

## TRANSCRIPT--ANNIE MARGUERITE BASCOMB WARREN

Interviewee: Annie Marguerite Bascomb Warren  
Interviewer: Kimberly Hill  
Interview Date: August 10, 2006  
Location: Birmingham, AL  
Length: 1CD; approximately 2 hours, 15 minutes

## START OF CD

KH: This is August 10, 2006. I'm speaking with Mrs. Marguerite Warren in her home. Thank you for having me ma'am.

MW: Sure, it's a pleasure.

KH: We're going to talk about the history of Titusville and also about the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham.

MW: With what I do know, I don't know too much about it. That that I know and learned about I can share.

KH: I'd like to hear it. I know you know a lot more than I do. Can you tell me about where you were born and where you grew up?

MW: Right here in Birmingham, but not in this area at all. I was born in the area was called Enon Ridge. I lived there until I was about in the upper age of around seven. Then my father, who was the Reverend Lawton Brisco Bascomb who was a retired minister,--he wasn't really retired--he had been the pastor of Miller Memorial Presbyterian Church but for lack of funds he had to get another job to supplement being a minister. He sought places. The American Cast Iron Pipe Company hired him as a

liaison between the pipe shop employees and the community and asked my father to be a night secretary because the men who worked at night were always neglected. They needed somebody to work for and with the people who worked at night.

Although my father and mother, who was a teacher at Miller Memorial Presbyterian Church school adjoining the church. I was a part of the church. They were responsible for building what they called the new church which stayed in tact until they started building--I call it building--these highways and all that and they needed the property. Then that beautiful church was deleted. The freeway, what we call the freeway, paid for it. Another church was built in place of Miller Memorial. They kept the name. They just moved the location.

KH: I guess that would be highway 65?

MW: I don't know which one I'm not familiar with those numbers at all. I just hear them talk like say 280 and 20 and all like that. I never learned to drive. I always drove the street way during the time that I drove. We moved from the area called Enon Ridge, we moved to A.C.I.P.Co. which stood for American Cast Iron Pipe Company and the name of the place was A.C.I.P.Co. A-C-I-P-Co. That's where I really grew up. I was only about seven when we moved to this area. I was already in the third grade, at seven because I had been taken to school when I was five.

We lived there in A.C.I.P.Co until I was married to Lankford Warren whom I had met just a year prior to marrying him. I had had my first job ever at Interurban Heights High School in Fairfield. I had never heard of Fairfield but I learned it. That's when I learned that Mr. Oceola White, who is Mr. Roger White's father, and my intended husband at that time were classmates. They both had finished Miles [College] and I had

finished from Fisk because I had transferred from Talladega College in order to get enough secondary education courses to give me the opportunity to give me the opportunity to have a license to teach at all. I always wanted to teach secondary level. I probably could have gotten licensed for teaching lower grades but I had to have a secondary, so many hours in secondary to teach secondary. That's how I started teaching in Fairfield, and Interurban Heights was an all black high school at that time.

I just had one of my students who I taught during those first six years at Fairfield, she was here two weeks ago for a Miles College alumni meeting, association thing. I had never seen either one of her children. I have now just seen just one of hers. She had one daughter with her. She lives in Detroit. She had married a teacher. She had finished Miles herself. She had met her prospective husband who was a teacher at Miles College.

KH: Oh, so she stayed there.

MW: Well, they both were working. She was working the office of Miles College after she graduated as a bursar in the office. He was a math teacher. They got married and then later on they moved to Chicago, not Chicago.

KH: Detroit.

MW: Detroit. That's right. Correct me if I falter or make any mistakes. It's okay with me if you've heard something I've said and it's got to be changed, remind me. That's good.

That was a very nice meeting with her to see her for the first time and one of her two daughters. She told me that the other daughter lives in Atlanta. The one who came with her lives in Detroit. Her name is Lois Coleman Macon. Unfortunately, that marriage dissolved but she kept the two girls. I never really knew Mr. Macon, I just

knew of him. I never knew him really. Lois was a very excellent student. I was a young person at that time, myself. She represented the school by going to an academic meet in London. This academic meet in Montgomery at first and they had it also in Tuscaloosa. She was one of my star pupils. I was learning as well as teaching. I was learning because that was my first endeavor. My parents kept encouraging me to go everyday. I would cry and say, "Well, I'm not going back. I'm not going back there."

KH: Because you felt so awkward?

MW: I felt too awkward with those older teenagers. Some of them, not Lois, I'm not talking about Lois now. She was one of the younger teenagers. Those older teenagers, they knew I wasn't much younger than they were. I had a lot of young men trying to give me attention. I would get them off. That would be one of the reason I would not want to go back everyday. Say, "Oh, Marguerite, don't you pay no attention to them. That's just the way males act." I didn't know that. I had two students that I said I would never forget that aggravated me so much. One of them was Cecil Perkins and the other one was named James Burt. They'd come in after recess and have cowboy things over their face and that was just to aggravate me. I wouldn't let them know they disturbed me that much but when I'd get home that's when I would let go with my tears and everything.

I left that school, Interurban Heights, because I was offered a better job in Jefferson County. Better at that time meant financially better. Then I left Interurban Heights and went to a county school.

[Interruption] Yes, dear. Thank you. [Her daughter brought the phone closer].

Oh, so if it rings.

KH: Oh, okay.

MW: I went to a Jefferson County school called Aarondale. Then from Aarondale, still in Jefferson County, I was transferred to Rosedale. Rosedale is right off here from Homewood, or in Homewood. At that time they called this area where the black people lived, they called it Rosedale. I stayed there for maybe just a couple of years. I had been there then that's when my daughter was born. I had to leave on account of expecting a child. I stayed out from there because at that time, strange as it seems, it's a complete turnaround, if you were pregnant or whenever you were expecting you had to leave. You had to take a, what you might call, take a leave of absence for two years until your child got to be two years old. Right.

KH: Now it's more like two months.

MW: I'm telling you less than that. As I will tell you, we had people who gave birth and they were back in school and teaching in ten days. I mean, you know, as time went on. They did differently from what they are doing now. It might be profitable to the person than it might be very much against their health to do it, but they do it. I have stopped even making any comparison and I don't give any criticism to what was done during when I was working. The circumstances are different. Times are different in every kind of way.

I was at Rosedale at that time. I stayed my two years out. That's when I moved to Titusville when my baby was seven months old. That was February 1947 when I moved to Titusville. That was my first experience of being in Titusville. That was not here in this house. That was at 206 Sixteenth Avenue South. Of course, [I met] Mrs. Gregory Durr White who is Roger's mother, and his brother's name is Eugene and he

became Dr. Eugene White. Like I told you, in Cleveland, Ohio. Roger stayed here in Birmingham and did his career here in Birmingham. As of today, he still lives with his mother and family. He was very close to his mother, very, very close.

