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Selvin Chambers, oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, September 4, 2019, "Sweet Souls, Voices from the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge" oral history project; Cambridge Historical Society.



Sweet Souls, Voices from the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge

Oral History Project

Interview with Selvin Chambers, September 4, 2019

This interview is part of “Sweet Souls, Voices from the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge,” an oral history project of the Cambridge Historical Society, in partnership with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House and The Loop Lab. This project was funded in part by Mass Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Interviewee: Selvin Chambers

Interviewer: Katie Burke

Interview Date: September 4, 2019

Interview Location: BUILD Greater Boston, 745 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts

Length of Interview: 63 minutes

Transcription: by Katie Burke, November 11, 2020, 12,323 words

Note: The Loop Lab audio engineer Jeff Solomon recorded this interview. Jeff asked Selvin some questions and offered some reflections toward the end of the interview.

Selvin Chambers grew up in the Port and his family attended programs and community meetings at the Margaret Fuller House throughout his youth. He attended Black Panther Party/National Committee to Combat Fascism youth breakfast program at the House. He has spent his career in the non-profit field, with a focus on human services, youth leadership, and community advancement. Selvin was the interim Executive Director at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House immediately prior to this interview, and he currently serves on its board.



Start of Interview

Katie Burke [00:00:00] My name is Katie Burke. I'm here with Selvin Chambers and our audio engineer Jeff Solomon at Selvin's office in Boston, Massachusetts. It is Wednesday, September 4th, 2019. This interview is part of the Sweet Souls Oral History Project to explore Margaret Fuller House's role in the Port in Cambridge. The project is in partnership with the Cambridge Historical Society. Selvin, do you agree to have this interview recorded?

Selvin Chambers [00:00:24] Sure. Not a problem.

KB [00:00:26] Can you tell me your date of birth?

SC [00:00:28] January 7th, 1963. I'm old.

KB [00:00:33] [laughs] Where do you live now?

SC [00:00:35] I live in Cambridge, on Putnam Ave. 137 Putnam Ave.

KB [00:00:39] Where did you go to school?

SC [00:00:41] I went to the Roberts School, which is now called the Fletcher Maynard Academy. I also went to the Cambridge Alternative Public School as well, and for high school I went to the Pilot School and graduated from St. Mary's High School, so I was at the Pilot School for three years, which is part of Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School.

KB [00:01:00] And where did you go to college?

SC [00:01:01] I went to Fitchburg State University for undergrad and then Boston University for graduate school.

KB [00:01:07] What did you study there?



SC [00:01:09] At Fitchburg I studied sociology and at BU urban planning and design.

KB [00:01:16] So what did you do after you graduated?

SC [00:01:18] So after I graduated, I actually worked for Fitchburg State University as an academic advisor for a number of years there. It was in a program where I was, kind of, supported and had some mentorship and so out of college I wanted to be able to give back in that same way and then got a job actually working in the program that I graduated from, at the same university, so.

KB [00:01:46] Cool. Can you tell me about some other jobs that you've had?

SC [00:01:49] Yes, I had some, but I've been lucky enough. Actually, a guy growing up in the Port, growing up on Pine Street and also growing up and spending 22 years of my life in Washington Elms, I've had some pretty cool jobs for, as they say, a kid from the projects. And after college, I went to an organization called City Year and I worked there off and on for about six years, and I was responsible for program development and really enjoyed that particular job while I was at City Year, and then I also had an opportunity to work for the U.S. Olympics in '96. That was probably the job that I had the most fun at because I got to kind of dabble with athletes and was mesmerized by the nostalgia of working at the Olympics. That wore off really quickly after it was over. Then I also worked for an organization called Hands on Atlanta in Atlanta, which is similar to City Year, and then went back to City Year after leaving City Year for a while to become the Deputy Director of City Year Chicago. And from there, I was coerced -- not really -- to come back to Cambridge. My mom was sick and so I decided to find a job closer to home, and so I became a division head for Cambridge Youth Programs in the city for the city's department of Human Services. And then from there, I went on to be the Division Head for, excuse me, the Department Head for Boston Center for Youth and Families. I was a Director of Youth Development and Family Services, and then my first job as an Executive Director was at the Elizabeth Peabody House, which is a historic settlement house over in Somerville, Mass. And then from there, I became the Executive Director of the Food Project for about four years, and then went on to work for a short period of time for the Trustees of Reservations and then was the COO of United South End Settlements House for interim basis,



and then moved on to an organization called Root in Salem, where I was the founding Executive Director, which is focusing on developing young people between the ages of 16 and 24 to help hone their workforce employment skills, their educational skills, hard and soft skills, and we use the hospitality industry as the playing field for that, so they were trained in all aspects of engagement with the workforce. So, they learned both the front and the back house of the industry, resumé writing, and they were also assigned a mentor through that program. And then I became the interim Executive Director at the Margaret Fuller House, so I left Root because I had a nephew that was there for me that had cancer and so I had to leave to go help support him, and then was asked to become the interim Executive Director at the Margaret Fuller House, which I thought was going to be a very short stint of about four months and ended up being sixteen months and then looking at how -- the track we were on, I found another opportunity that was presented to me, to now, where I sit as a Regional Executive Director for Build Boston, which is a entrepreneurship and youth development program that works with high school kids to hone their workforce employment skills, but also train them to run their own businesses and they get high school credit for it. So, I'm here as a Regional Executive Director for Boston. We have an office also in New York City, also in Washington, D.C., and also in the San Francisco Bay Area.

KB [00:05:31] What do you think about your past made you kind of go into the nonprofit social services world?

