

TAPE TRANSCRIPT  
Durham Civil Rights Heritage Project  
CDS, Durham, NC

**Interviewee:** Kristin Herzog  
2936 Chapel Road  
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**Interviewer:** Barbara Lau  
Center for Documentary Studies  
1317 W. Pettigrew Street  
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**Place:** Hayti Heritage Center  
St. Joseph's Historic Foundation, Inc.  
804 Old Fayetteville Street  
Durham, NC 27701

**Equipment:** Sony Minidisc MZ-R700 Recorder  
Sony ECM-MS907 microphone

**Tape:** Sony MD 80 minidisk

**Date:** November 15, 2003

**Description of Interviewee:**

**Circumstances of the Interview:**

**BL:** Okay. Today is Saturday, November 15th, 2003. This is Barbara Lau at the Hayti Heritage Center, and I'm talking with Kristin Herzog. This is part of the Durham Civil Rights Heritage Project. Kristin, I know that your family, you and your husband, were involved with the first integrated church here in Durham. If you could tell me a little bit about that.

**KH:** I wasn't really involved, except that my husband and I attended it once, and we knew about it. But we had to try very hard to integrate Pilgrim United Church of Christ, which we joined in 1960 or 61. And it was very hard to get the congregation to accept integration. But we worked with that. But we visited with this first integrated church, and I just happened to find a little document that reminded me of that.

**BL:** What was the name of the church, that first integrated church.

**KH:** ( ) I think it was called Covenant Church, something like that. And I knew that Floyd McKissick was active in it. But I just happened to find this yesterday. My own part in this is not very big, because I came as a German citizen in 1958, and I'm still a German citizen. And so I didn't go on demonstrations at that time, I just didn't even think about that. But I simply did a lot of community work with black children, especially in the setting of church work. But my husband got involved in the sit-in in Pittsboro, ( )'s Restaurant, with several colleagues from Duke and some students from UNC. And they were attacked with the hoses on a very cold night in January of, I guess, '64. And the woman of the restaurant and her husband, they were both known to be very cruel to demonstrators. Anyway, the group was totally nonviolent, but they were put into prison for a night in Hillsborough, and then they were let out, but it was several months, then, of terrible court proceedings under Judge Mallard, who--I brought a clipping about him, where the ending of this trial was mentioned, and we just experienced as visitors in the courtroom, the terrible situation of a judge being vicious, really, towards ( ) a young man who

had overdrawn his account. And many people in the audience said we have sometimes overdrawn our accounts, so why is this boy put into prison?

**BL:** What was your husband's name?

**KH:** Frederick Herzog.

**BL:** And was he here--I assume he was here to attend Duke Divinity School?

**KH:** He was teaching at Duke Divinity School since 1960, right.

**BL:** Tell me a little bit, though, about when you said at the very beginning that you were trying to get your own church. Tell about what did that mean, trying to get that integrated.

**KH:** Well, there were meetings in the church that tried to decide on this issue, because there was, of course, a large group who wanted to integrate, and then other people said this is our church and we can decide, and we were brought up never to eat with blacks, this is just our heritage. And we said, of course, this is God's church and not our church. And then I think the decisive factor became a little later, a Duke Divinity student and his wife wanted to have their baby baptized, and that was a black couple. The man, ( ) Shannon is his name, he became later a military chaplain. He's still living I think in Virginia. And the baptism of this child became the decisive factor, because it was finally decided by the church that not only could blacks attend worship service, they could be full members, and so we could do a baptism of a black child. And that meant that several members of the congregation left and went to more conservative churches.

**BL:** What year was that?

**KH:** I guess probably '61. I think so. And then my husband fought very hard for establishing a black studies program in the Divinity School. And the man that was involved in that mostly in the beginning was the father of Reverend Cousin who is now the pastor of St. Joseph's. His

father became the bishop later on. But he and my husband established finally the black studies program in the Duke Divinity School. And there were struggles for getting the first black secretary in the Divinity School, who turned out not to be a very good secretary, and then of course everybody said, there, you see. But she learned over the years. And then there was the occupation of the Allen Building, and in relationship to that the too low payment of black workers around Duke. And so I just found yesterday a letter of my husband's to President Knight at Duke University, where he sent an open letter to the newspapers saying President Knight should not have gotten the National Guard, and the tear gas was used, it shouldn't be done like that on a campus of a university. So these were difficult years.

**BL:** Yeah, you know, when I was growing up, there was a lot of discussion and my church was behind integration, but my church ended up giving its building to a black congregation. It's in Cleveland, where I grew up. And I have really distinct memories of those congregational meetings. And so I wonder if you think back and you think about those, as you say there were a series of meetings, how did that really--what was the tenor of those kind of discussions? What were the arguments people were using? I know there's the heritage argument, but then like you say, there was this notion of our ideas about religion and our ideas about other human beings. Tell me a little bit more about the ways that those kinds of--

**KH:** It was very emotional. People were in tears, and said we don't hate blacks, but we were brought up like this, and this leads to race mixing. I don't think they had biblical arguments that I can remember, but it was simply a matter of instinct that rebelled. Another thing that was very helpful for our church was meeting with people from Covenant Presbyterian Church--tomorrow they will have celebration for their new church on Weaver Street, and there were members of that church and of other churches that met regularly at Pilgrim, at their church, Covenant, at the

Quaker house, in order to discuss not church matters but city matters. For example, Howard Fitz, who is with me still on the board of the United Christian Campus Ministry of North Carolina Central, was very active in that group. And they found each other across denominational lines, just to talk about integrating the city.

