

## **Transcript of a Recorded Interview with James Carr, Jr., 8 Apr 1992**

The following is an unrehearsed taped interview with Mr. James Carr, Jr., long time resident of Richmond, Kentucky. The interview was conducted by A.G. Dunston, Assistant Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University for the Oral History Center at ECU. The interview was conducted in Mr. Carr's home. That is 1118 East Main Street in Richmond. The interview was conducted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 1992.

AD: Alright, I am here with Mr. James Carr. What is your full name?

JC: James Carr, Junior.

AD: Do you have a middle name?

JC: No, just the junior.

AD: Just junior?

JC: Mmm hmm.

AD: Okay. Where were you born?

JC: Here in Madison County.

AD: In Madison County. Was it in Richmond, the city or what?

JC: No, it was in the county. A place called White Hall.

AD: White Hall?

JC: Mmm Hmm.

AD: Okay.

JC: The name at that time was Hoodsville. They called it.

AD: Hoodsville?

JC: Yeah, Hoodsville. That is a black community. At that time, it was a black community.

AD: It was out in the county.

JC: Mmm Hmm.

AD: Does it still exist?

JC: Yes, but now they go under the name of a subdivision, uh, Madison (pause) Madison Village, I think it is.

AD: Where is it? South of here?

JC: It is north of here.

AD: Is it north of White Hall?

JC: By White Hall.

AD: Okay. Alright. Were you born at home? In the home itself?

JC: Uh-Huh. At home, uh-huh.

AD: Was that a farm?

JC: Yeah, kind of like a farmhouse. Mmm-Hmm.

AD: Delivered by a midwife as far as you know?

JC: No, a doctor. I think the doctor was named Dr. Goldstein.

AD: A white or black doctor?

JC: Black doctor.

AD: Oh, okay. Practicing in Madison. A black doctor practicing in Madison County. When were you born, if I could ask that?

JC: Uh, in '23. Now, I could be a little off on that, but I believe it was Dr. Goldstein because I was born in '23. May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1923.

AD: Okay.

JC: Now, I might be a little off on that doctor but at the time, all I could remember was Dr. Goldstein doctoring black people down in that area.

AD: Okay. And when you were a child, that is who you went to or if you got sick or who your parents went to?

JC: Mmm-Hmm.

AD: Okay, what was your father . . . He was James Carr, Senior. What did he do?

JC: He just . . . everything. He worked with horses. He worked on the farm. He farmed. He worked with horses. He worked, contract. . . I think he retired from contract work.

AD: Okay.

JC: And contract work.

AD: Did he own... Was the Carr farm owned? Did you own that property?

JC: No. They owned property down there but it was not big enough to call a farm.

AD: Okay.

JC: It was kind of a house and say about three or four acres or something like that.

AD: Oh, okay. Alright. And your mother, what was her name?

JC: Mary Lee. She was Chenault before she married Carr.

AD: Okay, Mary Lee Chenault. Okay. Are you the only child?

JC: No.

AD: Okay. (Laughter)

JC: There was eight of us.

AD: Eight!

JC: Mmm-Hmm.

AD: Where are you in the line?

JC: I m a . . . say, one, two, three. . . I m the third one.

AD: Third oldest?

JC: The third youngest.

AD: Okay.

JC: Third youngest. I ve got a sister, I ve got two sisters younger than me.

AD: Okay. Alright. Do you remember . . . Are all your sisters and brothers still living?

JC: No. I've got two sisters dead and a brother dead.

AD: Okay. Do you remember the names of your sisters and brothers?

JC: Well, yeah. I remember . . . See, my oldest brother died at birth and his name was William C., and next to him was my oldest sister. (Clears throat) Excuse me. And she died at age 17. Her name was Sue Edna, and at the time, she was a Park. She was married. Sue Edna Park.

AD: Sue Edna, okay. Mmm-Hmm.

JC: And, my next oldest sister was named, well, which she is still living, Lula May Brooks.

AD: Okay.

JC: And the next sister... A brother comes in next.

AD: Okay.

JC: Harry. His name is Harry Carr.

AD: Alright.

JC: And then my sister comes in, which (clears throat) was killed in an accident the year before last, a car accident in Dayton, Ohio.

AD: Okay.

JC: Her name was Emily Curry. Her married name was Curry.

AD: Curry?

JC: Mmm-Hmm. And my next sister, well I'm next.

AD: Right. Your next, okay.

JC: I'm next in line.

AD: Uh-huh.

JC: Then, I've got my other sister named Ida Francis. Ida Elizabeth Francis.

AD: Okay.

JC: She lives in Winchester.

AD: Oh, alright.

JC: My next sister is Geneva, uh, uh-oh. (Laughter). She was a Taylor, and then she remarried . . . I can't get it. Uh, Jack uh, I'm sorry, I can't remember that.

AD: Okay.

JC: Jack uh, Brown. Jack Brown.

AD: Jack Brown?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Is she still living?

JC: She is living and that's my baby sister.

AD: Okay. How many of them lived in the Richmond area or Madison County?

JC: Well, all of them in Madison County. They were born here in Madison County.

AD: Okay.

JC: And they went to Fayette County, and then when they got married, they went different places. A sister went to Dayton, Emma, the one that got killed in Dayton, and Lula May, she went to Michigan. But she is back now. But that is her home up there. The rest of us live right here in Kentucky. In Winchester and Lexington.

AD: Alright. Do you know anything about your grandparents?

JC: Well, I knew a little. I had a great-grandfather who was born in slavery, but I did not know too much about him. I just remember us going around him as a kid and him telling us stories, you know?

