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Madeline Roy
Jamie Roy
Interviewed by Megan Dwyre and Becky Lebsock.

Megan Dwyre (MD): So, it's Thursday, January 13th at 5:05 pm. This is Megan Dwyre and Becky—

Becky Lebsock (BL): Lebsock

MD: Lebsock. We're conducting an interview with Jamie Roy and Madeline Roy on Church Street. So, usually we just start [inaudible.] talking about just yourself and what it was like growing up here.

Madeline Roy (MR): Well I didn't grow up here.

Jamie Roy (JR): She came when she was fourteen.

MD: Well, the story of how you came here. [Laughter.]

MR: Well, I moved here in '46 and when I moved on Church Street, there was only three houses. Mrs. Alberta Brown across the street, Mr. Bill Lloyd was next door, and there was another house here, a [inaudible.] and I think Mr. Wright owned that, and then Mr. Barber built his home across the street [inaudible.] and let's see, Haymans moved next door to us.

MD: So, when you moved here, you moved to this house, and lived here ever since?

MR: No, not this house. It was one next door, but they told us we had to tear it down, when we built this. [Inaudible.] built this house.

JR: Are you guys familiar with George Wilson, The Wilson Community Center?

MD and BL: Yes.

JR: Okay, that's our uncle, and what he was, he was a demolition man, and he tore a lot of houses down in the city of Wilmington and throughout Delaware and he salvaged a lot of the parts from the homes, and rebuilt, and that's pretty much—this was one of the last houses, this is the last house that was built that way, and my mom and dad scavenged most all the stuff that you see. There's bricks and all that from demolition work that my uncle did and we built this house. Our other house was right next door, but like she said the city had to make sure that they were going to tear it down once they built this one because of the size of the lots, but my dad built this, and Mr. Mitchell built the one right across the street, and there's a Haymen family, there's a guy named Conway Haymen who—he was the University of Delaware former All-American, played pro-football, and his brother, they lived right next door to us. Gary Haymen was his name, and Conway, and his sister just got her doctorate. She lived right next door. Have you heard of a girl named Lauren Wilson, Channel Six Action News? She lived right across the street. Uncle Inky was her grandfather and he built that house for them. He built his house is still on the end of this

street. It's brick house. That's where he used to live. He built that house, and of course, like I said, my dad built this house. [Inaudible.] Mom when you guys finished?

MR: It was '78 when we finished, moved here, and Miss Alberta Brown that house is torn down. I didn't know the name of [inaudible.] built that across the street [inaudible.]

JR: Oh, this brand new one?

MR: Yes.

JR: Yes. That just came here this past here. It's been about a year or two at most.

MR: A couple years.

JR: 'Cause this will be the second year that I see students in that house. So, that's the most recent house, but that wasn't built like this. [Inaudible.] Well, yes, he built—you ever hear of Terry Manor? He built that whole community with the same method, salvaging stuff on the demolition job, and he did that with the idea that African Americans would have some decent living, homes and some houses that had running water and stuff, 'cause they didn't have it back then from what I understand. I was blessed I always had it, but some of them didn't have decent plumbing from what I understand, and that's why he built the houses.

MD: Someone mentioned that he had to sort of fight the city or had some problems with the city about building--?

JR: You might know more about that.

MR: Well I don't know if he had to fight or not, but it was difficult for him to do what he wanted to do. They tried to dissuade him, but he overcame, built Terry Manor. He built several houses around here. Here on Church Street he built two down at the other end. [Inaudible name.] lived in one, I don't know the other family's name.

JR: This an article that could possibly help somewhat explain about him. I know Bernie showed me he had a lot of pictures about him, but I'm actually named after him, my middle name. [Inaudible.] [Laughter.] But that explains pretty much how did it around this neighborhood, and it's also. I don't know how true this is Mom, they said Martin Luther King visited him down at [inaudible].

MR: Oh, yes.

JR: He was going to the seminary up in Chester before he became big Martin Luther King, but he actually been on this street in his lifetime.

MD: He visited him because of the work he was doing, or--?

JR: Right, he was actually a community—I don't want to say activist, but he was an activist. He was the first and only black Newark city councilman this city's ever had. What else? Like I said, he built affordable housing and homes with decent plumbing. That was his main intent. That's why they named that development after his daughter. Her name's Terry.

MR: Her name is Alice, but they called her Terry.

JR: Yes, Alice Terry. In fact, her middle name was the same as my middle name is Mancel [?]. That's George's middle name, and his daughter's name is Mancella [?]. Alice Mancella..

MR: After Mr. Bill Lloyd, well we bought his lot. His house was back there. Mr. Lloyd.

JR: If I can find it, I'll show you what the Haymens house actually looked before it got condemned at then they moved to the Newark housing projects down on Cleveland Avenue, and then when Gary signed his contract with the Buffalo Bills he bought a home for his mo and sisters and took them all out. I wanted to show you a picture of what their house, you'll see what we mean by—if I can find it. A picture of [inaudible.] In fact this got some pictures—well, this one shows the house directly across the street when it was just being built my Mr. Mitchell Barber. Him and his son—his son's a graduate, a '77 graduate of University of Delaware, and he was actually, he retired as a lieutenant colonel with the Army after going through ROTC at the University.

