

MSS 642, New London Road/Cleveland Avenue oral histories and research materials, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

**Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library / Newark,
Delaware 19717-5267 / Phone: 302-831-2229 / Fax: 302-831-6003 / URL:
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/>**

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library,
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi>

[inaudible] That's the good thing about this real little area. So much influence come out of this area. There's so much history there.

BH: Hold on let me introduce the tape and we'll get started.

A: And what you need to do. See Miss [name] and Miss Myrtle and [name] are the oldest people in here that could still talk. There's Marie [name]'s mother. She's the oldest one in the neighborhood that lives here, in Newark, but she just had her leg amputated. I haven't talk to Cally.

B: Bernie, you live on West Main?

BH: I live on West Main. Let me introduce the tape. We're here today, this is the 29th of August with Kenneth Hall and Pedro Swann and Clarence Pepper Wigham and me, Bernie Herman, and we're going to be talking about the neighborhood around New London Road, and I turn it over to. Start by talking about growing up here.

KH: OK, now are you taping this now?

BH: I am.

KH: OK, now what we need to do is, this area here that we live in, you get a map and look at Newark, and then you look at this area up here, the black area, which was in 1955 or 1954, when we integrated Newark High School. Before then, before we integrated Newark High School, the kids up here knew one another, that lived here. Like we had the Gray? families that lived down here on Cleveland Avenue, we had Jackson? family we had the Phelps or Phillips? family down there, and this girl Phyllis, she was born and raised right there where she was, and them people had some influence into the Newark here, and you can see by some of those pictures and videotapes, can picture the way it grew. This, next door to the Elks Club here, was a community center, which had a lot of--

[Multiple people speaking]: All kinds of activities.

PS: All kinds of stuff, you name the function and it has been at the community center. And it was, people that was involved in it Miss Lilly Brown, Miss Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Cora Thomas the people that was there, that was part of the Elks and lived in this area here, and they were people that were dedicated to this area and I know that as I was coming up, we played football, baseball, over the University of Delaware with the white guys, and up on West Main Street there, they had the Griffith family boys. Their backyard ran into our grandfathers backyard. We played football up there, the guys, Fats Watson, Bubbles.

KH: Bubbles downstairs now.

PS: Is Bubbles downstairs? You got to tell him to come up here.

KH: I thought he was coming up here.

A: And the people that lived around here, were part of the history of this town. And as the town grew, people coming in here, and the Phelps/Phillips? Packing Company brought in a lot of black people that were working at their plant, down there on [name] Lane and Phillips? Lane down there was a packing company down there, but they brought in a lot of people, Iris, Davis, his family came in through there, and they were just pouring in, and as the town grew, and as more and more people were going to college there, up until say 1954, it was the number of guys that went to college and girls went to college, you could pick them out, one by one, by hand, and people that, some of them Pedro know and some of them Pepper knew, and you know that they they've been to college, like Reed, Robert Reed, and he lives down in Virginia now, and he has one of his legs amputated.

?: I didn't see him, I was down there the Fourth of July, I didn't see him

CW: June and Chubby had a cook out but he wasn't there. That's Ernie right? Ernie Reed?

A: Ernie?

CW: We called him Ernie. I thought his name was Ernie

A: No, his name was Robert. His boy that, his son he had by Cathleen, his name was Robert, and Reed was ... of him going to college. That's one of the poor families, you know? His mother, Reed's mother was a midwife in the day, and Miss Clemmie, everybody says, 'Oh Miss [name] had a baby.' 'How you know that' 'Saw Miss Reed going in there with her-- saw Miss Clemmie with her little black bag.'

BH: What was her first name?

A: Her name was Clementine Reed. Clementine Reed, and she was a midwife of this area. She delivered some of the white babies around here too. Her and Miss Alice [name] was a white nurse, who lived down there on the corner where Happy Harry's is on Main Street. There was a big white house there, and she lived in there, and she was a nurse, a certified nurse, and her and Miss Clemmie delivered damn near every baby.

CW: The closest hospital was Wilmington then.

A: What?

CW: The closest hospital was Wilmington.

A: Yes, oh yes.

CW: And the only ambulance service we had was volunteer service. So if you needed an ambulance you had to wait for the fire whistle to blow, and somebody leaves home and

goes to the fire station, get an ambulance, and come pick somebody up, and then take them all the way to Wilmington. So the white people would say, well call Miss Clemmie, call her up, and she'd go over there and she'd do whatever she had to do. If the baby came before the ambulance did, then she delivered it.