SC [00:05:37] Well, when I think about it, it was, you know, if my mom was alive -- rest her soul -- she would say it's because of her and now I reflect on it, it probably is because she was an activist in the community. Growing up in a household of eight, she was often kind of helping other people navigate the social system. We were also a place where I could come home and find someone that I had never met before sitting in our living room, talking to my mother, and getting a meal. We had several people who grew up in my community who actually lived in our house because my mother took them in for a little while. So she was that type of person that would always engage and support people, so I think the seed was planted there. We -- I've had a lot of mentors growing up, living in the Port. So Tony Bizzell, who now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, was a mentor of mine, Donnie Harding was a mentor of mine, so I had a lot of mentors in the community, you know, who kind of looked out for me. Dr. Raymond Dancy, who was



the Principal of the Roberts School -- now, the Fletcher Maynard Academy -- was a mentor of mine. So, you know, I was raised in a household where my mother was fair but firm. But when you become a teenager, right, you get a little bit more free reign to kind of get off the beaten path. The great thing about growing up in the Port at the time is that there was always someone who knew your family, and so no matter where I moved in the neighborhood, that someone said, "Ah, Selvin, I see you. I'm going to tell your mother." So, I ended up hanging, most of my childhood, I hung down the Coast because the Coast was a safer environment to be in, from a personal standpoint, I'm not meaning to be snitched on, so to speak, if you did something off the beaten path. But I really wouldn't trade anything about growing up in the Port for anything, and I lived in many different parts of the country, you know, I lived in Chicago and San Antonio and Charlotte, North Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Columbus, Ohio, so I lived in probably seven different cities and states across the country, and I wouldn't trade living in Cambridge for anything because it's a -- you know, for this size, it has the greatest amount of social services I've seen per capita in any city that I've lived in. But the Port growing up was a really close-knit community, so I take much pride when people say, "Hey, you're from Cambridge," and I'm proud to be from Cambridge, but I say, "I'm also from the Port."

KB [00:08:03] Can you talk a little bit more about what the Port was like when you're growing up? Like, what were some places that were important? Like what did it look like? How is it different?

SC [00:08:13] So the Port growing up, there were several different pockets of places where you could go to be safe and have fun and some guidance, and so one of those was the Cambridge Neighborhood House, which is no longer there. It actually sits on the side of the tennis court and the body of land where Greene Rose Park is, that was the Neighborhood House. It was a settlement house. They had lots of social services. They had a drill team. They had a boxing club. I remember Juan Sanchez -- a good friend of mine that I grew up with -- Sanchez's father taught boxing, so there was another level of mentorship and guidance you got. It was Frannie Greene who ran a drill team, so I was in a drill team and -- most people call them marching bands. We didn't have a band. We had the best drum corps in the world though, so there was that component. Then there was also Cambridge Community Schools, and so the Roberts School had a community school program after school, where you can go for piano lessons, there



was basketball, there was arts, they even had woodworking at one time. Then there was also in Newtowne Court, the housing development next to Washington Elms, with Newtowne Court, what people don't know, it's the oldest housing development in the country. It was built in 1938. There was a gym in Newtowne Court, so we could go there and hang out. And then one of the meeting places where *lots* of people went to was the Margaret Fuller House, and that was what I would call our living room outside of your own house. It was kind of the neighborhood living room, because in the Margaret Fuller House, you had -- I remember having a teen center and I couldn't wait until I was old enough. Their teen center opened up in the basement in 1976. They no longer have a teen center. They used to have a radio station. I remember my older brother, Bobby, was on the radio station at the Margaret Fuller House for a number of years and it kind of only broadcasted, like, maybe for four blocks, you know, and so people would run to Washington Elms and Newtowne Court and turn the radios on. You could hear some of your friends or a little older, because my brother was older, much older than me, so you had to be older than sixteen to be on the radio station. So, he'd go home and listen to people play records and kind of talk on the radio, so we thought that was kind of cool. One of my fondest memories about the Margaret Fuller House, it was always a gathering point whenever there were social issues in the community, they were always a focal point where they were galvanizing people in the community to come together, so we had meetings that took place in the Margaret Fuller House. You had meetings that the Margaret Fuller House would facilitate in the community. They hosted a number of block parties and events. I remember a guy by the name of Arnold Dobson was in a band and I remember -- I might have been maybe eleven and watching Arnold and his band on top of the roof in the backyard of the Margaret Fuller House with a packed parking lot of young people listening to his band play. So there were a lot of fond memories, but the thing that I remember most about the Margaret Fuller House is probably -- when I was probably twelve, so this is -- I'm dating, we're talking about in the early 70's, that there used to be a breakfast program that was facilitated by the Black Panthers, and at the time in the 70's and the late 60's and the early 60's, when you would hear things about the Black Panthers, they were calling them communist and I was young, so I didn't know what a communist was and then I went home and would ask my mother questions about, you know, what a communist was and then I said, "Well, the Black Panthers, are they communist?" and she said, "You listen to too much propaganda," and at twelve, I didn't know what the heck propaganda meant and so she was breaking it down to me. She says, "When you hear one side of a story and people tell you



the message about someone without you getting your own facts," and she said, "you'll figure this all out." And so that's when we were enrolled in the Black Panther Breakfast and we went Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, went about seven o'clock in the morning, so before school. You had to bring your report card, or a grade report and you had to focus on one or two grades that you were struggling in. So even if you came and you had really good grades, but you were struggling with a B or a C, you still had to come and focus on that subject area. So, you'd come in, you would have maybe ten, fifteen minutes of socialization. Then you had fifteen minutes to eat your breakfast, and then you had, like, another 45 minutes before you went to school, so school started at 8:30, so we'd leave there by about quarter past eight to walk up the street to the Roberts School. And then that's when I realized that, you know, they were selling nothing but propaganda about the Black Panthers, because here I was getting some food, you know, so we had bacon, eggs, all this stuff we probably shouldn't eat, but we went to school with full bellies and also had someone outside of your school helping you with the subject that you might have been deficient in. And so for me, those are my fondest memories of what was going on in the community, but the Black Panther breakfast was one that I'll always remember because the stories that were told about them in a negative light and then seeing the impact that they had on me when I was a young child.

KB [00:13:32] What do you remember about the people who were leading the breakfast program?

SC [00:13:39] I think they were -- it's interesting. They were very friendly. They were well focused, and it's funny because they always stood by the door, so they always had people at the door. No, they didn't have any weapons. That's only drama -- that's only dramatized from the movies, but they made sure that we were safe. They also did some fun -- even in the fifteen minutes we were engaging they always did a fun activity, made us laugh, you know, and they always had this way of checking in to kind of see what you were bringing to the table that day. If you were happy, they'd say, "Oh good, you're having a good day already," and if you were sad, they'd try to hone in and figure out why you were sad, and I think the premises behind that is to really check in on how are we going to school in the morning, so if you don't have a full belly, right, you can't focus on the subject matter, but if you're upset because you got in trouble, or you're seeing something happen in your house that wasn't too kosher, then they would try to



help navigate that for you. So, they were very attentive to the emotional development of us as well as the educational development.

KB [00:14:36] Was your mom happy with what you were getting from the program too?

SC [00:14:40] Yeah, well, yes, in many ways, because, you know, when you have eight children and you also have to feed eight people, you know, the reality is -- and sometimes it was a bowl of cereal for the day, right? But imagine being able to have -- so what we called it, at the time, was that my mom would only cook like that on Sunday, so we got Sunday breakfast four days a week. Three times from the Black Panthers and once from my mother on Sunday, so she was kind of making ends meet and helping us fortify our educational track as well. So, it was a twofer.

