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Jones, Carridder
Collection, 2000-2002. .66 cu. ft.

Interview Transcripts, Jeffersontown, 2000-
2001



An older Alberta Wilson

These and other photographs of Alberta Wilson, her family, and her work as a schoolteacher transferred to the Filson's photo collection. (015PC55)



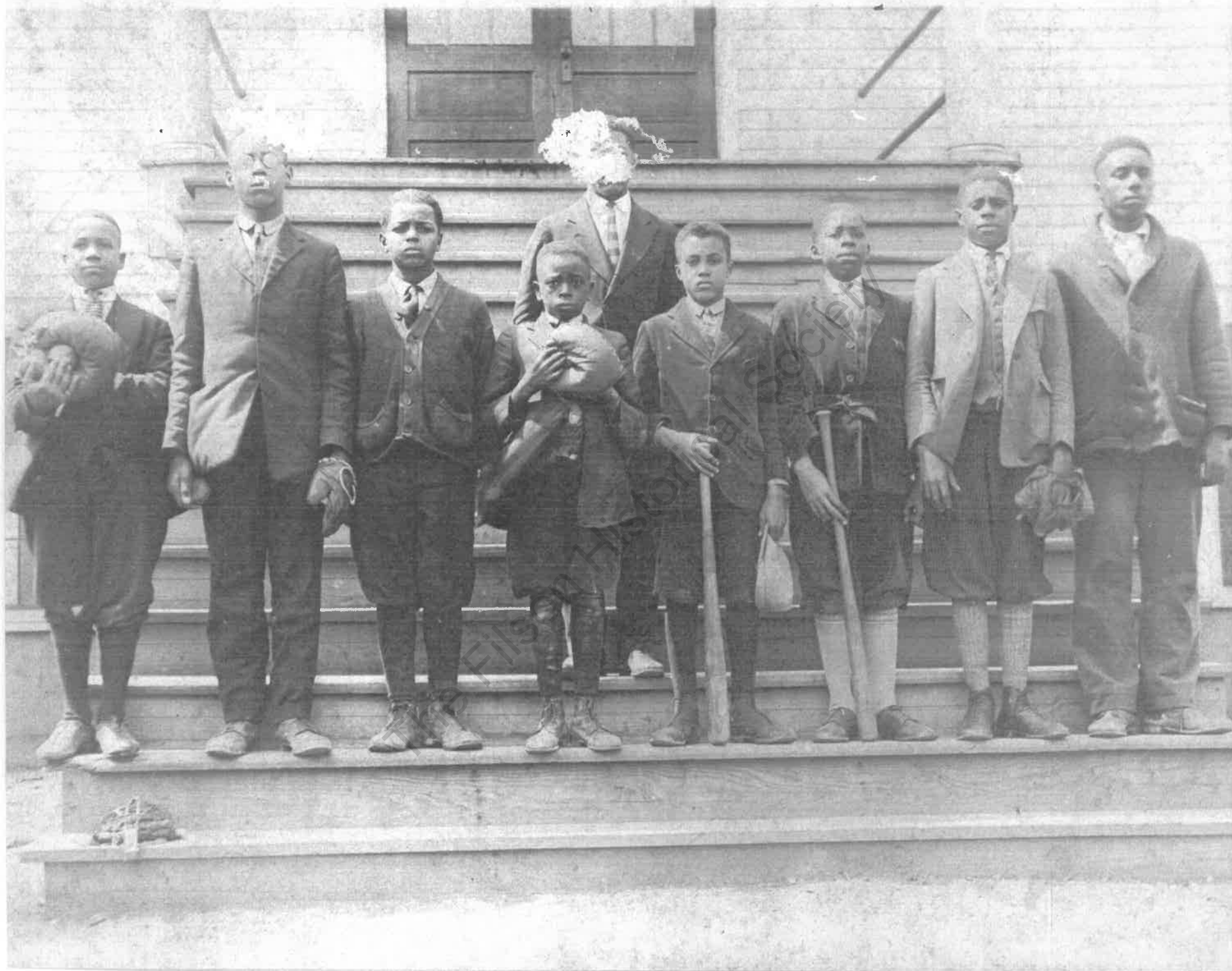
Class with Alberta Wilson and another teacher at Jeffersontown



Jeffersontown School class



Albertra Wilson in the yard at Jefferstown School



Students at Jefferson town School



Students of Alberta Wilson at Central High School

Interview with Linda Wilson - 8709 Lambach Lane 40220 - About Alberta Wilson, aunt & Teacher in Jeffersontown and Louisville school system - November 6, 2000 - By Carridder M. Jones.