KH: I got to meet her when I was there.

MW: You did. That's right. Mrs. Gregory. I've been knowing her for years. We were in the same club at Fisk called the Harmonia club. I shall never forget one dance we had at Fisk. We made it appear it was a boat that we were traveling on and had this party. Gregory was a music major. At that time I had already been a math major and then science was my minor. When I got a job I didn't get the job in my major I got the job in science in my minor. I had to keep working on it. That's the reason I said I was studying right along with the students because I had not had a major in science. I had a minor in science. I made up for it by teaching myself and learning all I could learn and reading everything I could read. With help from science teachers I had sense enough to know I didn't know enough about it. I had to seek everything. That's how I really made my mark in science is on account of my self study and with tutoring from people who were already were teaching.

Okay. After that Mr. George C. Bell, principal of Ullman High School, at that time the school was not a full high school. They added grades along the way. When the school added on the eleventh grade then it was time to have eleventh grade science which was chemistry. That was when Mr. George C. Bell who had taught me in high school, he came to me and said, "Marguerite, I would like for you to come and be my chemistry teacher for the eleventh grade. I know you can do it. My school is being added on the eleventh grade." Before this, the people who went to Ullman, when they got to eleventh



grade they had to go to Parker because they didn't have it at Ullman. As I said, a grade was being added all the time.

KH: Parker was the only other black school to go to.

MW: It was the only black school in the whole city of Birmingham, Industrial High School. Everybody that came from everywhere, all the communities of Birmingham that everybody went to Industrial High School [later renamed Parker High]. There was no other school that they were accepted. I used to feel so bad riding the streetcar (we had streetcars then) from A.C.I.P.Co. where I was living. We'd get to Eighth Avenue and Nineteenth Street, we had to get off of that streetcar, either walk on to Industrial High School or we would get to transfer. We could walk it faster than that other streetcar because they had them so spaced you would be late for school if you waited for that streetcar. You had your transfer in your hand but you couldn't use it because the streetcar didn't make connections timely enough for you to do it there. Anyway, then the white high school was just right there. Phillips High School used to be two blocks away from where we had to get off at that point to go to--. Had it been integrated at that time we could've gotten off at Eighth Avenue and Nineteenth Street. We could've gotten off there and gone two blocks to that school. We couldn't go. We had to get off there and go to the black school. That's the way that was. I graduated from Industrial High School when I was fifteen. Therefore when I graduated from college I was nineteen.

KH: Did you skip grades?

MW: During my elementary. I started to school when I was five because the principal of the school lived next door to me and I would cry, cry everyday to go to

school. "What's a matter with you baby? What you want?" "I want to go to school."

"You can go with me." Mr. P.M. Davis, I won't ever forget him. He says, "Well you can go with me." He took me to school with him, put me in the first grade. That's how I got started and got out of high school so early. That made me get out of college early.

I finished Fisk. I was nineteen. I didn't get to be twenty until that summer. That's how I started teaching so early. Like I told you about the courses, the secondary education courses which I did get at Fisk. They didn't have it at Talladega at that time. I stayed at Ullman after Mr. George Bell got me to come when the eleventh grade was added. They didn't have the twelfth grade at Ullman when I first went there. They were building onto Ullman High school. The first teachers that I was associated with that went to Ullman High School the same time I went, we had to work at Cameron Elementary School which was a few blocks from the area of the grounds where Ullman High School was at that time. We had the graduations after they put on the twelfth grade, after Ullman got the twelfth grade. They were graduates of there. Some of the students who had gone had to leave Ullman and go to Industrial High School. They came back as twelfth grade students. The others had to leave because when they didn't have the twelfth grade. We had graduation. I can remember maybe at least two graduations that I witnessed at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church on Sixth Avenue South. The same church but under different circumstances, that's the same church that's over right here near us in Titusville, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.

KH: I've seen that one.

MW: Beautiful. Just beautiful. That was built many years prior to the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church on the south side. When it was on the--but this is this same



church just a different location. That was when Mrs. Gregory Durr White became the organist of the new church which is spread all out.

KH: Is there a reason why it moved? Do you know?

MW: What happened to that church I can't remember exactly. I know they ran out of space. Mrs. White probably can tell you that because she started being the organist there as I remember after they moved. She might could tell you why they moved. I couldn't because at that time I was a member of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. The church that was bombed in '63. I was a member there at that time. My mother and father then attended Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and they joined it. And as I grew up I joined it, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. After that church was bombed, both of my parents were deceased. They didn't ever know about it. I did. I didn't feel comfortable at that church after it was bombed.

KH: I can understand that.

MW: I'm telling you. We, my husband and I at that time, decided that we would join a church closer. He was a Methodist and I was a Baptist. So, we had to get our thing together. We joined Westminster Presbyterian Church. [We said] we got to get this act together now. You can't be going out there to your Methodist church. I can't be going downtown Birmingham to Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. We got to compromise, do something.

KH: Were people at the church afraid that it might happen again?

MW: I don't know. I know I was. I was. Being a young person at that time, I knew I had a better chance, a better opportunity somewhere else. That's when my husband and I decided to join Westminster. Then on another reason, I liked that because

my father had been a Presbyterian minister. His father had been a Methodist minister. We decided on Westminster because it was close in proximity to both of us, being right here.

KH: Did you know the families of the girls that were killed in the church?

MW: Yes, I was personally acquainted to three of them. I knew the other child, the Collins child [Addie Mae Collins]. I knew her but I really didn't know her parents and her people. The other three, I knew them very well, personally. I still know Denise McNair's, her father and mother. Mrs. Robertson, the mother of Carol, we worked together at Ullman.

Then I hadn't gotten to Carol W. Hayes High School yet. I left Ullman and that's where I ended up when I retired was Carol W. Hayes High School. I've been to a lot of schools in Jefferson. I've already told you about those is Jefferson County and why I took a leave of absence when my child was born.

My own child lives in San Pablo, California. That's where she is. She's a graduate of whatever the name of that college out in California. I've forgotten right now what it is. She graduated from Ullman after I transferred to Carol W. Hayes. I left her at Ullman. She finished Ullman. I might be going ahead of my story now. I was trying to take it in sequential order as to what schools and how I went from one school to another and where I ended up.

