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PERRY, CLYDE

FEBRUARY 15, 2001

This is February 15th in the year 2001, and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing Clyde Perry at the Lincoln Center.

BOB GILGOR: Good morning. I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me this morning. The first question I have for you is where did you grow up and what was it like growing up?

CLYDE PERRY: I grew up in Chapel Hill. I attended Northside Elementary School and Lincoln High School. I always thought it was nice. I grew up in Pottersfield. We were all poor and so we didn't know what it was like to live a luxury life. It was nothing really that distinctive about my growing up or whatever. It was segregated. I never encountered any one on one white friends or whatever until I entered in the military.

BG: So your entire growing up was around the black community.

CP: It was in the black community, yes, and like I said in Pottersfield.

BG: What were your parents like?

CP: My father worked at American Tobacco Company and my mother was a housewife. She worked at the Porthole until '54. My baby brother was born in '55, and my mother stopped working then and became a housewife.

BG: What did she do at the Porthole?

CP: She was a cook.

BG: What did your father do at American Tobacco?

CP: He was a relief man. He was an operator of machinery there. Mostly he would give people breaks so that he would operate the machine while they went on break or whatever.

BG: What kind of marriage did they have?

CP: I think they were married--. My oldest brother is around thirty-eight and so I'm sure they were married around thirty-seven or something like that. They stayed together until my mother parted or died in '77. My father passed away in '89. It was a typical marriage, I guess. It wasn't always a bed of roses but they were together and endured the hard times and whatever. My father was a heavy drinker but other than that--. My mother was the disciplinarian in the family. My father was there but my mom was a strong disciplinarian.

BG: Would you say that she ran the family?

CP: She ran the family, yes.

BG: Was your father abusive when he got drunk?

CP: No, he went to sleep.

BG: Did your parents seem to get along well or was there a lot of fighting in the home.

CP: No, they got along real well.

BG:: Would you say that they were loving to one another?

CP: They were loving. You could tell that they cared about each other. There was no outwardly affection, you know, they didn't kiss before he went to work or anything like that, but you could see the love there.

BG: How did they treat you?

CP: According to my brother and sisters, I was my mother's favorite, but I don't think I was.

BG: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

CP: It was six in all, three boys and three girls, two brothers and three sisters.

BG: Where were you in the string?

CP: Third.

BB: You were third.

CP: But there was a twelve-year layoff, I was born in '43, and I have a sister that was born in '44, and then my brother wasn't born until '55, and then in '56 I had another sister. For me, it was a twelve-year lay off. I was a knee baby all of that time.

BG: What kind of a house did you live in? Six kids is a big family.

CP: Yes, the boys stayed in one room and the girls stayed in the other room. Mom and dad had their own room. It was a three-bedroom home.

BG: Where were you in Pottersfield?

CP: We lived on Cotton Street, Brooks Street, Gomain Avenue, and our last home was on Barn Street and that was out in Carrboro, [NC]. I was a senior in high school during that time.

BG: So I assume your parents rented, is that right?

CP: They did. The last home we were buying on Barn Street.

BG: I see. Do you remember the homes that you lived in growing up whether they had central heat or a wood burning stove?

CP: Wood burning stove. All of the homes did, until the final home, had a wood-burning stove. We would bring in wood. My job was to-- I had an older brother that cut the wood and my job was to bring it in. The girls washed dishes and helped in the kitchen. It was a thing that no matter what time--I would stop by Hargrave Center on the way home from school--and whatever time I got home I had to bring in the wood. It didn't matter you had to do that, your chores, you had to fill them before you did anything else.

BG: Would you say that you grew up happy?

CP: Oh, yes.

BG: Tell me about your playmates and where you played and the neighborhood.

CP: I had one playmate that was my best friend Charles Mason. He and I grew up together and it was on Church Street that we--. He lived on Caldwell Street and I lived on Brooks Street. We would spend the night with each other. We were just the best of friends. We would go to the Tin Can, which is located on UNC's campus. We could get

in there and play ball or mess around, you know, run track or whatever we wanted to do down there. We played ball at Hargraves Center. Ms. Lucille Caldwell was the director. We would stop there and look at American Bandstand with Dick Clark and then the Musketeers would come on at four o'clock. We didn't get a TV until I was in the fourth or fifth grade. No one had a TV so it wasn't like we were deprived or anything. It was a thing where you didn't have it and you weren't expected to have it. The only air-conditioned places that we saw at that time was Belks and the A&P Store, the Colonial Store. In Belks, they had the segregated bathrooms and the segregated water fountains. Colonial Store didn't have any public facilities so everything was equal there. But other than that, the playing fields, sometimes we would play baseball against the white kids at a midget league or a night league or whatever. We would go up and play with them. There was an Indian kid in the area name () and we somewhat identified with him even though he went to the white school or whatever.

BG: He was Indian?

CP: He was Indian.

BG: American or East Asian?

CP: American Indian. He played quarterback for Chapel Hill High School and went on. I think he's in California. He's a lawyer now I think. I'm not sure.

BG: Did you play out on the streets?

CP: We played in the streets and we skated. They would close off McDade Street and we would skate on McDade Street. Over the Christmas holidays we would get the skates and go up and down McDade Street. Like I said, it was closed off so the whole black population would all gather there and we would have that. I mean it was the thing where you would get out there and you would stay all day skating.

BG: Did you have any problems with discipline? I assume a group of children would be playing out on the street on McDade and what would happen if someone misbehaved?

CP: The parents at that time--. Any parent could discipline any child. It was a thing where if a neighbor saw me acting up she would discipline me as well as her own kids with no repercussions from my parents and when I got home I would get it. If the neighbor had reported it to my mom or father or whatever, it would be a double jeopardy. I would get two punishments.

BG: Did you feel love from your neighbors?

CP: Oh, yes, it was love there. They didn't do anything to jeopardize me or whatever. It was a thing where you respected your neighbors and they respected you or your parents. It was a thing where you were not supposed to do. You knew what your limitations were and you knew that you weren't supposed to do that and if you got caught doing what you

were not supposed to do you were disciplined. Like I said, it could have been twice if they told your mother. They would discipline you themselves and then if they reported you to your parents it was another set of discipline rules coming in to them.

BG: Did you have family living in the area?

CP: Oh yes, I had lots. I had an aunt that lived on McDade Street then there was my immediate family, but the rest of my family was in Chatham County.

BG: Where you lived were the streets paved?

CP: No, the only street that was paved was McDade and that was the skating street. Church Street was somewhat paved, but it wasn't the smooth paved. We couldn't skate on Church Street.

BG: So a number of the streets in that area were still with dirt.

CP: The majority of them were dirt. The McDade Street to my recollection was only paved. Well, Church Street was paved but it was paved to a point. McDade was the only fully paved street.

BG: Did your parents or your family talk to you about education?