BL: Who's this in the picture?

JR: That's my 37 year old niece now. [Laughter.] She lives in California. That's my mom's granddaughter, but I want to show you the kind of home. I thought I had a picture of Gary and them's house. You'll see just where they came from. That's me in the Little League.

BL: In the Little League? That's a great picture.

JR: Let's see.

BL: We had somebody who was originally working on sports.

JR: Oh really?

BL: And they were looking into sports in the community.

JR: Well, we could really have some—Mom, I thought there was one that had—I'm sorry I thought I had it, and maybe I'll keep looking.

MD: Well, I brought a digital camera too so we can take some pictures of them after.

JR: I'll find it. My mom didn't know sort of what you guys was looking for.

BL: We are looking for everything. Your story, essentially. So why did you originally move here?

MR: I came down here with my father. My father moved down here. He worked for the railroad, and he moved down here. He had worked here for several years and he had a couple accidents and decided to move down here, and that was in '40, I moved here. Then in '46, I got married, I lived here. [Laughter.]. In the old house. It was George Wilson's brother's pool hall. We lived here. We lived downstairs and then—

BL: So, you moved into the pool hall?

MR: Pool hall.

JR: Yes, sure did.

MR: [Inaudible.] home there, and then made apartments upstairs and rented those. [Laughter.]. And then bought this lot from—

JR: Mr.—

MR: Easton. Easton.

JR: I don't know what his first name, what was his name?

MR: Easton Johnson.

JR: Easton Johnson. That's what it was. This was a Haymen. The one that ended up being a University all-American. That was where the house he actually grew up in.

BL: Wow.

JR: It was right next door to us. Where those two houses are, where the students live now?

BL: Yes.

JR: That's the lot.

BL: Wow.

JR: And there were six people in that house.

BL: Wow.

JR: And this was the front yard of that, but our old house we just tore down, and we're over here now, and that's my little brother [in photograph]. He's 43 now, and twice my size [laughter.]. In

fact, she's still living, Miss Holmes. She's 91, but she's in nursing home, right Mom? Miss Holmes?

MR: Oh, yes.

JR: But I wanted to show them that house that Gary and them lived in before he made it to the pros.

BL: So did you play with him?

JR: I was a little younger than him. In the city, I mean [inaudible.] But yes, he played with my older brother. Gary was, let me see, he's almost 46, [inaudible.] so Gary had me by six years I think, five or six years, but we all grew up in the same neighborhood. This was the neighborhood. Once you crossed those railroad tracks, everything on this side of the railroad tracks was African-American. I mean, every house, every structure, every home you see, starting from the railroad tracks all the way up to, you know where George Wilson Center is?

BL: Yes.

JR: It was a few houses up. He lived at the top of that hill, and that's pretty much where our neighborhood ended, at the top of the hill. Everything in the valley, and Terry Manor, and Ray Street, all that was, all the homes, African-American. This is Lieutenant Colonel Ricky Barber [looking at photograph] who graduated from University of Delaware in '77. Him and his dad built that house right there. He's still renting it out. That one right there where students live? Him and his dad built that. He grew up just him and his dad.

MD: So are all the houses on this street originally part of the black community or have they now been--?

JR: Yes. They were all part of the black community.

MR: Well, they were. Now, they're turning into college, most of the houses.

MD: But they were all built during that time?

JR: Some of them might have been here Mom, I don't know.

MR: [Inaudible.] no.

JR: Well, I remember when I was born, that was already here, the one directly behind us. Uncle Inky built that, right mom? Have you guys heard of a guy named Richard Wilson? He dived for the University of Delaware, but he used to be a—he was either in admission—he was I guess one of the highest ranking African-American—he wasn't a professor, but he used to run the Upward Bound program, and then from there I think he ran the admissions. He was in admissions. I'm not sure exactly where, but they have a thing for him every year because he passed away. That was Lauren's father, that's on channel six.

[Break for a visitor.]

MR: [Tape starts mid-sentence.]: Old office building and they moved across here and they turned it into American Legion building. In the meantime there was a smaller place that [inaudible.] built and I think it burned down, and then when they got ready to sell it, my sister-in-law bought it. Millie [?] Roy, Marie Roy and Sadie Roy.

JR: Marie was your mother-in-law.

MR: Mother-in-law. Sadie was my sister-in-law.

MD: And what were your parents names?

MR: My parents names was Clarence White and my mother's name was [inaudible.].

MD: I was also wondering, what was it like living in the neighborhood. How did everyone get along?

JR: Great. We were like a village. You ever hear of 'It takes a village to raise a child?' That's how we were around here, and that is the truth. We could do something two blocks away and they would know about before we got home. Or, we would get reprimanded by someone in the neighborhood, and then, when we got home, they knew about it and reprimanded us again. [Laughter.]. That's how this community really was. I mean, we kind of nurtured each other. We all got along.

MR: My children went to that school up—well it's the community center now, not all of them because Douglas started—

JR: Me and Doug. I never went there.

MR: He never went there.

JR: She's talking about, the community center used to be the black school, where the African-Americans went, and there were six of us. I had three sisters and two brothers. Out of us six. Did Linnie [?] go there? She's a year older than me.

