

Interview with Clarence Weathers whose family lived in the James Taylor  
Subdivision for a short time - Prospect August 19, 2000 by Carridder M. Jones

My name is Clarence Weathers and my date of birth is 12/17/49. I was born over a grocery store on West Chestnut Street. I think it's around 22<sup>nd</sup> and Chestnut I believe. I lived there until I was about three years old. It was only a small two or three room dwelling and my mother told me it was during the Korean war and places were hard to find to rent.

Stinson Broadus who had a home out on Durock Lane told my father that he would rent the house to him. So we moved out there and lived out there for about a year or so. There weren't that many houses out there. There was a little boy who lived next door that my mother reminded me of, whom I can vaguely remember. I have forgotten his name now. He lived right next door but the houses were so sparsely laid out there, that was the only house in proximity to ours. It was just a gravel road so I don't recall us straying very far from the house.

My father's name is Clarence Weathers and my mother's name is Leora Weathers. My father is deceased and my mother lives in the Blanton House. I'm glad to see the community is still all black. I'm glad to see that blacks are still all together as a community, that they were not broken up. I think that just signifies some strength I think in the community, some cohesiveness. It appears to be, despite all of the locks we saw on the doors we saw a while ago, it appears to be a peaceful community.

I am not even sure in a community like this how well people know one another since it's sort of a rural area. I know when it comes to people living in the country, from my past experience, they seem to be a little bit more friendlier than people in urban areas. Maybe a little bit more trusting of their neighbors. In fact when we were riding down the street a little while ago, people would look at you and wave. My mother is from Springhill, Kentucky and we have the same experience whenever we go up there, particularly, I don't know if it's a strange car or what. When you ride down the street be prepared to do a lot of waving. It's a different experience than what you have in an urban setting, it makes you feel welcome.

I used to remember my mother telling me about the first day she took my brother to Jacob School and she took me with her. I was crying because I wanted to stay with him but I can't remember that episode. I can just remember seeing my brother walk across the field in the morning on route to school. The school, I think is one or two roads over. Of course he didn't go to the end of the lane, he just walked across the field. I can just remember him in the morning walking away.

I don't think the thing that holds black families together is any different from what holds any family together. It's just the bond that is struck from birth through the nurturing process. They say that family is the foundation of society and I agree with that. Because you can go through a lot of things with your family, a lot of conflict and arguments or what not but at least with most families, there is always a bond there that no matter what, if something happens to a family member you are always concerned. I think that lasts until death.

My mother told me just the other day, she remembers seeing James Taylor drive up and down Durock Lane every once in a while and waving. I guess he was driving around to check on his property. I think it was around 1953 when we lived out there. My mother told me that my youngest sister was conceived out there on Durock Lane. That's one reason we moved. One, it was too expensive for my parents and it was a long commute to Louisville. She said it was about twelve miles. Both my mother and father worked down town. Two, apparently the house on Durock Lane wasn't large enough for three kids. So, we moved down to a house in West Louisville.

I only have brief flashes of memories of the inside of that house. The two vivid recollections I have, again, I was only about three or four years old. Two things that happened out there, one time my brother who is three years older than me, went up to the stove and some how, I don't know if he picked up the skillet or knocked the skillet off but he spilled some boiling hot grease on his chest. I remember he was screaming and hollering. There are some images when you think about something that happened, you don't know if you have manufactured this image or whether it is really something you witnessed. Seems like I can remember him going up to that stove without his shirt on and remember him screaming and hollering. My mother told me that she put some sort of salve on his chest and wrapped him up real tight and just rocked him to sleep.

The other vivid image, and this is even more vivid than my brother getting burnt by the grease. It was the time the police officers came out there to shoot my dog. My nickname was Scottie and the dog's name was Scottie. The dog had gone mad, or rabid or whatever. I can remember these two police officers in uniforms standing out in our front yard. I can remember it almost like it happened yesterday. Remembering that police officer bringing the gun and shooting the dog right there in our yard. It was upsetting. I don't ever remember having nightmares about it but it's just strange. It's probably the most vivid image of all that I have of those times.

I just wonder what it would be like if we had stayed out here. How my life would have been different, living in a fairly rural area in an all black community. Most of the communities I lived in the city were all black but I think it would have been a different experience. So, I'm interested in talking to people while we are out

here. What it was like, particularly for a child to grow up in this community and the different experiences they had.

One other thing, I mentioned the teenager who used to baby sit us. I was asking my mother about this the other day. He died. He drowned. I had a vague memory of a body of water or a pond. I thought it was somewhere across the road on Durock Lane but that's not where he drowned. My mother wasn't sure. She thinks he was driving a tractor somewhere, and I don't know whether the tractor overturned or what have you. His name was Robert Brooks, I think she said. I have a very vague image of Robert Brooks sitting on the edge of my bed, I was laying in bed and I don't know if he was putting us to bed for the night. I was asking my mother to describe him. Again, I can't picture his face because it was almost like I see a glow around his face like an angel or something. Sometime when you struggle to remember something but you can't quite make it out. And the more you try, you just wonder if you are manufacturing details to fill in the holes or whether or not you really remember any of them. I can't quite picture his face.

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Interview with William A. Kellar 6421 River Road (Husband of Mary Merriweather Kellar) June 7, 2000 - by Carridder M. Jones

My name is William Arthur Kellar. I was born in Goshen, Kentucky, December 1921. My parents are deceased. My father was George Foree Kellar, my mother was Susanna Kellar. There were four children in our family. My two brothers have passed and my sister lives in Sydney, Ohio. My oldest brother's name was George Foree. I'm the middle one and my younger brother was named Henry Franswar of all names, and they called him Faro. He was called Faro because when we were quite small, we had an aunt who stayed with us when our mother worked and she would rock in a big old rocking chair. My brother Henry would ride on the back of the rockers. We had a play to be in and she asked him what he was in the play and he's rocking on the back of the rocker. And he says, 'oh I'm suppose to be ' Jack in the Cubard', like in the kitchen. He said, 'I don't want to be no damn Jack in no Cubbard'. She snatched him and threw him down and put her foot on him and held him and made my older brother George and I go get the lye soap and she scrubbed his mouth out. And she said, 'now you ain't nothing but a Faro'. And that's what he had until he passed in 1996. My sister's name was Fannie. Her name was Mary Fannie Anna Bertha Kellar. After every body. I know the people she was named after because I was born two years before she was.

I went to school at Jefferson Jacob School. Jefferson Jacob School is about a mile from where we are sitting on a road called Jacob School Road. The school was named after one of the African American settlers. That was the only formal educational place where African Americans got any education. It went to the eighth grade. Started out with the primer to the eighth grade. Course now it's called pre school. That's where I got my elementary and from there I went to Lincoln Institute in Shelbyville in Shelby County. Then I went on to Central. I'll tell you that at the time we were going to Lincoln, Ballard High School, about two miles from here would not allow any African Americans to go there. We were bussed by Ballard High School to Central High School. And then I went down to Western Kentucky Vocational College in Paducah. Down in the western part of the state.

At Jacob School, I graduated Valedictorian of my class and I skid by because I was the teacher's pet. They had the examination at the end of the school term and there was another lady who was much smarter than I, she's still with us thank the Lord. We had a tie in our test and the teacher put a column of numbers on the black board and whoever came up with the quickest answer would be the

valedictorian and the other would be the solutitorian. That was a pretty lousy way to do it because it hurt when I got to Lincoln Institute. I was going through it and when the teacher asked a question, all I would do was just hold up my hand. She'd ask if anybody knew the answer. She'd say, 'aw, William Arthur, you know everything so I don't want to call on you, but I wouldn't know it.

The Jefferson County black communities were New Berg, Berrytown Griffeytown and Harrods Creek. We could not go to Ballard High School which was the same thing right here but we could not go. So we had to go to Lincoln Institute to senior high, which was in Shelby County. We were dormitoried there. Girls and boys and boys. I used to clean the girl's dormitory so I could be over there where the girls were.

Jacob who Jacob school was named after was not a relative of my family but I know one of the descendants, her name is Laura Brooks. She is the granddaughter or great granddaughter of that old man and she is 92 years old. I heard about it because she talks about him. She lives on Shirley Avenue in the Taylor Subdivision. He was her great uncle.

The Taylor Subdivision was named after James Taylor who used to live right up the hill here. It was all African Americans. Mr. Taylor didn't develop it but he had the land rights. He divided it up and sold it only to Blacks. Now it's populated with Whites and Blacks. Some of these young Blacks that had land that was formerly owned by their parents, they just sell it to anybody that comes along. Now it's White and Blacks. This area here used to be called the Neck. At one time, this house, the Merriweather House was the only African American resident in Harris Creek Proper. All the rest have been sold off. There were around seven or eight African American Families in the Neck at one time. The families who lived here were the Merriweather's, Jacobs, Sydney Jacobs and John Jacobs, Sam Pruitt, Ryner McGruder, Joe Hoskins, Bell and Tom Crutchfield, and Will and Nellie Butler were the original settlers. They all lived in the neck. According to the records, the Merriweather's bought this property from somebody named Allison. That was before my time.

I lived up where the school was. I married Mary that's the reason why I am here. That school was built in 1916. When they integrated the schools, my fraternity, Prospect Lodge bought that school. And now it's Prospect Lodge 109 and the Senior Citizens building. There are two buildings up there. The small building in back is the Senior Citizen Building. I had a cousin who worked on the task force, her name was Edwina Murphy and she lives in Washington. She worked with Gene Snyder, the Snyder of the freeway. She worked on senior citizen places

all over the country. The Senior Citizen building was suppose to be named after my mother, It was going to be called the Susanna Blanton Kellar House, but Edwina called it the Harrods's Creek Prospect Senior Citizen Building.

At recess time at the school, there was nothing but the playground, a small area. There was balls and croquet later. First there was nothing but bat and ball and that's about the size of it. They had that little building in back for the lunch room. The first, and second grades were in one room and the other side was the lunch room. Then in the Larger building, there were two room up there. There was the third, fourth and fifth grades in one room up there. Then over in the other room was the sixth, seventh and eighth grade there. One teacher in each room. Mrs. Marinda Robinson, Mrs. Mamie Morris and Mrs. Etta Taylor, Mr. James Taylor's wife had the first and second grades down in the little building. Before her there was a lady named Mrs. Alexander down there. Before the Principal Mrs. Morrison taught the sixth, seventh and eighth grade there was a Mr. James Wilson who was the Principle. He was out of Jefferson Town.

Our teachers didn't tell us any stories. They'd beat you but they didn't tell any stories. They were the best and they were concerned. Not only would she teach you but she was a mother away from home. All three of them, and that prevailed into highs school at Central. They were interested in a child getting a good education and it wasn't just wash you in and wash you out. They were very concerned and very strong about the welfare and the future of a child. They prepared you and gave you all they had and were very diligent and strict. They would whip you. Down at Central High School, there was a coach, Willie Kean, and what happened down there with coach Kean, boy don't go to coach Kean, or don't have them to send you to him. Mr. Wilson was the principle and it wasn't too good a news to go to him either. There was a place called Bouchard Beanery and he'd get you in there, if you were tight with him, I mean if you had a little inroad, he'd tell you to go and get him a bunch of beans. He liked beans. You'd go and get him some beans and he'd say, 'gone back to class boy'. If you went to the coach, you got whipped, tanned. But they were the best people where the education is concerned because, as I said before, they were concerned for a child's welfare and what they could do in the future. Now, children are not geared from the home out. They have television, cars, cellular phones and all.