CP: Well my mother, I always thought, had the prettiest handwriting. She had gone, I think, through the tenth grade in Chatham County. My dad, they used to call him Fess and that was short for professor. On the weekends he would shoe horses for people, he would cut hair, he did it all. He was like I say, a jack-of-all-trades. I think they called him professor and they made it short, Fess.

BG: Did they talk to you about your schooling?

CP: I was on the honor roll at Northside and Lincoln. I was expected to do well in school. I did well up until--. Yes, I did well all through school.

BG: Did you go on to college?

CP: No, not right out of high school. I entered the military. After the military, I went to Baltimore, [MD], and stayed there for three years and worked at the Post Office. I came back and I went to Durham Tech. I graduated from Durham Tech in '73.

BG: How many years did you have at Durham Tech?

CP: Two years.

BG: Did you have grandparents living in the area?

CP: My grandmother lived with my aunt on McDade Street until '75 when she passed away. My grandfather passed away in '52. I never knew my mother's mother and father. Her mother died in childbirth with her and her father was--. My mother had half brothers and sisters. This was her father's second marriage and I'm not sure what year he died. He died young. I never saw him.

BG: Are there any other things that you remember about growing up that stand out in your mind?

CP: Oh, yes. Growing up I started Northside and during that time we only went to school a half a day. We would go from eight to twelve or from twelve to three or twelve to four. My first three years, I think, was half day school. My first grade teacher was Mrs. Euzell Smith. My second grade teacher was Mrs. Peace, third grade teacher was Mrs. Peace, fourth grade teacher was Mrs. Boyd and she got sick and they brought in a replacement for her. Fifth grade teacher was Ms. Monroe, sixth grade teacher was Ms. Hargraves, the exercise lady around her now. Of all of my teachers, I think Ms. Hargraves stands out the most. I don't know why that is because she was my latest one or whatever, but I was more comfortable with her. I had somewhat of a stuttering problem and large crowds would upset me or whatever, not upset me, but I would stutter. She talked me out of that and since her class it would reoccur occasionally but nothing like it used to.

BG: That's pretty impressive remembering all your teachers from grammar school.

CP: Oh, yes.

BG: They must have left an impression on you.

CP: They did. They did.

BG: What was it that they did that left such a lasting impression?

CP: Your first grade teacher you're going to remember her anyway. Mrs. Peace was--. I don't know it was a learning process. I learned to tie my shoes which is nothing to brag about I don't think in the second grade. My sister who's a year younger used to have to tie my shoes for me. Mrs. Peace worked with me on that. I learned to tell time in the third grade, I think. And then in the fourth grade I learned that Mrs. Boyd had gotten sick and I had to talk to her. She was a real good teacher that I had respected also. Her husband was or it may have been her father that was the Reverend Boyd at St. Paul's Church on Merritt Mill Road. I think on one of the things over here the newspaper has my name in there for the honor role. I was in the second or third grade then and I'm not sure which one.

BG: When you were growing up did you have a dictionary in the house?

CP: I don't think we did.

BG: An encyclopedia?

CP: No encyclopedias. The only encyclopedias we had use of were in the school library. The public library we were not allowed in. The University library we couldn't go to so the only library we had was the library here and right here was the library.

BG: So you couldn't get into the public library?

CP: The public library was segregated. It was on Franklin Street. No, we couldn't go in it.

BG: When did that end?

CP: I went into the military in '62, and when I went into the military Chapel Hill High was located on Franklin Street and the library was right next to Chapel Hill High. I'm not sure when, but maybe when the schools integrated the library became a place where everybody could go or whatever.

BG: What are the other memories that you have of the Northside?

CP: When I was at Northside we had free rein. Like I said, we used to go to the Tin Can and I eight or nine or ten years old or whatever. The memories of Northside would be they had an auditorium; the front part was an auditorium, a gym-atorium. It had poles in

the middle. It had like four poles and I used to go over. I lived down the street from Northside, and I would come up and go to basketball games. I had to climb a ladder and I would keep score. Every time the team would score I would take out the score and just slide it in. There was no scoreboard or anything like that. I know that Lincoln High got beat one time and I think my sister was a freshman in school, got beat twenty-eight to nothing in basketball, the girls team, and during that time six girls were on the team. Until I graduated from high school, six girls played. Three guards and three forwards, the guards couldn't cross centerline nor could the forwards cross centerline. It was a half court game with three on three. My sister was a real good basketball player and I could name you some of the basketball players then. Fay Jones was a real good basketball player. That stuck out.

BG: Did they have restrictions in their dribbling also?

CP: Only can dribble but twice, I think, two or three times and no more than three. I think it was twice that they could only dribble the ball. Then they had to pass it and they'd get it across the line or whatever.

BG: So those three forwards had to stay on their side of the court and the three guards had to stay on their side.

CP: Right.

BG: And they would have to pass it over that mid court line.

CP: Right.

BG: What about the auditorium? You mentioned they had an auditorium there. Did you have regular programs in the auditorium, weekly programs?

CP: We had the weekly programs where each class would make a presentation every Friday. That's when my stuttering became apparent. I was pretty good in school so I always had to play little parts. I can remember that the crowds would upset me and I would start stuttering or whatever. Yes, every week someone had to make a presentation.

BG: What kinds of presentations were made?

CP: We would do plays. If it was February, we would a presidential play, Thanksgiving we would do a Thanksgiving play and Christmas, the seasonal plays. Different people would have speaking parts and whatever.

BG: Was there a singing group?

CP: We had a glee club. In the first grade I remember we had the rhythm band and then we had a flute band. I was in the flute band in the third grade. I remember we had to

wear white shirts and blue pants. I was in the flute band for the third and fourth grade I do believe. Lillian Perry, she's Lillian Robinson now, but she was the teacher of that.

BG: Did the teachers visit your home at all?

CP: Oh, yes, yes. Everyone lived in the same neighborhood. I think the majority of the teachers that taught in the school system lived in the area, and if you had a disciplinary problem or whatever they would give you a letter to carry home. You carried it home. There was one thing about it, you don't dish it or trash it or whatever and then the teacher would come by and explain to your parents exactly what had happened or whatever.

BG: Same day?

CP: Same day normally, yes. If your parents didn't work and they could catch them at home, they would be there the same day.

BG: What about if there weren't discipline problems? Did teachers make home visits to find out what the view of the home was?

CP: Oh yes, they would come by and like I said, they lived in the same community so they would walk by and see a pupil on the porch. There was no air-conditioning then so people were in the yard quite frequently. They would stop and talk and let you know what your kids were doing or whatever.

BG: So even though you might not have had a telephone there was still good communication.

CP: It was great communication. It was too much communication really. It was a thing where, yes, even without a phone they stayed in touch with you.

BG: You had mentioned the rhythm band and the glee club and the flute band, did you have a drama club also or just the classes put on plays?