My name is Linda Louise Wilson I was born April 16, 1950. I am 50 years old. My mother is Louise Marie Rudder Wilson. She is the daughter of Beatrice and John Rudder, who were originally from Paris, Tennessee. She grew up in Paducah, Kentucky. She is a retired elementary school teacher. She got her degree from Kentucky State in the 40's and her area of study at that point was home economics. She met my father there who is Robert Leon Wilson from Jeffersontown, Kentucky. He was a student who majored in, I guess woodwork shop, that kind of thing, although when I was small we lived in Stanford, Kentucky. My mother didn't work but he taught at the public schools, it was still segregated at that time and he taught math and a little bit of everything else and we lived next door to the school.

I'm the oldest of three daughters. I have a sister Judy Ann Wilson who lives here in Louisville. In fact she lives in the house that was my aunt's house on Billtown Road. She works for the state in the employment area. My younger sister is Robin Marie Wilson and she is an assistant professor of dance at the University of Michigan.

My father did not teach in the Jefferson County schools system. When they began to desegregate the schools, he was teaching agriculture and they told him he would have to go back to school for additional training. His response was, I have three children, that's ridiculous. So he took a job as a postal worker in Louisville and we moved to Louisville at that time, about 1955.

I remember my grandparents, my mom's parents. They lived until they were actually 88. They lived in Paducah at 1120 Clay Street. My grandfather worked in the railroad iron round house and my grandmother did domestic work. They both finished eighth grade and they made sure all of their five children were college graduates. In fact my uncle which is John Earl Rudder who lives in Washington, D.C. finished his law degree at 60 years old. All of the others, my mom went to Kentucky State. Her two sisters, Dorothy and Evelyn both graduated from Dillard, in New Orleans, Louisiana. They were both valedictorians from their high schools so they went there and my uncle graduated from Purdue. Dillard was a historically black school. But my uncle graduated from Purdue and went into the military.

My father's parents, I do not remember very well. My grandfather died when

my father was 13. My grandmother died when I was about three. His name was James Brooks Wilson and her name was Isabel Davis Wilson. She was the cook and he was the butler for Henry Watterson. They lived on the Watterson until somewhere in the 1916-17. I can probably look it up because I have the deed. They bought a piece of property on Billtown Road and that is where the homestead is currently. My grandfather was about 6'2", light complected and my grandmother was 4'6", a twin, a dark brown skinned woman. I don't remember her other than from pictures but I remember smells. The house at that point did not have running water. My aunt did not have the house rebuilt until about 1966-68, when they began to run water on the Billtown Road side. The other side which is actually Watterson Trail, my uncle James Wilson who Sky View Park in Jeffersontown is named for, lived on that side so that's where we got the water. We hauled it back and forth until 1966. Both of them taught at Central High School. And part of that had taught at James Madison and my aunt had taught in J-town. Her name was Alberta Wilson.

She was a 1919, I think, graduate of what is now Kentucky State. As best I know, my grandmother Isabelle was originally from Mount Washington and my grandfather Jim Burke Wilson came from Virginia somewhere around the time that Henry Watterson showed up with a wife. I have not figured out whether she came with them or not but he was about 20 years old when he came to Kentucky from Virginia with his father who worked for Henry Watterson. His name was Pintodd. There is some question about how it was spelled but it was Victor Pintodd or Pintodd Vic. Some of them called him Vic and some called him victor. But it was P-i-n-t-o-d-d. He died in about 1921 so there is that connection there.

I heard some stories about Henry Watterson. My grandfather said he was a snake in the grass. What that really meant I don't know. I know that we have two books. One was given to my aunt. It is a Booker T. Washington Character Building. I think it was a 1902- 1911 edition. There were two books. When she moved out of the house and went to a nursing home, we kept them, we didn't have anything else to do with them. It was signed by Henry Watterson. There is a copy of a will, printed typed where he gave some money to my uncle Henry who was named for him, Henry Watterson Wilson who died probably four years before my aunt. He was 88 and my aunt died at 98. There is also a scrap of paper that was written to my grandmother from Mrs. Watterson about taking care of something, on a half piece of envelope. I kept that too. I'm a pack rat so I kept it. There seems to be some connection and we didn't know what else to do with it so we kept it.