MR: No, the year Lynn started down there they took us through the hoops to even get in down there.

BL: To get down where?

MR: Down to the white school.

JR: That's Central.

MR: Central. [Inaudible.] and I had to get a Lawyer Redding before I could get her in.

JR: Did you ever hear of lawyer Redding?

BL: No.

JR: Well he's—some buildings named after him, the Louis Redding building in New Castle County. He was the first African-American lawyer Mom? I'm assuming.

MR: I guess he was the first. I know Williams, Judge Williams, I guess he was after him.

JR: Lenny. Yes. Lenny was [inaudible.] after.

BL: So, he helped you get your daughter—

MR: Yes.

BL: What did he have to do?

MR: Well, I don't know what he did, but I went and told him what the story was. They had to do fifteen minute testing, then they graded them on that, and a lady by the name of—

JR: Was she a lawyer?

MR: No, lady that helped Lynn. She taught her to read. She was reading before she even went to school.

JR: We got a lot of pictures in our old house. There's a lot of pictures.

MR: Oh, I didn't have time to.

MD: Did you go to school at all when you moved here?

MR: Yes. Yes.

JR: Howard.

MR: Howard High.

JR: You guys familiar with that? Now Howard High School is Howard Technology or whatever now, but Howard used to be only school any of the blacks could go to, even if you lived way down state. There was folks that had to come all the way from the end of Delaware to go to school all the way up here, until what, they integrated about '55?

MR: '54, '55.

JR: I wasn't born 'til '57 so I missed all the good stuff.

MD: Well just getting back to the neighborhood a little bit, what were some of the ways that people helped each other out?

MR: I don't know.

JR: Feeding 'em.

MR: Any sickness or anything we were right there to offer to help and—

JR: If somebody might have passed away or died in their family, people just converged on the homes, and so much food, and yeah.

MR: We had our own businesses up on this end. We had the cleaners, [inaudible.] cleaners.

JR: That was Gary's grandfather right there. He had a taxi cab service.

MR: Taxi cab, yes.

JR: Mr. Fritz Haymen was his name. It was actually, is in the—if you go down to the Carpenter Building, "The Bob" they call it? And they had the College Hall-of-Famers throughout that building. He's up there. He was inducted about three years ago, to University of Delaware's football hall of fame. That was Conway, class of '71, and his sister just got her doctorate. She's in Chicago now, and she was in the class of '77, but she just got her doctorates degree. I'm pretty proud of coming off this street that had so many people, for such a small street, we've had two professional football players, a lieutenant colonel, a TV reporter, and what else? That's probably the major—and the lady [inaudible.] with her doctorate's. And Patty, does Patty have her doctorate's. No, her Master's.

MR: I don't know.

JR: That's [inaudible name.]'s sister.

BL: It's a famous street.

JR: It is. I'm proud of it. I always brag about our street. I mean in the neighborhood, because I know that even though we're all from the same neighborhood, then we break it even down further. We're from Church Street. Then there's Ray Street. Then there's New London. So, we had it like that, but I mean, we always competed against each other, but we were all friends. It was just like I said. It was like a village here. It really was, and folks that may, like myself—I was blessed to have a complete set of parents. A lot of my friends were coming out of single parent homes. It wasn't the traditional family, like the Roy family. We were really blessed, and we took care of each other, but many times he spent nights over here, or I spent nights over there.

We'd fall asleep watching TV at three o'clock in the morning, and then he'd get up and walk home, or I'd get up and walk over, things like that, and a lot of other families that didn't have maybe a father around, fathers that were in this neighborhood became like surrogates. So in a sense, like I say, we all kind of raised each other around here.

MR: [Inaudible.] six children, never had any problems, and his two granddaughters graduated from the University.

MD: Well, I have a quick question about children because I think someone said that a lot of the children that were born here were delivered right on the street?

JR: You can answer that one. I don't know.

MR: No. That must be before my time. [Inaudible.].

JR: I know we weren't born in Newark. I was born in the hospital. I think me and my—all my siblings, yes.

MR: Wilmington General. They tore it down, and Memorial Hospital. They tore it down to make high-rises.

JR: Yes, back here where Pencader and what's it called, Towers, and all that used to be a field we used to play in it was called Green's Fields, and woods, and we used to go up there playing, but like Mom was saying, about the hospital now in Wilmington, it's now condos up there I think. Where we were actually born, Wilmington General.

BL: So, what games did you play?

JR: In sports, I played football, baseball, and basketball. I went to Newark. I'm the only one that didn't graduate from Newark out of my five siblings [inaudible.]. They all graduated from Newark High School. I went there, but I ended up graduating from St. Mark's.

BL: I'm not.

JR: No. Well. That's where I ended up. It's a private school up off of Kirkwood Highway. And I was lucky. Like I said, my dad worked three jobs, and my mom did housework, domestic, until she started working for Avon's, and that didn't start until when I got in high school, when [inaudible.] went to school. But, my dad worked three jobs, he worked at the post office, he drove school buses, and he was a janitor at Newark High School at night.

MR: He worked on the highway. He worked, worked, worked, to keep the family going.