Jacob School closed in 1957 and That's when the lodge purchased it. We have fish fries and raffles twice a year, in July and December. We meet there the first and third Sunday Nights. We were meeting on Wednesday but people that worked at industrial plants like Fords, we found that the men couldn't get to the

meetings so we changed that. Got a special dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. Now, we meet on Sunday evening at 6:00. This is just the lodge members. The Senior Citizens meet in the little building on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at noon. They play cards on Tuesday and Friday, on Wednesday they have lunch and play bingo and Uno. I go up there but I don't play cause there are too many women for me. Wednesday is the best day to be there for that sort of function. After lunch they go into these little games. They have a devotion.

On Rose Island Road at Prospect, there on the east side of Rose Island was an African American settlement. It had been there, I'd say a century. This fellow, Wallace's father was the editor for the Courier-Journal paper and then his son who was a writer for Life magazine has a zoo. And he owns all of that land up there except Green Castle Baptist Church. Now, he was very good to Green Castle. We have property that he deeded us and all we have to do is to pay for the survey. It's our parking lot now and we are in the process of building it's through him and some of that land that he gave us. He's just that kind of person. His name is Henry Wallace and his daughter is Karla Wallace, they did a movie called the Lawn Boy and they jumped over this bridge and made a segment right under this bridge down here. The black community is no more no more. I would say it disbanded fifty years ago. They had picnics, and a base ball field. The old Inner Urban Streetcar used to run from Third and Liberty out to Prospect, that was the end of the line. The reason why Prospect got its name, at the time when they were constructing the Inner Urban Streetcar, when they got up there was looking for a circle for the turnaround, they said this looks like a good 'prospect', and that's how it got its name of Prospect. That's how come it's named Prospect, Kentucky.



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Interview with Mary Margaret Merriweather Kellar - 6421 River Road, Louisville, Kentucky - June 7, 2000 - By Carridder M. Jones

My name is Mary Margaret Merriweather Kellar. My mother was Elnora McIntyre Merriweather and my father was Harry Hall Merriweather. My grandparents were Mattie Barbour and Harry Hall Merriweather. My dad built this house back in the 1800s.

Mary reading information taken from historical marker: On January 6, 1891, Harry Merriweather purchased one and a half acres overlooking Harrods Creek from the Allison family. The property was transferred to his grandson, who is my father, Harry Hall Merriweather on May 3, 1898, who traced the steep riverbank and built a unique house that stands today. The Merriweather family engaged in farming and built and managed docks and cottages for vacationers on Harrods Creek.

Harry Merriweather and his brother Isaac were among the first free African Americans to purchase land in the Harrods Creek area and the Merriweather house is the only surviving structure of this early African American community. The property remains in the Merriweather family.

After the Civil War, large land holdings along Harrods creek were subdivided and sold as smaller units. African Americans, many of whom were former slaves settled in the area and worked as domestic servants, farm laborers and small farmers. By the 1890s an African American settlement had been formed near Harrods Creek. The Merriweather house was the focal point of the settlement. When James F. Allison, son of one of Jefferson Counties earliest settlers died in 1877, most of his extended property along Harrods creek was passed to his widow, Rebecca.

The Merriweather house is located on River Road on one and a half acres overlooking Harrods Creek. The property was purchased from the Allison Family on January 6, 1891 by Harry Merriweather. On May 3, Harry Merriweather sold his property to his grandson, Harry Hall Merriweather for forty dollars (\$40.00). After purchasing the property from his grandfather, Harry Hall Merriweather built a two story framed house thereon. After engineering a terrace on the steep river bank to create a level building site. The architecture of the Merriweather house is unique, featuring a steamboat inspired porch with arches.

This can be checked in deed book 499, page 5, 36-537. The Merriweather

family engaged in small scale farming, raising and slaughtering hogs. Taking full advantage of their ideal location, the family constructed docks and cottages at the foot of the property for boaters and other vacationers on Harrods Creek. Harry Hall Merriweather also worked for the L& N Railroad, and later for the Garvin Brown family. His wife Elnora worked at the Western Branch Library in Louisville, Kentucky for thirty-two years. The Merriweather house remains in the Merriweather family, now owned and operated by Mary Margaret Merriweather Kellar and her husband William. Several of the cottages are still standing as well.

A well of preserved illustrations of the settlement by blacks in the rural community of Harrods Creek in the last quarter of the nineteenth century built by black Harry Hall Merriweather is about 1898. The house and its sight on the banks of the Creek reflect the use of the land by these small scale farmers and laborers. Free blacks must have certainly begun independent life in Harrods Creek following the end of the Civil War. The Harrods Creek community, a crossroad village founded in the early part of the nineteenth century, offered commerce to farmers of Jefferson County and Oldham county vicinity. Economic opportunities for blacks in such a settlement would have included independent and tenant farming and harvesting cane, laboring on the creek.

I have two children, Suzanne Elizabeth Sweeney who is married to Dwight Sweeney and Karen Rucker, and her husband is Tony. Suzanne Lives in Louisville on Virginia Avenue and Karen lives on Goldsmith Lane. Suzanne has two children and Karen has three.

I liked growing up here because we had fun. Besides canning, we had our own meat because we had a smokehouse out in the back. We just had a ball. When I'd come home from school, momma would have two or three bushels of green beans we had to help snap the green beans because she loved to can. It just made it nice to go out to the smoke house and get your bacon and we had chickens too. There were two of us children., My brother's name is Bernard and he lives in Louisville off of Crum's Lane.

I've been here all of my life. I didn't move out when I married. My daddy passed in 1951 and momma passed in 1970. My children grew up here. We were sort of isolated here. We couldn't let them ride up the road and didn't have time to take them up there where the subdivision is (Taylor Subdivision). They played here and had their friends here. They did all of the normal things kids did. The main stay of was up there. They didn't know many of the children in Louisville to associate with.

We had all kind of stories. The one that all sticks out in my mind, every time

I go around that side of the house around there, we were told the whites would take the blacks and rub their mouths with a piece of meat to make it look as if they were well fed. Just old timey stories. How blacks would have to get under a tub, one of those old metal tubs and sing I guess that was to muffle their voices so their owner wouldn't hear them. See all of this was a farm, it was just little stray things like this. You wouldn't want to think that people were like that. They wanted to look good. I never did 't think too much about all of this because I had always said I wouldn't stay here. I'd love to have something modern because I have been here all of my life. It's seldom that you hear of somebody growing up and staying there marrying and having children and you're still there and till this day in 2000, I'm still here.

I'm blessed to have had this home but I still would have loved having a brand new home. I'm content now. All of the history they have come out with still is not doing anything for me, really. Monetarily wise, it's not doing anything for me. I told you earlier, they were suppose to put a marker out there and that's been three years or maybe longer and we still don't have the marker. But, as far as the publicity of the place, I'm pleased by that because it lets them know that a black man, with no education actually built it. My dad probably went to the sixth grade. I'm saying sixth grade but I don't know how far he went but I know he wasn't very educated. Now my mom, on the other hand was a librarian at the western branch on tenth and Chestnut.

Most of the people around here were all related. Like Daddy and Jim Taylor were sisters children and the McGruder's who lived next to the old church down here on River Road. Aunt Riney back here was related to us too.

Reading from an article in the American Baptist, June 20, 1924, the obituary of Mattie Merriweather: While in the midst of life we are now reminded that death has visited one of our sisters and co workers. Life is a narrow veil between the cold and narrow peaks of eternity. Life is a debt owed by everyone born into existence and must be paid at a set time at the end of which is your career. From a foundation of the world it was planned by God that there should be a Green Castle Baptist Church. There should be one Mattie Barber Merriweather, who would be the type of flower to represent the Green Castle Baptist Church. Today it is only in the power only nine living member of said church who can recall the dark days of slavery. For those days in prayers prevaieth much.

Born on the Ohio River, some twelve miles east of Louisville, in an old log cabin occupied by brother Ben Parker was a prayer meeting which was held for a number of years, conducted by brother Parker and Jeff Jacobs. Through the result

of such a prayer meeting, during March of 1869, Christ answered the prayers of sister Mattie Merriweather. And she felt within her soul, sins forgiven and a life saved. This was the very beginning of Christ's works in the community and marked an event that has stood with and will forever stand on the record of time. From this one saved soul, a genuine old fashioned revival commenced, which lasted about four weeks and closed with forty-seven happy souls prepared to face God. Not an earthly but a heavenly being.

On the second in June, the sun shone from its easternly bed of repose, brighter seemingly than it had ever shown before. These forty-seven happy souls marched down to the Ohio River, side by side, husbands and wives, daughters and mothers, brothers and sisters for the purpose of putting on Christ by baptism. Brother Jeff Jacobs led the crowd down to the mighty stream and sang that glorious old hymn, "Must I be to judgement brought and answer in the day for every vain and idle thought and every word I say, and every secret of my heart that shall be made known when I receive my just desert for all that I have done. How careful then ought I to live without regales fears for such a strict and countless gift for my behavior here."

Brother John Buckner offered a prayer and another hymn was sung. At the close, of which the crowd was attracted by a voice exclaiming, "come for me for I am free", by Sister Mattie Merriweather who just possessed a hope in Christ. Reverend Buckner immediately sent a skiff across the water to convey her over. She told her experience of grace and was accepted as a candidate for baptism and marched down to be buried beneath the waves of the Ohio River with her daughter and others.

On the third Sunday of July, Reverend Buckner called the little band of forty - seven together in a locust grove on the banks of the Ohio River and preached a sermon. His text being, On this rock I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He then and there organized a church, which was the Green Castle Baptist Church. There was one in that organization who was the first one to be converted and that was sister Mattie Merriweather. At the time of her departure, she was a member of the Green Castle Baptist Church, Age 55, three months and twenty two days. She loved the position she held as a follower of Christ. She served and lived for him through these many years of combat. She was ever ready to perform her duties for her church and its causes. She was loyal and agreeable with its co-workers. While she converted at an early age, her Christian life was her guidance. She frequently referred to happy days of Christian life in her early career.

Sister Mattie Merriweather was not only a church worker but was interested in all that was everlasting to her community and race. I seems to be a part of her to do whatever she could for Christ cause. Green Castle Baptist Church has lost a jewel, one who was the cause of many considering it as serious as she was in accepting Christ. Thirty-seven happy souls that were buried beneath the waves of the Ohio River with her but passed ahead, awaiting her arrival on June 2, 1924 at 9:30 P.M. When she like they, had taken their burden for their pillow and sweetly passed away. Her church has lost a member, a great vacancy, a voice is hushed in silence and sadness darkens our pathway. Yet, we need not worry for back of every cloud is a bright shining star. We know that as our membership ceases here, it begins within a city where eternal happiness prevails. She was loved by all, accepted by all and worthy of all good praise. She was ever cheerful. Even during her late illness. Death was no fear to her. She prepared fifty-five years on a journey to be taken by her on June 2. She left her testimony in a Christian life of fifty five years, worthwhile being exemplified by human beings. We now bow in submission to Gods cause.