KB [00:15:17] Can you talk a little more about your household? So, you had eight siblings and then your mom? Like, what was your mom like and what did she do for work?

SC [00:15:26] She was a -- well, she ruled with the iron fist. She was a disciplinarian, and she's also an educator. So, she always made sure that we understood right from wrong, but also made sure that if we were watching something on TV, she would ask questions about it to make sure you understood what you were watching, and she also monitored what we could watch. And for some time, she was a teacher's aide in the schools that we were at. And I think one of my fondest memories, and I had no clue that my mom did not finish her high school education, until one night, I was -- I think my aunts told me, I was in high school, and they told me to go watch Channel 5 News. And I'm like, "Oh, I don't want to watch the news," and my mother also had a habit of sometimes making us watch the news, but my mother wasn't home this night. "We don't watch the news," and there was an adult education program and my mother walked across the stage and got her high school diploma. And it was interesting, I had asked her, "Well, how come you never told us you didn't have your --," because she would preach getting your education. She said, "If I told you I did not have my high school diploma, how would you follow me?" Which I thought was brilliant, but I was really proud of the fact that, you know, she got her high school diploma as an adult while raising a family and pushing the fact that we should always think about educating ourselves further. Because at first, I was like, "You



should've told us that," but she said, "Would you have followed?" And I'm like, "Hm, she had a point there."

KB [00:17:01] What were your siblings like?

SC [00:17:05] I grew up in a fun household. So, it's, you know, I had brothers and sisters older than me, and I had brothers and sisters younger than me, and so I felt that I had a household that you could get some guidance from a sibling or some protection from a sibling or you can get picked on from a sibling. And I also made sure that had a rippling effect that some days that I was picking on my sisters or my younger brother, but also was able to kind of help guide them as well. I grew up in high school playing basketball and my younger brother always was traveling with me to the games on the bus. He was actually even, my senior year he was our manager on the basketball team, and he was all of, like, eleven or twelve. We were a family that we didn't have a lot of resources, but my mother was very resourceful. We would go on these -- during the summer, there were these Sunday trips and a woman by the name of Wilhelmina Gosmon used to rent a bus out and you could come on the bus as a family -- I think even a family of six, you'd pay, like, 20 bucks -- and they would pick you up at Washington Elms and you would travel to Lake Cochituate or Hopkinton State Park. Somewhere that wasn't the norm for us. And we'd go there and every Sunday for about eight weeks during the summer, and so there were opportunities to kind of get us outside of our -- the city limits. Wilhelmina Gosmon also hosted Friday night skate nights at a place that no longer exists, which was over in Medford somewhere which was called the Bal-A-Roue, and every Friday night during the winter months, we'd kind of get on that bus to go to the Bal-A-Roue, and it was kind of like *the event*. You know, so the Sunday trips were the events in the community. People looked forward to that, and so didn't we look forward to the Friday night skate nights, you know, so the skate nights -- most of the parents didn't go, so occasionally there'd be a chaperone -- so it was a night for the teenagers to kind of let loose a little bit without your parents. So, the Sunday trips, the parents were always there, and so we'd kind of look forward to the skate nights a little bit more because we had a little bit more freedom. But one of the things that my mother used as bait was the Sunday trips and also the skating nights to the point where she would kind of think -- let you think that you got away with something. So, if you did something on a Wednesday and she'd kind of scold you a little bit and you're like, "Wow, I got away with that." Then it was time



to go to the skate night, she says, "Oh, you're not getting on the bus tonight," but would take you to the bus and watch you look at your friends basking in the joy of getting on the bus and you're missing out. It was interesting.

KB [00:19:47] That's harsh.

SC [00:19:47] It was it was harsh. I was like, "You could have punished me in some other way," and then when your friends came back from that skating night, she would walk back to pick up my siblings who went on the trip and hearing everyone else explain, "Hey, we had fun tonight," and she would say, "See what you missed?" And she would do the same thing on the Sunday trip, and if that was the case then I'd stay home with my stepdad, and I bet that I missed one skating trip in probably the eight years I went and then probably in the eight years we were going to the Sunday trips I probably missed one of those too. I didn't miss too often, but there were a lot of activities that were going on in the Port that allowed you to kind of feel a sense of unity, and when I reflect on even the Margaret Fuller House, that was the, as I said, it was the neighborhood's living room. That was always one of the focal points. I know the drill team that I talked about; they were actually housed out of there at one point. Mr. Sanchez' boxing club was housed out of there. The radio station was out of there, the teen center, so they had a lot of activities that were going on at the Margaret Fuller House. And I recall going to meetings with my mother to the Margaret Fuller House, and I just thought it was regular meetings. I was bored. I was a kid, like, "Oh, why are we here?" And then I found a document from 1973. So, I found this document about five years ago. The Executive Director at the time, Barbara Kibler, at the Margaret Fuller House, showed me this document. It had my mother's name on it, and she was on the Board of Directors at the Margaret Fuller House. So, I keep following in her shadow somehow [laughter].

KB [00:21:16] She never told you that?

SC [00:21:18] Never -- we just thought it was a meeting, so she never told us. And my mother was a brave and powerful woman and sometimes she would brag about some stuff. But that's not -- the community stuff she did, she would never brag about that. And, you know, if she was alive, she would've said, "See, you did that because of me," but it was pretty exciting to see that



there was a living document with her name on it, that said she was on the Board of Directors at the Margaret Fuller House. So, she wasn't just going to meetings. She was sitting in the board meetings.

KB [00:21:48] You're mentioning that Margaret Fuller House was kind of a meeting place about different issues that were going on in the neighborhood. Do you know, like, what kind of things were going on in the 1970's?