AD: Yeah.

JC: And my mother's father, I knew him. And I know my mother's mother.

AD: Your mother's mother and father.

JC: Yeah, I knew them.

AD: Okay.

JC: And I was raised by my father s mother and father.

AD: By the Carrs?

JC: Yeah. I was raised by them. My mother died when I was seven years old.

AD: Oh, okay.

JC: I was seven years old. So, my ...

AD: Then, his, your father s parents, raised you?

JC: Raised me, mmm-hmm.

AD: What was your grandfather s name that raised you?

JC: Oh, the one that raised me? His name was Will Carr.

AD: Will Carr?

JC: William Carr, uh-huh.

AD: Do you remember your grandmother s name?

JC: Yeah. Emiline Carr.

AD: Okay. Do you remember her maiden name?

JC: She was a Chenault.

AD: On both sides?

JC: Mmm-Hmm. But they wasn t no kin.

AD: Okay.

JC: Was not kin.

AD: Okay. Did you ever hear any stories about how they got to Madison County?

JC: No.

AD: Okay.

JC: No. They never did, uh, did discuss that with us. I did not hear, that is, where they came

from or nothing. No.

AD: Okay. You grew up in Richmond, this area?

JC: I grew up in the Madison County area until I was ... I went into the service when I was eighteen, and I stayed in the service eleven years.

AD: Okay.

JC: And when I came out, I came back here.

AD: Back to Richmond?

JC: Mmm-hmm. You know what I m saying.

AD: Okay. Did you go to elementary school? Where did you go to elementary school?

JC: I went .. Well, I started off like this. When I got over here, I went to a place they called at Hoodville.out there, then went home, and then I left from there and went to McCord School to Red House, down on the other side of Red House.

AD: Red House?

JC: Yeah. (Laughter)

AD: When you say Red House, what are you talking about? Is it a ...?

JC: Down by Boonesborough, it is a place down there.

AD: Okay.

JC: Uh-huh. Down by Boonesborough.

AD: So, you went to school there?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: What grade was that?

JC: They called it McCord School. It wasn t exactly the Red House but it was down from it, somewhere near Boonesborough.

AD: Okay.

JC: We just say Red House. You know, there was a school at Red House, but when they

consolidated the two schools and we went down to what they called McCord School.

AD: Okay. Alright. And that was what grade?

JC: I think I went there in... I was in the fourth grade, I believe it was.

AD: Okay.

JC: I left from there in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I came here (clears throat) .. excuse me.. across the street over there, which was Richmond High.

AD: So, you did . . . did you go ... you went to Richmond High? Did you finish Richmond High?

JC: No, I went to Richmond High two years. I left there and got in the army my third year, to be my third year. They got me in the army and so I did not finish.

AD: Did you ever finish high school?

JC: No, I did not finish.

AD: Okay.

JC: I went in the army and then had other things to do (laughter), which I regret now, you know.

AD: (Laughter). When you were in the army, when did you get married?

JC: Mmm, 54. 1954.

AD: Okay. And you told me earlier that your wife died last year.

JC: Mmm. May, the 31<sup>st</sup> of '91.

AD: Was she from this area?

JC: Yeah, she was here too. She was in Richmond. I think she was born here in Richmond.

AD: Okay. What was her maiden name?

JC: She was Embry.

AD: Embry?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay. How many children do you have?

JC: Two. A boy and a girl.

AD: Alright. About what ages and what do they do?

JC: Well, my boy is 38. He will be 39 in June. And my daughter, who was here last week, she is 37. She will be 38 in December.

AD: What does your son do for a living?

JC: He has worked for UPS and he is real estate and he does a little odd jobs, construction work, on his own thing, but he works a job at UPS.

AD: Where is he?

JC: In Oakland, California.

AD: Oakland! Alright, and your daughter, where does she live?

JC: She s in Denver, Colorado.

AD: Mmm. Okay. They are spread apart from you.

JC: Mmm-hmm. Yeah (Laughter).

AD: Okay. Now, when you went to. . . your years at Richmond High, where was your family living?

JC: They were living out here . . . here is another one of those little odd names, you know, you get some of those little odd names throughout the country, county, called Briartown.

AD: Briartown?

JC: Yeah, Briartown.

AD: Okay.

JC: Which was about five miles from here.

AD: Was is black . . predominantly black out there?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay.

JC: Which there wasn't that many houses. There were about four or five houses, but there was nothing else in that area.

AD: Okay. So, you lived there and came into Richmond.

JC: Mmm-hmm. We caught the bus. We caught the bus, had the school bus, which was elementary children, but they dropped the high school children off up here and then they go on to their school, the elementary school.

AD: Okay. When did you . . . You went into that army from that situation. You were living out there, coming in here, and went into the army during your third year at Richmond.

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay.

JC: At . . . in school the summer months, I was working at the Bluegrass Army Depot when they were building Bluegrass Army Depot and I got a job out there.

AD: Okay.

JC: And worked until . . . when I seen that they were going to call me in the army, so I didn't go back to school which was about a couple of months, you know, before I was called into the army.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I just went into the army and I did not think much of school.

AD: What did you do in the army? Were you in infantry?

JC: I was in a side off and a trucking outfit. I drove a truck and then I ended up in the factory. Now, I went from a trucking outfit to a tank outfit, and then I went into factory work. Then, I come out of factory and went back to that tanking outfit. When I got out of there, I was in the tank outfit, a tank mechanic.

AD: A tank mechanic.

JC: Yeah, a tank mechanic.