We know that we were fortunate to have had her with us this short space of time and that today this church stands as a living monument of work started by sister Mattie Merriweather in 1869. Yet many were her struggles through these fifty-five years. Yet she stood like a heroin , using Jesus for her weapon. My language is too shallow and my imagination too narrow to express the actual service rendered by Sister Mattie Merriweather. She always let her Christian life shine as bright as the noonday sun. She added to the sum of every human being joy and of everyone of whom she gave advice, or some loving service to bring to her sleeping tomb. The church mourns this departure and feels that it has lost one of its angels added to the heavenly host association with the living word.”

My mommas death was sad. I didn't expect it and I was here by myself. She told me to come get her ready that morning. She had fallen almost a year before and had been bed-ridden. Of course I bathed her and took care of her. This particular Sunday, she said ‘come on and get me ready’. I said OK momma, where are you going? She said, ‘just come on and get me ready’. She used to be real active in the clubs here in Louisville, the bell and embroidery club and the flower garden club. She was real active, even after she had retired from the library. That was just something she said that particular morning. So I went and got her bath water and stuff together.

She said, ‘now Margaret, he's coming’. And just like that, no sooner than I turned back around, that was it. I tried to get her up in bed, sit her up. It was just

like a silk scarf. That was an experience I had never been around. It was like the breath was leaving her body but I didn't know that. Just like you had placed a silk or nylon scarf on your arm. I kept trying to pull her up in the bed and she just slipped right out of my hands. Life had just left her body. That is nothing I would want to ever experience again. I was home by myself so I called my neighbor, Mrs. Richardson. I told her something had happened to Momma and she said, 'I'll be right there'. She came right on around. My husband was at church. When I heard her come in, I hollered and told her I was upstairs. When she came in, she said, 'oh just let her down, let the bed down'. When we let the bed down, she said, 'she's gone'. You get sort of frightened at first, but when she said to let her down, don't keep her sitting up in bed, that was just it. Naturally I went all to pieces and called Pete and then the Coroner had to come and everything.

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Interview with Minne Alta Broaddus (daughter of James Taylor) by Carridder M. Jones May 2000.

## START OF TAPE 1 - SIDE A

MINNE ALTA BROADDUS : My fathers name was James Thomas Taylor. That was the name he went by, James T. Taylor. He really had a much nicer name than that. James Thomas Thaddus Alexander Taylor. I don't remember now where the James came from. Thomas was from the Taylor side, Thaddus was his grandfather Lang and he had an uncle named Alexander. I guess that's how he got that name. My mother was Julia Etta McAfee Taylor. The McAfee brothers, Edward and Calvin came here, from a place up there between Frankfort and Lexington, I think in that area. They came down here to work.

Daddy was born in 1885 and Mom in 1888. Dad was a native of this area, he was born in a house up on top of the hill. His father was Eddie Taylor and his mother was Florence but she died when he was born, or shortly there after. He didn't know her at all. His maternal grandparents raised him.

My mother's relatives, Calvin and Edward came down here from the Lexington Frankfort area. There is a place not far from Frankfort called McAfee. His mother was an Indian and his father was white. When they came down here, they worked in a foundry a little north of River road, around Clay Street. When I was a teenager, we used to drive down there. Those plants were still there and still operating. Edward is my mother's father. When they were working in this foundry, they were firing the furnaces. It would get so hot they would take off their clothes, except their pants of course, depending on the kind of weather it was and Edward contracted tuberculosis. You know from taking off his clothes in the winter.

His wife was Mollie McKay McAfee and she came up from Springfield, the Chaplin area. She and her sister Julia, I don't know how they met or when they met but Mollie and Edward Married and had my mother, Julia Etta, who was named after Mollie's sister. Edward died and Mollie also contracted tuberculosis and died. Etta was between five and seven when that happened. Now, Calvin had met a women, I don't know if he met her here or if he knew her before. She came down from Midway, Kentucky and her name was, Florida Phoenix. They married in 1890. Calvin and Florida adopted Etta.

My parents are deceased. Mom died in 1942 and Dad died in 1955. I think Mom had cancer of some sort. They never ever said it but she was not well for some time. I think it was in her abdominal area. Dad had been very successful but

things were not going to suit him. The doctors never could find anything wrong with him. I think he just decided he was going and he just died. Mom died in 1942 and he died in 1965. He said when mom died that he would never marry again. I thought he was an old man but he wasn't. He was just in his fifties. About 54 or 56, he looked fine. About five years later, he married a lady named Minnie McAfee Cooper. She had been married twice before. Her last husband was a Mr. Cooper who was an undertaker. He died and then she married daddy.

Daddy bought this farm in 1922 or 23. Durock Lane is the middle lane, Bass Lane is the next street from Shirley. It went back to this farm back here, the Bass farm. On the other side, there used to be an Inner Urban that ran through here, about one house from here. Dad's farm only ran to the Inner Urban. He grew mostly hay on this side and all sorts of things like watermelons, he did a lot of that on the other side. When he bought this land, he had a lot of cattle and hogs. He named that area Durock because that was the type of hogs he liked. He had a lot of them on the back end of that area. When he bought this, he was in the real estate business in town and he was still living up on the hill. Some sort of water would form in this area and we would ice skate on it.

He started developing this shortly after he got it. Around 23, Dr. McIntyre and his wife Eleanor built that house on the corner of Durock and River Road. That was the first house that was built out here. There used to be some sort of platform and people would come out and play music and dance. A Mr. Smalling bought the land from the McIntyre house, about half way back this way, because he wanted to have a park or something. All of the people who were buying the property were black because dad only wanted blacks up here. In fact, somewhere that was stipulated in the contract.

When I was young, there was another section at Harrods Creek, near the big house by the bridge. That big house was built by Harry Merriweather. Blacks lived in the lane by that house too. My grandfather and two of his sister and Harry Merriwether's mother lived back in there. Harry Merriwether's mother and my Taylor grandfather were brother and sister. They had another sister, Riney McGruder, and another family, Hodgkins lived back there. They called it the Neck. There was only my brother, James Taylor and me. We did have a sister who was younger than me but she died when she was seven. Her name was Mae Etta. On Wolf Pen Branch Road, next to the Langs were the Kennedy's. Harrison Kennedy and his family and that house is still standing. Whites are living there now.

Daddy worked with all of these rich people all up in the hills around here and their servants needed places to stay that were closer to them so they would not have

so far to come, for the most part is the reason he developed this community.

The earliest memory of my family was when my mother was ill and my brother and I were living in town. My mother had a cousin who worked for the Lee Lewis' who lived at fourth and Hill. This cousin and her husband had living quarters in the alley behind fourth and Hill. It was a nice apartment over the garage.

They provided all sorts of things for my brother and me. My brother and I were really young. I was born in 1911 and was almost two years older than he. He used to want to go to see that 'pretty lady in the big bed,' that of course was mom. They had all kinds of things for us there, even a monkey and a parrot to keep us occupied. They kept us because mom was ill. Then we came back to the country when I was about four. Those are my first memories. I remember going to school, and the school for us was back in the Neck. I don't remember the name of the school but we walked and it was an all black school. My teacher was either Narcissus Brown or Sunshine Merriwether. Sunshine, was Harry Merriwether's wife.

I remember that dad was tall and Jimmy and I used to play London Bridge is falling down with him. We would walk in between his legs and he would stand while we sang a song and walked between his legs then he would try to catch us. He was a lot of fun. Mom always read us a story at night. For the most part it would be the old fairy tales but dad's stories were not in the book. They were things he would make up. I can't remember any of them but they were fun. When anything would happen, we would always go to dad instead of mom, for some reason or other. He was always able to calm us down and mom would always get excited.

By the time I was in the second grade, they built the Jacob School. Reverend Kennedy bought that section over there. He lived on the hill too and further up the Stokes family lived there too. Martin Dunbar who is the Stokes grandson lives on Shirley now. Reverend Kennedy also got the land adjoining this. He may have had his land before dad had this. The school was a two story plan. It had two classrooms upstairs, a hallway and a cloak area. Under it was the gym. They had things you could use for gym and play on bad days. It had a stage and we could have plays. It is still standing. It was built before 1920.

Most of the kids walked to school on good days and on other days, someone would bring us. My dad had a lot of men working for him and one of them would bring us. He was what they called a contract farmer, or something like that and he had all kinds of equipment, like threshing machines and hay bailing stuff. He took care of the farms around here. He had this real estate company, called James T. Taylor Real Estate Company. His office was on Walnut Street, six something,

along where that bank is now. The people who lived here felt very good about the community.

Dad had some real good white friends and we had them in. We didn't live up here at first. As a young person, dad lived with his grandparents. Then he built his house on their land. In that area, there was a high hill and dad built his house on a plateau below his grandparents. That is where I lived until I was sixteen, then I went away to school at Fisk. Then our house burned and we lost everything. There was no fire department out this way then. Dad had been out of town, I don't know for what reason and mom, my brother and I were in a restaurant waiting for dad to meet us. He got there just before somebody came and told us our house was on fire. Dad rebuilt and instead of rebuilding where the house was, he rebuilt on that higher plain just a little bit a front of the grandparents house. He built it similar to the one that burned, but it was not quite as large as the one that burned, and it's still there.

These rich people like Paul Simeon were the people dad dealt with. And one of his white friends told him that he should build on this property up here. They said he should build far from the road, then people couldn't see what he had. He built a two and a half story house at 6600, right down the road.

When I went to college, I studied English and history. I loved history, those were my major. I taught at Central Highschool. That was the only place I taught. Then I got married and had two boys. I had two other pregnancies but I lost them because I could not hold the pregnancies. My husband's name was Stinson Broaddus. He died in 1977. When I married Stenson, he was teaching at Kentucky State so I went up there. At that particular time, a husband and wife could not work together. I kept my job and would just go up there on weekends or he would come down here. So I had my son, Stinson in November of 1941. My mother was ill when I married. We were going to have a church wedding but the doctor felt that I should go ahead and marry but not have a big wedding because it would be too tiring for her. I married on the lawn at 6600 and I have movies of it. We married June 15. At that time, Kentucky State was having a hard time. They cut salaries and we decided I should keep my job, although I had written my resignation and turned it into my principal. When I called him in August, he said. 'I knew you were coming back so I didn't do a thing with it'. So I stayed that year. Also in those days, if you were pregnant you couldn't work, but I was so tall I didn't show so I worked that whole year. Then I stayed off a year after the baby came. Mom was still ill and she was crazy about the baby. She got better and was able to come to Frankfort and spend some time with us and we would come down here. Anyway, we thought that I would come on down here and work. I came on back to work and

mom died that September.

Then I stayed at home with dad and the baby and I would go up on weekend or Stinson would come down here. I decided that I would really quit working or my husband would come down here and help my father. It seemed he needed some help so that's what we did. He came down here and worked with dad for a while but my father was the type of person that had to be the head. This did not go over too well with my husband but he was good and he found something else for himself. We stayed there with dad until he married. We stayed there five years. I had taken some library science at Fisk but that same principal and I talked it over and I went and got some more library science and became the librarian at Central. Dad's wife was also a librarian. Mrs. Cooper, who became Mrs. Taylor, was a sweet person but I decided that it would be best for me to get out of there. By that time I was pregnant again and doing too much. I had a girl that helped me some.