A: She delivered it, and there was Dr. Downs, Dr. Mencher down there. He lived in the neighborhood and somebody, 'Has Clemmie been up there yet?' and it was a lot of people around here that new about delivering babies and a lot of them helped to it like Margaret, [inaudible] name was Johnson [Other Voice: Bishop] and she had some knowledge of medicine and delivered babies. People just pitched in, and whenever somebody had a baby, say, 'Hey Miss so-and-so had a baby,' and 'How you know that?' 'Cause Miss Clemmie just came out of there, you know.'

CW: The thing about it is, the one thing I remember the most around here, cause when I grew up there was guys like him to influence me. I loved sports. I got into sports because of him because he was getting so much recognition playing sports, but the thing about what really held this neighborhood together was the three churches. All three churches was right on the same street. We had the Baptist Church down there, we had St. John's Church right there, and then Mount Zion down the hill. Now Mount Zion was across the street up on the hill. St. John's is still there, but the Baptist Church is on Barksdale Road, but you had those three churches, and those churches were so influential in the community, and then the people. It was certain people like Mr. Bobby Saunders, and absolutely the biggest influence on anybody had to be George Wilson. I mean he had vision for our area. He wasn't worried about no other place in Newark, it was right here in our area. I mean, he come in he built the houses in Terry Manor, the one that he lives in. All them houses that was on Ray Street, he built all those houses there. I mean he had vision. Matter of fact, I remember when he had the place right down here Poody Wood lives now. Now that was a chippies joint. Poody lived upstairs and--

BH: [inaudible] chippies joint?

CW: A chippies joint is like a place where the teenagers hang out. They had a jukebox in there. You could go in there and get cheeseburgers, soda--

A: Hot dogs, had pool tables in there, and we knew that on Friday night there's no young kids up in there, cause the old guys gonna be there shooting craps on the pool table. So you knew that Friday night that the only way we was gonna get in that place is after the craps game was over.

CW: Well going to Mr. Bobby's. Mr. Bobby Saunders had a store right on the corner of New London and Cleveland Avenue, and he even had gas pumps out there, didn't' he? And on the side he had a little [inaudible] juke joint.

A: And they had pool tables in there, and they shot craps in there, and Neil Carter--

?: He was the number writer.

A: And he was the number writer. Everybody, all the people knew [inaudible] and they could apt to tell you who the number writers was, Neil Carter, [names].

CW: They came to your house. I mean that was the only lotteries back in the day, and matter of fact, the legal lottery kind of put them guys out of business. I mean, my grandmother, she wasn't a wealthy woman, but she played her numbers for twenty-five cents every day, so even if she hit on her numbers, the best you could make was twenty dollars, on twenty-five cent, and you'd be surprised the things that—I mean the community was there, and nobody bothered nobody. You could lay on your floor with the door wide open, 'cause it was hot back in the days, no air conditioning. So we had all the doors open, all the windows up, and screens up, and we laid out on the floor, 'cause the higher you go up, the hotter it gets.

[Mutiple Voices speaking simultaneously, inaudible]

CW: Now you remember that [inaudible]

A: Our grandfather being a [inaudible], there was never damn lock on the door. Every house up there, there wasn't no lock on the door.

?: Didn't need no lock!

A: After 1960, I'd say, people started to lock their doors, but before then, we would leave our house down there and go up on New London Avenue school ground there and sleep up there all night long.

?: Yep, on the hill.

A: Up on the hill. Black people, and we stayed up there. In the morning we got up, went the hell on home, Saturday morning you know.

?: Couldn't miss breakfast.

A: Couldn't miss breakfast.

?: Breakfast was too good back in that day.

?: He'll tell you about, my grandfather used to make shortening bread on a pancake griddle. It was about this big around, and man that stuff would swell up like that, and you just slice it and put butter in that bad boy, and you could eat it, aw man, it taste so good. The only thing I didn't like was that daggone salt mackerel. You'd have fried potatoes and eggs, but that salt mackerel. Even those rolls got real salty, but like I said, it's so much history.