At Ullman, I stayed there ten years teaching Chemistry to the eleventh grade. Mr. George C. Bell was the principal, of course. He was the one who had been principal of the school ever since it had started being high school which was ninth grade. He was

there. I was there until 1960. The supervisor, Mr. Carol W. Hayes, was a Negro. He was the supervisor of Negro schools. That's what they called him.

KH: I've heard a lot about him.

MW: You have.

KH: I've talked with Mrs. [Helen Clorinda George] Heath and Mrs. [Cleopatra] Goree and they mentioned him. And Willie Mae Crews.

MW: I knew her. I knew her at Hayes. I left Ullman because Dr. Carol W. Hayes, he say, "Marguerite, it's time for you to leave Ullman now. I want you at my school." What he meant by his school was Carol W. Hayes High School. By that time, integration was in full bloom. We had been through all this terrible times of being integrated and all the horrible times of Martin Luther King. We had been through that. Carol W. Hayes High School was built and Ullman was on its way out because UAB, University of Alabaman-Birmingham was going to have the buildings, the Ullman High School buildings.

KH: Yeah, they have it now.

MW: They have it now. They do have it now. Yes. That's where my granddaughter graduated from, UAB. My daughter first went to Fisk because she had to go in her time which was before all of this bombing and all this mess that did go on in Birmingham. She had to go, like I did, had to go to a black school. There was no UAB at her time. There was only the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. At that time she couldn't go. She went to a black college which was Fisk.

KH: Did the state offer her a scholarship to go somewhere else?

MW: Nope. She didn't try. I know people who did. One of my best friends. What was so strange, Alabama didn't realize that these people they gave money to to go to a good school, they didn't realize that they were being actually being paid to go to a better school.

KH: Least there is something good in it.

MW: It's ridiculous.

KH: It was ridiculous.

MW: One of my good friends and Delta [Sigma Theta] soror [sorority sister] went to New York. I know about that. She went to New York to Columbia. She was teacher at Industrial High School at that time. Her name was Josef May Oliver Reid. R-E-I-D. I was already a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in Talladega. I was a charter member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority at Talladega College which was Alpha Zeta Chapter.

After I graduated, after she graduated, I graduated from Fisk, she graduated from Talladega, we both became members of the chapter that became in Birmingham of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in 1931. I think she became a member of the Alumni Chapter like next year. You could join an Alumni Chapter whenever you wanted to. Of course when you're in college it's altogether different. As an undergraduate I was a charter member of the undergraduate chapter.

Back to leaving Ullman after Carol W. Hayes, supervisor of Negro schools, asked me to leave Ullman. Ullman is going to be deleted because the City of Birmingham is going to see to it that UAB will be taking over all the buildings of Ullman. Then Mrs. Gregory Durr White again, she and I both worked at Ullman.

KH: Did she transfer to Hayes too?

MW: No. No. My neighbor across the street from me, Laverne Eaton Coma, became the choir director at Hayes. I can't tell you exactly what happened to Mrs. Gregory Durr White. I don't know which school she went to. In other words I've forgotten that. She'd be the one to be able to tell you that.

Anyway, I went to Carol W. Hayes High School but I didn't continue to keep teaching the Chemistry. I then started teaching general science at Carol W. Hayes High School. I had an opportunity, then, to prepare the students who were interested in science to give them a background for biology, chemistry and physics by teaching general science. After ten years of teaching chemistry straight, just nothing but chemistry for ten years I was kind of burned out.

KH: I would think you'd be pretty tired of that just one grade too.

MW: Absolutely. You pick up real well. Right from here, right to there. Exactly what happened. When I first went to Carol W. Hayes, Mr. Augustus Dickenson was the principal at that time. He had promoted himself by the fact that he got his doctorate. When he got his doctorate then Lawson State wanted him. Lawson State was a college so they needed professors who had or a professor who had PhDs to get on their faculty. He left Carol Hayes High School. I didn't. I was still there. That's when Mr. John B. Norman became the principal. That's who I retired under, John B. Norman. Mrs. Heath and Mrs. Alfa Robinson, [who] was the mother of one of those four girls. Mr. Claude Wesley was at Ullman, who was the father of Cynthia Wesley who was one of those girls who were killed in that. That's why I said I knew three of them personally.

The fourth child, I knew her as a little girl in the church. I actually didn't know her anything like I knew those other three.

KH: The other three also lived in this area, right?

MW: No, they didn't. No. No. The McNair child did.

KH: Oh, Okay.

MW: Carol Robinson and Cynthia Wesley, they lived in the Smithfield area. I couldn't tell you exactly where the other child, I think she lived right in the area of the church, near the church. The other one named Collins, the fourth child that I said I didn't know them as well. She lived somewhere right near the downtown area of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. I know that those others where they lived. Little Denise, somebody had just run over and killed her little puppy. At that time, my husband and I, both of us loved little cocker spaniel dogs. We had some new puppies. We gave little Denise McNair one of our puppies because she was about to cry her heart out about her puppy getting killed. We couldn't stand to see her cry like that. We gave little Denise one of our little cocker spaniels.

KH: That's nice.

MW: Bless her little heart. Then when we heard she got killed. The thing about it is, her mother's Alfa, her name was Alfa Bliss Anderson Robertson. Her father was my parent's postman. When I was just a little thing over in the Enon Ridge area he was our postman. I would be sitting on the steps everyday waiting for my postman. I can still remember that. He'd say, "How's my little girl today? You always in blue or always in pink. Where's your mom?" I'd say, "She's inside." "Here's the mail. I know that's what you waiting for." I must've been like three or four years old or something



like that. That was her father who was my postman. We had a lot of connection. She was at Carol W. Hayes School in the library. I was there teaching general science. Mrs. Helen George Heath--did she tell you all of her name?

KH: Yes, she did. Mrs. Helen Clorinda George Heath.

MW: We tease her about that all the time. "Why you drop the Helen?" because that's all we called her was Helen. Her married name is Heath. We knew her as Helen C. George. She decided she like to be called H. Clorinda George. She decided that. Her parents named her Helen Clorinda George. My name is actually Annie Marguerite Bascomb Warren. That's how I got all those names. That's how she got all of those names she had. At that time, all of us were named two names, your first name and your middle name. I was called by my middle name because my mother's name was Annie. My dad said, "I can't be around here calling Annie, Annie, Annie." My mother loved the name Marguerite. She just liked that name. I wasn't named for anybody. She just liked that name.

KH: I can see why. It's a very pretty name.

MW: Thank you. She loved that name. That's right.

When I retired Mr. John B. Norman was the principal. In a few more years he retired. Shortly thereafter he died. He died not too long after he was principal of Carol W. Hayes High School. Mr. Hayes had been deceased then for a while. Like I said, Mrs. Gregory Durr White, although she had been choir leader and all that at Ullman and at church, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, I really don't know what school she went to after that. I really don't remember.