SC [00:21:58] Oh, heck yeah. So, if you look at it, one I -- it's funny, I was talking to someone about this today, that in the 70's, that's when they were having busing issues in Boston and, you know, the folks from Cambridge, we always want to be a little bit better and ahead of what's going on on the other side of the river in Boston. So, I recall during the busing crisis in Boston, we made national news and you saw people throwing rocks at busses with people of color on it, and I remember watching it and I know at the time they were thinking about, you know, integrating the schools in a very different way. Because schools were integrated but, you know, in Cambridge, you had pockets of schools that were like the Roberts School, it was predominantly kids of color, and they wanted to break that cycle, but they didn't want to follow the path of Boston. So, I said to my mother one day -- I think I might have been ten -- and I'm like, "Wow, is that going to happen here?" She says, "That's never going to happen in Cambridge." And what happened at the time -- it was good at the time. Now, I'd look a little different about that now -- but at the time, it was really good the way they integrated schools, that they had what was called voluntary busing, and you got to pick three schools that you would want to go to. And the whole premise behind it was to diversify the schools and make sure that all the poor kids didn't go to one school or kids of color into another school. And so, for the time, it was really good, but it alleviated the problem that was going on on the other side of the river. So, that was one of the things that I remember about in the 70's. I do remember that also there were meetings at the Margaret Fuller House about the Vietnam War. And I remember there was a big protest at M.I.T. and my brother and cousin and a few of my friends -- my brother, Sean, and my cousin, Jay, and a few of our friends went to the YWCA. At the time, it was a women's Y, but we could have coed swimming there and their pool was better than the YMCA's. And my mother said, "After swimming, come right home. Don't go anywhere. You're not supposed to be there. There's a protest going on tonight at M.I.T. Don't go there." Duh,



why'd she say that? Yes, well, we went [laughs]. So this eleven year old walked up the street down towards Main Street, and then cut over to Mass Ave, and then we -- it was the first time that I'd seen police in riot gear and there were a bunch of college students and, at the time, hippies were on one side of the tracks and we were on the other side of the street and watching these -- the mass of bodies come together and then tear gas being thrown, and I remember a guy had grabbed us and said, "What are you guys doing here?" and he said, "Get out of here." We sat -- hid by a tree and watched a little bit and then ran up the street towards Washington Elms like the rest of the crowd, because the crowd started dispersing when the police were throwing teargas, but it was the first time I'd ever seen a protest up front and center that I would see on national television. I was like -- it was pretty scary, too, as an eleven-year-old to see that. So those are some of the things that had transpired during a young age growing up in the Port and also being connected to the work of the Margaret Fuller House.

KB [00:25:18] What other programs did you attend that Margaret Fuller House besides the breakfast program?

SC [00:25:23] So for me, that was probably one of the only ones and the teen center.

KB [00:25:27] Okay.

SC [00:25:27] And the teen center. *And* the drill team, so the drill team practiced out of there. So, I went there for the drill team. I went there for the boxing club, and then the teen center. The teen center only stayed open -- I think it was two years because then you had all these other teen centers that the city was running, so it didn't make sense to compete with them, and then most of us went to those as well. And then there -- when the gym opened up in Newtowne Court, you know, Margaret Fuller didn't have a gym, so we were like, "Okay, we're not going over there anymore." And so that, and then they also did family field trips as well, and so, there were so many activities going on in the community at the time that you could kind of pick and choose pockets of where you were going to be. And most of that was dictated by my mom so, you know, she would only send us to places where she felt safe and felt that she had a connection to someone working there.



KB [00:26:17] What was the teen center like?

SC [00:26:20] We had a pool -- I remember it had actually two bumper pool tables, had a pool table, had a ping pong table, had some, you know, lounge furniture there. I recall when it had a TV, we were excited, but it didn't really work that well because it was in the basement and this was way before cable, but I think we could only get two channels then, and there were actually, at the time, maybe four or five channels but the antenna would only pick up two. But we felt like we had a cool place to go hang out.

KB [00:26:49] Can you think of anyone that worked at Margaret Fuller House or that was around there that had an impact on you?

SC [00:26:57] Yeah, well, I'd say Frannie Greene, who ran the drill team. She worked there at one point and again -- so she was like a gatekeeper in the community, so you were connected to Frannie Greene in many ways, through the Margaret Fuller House, it was through the drill team, and she knew your parents and, you know, she helped host community block parties as well. And so Frannie Greene was probably very instrumental in helping to guide lots of us as we grew up there. Frannie Greene, Wilhelmina Gosmon, I remember Theresa Wigfall. We used to call her "The Candy Lady." She lived in the front side of Washington Elms along with Wilhelmina Gosmon. So, there were *lots* of people who were kind of watching out for you. You had Florence West who lived on the other side of the housing development, you know, so there was Mrs. Murro, -- you had *lots* of people -- Juanita Anderson. There were tons of people who kind of had their eyes out for you. So, growing up, we used to have a saying that, "Your mom's my mom," because if you did something wrong, you know, your mother would get you, but two other mothers would get you before your mother got you, and by the time you got home, you were getting it again, and then if you had aunts and uncles, they were getting you. So, it was a very close-knit community. Most of us in the community were poor, you know, not a lot of us came from means. I think now with the growth of Cambridge and the income levels it's interesting. So, a family of four living in Cambridge would have to gross at least about \$106,000 to live in just the Port, excuse me, in Cambridge in general. And the average income in the Port is about \$34,000, and so you're talking about a population of about 7,500 people who live in the Port and the average income is \$34,000 per household. It costs an average for a family of four



about \$104,000 to kind of live, and so how some people are still doing it, I'm star struck, and awe struck and come to think of it, most of the friends that I know that are living in a house that they own in Cambridge are living in houses that they were either raised in or was passed down to their family.

KB [00:29:21] How did you stay connected to Cambridge and the Port after you went off to college and we're getting different jobs in other places?

SC [00:29:28] Well, my mom still lived there, so for me, it was his home. So, you know, when I would come from college break and during the basketball season, if I got to come home, I would always, you know, the Port was home. So there, and I would always go to the Coast where, because in my teenage years, that's -- I hung out on the Coast because that's where a lot of my other friends were. When I moved to different parts of the country, when I would come home, my mom was in the Port, so I -- my mom lived in Newtowne, I mean, in Washington Elms up until, I think, 1993, and then she moved to another section of the Port. I was actually born in the Port, so I was born on Suffolk Street, and then I was -- we moved to Pine Street and then 22 years in Washington Elms. So, it's always going to be home. So, you know, up until recently, I was spending six days a week in Cambridge, in the Port, so it's always going to be that place, at every point. So, there's a few of us that -- Russell Harding, who is the Community Outreach Coordinator at the Margaret Fuller House, would host this -- he came up with an idea a number of years ago. We were having a conversation about the Fourth of July, and what do some of the young people do on the Fourth of July and we were reminiscing that growing up, you know, some of our parents didn't have cars, but we always found a way to get out of the community on the Fourth of July. I personally don't recall ever spending one Fourth of July in Washington Elms. I lived there for 22 years, didn't spend one Fourth of July there. And so, as we're thinking about this, you know, and how close the community was and Russell said, "Look, some of these kids don't get out of here at all." And so, we've hosted, because of Russell's leadership, a Fourth of July event where we had free food, music, bouncy rides and t-shirts and all kinds of fun stuff on the Fourth of July so people could feel that there was an opportunity for them to have fun.