AD: Why eleven years? The line was even shorter.

JC: Yeah, my intention was to retire, but it got a little rough out there. I went to Korea, you know, and you looking at shooting and dead people here and there, and you know, you dunking all the time and I got tired of it.

AD: Okay.

JC: And again, I stayed over 13 months. Most of my time was on the line with a tank outfit. Most of my time was on the line. I came back here and they give me a 45 day leave. When I get back to the camp, I had a buddy in personnel, which he informed me that I was on my way back to Korea, and we got to go and I had less than 45 days to go within my enlistment.

AD: Yeah.

JC: Enlistment, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: And so, I chose to come out. Most of them go back to Korea, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: After I go out, I had never been out before, and after I got out, I liked it. (Laughter)(unintelligible) did not go back (laughter) which I regret that too.

AD: Do you?

JC: Yeah, I regret that I did not go back, now and finish it out, but you know, when things get kind of hot like that, you get lucky sometimes. You don't get lucky all the times in places like that.

AD: That's true. Yeah. Yeah.

JC: So, I just figured I was lucky to get away. So, why go back into it, you know.

AD: When you . . . when you . . . So, you came home, right?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay. Did you come back . . . When you left the army, did you come to Richmond?

JC: Richmond, yeah.

AD: Okay, and what did you do? What kind of jobs did you do?

JC: Well, I'm going to tell you, this is a rough situation. When I first got out, cause jobs were hard to find and I walked a year trying to find a job. I would go from here to Frankfort, and I would go from Frankfort to Louisville. I went from Louisville to . . . Well, I never did go to Cincinnati, Ohio. I didn't like Ohio. I didn't like the drive back and forth, back and forth. I was trying to get a small job working in a junk yard, what you might call it, and I worked there for

about three years because I could not get away and go no where there.

AD: Okay.

JC: My hours were so long and so I couldn't look for another job. I went to work at 7 in the morning and I got off at 4 or 5 in the afternoon. So, the only way I got away, I had a friend come by that night, and said to him I was thinking about leaving my job, you let me know. Then, a couple of days after that, he come back and asked me. He said, You know about mechanics, don't you? I said, Yeah. He said, I got you a job. Which that was . . . sort of . . .

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I went to work for Beatrice Foods, which was ice cream. Meadowgold by Beatrice Foods Division.

AD: Oh, alright, mmm-hmm. Okay, I know what you're talking about.

JC: So, I stayed there for off and on for 28 years.

AD: Twenty-eight?

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay.

JC: I started out as a mechanic and was a mechanic for five years. And then, I was the onliest one out there at the time when they got some tractors and trailers in and I was the only one who knew how to drive a tractor and trailer at the time. And, I refused to drive it for them, because I didn't want to drive, you know. But, then they laid off and that was the only way I could get my job back, you know, to take the driver job.

AD: Okay, mmm-hmm.

JC: So, I got it back and then I drove 28 years.

AD: Okay.

JC: I drove for about 23 years. I stayed out there all together 23 years with five years as a mechanic. I stayed out there 28 years.

AD: Okay. And when did you leave there?

JC: I left there in '85. I retired in '85.

AD: Okay. What have you been doing since?

JC: Nothing. (Laughter) Well, I take that back. I farmed . . . I've been farming for . . . I had a cousin who died and I had just helped him put out his crop. He asked me to promise him that I would help his wife finish his crop, and then, when I finished it, she couldn't find her son, didn't want the farm, so she asked me if I would take it over until she found somebody. So, I took it over until this year. I gave it up this year because it didn't look like she was looking for anybody. As I told her, I had done retired and I didn't want a full-time job no more, you know.

AD: Now you got . . .

JC: Yeah, my own.

AD: This is . . . What do you call that out there? A garden?

JC: No, that's my tobacco patch.

AD: Is it tobacco really?

JC: Uh-huh. I hadn't got it out, but that's where I put my tobacco. Right out there.

AD: How . . . How big is it?

JC: Well, they go by the pound. I'm allowed about 1,200 pound out there. About 1,200 pound.

AD: Right in this?

JC: Right in the back, back there.

AD: Okay. When you say you're allowed, that means . . .?

JC: They got a quota, you know. I can't go over that 1,200 pounds.

AD: You can't produce more than that.

JC: Uh-huh. You can't go over 1,200 pounds.

AD: Why is that, because of where it's located?

JC: No, that's just, aah, see this was in the county once. That's how you got your tobacco base. That's where he's keeping it. And since it is in the city now, they haven't taken it away from me. You're allowed to keep it, you know.

AD: Oh, okay.

JC: So, it went on the poundage scale and this is 19 cents an acre. I can't say it's an acre. I say it's about a third of an acre like that, when it comes down to it. But, I'm allowed 1,200 pounds

by the law, the state law.

AD: How long have you had the patch?

JC: Well, I've had that . . . I've raised that tobacco the last ten years.

AD: Okay. And do you generally come within the . . .

JC: No.

AD: The guidelines?

JC: No. This year I'm hurting bad, real bad.

AD: Really. \_\_\_\_ or . . .

JC: No, my crop. After my wife died, I give up on it. Then, the drought hit.

AD: Oh.

JC: You see, I mean, . . . In the country down there, I was supposed to have 3,800 pounds, and out of the 3,800 pounds, I come up with 1,500. In this up here I'm allowed 1,200 pounds, I come up with 3.

AD: Three hundred?