I was in an accident when I was in high school on one of the Inter Urban cars coming from Louisville. The Inter Urban coming from Prospect and the one coming from Louisville collided and burned. They got me off before the fire, I was the last one out. I was down under the seat some kind of way. I had fallen out of the seat and was unconscious, but they got me out before the cars burned. I had just been to the hairdresser. Mom used to do my hair and I had long thick hair and the hairdresser braided it that day and wrapped the braids around my head. They think the hair saved me. I got a little money, I can't remember how much it was.

There was a piece of property on the hill where the house was and daddy said that was mine. Then, some white people bought Mrs. Mary Gibson's house and they wanted some more land so dad sold them my lot and gave me some land up here in place of it. My husband was an agriculturist and he decided that he would have a poultry farm and he would raise poultry without ever letting them on the ground. He built a little place over there where he had all of this poultry. He was doing pretty good, selling fryers to people around. He would sell about a hundred a week. Then Georgia started doing the same thing and sending poultry nationally, so he decided to do something else.

The second World War was going on and you couldn't build or find anything. I read where there were some barracks up in Madison, Indiana that was being sold. My husband went up there and got one. It was 45X20 and daddy had some men who did this sort of thing so they built a basement the same size of the barracks and brought it down here. We divided it up and moved into it. That's where we stayed and finally in 1950, my husband started managing public housing. At one point in 1952, the Housing Authority said managers with families had to move in, so we

moved down to College Court. Then, in late 1957 the Housing Authority said we didn't have to stay at College Court and we moved back out here.

The boys were getting bigger and the house was too small for us. Stenson said he wasn't ever going to move because he liked our place. He said he was not going to move anyplace unless the place had some land around it. We found this house. It was built for a veteran who was a paraplegic, this room was the garage and I needed a room for my boys, Sten and Charles, to play so we made this into a room before we moved in. The boys are seven year apart, I couldn't conceive. My husband was older than I and I thought at first it was his problem and I had him going to doctors and everything. I sent Stan to a doctor I had known down in Nashville, then I went. He said, 'I don't see how you got pregnant the first time. Often women as tall as you, the womb is not in the right place'. So I had an operation and got mine in the right place and conceived right away.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
CARRIDDER M. JONES PROJECT DIRECTOR

In consideration of the recording and preservation of my oral history memoir, I hereby grant and assign them to the Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky, and consent to the deposit of my oral history memoir in their permanent collection, to be used for whatever scholarly or educational purposes, including the right to duplicate, and distribute the recordings and/or transcription to any other libraries and educational institution. I grant Carridder M. Jones, all literary property rights, including transcription and publication rights to this material as an unrestricted gift.

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Interview with Laura Brooks 6419 Shirley Avenue - James Taylor Subdivision,  
Prospect, Kentucky - July 5, 2000 - By Carridder M. Jones

**THIS INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE AT A MEETING IN THE HARRODS  
CREEK/PROSPECT SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER AT THE JEFFERSON  
JACOB SCHOOL**

My name is Laura E. Brooks, Born 1907 and I'm 92 years old, be 93 in October. All of my life I have lived in this community. Born and reared her, a place called Happy Hollow. My fathers name was Simon Brooks and my Mothers name was Edlene Brooks. They came from this same community, Prospect, Kentucky. That's where they were born and reared. My father was in his fifties and my mother was 85 when they died. I don't remember the years they died.

When I was coming up, the good things I remembered was they had a church here and there was a place called Swearance Park, it was just a place we went to play. We had fun there and we danced. I attended Jefferson Jacob School, right where I'm sitting now and that school is named for my grandfather, Jefferson Jacob. I can't remember why the school was named after him. He was the oldest person in the community and I imagine that's why they named the school for him.

I started school at Prospect, a one room school. Then when the black schools was consolidated, they built the Jacob school. The people from Harrods Creek and Prospect came to this school. We had a one room school first, in Prospect. All blacks in this area came to this school.

I went to school under one teacher, and her name was Lucy J. Scott and as far as this school went was the eighth grade. Then when you finished the eighth grade, you had to go in the city to school, which is called, Central High School. They never brought any more teachers in whilst I was there. But, after I left they had just numerous of teachers. We had from the primer to the eighth grade, as far as you they went. We just learned from the primer, a very ordinary book, you know. All I got out of my education was to the eighth grade. I went as far as the eighth grade, then I went to work. I did domestic work.

I was seventy years old when I retired from domestic work. The place where my mother and father lived has been torn down and they made subdivision out of it. I'm living now at 6419 Shirley Avenue, which is about a mile from where I was born and reared. I've lived there fifty some odd years. I've never been married and I had my house built myself and living in it all by myself.



Now, oh Lord, I don't have too many relatives living. I can't count them cause there used to be a whole lot of us. I've got a lot of cousins. No, no, no I never considered moving from this community, not at this age. I'm well satisfied here and I never intend to move from here. Its always been my home. Right in this community is as far as I ever lived and I just want to continue to stay here cause it's a nice place to live and all of the surroundings and the people. It just makes it nice to live in this community.

The Seniors here meet twice a week, on Tuesday and Wednesdays. On Tuesday we play cards and on Wednesday we do craft work. The craft work, sometime we sell them, sometime we show them off.

My father was a farmer and my mother was just a house wife, she didn't work. We used to read and do things like that and we shot marbles and played ball, just like ordinary families in those days. We had all kinds of marbles, aggies and all kinds. Most of us who shot marbles were girls, my sisters.

I went all the way from primer to the eighth grade with Lucy J. Scott and everything I learned, I learned from that one teacher. The community has changed, my lord, they've built more houses and there are more people moved in the community and oh, every things changed. Whites are moving in all the time. Soon as the house gets vacant, the whites are moving in. I always say when the houses get vacant, whose business is it who they sell it to, white or colored. Whoever's got the money let them buy it. That's the way I done my brothers house. White person bought it cause he's the one that had the money. My brother had a house. He died and we sold his house over on Duroc.

In my family, it was twelve of us children. There was eight boys and four girls. Their names, jim, Wallace, Jesse, Louis, Eugene, Hattie, Laura, Susie and Edna, I forgot about Joy..... When school was out, we played around, just ordinarily in the country. Just as soon as my brothers got big enough to work, pappa carried them on the farm with him. When we got big enough to work, we went to work. Pappa was the overseer of the farm and he grew some of everything, corn, wheat, oats, everything. He overseen this farm right here in the same community. This is some of it right here where we are sitting. Some of that farm that he used to take care of.

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Signature of donor

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Narrator

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Interviewer

CARRIDDER M. JONES Date 6/21/00

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Interview with Martin Dunbar II - 6610 Shirley Avenue - James Taylor Subdivision,  
Prospect, Kentucky - June 7, 2000 - By Carridder M. Jones

My name is Martin Dunbar, II. I was born December 15, 1927. My mother is Margaret Stokes Dunbar and my father is Martin Dunbar, Sr. My mother was raised here in the Harrods Creek, Prospect Community. They were born down in Harrods Creek. My mother was one of nine children. She went to college and when she graduated, she taught school here at Jefferson Jacob school. She even taught some of her younger brothers and sisters. One of her classmates wrote to her and told her that in Detroit they were making twice as much money as she was getting in Kentucky and that she ought to move to Detroit and teach up there.

She went to Detroit and taught up there and that's where she met my father. They were married and three children were born. I have a sister Delfern Elizabeth Dunbar, she's the oldest and I am the middle child. We have a younger brother, Hackett Emerson Dunbar. He was born in 1933. My mother was born December 24, 1900 and my father was born September 25, 1901.

We lived in Detroit and when my mother was having her last child, my brother Hackett, she had some complications so she came home to her mother and father, my grandmother and grandfather. Their names were William Stokes and Lula Edwards Stokes. They were living down on the Watson property. He was the foreman caretaker of that property. That's down in Harrods Creek on Wolf Pen Branch Road. Actually the address is 6401 Wolf Pen Branch Road. That property had over one hundred acres. There was seven or eight men who worked in the yard. They had a cook and a maid who lived in the house. They had a chauffeur who had an apartment over the garage. It was a large estate and my grandfather ran the estate. When my mother was pregnant with Hackett, my younger brother, she came home to have him. Then she had some complications and she never got over it.

My mother passed in 1934. My grand father and grandmother told my father to let them keep Delphi, Hackett and me while he went back to Detroit to get himself together. So we lived down there on the Watson property with them. Like I said, My grandmother had nine children. At the time when we first moved in, Rufus was at home, Uncle James and Aunt Louise. Three people were at home at that time. I remember a lot of it. It was like a farm type of thing. We didn't have electric lights, we didn't have indoor plumbing. So I can remember all of those things while we lived on that large place. There was plenty of space to run and

play, climb trees, ride bicycles, and do things like that.

To me then it was fun. We had to work. When I got a little older, in the summer, I worked on the Watson's homestead. I was making fifty cents a day. I'll never forget when I got my first check. Not my first check because they paid us in cash. I got \$3.00. I was so excited about the three dollars, I ran and showed my grandmother, "Look here, I got three dollars."

My grandmother said, "well no you don't. You've only got a dollar and a half." She said, "you owe me a dollar and a half for feeding and clothing you." So from then on, everything I made, I had to give her half of it. Yet and still, that was a lot of money to us, even at that time. It was defiantly good training. So we stayed there on that property.

My grandmother died when I was in high school. By that time there was only two people living there with my grandfather, my brother and me. My sister had gone to college. She went to Kentucky State a year. Then she decided she wanted to go to nursing school so she went to Atlanta, Georgia. She went to greater Memorial Hospital. I remember well because I used to work and help send her money, even when she was at Kentucky State. I graduated from Central in 1946, of course she graduated before me and the year before that she went to Kentucky State. Then in 1946, she went to Atlanta, Georgia to Greater Moore house to study nursing.

Oh yes, I graduated from Jacob school. We went over there until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Mrs. Taylor was my teacher. She was Mr. James Taylor's Wife, he was the one who bought this property. She taught the first three grades in a little bitty room. I could remember my grandmother taking me up there that day and I sat in the room all day because I was afraid of the kids and all that kind of stuff. After that day, I got used to it. We stayed there in that little room three years. Then Mrs. Robinson, Ellen Robinson, she taught the next three grades. Then we moved into the big school. That's what all of the kids wanted was to get into the big building because that's where all of the bigger kids were.

We had the little building that was behind Jacob school. That was kindergarten and that building is still there. After three years, we went upstairs to the other room. See there is only two rooms upstairs. They had one room where Mrs. Taylor taught and Mrs. Mamie Morris who was the school principal taught the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. We had a graduation just like other kids. We didn't have caps and gowns or anything like that out here. We took spelling, reading writing, arithmetic, and geography. We learned all of that good stuff. It was basic education. We didn't have any algebra or anything like that but we had

basic arithmetic. After graduating from eighth grade, I'll never forget, when I was there, getting ready to graduate. I told my grandmother, I can't go to town school wearing these clothes I have out here. I said the kids will just laugh me out of school. She said, "I don't have any money but if you want these new fancy clothes, you will have to go to work and buy your clothes." That's what I did. In the summer months I worked and in the winter months I worked on a regular job. I would cut grass for the neighbors in the area. In the winter time, we didn't have gas furnaces, we had coal stoker furnaces. As a child, on the way to school, I had to walk from Harrods Creek down to the bottom of the hill. I had about four houses. I talked with the people and they let me come in the morning and fill up the coal furnaces. On the way home, I would clean out the furnaces. I made money that way so I could buy my clothes to go to school. I had to do it, I didn't have much choice. They just didn't have much money. From then on, I worked and bought all of my clothes and did everything for myself. That's the way it was. Our other brother is about six years younger than we were so we all helped him.

