garden, which was one of the earliest, that was a brand-new concept, brand-new thing. And so Arnold was—come here [to dog]. That won't go well on the tape.

CUTLER: It's okay.

MITCHELL: Arnold was helpful but was not directly involved in getting the right people and getting set up. One of the things that Interfaith Ministries had that other groups didn't was an entrée to local churches, so you could go to the local church group near where you thought there ought to be a garden and say, "Who do you know who's active in the community who might respond to this?" So you followed the clues. And that's pretty much what Jean was asked to do. How Bob heard about it, I don't know, but he was one of the earliest ones. And he worked with her and gave her a lot of good advice.

CUTLER: Did you have any interaction with government, the local or county government, or do you remember what their support was like?

MITCHELL: I can't think of any at all.

CUTLER: Did you ever work with Barbara Jordan or [George Thomas] "Mickey" Leland?

MITCHELL: Well, yes, I've got stories off tape about Mickey Leland.

CUTLER: Oh, really?

MITCHELL: Which are just amusing to me, but not with gardens. Mickey Leland was a big supporter of whatever was going on in Houston that attacked the hunger problem. He was very good about that. He would do what we asked him to call attention to, the issues.

Two of the other things that we did at the same time we developed community gardens was a Food for Seniors program, which is the only surviving piece of the Coalition now, and developed an advocacy program, because without calling attention to this problem, it's not ever going to be changed by public policy. It's kind of an invisible issue. So we set up, particularly when I was director, a Right to Food Week and did that every week, and had featured speakers, and we had workshops and we had press conferences and whatever we could do to draw attention to the issue in that week, and Mickey Leland was very helpful in that area.

CUTLER: But he was never actually involved in the gardening movement?

MITCHELL: No.

CUTLER: He was more with the anti-hunger?

MITCHELL: Yes, yes, the general emphasis, right.

CUTLER: Okay. Well, I guess we should move into talking about the organization of Urban Harvest.

MITCHELL: Yes. Sorry about that.

CUTLER: That's okay. So if you want to just start from the beginning of your involvement there, how you all came together to start thinking about building the

organization.

MITCHELL: I'll back up a little bit. With Interfaith Hunger, we got to the end of our VISTA contract and had no more VISTA volunteers. It was obvious that this was a program that really was needed. It had a lot of potential for growth (no pun intended, although one falls into that all the time in this area). So I don't remember, but my job—by that time, I was director of the coalition—was to find money, always to find money. So get out and hustle and try to find people who would be interested in supporting that, and then have the money to put somebody on the staff.

Bob Randall, bless him forever, came and said he would like to do that. And I said, "Do you know how little we pay?" And he said, "Yeah, Nancy and I have talked about it, and we understand nonprofits." Seventeen thousand a year, for a Ph.D. I just found that an incredible gift. Bob, as you know, is very knowledgeable.

CUTLER: Yes.

MITCHELL: And so the program, I thought, was off and running. Bob drew other very knowledgeable people to the program, by his own personality and experience and enthusiasm. And so it was growing well.

CUTLER: Where was the funding coming from initially?

MITCHELL: I'm trying to remember. I've done away with all those records, thinking I would never need those again for anything. Part of the funding that we received—the largest proportion was from the United Way. Other than that, we received gifts from individuals. I always had to run a fundraising campaign, usually at the end of the year,

and churches, sometimes other organizations that we heard about or their communities, so it came from a variety of places. But more often than not, I would be out speaking, trying to drum up the money, either church groups or clubs or a lot of times in most recent years, before I left, from individuals, people who were willing to buy into the thing.

CUTLER: And this was in the late eighties, leading up to the actual organization of Urban Harvest?

MITCHELL: Yes, it was. It was still up until—oh, goodness, I think Urban Harvest was what? Ninety-two?

CUTLER: Ninety-four.

MITCHELL: Ninety-four? Possibly, yes. Yes, so probably the late eighties, early nineties. Trying to keep the thing growing. Yes, it would have to have been—I had to represent Urban Harvest—no, Community Gardens at that time—at a United Nations Global Assembly of Women and the Environment—

CUTLER: Oh, wow.

MITCHELL: —in Miami. It was an incredible experience.

CUTLER: When was this?

MITCHELL: Ninety-one.

CUTLER: What went on?

MITCHELL: I got to be a presenter, and they had a variety of topics represented from

people truly around the globe. I kept tabs of that, and I met people from fifty-two different countries, and that certainly wasn't all that were there. And these women were doing incredible things, so we were in a rarefied atmosphere, I felt. But we got chosen because of impact on the environment of community gardens. So forget the nutritional value and forget the staving off starvation; there is a big environmental component to it, and that was recognized. So that was very…

CUTLER: Can you talk more about the environmental aspect? I mean, what was it that really stood out for that?