CP: Just the classes put on plays. The high school had a drama club and they would make presentations. I remember Prince Taylor; he was quite a few years ahead of me. I remember seeing him in a play at Lincoln. I don't know how often they were presented during that time but I remember seeing him perform.

BG: Do you think the students liked to do the performances?

CP: Yes we did.

BG: They sort of--. I don't want to say show off but was this something that they really looked forward to?

CP: They looked forward to it and see the people in the neighborhood would come out and then it would be something they could brag about that they had done this and that.

From our exposure, we hadn't been exposed to that many things to really judge it but they were good. They were our idols, and we looked up to them

BG: When you say there were our idols, but you were part of the day weren't you?

CP: I was but they were older. They were like at the high school level and I was in elementary school so we would come down to Lincoln to see them perform.

BG: I was talking about performances at Northside and you were talking about performances at Lincoln.

CP: The older guys would be at Lincoln and they would be making the big time performances. The ones that we did it was like a class would do this, that and the other thing. Yeah, the kids that were doing well in school were the ones that got the major parts so you readily accepted the part because everybody knew that it was the reason why you were given the part.

BG: Did the Lincoln High School students come down to Northside and perform at Northside also?

CP: No, they performed mostly at Lincoln.

BG: Can you remember the PTA? Did you parents take part in the PTA?

CP: No they didn't. My parents didn't. The PTA did not have that much--. We had a PTA and I don't remember how many people were in it. I remember the Merritts, their mother was the president of the PTA but I think that was at Lincoln. In Elementary school, I don't even think we had a PTA. But my parents, no, they never participated in the PTA.

BG: Was there a gathering place before you would go to Northside and after the school day was over?

CP: Mr. Bynum Weaver's store, he was the undertaker and he had a little store at the bottom of Northside. We would all gather. We would come down and get whatever. You could get a hamburger and a half a pint of chocolate milk for twenty cents.

BG: The combination of chocolate milk and a hamburger for twenty cents?

CP: Twenty cents. Miss Susie had the best hamburgers in the world. That twenty cents was hard to come by. You didn't have that everyday to go and get the hamburger and the chocolate milk, but his store was the place where you would come by and meet people or whatever. He had a woodshed in the back and we would gather back there and we could play and whatever. Back then it didn't take much to please us. We didn't have much, but we were happy with the little stuff that we did have; had homemade bicycles or wagons or whatever.

BG: Mr. Bynum Weaver's store, was this a place where you met before school or after school or both?

CP: Well, both but mostly--. You know before school you had to be at school at eight o'clock so we wouldn't have much gathering there then but at lunchtime we would sneak off and go his store and then after school we would walk down and gather there.

BG: Did you also go to the community center?

CP: Right. In elementary school, not that much because the older kids played basketball at the community center and that was the gathering place for them. Like in the seventh grade when we were coming home from school, we would stop at the community center and play basketball or whatever, but the big boys would take the court. It was a thing where you had to call up next and they ruled it. You had to wait your turn, your age limit or whatever.

BG: Do you remember the rock pile?

CP: Yes.

BG: Can you tell me about that?

CP: Okay. The rock pile was a gathering of rocks and people would climb up on the rock pile and it was a challenge. You would go up there and see who would be the most daring. Then we had a rock wall. It was a rock wall that divided the school and you would run and you would jump over the rock wall not knowing what was down below. It was just something that we were interested in doing.

A friend of mine, Dave Mason, and I were talking about that. He was saying how daring I was I would go over the rock wall and I taught him how to go over the rock wall. The rock wall was-- I wouldn't do it now.

BG: Was it a tall rock wall?

CP: It was about an eight or ten foot drop. And then on the other side there were like bushes and whatever. You'd jump over the rock wall and you would show how tough you were.

BG: Nobody broke any bones?

CP: No.

BG: What was the rock pile used for besides daring and showing that you could climb?

CP: I don't know when it was there, when it was placed there, or why it was placed there. They'd been cleaning off the football field and Orange County Training School

practiced football right there at Northside. They had stacked the rocks up cleaning off the field, and they just stayed there. Rocks would come out of the ground every year at Northside. Every year they would clean them off and stack them on the pile and it just grew.

BG: Was the street paved outside of Northside?

CP: No.

BG: Did you have streetlights out there?

CP: No.

BG: Was it difficult to get to school?

CP: No, I walked. If you lived in town you had to walk to school no matter where it was. I lived over by Northside. You didn't have lockers. You would walk to school. It was understood that you walked to school rain or shine, sleet or snow. I had perfect attendance I think until I was in the seventh grade. You just walked to school. It was the thing and usually you would pick up friends on the way. At Lincoln that's the way it was and at Northside I lived about 300 yards from the school so it was nowhere to go.

BG: Any other things about Northside that you remember?

CP: I remember the cafeteria. It was good food there. I remember my teachers. I remember I had a classmate in the sixth grade and his whole family burned, Victor Blacknell, and I think they buried them in two caskets. It was like eight of them. He had spent the night with his first cousin and he survived it. That was the most tragic thing that I can remember in Northside.

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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B
PERRY, CLYDE

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BG: So you liked going to school.

CP: Oh, yes, I enjoyed school. At that time, school was the only place to go and meet friends. There were no gatherings places other than school. No one played hooky; no one really did anything--. If you didn't go to school, you didn't see anybody else. Like I said, I had perfect attendance until I was in the seventh grade. During that time I'm not sure what happened but I had gotten sick or something. I enjoyed going to school.

BG: Tell me about your teachers. Do you remember them as being strict, as being encouraging, loving, difficult; how would you characterize your teachers?

CP: The teachers were strict. They knew you and they knew what you were capable of doing and so they would push you to that point. They were caring. You got the impression that they were not going to let you do less than what you were supposed to do. We had limited--at that time we didn't know how limited they were--books and whatever. We were given books and they were graded when they gave them to us like new, good, fair, and poor. When we turned them in they were graded again, and if we had damaged them we had to pay a book fee. The teachers did that. Like I said, we had to walk to school. We didn't have lockers so we carried our books with us wherever we went. Most of them were damaged during the course of the year and you ended up paying whatever the book fee. My teachers as a whole were all--. I can't say one that was not a

caring teacher. All of them showed an interest in you. They could stop by your house and let your parents know whether you how you were doing in school and whatever.

BG: What happened if you lost a book?

CP: You had to pay whatever they assessed the value.

BG: Let's say that you didn't have the money to pay?

CP: I'm not sure. You wouldn't get a report card until you paid or whatever.

BG: So you really needed to pay to get grades.

CP: Right.

BG: Did you have a graduation ceremony?

CP: Yes we did from Northside. We had the largest class to graduate from Northside. I think we had around a hundred kids that came out of Northside. I don't know how long that record stood, but we had three classes. The three sixth grade teachers were Mrs. Manley, Reverend Manley's wife, Mrs. Hargraves, and Mrs. Hogan, and each class had about forty kids in them. We had over a hundred kids to graduate. We had a big graduation ceremony. Mr. Peace had it at Northside. Every year after that they had one

and I believe previously they had them. There are some pictures of some of the graduating classes, I think.