When my grandmother passed, I was still in high school. My sister had gone to Kentucky State and stayed up there a year, then she went down to Atlanta Georgia. When she graduated, she came back here and she nursed at the Red Cross Hospital, out on Shelby Street. She had a job nursing there. Course she didn't have a car and we used to take her to work and pick her up at night. She did that for about a year. Then a girl in her class who had gone to New York wrote Delfern a letter and told her to come to New York because of course the money was so much better. So my sister left and went to New York to live. That just left my grandfather, my brother and me. We stayed there and when I graduated from high school, that summer, I went up to Belgium New York and I worked on a farm harvesting vegetables to make money so I could go to college.

I came back and went to Louisville Municipal College. Then, Blacks couldn't go to U of L. Louisville Municipal College was a school that we could go to so I went there for a year and a half. Right now Saint Stephens bought that property at 7<sup>th</sup> and Kentucky. During that time, World War II was going on in the 40's so I had to register for the draft. When I got old enough to go to the draft, I was still in high school. I turned eighteen in December but because I was still in high school, I was exempt from going to WWII. By the time I graduated, WWII was over so I didn't have to go.

The Korean War broke out in 1950, or a little before that. I had to register again and at that time, I was drafted into the Korean War. So I went into the service in 1950 and was stationed at Fort Knox. While I was at Fort Knox, my Sergeant

came to me and said, you ought to go to leadership school. If you go to leadership and you get good grades and pass, you can stay here at Fort Knox and be a teacher. I said, " Oh, that's cool, I'll do that." So I went to leadership school at Fort Knox. I graduated like ninety five cause I really didn't want to go to the Korean War. We heard about the fighting and all that kind of good stuff. At our graduation, the company commander said that because of the war situation and the way it was, we all had to go to Korea. So, that's where I ended up.

We had a thirty day leave before going to Korea and while I was on my thirty days, about the twentieth day, my grandfather took real sick. When it was time for me to go, I went to the Red Cross and told them my grandfather was real sick. Course they called the doctor and the doctor verified that my grandfather was really sick. My brother and I were the only ones living there with him and he needed me to stay to help take care of him. I got a deferment for another two weeks. When I had five more days left, I went back to the Red Cross and told them I wanted to get another extension. Of course they called the doctor and he said my grandfather was doing fine, "he don't have to stay here because his grandfather is doing fine." So they gave me seven more days and I had to go. I got on the troop train to Seattle, Washington. It took three days and three nights. My grandfather died the same day that I left. When I called home, they had buried him that day. I didn't get chance to see him anymore. Three days and three nights on a train and they couldn't get in contact with me. When I got to Seattle, Washington, I got all settled in and called home and they had just buried him.

My brother Hackett was still at home so he went to live with my aunt Louise Taylor. She lives on Jacob School Road. She was Louise Stokes, Taylor and not related to Mr. James Taylor. So my brother Hackett went to live with them. I stayed twenty-one months in the service. I spent all of that time in Korea. I had ten months combat pay. I was in combat for ten months. When we went over there, they said we could only stay in combat for six months. Then they would rotate you back. When my six months were up, I went to my captain and I told him that my six months was up and it was time for me to go. He said, sergeant, you can't go, we don't have anybody to replace you. You've got to stay. We were on the front line. I got the CIB,( Combat Infantry Badge) and I Also got a bronze star for heroism while I was there fighting. We were on Hill 317 and the enemy had overtaken the hill and I had my platoon up there and I stayed up there and fired my machine gun so they could retreat, then I got off. They gave me a bronze star for that.

During that time, all of the army was segregated except for the officers, there was no whites in our platoon. Finally they started shipping white soldiers into our

platoon. I made ranks real fast because a lot of my sergeants and lieutenant were killed in action. That got me promoted because I was doing such a good job, they promoted me to sergeant first class.

I was a platoon sergeant. I can remember one time we had three young white soldiers come in. Over there we didn't wear our ranks because we didn't want the enemy to know what rank you were. They came up to me and said, "we want to see Sergeant Dunbar, we're reporting to him." I said, "OK, just have a seat over there, I'll let him know in a minute." Then when I went to talk with them, they just couldn't believe that I was the Sergeant over the whole platoon. It was really something to see how they reacted, but they all took orders and did what they were told. There was no problems at all.

While I was over there, when my six months was up, I got an attitude. I said, I'm going to mess around here and get killed before I get out of here. So, I quit doing the best job I had done. I just did enough to get by. And one morning, my Captain, DuTrimbel called me. He said, "Sergeant Dunbar, I want to speak to you." He called me to attention. He said, "I know why you are acting the way you're acting. I'm going to tell you one thing. You're going to do this job as a sergeant or as a private. Which do you prefer?" I said, "as a sergeant sir." He said, "Carry on Sergeant." What he meant was, he was going to bust me down and still make me do the job. So I got my act together real fast and went back to doing what I was suppose to be doing. I stayed over there about another month and finally, reserves started coming in. Then I was told I could rotate.

The funniest thing about it was that all of the white and black soldiers were all together then, all friends and all that kind of stuff. The closer we got to home, the further they got from us. I had two guys in my platoon and while we were in Korea, you would have thought we were brothers. When we hit the states, I couldn't find any of them. They just departed and wanted no part of us. It was still the way it was before I left. We came back on a ship and I had all of the paperwork of everyone that was going back. One day I started looking through it and found mine. I found letters in my folder when I first registered for the army. Anything they sent me was all in that folder. That was sort of earth shaking. My whole history was right in front of me.

On the ship, I got sea sick, I just couldn't eat that food. One of the guys came up to me and said, "man, what you ought to do is go and volunteer to work up in the officers quarters. The food is better up there. Just go up there and work cleaning tables, do a little something and you will get to eat fresh food. You won't have to eat this canned food that we have." So I went up there and worked in the

officers quarters while we were on the ship. I got fresh food and I wasn't getting sea sick. I did all of that until about a day before it was time for us to land. I figured I could make it then so I went on back to where I was. We landed in San Francisco and we stayed there for about three days and got orientated. Then we boarded a troop train and came back to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

I got to Fort Knox on a Saturday and when I got through checking in, I came home. I saw my family and everything. I was still in uniform. They gave us like two weeks off until I had to go back. The next Saturday was Derby Day. While I was in the army, everybody who heard I was from Louisville, Kentucky asked me if I had ever been to the Derby. I said, no I never have been to the Derby, because I always worked to make money. Since I was still in the army, I said, I'm going to go to the derby. So that first Saturday after I got back, I went to the Kentucky Derby. It was crazy. It wasn't what I expected. It was a lot more than I expected, I put it that way. I didn't win any money and can't even remember who won the derby. We were in the infield and it was crowded and people were doing crazy stuff out there. You didn't see much of the race but you got caught up in the atmosphere of the derby. At least I can say I've been to one derby.

I stayed at Fort Knox until I was discharged. We got there in May and I was discharged in June. I was home about three weeks when my father called. He said, "why don't you come up here to Detroit and live. I can get you a job." I said, "OK." So I went to Detroit to live with my father and my stepmother. He had married again and had other children. I stayed up there about a month and I never did like Detroit. I didn't like the city so one Saturday morning when we were having breakfast, I told pa, "well, I'm going home in the morning." He said, "this is your home what do you mean you're going home?" I said, "well, I'm going back to Kentucky in the morning." So I packed up and that Sunday morning, I got in my car and drove back here to Kentucky. I felt real good.

It shows how the Lord blesses you. When I pulled in to my aunties house, Mr. Boss pulled in behind me and asked me, what are you going to do. I said, I'm going to draw that 52-20. In the army, that was like unemployment. You could get twenty dollars a week for fifty two weeks. He said, "did you ever think about working for the Housing Authority?" I said, "what's housing?" He said, "public housing." I said, "what's public housing?" I'm a country boy so I didn't know about Beecher Terrace, Clarksdale, and College Court. I didn't know anything about those places. So he told me. He said, "I can get you a job. I'm a manager there." He said, "come on and go with me now." I said, "now?" He said, "yes. Let's just go like you are." I thought I might as well go maybe I'll get a job and



please him.

He introduced me to Carol Gowen's, He was the director of maintenance. Mr. Stokes took me there and introduced me to him, telling him that I had just gotten out of the army and wondered if he would give me a job. He said for me to fill out an application. So I filled out the application and he said, "well, we'll hire you." I said, "good, when do you want me to start to work." He said, "how about today." I said, "today?" He said, "yes." I said, "I'm not dressed right." He said, "you go down there to Grand Avenue and Homes, 38<sup>th</sup> and Grand. You go down there and you see the maintenance supervisor down there and he will put you through." His name was Milton Green, he was to be my supervisor.

So, I went down there at Grand Avenue Homes and I had a car. Mr. Green had another man working there. His name was William Downs. What they had been doing was saving up scrap metal. They said, "come on, you are not going to work today. We've got a job for you." I said, "what's that?" They said, "we want you to take this scrap metal to the junk yard and we're going to sell it." I said, "OK." So we piled all of this scrap metal in my car and took it to the junk yard. I think we got fifteen dollars for it. Then Mr. Green took the money and divided it between all three of us. I said, "Mr. Green, I didn't save any of that scrap metal." He said, "we all work here together and we're going to share together."

I worked there until September at Grand Avenue Homes as a laborer. One day Mr. Green said, "Martin, you're being transferred to College Court." I said, "why College Court?" He said, "they've got a maintenance job for you. It's a promotion." I said, "OK." When I was working as a laborer, I was making a dollar an hour at Grand Avenue Homes in 1952. That was the going rate. You worked forty hours a week so you got forty dollars, not quite that much after taxes. So I went to College Court and got about a twenty-five cents an hour raise. Mr. William Sutters was the maintenance supervisor there, so I worked under him. Mr. Sutters was an old man. He knew how to do everything but he didn't have any education. He sort of liked me so he would have me do his paperwork for him because he struggle to do it. Central office was on him because he wasn't keeping his paperwork up. He was doing the best he could, he just couldn't do it. I started doing all of his paperwork and he asked me to make a budget for the next year and he told me what we needed and I added it all up and made a budge.

The people at the Central Office knew something was wrong because they knew Mr. Sutters couldn't do that work. So they asked him, "whose doing your work?" He said, "I'm doing it." They said, "you're not doing this because we know better. You never have done it before, who's doing it?" So he said, "I've got

Martin helping me. He helps me do all of this.” They thanked me and by that time, I had a friend name Robert Brown who lived right down the street from me and had been in the Korean War like I was. He had gotten a job at GE. They had just opened that big factory out at Newburg. So he told me I should come and go to work at GE. He said, “you can make more money at GE than you can at the Housing Authority.” I said, “aw, I don’t know if I want to go to work out there.” Then one day he showed me his check. He said, “this is one week.” I said, “What?” His one week was more than my two weeks. I said, “I can’t believe you all are making this kind of money. I said I’m going to try to get on out there.” So I go out there and make application. I didn’t tell Mr. Sutters. I just told him I had to take off. The guy who interviewed me said, “we don’t have any jobs open except janitorial jobs. With your application, you don’t need to be in janitorial type work.” He said, “we’ll call you when we have a job open.”