?: It's so much history around here in this town. People you could, you could sit down, and I think we need to start at that railroad track that comes right on up the line, the different things that happen around here, in Newark. I can remember when ... that house is still there, Bubbles and his family... When I was coming up, the first family that lived there was the Conkey family. Next door to them it was a open lot there that we used to call, they used to have a icehouse there, and Tony Wilson was the iceman, and grandmamma said 'Go and tell Tony, I need a ten cent piece of ice.' Which was about this big. So we had a icebox, we didn't have a refrigerator, we had a icebox.

BH: So a ten cent piece of ice—

?: Oh it was a big hunk. When the iceman came around, he had these big hooks, and he had it over top of his shoulder. He had to carry it like that cause it was so heavy. Boy I remember when the ice man come around and—you put it in the back of the icebox to keep stuff cold.

A: And everybody that lived up here got ice from Tony, and the ice company out in Wilmington would bring the ice, if Tony didn't have no room in his box, he would take it down on Main Street, where Arthur Pruitts had a gas station down there, where the diner is now, and Dr. Pruitt had that ice house down there, and Tony he's ... take me down to the ice house, we'd be couple hundred pounds of ice delivered, you know they delivered ten cent pieces, fifteen cent pieces.

?: It's a big chunk for ten cents back in them day.

A: It was wonderful.

?: Bout a two or three foot long piece of ice.

?: It was about this wide, about like this. And about three feet long. And the guy hooked it with them hooks, and put it over his shoulder to carry. You couldn't carry them like this. He had to put it over his shoulder.

A: When you got them three pieces together, they were [inaudible,laughter]. And you had to come up this road here, and to each one of them houses, and say 'Who lives here?' and somebody would tell you the history about that. I know [name] Swann, my grandfather, he was living ... used to be a carpenter though. Between old Edgar's father, they were like old man Edgar, Swann, I need some help, okay, they'd go ahead and help. And old man ... came--

CW: He's talking about our grandfather. I mean, remember, Mr. Bobby Saunders was like one of the rich people here, him and his brother Jack, build a lot of houses on New London, and so when he needed something repaired, like carpentry work or something like that done, he always called my grandfather, he worked for, but now, we had another man that was related to us to, he was electrician in the family, Mr. Mac Johnson, so it was like, each one of these people had different roles in the community. You know like

something happened electrical, something like that, they wouldn't call no electrician, they'd go call Mr. Mac Johnson.

[Other voice: inaudible]

'Cause Mr. Mac Johnson was a brilliant man, real brilliant man.

I'm going to tell you how brilliant he was. Governor [name] broke his neck down here and Mr. Mac Johnson set his neck. Oh yes, oh yes.

A: The oldest person right now that could probably tell you anything about that is the guy by the name of Leroy Hill. His father was a cop and Leroy lives over on Prospect Avenue over here. [inaudible]

There's a baseball field named after him down there on Barksdale Road.

A: His father was a cop, and the people that lived here in Newark new that, ..Swann, Mr. Mac Johnson. They had Mr. Tommy Allison who helped with the .. work down there, and Mr. Money that lived directly across the street there, which I don't know, Pepper would remember. Mr. Watson, I think ... father died before you--

CW: I remember well, Toots, and then the other one, named ..., nicknamed ... This guy right here man, I remember when he died. He was asleep and he used to always put ice in a jar and put water in there because he liked ice water. And what he did was, he woke up one night and drank a whole quart full of ice water and it killed him. Remember when they was talking about that's what killed him? He drank that ice water and it did something to him or something.

But it was people in here that had certain rules that we were taught. Mr. [name], he lived over on Corbett Street through there. He was a jack of all trades.

Yes, he worked on people's cars in the garage.

Garage, he worked, him and Mike Wilson, they were down at Fader Motor Company, down on Main Street.

Fader Ford.

They Mike and old man .. was in there, and another guy, white guy that lived up there Pennsylvania line. Them guys worked down at the Fader Motor Company down there. Old man Fader lived up on top the hill.

Yes.

A: And it was just, people had a act of making a living working over at the [inaudible] mill and the paper mill. Down the ... guys down there. I heard say that the black guys

weren't getting the same price that white guys were getting that worked down at the fiber mill down there, but they had jobs, and they were getting them, and it was like, okay I got a job down at the mill there, so I'm working. And they worked, and they got their paycheck every Friday, and it might not have been I don't know how many white guys are, 'Hey man, this is what I'm getting, and what are you getting?' And they decided, I think it was--

[inaudible] long time at the paper mill.