MITCHELL: There are several things. From the basic—if you have land under cultivation, you don't have it under cement. That's good.

CUTLER: Right.

MITCHELL: You get all the benefits of oxygen and so forth. If you have food that it grown locally, not only is it way more nutritious but you're not dependent on a far-off resource. If you have, as this country has developed, a system where almost 100 percent of our salad ingredients are grown in California, they've got to be shipped here. The shipping alone is an environmental problem. But if something hits one of those crops and it is wiped out, we are in bad shape.

CUTLER: Right.

MITCHELL: So it just makes good sense to grow things locally, where they grow better, stronger; you get to know what will do well in your own climate and eliminate all of the downside of that. So they saw that as a good idea.

CUTLER: At the time of this assembly, Urban Harvest didn't even have its name yet.

MITCHELL: No.

CUTLER: So how does—

MITCHELL: It was still Community Gardens.

CUTLER: Okay, and how did they find out about your program?

MITCHELL: Through Bob. Through Bob. We got some kind of a notification that they were looking for a variety of experiences, and I was going crazy trying to raise money at the time and shoved it aside, and he saw it as an opportunity, so he sent in an application. He put it in front of me one day and said, "Why don't you sign this?" And I said, "Okay, Bob, sure." And then, lo and behold, we're accepted as presenters. And I hadn't even really registered [laughs] that we were really applying. But we went as Community Gardens of Houston Metropolitan Ministries.

CUTLER: Did that help with exposure, sort of to have the rest of the country, in a way—

MITCHELL: Yes, I think we got more attention from the rest of the country than we got locally.

CUTLER: Really.

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: Did it create any sort of partnerships in other cities? Or what did it do? What kind of attention did it get?

MITCHELL: No, it created, I think, more of our being on a list as a possible resource,

and so any contacts that I had were from individuals who had either been there and heard it or heard about it through friends or acquaintances or write-ups somewhere. But sporadically placed, so that [sic; so] I can't claim any big movement came out of that, but it was really an interesting experience.

CUTLER: And were the other individuals from around the country—were they involved with similar ministries groups—

MITCHELL: No.

CUTLER: —or were they more environmental groups?

MITCHELL: Yes, yes, a whole lot more environmental. In fact, the woman [Wangari Maathai] who got the [Nobel] Peace Prize last year for planting trees in Kenya was one of the participants.

CUTLER: Oh, wow.

MITCHELL: And she was there to talk about the program that she had set up.

CUTLER: So did that seem to set Houston apart in terms of the organization aspect, that it was founded in the Houston Metropolitan Ministries—

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: —versus other places, maybe founded in conservation groups or environmental groups? Did you see that difference?

MITCHELL: Sure, that would be true, yes. They chose very few from the United States. They chose mostly from other countries.

CUTLER: I'm just curious—in terms of putting Houston's story in a national context, I'm curious if this is standard or if it's unique to Houston's story that it came out of church support—

MITCHELL: I think it's unique.

CUTLER: —and Interfaith Ministries.

MITCHELL: I think it's unique, and I think it has to do with the individuals who came along, who were involved with it along the way.

CUTLER: That's interesting. Okay. And then, as Urban Harvest began to organize and have a name, what kind of role did you take? Were you on the board of directors?

MITCHELL: Yes, I was on the first board. Yes, it became obvious that Interfaith Ministries was not going to be a good supporter of Community Gardens as it needed to be, and Urban Harvest needed to separate itself and become independent. Just as an example, back in the late seventies, they Hunger Coalition board, acting separately and as its own board at the time, established the Houston Food Bank, but spun it off so that it could be available to receive its own funding. It became too complicated to be a step down and a step down and a step down in this organization structure, so Urban Harvest needed the same thing. It needed the ability to be there, stand there on its own and say, "This is what we do. This is the only thing we do, and we need your help and support for this project."

CUTLER: So Interfaith Ministries just had too many other things going on?

MITCHELL: Yes, I think, and it was going in a different direction. It was not—you

know, all volunteer organizations—I suppose all organizations, period, change character as the people who are serving on their boards or committees change.

CUTLER: Right.

MITCHELL: And things evolve. So it had gotten to a point where hunger was not a major emphasis. I don't whether people got tired of it or didn't know—I don't know what, but it just wasn't. It became very obvious that Urban Harvest needed to be on its own and could not continue the name Community Gardens because that belonged under that roof; it had to be separate and distinctive, so that was a good choice, I think.

CUTLER: How much time did you put in? [Telephone rings.]