JR: That's him there [photograph.] He passed away a year ago this month. So it'll be January 23rd, a year ago he passed away. In fact that's a picture of him and his brother when they were in the Newark Memorial Day parade. He was a World War II veteran, and he just got his high school degree, or diploma, two years ago because he qualified as one of those World War II

veterans that left school to fight in the war, and then came back and then they never completed it. They went on with their lives. So, he just got his diploma from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor about two years ago in a ceremony down in Legislative Hall in Dover. Let's see. This [photograph] is a picture of him when he was in the war. In World War II, and that's him. So, like I said, he designed this house on a piece of notebook paper, and salvaged the parts. Him and my mom went around in my dad's pick up and they went to different job sites, and my uncle's tearing down places.

MR: Those bricks came from [inaudible street name.] Avenue.

JR: In Wilmington.

MR: [Inaudible.] up there.

BL: Your house has many stories then.

MR: Yes, it does. It really does.

JR: And the fact is, not only did—pretty much, this community built it because when they saw it going up, people just come around and they just chip in. You know, they was, “What do you need?” and one day it's be somebody else. The whole community sort of built this house to be honest, just by hanging around and chipping in. This really is the last home in this neighborhood that was built that way, from my Uncle Inky's salvaging stuff from his business. But, it's a lot of houses, especially if you go up on the—did you ever see where he actually lived, up on the top of the hill? You might want to see that because he built his house and another one right next to it for his son, which was Lauren, the Channel Six reporter, when they moved from there up to his other house, where he built. So he built that community too.

MD: Do you know—how did he learn how to build houses, did he just sort of learn it from--?

MR: Eighth grade. He'd always say he only had a eighth grade education.

JR: Eighth grade education.

MD: He was self-taught then?

JR: I'd have to say yes, self-taught, he'd have to be, but like she said, he only had an eighth grade education, and he built a whole community up in here. He was smart enough to know that he could make a dollar, save a dollar, I guess. I remember he used to say that, well it's in that article, where he would—sometimes the government would try to audit him because they couldn't believe somebody was building without a profit motive. You know, so when he was [inaudible.] making money, [inaudible.] sometimes auditing him because they just didn't believe that there was a guy out there building homes, but wasn't building for profit, and he wasn't. He was building for comfort, for the neighbors in the neighborhood. So, that part of him, I mean I hope that's told, 'cause that's the truth that I can remember.

MR: He brought running water into the homes. Before that, most of the homes had outside pumps.

MD: And this was when he built Terry Manor.

MR: This was before he started Terry Manor, when he started fighting for the water. This was before Terry Manor.

JR: You guys have been over to see them homes over in Terry Manor.

MD: Yes.

BL: I live in Pencader, so.

JR: Oh, yes. [Laughter.]

BL: So, what's your best memory of living here? Do you have one? Either of you?

JR: Oh, me?

BL: Either one.

MR: Well, they're all good memories.

JR: I don't want to cut my mom off, but I'm super proud that I know that we had some stability that a lot of people didn't have, because like I said, she's been on the street—my oldest sister's 57, and they've been here longer than that, so. But, there's folks that are in our neighborhood, that may have lived on New London for some years, and the next day they're living in Terry Manor for a few, then they might be living over on Ray Street. So, my best memory is the fact that we had stability. Our family had stability and we were kept together, and we were raised as a family. I call us "the black Brady Bunch," 'cause there was three boys and three girls. [Laughter.] And we was all together, so those are my fondest memories, the fact that I was able to be raised like that, and then I know that folks like me, not everybody like me can say that under the circumstances that we were born, raised. We were blessed. The Roys were blessed, I would say that, and I think my sisters and my brothers would all say the same thing too. [Missing part of recording.] up and down this street. The whole community was a playground. Hide and seek, and football out in the street.

MR: Down in the field.

[MR and JR speaking together.]

JR: Yes, the University parking lot now was a field that we used to play football, baseball, anything.

MR: It's a parking lot now, but it used to be.

JR: It had trees. It had wineberry trees, and wild strawberries in the grass at times, and—they were mulberry trees, that what they were called Mom? The mulberries. Yes. We'd go down there and eat off the trees.

MD: That was Green's Field?

BL: No.

JR: No. This is the Big Field. It used to be Hollingsworth.

MR: Hollingsworth. Just Hollingsworth parking lot now.

JR: Well, it's the University parking lot, where you guys art center is?

MR: The art center, yes.

JR: That used to be a lumberyard, and then outside the lumberyard was a field. I guess they must have owned that too, huh Mom? I mean, I don't know. I just knew that was the field.

MR: When they closed down Hollingsworth, that's when they moved that building that was the building where your grandmother—

JR: Yes, and my dad had something to do with that too. That house-- where my aunts live, my cousin's in there now, but my aunt owned it, my dad's sister—used to be a office building for Hollingsworth, and then they moved it from Hollingsworth up to where it is right now.

MR: It was the American Legion. The American Legion [inaudible.]

JR: And then they had what, the [inaudible.] or something, and then swapped titles, or something. I don't know.

MR: That lot next door to it, was a little house on it. I don't know whether they built it or not, but that was American Legion, and it burned down, then that's when they took over, the Hollingsworth did.