JC: Uh-huh. So, I come out in the hole this year, way in the hole, so I'm lucky if I make it up next year. I go so much . . . They allowing me 1,900 pounds for another year, but I know I can't raise 1,900 pounds this year. So, I am going to try at least do what I can raise and sell there.

AD: Okay. If you don't . . . You say you were hurt. You said in talking about in terms of what you could sell and get.

JC: Yeah, mmm-hmm.

AD: But, I mean, nobody is taxing you or bothering you because you didn't?

JC: No, no, no.

AD: You don't have to pay any taxes on the land other than the normal tax?

JC: No, no, no. I just hurting on my products that I raise.

AD: Okay, the property . . .

JC: I didn't have my quota, and I didn't get the property that I was supposed to get on my income. I'm hurting on my income.

AD: Oh, I see. . .

JC: I didn't get the income that I was supposed to get.

AD: Alright. How long have you lived in this house?

JC: About ten years.

AD: Okay. In '82.

JC: I started raising this crop when we moved here.

AD: Okay. When you . . . you know, you said you came out of the army and you said you were walking, with jobs, and then you found a job, where did you live?

JC: I lived here in Richmond, here on Irvine Street.

AD: Okay. East Irvine?

JC: Yeah, East Irvine. That's where I lived at that time. I lived there about 25 years, maybe 25 years we lived there.

AD: Alright.

JC: We celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on the day that we left from there, about two weeks after we left there.

AD: Okay. What church are you? Where do you go to church?

JC: I go to the Methodist church here.

AD: AME?

JC: AME, uh-huh.

AD: Is that St. Paul?

JC: St. Paul AME, mmm-hmm.

AD: Okay. Who is your pastor?

JC: Uh, I can't recall a name. She is a lady, but I can't . . . I don't participate that often, not

enough to know her name, you know. So, I don't know her.

AD: Is your family Methodist?

JC: Yeah.

AD: All of them?

JC: Let me see, on my mother's side, she was Baptist. She belonged to the Mount Nebo. Out here, you call it Shallow Ford.

AD: Yes.

JC: You see, her people belonged down there.

AD: Okay.

JC: My father belonged at a little church over where they called Pricetown, right out of Lexington, that is Centerville. No, it's Pricetown.

AD: Okay.

JC: He belonged right there and that was a Baptist.

AD: Okay.

JC: And the rest of my people is Methodist.

AD: Okay.

JC: I think all my sisters and brothers are Baptist.

AD: Alright.

JC: Yeah, my sisters and brothers are Baptist, but I was raised as a Methodist (laughter) by my grandparents because my grandfather was Methodist.

AD: Okay. Have you ever heard of a place called Peyton Town.

JC: Yeah, uh-huh.

AD: Okay. That was like a black community, too.

JC: It still is.

AD: It s still out there.

JC: Mmm-hmm. Peytontown is. It s not as many out there now as it was, but there are still quite a few out there.

AD: So, what, what I m getting from you and I ve heard about various areas, that at one time there were groups of black communities scattered in the rural areas.

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: Usually about five to ten families maybe.

JC: Yeah. We still got quite a few around. They got Peytontown. They got Farristown. They got Middletown. They got . . . I believe that s it. That s all I can think of right now, and they still exist.

AD: Okay.

JC: You know, there is just a few there, but they still exist. You know, there are still towns. They try keeping everything going. They still got their churches.

AD: Talk to me. When you came back to Richmond, you lived at Irvine. So, you saw the transition from what this used to be. It used to be old Richmond High. Then, it became the junior high, Richmond Junior High School. And then in, I think, in 73 or something, it became the Telford Community Center, and more recent they ve linked up with the YMCA.

JC: Yeah, mmm-hmm.

AD: When you can remember the old Richmond School High School, what can you remember about it? Do you remember those years when you attended there?

JC: Well, what do you mean? I mean . . .

AD: Social clubs? Did you belong to any clubs when you were there?

JC: For me, no, I did not belong to any. You see, at the time I was over there, as I said I was a country boy. I spent a lot of my time at work. I didn t spend too much time at school. I was just getting there when I could.

AD: Mmm-hmm.

JC: No, I wasn t in anything.

AD: Were you a good student or a bad student?

JC: Well, in between (laughter). Well, you know, you ain't going to tell someone you were bad or not.

AD: Do you remember who was principal when you were there?

JC: Mr. Fletcher.

AD: He was. Okay. Alright. That puts it in time for me. Do you remember any of the teachers? Any of the teacher names?

JC: I remember Mr. Mayer. J.C. Mayer or something like that. Mr. Mayer, he was my science teacher. Mr. Fletcher was my principal. Mr. Jackson was my English teacher. Mr. Park, he was my history teacher. Mr. Friedman, he was my agriculture teacher, and I said my science?

AD: Yes.

JC: Mr. Mayer was my science.

AD: Mayer was science.

JC: Yeah.

AD: Friedman was agriculture at that time?

JC: Mmm-hmm. He hadn't been there too long. I think he was a young fellow himself.

AD: Okay. (Laughter)

JC: Like in school, he was still a teenager. Well, let me see, they had Ms. Willa Embry. She wasn't my teacher. She taught at that time, I think, was public speaking. No, she taught algebra. Ms. Taylor taught public speaking.

AD: Katherine Enslow Taylor?

JC: Uh-huh.

AD: Okay.

JC: When I was over there. Neither one of them was my . . . I didn't . . . I wouldn't of taken it, either one of those at the time.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, that's all I can remember right now.

AD: So, you were working. Now, you really have time to get involved in all of those sort of clubs.