KB [00:31:27] This is at Washington Elms?



SC [00:31:28] This is at Washington Elms. So, the first two years we did in Washington Elms, and then as they were doing construction there, we'd outgrown the space and we couldn't use it, so for the past few years, it was in Greene Rose Park. So, Russell had set a tradition of hosting Fourth of July events in that neighborhood, and it kind of is reminiscent of what used to happen in the Port, as we call it, back in the day, you know, and what was going on, and so a lot of our reminiscing was about the Cambridge Neighborhood House, the Roberts School, Community Schools and the Margaret Fuller House, Newtowne Court, where all these things, and not to -- I would be remiss not to also mention that in the midst of this, you also had the Community Arts Center, which was an organization that was supporting and developing young people and using arts as a vehicle. Then there's also another program which is called Tutoring Plus, which I was actually a part of in the 70's. I got my first mentor and tutor, a.k.a. Big Brother, Big Brother Bill was my first tutor, and then I had another tutor, John Westwater, who was a mentor to my brother and I because of the Tutoring Plus. So, there were lots of pockets of places and organizations that were helping to support the people in the Port, and so the Margaret Fuller was one of the anchor organizations, but there were all these other organizations that were working in partnership to kind of help support and care for the community.

KB [00:32:59] Were you part of all of these different activities and things because of your mom or was it kind of just what everyone did there?

SC [00:33:05] I think it was a mix of both. Some of it was your mom's encouragement, and sometimes you'd hear about a fun opportunity from your friends, and I went home to my mother and would say, "Hey, I heard about this, and I heard about that. Can we do it?" She'd investigate, and if she thought it was worthwhile, we could engage in it. She sometimes would look and see who else was in the program, so if she thought someone I can get in trouble with, she'd be like, "No, you're not going there." But so, it was a both/and situation.

KB [00:33:32] It was interesting when we met with the Loop Lab for the first time that the younger people already knew where you were [laughs], and I was just kind of curious about that. Like, how do you maintain a relationship with the younger people? Is it through doing these kinds of programs like the Fourth of July thing, or what do you think?



SC [00:33:48] It's a mix of both, and mostly, I think as Jeff [Solomon, audio engineer] knows, I'm an engager. I'm in the community. I walk -- you know how many times I got in this guy's case? And so, for me, it's building a relationship, right? Because I know what it was like when I had people just preaching to me, and so before I can talk to these guys, it had to be -- build a level of trust. And it just can't be always preachy, you know, sometimes it's listening, and sometimes it's letting them get their steam off. He's gotten steam off on me a couple of times before. But my point is, is that being engaged in the community and also to be able to lay some context into historical perspective of what's going on in the community, and the social responsibility that I felt I had to people who grew up in the community and also letting the Jeff's of the world know the social responsibility that *they* have in the community. So, looking at Jeff doing what he's doing now, I'm actually proud that he's doing what he's doing, but he also has a social responsibility to pay it forward. How do you let someone else know this is how this is done? So, when I think about Duane Brown and I think about Donnie Harding, and Toni Bizzell and Frannie Greene, and all the other women that I mentioned, you know, there had been a bunch of gatekeepers who were kind of pushing that, and so when I look back at that, there were a whole bunch of them. Now, when I look back, there's not a lot. There's pockets of them. And when I think back on it growing up, that not a lot of them were doing it for money, and then when you look at some of the things that are happening now, some of them are driven and some of them are acting because there's money behind it to pay someone to go and do this. So, when I'm out there, I'm hardly ever getting paid for it. So, you know, the times when I was at the Margaret Fuller House working, I didn't work 24/7, but Jeff's seen me out there in the park at 10 o'clock at night playing basketball, or shooting, or talking some junk, but it's really to kind of do two things: to let people know that you value what they do, you appreciate it, and that's my home, too. You know, I really, actually grew up in the Port. So, when I would hear guys yelling about "four four," and what that means, you know, they call the police saying that the 44 and Port Life, they're a gang, and I was like, "Ah this, here they go making stuff up." And again, when I would hear young people and the police saying that "four four" stands for gang violence or "four four" means the Port, I would always educate them from perspective that when I think of Richard Harding, Omo Moses, Taba Moses, my brother, Sion Chambers, London Hardy, the "Port Life" started because a bunch of them were -- especially, mostly Taba Moses with the help of my brother and some of his friends started a record label called Port Life Entertainment, and



they actually did some pretty good stuff. They did some songs for Kan, not Kanye, Akon. They did something for Beyonce, so they're making some traction, and their logo for their record label, entertainment company, was the number 44. 44 was the number that was on the shirt of Omo Moses, who was a basketball player who graduated from Cambridge Rindge and Latin, went to George Washington University, played at Pitt as well in the Big East, but his number was 44, hence that's where the logo came from. So, when I hear people yelling, "I bang 4's," I'm like, "What's it stand for?" They say, "The Port," I say, "Now let me tell you the history around that." And I would educate the police too, when they would have conversation about, "Oh, they're down with the four four. I saw him in the park banging 4's," and I told the police commissioner, "I bang 4's all day. I'm not in a gang." So, it's my social responsibility to hold people accountable, to know what you're talking about if you're talking about something. And if you're proud of it, be proud of it for the real reasons. And if you're going to degrade something, right? Why are you doing that if you don't know the real context of what they're doing? So, you're turning something that was positive into a negative because you have your perception of what it is but don't have the history. So, that's part of why I engage in the way that I do.

KB [00:37:45] Can you talk a little about how the Port has changed since you were young? What is different about it now?