JR: In fact, when we say Terry Manor, this is who we're talking about. This [photograph] is Terry. That's her, and that's her, and that's the back of her. I don't know what year it is because my brother's 43 now, and he's a lot bigger than me, but [inaudible.] I wish that we had—these are my sisters, that's one of my sisters, and my niece, the one that's 37. This is a part of our porch of our old house. That's my 36 year old niece. She lives in California now. That's Tamika. She's 36, yes. But, that what you see is our porch, and that used to be the pool hall. Then we had to tear down that house. It had two apartments, and we lived on the bottom part, and there was one on the back end and one on the front end that my dad and mom would rent out.

MD: And what street was that on?

JR: Right here.

MD: Oh, right.

JR: It's—where our yard is.

MD: Oh, right. That's the one you had to tear down.

JR: Yes.

MR: [Inaudible.] [Laughter.]

JR: [Inaudible.] Always found a way into somebody's house. That's my brother in that picture. My older brother got killed in a car accident my senior year of high school.

[Tape Ends.]

JR: [Tape begins mid-sentence.] I always did. We always had the biggest trees and people would always come down just to look at our trees, and then I realized our house was small. That's small compared to—then again, the house might have been small and the tree looked big in there, but we always had the biggest trees, and we always—at least I thought, we always had the best Christmases.

BL: Now did—you attended church here?

JR: Yes. Pilgrim Baptist. It was right at the end of the street, but now it's down off Barksdale Road, but this is the church that's right at the end of the street, that's where we all went. And even though we were all from the same community, some of us went to Pilgrim, some of them went to St. John's on the corner, and some, like the Haymens right next door, they went to Mt. Zion, and it used to be fun because they would arrange for Sunday School picnics, and all the churches in town would try to raise, like they'll all go to Dorney Park, or they'll all go to Hershey Park, or Wildwood or something like that. Yes, those three churches and the Elks Lodge really was the, like I say, cornerstone.

MR: Well, the community center was right out back of it. They tore it down. That's where they show movies. I came from Pennsylvania, and we were at least allowed to get to the movies there, but we come here, there was nowhere to go to the movies, and my niece would say, why couldn't we go to the movies, and I'd explain to her, try to explain to her, why we couldn't go to the movies.

BL: So the community center showed movies and it was right—

MR: They was silent, what do you call them?

JR: Silent movies? They didn't have no talking.

MR: No, you had to read it.

JR: But she said it was right behind?

MR: Right behind it.

JR: Yes, it was right behind.

BL: By the Elks Lodge sort of?

JR: It would have been right next to the Lodge, right?

MD: Did you ever go to The Wagon Wheel?

MR: Yes. Jim Bell's Wagon Wheel? Yes.

JR: Yes.

MR: Oh, what year was that? That was [inaudible.] years, I guess.

MD: What was it like there?

MR: Well, it was a place to go to have a good time, if you like it. [Laughter.] They had a swimming pool up there.

MD: One of the things we're interested in finding out is places, so I was wondering if you could think of any other places, like restaurants or stores, or you know, like the barbershop? Stuff like that.

JR: Has anybody mentioned Mr. Bobby's barbershop. Okay, yes.

BL: Well, you can tell us about.

JR: Kitty and Jim's store? They mention that? Kitty and Jim's store, to you?

[Inaudible.]

JR: Like it was, where would it be now? Well it's the basketball court, probably on University property. It was on Cleveland Avenue. It was what we called, what you call them kind of stores? Convenience stores, like a mom and pop store where, they lived on this part of the building, and the store was on that part of the building. Bernie's market used to be down there where right behind Wonderland. Wonderland used to be, what? Linton's restaurant.

MR: Linton's was—

JR: Well, I can remember knocking on the back door. We'd have a quarter. We could go knock on the back door and they would sell us a bag of French fries for a quarter. I don't know if the guy was just—

MR: [Inaudible.] [Laughter.]

JR: Yes. We used to do that. Us kids, we could knock on the door and somebody would—

MR: Richards [?] had that store on the corner where the Wonderland is.

JR: So that was a store then.

MR: That was a store at one time. [Inaudible.] my brother, he had what you called a tab there, so when I needed anything I'd just go down and put it on the tab.

JR: And here's a—I don't want to cut you off—but this [photograph] is Lauren and that's her dad, this administrator, dived for the University of Delaware, named Richard Wilson. That's Lauren. That's the one you see on Channel Six all the time, the Delaware correspondent. WPBI Channel Six. Yes. We were all, like I said, from the same—so you definitely have to mention Church Street.

MD: It's famous.

JR: Yes. I think so. [Laughter.] My mom used to have a bunch of pictures around here. They might be up in the attic, and I think I showed you, that [photograph]'s Ricky. That's the one that went to the University that's the lieutenant colonel.

BL: Yes. You showed me.

JR: So [inaudible.] he was, like I said, just him and his dad.

MR: The pool hall was here when I got here.

BL: Where you moved into.

MR: Yes, and that was owned by George's brother.

JR: Which one was that, the doctor?

MR: Yes, Dr. Louis [?]. There was two doctors, one was a dentist.

JR: One was a doctor, one was a dentist, and he was an eighth grade dropout [Laughter.]