BG: Right.

CP: That's one of them right there. Yes, we did have a graduation ceremony.

BG: Did both your parents come to graduation?

CP: Oh, yes.

BG: How many of those students who graduated went on to Lincoln?

CP: All of them came to Lincoln. They had a rule then if a girl got pregnant she and the guy that made her pregnant were both put out of school. My graduation class was only about forty-six kids out of a 112 or 113 that came down to Lincoln. I can't remember exactly how many but it was around forty or forty-six that graduated. Some stayed back but the majority was the pregnancy thing. Not the majority but quite a few of them were put out because of that.

BG: So about forty to forty-five percent of your class that entered Lincoln ended up graduating.

CP: Right.

BG: Well, let's go on to Lincoln and tell me what you remember about Lincoln High.

CP: We had been warned before we came about the long hallway. They were telling us how it was to come down here and this and that and other thing. When I came my seventh grade teacher was Mrs. Bell, and her husband was Mr. Bell the band teacher. It was not a haring experience it was enjoyable. I get in the band. I started out playing the clarinet and I went form the clarinet to the saxophone but only played about a year. You either had to buy your horn--. They didn't have the rental thing then. So I couldn't afford a horn or anything. I wasn't that interested in it anyway, but I did study it a year.

The seventh grade was good. It wasn't bad. The eight grade was my best year. Mr. Edwards was my teacher. I thought he was the strongest disciplinarian. He taught us more things. He was my best teacher that I can recall having down there.

BG: You were about to say that he taught you more things. What were the other things that he taught you?

CP: He would not let you laugh if someone made a mistake in class, you couldn't laugh. That was one of the reasons why most people would not speak out for fear of saying the wrong thing and being laughed at. We couldn't laugh at anything that was said in class. It didn't matter what it was. That let people express themselves even more and not seem as though they were foolish. You could say what you wanted and it was taken at face

value or whatever. It was never--. Like I said, you had no fear of anyone belittling you about a statement that was made. I admired that most about his class. He had full control of that. He would not let anything go on in class that he was not on top of.

BG: That meant a lot to you, the teaching, not to ridicule others.

CP: Right. It did. It helped the slow learners to speak out, and then you could get more of an understanding. The slow learners were people that didn't speak out in class. They were the ones that didn't talk for fear of being made fun of and when he cut that out it let them speak out and you understood them more. We had guys that we thought were really slow because of that. They would never say anything. In his class, they would speak out and you would know where they coming from, their feelings about things. Everyone's feelings may not be the same about anything, you know, but they were allowed to give their point of view without being made fun of.

BG: Did you feel other teachers did similar things to halt that kind of behavior?

CP: He was the first one, and I guess the first one always has the lasting impression or the most formative impression. Then further on up the road, we had one teacher, Mr. Christmas and he was our English teacher, he said an A was for the guy who wrote the book, a B was for the teacher, and C was for his best student. It was a thing where you didn't laugh in his class. He was hard; no matter what you did a B was the most you could expect out of that. A C was probably what you would get, and a D was failing. It was a C, C+ type thing that you would get. He was a hard teacher. He didn't give you

any--. My math class I was pretty good in that and I could watch you work a problem and I could come back and work the same problem. Mr. Christmas, in the English class, it was a thing where he would give you books reports to do and you used to read the acknowledgement and the epilogue and you could do a book report, but not with him. You had to read the book.

BG: You mentioned that you played the clarinet and the saxophone. Where did you learn to play the clarinet?

CP: It was a thing that Mr. Bell thought that I should play. At the time that I was assigned that I really didn't like it. I thought it was a girl's horn. I did it for him for the first three or four months and then after that I transferred. I really wanted to play the drums but everybody played the drums. I was never a gifted individual in the musical department anyway. I went to the saxophone. I could play out whatever, but I was never--.

BG: Did you take lessons?

CP: No.

BG: Where did you pick it up? Did you sort of do it on your own or did the music teacher give you lessons?

CP: The music teacher would give us lessons.

BG: At the school?

CP: Right.

BG: Was that the case with most of the students that they were taught an instrument by the music teacher?

CP: That's right, they were taught by the music teacher. He would assign them, I guess, whatever he was in need of. Whenever you came in he would say you do this, that, or the other thing. The girls played the oboes, the clarinets, and had a few girls that played the saxophone. No one was taught previously before joining the band or anything.

BG: When you were at Northside they didn't have anyone there who was teaching instruments; how to play?

CP: No, but we did have a few individuals that played in the band from Lincoln. I'm looking at this picture right here and this band right here was this was the building on the left hand side right there and he started a band over here. He would come over and work with the band, you know, with the players. No one owned instruments. The school had the drums and whatever.

BG: You had mentioned the long hallway. What was the long hallway?

CP: Lincoln Center's hallway, they were talking about changing classes and all of that. When I speak of elementary I always speak of Northside and then the high school is Lincoln, but it was seven through twelve at Lincoln. In the seventh grade, you didn't change classes. In the eighth grade, we did do some class changing. They were telling us about the hallway was so long and within two minutes you had to go from one end of the hall to the other end of the hall. They were trying to put the fear tactic in you.

When we got here it was like anything else new to you, you know, you were fearful of it but then after you were here a month you had grown used to it or accustomed to it or whatever, and then going to school here from the seventh grade thru the twelfth. The seventh and eighth grades were like the elementary school; you had one teacher or whatever and so by the time you did get to the ninth grade you knew where to go and all of that. It probably would have been different if we had come in say the ninth grade year and had to learn Lincoln and find out where to go and all of that. But with the eighth and ninth and having spent those years here it was the thing where you had adjusted to it and you adjusted pretty quickly to the changes.

BG: You started changing classes in the eighth grade.

CP: Yes, but it was just with eighth grade teachers. We had three eighth grade teachers and we would go to one for something. Art was taught in one classroom. But the teacher that really taught us was the homeroom teacher. Mr. Edwards was my homeroom teacher, the one that I said had the most impact on me, I think.

BG: Was there a gathering place when you went to Lincoln before class or after class?

CP: We would all gather right on the east side of the building. We would just talk and chatter or whatever. After school, we would always go up to M & N Grill. That was a gathering place.

BG: Where was that?

CP: It was on Graham Street up where--. What's there now?

BG: Where the newspaper is?

CP: No, it was across the street from the newspaper. They just rebuilt up there; Lane's Hair Design and it's about three different things that is set up in there now. Next to() used to be there but it's right next to that.

BG: What would you do at the M & N Grill?

CP: It was a stop off place going home from school. It was a little grill and we would order potato chips, hotdogs. Lilly Nicks and her husband, it was Mason and Nicks Grill, I think, Charlie Mason and Robert Nicks.

BG: Any dancing there?