SC [00:37:51] It's a transient neighborhood now, and there's a lot more college students that are there that might spend two, maybe four years living there because they go to Harvard, or M.I.T., or Northeastern, or something of that nature. The Port had the highest crime rate for about 70 some odd years going up until maybe fifteen years ago, and part of that -- I get part of that credit. I don't have the data for it, but the -- after the death of a gentleman by the name of Sean Williams, myself, Richard Harding, and Susan Richard Scott, Mo Barbosa, we petitioned the city to see if they could help support the Port community with some more resources, and out of that came some funding to support the Community Liaison, the Adult Enrichment Coordinator position, and the Community Outreach Coordinator, which then was called a Street Worker. And those positions are really external parts of the Margaret Fuller House. So, they're in the community engaging young people ages 17 to 35 to help them navigate the social system, and so they get workforce employment opportunities, educational opportunities, if they



have street issues, they have court issues to help navigate that, and they also funded Port Community Pride Day, which I think this coming year will be the sixteenth annual Port Community Pride Day. And so, the neighborhood has changed a lot in good and bad ways, and so the crime rate has dropped dramatically, and because of gentrification, a lot of people have been pushed out of the community and, as I said earlier, people who are still living in the Port who I grew up with, most of them are growing up there still because of living in a house that their family owned. I mean, there's a few maybe that still live in Newtowne Court, so when I think of Annabel Liddy, who's lived in Newtowne Court, Washington, Elms, who -- probably longer than I've been alive and still lives there, but I recall asking her, "Why don't you move from here?" She said, "Where am I going to go? This is my home." And so, you know, there are a number of people that see Port as their home and Annabel Liddy is one of them. That's home. She's going to stay there and that's where she wants to rock out. But I think that, when you look at how gentrification's hit the neighborhood, that's in a bad way because this has pushed people out. And so, when you look at the development of Technology Square, which was then Technology Square, which is now called Kendall Square. When I was growing up right there on Portland Street where the 7-Eleven is, that was a patch of grass where we played football, and at that time in Technology Square, there might have been three buildings and the two big parking lots that are there, so hence the parking lots were there before they could -- populated with a lot of cars for a number years, but when I started studying sociology, I understood why those parking lots -- it was planned. And so, when that football field was there -- well, it was grass but we called it our football field and the three buildings -- we felt that beyond that grass was a fictitious wall, that there was a place in Technology [Square], we don't belong to that, you know, that was -- M.I.T. was down that end and we felt that we didn't belong in that. So hence, you look back, you look forward 45 years and now there's no fictitious wall. There's *real* walls. And you have -- M.I.T. is still there, and you have Microsoft, you have Google, you have Twitter, you have Facebook. You have all these places that have billions of dollars, and the people still living in the Port, who live three blocks away and in the Port neighborhood, and especially in Washington Elms and Newtowne Court, still feel that they're not part of that ecosystem. For me, there's a problem that, around the economics of that, so the fact that you have both a wealth of knowledge and a wealth of riches just a few blocks away, but there doesn't seem to be an obligation to make sure that the people who are in the Port feel like they're part of what's going on in Kendall Square and something's systemically wrong with that.



You know, and most of it is greed. Some of it is the fact people that -- some people don't just care, you know, and I think people would debate that with me, but if you did do something show me with the action, not with your mouth. Show me that you're reaching out to people that live in the Port so they can get jobs at Google or they can get jobs in Microsoft or Twitter or Facebook, right? And I know there's always a stream of skill development that has to happen, right? Well, set up a training program that you focus specifically on the people, the Port, to let them know, "Hey, I'm going to train you to be part of that ecosystem, so therefore, one day, maybe you can buy a house in the Port again. You don't have to live in the house that you grew up in because your grandmother passed away and left it to you." And so, for me, there has to eventually be an economic and moral responsibility of those companies to really have an invested interest in the community, *other than* making a donation to the Margaret Fuller House or Tutoring Plus, and the Community Art Center, and programs in the community. Make some real systemic impact by giving people a meaningful opportunity, right? When you're in a neighborhood that most people called "at risk" at one point, you know, okay, we're past the risk point. Now we're at an opportunity point. Give them an opportunity.

KB [00:43:09] What do you think the interactions are like now with the people who are lower income in the community and then maybe, like, the students who are coming in who have more money and are gentrifying?

SC [00:43:23] Well, I think it's like, when you come in the community, especially the students, right? I really think it's their responsibility also to get to know the community. And it's something I learned when I was in college -- my mother taught me that -- when you go to live off campus in this place where people -- you live among people who are from there, you have to respect the fact that they're from there, and if you're going to be from there, get to learn what's going on in the community. So, I think my challenge for college students that are coming and living, and being abutters in the Port, is to get to know the neighborhood. I know the Margaret Fuller hosted for the past couple of years an annual community block party where they invite people to the community, and it's funny, this year we had -- they called it a potluck, the past two years, and we purchased -- Margaret Fuller purchased food and people brought their own food, and there were a few college students who came by. There were six of them who came by once, and they had more than that, but this particular group had brought some food and he was



telling me how the sandwiches were made on sweet bread with ham, and his grandmother's recipe, and he had his roommates helping him cook it, and I said, "Well, how did you find out?" He says, "I got a flyer on my doorstep, and I wanted to figure out what the Margaret Fuller House was, and I thought this would be a great opportunity for me to meet my neighbors." And so, the obligation is on both sides. So, the students have an obligation to figure out, and the people in the community have an obligation to kind of let people know that they're welcome in the community. So, for me it's a both/and.

KB [00:44:57] What was it like to live through the period of violence for you and your family?

SC [00:45:05] You know, it's funny, I have this debate with folks. There's been a rash of shootings in the past, as Jeff knows, in the past few years down in Columbia Street Park and, you know, the police would make and the community would make a ruckus about it, and they should because violence is never good. But I was growing up in an environment at the Port at one time, violence was happening all the time, and it was happening in a way where we were, like, kind of immune to it. "Well, that's so-and-so fighting," or "That's this person fighting," and so, it kind of became part of the social fabric, you know, you got some thick skin. I tell people all the time, you know, I went to B.U. for urban planning and design for graduate school and Fitchburg State University for undergrad in sociology, but I learned more in my 22 years in the housing project of Washington Elms than I learned in any college book. So, I think about being an Executive Director at a nonprofit, my knowledge base of how to get along with people and navigate people? I learned it in Washington Elms. I didn't learn any of that in a book. None of it. And so, when I think about that climate, it was just something that we became used to, but also our community was also one that would take care of itself. So, no one can come in -- if you came in our community and caused some ruckus, there were mechanisms that were going to deal with you to get rid of that. But you had drugs, you had violence that happened in there, you know, and it was a little tougher then than it is now. So, I mean, I'm sure Jeff probably heard me tell, "You guys don't know what you're missing. This is *easy* compared to what I had to go --," and that's not bragging about it, but, you know, and it's not to take away the pain that *they* see, but I'm like, come on, you have more riches of resources here than you had when I grew up, so how do we take advantage of them? But still, how do you hold the system accountable to making sure that you stand for something, you should be included, hence going back to the



ecosystem in Kendall Square. You know, it's our responsibility also to let the establishment know, "Hey, I belong here, too." And the reality is the Port was longstanding well before Kendall Square blossomed into what it is now. Kendall Square didn't exist 20 years ago. Not like it is now. Not at all, and I wouldn't have fathomed it would be like that either, but it is.