MR: He dropped out.

BL: Mrs. Roy, what's your best memory?

MR: Well, they're all good memories. It's just being in the community, being able to get along with everybody.

MD: I'm going to stop this for one second. I think this one's running out of batteries.

MR: How long have you been on campus?

BL: Well, this is just my fourth year.

MR: Your fourth year?

BL: Yes.

JR: You know any guys by the last name McCollister or Kendra Yancy? She just graduated. Well, she just graduated last year. She was a math major. That's my niece, and then my other two nieces, one graduated in 2000 and the other came out in 2002 from the University of Delaware.

MR: [Inaudible name.] she graduated.

JR: She came out in 2000.

MR: 2000?

JR: Yes.

MR: She was down at the—

JR: Charter School. She was down at the Newark Charter—

MR: Down on Barksdale Road. [Inaudible.]

JR: Know anybody that worked for MBNA? No. I know there were a lot of college—that's where I work—and I just know there's a lot of students they cater to more or less.

BL: Yes.

JR: Obviously you guys aren't one of them. [Laughter.]

BL: Well, no, I know people that work at MBNA, so.

MD: Well there's just a couple more things I wanted to ask about, one was baptisms. Some of the other people said that people used to be baptized at the creek before—

JR: Down at—

MR: [Inaudible.] I guess that was before my time. I know in Pennsylvania they baptized in White Clay Creek. They did here too before they had the baptismal pools in the churches, but my children were all baptized in the church.

MD: And then another thing I wanted to ask about was if there was any names for the neighborhood because some people have referred to it as "The Village" or "The Row."

JR: The Section.

MR: The Row, that was one. The Row. When they said, "The Row," we knew what they was talking about. Afro-American Row, only you can't call it The Row anymore because there aren't very many African-Americans on The Row.

JR: [Laughs.] No. Did you guys know a David Holmes, used to be equipment manager down at the University? Down at the Field House and worked down at "The Bob"? Or Wayne? Guy named Wayne? Or Cooper?

MD and BL: No. [Laughter.]

JR: Dave worked there about 30 years.

MR: Yes he did.

MD: So did a lot of the people from the community work for the University at some point?

MR: Most of the people in the community worked at the University.

JR: Except for my mom and dad didn't, that I remember.

MR: Well, most of them, but I think I comes from [inaudible.]

JR: I know Gary's grandma, Miss Haymen did.

MR: Well, that was where the jobs where.

JR: Yes, 'cause everybody on the street, Mr. [inaudible name.] Miss Niecey [?], did she work there?

MR: Yes. I worked there for about two weeks. [Laughter.]

BL: What did you do for two weeks?

MR: Oh, what did we do? [Laughter.]

JR: You guys [inaudible.] or something different?

MR: No.

JR: Oh.

MR: What did we do? That's been so long ago. I was just a teenager, and we figured out we made fifteen cents an hour.

JR: So that's when you quit?

MR: That's when we staged a sit-in. [Laughter.] And then we had to go home.

BL: You staged a sit-in?

MR: We staged a sit-in. When we figured out we was making fifteen cents an hour, we wanted a raise.

BL: And they didn't give it to you.

MR: No, they did not. [Laughter.]. [Missing part of recording.] down here. What year was it that they decided to come in the community? Like I said, my niece, she be become a registered nurse. When she first moved here she was a small child, wondered why she couldn't go to the movies. We was used to going to the movies.

MD: There was a couple other places that I wanted to ask about—the Hollow?

JR: I don't know what that is.

MR: I think that was where Jameses lived. They're off of—

JR: On Ray Street?

MR: On Ray Street, corner of Ray Street and Creek Road. That was the Hollow.

JR: Okay, that's, he was—

MR: No, that's who bought George Wilson's house, down there.

JR: Yes, he bought that off Uncle Inky, but from what I understand Gary was saying had Mr. Herb [?], when he sold that property, that's when they first started building Pencader and The Towers. That's what gave them the access that they could connect the University of Delaware from where they are now up there, to make it like it runs right down North College or whatever street is there, but that's what he sold. Before that, they wouldn't have had no access to it, and man, I remember, Ray Street used to have all row homes too, from what I remember.

MR: [Inaudible.] wasn't paved.

BL: Was anything paved?

MR: Church Street wasn't paved.

JR: I can remember when it wasn't paved. I can vaguely remember that. It was just dirt.

MD: So there wasn't much traffic?

MR: Well, not really. I can't remember what year it was that they paved Church Street.
[Inaudible.] Ray Street.

MD: What about School Hill?

MR: That's where children—.

JR: That's where George Wilson Center is. That was School Hill. That's the School Hill. We all played there. That was our recreation, and during the summers, where we had, it was called New London, we'd have Olympics against different recreations around Newark, and we were representing, ours was called New London, and there was like, West Park, and Kells Avenue, and different recreations that we would have a summer Olympics, and we'd represent School Hill.

BL: Did you guys win?

JR: I don't like to brag, but most of the time we did. [Laughter.].

BL: So, what'd you get if you won?

JR: Ribbons or little trophies, and things of that nature, and then maybe a treat when we got back up on the hill, once we got up here, but yes, we would compete for ribbons and trophies, stuff like that. Certificates.