MITCHELL: It'll pick up. How much time did I put in?

CUTLER: Yes, volunteer time, from the beginning. Was it very involved in the beginnings of Urban Harvest or—

MITCHELL: Ah. No, I can't claim that. I can't claim that. I've always had a strong interest—I had a health problem, or something or other came along, and I dropped out for a couple of years, and have popped in from time to time, as Bob has called or somebody would say they needed some help somewhere. But, no, I haven't been deeply, heavily involved.

CUTLER: Were you more on the organizing side, or did you ever go into gardens and volunteer there?

MITCHELL: Organizing, organizing, yes, putting together boards and committees and stuff.

CUTLER: I'm also interested in the kind of role of women in all of this, and so I'm wondering what advantages and disadvantages there were being a woman in this community gardening effort over the years.

MITCHELL: You know, I don't think it made any difference.

CUTLER: Really.

MITCHELL: I really don't think so. Now, in some parts of the community, it is still true that men have the respect of the community by virtue of being male. And in some of the congregations it would be really necessary to get Brother So-and-so or someone else who has a title of respect to endorse and be a part of it. And we had several who were outstandingly involved, but we had many, many women who jumped right in and just really knew what they were doing.

CUTLER: Do you think there were more women involved than men?

MITCHELL: Hmm. Early on, I don't think so. Early on, I think probably 50/50. But a lot of the men who came earliest were usually retired people, often older people who had had an experience in a rural background and really missed being in the soil and really knew something about it and could see a value to it. But the women often were the ones who were in there doing the work day after day after day and really could become very enthusiastic gardeners.

CUTLER: What would you say you personally learned over the years from your involvement in community gardening [sic; Community Gardens] and then Urban Harvest? And were there any sort of momentous events that stand out for you? I mean,

Bob had mentioned a few things that seemed like small things but that end up being a real inspiration and kind of a thing that makes you keep going, working on this particular community effort.

MITCHELL: Certainly the global assembly was a big highlight of my entire life. It was just incredible. I think I have learned to be more aware of the environmental consequences of anything that we do. Through food as an example, [I have] become a real convert to natural foods, to being very aware of what goes into a variety of things that we consume, and their effect on all of us.

I think some of the most exciting things were to go into some of the poorest parts of this city and see people really get enthused about the project, and putting so much effort [into it] and really worked terribly, terribly hard at it, and take a great deal of pride in it, so then as an organization we could go, "Oh, yay!"

CUTLER: Yes, it's rewarding.

MITCHELL: "This is so good. This is so good."

CUTLER: Did you have any—maybe even before you came to Houston or when you came to Houston, were you involved in anything like [the] environmental movement or—you know, when all of that was going on in the sixties and seventies?

MITCHELL: Only a deep interest but no practical experience. I was involved in gardening when I was a kid, like all these other old geezers. [Laughter.] Because at the time I was growing up, it was a necessity, so you grew a lot of food that you needed and learned how to preserve it or keep it over for many months in cold cellars or whatever it

took, because as I say, as I think I said, I came from the Northeast, so it's a different climate, so a different kind of garden.

CUTLER: So your family had a garden at home?

MITCHELL: A family plot. And a garden.

CUTLER: When were you born?

MITCHELL: Nineteen thirty-two.

CUTLER: So were you at all involved with victory gardens?

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: Do you see any kind of comparison between that and—

MITCHELL: I do, yes. I do. And I do think that that's what drew a lot of the people originally to the program, because they *were* of an age where they could remember that and how effective they were, and the fact that you really did good-quality food that way.

CUTLER: So you were doing some of that when you were young, younger, in the Northeast.

MITCHELL: Yes.

CUTLER: That was what your family was doing?

MITCHELL: Yes. Well, it was nighttimes and weekends, but yes, it was something that was necessary for the family, right.

CUTLER: Okay. That's interesting.

Well, I don't really have any other specific questions, but if there's anything you

think I've left out or that you wanted to add.

MITCHELL: I think one of the most fortunate things for Urban Harvest and Community Gardens before that, ever, was Bob Randall's coming into the program because we had tried in the Hunger Coalition two or three other times to make a start at it and had never gone, never really took off until he made that commitment to it and brought all that energy and all that information to it. He's so committed to it.

CUTLER: Right. But you really needed that leading individual.

MITCHELL: Absolutely, absolutely. I think Arnold Brown would say the same thing, because we had been in contact with Arnold in these two or three different false starts, but he was spread really thin, and he was not able to come and just be our guru. And so it just never would have taken off if Bob hadn't come along, I think.

CUTLER: Yes, that makes sense.