KH: That's okay. We can try to find out from her. What was it like living in Titusville back then?

MW: Okay. It was really nice. This was a very small house. As people say, that's where we got our start. It was a small hearth. It didn't have natural gas. That's when we started dealing with electric stove. Our first real house that we ourselves bought--we had lived with my parents some and all that even when our child was born and I guess how old she was? My husband had to go to World War II. He was gone three and half years in a place where he had never heard of--I hadn't either--called New Guinea.

KH: I didn't even know they sent people to New Guinea.

MW: I know it. Those people were half civilized. They weren't just really people that you would even imagine. He didn't know zip. He said those women they wore little grass skirts and all of this part was out. They had no conscious about that at all, none what so ever. That was the way of life for them. Who had ever heard of New Guinea? I know I hadn't. He was gone three and a half years in this god forsaken place. The worse thing that happened was that he had to have an appendectomy or he would have died out there, wherever that place was. He was fortunate enough to have a very good American surgeon. That man just made a small incision and got that appendix out.

KH: That's good.

MW: When he came back he didn't even want to talk about it. I didn't push him to talk about. I could see he didn't want to talk about it. It was so horrible. When he got ready to say something I would just listen. He said, "Many a day you hear thump on the ground. You know, thump, thump, thump. That was Japanese falling out of the trees

where some American soldier had killed him.” He didn’t want to talk about it. He said it was so sickening, horrible. He didn’t want to even remember anything about it. That was World War II. He was fortunate enough to get home safely. He got into Birmingham August the fourteenth and the war was over August the sixteenth.

KH: I know he was very glad.

MW: He didn’t have to go back. He was discharged and everything. I have all of his stuff where he was honorably discharged. He just didn’t want to talk about it period. I just let him talk when I guess he filled up too much and he would say something about it. He was so hurt.

KH: Were many men from this area gone then?

MW: I guess, yeah. He had some veterans, some who had been discharged at the same time he was. I didn’t really know them myself personally. I didn’t know them. He knew several. What time is it getting to be?

KH: I’ve got 11:15.

MW: Okay. Well, we might hear the doorbell ring.

KH: Okay.

MW: It’ll ring the back door just like I told you to come in. They [Meals on Wheels] are familiar with coming. They can just hop out their car and bring me my meal. They just get on back in their car. They don’t stay. They’re not friends of mine. They are just volunteers. Believe it or not, I know a lot of people wouldn’t believe me, do you not know all of them that come now are white, all of them that come. They act so nice. All of them are so nice. “Mrs. Warren, how are you doing today? I’m so glad to see you.” I like that. It’s so different now. So different. I don’t think of any white person

that I knew at that time that would do that, would come to your door. My father had better relationships, way back there when we lived at A.C.I.P.Co. Because the president of the American Cast Iron Pipe Company was a very, very non— how do I describe it? -- he was not a person that was at all prejudiced. I heard him say that when I was a teenager. I would go with my dad sometimes to the some of the meetings that they had. He said all of the employees of American Cast Iron Pipe Company, black or white, it didn't make him any difference, all of them are supposed to be treated alike. He said, we have separate this and separate that because the state requires us to have it. My father and another man named Mr. Andrew Walker--Andrew Walker was the daytime secretary, and as I told you, my father was hired as the night time secretary. They had good relations, very good relations.

KH: That was back in the '30s wasn't it?

MW: That was. That was. This particular man, Mr. John J. Eagon was the president of American Cast Iron Pipe Company. I understand that one of his grandsons who is named for him is a doctor right now in the City of Birmingham. His name is in the directory there. I'm just telling you what I know about his grandfather. He was a very nice man, very nice president. He told all of them. He says, "Now who makes the pipe. The men make the pipe whether it don't make any difference whether they white or black. They make the pipes. We in administration, we reap the benefits but we don't make the pipes. This company stays stable and on foot--." I can't repeat everything like what he said but I have as a teenager interpreted what he said. "We have to treat all employees alike." I do remember, as a child, every Thanksgiving they gave turkeys.

KH: Every family got one?

MW: Every family got a turkey. Every family. I remember my dad saying about the bonus--they gave them a bonus every so often. I don't know how much but they got some kind of bonus. By that time I understood what a bonus meant that you got some extra money [Pause] At American Cast Iron Pipe Company. I don't know anything about what has happened to that company but it still is American Cast Iron Pipe Company. I don't know what they are doing, how they doing. I do remember when I was teaching at Irondale, one of the employees worked in the restaurant at American Cast Iron Pipe Company. He wasn't one of the workers in the pipe shop. I taught one of his children out to Irondale. His name's Robert Grace. I thought that was such a pretty name, Grace.

KH: It is. Let's talk more about prejudice, like how many bombings do you remember?

MW: Well, about those bombings. The wife of Arthur Davis Shores was my husband's sister. Their house was bombed twice that I know about. The men over in Smithfield used to put themselves up in the trees like birds trying to catch some of them who were doing the bombing. They didn't like Arthur Davis Shores which I had already known. I knew him before I knew his wife which became my sister-in-law. They didn't like him because he was connected with Martin Luther King. I know about that because that was my family. He became my brother-in-law. He was my brother-in-law at the same time that Lankford and I got married. I think he married my husband's sister after we were married. Then they got married later on, not at the same time. Her sister was named Mary Warren Hollins. Wilber Hollins and Arthur Shores were very good friends. Their house was not touched at all, the Hollins'. The Shores house was bombed twice.

I'm telling you why. Then Shores was also a friend to Thurgood Marshall. You know they didn't like him. He looked like white himself.

KH: I can't really tell from old pictures of him. I got the--.

MW: You have seen one haven't you? He looked just like he was white too, Thurgood Marshall. Shores was a black man. You've seen his picture. Where he helped this girl get into the University of Alabama, that was another reason they didn't like him. Right now, in the Law School at the University of Alabama down in Tuscaloosa, they have his picture in there.

KH: Even though they didn't like him at the time.

MW: They didn't? No, their parents, grandparents, mostly grandparents. Their grandparents didn't live in the generation that we live in now. They were the ones, their grandparents and it's not--I don't blame the white people. I blame their parents and their grandparents. Their grandparents mostly, who taught them all this mess. They wouldn't have known but--I had a friend that was a chaplain in the United States Army. He was not in the South at all. He didn't grow up in the South. He grew up in Pennsylvania. I knew him as a friend. He told me this. That's why I'm saying I blame the parents and the grandparents and the great-grandparents. He was on a bus coming down here to be in Fort McClellan in Alabama and said a little boy pulled at his mama, pulling at her. He wasn't but, he said he must've been four or five. "Mama, is that a nigger?" Talking about him. He was on the bus.