JC: No, no, I had to work quite heavily. As I say, I was on the farm and my grandparents were getting kind of . . . in age, you know, and I was the only one to help him. He was trying to work and raise crops, share cropping.

AD: Okay.

JC: You know, so I had to work to help him. They didn't have enough land to raise crops on their own, you know, so they raised it with share cropping, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, the only thing we had on the land we had was just the stock, like cattle, hogs, chickens (laughter) you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: Some for survival.

AD: Since you have been grown, in later years, did you ever join something like the Masonic League or Masons or Elks or . . . ?

JC: No, no. I mean, that is something that I had the opportunity. But, you ask me why, but I can't answer that. But I had the opportunity. They tried to get me in . . . Out in Texas, they tried to get me in Masonics and then they tried to get me in here, and I've had several opportunities to be in the Masons. I mean in the Elks.

AD: Elks, okay.

JC: Some reason, I never liked being in clubs and things like that. I never seen nothing that, you know, interested me. If I got in it, I probably would have seen it, but I never did get in, you know.

AD: Mmm-hmm. Okay.

JC: I just . . . what you said, I'm a loner, you know (laughter).

AD: And a lot of people don't like to join in those kinds of organizations. Do you remember any time since you have been here that has been any unusual racial conflict? Any real trouble other than just the, you know, arguing back and forth? Any real racial conflict . . .

JC: No.

AD: In Richmond?

JC: No, I can't remember. And what little I remember I can't describe it, so I rather not try talking about it. But, it was minor, something minor. But the people involved in it, I don't imagine they would call it minor because they had to go to jail. Two ladies that went to jail.

AD: Two ladies?

JC: Uh-huh.

AD: Okay.

JC: And they would kind of, what would you say . . . ?

AD: I don't mean to interrupt you, there is somebody there. (Knock at door)  
(End of side 1, tape 1)  
(Beginning of side 2, tape 1)

AD: We interrupted the tape. Mr. Dean Jenkins came in and you say he is one of the top black farmers?

JC: Yeah, one of the top black farmers in Madison County.

AD: Okay.

JC: My God, I image in the state of Kentucky, period. He is pretty good size farmer. You know, he farms quite a bit.

AD: When you talk about the size of a farm, you say a big farm, what are you talking about to a lay person? I don't know, how many acres are we talking?

JC: You mean the average black person?

AD: When you say he is a pretty big farmer?

JC: Oh, he raises tobacco, and he raised tobacco. I say around about, last year, he had about 20-25 acres of tobacco, maybe thirty.

AD: Oh, okay.

JC: Of tobacco. Then, he had about 50 head of cattle on the side.

AD: Oh, I see.

JC: He cut the hay for other people. He's got his own machinery. He cuts hay and he uses his

tractors and things or he can put other people, you know, use them like that, and well, he is a typical farmer. You know, if you got anything that you did on a farm, he could do it.

AD: Okay. Another thing I wanted to ask you, when you all moved into this house, was this area mostly black?

JC: Yeah, It was always (clears throat) excuse me. This has always been black up and down East Main Street here.

AD: After you make that turn . .

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: From there on its black.

JC: Mmm-hmm. From there on its black.

AD: So, that funeral home is that a black funeral home?

JC: Yeah.

AD: Wright s Funeral Home?

JC: Yeah. Uh-huh. Well, it used to be a . . . right there on the other side of that, there used to be another funeral home, a big Collins funeral home, and they sold it. He died out, and then when he died out, they sold it to . . Wright bought it, and they put those blue office buildings in the back.

AD: Oh, okay. So, how far did the old black neighborhood go? Down?

JC: Yeah. They went down to . . . They got a street down at Lake Street.

AD: Lake?

JC: Uh-huh. Lake Street and Lexington, about the third street down with the last street down going this way. Lake Street.

AD: Okay.

JC: And we just circled it and went down Irvine, and go back down Irvine Street, all down that way.

AD: Oh, okay, alright.

JC: All of this was black. This street here. Over in that to be . . .

AD: Maple?

JC: Uh-huh, Maple.

AD: So, (unintelligible).

JC: Uh-huh. Maple, Linden, and Irvine. All that in there was black.

AD: Okay. Have you have any direct links with the Telford Community Center?

JC: No. Not since I ve been here. I just go over there every once in a while, when I got time. See, in the summer time, I fool with lawnmowers. I work with lawnmowers in the summer time and I tie all my time up with that sometimes. Then, in the wintertime, I just odds and ends, anything I can get, mostly nothing. I go over sometimes to play pool, shoot pool, I just go over and play it.

AD: Would you . . . Are you . . . You are involved in the community, but is it on a one-on-one basis like this man next door, you said he was old, very old.

JC: Mmm-hmm. Mmm-hmm.

AD: And you have helped him?

JC: I m taking care of him right now.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I m taking care of . . . Well, I m not exactly taking care of him. He s in the home, but I m taking care of his property while he is in the home.

AD: Okay. He does not have family or he just wants you to do it?

JC: The only person he has left in his family, he s got a niece and he s got a brother-in-law, but his niece is in Danville, which is 37 miles from here. And his brother-in-law is in Indianapolis. So, since I m right here beside of him and me and the old . . . we got along pretty good before his wife died and I carried him places, you know, driving him to different places. Once his wife died, we just kept it up. He decided that he wanted to go to a home. He didn t want to live by himself, you know. He s 92 now.

AD: What s his name?

JC: John Lewis Gibbons.

AD: Okay. So, he s 92, and he made the decision to go to the home.

JC: Mmm-hmm. He made it himself. He didn't want to stay by himself anymore, so he went to the home and he kind of \_\_\_\_\_ me in the home.