**BL:** So they were talking about activism.

**KH:** Right, right, whatever demonstration was going on.

**BL:** Do you remember, did religious leaders here play a really important role in the civil rights movement in Durham?

**KH:** I don't remember any big names of religious leaders, no.

**BL:** Well, I meant the local pastors, and--

**KH:** Yeah, there were very few that stood out.

**BL:** So these meetings you're talking about was more congregational--

**KH:** That's right, it was lay people. Like my husband, Bob Osborne from Duke, some Duke professors participating.

**BL:** Where did the pastor of your church, when that was all happening, how did he--

**KH:** I guess it was Bill Smith at the time, and I've forgotten now the answer. No, it was maybe Scott was his name. We had so many different pastors, but they were always on the liberal side.

**BL:** So the pastor was in favor of integration?

**KH:** I'm sure.

**BL:** So did this come up in sermons as well at your church?

**KH:** Oh, definitely. And we had members who came, for example, from Duke Memorial Church and joined our church, because they felt that they were not in the right place where blacks were not accepted.

**BL:** You were also talking about some church work in the African American community. Can you describe that for me?

**KH:** Well, there was a Professor Ritchie at the Divinity School, Macmurray Ritchie, who is long retired now, and his wife worked in a kindergarten, and she got me involved in working with black children. We went into the area near Kent Street and gathered children, maybe twice a week or so, and taught them knitting and crafts, and took them on little trips. I remember we visited the milk factory, or something like that.

**BL:** How was that for you, since this was just a couple years after you came over here from Germany.

**KH:** It was hard, because, one incident for example, I remember that we worked with the group, and I forgot, it was not Operation Breakthrough, it was some other group that tried to establish a playground where now is Liberty Street, near the Public Library, that is now the Public Library. And it was a time of black power, and at a certain point, there were some black power leaders who said, we want to do this on our own, we don't want white people to be involved in this. So this playground never came about, and I as a German felt even more marginal among the whites who were rejected like that. But it was really very understandable under the circumstances, that blacks said this is finally our hour, and we want to do that on our own. But there were some difficult moments like that.

**BL:** Had you met black people before you came to the United States?

**KH:** No, I don't think so.

**BL:** Did you come directly from Germany to North Carolina?

**KH:** No, my husband was teaching in Wisconsin at a small seminary of the United Church of Christ, which at that time was still called the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Anyway, I

came over in '58, and we went to Duke in '60. And he refused to come to Duke first, because it wasn't integrated. And then a few professors of the Divinity School said, look, we're working so hard, and the problem lies with the trustees, they're afraid that people won't give money anymore to Duke if we integrate, so if you come please help us. So it didn't take very long after he finally decided to come that Duke was integrated.

**BL:** Was your husband also a German national?

**KH:** He was a double heritage, and double citizenship. His parents were German, he was born in North Dakota, but was brought up partly in Germany, partly in the United States.

**BL:** So did you notice, you were talking about that women were involved in doing some of the community kind of work. Were women involved in any of the other ( )--did you find women leaders in this process?

**KH:** I'm sure there were many in the black community. I mean, we knew Ann Atwater, and that whole story was brought out again when recently we had a group of our church, 10 Germans visiting our church, and we took the civil rights tour of the Historical Preservation Society, and this young man who gave the tour told us ( ) Ann Atwater story, and she is United Church of Christ. So they were very brave women. And I'm sure there were some white women like that, but I can't recall any names right now. But like this Mrs. Richie, wife of a Duke Professor who took me to these black children, I'm sure there were many who did a lot.

**BL:** We're just about at the time, we've talked about 15 minutes, so are there any other stories that you think you'd like to have in an interview that is in the library? How do think the civil rights movement has affected Durham? I mean, how has it changed?

**KH:** It has changed tremendously. It is, like on the Civil Rights tour, we were told that schoolchildren now cannot even imagine what it meant to go up on the Carolina Theatre and sit

there on top when there was no air conditioning and you couldn't even see the right people, and I remember the demonstrations at the Howard Johnson's restaurant, when it was chanted, "We will eat those 26 flavors of ice cream someday." I don't know whether it was 26 or how many. There were huge demonstrations. It has unbelievably changed, but what struck me at this Historical Preservation Society tour was that the whole story is now repeated in the Hispanic community. There's the first Hispanic bank, and the black bank did a tremendous amount of good for the black community, and it's the same. Right now my church is teaching English with Hispanics, and between my house and my church there are hundreds and hundreds of Hispanic workers, and every Wednesday night we have classes for them. So the civil rights atmosphere has changed tremendously, but these people have still big problems, you know.

**BL:** The work goes on.

**KH:** Yeah, it is completely going on, it's repeating itself, really.

**BL:** That's great observation. Thank you so much.

END OF TAPE