KH: How did he react?

MW: That means the child didn't know what she was even talking about telling that child that black people were niggers. He didn't know. They had to be what?



KH: They had to be taught, taught to hate.

MW: That's right. That's the reason I said I don't blame them. That's what they grew up with. That's what they were told. That's what they ate everyday. Whenever it became logical or visible then they would have to ask. They didn't know. A child is not born with any knowledge of anything. They are not to be blamed but for what they are taught. A lot of these people now they don't even have a background with that mess. That's why I'm saying that everybody that comes here, the people way back there wouldn't believe me. They would say I was telling a tale that these people volunteer to come and bring food to me. They are not paid anything. I don't pay them anything. I pay the Meals on Wheels. That's like an organization, but it's federally connected. They were charging \$1.25 a meal now they have raised it up some. I pay more than that now. [Siren noise from outside] They are so nice. They have even adjusted my paying now on account of the horrible time I've had with things at this house. I had to tell them that my air conditioning went out, things like that. They had given me a break with paying. I still pay but I don't pay as much.

KH: And with illness too?

MW: Huh?

KH: I guess they accounted for the illness too?

MW: Oh yes. Then I had an eye operation because I had a fall, different things that have happened. They are very considerate, very considerate.

KH: What ways were you personally affected by prejudice back in the 50s and 60s?

MW: I have to be frank and tell you honestly. I didn't have too much personal things. I don't know we say black people but we are all colors just like a bunch of flowers. We all are different colors. I cannot say that I had daggers at me. I know a lot of my friends; we are not the same color. They had other experiences than I had. My mother, which I can show you her picture, they took her to be really white. Let me see if I can get it.

KH: You want me to get it?

MW: Yeah. Look at that picture that's two, that's a double picture. Go on back. That's my mother. That's my father. My mother has had the--. [Pause]

KH: That's a very nice picture.

MW: Yeah. She was mistaken many a time to be Caucasian. She had experiences. This is my father. My sister was brown like he is. That's why I said we come in all shades. My mother had this experience. I'm saying that I didn't have. I don't look like Caucasian. I look like I have a background of Caucasian. I don't look like a Caucasian. Being just looking like I have a background of Caucasian I attributed to that fact that I didn't have as much of a horrible experience like other people who had a different color. I have brother, my sister were brown, different shades of brown. My oldest brother had a shade of color between the two. It's just all mixed up. I had one brother--I had three of them--I had one brother and myself were the lightest ones. We took more of the color from her but we didn't take exactly her color. She had this experience. She had her brown child with her. She told me this. I don't know anything about that because I am number seven in the nine people that she had. She had seven children. I was number seven. You know she would have to tell me this. This little child

was her second child. She was at a store called Pisitz at that time. This little child came running to her, "Mama, mama." The clerk said, "What did she say?" "She said," my mother told her. "She said what she supposed to say – 'mama.'"

KH: She just assumed that it wasn't her child.

MW: That's right. Say, "What did she say?" She said, "She said what she's supposed to say. She's my child." "Your child!" She said, "Yes, that's what I said." My mother could have passed if she didn't have her child with her. They never would have known the difference. Could you tell the difference?

KH: No.

MW: Not a bit. That's the story. I never had anybody to attack me during those Civil Rights things. I am guilty of not telling that. My students--I don't know how much of this is going to get written up.

KH: We don't have to put it on if you don't want it to be. You want me to turn it off.

MW: At this point probably I would. I'm going to say something now that might [offend]. [Recorder turned off]

KH: How did people talk about the movement back then? Did people seem hopeful that good things would to happen?

MW: They were bitter but I think everybody had a real focus on the future that it would be better. That legally it was on paper and it had to be done. The Federal government would be behind what was on paper. They wouldn't go by what was hearsay and what somebody had thought. They absolutely had to stick to the law. The law was that the schools would be integrated. I remember when our faculty was integrated.

As strange as it seems I have to say it. Our people, which we say they have called us some of everything, colored people and they said black people. Let's see what else have they called us everything but that N word. I'm not responsible at all because my parents didn't even teach me that. I have no reason to be prejudiced. I'm not prejudiced towards anybody. I know a lot of what we call, so called black people, because of all these names we have been given, they are. I've had a lot of what I would call 'our people' who have been saying things towards me on account of I am not the color they would like for me to be.

KH: As if you can change that.

MW: That's right, as if I had anything to do with it. My sister who is brown had nothing to do with it. My other brother that was brown but he had real beautiful hair, he was in Mississippi at some time or another and he was on the little platform where the train goes. He loved trains and worked for Southern Railroad. He said a Caucasian came up to him and said, "Don't you know we don't allow niggers in here?" He just told him "how do you know what I am?" He took off his hat, his cap, or whatever he had on and threw his beautiful hair out. "How do you know what I am? Why did you call me that?" He didn't say I'm this or I'm that or I'm mixed up. He didn't say anything just "how do you know?" Ordinarily they associated nappy hair with color. He knew he had the color but not dark, but he had color in his skin but he had this beautiful hair. Where did he get it from? His mama.

KH: I bet that guy was confused.

MW: Yeah. He said, "How do you know what I am?" That's right. That stopped him, made him breathless. There are plenty of people in this world who are brown with beautiful hair. You have some who are real light with nappy hair.

KH: That's true.

MW: Okay.

KH: Then some of them--.

MW: What did I end up saying? People are just people. It doesn't matter about this and this. It doesn't matter. Whatever you came in the world with you came in with it because of your background, genetically speaking. You didn't choose. What choice did you have? I know I didn't.

KH: No, I didn't choose.

MW: Any baby that comes into this world, this little or this size or this size, be all up to the ceiling. They had nothing to do with it. I think that's what most people have ended up learning. That's what I say you choose your friends. You choose who you want to be with and all like that. You can do that because-- when I say you I speaking in general. You had no choice when you came into the world. You have no reason to have any of that stored up in your blood veins, none whatsoever. Somebody had to teach you that.

KH: Did you feel like people were sheltered from violence and from prejudice when they were living here?