Then I had to tell Mr. Sutters that I was going to resign the Housing Authority and go to GE. He really didn’t want me to do it because I was his right arm. So I said, OK, I’m going to go. So I left and I stayed in touch with the people at the Housing Authority and they stayed in touch with me. Mr. Sutters struggled and they finally had someone else to help him get his work and I stayed at GE three years. One day Mr. Sutters supervisor called me and said, “Martin, Mr. Sutters is going to retire the first of the year, why don’t you come back and we’ll make you a maintenance supervisor. But, you’ve gotta take the civil service exam but you can pass that. When he retires, we’ll make you a supervisor.” I said, “A supervisor?” That was in September. I said, “why can’t I stay at GE until the end of the year?” He said, “if you don’t come now, we’ll hire somebody from within to be the supervisor.”

I gave GE my two weeks notice and my foreman just couldn’t understand why I was going back to the Housing Authority. He said he just couldn’t understand and it didn’t make sense to him. He said I was doing a good job and was going to get promoted. I said, “this is not the kind of work I like, picking up here, putting it there, doing the routine things all day long, to me, that’s not me.” I was on the assembly line. I said, “I want to do things where I can be innovative and use my brain. I think I can do better. I might make a little less money going back right now but eventually I will make more.” So, I went back and worked as a maintenance person from September through December. I took the examination and on January 1, they made me maintenance supervisor at College Court.

Well, Mr. Sutters was still there and all of a sudden, now I’m his boss. He took it fine because we worked together before and I did all of the work. I knew his

time wasn't going to be long so as supervisor, I gave him the easy work and he could practically pick out what he wanted to do because he felt like he raised me. He gave me the opportunity and I owed him, and I did owe him. I stayed there for six months and then a job came open at Shepherd Square, which was a larger project. I was a maintenance Supervisor I at College Court because it was a smaller project. They promoted me and made me Maintenance Supervisor II which meant I made more money. I worked up there a couple of years as supervisor. Then they built Lang Homes, the new project. They called it South Wick at first. Of course they tore it down now and built Lang Homes. That was the first development that was integrated. All of the other projects had whites or blacks but Lang Homes was the first project that was built integrated with whites and blacks living together. It was a brand new project.

Everybody wanted Lang Homes because it was a brand new project. One guy said, "man, are you putting in for Lang Homes?" I said, "no need for me to put in because all of you guys are putting in and you all have more seniority than I have. I would be wasting my time putting in for it because I'm not going to get it." So, I didn't even apply for it. Then I got a call one day from Carol Gowns who said, "Martin, I want you to come talk with me." I went to the central office and he said, "We're going to move you to Lang Homes." I said, "What?" He said, "We're going to give you Lang Homes." I said, "What about all the other guys?" He said, "We want somebody down there who will run it right and you would be our best person."

The other supervisors didn't like me too much. They tried to be nice but they weren't nice, even the little white supervisor, because I got Lang Homes. So, I stayed down there and Mr. Broaddus (Husband of Minnie Alta Taylor Broaddus, Daughter of James Taylor) was the manager down there then. They moved him to Lang Homes as the manager. He and I worked good together. We worked there about three years and we had to live on the project then. As a maintenance supervisor and manager, you had to live on your development.

I had married in 1956 when I was at GE. My wife's name is Ann Goodwin Dunbar. Mr. Broaddus and Mrs. Broaddus introduced Ann to me. Mr. Broaddus said, "you ought to be married. Here you are out there fooling around. We've got somebody we want you to meet". So they invited Ann and me to their house to have dinner and that's how I met Ann. When it was time to eat, Ann called and said, "I can't come because I don't have a way." So Mr. Broaddus said, "you've got to go out and pick up Ann." It was all a set up, ha. So I went and picked up Ann then we had dinner and I took her back home. It worked out fine. About six

months later, we started really dating and we dated for about a year and got engaged, then married.

When Ann and I first married, I was working at GE. We lived at Fourth and Iowa, Mr. Victor Perry, he was a teacher at Central and he had a large house out there on Iowa Street. 417 Iowa was the address. He rented Ann and I the upstairs. We had a kitchen, one bedroom and a bath. So when I got to be maintenance supervisor at Lang homes, then I had to move down there.

I would talk to other supervisors, and say, "you know it's not right for us to have to live on the project. We shouldn't have to do this because I want to try to buy me a house, I don't want to live in the project." So I talked to Mr. Broadus and he told me what I ought to do was talk with all the supervisors, sign a petition and ask them if they want to live on or move off. Ask the white and black supervisors, get it all together and bring it back and take it before the Housing Authority Board and see if they won't let you all move off. So I had to take a days vacation to talk with all the supervisors because I couldn't do it while I was working. I got everybody to sign up to ask the Housing Authority to let us move off the development. They took it to the board and the board granted us permission. We had options, we could live on the development or we could move off. If we lived on there, we got scratched for rent rates. Everybody's apartment looked the same. We had the same color, same everything. But as supervisors, we could paint our apartments different colors. We could do certain things that the regular tenants couldn't do.

Ann and I lived in Lang Homes for about three years. Our first Child, Margaret was born while we lived at Mr. Perry's. Our second child, Martin was born while we lived at Lang homes and that was 1960. That weekend it snowed. I mean we had about a foot and a half of snow, which started on Friday night and snowed all day Saturday and Sunday. Ann was due, so I told her I was going to put some chains on my car," knowing you, you'll have this baby with all of this snow on the ground." So I put the chains on my car on Sunday because I was still coming out here to Harrods Creek church and we'd pick up some kids and bring them out to church with us. That Sunday it snowed so bad until they didn't have church, so I went to Mount Lebanon Baptist Church that day because it was open. I came back and put the chains on my car. That Monday morning, Ann got up and she started walking. I said, "Ann, are you alright?" She said, "I'm fine." I said, "don't you have this baby here." She said, "I'm fine, I'm alright." but she kept walking back and forth so I got up and put my clothes on. Of course our bedroom was upstairs.

About six o'clock, she said, "Oh Martin, I think I'm going to have it. I've

got to go. I said, "What?" So I rushed and got the car and put clothes on our daughter Margaret, put her in the car and I said, "Come on Ann you gotta go." She got to the steps and said, "I can't walk down the steps, I can't walk." I picked her up and carried her down those steps. How I did it, I don't know but I did. I put her in the car and took her to the Red Cross Hospital and they came and got her. They told me to go and register and they would take Ann. I didn't even get registered before they came and said, "Mr. Dunbar, I want to tell you something, you've got a son." I said, "A Son, I've got a daughter too." I said, "wait a minute." My daughter was still in the car. So I rushed out to the car. The door was wide open and the motor was running and Margaret was just sitting up in the car as if nothing was happening. She was all calm. So I got her out and we went back up and got to see Martin, my son. She had Martin as soon as we got to the hospital. We barley made it.

We stayed at the Housing Authority until 63 and this house came up for sale. This was Mr. Jim Taylor's relatives that lived in this house. He passed and then she passed and the house was vacant. I think it might have been his sister, it was a real close relative. The man's last name was Calvary, and her name was Bertha. He ran a filling station out about 17 and Chestnut. Anyway, after Mrs. Calvary passed, Mr. Broaddus came to me and said, "you ought to buy this house." So Ann and I looked at it and we bought the house and we moved from Lang Homes here and that was 1963. Of course we made some renovations. Our children came out here and started school and I still had to drive back and forth to Lang Homes as Maintenance Supervisor. Our children went to Dunn elementary school and graduated from Ballard. Jacob school had closed.

While I was at Lang Homes, the federal people came in at Beecher Terrace and they found a lot of things wrong. The maintenance and management wasn't being done right. What they did was come to me and told me, "we want you to move to Beecher Terrace, we're transferring you to Beecher Terrace." I said, "I like it here in Lang Homes." They said, "no, we need you at Beecher Terrace." I said, "OK, I'll go to Beecher Terrace if I can take my right hand man with me." I thought they wouldn't do it. Then they said, "yes, you can take Downs with you." So as a maintenance supervisor, I went to Beecher Terrace. Then they transferred the maintenance supervisor from there to Shepard Square.

At that time, Mrs. Orton was the manager. Pruitt was the manager at Beecher Terrace when they first built it and Pruitt stayed manager there until he died. Then Mrs. Orton, she was his head secretary or whatever. Then when Mr. Pruitt died, they made Mrs. Orton the manager. When they transferred me up there to Beecher

Terrace as supervisor, I started making some different changes and Mrs. Orton didn't particular like it because I think she felt the handwriting on the wall. I was there about three months and they moved Mrs. Orton away and brought Mr. D.W. Beard. He was the manager down at Cotter Homes at that time. Then they made him manager of Beecher Terrace. Mr. Beard and I worked good together and we turned that project around. I mean we did it right. He and I worked together and we talked and counseled with one another. Every morning we would plan our strategy and when the government came back to inspect, Beecher Terrace was "A" number one and we kept it that way. We became friends, plus we worked good together.

I worked at the Housing Authority for thirty-one years. I half way retired from there. I stayed at Beecher Terrace for a while. Then one day they called Mr. Beard to the Central Office. The Assistant Director of Management had passed. He was white. About an hour later, they called me. I said, "Oh Lord, what's going on?" The girls in the office said, "now they want to talk with you." I said, "aw no, what's going on, what did we do?" I got up there and I was all shaking because I thought we'd done something wrong. They said, "everything is OK Martin. We promoted Mr. Beard to Assistant Director of Management and we are going to promote you to Manager of Beecher Terrace. Then Mr. Boot, he was the Director of Manager. He said, "Martin, you don't remember me but you were at Lang Homes when Mr. Broaddus was head of the Alpha Fraternity over the whole United States. Of course he did a lot of traveling." A lot of time, the people at the Central Office didn't know Mr. Broaddus was gone. So Mr Booth would come down to ask Mr. Broaddus if he had a problem and if Mr. Broaddus wasn't there, he'd ask for me. I was the maintenance supervisor and I was sort of managing and supervising.

Mr. Booth said, "Martin, you don't know it but when Mr. Broaddus wasn't there, you did a lot more managing than you realize. We know you can do it and we're going to make you manager of Beecher Terrace." And that was a big deal. Beecher Terrace, at that time, was the largest of the black projects. They had just began to integrate whites but it was mostly 95 % black. They made me manager of Beecher Terrace and I stayed there for three or four years. Then they promoted Mr. Beard to Director of Management and built a new office building, which is Avenue Plaza. Then they started building high rises. They built Dosker Manor and Saint Catherine Court, so they needed other people. Mr. Beard had three Assistant Directors and I was chosen as one of his Assistant Directors of Management. So, I moved from Beecher Terrace to the main office.

I worked hard and went back to school and did a lot of things. I stayed as

Assistant Director of Management, then they moved Mr. Beard, and I was made Director of Management. Then from there, I was made, Deputy administrator of Management Services. Which put me over all of the managers, the review people and the project police. There were only two Deputy Administrators. One was in management and one was in maintenance. Then there was an administrator who was over all of us. One day, I said to myself, I want your job next. I'd worked from a laborer all the way up to a deputy administrator and I was looking for the top job.

What happened, was during that time, Reverend Jesse Jackson was on Kentucky Fried Chicken because he said, "you've got a lot of black people working for you but you don't have any black owners. You ought to have some black people owning some Kentucky Fried Chicken." That came out in the paper. During that time, while I was in school, I did catering work. I used to go to the Louisville Country Club and work on weekends and nights to make money to supplement my salary so Ann and I could buy our house and get things for the kids and stuff like that.