MD: What'd you have to do?

JR: Racing, like hundred yard dashes, fifty yard dashes, three legged races, soft ball throws, let's see, quarter mile run. Things like that. Obstacles courses, things like that.

BL: Now, would you train for this? [Laughter.]

JR: Yes. Unofficially, because we were from the neighborhood and we did it anyway. Now we don't have to compete against ourselves, we can go outside and compete.

BL: That's the first time I've heard that.

JR: Oh, about the Olympics?

BL: Yes.

JR: That was a big thing we used to always look forward to, just so we could come and win everything, or so we tried to. That was fun, and we knew that, it wasn't the way it is now, it was a condemned building, and when we got hot, they would run a hose, turn the hose on. That's how we would line up, we was all hot and sweaty, we'd take turns drinking out of a hose, drinking water, and that was our recreation. So we always felt like we were underdogs when we went to the other recreation places 'cause they weren't drinking out of hoses and stuff like that, so that was the fun part. Yes. And it was pretty much sponsored by the Newark Parks and Recreation. Those are the ones that really sponsored these events back then.

MD: And when did that stop?

JR: [Whistles.] Well, I'm 47. Way long time before me. Actually, I'm not sure if they even still—they may, they really may be still doing it, I don't even know. I don't know if they're doing it now, so it might not have ended, or they still could be going. I'm not sure about that, but that was something we used to look forward to every summer, just the competing part. I'm trying to think of what else. Well, it was just, like I said, I'm just glad I was able to grow up in this type of community because, even though we may have—well, I never thought I was poor, but we all never really knew what poor was because—

MR: Everybody was the same.

JR: Yes, everybody, and like I said, we nurtured each other. Nobody was hungry in this neighborhood 'cause somebody. There was food in the neighborhood, so you would eat.

MD: Did a lot of people grow their own food and animals and stuff like that?

MR: Not a lot, [inaudible.] we had chickens.

JR: How 'bout Mr. Sherman Woods.

MR: Oh, yes. Mr. Sherman was like the biggest farmer.

JR: Mention his name Sherman Woods. Tyrone used to get mad, we used to chase his chickens across School Hill. [Inaudible.] Once they got out, we would chase them, then they would get made 'cause they'd see us chasing the chickens. [Laughter.]

BL: You'd chase them into the field or something?

JR: Yes. We really shouldn't have did it, but we did. He was—what was he like? You ever seen Sanford and Son?

BL and MD: Yes.

JR: Well, Mr. Sherman was sort of like the Sanford around here.

MR: He'd collect old things and resell them, and he sold produce from his garden.

JR: He would smoke cigars, and he was so tight that when his cigar got short, he would stick it in a pipe, and would finish smoking the cigar out of a pipe. [Laughter.] So it wasn't unusual to see him smoking a pipe with this much of a cigar sticking out. [Laughter.] I remember that about him They said he was so tight—this is what Tracey tell me, that his mom said, “There goes Sherman again—” He would drift his car down a hill just so he didn't have to use any gas, and then soon as he got down to the bottom and was getting ready to go back up to the hill, that's when you could hear him canking his car up—

BL: He would just coast.

JR: Yes, he'd coast all the way down the hill, then as soon as he got up he'd turn it off. That was his way of conserving energy. [Laughter.]

BL: So that's why he grew vegetables and things.

JR: Oh yes, sold and salvaged. It was like a regular old Sanford up there. Junk man, we called him. I mean, and then I don't remember the animals.

MR: [Inaudible.] now.

JR: Huh?

MR: I don't know what's up on that [Inaudible.]

JR: Well Tyrone just gets nothing now. Tyrone grows his own, he still grows vegetables and stuff. One of his grandsons is still working the land I guess, because there's no house on there.

BL: So it's like two doors down?

JR: Right. If you go up to School Hill it's the dead end street. It's called Grays Avenue.

BL: Yes.

JR: Then right at the end of Grays Avenue, that's where he lived.

BL: Oh, okay.

JR: It's like a cul-de-sac now, but Mr. Sherman lived down in there, from what I remember. I remember that house too vaguely. They tore it down, but I do remember all of the junk on his property.

MR: He made money off of that though.

JR: Yes. Knowing what I know now, I'm sure he did. [Laughter.]. Has anybody ever mentioned that name? Sherman Woods?

BL: No, not that I've read.

JR: Yes, Sherman. They did mention Mr. Bobby Saunders.

MD: The barber.

JR: I'm trying to think of what else.

MR: Yes, and they had luncheons [?] There on the corner by the Ice House. The Ice House was there first, and they built a snack bar.

JR: Mr. Bobby?

MR: A snack bar, up here on the corner.

BL: On the corner of what?

MR: New London and Cleveland. On the right hand side.

BL: On the right hand side. So it's kind of that cream with brown colored house?

MR: It was right in that area.

JR: Where that new house is right across the street from Sarah's?

MR: No, that's where—

JR: I remember there was a red club there or something.

MR: That was Jack Saunders.

JB: Was his brother. Was that a bar?

MR: That was a bar.

MD: What kind of snacks did they have?

MR: Oh, ice cream and cake, sandwiches.