A: And then, when they started unionizing, people got upset when Chrysler was coming in here. Chrysler ain't gonna be here that many years. Brookside not going to be there. Chrysler came down there.

B: Chrysler made a big difference in Newark.

A: But what it was, it was the tank plant that came in there that really made the difference. The tank plant was there before Chrysler.

B: Wasn't that for the Korean War or something? They had the tank plant?

A: It was before that.

B: And then they started making cars.

A: They started making cars in there in—

B: 1955. That's when Clarence came here from, that's when his dad came here from Detroit.

A: Chrysler came here but, 1950 to 51, I was a junior at--

B: No, you graduated in '55.

A: I graduated in '55, but--

B: [Inaudible] Howard then.

A: When we were going to Howard, the tank plant was down there.

B: Yes, the tank plant was, yes.

A: And the tank plant was down there, and then after the tank plant they started building cars down there, and when I was in the tenth grade we were getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning unloading ninety pound bags of cement for the Chrysler plant down there, and we were doing the work that Howard High School's football team had two practices a day. We only went to one of them. Mr. Neil said, ... Wilson at 5 o'clock in the morning,

picking up them ninety pounds bags of cement. We took it out of a boxcar, and we take them out the boxcar onto a truck, then—

B: They didn't have cement trucks then.

A: And at twelve thirty everyday we'd leave from down there at the depot, the [inaudible] depot and go on up to Rte. 40 to Wilmington over to George [name] school up on Governer Prince Boulevard for football practice. Take our stuff home with us, every night just come back and go to afternoon football practice, and just the same thing over and over again until that job got done and after the University was built, Smith Hall, and we had access to working down there, and they would send the furniture in here on the boxcar down to Newark, and we would go and the old man, the old man is George Wilson, had the job of unloading the furniture in there. We unloaded the furniture in Smith Hall, down the University of Delaware, and it was just part of the life here, and George Wilson, he had a lot of jobs that poor people would do, and--

B: George Wilson was the biggest influence in this neighborhood because, I don't know if you ever heard about the sit in at the Deer Park.

BH: No go ahead.

B: Well George Wilson. I was a young kid and he staged, because back in them days when I was a young kid, blacks weren't allowed in the restaurants. They had the Newark Restaurant down on Main Street, right next to the Five and Ten. Now you could get something to eat out there, but you couldn't go through the front door. You had to go around back, knock on the door, and tell them what you want, and then they'd give it to you, and then you could walk around front and go wherever you wanted to go. Same thing at the Deer Park. Blacks weren't allowed to drink in there, they weren't allowed to eat in there. They had to go around behind in the back to the door.

Everybody who worked in the kitchen there was black.

Was black. Everybody worked in the kitchen was black, and the lady that owned the Deer Park down there, she was Miss Mac.

I remember her face but I can't think of her name.

Her name was Mac, and everybody called her Mrs. Mac, and her and her boyfriend or husband owned it, and down there--

She drove a Cadillac with that little poodle with her all the time. That little poodle.

And the guy that owned the restaurant down off the side of the [inaudible] store [inaudible] ice cream [inaudible], and next to that was Neighbor's drug store.

George Neighbors.

George Neighbors was kind of a nice guy, but we could go in there and order some Coke, ice cream soda or something, and you'd pay for it up front there, but we knew that we had to go back out that door. [Inaudible] sit down and it was like three of us or four of us there, whoever got there first they would sit, and like this is the end of the counter you know, we'd sit there and drink it until everybody .. gone out, but there was a lot of people knowing what the right thing was, and a lot of the whites knew that things were going to happen, and they could see the things happening, especially when the University of Delaware, they knew the University of Delaware was leading in education and here they are, they had a couple people working down there that were black, but you look at them, you thought they were white. Dr. Taylor was a chemistry teacher up at Howard High School. He came down ... and taught. You had Dr. Davis who was from down.. down there. She was teaching down there, but everybody thought, students thought that she was white, but she was a black lady. So as the University was growing, so was this town, and different jobs, our grandmother, she was the nurse, she was the nurse or the nurse's helper down at the student-- she worked for the doctor.