MW: Oh, yes. My husband and I, we go blocks around out of the way of the state fairgrounds. We didn't want our child to build up any prejudice. We would rather for her to be able to grow up not having an experience of that, all that mess. We couldn't

take our child to that. We didn't want her to see that real pretty wheel turning and couldn't go any closer than staying way back out of the way. I had that experience. My one little child, that's all we had, was that one child. She has two. This granddaughter lives here. She has one there. One is--you saw her. She's like Arthur Young. The other child in California. That's her picture. She's a good brown, a deep brown. My sister's son who ended up being a very fine doctor, he became Dean of Einstein--one of the Deans, I don't want to say by himself. He was one of the Deans.

[Interruption] That's my meal.

Their son went as high as anybody could go from Kindergarten on and worked for many times, worked all of his years in America not overseas anywhere. Like I said, when he wanted to retire he had to select somewhere he wanted to retire to go to. That's how he chose that. He has had a lot of experience on account of his color. He even had the experience of a young man who left Birmingham and went to Einstein College. This young man asked him, because he saw him in the hallway at Einstein and asked him, "Would you wake me up in the morning so I can get to my eight o'clock class?" He told him, "Yeah, certainly I will. I'll do that."

KH: Ask the Dean of your school to wake you up?

MW: He didn't know that, see. He did. He knocked on the boy's door from Birmingham, Alabama. When they met again my nephew was all so neatly, looking handsome and good, his dark brown skin and beautiful hair. The fellow who was from Birmingham was the student and he was the teacher.

KH: Another person who was very embarrassed.



MW: He was so embarrassed. Then my nephew proceeded to ask him, "Where do you come from?" He told him where he came from -- Birmingham, Alabama. Then, "Well, what do your people do?" He told him, "My father is the doctor." He says, "Well, what area does your father do his practice?" "He's a doctor at American Cast Iron Pipe Company's dispensary." That clicked with my nephew because he was talking then that right down my nephew's path. My father was his grandfather.

KH: That's where his mom grew up.

MW: My nephew proceeded to call Birmingham, Alabama. "Do you know Dr. so and so?" "Oh, yes." That's my mother speaking. "Yes, I know Dr. he's my doctor." He said, "Oh well, well, well. How does he treat you?" My mother answered, "Well he treats me just fine. Why do you ask me that?" He proceeded to tell him. Say, "He treats me just fine. His nurse doesn't treat me so well. My doctor will tell her hang up Mrs. Bascomb's coat or jacket or whatever." My nephew says, "Oh, that's just great." He said to himself, "It wouldn't be that great if he had been told something different." He knew then that this young man had not been trained to dislike people of color. He could tell that he wasn't trained like that. After that, as student and teacher he said, "I would help this young man do anything I could to get him out of Einstein" because he was just coming in as a freshmen. He said, "I would help him anyway that I could because I learned that his father treated my grandmother like a person."

KH: It's just a part of passing on the favor.

MW: That's right. His nurse didn't. You could tell the difference. The doctor's nurse didn't want to treat my mother like she was a lady. That shows you the difference. That's why I say I don't blame any Caucasian person for how they act or how they treat

somebody. It all depends on their kind of how they were raised. What kind of people raised them? They and ours by the same token, our people have been taught to be like that. I wasn't, a lot of them were. They grow up with prejudice. They didn't choose it. They grew up with it because they were taught like that.

But, this young man's father being a doctor, evidently he was never raised like that either. If he had he would have shown prejudice right then and there. He knew my mother was an employee of the YMCA secretary who was black. He was not white. He wasn't taught that. He didn't teach his son that so, therefore, there was that. When he asked my nephew to wake him up to get him to class he had no idea that was going to be his teacher, none whatsoever. He knew enough about prejudice to know the difference between his color and his color. He just assumed--.

KH: That he was probably a custodian.

MW: That's it. That's right. That he had had that same experience at the College of--famous photograph people--Kodak. Kodak, they used to make these cameras--I don't know what they make them now or not, but during my time the one's that make the cameras to take individual pictures with, Kodak, K-O-D-A-K. He had that experience somewhere in upper New York where he was working. He had bad experience on account of that. That's the reason I also say it's not because you were in the South. You could be anywhere if they were taught prejudice they were taught it. I don't care where it was. When they call this flight to Chicago, the flight to Detroit, because colored people thought they would have a better break, which they did. They didn't have as many people who were taught to prejudice than the people who lived in the

South. They weren't taught the same thing. I had lot of little friends that their parents moved to Chicago and moved to Detroit.

KH: Are there ways that you still see prejudice at work here in Birmingham, nowadays?

MW: No, because I don't have opportunity to be out there as much by being a retired teacher. When I was teaching I never mentioned ever to any of my students about being prejudiced. I never did encourage it. I never did. I would always tell my students, "I don't care what color you are. It doesn't make any difference. It's you that make your life. You. If you carry around stuff in your head of being prejudiced towards somebody you are hurting yourself. You're not hurting anybody else but yourself. You just try to aspire and do all that you can for yourself. Nobody can stop you. Nobody can take away from what you actually learn yourself. Don't grow up with being mad with somebody you don't know anything at all about. You have to know a person first." My bottom line, I say it all the time. I've said it to them. I've said it to people who I had to work with and people who I had to teach. People are just people. You choose who you like. You don't choose people by what they look like. You choose your friends according to whether or not they think like you think. You accept people as being just people. Like I said you got to live in this world. You can't carry your parents with you all your life. You got to live for yourself. Whatever you have there that's not good for you, you need to drop it.

KH: What kind of careers did kids from around here end up going on to do?

MW: Beautiful. One person that I taught that I know has gone as high as they can go, Curtis Patton. He is now the Chemistry teacher at--what is it?--one of these big schools in Massachusetts. What's the name of that school?

KH: It's a college?

MW: It's a college. Yeah, it's a university. He is the chemistry teacher. His father was the president of the Smithfield neighborhood which I used to attend also. I lived in Smithfield some years. That's where, after my father retired from A.C.I.P.Co. we moved to Smithfield. My husband was in--you name it--that New Guinea. I had a relationship with Smithfield as well as with Titusville. Curtis Patton is now the chemistry teacher at--oh, can't think of it. It's way up in Massachusetts. [Pause] Not Boston.

KH: Do you know many young people who went into education?

MW: Yeah. Let me see now. I had another student who is--after she went to Emory University in Atlanta--she became a registered nurse. [Pause] I had another young man I was trying to think of became a city official in some city in California. I come in contact. Mrs. Heath can tell you more about some of the careers of some of the students from Hayes. She was the counselor.

KH: She's told me some.

MW: I know she did.

KH: She was the guidance counselor.