AD: What home did he go to?

JC: Crestview.

AD: Okay. Do you hold his power of attorney?

JC: No, no, no, no, no.

AD: Okay. You just . . .

JC: His brother-in-law handles that. He tells me what to do and I call him if something comes up concerning him.

AD: Okay.

JC: You know, I will call him and tell him what's up and he will either authorize me to do it or he will come down, you know, within a half an hour.

AD: Okay. So, that's your community work, and that's just an individual decision that you and he made together. Okay.

JC: Yeah. Mmm-hmm.

AD: Alright.

JC: Other than that, I'm just sitting here in the house, just an old bachelor, you know (laughter).

AD: Well, for an old bachelor, I can't find you (laughter). Okay. What I'm trying to do is write the history of Richmond, black Richmond, Kentucky using the source of the black people themselves, is what I'm doing. It's a risky proposition at best, but this is the way I like to do history.

JC: Yeah, uh-huh.

AD: So, what happens is, I will take this back and I'll eventually turn it over to the Oral History Program at ECU. Okay, because that's where I am, and I work through the History Department. I teach history. So, it will just go into the History Department and into the Oral History Program at ECU. I'll use it as a source and somebody else might come along in a year or two or a month or two and decide to do some more research and they'll have your voice on tape.

JC: Mmm-hmm.

AD: One general question, what is your assessment about the black community in Richmond? Do you think it is adequate at times in terms of economic equality? Have you ever felt that the black community was given less than its full share?

JC: I d rather not go into that because I m not up to date on things like that and I d rather not . . . I might be . . .you know, I might not be . . . as I said, I m not up to date on it, and I might give you the wrong thing, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: I d rather not get into that.

AD: Okay, okay. How about political life? Have you been active in city politics?

JC: No, no. I just keep up with it.

AD: (Laughter).

JC: I try to stay away from it as much as I can (laughter).

AD: Okay. But now you are voting, Mr. Carr?

JC: Yeah, uh-huh.

AD: (Laughter). Alright. You just don t have a lot to do with commissioners and cities, counties . . .

JC: No, no, I don t, kind of like that, but I don t. I won t comment on that either.

AD: It s okay. Okay. Alright. Um, let s see, any statements you would like to make about the black community in Richmond?

JC: No, I d rather not. I don t want to commit myself to anything (laughter). I won t commit myself to it.

AD: (Laughter). Okay, (unintelligible).

JC: I think, I think we got some pretty nice black people in Richmond. I mean, we got a few of them pretty well established and I think they are pretty nice people, the ones that I know.

AD: Okay.

JC: A few of them, I don t know that much about them, see? By me living in the county, and when I come to school up here, I d never been to Richmond that much. We always had our little fun things out in the county. When I started school up here when I was about 15 or 16 years old,

at that time, back in those times, your family wouldn't let you too far away from home, you know.

AD: Mmm-hmm.

JC: You know, we weren't allowed in Richmond until after I got to come to school up here and then I was allowed to come back and travel to Richmond at different times. But, we had our own little things out there in the country. We had little parties and things like that in the county out there and we did our own thing out there. By that, I didn't know too many people in Richmond. When I was in the service, I was just getting acquainted with Richmond people. Then, after I come out of the service, I got married and I always made it my policy, and I always said if I ever got married, I was going to stop running around.

AD: Okay.

JC: And I stuck to it, I stuck to it. Because it was a problem raising my kids and taking care of my family and I didn't have enough to take care of the outside too. So, my wife and my family come first.

AD: Okay.

JC: And, that's where I were. All of my time was spent down there, you know. So, I raised my kids and as I told the brothers when I went in the army, all the bad habits that I picked up when I was in the army, when I get out of the army, I leave them in the army.

AD: Did you?

JC: Yeah, I did. I drank quite a bit when I was in the service. I left it in the service. I gambled a little while I was in the service. I didn't do it before I went in. I left it in the service. So, when I come out, I turned all my attention toward my family. My wife and my two kids.

AD: Okay.

JC: I'm proud of them.

AD: Yes, yes, I don't blame you. And you told us something, I don't think I got it on tape, when you were in the army, most of your time was spent at Fayetteville. In Fayetteville, North Carolina?

JC: No, no, no.

AD: Okay.

JC: I was overseas at different places. I went all over.

AD: Korea.

JC: I was in the second world war. Not the first. I was in the second world war. So, I went to England. I was all over England.

AD: What unit were you in the second world war?

JC: I was in the trucking outfit 515, trucking outfit.

AD: Okay.

JC: I went all over England. We went from England to France. Went all over France. All over Belgium. Uh, uh . . .

AD: Did you see battle in most areas?

JC: No, at the time, to tell you the truth, there was too many blacks in second world war. There were a few outfits and they stayed pretty heavy.

AD: Mmm-hmm.

JC: I think they had the 92<sup>nd</sup> and the 93<sup>rd</sup>. They was all black. My outfit was all black, but we had a white officer, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: Where I worked, there was no black truck drivers in the service outfit at the time. Somebody else come in?

AD: No, no, no. I \_\_\_\_\_.

JC: Service outfit and thing like that, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I happen to be lucky to be in the trucking outfit. Anyway, I got to be all over those different countries. I was all over Belgium and, as a matter of fact, I knew more about them foreign countries than I do about the United States, you know.

AD: You do what now?

JC: I knew more about the foreign countries than I did about the United States, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: I tended to go all over them. With the United States, I had never been anywhere in the states.