CP: Oh, yes, they had dancing there.

BG: How about the Hargraves Center or the Community Center? Was that a gathering place, too?

CP: That was a gathering site. After you left the grill, you would go down to Hargraves and you would play basketball, you could play table tennis, you could dance and watch TV. That was the place for us. That was the place where we would always eventually end up.

BG: Who ran the Hargraves Center?

CP: Ms. Lucille Caldwell.

BG: What was she like?

CP: She was a strong disciplinarian. If she caught you, she would expel you from the center. If you were caught doing anything that was incorrect or improper, she would send you home and tell you not to come back until X amount of days. You didn't really mess up. Playing basketball--it was out where the parking lot is now--in the heat of the game somebody my curse or something and she would hear it, they were gone. And the same way with ping pong--table tennis--if were caught hitting the table or dropping the

paddle or throwing the paddle, she would expel you for a while, and you leaned not to do that.

BG: It sounds as though people were on best behavior there.

CP: You had to be pretty much on your better behavior, that's right. She supervised and she ran it. She didn't take any lip. She wasn't a huge woman or whatever, but she was stern. She stood her own and she held her own ground.

BG: One of the things I didn't ask you about when you were growing up is about the church whether your family were church going and what role the church had in your life.

CP: Growing up we had a community church, O'Bryant Chapel [AME], and we went there my whole family. My home church was Hamlet Chapel, and that's where my mother and father were both born in that area. That was our church. We would go there every whatever, but when we didn't go there we would go to O'Bryant Chapel. After we got old enough to go on our own, we would go First Baptist. That was the "church for the teenagers," but you always went to church.

BG: Your mother and father went with you every Sunday?

CP: Yes. Sometimes they would go to Hamlet and we may go to O'Bryant Chapel or something like that, but if they put their foot down and wanted us to go to Hamlet--.

Hamlet was, like I said, our family church. There were older people there instead of if we would to go O'Bryant Chapel there were other kids our age there. Then after we started going to First Baptist it was always kids there. O'Bryant Chapel was the church of the community.

BG: Do you remember Mr. [C.A.] McDougale? Can you tell me about him?

CP: He was a strong disciplinarian. The School Board was white and made up of all white parents. The PTA was the only thing--. I think Mr. McDougale ran the school. He was a strong disciplinarian. He would be at every door, it seemed like, when you came in. School started at 8:30am, I think, and if you got here at 8:35am he would tell you that "you're too late for the day and too early for tomorrow." It seemed like he would be on every door. We had the gym--. We had about twelve entrances to get in here and the one that you chose he was there. [Laughter]. His favorite words were, "you're too late for today and too early for tomorrow. Go home."

BG: You had started to say that the School Board was all white.

CP: Yes.

BG: How did that relate to what Mr. McDougale's functions were? Did they give him free rein? Is that what you were saying?

CP: Yes, he had free rein. To my knowledge, he had free rein. He had free rein. It was his way or the highway. I guess he had to have it that way, I mean, all the kids that he ran across or whatever, you know. His daughter was a year behind me in school. He had a son that was maybe four or five years--. He tested Mr. McDougle, but no one else did. He was a strong, strong disciplinarian.

BG: So this white School Board controlled the white schools. Is that a proper interpretation from what you remember?

CP: From what I can remember, they controlled the white schools. We would see them maybe twice a year at the most. Some functions that we would have like graduation, you would see the superintendent, and then maybe one other time in the year they would come down or whatever.

BG: They didn't control the black schools. They gave that control to the principal?

CP: I'm sure they had the final say-so, but Mr. McDougle, it wasn't like everything that was done--. You know, now everything that is done you can appeal it to the School Board. Back then you didn't. It was Mr. McDougle, he had the final say or whatever, and no one ever challenged him. I know when integration started out my senior year I think one kid had already gone to Chapel Hill High. He told us if we went down and didn't like it we were not coming back here. That was his way, I guess, I don't know, I don't know, but I remember that statement, if you leave Lincoln and you don't like it at

Chapel Hill High you aren't coming back to it. If you had gone to school ten years or eleven years in one place, you don't want to change. I didn't. I know he had that much control. He could tell you that if a girl became pregnant and I don't know whether it was the school policy or state policy or what, but I know they were kicked out of school.

BG: And the father too?

CP: And the father too, yes.

BG: Anything else about Mr. McDougle that you remember?

CP: The voice that he had, it was a piercing voice. He would come on the intercom in the morning to make his announcement and whatever. He had our respect. He had the respect of everybody. He put fear in you. Like I said, it seemed like for him to have been the principal, the only principal and no co-principal or assistant principal, he was everywhere. It seemed like he was everywhere. When you didn't want him to be there he was there. He kept us in line. He made us toe the line.

BG: Did he have any other degrees other than a college graduate degree?

CP: He wasn't a doctorate. He may have gotten his master's, I don't know. We didn't call him Dr. McDougle. I know he didn't have his doctorate. He had a brother and one of our rivals was Henderson Institute and his brother was the coach at Henderson. That

was the toughest football and basketball competition that we had. It normally came to fisticuffs when we went down. Oh, yes.

BG: What was the band like?

CP: Oh, the band was good. The band was composed of seventh thru twelfth graders. They would perform in Chapel Hill over the Christmas holidays. I remember a couple of years at Carrboro Lion's Park they would turn the lights out and the band had lights on their shoes and the majorettes had lights on their boots and you would see the lights marching. It was dark out there and you could only see the lights. The director, Mr. Bell, was very innovative about stuff like that. In high school we had a Mr. [Clark] Egerton who later moved on to Durham Hillside. He's retired now. We always had a hundred strong. Sometimes we would have football players that got to come out at halftime and before with the band. The homecoming parades people would turn out just to see our band.

BG: Would you march at homecoming?

CP: We would march up and down Franklin Street.

BG: Where would you start and where did you end?

CP: We started at the museum and we would end at Carrboro Lion's Park.

BG: When you say the museum, which museum?

CP: Not the museum, I'm sorry, the Planetarium.

BG: You would start at the Planetarium and walk to Carrboro Lion's Park. Would white folks come out as well as the entire community?

CP: Yes. Franklin Street at that time, we didn't have the malls then so Franklin Street was made up of the Intimate Book Shop, Varsity Theater, Carolina Theater, Robin's Clothing Store, Milton's, and Maurice Julian's, and Town and Campus, but anyway, they would all come out of their stores and watch the band go. They were really well respected and everything. We would talk about Chapel Hill's band.

BG: Did they compete at any state competitions?

CP: They would get the A+ in rhythm in state competition. That was an ongoing thing. I think maybe from '55 to I know when I graduated in '61 we got the A+ rating all those years. That's one of the things that Mr. Bell and Mr. Egerton prided themselves on.

BG: Now Mr. Bell was the band teacher from Northside?