My aunt went to Kentucky State and my grandfather made sure that she went

because education was important to him. He worked with the school board and we found papers and things to that effect. He was a trustee at the Jeffersontown Colored School. I'm not really sure where the school was but there is a picture that we have of the school. My Aunt is one of the teachers and my father is in that picture as one of the kids. I can remember my dad talking about how hard my aunt was and that she was always giving him the blues because his handwriting, and penmanship were not the way she thought it should be. He developed his own penmanship but it didn't look anything like the traditional way you were suppose to write and she used to complain about that. His brother, Milton Hobbs Wilson was two years older than he was. He was also at that school. In fact, all of the kids were at the J-Town school. Evidently my uncle liked to get into a little mischief. I think they all did. They talked about things like my grandmother making different types of meals, especially fruit cake and the kids helping to cut the fruit and putting alcohol so it would soak up, slaughtering of the animals and things like that. Basically they had a really good life although they did not have a lot of material kinds of things, they really did have a lot of good times and playing.

They did a lot of just running around in the area. I passed by it and I know way back there is where the actual property was out Watterson Trail. Playing with the animals, playing with each other and their regular chores, helping my grandmother in the kitchen, things like that. When my father was about 13, he moved to the city of Louisville to go to school. He lived with my uncle Henry Watterson Wilson. He went to Central High School. He learned how to smoke, he learned to do a little drinking, a lot of things he wouldn't talk about. My dad would say, yeah, I did a whole bunch of stuff. If I had been a boy he probably would have told me but being a girl, you weren't supposed to know those things.

My aunt, every Sunday or every couple of sundays, we would go out there and have dinner at Alberta's house. There were always things there that would remind you of the rest of the family. She didn't have children and she didn't marry. In fact it wasn't until much later in her 80's and 90's when I began taking care of her and helping take care of her business that I learned that I learned that you couldn't get married and teach. There was a gentleman that she was quite fond of. He had been to visit her and he caught like pneumonia and died. So she really never chose to marry. Up until the 1950's in certain parts of Kentucky you couldn't be married and teach. In fact, when my parents got married, she continued to teach under her maiden name. Which was a fairly common practice until she got pregnant with me. So she had to do something different.

My mother taught in Mount Sterling. My father when he got out of the

military was teaching in Standford. Prior to that he was a chicken farmer. He raised chickens. My parents were 32 and would have been 33, my father was born in July and my mother was born in September and I was born in April. So they technically were 32 but they were going to be shortly 33. They got married after the war. They had met each other at Kentucky State. My aunt attended Louisville Municipal College for additional training. She went to Hampton for additional training, and she went to Tuskegee for additional training. From what she told me, when they started integrating the school, some of the board of education did not want to give black teachers the same kind of credit for their course work. Like at Municipal, black faculties were paid at one salary whereas white faculty were paid at another salary. I think there were some salary kinds of issues. It helped when she got additional training but there were some pieces of paper that showed that she had to resend stuff in, resend stuff in, in terms of her certification. There were parts of it they did not want to accept and that was very aggravating to her. She taught sewing and tailoring.

When she started teaching at J-Town, she taught basic things, basic writing, reading and all of those things but she had the additional training and when she went to Madison Jr. High School we've got a partial...In all honesty I believe that being pack rats runs in my father side of the family. There's a year book that has pictures of her and my uncle and some of the kids from that particular point. When she left there, she went to Central. I don't know how long she taught at J-Town but I know she was there for a while. I would say probably six or seven years. Most of her stories were about my uncle and my dad. They couldn't write and they just didn't do what they needed to do. They talked about her being hard. She was only 4'8" and so they called her shorty.

She was very, very strict and very, very stern. You didn't mess with her. They dealt with her that way being their sister. She was 17 years older than my father so he was a baby when she went off to college. When she got out of college and graduated, my grandfather was deceased and so she moved in with my grandmother and helped take care of her. She helped with the income. There is a bookcase that she bought when she first started working and it is still in the house. I originally had hoped to get it but my sister said, it's in the house so it stays. My sister has the house because when my aunt went into the nursing home at 94, there was about a year that she lived in the house by herself after my uncle had died. She fell one night and she couldn't get up. She had Rheumatoid Arthritis and she decided she needed to go to a nursing home. That was the home place.

In about 1966, she had the house torn down and rebuilt because it was

basically four rooms and there was a little sun porch off the area and no running water. So when they got running water, she had the house redone and the house now has a bath and a half. There was a well that got polluted. As a kid, I can remember going out pumping water so we would have fresh water. Once it got polluted, we went across the back to where my uncle lived, which when you saw the property it went straight back from what is currently Watterson Trail to what is now Billtown Road, or it used to be called Old Seatonville Road. That was their whole complete piece of property.