MW: That's right. She's kind of kept up with what careers some of the students went into. This young man I taught at Ullman. Oh, I know another one that has been--I don't know whether he's still up there or not. He was a math teacher up there at UAB. I

can't remember the names as well as I do the others. He became a math teacher right up here at UAB. He finished from Ullman. I had another girl. I had a girl that works at--. She became and she still is maybe, Viola. I can't think of Viola's last name. I think she married. I think she's named Washington. But anyway, she's an official right up here at the United States Post Office.

KH: There's a headquarters up there. She must be pretty high ranking official.

MW: What, you talking about the one uptown?

KH: The one downtown. There's a--.

MW: US Postal. Oh yeah. She's not at one of the branches. She's at the main post office. I think her name is Washington now. Viola Washington. That wasn't her name when she was in school. Some of them I only remember them by their school name. I have to ask them about their married name. Being a boy, he never changed his name, Curtis Patton.

KH: I know that this neighborhood has changed a lot since you moved here, especially with more renters coming in. What are the biggest changes that you've noticed?

MW: About the people or the--?

KH: The people. How the people changed.

MW: It seems to me that more professionals have moved into this neighborhood than they did before. I guess this area where I'm living now, to me, it was like it was isolated. I didn't know where it was. I had to be told. The registrar at Ullman High School told me about this area and she said that white people were moving out and their homes were for sale. I was at Ullman then. That was in the 50s. That's why I said we

moved in here in 1955. The people that were in here I don't know where they moved to. They were Caucasians. They hadn't been living in here for long. I was told that this house was built in 1949 or 1950 which that made this house either five or six years old when we moved in here. We have been here since 1955.

KH: Those other people probably left because they were worried about black people moving into the neighborhood?

MW: That's why they sold out. I can't say but I say we were one of the first who moved in. There were many, many more that moved after we moved in here. I'm saying we were one of the first. I'm not saying we were the only. I said we were one of the first.

What used to be my neighbor was a classmate of mine in Industrial High School. We had just kept in contact with each other a great deal. Then she and her husband bought the house next door. They both are deceased. [Pause] Then all in this neighborhood, just about every other one if not nearly every one, they are educators. Mrs. Gertrude Sanders lives across the street here. She's a PhD. Her daughter, I don't think she got her doctorate but I know she has her Masters. Her daughter has two daughters like I did, had one daughter then two daughters. Those two daughters of her daughter, one of them has been a principal of Center Street School, right the neighborhood school. She's in the military so I think--she didn't tell me this--I think that they didn't want her to have two positions like that, be in the military and be a principal of the school. That might have been--. I don't know exactly. I don't want to say yes. I don't want to say no. I'm saying I don't know.



One of the granddaughters of my friend across the street, she is working in administrative position in education. She doesn't work at the downtown office. She has a different office somewhere on the south side. Where she works there's a building somewhere on the south side. She is still in education. She's the granddaughter of the PhD lady across the street there. They just had a beautiful birthday party for her at the Catholic Church, Our Lady of Fatima. Her one daughter and her one daughter's two daughters, the three of them gave the mother, the grandmother and then one of the granddaughter's has a daughter who is a great granddaughter.

KH: Are there many of those long term residents still living in this neighborhood?

MW: Still here? Most of them are either deceased or they are not active or something. I know one lady that's a Delta [Sigma Theta] soror [sorority sister] that lives down the street on the right hand side. Her son is a doctor. At the moment her name doesn't flash. She lived across the street from the Stuart that I was telling you about whose son was in some of this stuff down at Kelly Ingram Park. My friend on this side of the street her name was Marguerite Stuart. She was a teacher. She taught Arthur Miles. She taught Arthur Daniel Payne. I don't think she taught at any of our high schools at all. Her husband was the first black doctor that was accepted at any of the hospitals in Birmingham.

KH: When was that?

MW: I don't know exactly. He was brought in to a hospital who had--it was mixed but it was--. The hospital was mixed but the hospital wasn't just right like it should've been like a hospital that my father's company chose to have. My father had to

go and live, not live but be a patient in a hospital where they had to be put in the basement because they were black.

KH: I've heard of that happening.

MW: It's true. I can witness [to] that. I was teaching at Ullman High School when my father became ill and that's where I would have to go to see him in the basement where all the pipes were. My mother, she didn't have to go to a hospital. She was still at home and me and my siblings, we put in money together and we hired someone. My father being connected with the American Cast Iron Pipe Company, he could get his benefits by going to the hospital.

KH: Or the basement of the hospital.

MW: Yeah. That's it. I still, like I said I didn't have that much of a prejudice in me because I was never taught it. If I had been taught it I would be running myself crazy and would still be crazy from it. I was never taught it although I was surrounded with it. If I ever said anything in my house, like I would say those white children threw rocks at me. If I would tell them things like that say well you just don't throw any rocks back at them. In other words, you can make the thing go on or you can stop it. You don't throw any rocks at them. I did have some thrown at me when I was a little girl.

KH: And you chose not to throw back?

MW: But I did too because I wasn't taught that. If what I'm saying I would be stopped in my tracks when I would say that. My little friends around me they would say things about that white boy, that white girl or this or that and other. I wasn't taught to do that so I didn't pick it up.

KH: That's good. You stopped the pattern.

MW: It didn't warp my life. When people teach their children ugliness it stays with them. It warps. They don't feel the same. They don't feel like they can go higher and higher with things. Like the ones that I taught, I would try to teach them the same thing that my parents taught me. Don't be prejudiced. You don't know whether it's going to hinder or help you as you grow on up. It'll help you more and you can live better with yourself if you are not prejudiced. It warps you in another way in that you don't feel good about yourself. You don't feel like you can do all of this. That's why this book I been just reading about Condoleezza, she says the same thing that I'm saying. She was not taught this ugliness therefore she didn't have any reins on what she thought she could do. She thought she could go to the highest because her parents told her you might not can go in this house or that house but you can go to the White House in Washington. It ended up she did. Had she been raised with the idea that she could not because of being in the black race, that she couldn't do that because she was black, she wouldn't have tried would she? She knew that she was not trained like that. She could go to the top, top, top. That's where she has gone. I wish you could read that book. It's a beautiful book.

KH: Do you know the name of it?

MW: Yeah. It's name Condi, named Condi and the author-- I knew the author. Let me--.

KH: I can look it up online so you don't have to look it up.

MW: It's Condi. C-O-N-D-I. That's the name of it. Her picture is on the cover of it. It tells about her whole life. I knew when she was born.

KH: You knew her parents too?

MW: Definitely. Her father was with me at Ullman also, not at Hayes but at Ullman. He was an advisor, student advisor. Her mother, I knew her. She was a teacher. I also knew her from her brother, her younger brother. I taught him. I knew the family that her brother married. Condoleezza's aunt that she and her mother were very close almost like twins. Her aunt lives right out here now in Vinesville. That's part of Fairfield. It's called Vinesville. Where she lives is right in front of Miles College. I don't know where she lives now because I have lost contact with her. Condoleezza's mother and father are both dead.