CP: No, he went from Northside to Lincoln High School. He was at Northside and he would hear the band and go over there and work with them. He was really assigned to the Lincoln.

BG: So Mr. Egerton was the band director.

CP: No, Mr. Bell was the band director. He was before Mr. Egerton.

BG: Oh, I see. I've got you.

CP: Then after Mr. Egerton came, Mr. Bell left and went to High Point, I think. Mr. Egerton came. Mr. Bell would work Northside and he would have a band at Northside and he would go maybe for an hour or so and work with them. Mr. Egerton discontinued that, I think.

BG: What about the band uniforms? Do you remember anything about those?

CP: Oh, yes. We had the black band uniforms. The kids had to wear white bucks. One thing we could say about Chapel Hill it was a poor neighborhood but they dressed them nice. The uniforms were all--. Everybody had the same color uniforms and same type of uniform. Everyone would have the white bucks. The horns were all rented, but some kids owned their own horn, maybe eight out of the hundred. There were all together. It

was real neat and everything. They would go to Durham and be in different Christmas parades and would travel around and do that.

BG: Did they play in the UNC Homecoming Parade?

CP: They would play in the UNC Beat Duke parade, the UNC Homecoming Parade.

BG: Christmas Parade?

CP: Christmas Parade.

BG: And then they got invited to other Christmas parades.

CP: They were invited over to Durham and maybe Raleigh occasionally. They were good.

BG: Did they ever go to Shaw [University] or NCCU or AT&T to play?

CP: They did. I'm not sure where the conferences were held; you know where they were rated. I think it was in Wilmington, [NC], but I'm not sure on that. They would go to NCCU for workshops like conferences. We had one bus. Mr. Smith would carry us where we needed to go. It was a thing where we always got there. In football, I was the

statistician. In high school, I only weighed like a hundred and forty pounds. I got the honor of riding with Mr. Smith and he could find every school that we had to go to.

BG: What was the bus like?

CP: It was a nice bus. It would run real nice. Like I said, I can't complain about the accommodations that we had. We had new uniforms, we had new band uniforms, the bus was fairly new, never had any breakdowns, and at that time before the football game the opposing school would feed you. You would get there early and they would give you whatever.

BG: Was that before or after the game?

CP: Before the game.

BG: Before the game?

CP: Before the game, I think.

BG: Most teams don't eat right before the game.

CP: It may have been after the game. I may have that confused. I would get the free meal, too.

BG: Was the bus painted?

CP: Yes. It had the big tiger on the side. We would start singing when we left Chapel Hill, and we would sing all the way. The places that we went to were reasonably close. We would sing until we got there.

BG: Was the bus painted orange on the side?

CP: It was white and orange with a tiger on the side.

BG: Who painted it?

CP: Mr. Smith probably. We had a shop here. He would take it to the shop. His project was bringing a car and he did all the work and I guess he did it on the teachers' cars, too, but he would keep that bus running excellent. I can't recall a bus breaking down I cannot recall one.

BG: I hear that they had a ritual at one time with the football team that when they would get to a field they would run around the field. Do you remember that?

CP: Yes, you would dress at the school and then they would take you to the field or whatever in the bus. We would get off the bus and then they'd run around the field. The

bus would let us off in the end zone and then they would take a lap around the field and be cheering. People knew of us anyway and so that added more fear to them, I'm sure.

BG: So you ran around the field. Do you go to sing anything in the center?

CP: They would sing fight songs and all of that. When they were running they were singing the fight songs, and then in the center of the field they were making other fight songs. The team was probably forty or forty-six strong and at that time that was a lot.

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BG: So they would go to the center of the field and be singing songs, and anything else going on?

CP: On, yes, they would do noise making. They would come out and let you know who they were and how strong they were and the person singing and whatever would act as though they didn't have any fear. They had heard of us and they knew that Lincoln was the team and they would come out with a swagger to them. It was something to see.

BG: Did they go through any motions, clapping of hands?

CP: They did hand clapping. They did the roar, you know, the tiger sound.

BG: Do you think it intimidated the other team?

CP: I'm sure it intimidated them. [Laughter]. At the time, I didn't think they were doing it to intimidate them. I don't know, it was just something that we did. When I look back on it, yes, I'm sure it did intimidate them.

BG: Did you do that same thing when you played at home?

CP: Did the same thing at home.

BG: What was the response of the crowd to that?

CP: Every time that we played it would be a sell out. It seemed like everyone in Chapel Hill was there. It was a thing where the crowd would go crazy. They would get up if they would go in the end zone and chant and want the team to bring it on home, bring it on home, and the majority of the time they did.

BG: Did just the locals come to see the games or did people come from other areas of the state to see the games?

CP: Some of the alumni would come in to see them. The other people we didn't know. We had white kids that would come out but they would be on the visitors' side. The reason they would sit on the visitors' side was there was always more room on the visitors' than it was on the home side because all the black community of Chapel Hill would turn out for the Lincoln High School games. The opposing team didn't bring that many with them and so there was more room on the visitors' side.

BG: At games where the band marched like for homecoming, did some of the children follow behind?

CP: Yes.

BG: Can you describe that?

CP: When Lincoln was ahead the kids would follow them all the way out to Lion's Park. It was like eighty or ninety kids running behind them wanting them to do that. They would stop every so often and do a show, you know, a step show. The kids would go wild and then they would take off again and then they would go maybe another three hundred yards or four hundred yards and then they would do another step show. The kids wanted to see every step show that they did. They would follow them all the way to the end.

BG: What was the step show?

CP: It was something that they would come up with. They would lay the horns down and the drums would be playing and they would be doing a step or just, that, and the other.

BG: Like a dance?

CP: Like a dance, yes.

BG: Who bought the uniforms for the football team and for the band?

CP: We would have selling's for the football and band team. Doug Clark bought the hoods that we had. He bought those and he bought the jackets, I think. I'm thinking that

we would have selling's and the plates, like that plate right there, we would sell those and it would go toward the uniforms.

BG: The sales of one sort of another. Did you have bake sales?

CP: We had bake sales, cookie sales, they would sell candy and they would have a lot of sales of different things.

BG: So that's how you got the football uniforms and the band uniforms.

CP: Band uniforms and basketball uniforms.

BG: Are there other things about the football games you recall?

CP: We normally won. My senior year we were state champs. We were strong. We were a strong football team. We played Hillside which was a AAA school and we were AA at the time. We held our own. The toughest rivalry was Burlington and then Henderson. They were two of our toughest games.

BG: You remembered all of your teachers from grammar school. Can you remember the football records? The school opened in '51, where does your memory go back for the record of how the teams turned out?

CP: Okay. '55.

BG: Can you give me the records?

CP: Okay, in '55 they went to the Eastern Championship and they lost. They were undefeated until they got to the Eastern and they lost to Lexington.

BG: '56?

CP: In '56 they were state co-champs.

BG: How do you become a co-champ?

CP: They tied 0-0.