CW: I remember when I cut my foot, I was a young kid. Then, we had milk delivered, and when you go get the milk that had a little metal ring around the neck of it, and you carried that in the house, 'cause the milkman came, Richard Barry, come every day, drop your milk off. And you went out there and get the milk, and the ring part around the neck slipped off and it fell, and I jumped in the air so it wouldn't land on my foot, and it broke, and when I landed on it, it cut my foot right in the middle of my foot, so the first thing they do is rush me down to the University of Delaware, down to their infirmary and Dr. Nutter was a doctor there, and my grandmother worked in the infirmary and he stitched my foot up. I mean I spit on him, I cussed him, I did everything, and it hurt, 'cause back then there wasn't no Novocain buddy when they stitched you up. It hurt.

There wasn't no novocaine back in them days.

BH: Before we get away from it I'd like to hear about the sit in at the Deer Park.

Okay, at the Deer Park, this was at a certain time, when things were changing, and George Wilson was seeing the changes and he was trying to—you know they work for you, but they can't drink in there, and they can't buy this, and so, what they did, they had a sit in. He was getting ready to run for office.

A: Let me tell you about that there. What happened, they had—so we said, okay, we're going in to sit in to the damn Deer Park down there. Well I wasn't twenty-one, but the guys that were twenty-one went down there, ... money them guys.. so they sit down and demanded to sit and George Wilson and them said, on this Friday we're going to go down and sit in at Miss Mac's store, and they told all the white guys that went down to ... came up to the Deer Park ... a couple... and after they went in there, the beers cost five hundred dollars a piece. Said okay, five hundred dollars. You want five hundred dollars, you give me a receipt for that. 'What you mean?' Give me a receipt for that beer, five hundred dollars. Miss Mac, oh no, .. and she never took the top off it. So, they would not

give him a receipt. So in the meantime, Dick Wilson, George's son, went into the bathroom...because ..end up putting ... both of them's .. in the damn commode, people ... out in there, and then Riley was the ...

He wasn't cheap then. He wasn't cheap then.

What?

Riley wasn't cheap then. No, no he wasn't cheap then.

Yes he was.

You think I don't know? I'm telling you, I know he wasn't cheap then because Riley didn't start really make it big until he broke that .. when...

Oh okay, but he was second in command...and Riley came up there and took Dicky...and the cops knew that. They knew that you had the guys from Chrysler were down there, and ..wants five hundred dollars for it, give me a receipt for it, and Miss Mac wouldn't give no receipt and they told Riley, said, "Hey, it's a public place. See that license up on there, read what it says up on there, and George Wilson could read better than anybody in Newark.

But they did carry him out. They handcuffed him and carried him out of there.

KH: And so...then about two weeks later we went down to the 5 and 10 on Main Street and George Wilson's wife was expecting a baby down there and she went to the counter and said, 'I need a glass of water,' and the woman, thought she was smart, went back in and got a glass of water, and said, 'Oh, here you go,' old man Handloff, who was Jewish, almost had a heart attack, and they said, 'Well, we're going to meet once a week we're going to do all the restaurants in Newark [PS: He almost did have a heart attack and died] and when we got up there to Rhodes drug store, old man Rhodes said, 'Sit down,' then across the street outside the movies there was a, a Greek restaurant over there.

CW: It's called the Deluxe restaurant.

BH: Leskaris's.

Yes, Leskaris's. I went to school with one, George.

And he, they had it, and what .. he had black people working in there, but they couldn't eat there. So they came over there and he says, anybody come here got money,

His son George graduated with me, and his wife taught me at Del State, she was a Psych teacher.

And then by then, everybody that owned a restaurant or something in Newark, said

‘Well, hey. Black people money do spend. ...out of integration was the damn shoe repair man... shoe man and--

Mr. whatshisname, Mr Nardo

Old man Nardo...

And his son up here.

Val

Well not Val. Val used to have the barbershop. His son. Ricky?

‘Cause I graduated with his daughter Patricia.

But see there was trouble out on the Nardo family. They had to sell the shop, the shoe shop. They had the laundry and cleaners at one time.

The Nardo was a good family.