KB [00:47:28] So, what made you come back to Margaret Fuller House as Executive Director?

SC [00:47:32] So, I was on the board at the time and they were in transition and looking for a new E.D., so I was helping with the E.D. search and I made a recommendation that they should probably look for an interim Executive Director. And then, lo and behold, I wasn't recommending me, but I was asked to do that, and so that's one of the reasons I became the interim Executive Director. I was asked to be -- I was on the board off and on for a number of years, and so I kind of felt it was my obligation in the community, you know, that if I was on boards other places, why wouldn't I be on a board of an organization that helped me and my family and in the community I grew up in? So, I was like, "Okay," and so I was kind of honored to be asked to be on the board, but that's kind of the main reason, because I was sitting on the board and there was an opportunity there that needed to be filled, and I so happened to be the lucky one.

KB [00:48:31] What were some of your goals when you took the position?

SC [00:48:35] One was to really fortify the organization and to really figure out, how do you develop some funding streams that can sustain the work that they do? How do you think about the work differently? So, when you have an organization that's been around for over 100 years, you know, how do you look at the work differently, knowing that the community is changing, too? And a lot of that was to become a more external organization, so how do you get more involved in what's going on in the community and how do you also invite the community into the things that are taking place? And so, one of the things that we did at the Margaret Fuller House, and they're still doing, is a community need survey, and so we've collected, probably almost 300 community needs surveys that would ask the community about things that would be needed in the community. So, as they're going through a strategic planning process, that data is going to be very helpful to really think about the next hundred years in the organization.



KB [00:49:32] How did it feel for you to come back as an adult? Like, did it feel different? Did it look different in there?

SC [00:49:39] Yeah, it felt real different. It was much smaller than I thought it was growing up. You know, I used to think -- I thought Margaret Fuller herself lived on the third floor of the house because we had never been up there as a kid, I -- the first time I've been to the third floor of the Margaret Fuller House about five years ago when we were dumping furniture out there and, kind of, turning the top two floors into a workspace. And so, it was a lot smaller than I thought it was. And it had a lot more history than I understood. I knew it had history, but I started reading through the archives of the Margaret Fuller House. I found a document -- and so if you know the Margaret Fuller House, one of the -- what we call the youth center, and so there's a flat roof part of the building. That was done -- well, the work on that stopped in, I think it's 1928? Because they ran out of money, so they were -- the intention was to build that up to about two stories, and they didn't have the \$25,000 to build it up. But it was in 1928, so I always thought that building was meant to be flat and [inaudible], but there was an intention to make it be two more stories, so that was interesting to learn that.

KB [00:50:58] Can you talk about some of the programs Margaret Fuller House has now to serve the community?

SC [00:51:02] Yeah, so right now, and again, they're going through a metamorphosis on their own now to really think about the strategic direction of the organization. Right now, presently, they have the emergency food pantry, which is a pantry that is open four days a week. It allows people to come to the food pantry twice a month to get food. There are 1,100 members, part of the program, they feed over 10,000 people. So, those 1,100 memberships are attached to families, and there's no financial commitment. There's no financial data that we collect. So, and the reason for that is that even people with jobs have to figure out how to make ends meet, but you just have to have an I.D. and a piece of mail that states that you live somewhere. So, it's not just a food pantry for Cambridge. You have people as far as Quincy who are coming to the food pantry, and Medford, and Malden, Everett. Then they have the adult enrichment programming, which they provide educational workshops and opportunities for adults ages seventeen and



over. You have the community advancement team, which I talked about earlier, which supports 17-to-35-year old's, and so they really work with people on the periphery of services. So, that's the population that is normally not coming into the Margaret Fuller House, and they're connectors, so they help that population with workforce employment opportunities. They help them with educational opportunities. If they have issues with people in the streets, they try to help, you know, navigate those conversations and mediate those conversations. If you have court issues, they try to help with that, so there's a plethora of things that the community advancement team works on, and the community advancement team at the Margaret Fuller House consists of a Community Liaison and Adult Enrichment Coordinator, so that's one title, and then the Community Outreach Coordinator, whose sole focus is meeting people where they're at, so parks, alleys, street corners. And then there's the fourth pillar of service, which is the Peace Leadership Academy, which is a new pillar of programing that's been there, and that is a program for young people ages four and a half to twelve years of age, and the whole premise around the Peace Leadership Academy is to lift young people's voices and help them navigate social justice issues, and there's a service-learning component where they do service projects in the community. They learn peaceful approaches to violence, conflict resolution, mediation and, of course, the other fun stuff: field trips, arts and crafts. But all through this -- through the lens of having a social consciousness about what goes on in communities, and a lot of young people aren't taught that in school, so we realize that at the Margaret Fuller House there, you know, you're not a teacher, you're not school, so how do we augment what goes on in school and what's our social responsibility to make sure that young people have a well-rounded opportunity to kind of learn and grow?

KB [00:54:07] How do you deal with those issues, like how -- what was your approach to figuring out what needs were still there that you can maybe help with?

SC [00:54:16] Well, a lot of it is keeping your ear to the streets and kind of hearing what the people are asking for. Hence, that's why we had started doing the community surveys. So, as we started with the Community Advancement Team approach, we realized that people were struggling navigating social services, whether it was health care -- you know, if you don't have someone who has that knowledge base to help you navigate that, then you struggle. And some of the population that is served. They come in, they hear a presentation, they can go get in on



their own, or some hear it and still need you to hand hold them and kind of guide them through that. And so, for us, a lot of it was really listening and keeping your ears to the streets in regards to what this community really needs in a way that's going to be impactful and helpful.

KB [00:55:10] What do you think Margaret Fuller House offers in the community besides its programs?

SC [00:55:16] It's the community living room. It's that place, you know, we have -- there are people that sometimes would walk in off the street, walk into the learning library, sit down, read a book, take a book. The computer lab is open three days a week for your charts, or some people come and read their email, or some people come in and, you know, work on a resumé. They have several partnerships, Tech Goes Home is one of the partners, and so people learn how to use technology in that space. And some people just come, you know, you have some regular visitors that just pop up and say, "Hey, how are you guys doing?" And that's why it's the people's living room.

KB [00:55:59] It was really interesting for me to come in and kind of see, like, your relationship with Denise, who you've known for a really long time, and some other people that work there that you've known since you were young. What is it like to be in that environment with them as a professional?