BG: What was their record during the year?

CP: They were 10-0.

BG: And '57?

CP: They were state champs.

BG: And the record during the year?

CP: They were undefeated.

BG: In '58?

CP: They went to the Eastern Regions. They lost maybe two games. I think they lost to Henderson that year.

BG: So they lost in the Eastern Regional.

CP: Right.

BG: And they were, did you say, 8-2?

CP: 8-2, I think with the last lost and then they lost to Henderson during the regular season.

BG: What about '59?

CP: In '59, they were state co-champs again.

BG: And their record?

CP: They lost one game I think. They were 9-1. In '60, they lost two games. They went to the Eastern Regions.

BG: So they lost in the Eastern Regions?

CP: Right.

BG: They lost two games that year.

CP: Yes, they lost two.

BG: '61?

CP: In '61, they lost but it was later overturned and it was a perfect record. We beat Hickory, [NC], in the championship.

BG: So they were state champions.

CP: Right.

BG: Why was it overturned?

CP: They had used some ineligible players at Henderson so we had a perfect record.

BG: '62?

CP: I went in the service in '62 so I couldn't keep up with them then. '62, '63, '64--.

From '62 to '66, I was in the military.

BG: Are the records here about how they did in '62, '63, '64, and '65?

CP: I don't think so. Fred Battle could tell you in '62. He was in Greensboro, [NC], so he probably knows about '63, '64, and '65.

BG: So in seven years from 1955 to 1961, five of those seven years they were either state champion, Eastern Champion or co-champion, and four of the years they were state champion or co-champion.

CP: That's right. We were a powerhouse.

BG: I would say so.

CP: We really were. It was a thing where in football we were the king.

BG: What made that team so good?

CP: I don't know. I can't say that's the reason because we would go to UNC and UNC took a liking to us also. We would watch them play and I don't know. Al Goldstein was an all-American at UNC. I think he graduated in '60 from UNC, '60 or '61. Everybody would watch him play and we had guys that would try to emulate him and imitate him in whatever. I remember going to UNC games where they didn't win a game but it was still the exposure to that. With us being a small town and whatever, everybody--. I don't know what makes a winner whether it was UNC and being exposed to what they did and how they did it or whatever, and then they did take a liking to us. I guess everybody likes a winner and we could do down and use their facilities and whatever.

BG: Was Al Goldstein the UNC player who arranged for a scrimmage between Chapel Hill High and Lincoln?

CP: I don't know whether it was Al Goldstein or not. I don't recall that.

BG: What is it that he did that makes you remember his name?

CP: Oh, he was an all-American at UNC. He was a wide receiver. He was the man. We didn't really meet him, I didn't, but he was on TV. He was in the papers all the time. He was a real good wide receiver.

BG: Did UNC give any equipment to the team?

CP: Yes, they gave us helmets, shoulder pads, and whatever they had a need for. They would call. Mr. Morris Mason was the trainer there. He was black.

BG: Don't they have something named after him, the facility or the training room?

CP: Right.

BG: Is it the training room?

CP: It's the Morris Mason training room.

BG: He was there a long time.

CP: A very long time.

BG: Was he the one who arranged for the helmets, I guess, they were used helmets and used shoulder pads?

CP: I don't know this for a fact, but I'm sure that he did have something to do with it. It was a thing where they would contribute and the reason why we got them was because of Mr. Mason. The coaches would go down and talk to the coaches at UNC. If I had to give it to one person, I would think it would have been Mr. Morris.

BG: So there was some help when you were here that the coaching staff at the high school went to UNC coaches down there and picked up some pointers.

CP: They could go and pick up pointers and they go and watch them from the sideline. Willie Bradshaw was the coach. [W.D.] Peerman only stayed here one year, '55, I think. And Mr. Bradshaw came in '56, Coach Bradshaw, and he stayed until '61. After '61, he left and Mr. Peerman came back.

BG: During those years when Coach Bradshaw was here, those were the glory years.

CP: Yes, those were glory years.

BG: What kind of man was Willie Bradshaw?

CP: I liked him. I thought he was--. He coached basketball, baseball, football--we only had one coach--and he taught PE. He was a real, real, real, good coach. If you ask any of the players they will tell you that he taught them more about football during the time that they were under him than anyone else had ever done. He was the man; he was the pencil and paper man. He could draw up a play. He came up with this play. We had one play that sticks out in my memory. We would line up, everybody would gather to the sideline and the center and the quarterback would run out on the field. The opposing team would be standing there and looking and they would snap the ball and throw it to the nine other players on the right hand side or the left hand side and they would take off down field.

One guy would be escorted down the field by eight blockers. Coach Bradshaw introduced that play to us. It stayed in our books for a while. You didn't scout that often because everybody played the same nights. He introduced that. That was a play that stayed with us for a while.

BG: I bet it scored a few touchdowns.

CP: It scored quite a few touchdowns. It was used on the first play of the football game and if it didn't score it put us in good scoring position. Most of the time we were going in with that. That was the play. They would line up and I don't know how they got away with it all of those years. The quarterback and the center would run out on the field and he would get over the ball and they would think that he was going to come back and by the time they got everything together he'd snap the ball and he had thrown it over there to them and they were on the way.

BG: You had one coach. Did you have no assistant coaches for the football team?

CP: You would have people that would come in. There were no paid assistant coaches, no we didn't. You would get volunteers from the alumni and they would work with them, you know, the line coach or whatever. Bradshaw was the man in the end and it was what he said. He drew up the game plan and whatever.

BG: Volunteers assisted as coaches.

CP: Yes. The volunteers would come out and work with the linemen or whatever.

Coach Bradshaw was the man that put it all together. He was the only one that had to be there everyday.

BG: What kind of preparation did the team go through to be so good?

CP: He started practicing August 15th. Then school didn't start until after Labor Day. He would drill them in the hot sun and they would two a day. I think they were more physically fit. We didn't have a big team. Out of the time that I was here, I can recall maybe three guys who weighed over two hundred pounds, which back then was not unusual. It was a physically fit team. He would work them out. He would work them hard.

BG: What did it mean to be a member of the band or a member of the football team?

CP: It was--. Both of them were equally successful, I think. The football team, it was the highlight, you wanted that jacket so you could walk around town. In football, you don't know who's out there you just know numbers. We played rain, shine, sleet or snow so if you got the jacket that was a thing where it set you apart from everybody else. If I had a jacket, no one would know what I had done. [Laughter]. I was a wearer of a jacket. You had to letter in order to get that. You would get the letters and all that. It was something to be really, really proud of. With the band, it was a thing of--. The band

was not as notorious as the football team, but it was highly recognized. The football team was a thing where we just excelled.

BG: Let's talk about excelling in academics. Was there anything about the school that made people want to excel or to go on and get more education after high school?