Okay, well, is there anyone else you would recommend that I speak with here—

MITCHELL: Hmm.

CUTLER: —that might add more to the project?

MITCHELL: Barbara McCormick followed me as director of the Hunger Coalition, and she was my associate director for some time, so she worked with Bob. She would have information of a couple of years that I did not, after I left.

I don't know. Pam Duff is in town. I'm not at all sure—I don't know. If you need information about what went on before we really got it going, she would be a resource. But beyond that, Duncan Cormie worked with Bob. Did he give you his

name?

CUTLER: No, I don't think so.

MITCHELL: He was a VISTA volunteer. Jean Joslin—mmm, yes, there were three… Jean Joslin worked as a volunteer. And those VISTAs—I give them a great deal of credit. That was at a time when the Houston economy had really taken a downturn, and so—

CUTLER: In the early eighties?

MITCHELL: Yes. Jean came to us, a single mother with two children, and took a job for $6,000 a year.

CUTLER: Wow.

MITCHELL: As did Jerry Pate in Food for Seniors, because they couldn't find another job in the kind of work that they wanted to do. They wanted to do something to benefit the community, so that's what they did, and I find that pretty amazing.

CUTLER: Did the downtown of the economy give momentum to this movement?

MITCHELL: I think so, yes. I think so. At that time—I knew these numbers at one time so that they would fall trippingly from the tongue. Houston's unemployment rate at that time was very close to 10 percent, and in the black community, always almost double. So as I went around trying to raise money and raise consciousness and so forth, one of the things that I always would try to tell people was the seriousness of this, for people who do not have work, who do have children, who have to find a way to feed their families.

If a family was on food stamps, then they could expect to receive enough in

stamps to provide food for three weeks, but the program was set up to provide only three weeks out of a month, rather than a full month's worth, and the pantries were originally set up to fill in that last week in the month for people. I'm not entirely sure what the reasoning there was, but I think it was that designers of the program felt that if they gave people an amount of food for a full month that they would lose their incentive to do anything for themselves. Well, you know, in my experience, that was not true. And in this state, you had to be really, really destitute before you qualified for food stamps.

So yes, the program was well received in large parts of the community, where poverty was really deeply entrenched and people would say, "Yeah, that sounds good. All right! Let's go after that!"

CUTLER: Part of this story is one of interracial cooperation. How were you accepted when you would go into low-income neighborhoods or black communities?

MITCHELL: Exceedingly well. It always surprised me. That was one of the benefits of the job I had, was that I developed some friendships with people that I never would ordinarily have come across, and be invited to weddings or family parties or just amazing stuff. But always, always well, easily received.

CUTLER: That's great.

MITCHELL: Yes, it was a great pleasure.

CUTLER: Anything else?

MITCHELL: I don't think—you know, you're making me remember a lot of amusing stories, but not particularly community garden oriented, related.

Several organizations came up with the same idea about the same time.

CUTLER: Oh, really?

MITCHELL: Yes. One that goes on now is End Hunger Network, and they started out doing the red barrels and picking up food from restaurants and starting a community garden program. I think it didn't go because it was starting from the top down. They started with well-connected people in society who might have land somewhere that they would like to make available to a community, but you didn't have the community! And so eventually they came to the office and said, "Well, look, we've got a site here and there and somewhere else. If you would like to use it and develop it, then we're going to back out of this."

The Y's had started a couple of gardens in a couple of places, but I think what that lacked was the personality of Bob Randall, somebody who was so focused on one thing and knew it well and could help it to be successful.

Gardens at Schools had popped up every once in a while in a variety of places, I'm sure all over the country. I mean, it's obvious that it would be great if kids knew where food came from and how it got there. But it took more the organization of Urban Harvest to really make that sink in and worthwhile.

CUTLER: Do you remember partnering with any of the other environmental groups in the city, such as the Park People or similar?

MITCHELL: Ah. Well, Park People came on at the time when we knew that Urban Harvest had to be established and on its own, and that of course would have been Terry Hershey's influence to get it in under [the] Park People umbrella so that it had shelter,

had an office, had connections had a ways to get going, yes.

CUTLER: So before Urban Harvest had an independent office, they were under Park People.

MITCHELL: Right, yes, yes. Almost the same kind of arrangement that Hunger Coalition had had with HMM; that is, a place to be. You need an office space; you need copy machines and telephones and stuff like that. You need the 501(c)(3) if you're going to raise money, all that sort of thing, and so it fostered the growth of Urban Harvest, I think.

CUTLER: Okay.

MITCHELL: And a good connection.

CUTLER: Sure. All right. Well, thanks.

MITCHELL: Okay.

[End of interview.]