KH: And then by that time everything in Newark was going pretty smooth and then we started integrating the schools and we went down to sign up at Newark High School at the Academy Street School down there and old man Shue was up there, said, ‘Well, boy you have enough credits here now to graduate.’ And we said, ‘Yes,’ and Mr. Redding ‘Yes, he does.’ Because you only had, at the time, Howard High School had eight periods a day. Newark only had six, and everybody that graduated from Howard High School had eight more credits than people from Newark High School, so he said, ‘Well, they don’t need to graduate, they’d already graduate from here, so they can’t come in here you know,’ and Mr....doggone principal was a little short man.

PS: That was before my time. That’s way before my time. I was five years old.

KH: No, no, no. You know his son...old man.

PS: At Newark?

?: ‘Cause I know Kutz was there, Dr. Cook.

KH: Yes, Dr. Kutz was standing in his office with the superintendent there and he said, ‘What can I do, George?’ And Dr. Kutz was from an Amish family way up in Pennsylvania, you know, and after we went from down there, he came up to the house, and said, ‘Look George, only a certain number of kids can come here,’ so that school year went long, and then it comes May the 17th or 19th, 1954, we had a track meet against Pierre S. Dupont, and after the track meet, Mr. Johnson, who was the track coach, his father was the principal at Howard High School, he used to bring all us guys home that lived down in Newark, Christiana, Belvedere. He had a old raggedy station wagon and he

brought us all down to, brought us home, because the school busses were gone, and so we'd come down there Belvedere, they'd come down Christiana through the back way, and then down here. When we got here, at Church Street, George Wilson [inaudible] Green Lane, there was nothing but white kids down there. I mean it must be white kids that went to Newark High School, and it was ... we said, 'What the heck's going on down there?' and Mr. Johnson said, Down there and said no we hadn't heard the news, Mr. Johnson turned on his radio, and by that time, it must have been like 6:15 or something like that, and a man came on the news and said...all the white kids was down there hollering, 'Hey Cookie, you guys coming down to our school next year?' And so after we sunk in then old man [name] said, listen, he says, 'We won the case, you .. case'

Brown vs. the Board of Education, right.

KH: In 195?, So we went to school the next day and Mr. Johnson called us, all us guys, all the kids that lived in Newark, he called us into the auditorium and told us, said, 'You understand what the court said, so you can stay here and finish up the next year or you can go to Newark next September.' So people ...I jumped up said, Mr. Johnson, I said, 'We would like to talk this over going home tonight on the bus, and so that's what we did. On the way back, next .. was on a Wednesday, we talked about it coming back down here to home, and Reverend [name] was driving the bus, and the kids from New Castle did the same thing, and we decided, okay, we're going down to Newark High School. Well my brother Alvin was taking up electric, electric.

He stayed at Howard though.

Because he had electric, because he could have went .. to vocation, but he said...they got a losing football team and a big ..., so Alvin said he wouldn't go out. Stanley was in a vocation course, Alvin, [name] Conkey, Stanley.

I saw him last week, Stanley.

Stanley Saunders?

Yes, saw him last week...

Stanley, and it was about five or six of us that said okay, so we went and saw Mr. Johnson and told him that, and Mr. Johnson said, 'Okay, well you guys that's going to stay here don't worry about your transportation. Reverend [name] will be still bringing you kids up here. So, to the ... location. They kept going up to Howard. ... We went down to Newark High School, and so we went down there. We were seniors, and we were in our room, in the room that like... and I, We were in Miss Annie ... who, they lived back there on Main Street, in your backyard.

BH: I live in that house.

Oh you live in that house. [Laughter.] Well her house, used to be where the backyard is. Well, and what she did, she walked out to my, Anne [name] and said, 'You'll be in my room.' You two...and I told ...the English teacher's name, I forget the man's name, but so she said, 'Don't worry about it. But, you come on down here.' So what she said, all the boys, we played baseball with the American Legion teams, old man Hamilton had that, and we knew .. guys and so she said the last day of school as Howard, and for some reason Newark had two extra days in the summer, and these kids come down and walk around building, well we'd already been in that building, in Newark High School.

..
summertime when there wasn't no school there because the.. custodian. Mr... Moore, he ...then he went down to Newark High School, and that is...

Member we used to say at night time, Mr. Fields come out. He had died, right. Mr. Fields. He lived right down from Bell's Funeral Home and we'd go up there.

CP: That's the story I was saying about the .. walking around.

You'd hear a lawn mower running and stuff like that.

That's what I was talking about there.

It's history.

There's a lot of history around here.