CP: I think when we were here we were taught that you wanted to go to the next level. It was a thing where it was--. Okay, it was put to you so that you would want to go to the next level. You were taught and you felt as though you were--I did anyway--I felt as though I was capable of competing with anybody when I came out of Lincoln. Lincoln just gave you that little swagger where you felt self-confident. I had won a scholarship to Shaw, a \$50 scholarship that I didn't take, in English. I don't know. The teachers just made us feel as though--they had gone to college--they made us feel as though we were prepared to go to college. Out of my class I think at least fifty percent of them went on and received a college degree. I don't know it was something that you felt that you were supposed to do. It was something that wasn't exceptional; it was just something that you were going to do. The thing that spoiled it was that you would go down to UNC and then during that time they dressed nice, well, I guess they dress nice now but what I'm saying is they would wear a tie to school and they had the MGs. Those were the preppy days. You would see that and then you couldn't live that way so you would say I going to go to college and do this, that, and the other, but it was a thing where you really had a good time.

BG: You mention swagger and self-confidence. How did the school give that to you?

CP: I don't know. I've never been able to pinpoint. The winning tradition of football, the real great band, the basketball team wasn't great but it wasn't a pushover either. We never had the success in basketball that we had in football but anything that we competed in we excelled. I don't know whether that was a swagger, you know. It contributed to it. Our neighboring schools like Horton High School which was the black school in Pittsboro, [NC], and then Orange High in Hillsborough, we weren't going to let them beat us. Orange didn't have a football team at that time. With Pittsboro, we were neighbors but being from Lincoln was the thing. Horton high, no, Lincoln was the place to be.

BG: What about the teachers in academics, did they add anything to this self-confidence or swagger?

CP: Yes. It was the thing where you know when you would come out you felt as though you were prepared. It was a thing where you would go to school and--. I was surprised that--. I dated a girl in Hillsborough and they had quite a few kids that went on to college. I didn't think that they, not Orange High or Hillsborough school, no, they're not going to do anything up there because I thought Chapel Hill was the only place that would prepare you to go to college. It was a thing where you just felt as though you were more prepared and whatever. I think it was the same thing in sports. It was a thing where they made you feel as though you were more prepared or better prepared.

BG: You had a significant percentage of your class that went on for more education and I assume that a certain percentage of them finished their college education. What happened to them? Where did they go to work?

CP: Out of my class, my classmates, some of them went to New York, [NY], and they have since retired and come back here. I had one classmate that's in Virginia. He's a principal up there. The other ones are working here and getting ready to retire here in Chapel Hill.

BG: Would you say that the majority left the area?

CP: A majority of them did leave the area for New York but eventually returned. Their parents stayed here.

BG: So they came back when they were getting close to retirement age?

CP: Right. They retired here.

BG: I know this isn't part of what I'm doing but I was intrigued by what you said about the fact that you were among eight people to sit down on February 28, 1960, at Big John's. Can you describe what led up to that?

CP: Okay. We were at the M&N Grill looking at TV and that's when the sit-in was down at Woolworth's in Greensboro. We said let's just walk down to Big John's. During that time, everybody went into Big John's. It was the drugstore. My brother was born in '55 and he was on Similac milk. Big John's was the only place you could buy it, well, the drugstore was the only place you could buy it. I thought it was ridiculous. We paid thirty-eight cents a can for Similac milk and Pet milk costs you like nine cents a can. [Laughter]. But anyway, I had been in Big John's quite frequently. We said let's go in and integrate Big John's. He had a counter there. It was about 7:30 or 8:00 in the evening. We walked in and as soon as we got in he said, "No, get out, get out." We walked in and were going to sit at the counter and he told us to get out. We walked outside after he told us to get out and we stood outside and the police and took our names. After they had taken our names, they told us we could go. Maybe a week later they came by the house and they picked up all eight of us. The NAACP stood up for us and assigned us a lawyer. [Floyd McKissick was our lawyer. The prosecutor was Mr. Cole, he's no longer with us I don't think, but anyway, they found us guilty but it was later overturned.

BG: Did you go back to Big John's?

CP: I haven't been in Big John's since then.

BG: I mean, did that group led by Harold Foster go back there?

CP: No, but they may have, they may have when they were doing the sit-ins. After that incident and we went to court or whatever, after I graduated I worked for a bookshop for a year and then I went into the military. The guys that I talked to about that said they hadn't been in Big John's since the sit-in. It's no longer there anymore, but we did not go back in there. They may have picketed it at a later date or whatever.

BG: Did you take part in any of the picketing that occurred?

CP: I did on a very small amount. I didn't do a lot of it. When it was getting going good, I went into the military.

BG: In 1960, several months after that first sit-in I understand that there were demonstrations and pickets.

CP: Oh, yes, well I was in those.

BG: You took part in those.

CP: Right.

BG: Was that usually outside of Colonial Drug or Big John's?

CP: It was down at Sutton's Drug. Everything was segregated at that time. We would meet at the Elk's Lodge and they would say where we were going tonight or whatever. It was organized, non-violent. It was spots that were predetermined. You didn't just go to Big John's or Sutton Drugs or wherever.

BG: Were you here in '69 when riots occurred at the high school?

CP: No. In '70, when they burned the administrative building at Lincoln I had come back but I wasn't working here. When the Cates kid got killed they had a burning incident--.

BG: Was that the youngster who was killed by the motorcycle gang and they watched?

CP: Right.

BG: Can you describe that?

CP: A friend and I were here and we went down to the Student Union when it happened. We went down after it had happened. The black community was in an uproar over it. The little Cates kid was a nice, quiet kid. The only thing I know is what they said because I wasn't there when it really happened. They said that he had said something to one of Hell's Angels and they went off and stabbed him or whatever. He was stabbed over eighteen times.

BG: I understand he laid there for a while before anyone would help.

CP: Yes, he did.

BG: Why was that?

CP: I'm thinking it as the motorcycle gang. It was a notorious gang at that time and so no one wanted to intervene on them.

BG: So they just watched him bleed to death.

CP: Right.

BG: Clyde, are there any other things that you can remember about Lincoln High that you want to share?

CP: Yes. At Lincoln it was a thing where you were expected to excel. The majority of the kids did excel. Like any other place, you are going to have slow learners or whatever, but the thing that surprised me most was when I came back and I saw where the black kids and the area were doing so poorly on the SAT scores. When I was in school the majority of the students excelled. They went on to college and they did this, that, and the other thing, and it's hard to imagine the big drop off from excelling the way the we had done and the people before me to where they have gotten to now. When we were here it

was a thing where you were expected to excel, you did excel, and you went on to greater heights or went on to college or places of higher learning or military or wherever. Once we were there we somewhat excelled. I found that Lincoln was a place that I'm proud to be from. It was a place where all the graduates are proud that they had a chance of attending. It was a place where you were expected to do well and you did well.

BG: Maybe we should end it right there.

CP: All right.

BG: Thank you so much for spending the time with me.

END OF INTERVIEW