KH: I had heard that. I didn't know she had an aunt still living here.

MW: Yeah she does. Her name is Mattie Rae something else. She was a Rae. I can't remember her married name. I hadn't been in close--. Reverend John Rice was the minister of Westminster Presbyterian Church where both Lankford and I joined. He and Anne Rae Rice lived in the apartment that the church had. I didn't know until I read that book that the church where I was a member, I didn't know that they had bought that house for them as a pastoral parsonage. I didn't know until I read that book and saw the picture of that house. I relate to the names of the people that she has, that the author of the book put in there. I knew a lot of those people. I relate to that book. That's the reason I start reading and couldn't put it down.

KH: I'll be sure to take a look at it then.

MW: Condi. I think Bush or somebody in his cabinet started that. Her name is Condoleezza. Her mother told me what that word meant but I've forgotten.

KH: I've heard it's a musical term that means you play sweetly.

MW: Well they tell all about her music, being a musician all through her life. In fact she still loves it but she gave it up. She gave up being a concert pianist because she says that it was too demanding. I don't know what could be more demanding than what she--.

KH: Being Secretary of State.

MW: She just loves that history, all that kind of history that she has gotten into. She just loves that. That's when she changed her major.

KH: Can I just ask you one more question? How would you describe Titusville as a community?

MW: Now?

KH: Now and compared to then.

MW: As I knew Titusville years and years ago before it became very much beautiful like it is now. The children who came from Titusville at the time of my high school days and their high school days, like the Chisolms were people who were very soaked into Titusville. They knew all about Titusville. We used to say they came from "Mudville."

KH: That's what Mr. Jones called it too.

MW: He did.

KH: Because the streets flooded so much.

MW: Yeah. "Mudville." We'd look at their shoes. You know children are all still. People are people. Children in my day did some of the same things that these children do now. They like to tease and they like to embarrass people. We used to look at their shoes when they'd come to school, "Oh I know where you came from.

Mudville.” They had clay on their shoes. Children are cruel. I don’t care what. They are cruel to each other. If they got that fighting spirit and it came through their house from their parents. They got it. Now, you don’t see any Mudville. The streets are paved. I, myself, went to the Post Office for this area where I live now. I went to the Post Master myself, right downtown and ask for the mail to be delivered to our doors instead of being delivered like it was rural.

KH: How was it before?

MW: Right out there where I have a beautiful plant that was where the mailbox was. Right out there by the driveway were mailboxes all up and down. Mine was right there. My husband planted that plant in that automobile tire. That’s where the mailbox was. I went down to the post office and asked the Post Master myself to please let us have our mail delivered. Some of these people on this same street they don’t know that. I didn’t go up and down the street blowing the horn. I just went and asked for it. I got the answer. The next thing we had mail boxes on our houses.

KH: That is an improvement.

MW: It was. Another thing that has changed, when we first moved here we had what they called septic tanks for the disposal of our wastes. We got connected to the city sewer line after we moved here. That was a big change.

KH: Do you feel safe here?

MW: I did. I don’t feel quite as safe now.

KH: Why not?

MW: Because all of this area was people who--like they cared for each other. They related to each other. Because most of them were professionals and they respected



each other. Unfortunately, we had a different caliber of mind thinking people. I'm not putting them down. They didn't think the same. There has been an element of people who didn't think and work like we did. I was trying to just shake it off. There has been, from other neighborhoods, I won't say--this is not in our neighborhood, but from other outlying neighborhoods like projects, government projects, where people who didn't think like we did. Now some of them, I won't put it on all the people because some of the nicest people and children that I have taught came from the projects. Friends make friends, don't they? Maybe they had friends or not friends that influenced them. They had to move out of those projects who didn't think alike and move and get a better place when they got able. The children that I taught, they improved themselves because they didn't think like some of the others.

KH: So they could make an improvement by moving in here.

MW: Because they prepared themselves. And education was the bottom line. Education is the bottom line. I have learned that there is another element of people who are not well educated and know how to treat people [who] live well beyond where we live here in this area, way beyond Greensprings Avenue, the highway, way over in there. You ask me did I feel safe. I said 'no I don't feel as safe as I used to.' I always think of keeping my doors locked and down. My granddaughter's always reminding me, "Mama, don't you open that door unless you really know or you have been told that they are coming or it's a delivery service and you can see their truck and know that they are delivering from somewhere." I never had to think about all that before now. It makes you wonder and makes you be a little too much alert for being broken into or something similar to that. I am more mindful of who I let in my house now than I used to.

KH: I guess that's kind of nerve racking.

MW: Yes it is.

KH: That you never had to do it before.

MW: Never had to do that. Over in the other neighborhood where I did live that's near Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, never thought about any of that kind stuff. I'm sure that they do. These young man now who live in California, both of their parents are deceased, that house has not been kept up like it would have been and they have been back here to see about it. The other kind of element of thinking people, mind thinking have done a lot of+ damage to their house. Although their house was a brick house the one that Lankford and I moved in was a wooden house. It has been kept well. For who we sold it to, if the same person isn't there she has relatives who are there and they have kept up the house that we did own and sold it. It's in nice shape in comparison to the brick house that was better than ours is not.

KH: People don't care about property as much any more.

MW: Like I said the people who live beyond Greensprings Avenue up here and way back further back over, further back--I don't know how far back--they are different too. I have said myself I never thought in this world I would see some people that pass by here that look like they are out of place.

KH: How do they look?

MW: How they dress and how they keep themselves up. Not just because they have this braided hair because the braided hair is in style. They are not well kept. They don't look like they care anything about themselves. I stay indoors. I used to go out on my back porch or out on the patio. Whoever was passing I would speak to them and all

that, speak to people. I better not do that now. They'll see me and see how I look and my white hair. I don't know whether they--. I'm afraid that they might come back to take advantage.

KH: It's a shame that it has to be that way.

MW: It is but that's the way it is. Our people have ruined our best communities. If you're not careful you'll be a victim. That's just the way it is. To say nothing how communities used to be, they could just walk out and leave their doors open and wouldn't anybody bother anything. You better not do that now. I think that's everywhere.

KH: Yeah. Seems to be.

MW: Mostly. Mostly. Mostly.

KH: Well, thank you ma'am. It's been real nice talking with you.

MW: It was wonderful talking with you. I want you to leave your--see I got a little pad there with my pen--.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Karen Meier, September, 2006