AD: Okay. Alright. So, when you came out of the army, you came at the end of World War II?

JC: Yeah. I didn't come out. I reenlisted in Lahaw, France. I reenlisted in Lahaw, France. I came home for . . . they gave me a 90 day leave home, and then I went back. I went back to camp, New Jersey, up there. Camp Kilmer, Camp Ft. Dix. I went back to Ft. Dix, New Jersey and I stayed up there until they . . . I was supposed to went back overseas, and we went back overseas and we got ready to go back. We got up to the ship. When we got to the ship, they had informed us that there was no black going back, only whites.

AD: Did they say it that way?

JC: Mmm-hmm. They said all whites were going back. The blacks weren't going back.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, we thought that we had reenlisted for overseas. If we knew we weren't going back overseas, we wouldn't have reenlisted. So, they gave us the option to stay here in the United States or go to Japan, to Fiyip, and I didn't want to Fiyip. I was scheduled . . . At that time, they had different kinds of disease and things down there, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: And I was scared of that, so I didn't want to go. I stayed here. You stayed here, they put you where you wanted to go. I never did want to go in the southern states. So, I was lucky. They sent me to \_\_\_\_\_.

AD: What, in North Carolina?

JC: Uh-huh. That camp that . . .

AD: Fayetteville.

JC: I think the South Carolina. Columbus?

AD: Garden?

JC: Columbia?

AD: In Columbia, South Carolina?

JC: Yeah, yeah, I think Columbia, South Carolina.

AD: Fort Jackson?

JC: Fort Jackson, South Carolina was where they sent me. I didn't like war at all.

AD: No. (Laughter).

JC: I stayed down there about a month when they sent me to Fort Knox, Kentucky. Now, I really liked that. I got back in the groove, you know like that.

AD: Yeah.

JC: Then, they sent me from there. I stayed there for about two years and they sent me there. I went to school for about 18 months as a mechanic on tanks. They were getting some new type of tanks that they were sending overseas, so I got in the group of mechanics that were going back to Germany on some new tanks to try them out, and not bragging, but I was one of the, you know, fellas that know quite a bit about that new tank that was coming out because we had school in it. And so they sent me over there and I stayed over there about four months alright, four or five months, and then came back from there. I stayed in Knox, oh, about 18 months or something like that. I got the chance to go back over there again. I stayed over there about three months. Then, I came back and then they sent us to North Carolina down there, in Fayetteville around there, and I loved it down there. I loved it down there, I did. See, every year, we get a vacation in Myrtle Beach.

AD: Yes, alright. So, yeah (laughter).

JC: When we left from North Carolina, they sent us from North Carolina to Texas. At Fort Hood, Texas. That is up by Killeen. Killeen, Texas. Where those people got killed . . .

AD: Yeah.

JC: Earlier this year.

AD: You didn't like that.

JC: Ah. . . What . . . I like Texas but what took me against Killeen was I was in Killeen one night and I came from Waco on a bus. I was at the bus station, trying to come to the camp, and I gave money to the girl, a young girl a twenty dollar bill, and she gave me the change back for ten, and I was trying to show her, Lady, I gave you a 20" and she called police.

AD: Oh.

JC: They took me down to the jail. Then, I went down there and it cost me another \$20 to get out from down there. (Laughter) That's when you know nobody cares nothing about Korea, you know. Uh, uh, well, . . . I won't say that either.

AD: Go ahead.

JC: Nothing about Killeen. I was going to say I was about half way glad it happened, but I better not say that because that is terrible to say, you know, you see people killed like that. The time we got there, it was a different time all together, you know.

AD: Okay.

JC: Different people too, I image, you know.

AD: You think the only reason that happened was because you were black?

JC: Yeah! That s what . . . At that time, at that time, yeah, it was. I ll say it right now.

AD: Okay.

JC: That s exactly what happened and they wouldn t tell us.

AD: They had warned you about going into certain places.

JC: No, they wouldn t warn you. They wouldn t warn you. And I said I wouldn t go out of camp until I got me a car.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I stayed in camp and I worked on the outside and times like that, when we get through, up there in Texas, it was so hot until sometime about 12 o clock that was all we could work and they d let us out for the rest of the day, and I would go on the outside of the garage and then got me a job to work on the outside.

AD: Okay.

JC: So, I got enough to get me a car. Then, I started riding in the car. Then, they stopped me up in Killeen once and told me, Nigger, next time you come through here, you come through with the top down , and the white guy, he hollered that, you know. (Untelligible) and they stopped us on the outside of town and said Nigger, next time you come back through, you ll have your top up.

AD: Have your top up?

JC: Yeah, don t come back here with the top down no more. You know, that puts you against that little town. That put me against that little town.

AD: Was it a new car? Was it a good looking car?

JC: Yeah, it was good. It was a convertible Ford.

AD: Oh my! (Laughter).

JC: (Laughter).

AD: What year was that?

JC: That was in '50.

AD: Oh, yes, okay (laughter).

JC: It was cool.

AD: Okay, alright, uh-huh.

JC: So, we used to go back and park to Waco. See, they had a college up there. Powell Quinton College, all black, and most of them were girls, you know.

AD: Yeah!

JC: A girl college. And we used to go back up there on the weekends and, you know, have a good time.

AD: Go to the dances? The ball games?

JC: Uh-huh, dances, uh-huh football games.

AD: Okay.

JC: They had quite a few of these celebrity singers and things like that in Waco, you know. They come in and sing, and we would go and take . . . you know, we would get a girl from the college and have a little dance, you know.

AD: Oh.