I said, I'm going to apply for a Kentucky Fried Chicken. So I went out to Kentucky Fried Chicken and talked to Walt Simon. He used to be a big basketball star and he was over the minority type things. I said, "Walt, I'd like to own me Kentucky Fried Chicken." He said, "Martin, that's great. Let me show you something. You see that box down there?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You know how many applications are in that box? I know there has to be six or seven hundred applications in that box from minorities. Everybody wants this and we are only going to do twelve, minorities at first. Depending on how that goes, we will expand and do other minorities. You see how many applications are in this box. You want to fill out one?" I said, "Well, I don't have anything to loose. I'd just well throw my hat in the box too."

So, I filled out an application. I didn't tell the people at the Housing Authority what I was doing. It went on for about a year and then one day, Walt said, "you're in the top fifty." I said, "OK, that's cool." Then one day he said, "Martin, you're in the top twenty-five. I said, "Hey, I'm still hanging in there." Then it got down to the top ten and he said, "Martin, we want one of the minorities to have a franchise in Louisville because that's the main office." Then it got to be the top five and then he called me and said I was in the top three. I said, "Out of all that file, I've made it to the top three?" He said, "What you have to do is come out to the Central office on Gardiner Lane, they want to interview you. You are going to be out here all day. Different people will interview you because we want to make

sure we get the right person for the job.” Then he said, “Honestly Martin, I’m going to tell you something right now. Don’t get your hopes too high.” Junior Bridgeman, he was a basketball star at U of L and he had turned pro. Walt said, “Junior Bridgeman has got a lot of money. The word is they are going to give it to him. I don’t want you to feel bad since you’ve gotten this far, but I don’t want you to get your hopes too high.” I said, “OK but you’ve got to go through the motions.”

When I went down there, it hit me in the head. I was talking with the president, the vice president, I talked to a lot of people at KFC that whole day. And I got to the president and I said, “Whose all in the running?” He said, “Well Martin, there are three of you all.” He named all three of us. And Junior Bridgeman’s name came up. He was playing pro basketball at that time. I said, “I know Junior Bridgeman, he’s a good person. If you all give this to Junior Bridgeman, Junior Bridgeman’s not going to work in the KFC store. He’s going to hire him a manager and he’s going to play ball. But, if I got it, I’m going to work it. I’m going to be there every day and every night to make sure that store works right. The guy looked at me and sort of turned red and he said, “Martin, are you going to quit your job? How long have you been working for the Housing Authority?” I said, “thirty years, going on thirty one.” He asked my title and I told him that. He said, “Are you going to quit that?” I said, “If I got the KFC franchise, I’m going to quit my job and I’m going to be a KFC franchise.”

I went through all of the other people and I didn’t hear nothing for almost a month later, and they called me up. They said. “ guess what, you got the job.” They liked what I said. If Walt hadn’t tipped me off, I never would have said that if I hadn’t gotten that tip. I don’t know if he called himself tipping me or if it just slipped out, I don’t know. Anyhow, it worked. I was the first minority to own a franchise in the state of Kentucky. I was the third minority in the whole United States to own a Kentucky Fried Chicken. So we opened at Hancock and Broadway.

We never thought about leaving the Taylor Subdivision, because we liked it. Kids were here, we liked the neighbors. We did some remodeling and added a room on to here. When we first bought the house there were two bedrooms upstairs and a den downstairs and a bath. Then Ann and I added a bedroom, bath and closet. It was small, not very big. Then Ann and I moved downstairs and the kids had the upstairs. We just have the two children. We never once thought about leaving this area. We thought about buying another house in the area but we didn’t, we just stayed here.

We have a Prospect-Harrods Creek Neighborhood Association that meets once a month. It’s not just for everybody on Shirley Avenue. We’ve got Bass,



Duroc, Shirley and Jacob School Road. It's mainly black. It used to be all black but what's happening now, every time a house come up for sale, we get white neighbors. So, now we can feel like a white man used to feel. If they had a house, we would buy it. Now, every time a house come up for sale they buy it. So, we just have to get used to it and we have good neighbors here. I'll never forget, white folks bought a house back here on Shirley Avenue and one day there was a storm. I had a large limb that fell out of my tree and I had a little handsaw and the limb was too large for me to carry so I had to saw it up. I was out there with this hand saw, sawing up this limb and this white lady came by and she blew her horn and I just waved at her. She drove on by to her house. Ten minutes later, I saw this same car come out and her husband was in the car. He parked out on the road and got out of his car. He had a power saw. He got out and cranked up this power saw and said, "get back and let me do it." He sawed up that whole limb, that big limb, for me. He didn't ask me could he do it, he just started doing it. I said, boy that's a good neighbor. When he finished, I thanked him and asked if I owed him anything. He said, "no, you don't owe me a thing. I just want to be a good neighbor." Then he got in his car and went on back home. I told everybody how nice they were.

Since then, we've got quite a few whites that live in this area now. The community organization meet once a month and we discuss community activities and functions. If somebody's not keeping up their property, we talk to them and right now we're talking about lights. Sewers are coming through here and we're dealing with that and neighborhood issues, keeping the place clean and traffic. As we bond together and we get Russ Maple to come out, there are a lot of things we are getting done that has not been done and wouldn't be done if we didn't have the neighborhood association. We meet the second or third Tuesday at the Harrods Creek Church.

The oldest member of the community is probably Mrs. Broadus, at least she would be in that line. We have a lady who lives back there, she's pretty old and someone lives with her.

The big yellow brick farm house back there on Shirley used to be the Wilson's house. Charles and Eugenia Wilson. They had children and Brother Wilson was a deacon of our church. He took sick and he was sick for two or three years. The family took care of him back at his home. There's two boys, Charles and Sylvester and three girls. Mr. Wilson finally passed and they had recommended they take him to a nursing home but the family wouldn't agree to that. Mrs. Wilson took care of him. After he passed, they were so close, I think she lived three months after he passed. I understand now one of the grandchildren's going to

purchase the house.

That house used to belong to the family who owned all of this property, I don't know if it was the Shirley family or not. After the Shirley's passed, there was another family living there for a while. Then Mrs. Betty Taylor, and Mr. James Taylor's son, they lived there for a while. Then they sold and moved out and started a nursing home. There used to be a nursing home, it's still there now. It used to be a different name. Then Reverend Orchard who was the pastor of a church down there on thirty fifth street, he lived in there for a while. I understand there is another minister who lives in there now. I don't know the actual name of the people but the people who used to own most of this property built that house.

Mr. Jim Taylor was a very nice person. Her was a great big man. We called him "Big Jim," that was his nickname. He was tall and big and he had a lot of influence over the whites and blacks in the neighborhood. He had his own business than he ran and he worked a lot of people in the neighborhood. Mr. Taylor was a nice person and he was an aggressive person. He had a lot of ideas of how to make this community grow. He was a good entrepreneur and he was a member of our church. When our church was in Harrods Creek, down there by the creek and after that 37 flood and 40's, it flooded our church twice. Then they decided it was time for us to move our church from off the creek because it kept getting flooded and ruined. He was the chairman of our trustee board and so he found this property where our church is now. He knew the people who owned the property and the church purchased the property. He rented our old church to the white church, Saint Francis in the Field, then we had church in our old schoolhouse, Jacob School, there in the basement, until our church was built over here.

He had great ideas and he knew all of the people and he knew how to get it done, and he did it. Also, when I was younger and I wasn't married, he said, "you ought to buy some property." So he sold me some property on Shirley Avenue right down here, about three doors down. There's a house there now then it was just a vacant lot. I think I paid a thousand dollars for the lot. He carried the mortgage and I've still got that little book. Every week I would pay him money and he would take that little book and deduct that money until I got that piece of property paid for. He sold to other people too. Practically all of us bought lots that way. Some of us had money to pay for it cash but I didn't have that. I was a young person and wasn't thinking about that. But I've still got that little book. I never built on that property because when I married and we were going to build, then we bought this house. Then I sold that lot to Jesse Brooks, he's a minister now. Then he built on the lot.

It is the safety and comradery that I have in this community that makes me

feel comfortable in this community. When we leave here, we don't lock our door, we just feel safe here. Mr. Art Walters, he used to be with the Louisville Urban League, he lives next door. And Mr. Howard, used to be Reverend Howard he lives right there and we're all friends and we look out for one another. If I'm going out of town, I'll say, "hey Mr. Walters, I'm going to be gone for a couple days or a week, or whatever." He'll say, "OK." We're friends, we talk with one another and help one another, it's just a nice place to live.

My son bought a house back there off of Russ Way before he married. He was living in an apartment and he had a cat and it was against the rules for you to have animals in the apartment, so they put him out. I said, "Martin, why keep renting these apartments. You're paying three hundred and some dollars a month for rent, for one bedroom. There's a house back here for sale. You can buy and then you can do what you want to. He said, "Yeah." So I helped him with his down payment and he bought that house back there. Then he married and they lived back there. He lived back there until about two years ago. Martin works at Ford Motor Company and his wife, Janice works for KFC/Tricon. Both of them have pretty good jobs so they decided they were going to move up, ha. So they built a house off of Wolf Pen Branch Road, up there in this nice subdivision. So, when he put his house up for sale, a white family bought his house. He said he needed the money to buy the other house so he had to sell it to whoever he could sell it to. They live in the new subdivision but the Kids always want to come back over here, because they feel free so they want to come here.

My daughter, she lives in a subdivision on Fincastle with her children. She has two children, a boy and a girl 10 years old. When they are home, they will call and say, "Gram can we come over there and play?" So they live in these nice neighborhoods but they don't have the relationships they have in this neighborhood. There are young children in this neighborhood and everybody loves one another here. Don't get me wrong, they're not being mistreated no where they are, but they don't have that same kind of bond that you have over here. I know, every time they call us up and ask if they can come over, they come over and play in the yard and ride bicycles, go back to the park and they meet the kids on the street. They don't have that kind of relationship where they live. Even though each subdivision is integrated, but it's not that kind of bond they have here.

The county built the old Jacob School house but our Lodge Hall owns it now. We bought the school from the county. I honestly don't know how much we paid for it. I'm a member of that lodge now but I don't remember how much we paid for it. My uncle Albert, who is my mother's oldest brother, he worked for the Mahan's,

Howard Mahan and they liked him. We had a lodge hall back further, which wasn't anything compared to this schoolhouse. When they stopped having school there, Mrs. Mahan told uncle Albert, "you ought to move your Lodge. Your Lodge ought to buy that building. He told her that we didn't have the money to buy it. She said, "I will buy it for you and you all can make monthly payments back to me to pay for the lodge." She thought it was important for the community. And Uncle Albert bought the old Lodge Hall and converted it into apartments and rented it out.

Before I went into the service, I joined this Lodge in 1950. It's called, Prospect Lodge 109. You had to be 21 to join and it's all black. Then finally, I had worked my way up to Junior Warden, which is next to the Master. The Master runs the Lodge. We had a master, he was a good master but because Mrs. Mahan didn't put pressure on him he wouldn't pay her like the lodge promised to pay her. He would miss payments because she wouldn't put pressure on him. She wouldn't say, "hey you owe me," she wouldn't do that. When I got to be master and we had our first meeting, I said, "as the Master of the Lodge, there are certain things we want to do. Number one priority, we're going to pay Mrs. Mahan the money that we owe her. We haven't been paying her but I'm going to make it my business, if we don't do nothing else, we're going to pay Mrs. Mahan the money that we owe her."