And so we went down there and the school year...all the boys knew us, the parents knew who we were and the coaches down there.. Mr. .. North College Avenue...football coach, and we went down there .. was the head coach, who had graduated from the University of Delaware. Every kid that lived in Newark, when Scotty was down there, doing them four years down there, we knew who Scotty Duncan was, Ray Cozinski was, we knew them guys just like--

Miss Duncan taught me, Scotty's wife.

And then Angelo [name]. He got his degree.

.....

And everything went smooth. There wasn't no .. fights down there. I said, we didn't have no fights down there because we .. playing sports ...and I ...down there...

Something else happened.

And.. got sent down there too.

Reading .. the black school in Middletown. Now see when Deseg came in, all the schools north of the canal.

They were getting black kids.

They were getting black kids, all the white schools was. But from Middletown on down, they were still segregated.

Still segregated. Including Middletown.

Including Middletown, matter of fact, in Middletown, blacks didn't start going to Middletown until 1965.

No, no. ...before that.

No, 1965, 'cause we discussed it last week, me and somebody because .. first person to go over there, the first person to go over there was Harry Blackston, [name] Blackston. He only went over there one year.

Billings come down there and took that team over. They went to North Carolina got the .. 'cause we had a big discussion about this last week, me and some guys. They went down there and got, Billings first year there, he only won one football game. The next year he won like four games, but he used to go over and watch the kids at Reading practice, and he told old man Johnson, who was on the board of education, and ..recruit. He said, 'We ain't gonna win nothing until we get some speed, and all the speed's over there. We don't get that speed, we ain't gonna win nothing.' And they went over and got Harry Blackston, they went over and got Clarence Saunders, and that's when they started going undefeated, when they started getting them—

..basketball

They didn't win a whole lot of basketball, but they won a lot of football. They won 53 straight 'til we beat them.

BH: I wanted to come back and ask you a question. You grew up with George Wilson?

...My mother died, and

.....I'm sick and tired of doing that. Every time I get around him, you bring one cigarette out and then you want to smoke mine.

His sonWilson. we grew up together, and right down there where ... and it was a ...two story place right there, ...and he was doing demolition work. He'd jump cars ...and ..brick house down there, and in the meantime, my mother died in 1948

..

She died, .

Summertime

There wasn't no school there because .. custodian...

BH: What I wanted to ask about was elections. That was a big thing ...

The first time a black person ran for office in Newark and actually the first time he ran, they said he lost but he didn't lose. What happened was they screwed around with the ballots because he had all the support of all the blacks. They screwed up. They screwed the ballots up.

They did something with the ballots.

Trying to say people wasn't registered and stuff like that. They screwed it up, but then he came back and won.

He caused so much commotion with town council. They were trying to do everything they could. They were trying to get people in here to run against him and stuff. They tried to do a lot of stuff.

And one thing he could do. He could read and understand things better than anybody, and he ... and they knew, with him being like he was, they had a guy by the name of Mr. Coverdale, Mr. Bill Coverdale, ...of the Newark High School back in ..they had Mr.

and them three, when they got on council, ..Newark..all them old guys that were all there, ..corner of Corbett Street and Main Street. They have ...end up punching him, knocking his behind out.

Oh is that what you talking about? The fight? You heard about the fight.

No I hadn't heard about the fight. I was interested about the election because it was such a big thing.

So, the election went on and when they count them ballots, Mrs. Nancy Owens, Mrs. ... down there, people that was supporting the thing that George Wilson was standing for went down there when they checked them ballots... number of ballots, but he became a councilman, and then..beacuse I mean, he—if there was something going on in Newark

and it involved this area up here, you better come in there right with the numbers that was there because George Wilson would be, you know.

That was his main objective. He wanted equal representation.

..what he's trying to say is that okay you got a share of the money coming in, but what are you doing up there? And they weren't doing anything, anything at all.

He said, 'Hey we're paying taxes, the same as anybody else down, so we get the same equal things that they do around here.'

I'll tell you another thing too. Like, he was talking about American Legion, stuff like that. See, when I was growing up as a kid, we had a hometown football team. We had a hometown baseball team. Now we didn't have a basketball team 'cause we didn't have no place to play, now right over there was a dirt court with a railroad tie, and we put a backboard on that thing with a twenty inch .. room, and we played over there every day.

[TAPE ENDS]