SC [00:56:16] Well, it's interesting because then people get to see you in a different light. So, I'll use Russell Harding for an example. So, Russell's much younger than me. So, Russell is probably about fourteen years younger than myself. And so, there's a big difference between his age population and my population, so Russell was like a little guy in the community back then. It was Little Russell, you know, now most people in the streets call him Fat Daddy. At work we call him Russell. And so, I got to see the other side of Russell, so the caring, enduring side of Russell, helping people and supporting people, you know, and then he got to see a different light of me and, you know, he was really close friends with my younger brother. So, you see people that you watched grow up, see them in the work environment, so that was kind of different. And then Denise, who came on not too long ago, she was good friends with my family and grew up in the same housing project. And as she'd tell it, she changed my diaper she



told you, she's much older than myself, so it's different. So, I was kind of, like, stuck in between her and Russell. I watched Russell grow up. She watched me grow up. But it's interesting to kind of see people, how things come full circle. I remember Denise said, "I would have never thought you would be an E.D. of something."

KB [00:57:38] Why do you think it is that so many people who grew up in the Port still work at Margaret Fuller House?

SC [00:57:47] Well, I think it's funny because Russell participated in some of the opportunities, Denise participated in some of the opportunities at the Margaret Fuller House. And so, I think that there were, in those cases, there were opportunities that presented for them to kind of work there. And it was their opportunity to kind of give back to their community in a way that's more meaningful than you could imagine, knowing that if you were benefactor receiving some support from an organization, and then you're able to work there and give that that love back, and so I think that was part of it that's exciting. I know for me that was what really excited me about that opportunity. And it was funny because we talked to people, when they hear that story, "So do you only hire people that grew up here?" I said, "Well, there's only three of us that work here that grew up here [laughs]." Most of the other folks live in another city or town, so it was just coincidence. And I said, "We're just lucky." I don't think the organization was lucky, you know, we as the staff there that are from the neighborhood, we're just lucky to be able to work there.

KB [00:58:48] How do you see Margaret Fuller House fitting into the Port and Cambridge as things continue to change?

SC [00:58:54] Well, I think it's still going to continue to be a pillar. Everybody is going to need some type of support. And so, I think being a pillar of the community and being the community's living room is something that will happen with the Margaret Fuller for a long time, and especially after they're finished with their strategic planning process, which will take place in another few months. They're trying to figure that out. What do we need to be for the community in the future? And so, I think everyone's going to still need support, you know, and going to need a place of being. But it just requires the Margaret Fuller, and their board, and the



community to figure out, "Well, what do we need to be for the next 100 years as we go with this change process?"

KB [00:59:44] Okay, I think that's all my questions. Jeff, do you have any questions?

Jeff Solomon [00:59:50] No, no, but to add on to that, the Port thing, the four four. For me growing up it was just like four four meant, like, Port Life. "Port" is four letters and "life" is four letters, so that's what four four meant to us when we were growing up, but other than that, there's a lot of stuff I heard that I didn't know about the Port.

KB [01:00:09] Yeah. Do you remember when you first met Selvin?

JS [01:00:12] Yeah, the first time about Selvin was -- what's that building where they do the tickets for City Hall, for like parking tickets and --?

SC [01:00:26] You mean 51 Inman or --?

JS [01:00:27] 51 -- no.

SC [01:00:29] Next -- City Hall Annex.

JS [01:00:30] Yeah, where they do, like, the traffic tickets and --.

SC [01:00:32] Yes.

JS [01:00:33] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, the first time I met Selvin was when I was doing basketball at Area 4, and I was trying to sign up for some basketball camp, I think it was, like Tomorrow's Stars or --.

SC [01:00:46] Tomorrow's Stars, so that was in 51 Inman. That's when I worked there. That was Inman, that was the other building, yeah, 51 Inman.



JS [01:00:50] I remember it was like, look, I was trying to sign up for that camp, and nobody knew, or nobody could point me in the right direction, and then someone told me Selvin worked there, and I think I was in there for Mayor's Programs stuff too, as well.

KB [01:01:05] How old were you?

JS [01:01:05] I was like fifteen, fourteen maybe.

SC [01:01:07] Fourteen, I think it was fourteen.

JS [01:01:08] Yeah. And I was in there trying to sign up for the Mayor's Program and then I met Selvin to do Tomorrow's Stars basketball camp.

KB [01:01:20] Mmhmm. Okay.

SC [01:01:20] And it's interesting because he's much younger than me, and so over time, you get to know -- I knew all the young people that were ten years below or ten years above me. He's way below that. But for me to build a level of trust, I was just this other guy in a suit and a tie sometimes, so I think after you have conversations, you break down those walls that people get to see. You know, I think for me, especially in the Port, when we would have conversations and they would start saying, "You don't know about the Port!" And then when I started dropping my knowledge about the Port, they're like, "Oh, jeez, he really -- this guy really *does* know the Port," you know, and so for me, it's been something I enjoyed and I will continue to do that till I turn to dust. But again, my hope is that the Jeff's of the world, you know, knowing what he's doing with Loop Lab, that he feels a moral responsibility to pass that forward to someone else, to, kind of, make sure, you know, the old saying "each one, teach one"? It's all of our responsibilities to kind of move people forward in society, and it's one person at a time, because when we look who's sitting in the White House right now, he's not doing a good job of that, and it's going to take the moral compass of individuals in the community to kind of make it happen. People keep looking to the government and saying, "You're the problem." Yeah, part of it, right? But people make change happen. If you look at it and just keep complaining about it, nothing's going to happen, but if you take action, something's going to happen. If you look at Mahatma



Gandhi and you look at Martin Luther King and you look at Malcolm X and, you know, Rosa Parks, I can go down the list, of what happened in our society and how things change. Change happens because people take action. Change never happens because people talk. Never. Just noise. So, we need the action makers. That's what we need.

KB [01:03:06] Anything else to add?

SC [01:03:07] No, I think, you know, I always enjoy talking about my neighborhood, so whenever I get an opportunity to talk to somebody about my neighborhood, because usually people don't ask me to tell them about my neighborhood. Usually, I just tell them about my neighborhood [laughter], so to be asked about my neighborhood, so it's pretty cool.

KB [01:03:21] Yeah. Thank you so much. I learned a lot.

SC [01:03:26] Oh, thank you.

End of Interview

This interview is part of “Sweet Souls, Voices from the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge,” an oral history project of the Cambridge Historical Society, in partnership with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House and The Loop Lab. This project was funded in part by Mass Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.