Uncle Albert went back and told Mrs. Mahan what I said. In about three or four days later, she called me up and said, "Martin, I want to talk to you." So, I went up to her house and we talked. Then she said, "I understand you are the Master of the Lodge." I said, "Yes ma'am, I'm the Master of the Lodge. She said, "I heard what you said, that you were going to make sure that you were going to pay us the money that we lent the Lodge to buy the building." I said, Yes Mrs. Mahan, I meant that. The Lodge should have been paying you all along like we promised. But, that's my priority, to make sure you get your money because you've been too good to us, for us not to pay you." She said, "Martin, I think that is very nice of you but here's something I want to give you." She handed me a piece of paper with our note on it and she wrote on it PAID IN FULL. She gave us that Lodge. She wrote on our note, paid in full and signed and dated it. That's how that Lodge got paid for. These are true things I'm telling you, that actually happened. Of course it's fantastic and the Lodge celebrated and we fixed the Lodge up.

The Senior Citizens meet over there in the little building where we used to go to school. They meet over there once a month. The County Commissioner gave some money to renovate that building for the Senior Citizens. I really don't know how much we owed Mrs. Mahan when she gave us the building because during that time, I wasn't involved in the payment of the bill. Uncle Albert kind of handled all

of that and I don't know how much we owed her but I was intending to make sure we paid her off. It was in the thousands, it wasn't no two or three hundred dollars. It wasn't no chump change, haw, haw, haw. She gave us that lodge and there is an acre and a half right next to the lodge hall. Frank Clay, he's an entrepreneur, he lives back here and he when the people who owned that property died, he wanted that acre an a half and he bought it. He needed to borrow some money so he went to Mrs. Mahan and asked to borrow X number of dollars. I don't know how much it was, and he put up that piece of property as a collateral for the money he borrowed. To make a long story short, Frank did not pay her. Then Mrs. Mahan died. After she died, Mr. Mahan wanted his money. So Mr. Mahan called me up. He said, "Martin, I own that property next to the Lodge Hall and Frank didn't pay me so I took the property. What you ought to do, is your church should buy that property and maybe you could put a parsonage there for your pastor." I said, "OK, Mr. Mahan that's a good idea but let me tell you something, our church don't have the money right now to buy that property but I'll tell you what we'll do. You give us that property and you can put any price you want on it and we will sign a note that we paid you for that and it's a tax write-off for you." He said, "Martin, I never thought about that. Let me think about it."

About a month later, he called me back and said, "that's what I'm gonna do." As of today, the church don't know what he said we paid him for that property. He gave us the property so we didn't pay him. He did it as a tax write-off. We sold that property last year for forty-five thousand dollars. All of the property in this area has tripled or quadrupled since Sutherland built over here. Property has just gone sky high after Sutherland built that subdivision right next to us over there. We had several people who wanted to buy it and we said the church didn't want to sell it because we were holding it. Once we got into our church at Harrods Creek, we're into a bidding program now. We're in the process of putting a family life center over there on the land we own by the church. We said, there's no sense in us keeping the property by the lodge. We could take that money and put it into our building fund program. And we had several offers for it. This guy, Cardinal Tree person, he lives back on Duroc. He heard we wanted to sell it so he came over and offered more than anybody for it. Course he's white and they hated us but we said, we need the money. So he bought the property. That was forty five thousand given to us because we didn't pay for it. The Mahan's gave it to us as a tax writeoff for him.

The neighborhood has been nice. It's a good neighborhood and we're all working together trying to get things done at our church. I'm a member here, a

deacon and a trustee and we're working trying to get this family life center going over here. We love our neighborhood and we're all good neighbors. The Park back there, Hayes Kennedy Park, she was the black lady that lived on Jacob School road, she and her husband lived there. He passed. Mrs. Hayes Kennedy never had any children but she was active in this neighborhood. She was active with the recreation department. During the summer months, we had recreations. She would put money in and would never tell nobody. She would sponsor certain things for the neighborhood. Then we got this park back there and we all rallied around and said it ought to be named after Mrs Kennedy. She was still living when that property dedicated and she came back there and made a little talk. She said, "this is the day that the Lord has made." It was really nice. Mrs. Kennedy was a great christian person and a great person. All she had ever done was domestic work. She had a sister-in-law, Estella Kennedy who was a school teacher.

I don't know what sort of education the teachers who taught at Jacob School had. I know my mother taught over there and she went to Tuskegee. I know all of them had to have some kind of degree to teach over there. I don't think any of them had master's degree like they do now. My daughter, teaches at Central and she has her Master's now. They closed Jacob School in the early fifties. I graduated from Central in 1946 and we were still bussing kids from here to Jacob School, so I think it was early fifties when that school was closed. When they integrated the schools, Ballard High School, used to be down here on Lime Kiln Lane, and that was a white school and Jefferson Jacob was a black school and that's when the Lodge Hall bought it.

We have meeting there up stairs, course we have a basement and we have fish fries and rent it out to anybody who wants to have a picnic, family reunions and stuff like that, because we have a lot of ground over there. The Lodge rents it out to anybody who wants to have a function over there. That's one of the ways the Lodge makes money. That's our property.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
CARRIDDER M. JONES PROJECT DIRECTOR

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Interview with Chester L. Trowel - 6523 Bass Road Prospect, Kentucky - October 25, 2000 - By Carridder M. Jones

My name is Chester Lee Trowel. I was born January 25, 1919 and I am now 81. I have lived in this area since I was four years of age. I was four years of age when I moved here. I moved from Oldham County but it was still in Prospect. My parents are Moore and Emma Trowel. My maternal grandparents are Richard and Laura Ingram. My paternal grandparents was Robert and Hattie Trowel. They lived off of what is now 22. They lived over in that area. They called it Taylortown, Taylortown area. I don't know for sure why it was called that but generally it was somebody's name that they used. That's what I understood. That was over by the church. They made up the church there and it was called Taylortown Methodist Church.

My mother attracted my daddy over here, I think. Because he strayed away, only two of those boys strayed away, the rest of them stayed around there. There were nine children in our family. The oldest one was Eugenia, George, I was third, Chester, Edith, Laura, Emma, Richard, Minnie, and David. Life was decent here, I guess I didn't know any better. I thought it was good. We just played around, didn't go far from home, didn't do much visiting. Course there was enough of us that we didn't need any company.

My mother did domestic work and my father did gardening and things like that on the outside. Mother worked for the Leitz up in Oldham County for a good bit. Of course they have passed on now for the most part. My father did farm work. He worked up and down River Road. I think one of the best jobs he had was a job with the Swabs. They paid pretty well and that took care of us during the depression. The depression wasn't any harder than anything else I don't believe. It was hard all of the time. And still, we didn't know any better, we were happy.

I attended Jacob School. I went from one through eighth. I went to Central when I left Jacob and then I went into the service. I went in May 9, 1942 and came back December 44. I was in the Corps of Engineers. I served in Africa, Italy, France, Germany and Belgium. I lost my brother in the Battle of Bulge in Belgium. This was my oldest one, George. He was in the 761 Tank Battalion you have probably heard about. I didn't lose him right away but he died later. He got back home but he never did get good health again. Course after going to Central, I dropped out because things were hard and tough. So I went into the service and came back out and I started attending college. First at Indiana University Southeast and U of L. I completed my Bachelor's Degree at Eastern University. I received



my Master's from Murray State University. My major was Vocational Ed to begin with. Then of course it became technical later. Got my Master's in Technical Ed. I worked for the State Department of Education for a number of years. At one point, I was Co-op Coordinator. They would train students and I would put them on jobs and I'd supervise them. Later I left the state and went to the County. I started to work at Fairdale as a teacher. I taught approximately 20 years. I left Fairdale and came to Deatrick Vocational down here in town and then I came back and got into Jeffersontown Vocational over in Jeffersontown. It worked out pretty well. I retired in 1985.

When I came home, after I retired, I started working on small engines, lawn mowers and so forth, just for entertainment. Course, after I bought this place, I had too much to do to fool with them. I have two acres here. I was living over off of 42 before I bought this place. I lived on Ken Karla Vista. My son lives next door and I bought him a lot over there. Then these two lots came up for sale so I just decided to buy them and build on them. I was trying to hold them for him. My son designed our home, he's was an architect at that time. Now he's a supervisor of Metropolitan Sewer District.

We had two children and we lost one. That's the youngest one down there in the center. They were both boys. We lost him in 77, right over there within yell distance where we lived off of Ken Karla. Somebody ran them off the road one night. He was with a friend and somebody ran them off the road because you could see where they backed up and looked over and spun off. We knew that to be a fact but they never found who did it. Wouldn't have done any good anyway. It's probably better not to. He had a friend he played football with and they were both injured and couldn't play football any more so they ran around together.

The community really hasn't done a lot of changing, not that I can see. Most of the old families are still there. We are getting a lot of White neighbors. Of course that doesn't bother me. If things are lacking they will get it and if they get it, they can't get it without us getting it.

I knew James Taylor. He was a fine man. I worked for him as a kid. He always paid us more for working than the average fellow did. He always did. He did farm work and we'd bail hay and he would always pay us more. He was a good man. I liked him. His son was just as good. His son was a lot older than I am. He passed away. Minnie, his daughter was older than Jimmy was and she's still living. Minnie was at the library when I was at Central. She was the Librarian there.

I have never thought about moving away from here because I don't want to leave. I moved here in 84. The first house I bought was on Prentice Street, 1555,

Prentice. I always struggled to make my way back out here. My next move was to Crescent Hill, 417 North Hite Avenue. After that I got out to Ken Karla and from there, I built here. We're all together in the James Taylor Subdivision, although this area is not a part of it. We have a neighborhood organization and I've been into that. I think its very good. We look out for the neighborhood, whatever it takes. We meet and discuss it and talk about it and try to get it done whatever is needed. For example we had a drainage problem back there and we got with MSD and they are correcting that.

I was not part of the group that bought the old Jacob School but from what I understand, that school was named for my great grand father, Jefferson Jacob. They just moved in and started calling it Jacob Lane, then when they built the school, it was Jacob School. I don't know if he was a trustee. He was an ex-slave and I'd never seen him. I'm second cousin to Laura Brooks. Her mother and my mother's mother were sisters. I don't know a great deal about the Jacob family background. I didn't get a chance to know much, except I never saw my great grandfather and I did know my great grand mother. She was very old when I met her. Her name was Susan Jacobs. She moved up there with another one of my grand mother's sisters and I never did see her anymore. I think she fell and broke her hip. Course you know what happened after that. She was over 100 years of age. I understand she was 109, I'm not sure. I can't swear to that but I understood she was. Her daughter owned land over there on Jacob School Road, that is my grandmother. Several of the others. They were the only relatives I had that owned land over there. Then my daddy finally bought land over there. That's when we moved down here from Covered Bridge Road.

My father built a house that is still standing. It's on Jacob School road, shucks, I've forgotten the address. You pass the old school building then there is another new house right next to it. His house is the next one down. It's a big old house. Life has been pretty good. I don't know anything else. I guess I know it all don't I?

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