MD: So the Saunders owned a lot of stuff, right?

JR: Yes.

MR: Across the street right here, was a—Miss Virginia Saunders had a little store.

JR: Here on Church Street?

MR: No, on New London Avenue.

JR: Oh, where Russell and them grew up?

MR: Yes.

JR: I remember vaguely the building. It was condemned or whatever, or shutdown.

MR: That's where [inaudible].

JR: And Herbie and the Tuckers, Mr. Bobby own both of them? 'Cause Herbie and them lived on one side, and Jeanette and them Tuckers lived on the other side, and you had to walk up them steps.

MR: Underneath where they had—

JR: The store.

MR: The store.

JR: That's how I remember, but it was abandoned and was just nothing in there, like storage. It wasn't a store then. You could tell it was something.

MR: It was a store where you could buy lunch meat, kerosene for your oil lamp.

BL: Now, when someone moved into the community, how were they welcomed? Was it just another person or--?

MR: Just another person moved in and become part of the neighborhood, nothing special, just moved in, started living. [Laughs].

MD: Well, I have just one quick question, actually, looking at this article—how did George Wilson get the name “Inky”?

JR: You might be able to answer that one. Something about when he was a kid—

MR: Well, he was Inky when I got here.

JR: Somebody said he was a kid and was chewing on an ink pen or something. This is what I heard. He was chewing on a pen and ink got all over him, and that's how they started calling him “Inky.” I could be wrong.

MR: [Inaudible.]

JR: If you guys, really—I could give you, if you really had time, you might even want to talk to her—I could give you how to get in touch with Lauren on Channel Six if that might help you. I mean if you guys still wanted to add some.

BL: We want to talk to everybody possible.

JR: Okay, let me do this, let me give you her—I'll just write down her information. [Writes down.] She would be more than willing I'm sure. Tell her you talked to her Aunt Mac and her Cousin Jamie.

MD: Well, we're getting near the end of our time. Do you have any other questions?

JR: I hope we were helpful to you guys.

BL: Is there anything else you want to say about the community or living here? A memory, a special memory that you had that you just want to tell?

JR: Well, other than Church Street being the greatest street in the community. [Laughter.] No, just the fact that to be raised in this type of community, especially since I've grown up and been able to travel throughout the United States, and out of the United States, and seeing different living conditions, and things were socioeconomics are factors, I'm blessed. I always say that because, like I said, I was raised six of us, and I believe I'm lucky enough to go to a private school when we really probably couldn't afford it, but she worked two jobs, and my dad worked three jobs to raise us. So my biggest memory is the fact that we came from a community that was really village, and we all looked out for each other, the families, and that's how we were raised, and I guess that's my biggest good memory, and how we built this home, our community.

JR: And there's another lady in this town by the name of Myrtle Watson. Yes, you might want to, she's 85. She was trying to be here, but she had some other things that came up tonight, 'cause she was going to be here tonight, that's my godmother. How old is she Mom? About 80? 77, 78.

MR: But she brought—her sister passed—and she brought all five sons here and raised them. Well, gave them a chance. The oldest one's in twelfth grade.

JR: She brought all them. Now, she lived over one of the apartments that we were telling you, we lived on the bottom, and there was one in the front and one in the back, well Mom Myrt lived in the back. It was a one bedroom apartment. She had a sister that died that was living in Florida, and her sister had five kids, and so she went down and got all five of those kids, and raised them, brought them all up here.

MR: Kept them all together.

JR: Right, kept them all together. They was from an infant up to a twelfth-grader in high school when they came. She went down there and got them. They had never been up this way.

MR: They never saw snow.

JR: I remember that. There were just nothing—they had never seen snow before. So, like I said, kept them all together. I was hoping she could have been here tonight because my mom came here when she was fourteen, but Mom Myrt been here ever since. She was raised here, really, so she would have some even deeper memories of my mom I'm assuming, at fourteen. My dad—it's a shame you couldn't have gotten here a year earlier. He was born here.

MR: He was living here before. He was living with Mr. Wilson.

JR: I guess he started buying that property when he must have been about 21. 21 or 22.

MR: [Inaudible.]

JR: And that's what we bought off Uncle Inky. Well, they bought it off Uncle Inky. I was raised in a pool room. [Laughter.] You know Mr. Fats would have been good to talk to because he's still living and he helped dad built for [inaudible.] Helped making it a house, partitioning them things off.

MR: [Inaudible.] Come by, need to have a permit. We didn't even know we had to have a permit.

JR: We had to have a permit to built this too, didn't you?

MR: Oh, yes. [Inaudible.]

JR: Yes, and actually [inaudible.] our old house is buried next door. We didn't haul it away. We dug a big hole and buried it. Don't tell the city, but that's where it's at, so. [Inaudible.]

BL: So, we can just go dig it up right?

JR: Yes. I just wish I had pictures because 'cause you could have seen that and you know, before and after, but maybe in the next book. [Laughter.]

MD: Well, if no one has anything else to add—I just want to thank you guys.

BL: Thank you so much.

JR: I hope we were helpful.

MD: Absolutely. So it's now 6:05 and we'll [Inaudible.]

[Tape shuts off.]