JC: Yeah, it was a real nice time. Then, come Korea along that and I had to go through it. I came in one night and I was on a three day pass, and I came in one night, one afternoon around about 5 o'clock and they said we were on alert, and didn't get a chance to send my car home or nothing. We were on alert. At 5 o'clock the next afternoon, we were getting on buses and going to California.

AD: What happened to your car?

JC: Left sittin' on the lot. Couldn't do nothing. Everybody there in the company, I don't want to

say everybody, the one of them that had cars, 100-200 cars were left on the lot. Some of them, people came and got them, but I couldn't get in touch with my people and nobody but my brother and he said he couldn't come, no way, so I just left it on the lot. And, while I was in Korea about a month, I wrote MP on post and asked them if they would store my car for me, and they wrote me and gave me the understanding that they couldn't, you know. It was just by law. Then, pretty much after that, I got a letter from the state police up there and found that they had found my car. It had been stolen. Somebody had picked it up and it had been wrecked and they're wondering what to do about it, you know. And I didn't even answer that. There was really nothing I could do.

AD: Yeah, right.

JC: I had nothing I could do.

AD: When you said left it on the lot, it was post, wasn't it?

JC: Yes, on post, but on the parking lot.

AD: Yeah, but still, it was still on government property.

JC: Government property, yeah, mmm-hmm. But they stole it, and the bad part about it was I had the key with me. Keys don't mean nothing about cars, you know.

AD: Mmm-hmm.

JC: Don't mean nothing. I didn't even have the chance to turn it back in to the dealer, where I got it. See, I didn't have it. I had about \$200 and had to pay for it. So, he didn't get a chance to pick it up. I wrote to them from over there telling him to pick it up and when he went to pick it up, somebody done got it.

AD: Okay, mmm-hmm.

JC: There were quite a few new cars. I loved that new car. Later when we got into Japan, they had warehouses. Oh, I bet you could get 5,000-6,000 cars. Blacks over there that was black and when they broke out over there, a lot of people don't realize there is a lot of those people, when they broke out, they were all black that they rushed in on and everything over there, and they didn't have nothing to fight with and all like that and they killed up a lot of them.

AD: Okay.

JC: Then the families and things was stranded over there, you see.

AD: When, in . . . in the 50s?

JC: Mmm-hmm. Maybe around '51. It started in '50 in think.

AD: It started June 50. Okay.

JC: It started June 50 and we went over in September 50. That s what it was. Mmm-hmm. It was September 50. (Phone rings) Excuse me.

AD: Sure.

(Tape stops)

(Tapes begins in mid conversation)

JC: Yeah, I had lots of fun in your state down there. Yeah, I had lots of fun down there. I loved it. I love Myrtle Beach. That s in South Carolina?

AD: Yeah, that s in South Carolina.

JC: I d like to get back down there. I d like to get back. . . They tell me . . . I wouldn t know it. They said it ain t like the old days. That s what they said.

AD: And you probably wouldn t like it. It has been developed.

JC: That s what they tell me.

AD: Yeah, the big boys with the big money. So, you probably wouldn t enjoy it the same as you used to.

JC: I think one time when I was driving a truck, a tracker trailer, and I used to drive all - Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and places like that. I think I was in Ohio, and I talked to a fella about it and he was on his way there then. He said he goes every year, and he said you wouldn t know it now. He said when you was down there, there are two different things that you wouldn t know it now.

AD: To many of us, it was ruined. I think so. It s hard to say, you know. You have the high rise hotel, you know what I mean. It s not like it used to be.

JC: Yeah, like it used to be.

AD: Oh, yeah. We used to have big fun.

JC: Yeah, now it s a money thing. Now, if you don t have the money, you can t go.

AD: You know you got to have so much when you go in and have to be able to pay that \$77.95 a night and, you know, the whole ball of wax. I don t like it anymore.

JC: No. If that s the case, there is nothing over there enticing me.

AD: Let me ask you a question. I don t have . . . um. . . I would like to send you in the mail a release form. I will go ahead and sign it and date it for today s date, send it to you. What you

are going to be releasing the information to me for my use and there is going to be a part on there so you can see that eventually what I ll do is release the whole batch of tapes to the oral history program. So, if I send that to you and include the stamped envelope, would you mail that back to me? Okay?

JC: Uh-huh. I ain t said nothing to incriminate myself.

AD: Huh?

JC: I haven t said nothing on that to incriminate me, have I?

AD: No (laughter).

JC: (Laughter). I didn t think I have. I just telling it like it is.

AD: No. But, we have to do that, you know, so that if it is anything that you can remember saying that you don t want anybody to have access to, there is a space in there that says, you know, I don t want you to use this part or whatever. Do you have any?

JC: I don t think I have said anything other than the way that it happened.

AD: You know, to pass on information. You said, you know, you don t have to worry about permission for this, you said, because when I asked you about economics and asked you about politics, you said, I don t want to get in to that right now . So, that takes care of that, see what I m saying? So, you just didn t talk about it all, which means it s not on the tape. Okay?

JC: Okay. That s what I . . . that s what I was hoping, you know. You get messed up and things like that sometimes. That politics and things, I never got involved with it because I know it s kind of a dangerous thing to mess with and if they want to mess you up, you know.

AD: Mmm-hmm. Well, Mr. Carr, I appreciate you taking the time with me.

JC: Well, I hope I did you some service. I hope so.

AD: I told you you would and you did. You did. Okay?

JC: (Laughter).

AD: Thank you very much, sir.

JC: Well, I appreciate it. I appreciate it.