The back end my Uncle James lived on and on the front side she lived on. The back end got water and plumbing and the other one didn't. As kids we walked back and forth. She had these big old tanks that she used to cook the water or to take a bath. To use the bathroom there was an outhouse. The outhouse was found and there was a cement shed that her brothers built and its still stands. There was a doge that was my grandmother's favorite, called Rover, which I didn't care for dogs. My uncle Henry raised hunting Beagles. The guys, my uncles, my dad, they hunted and fished. They were interested in education. They were very, very big on that. My aunt Alberta worked for the Bickle family. If you go out to Taylorsville Road, when you get to Taylorsville Road and Hurstbourne. There is a piece of property but they are moving the original house. That was the Bickle home. She worked for them during the summers and she was a cook for them and whatever else domestic. There are old cards where she traveled with them when she was younger. There are cook books and how to fix things and that kind of thing. She liked travel. They traveled to Montreal, all over Canada into a little bit of Europe but primarily in Canada. They went up into mount Boston area, Newport News and all up in there. She used to talk about that. She thought that was just wonderful. She always pushed getting an education. In our family a college student was a given. There was no such animal that you would not do that and that you wanted to travel and see the world. My father was stationed in Liberia so we have things like two carved bookends from Liberia, made in 1945 Or 40 something. They were sent back to my grandmother that sat in that book case. There is what looks like a bracelet that is ivory. One of my uncles or daddy sent it back to her. We've got some post card, the old pictures and a piece of, I guess it is like a tintype. It is a piece of wood with a picture imprint of her on it, of my grandmother. We have pictures of my aunt Alberta when she graduated from college and up through the time that she left.

It was interesting, and we had started keeping the history of our people. My cousin had done that with my mom's family so we started trying to do the same

thing. We learned that my uncle, one uncle jumped over and nobody ever heard from him again. He was able to pass as white and so he did. I don't remember his name. I don't think she actually told me but she wasn't too thrilled that he did that. The other brothers, there are at least two sets of cousins from brothers that are still alive. They would have been her first cousins. The funny part is that none of them had kids either. A couple of them were teachers so education was a really big thing and traveling and learning from people. My aunt had this way of talking. In fact all of them did. They called them "crackers" and "Hoosier." My Aunt's favorite was "yaps" when she was referring to white folks.

The way the house was when we grew up, there was this huge farm across the road and you saw cows and things. Now where the farm is, is the post office. There was a house next to us on this side and that lady died. Eventually they tore the house down. When they came through to put in Ruck Regal Parkway, they took the property. They took that lady's property and then they took my uncles property, all of it. Now you can't tell where his house sat. That's where it was, right where Ruck Regal cuts through between Billtown Road and Watterson Trail by the cemetery.

My grandparents got married in Indiana, over in New Albany. I've never figured out why. I asked my aunt, she said she didn't know but that's where they got married. She was a twin and they were from Mount Washington. I don't know if they were free or what. But I believe they were free from the way she talked. They were educated, so you find things like books that were given to them from the Wattersons and pieces of demitasse cups and teas and things like that. We have a ring that was my grandfather's. I haven't done anything with it because nobody can really wear it. He used to be repair and its still got two rubies in it that was his and its got his initials in it but the shanks are worn and there's not much we can do with it. They keep saying I'm going to have to redo the whole thing but I'm not going to do that. We have a necklace that was my grandmother's. It's actually a pen and necklace at the same time. It a diamond and pearl, probably ten years ago, I had someone give me a price on it and they said then it was about two thousand dollars. It's probably worth a little bit more.

Based on those things, those were things that my aunt kept that were my grandmothers. I got to learn about those because I started taking care of her. Right after she retired which was about 1966, she stopped driving. She stopped driving because she was in a really bad car accident. She just decided that she had a heart condition and she wasn't going to drive. She then relied on her sisters and brothers to help her get around, and friends. She had students, the day that she died, the

week before, some of her former students who came to see her on a regular basis was there. They did like church. They sang songs and read from the bible. It was really interesting that those women stayed with her the entire time. She did work at the Red Cross and did the Red Cross Chapter at Central. We have old pictures of her doing that. This was while she was at Central. She worked with a woman by the name of Gladis Spain. Gladis taught art and she designed jewelry. So there is sort of an unusual piece that has a purple stone and its silver that she used to wear. It's at the house.

They all did things with their hands. She sewed, my dad did woodwork, my uncle did leather tooling, my uncle Henry did leather tooling. My uncle Milton was a mortician, my uncle Sylvester was uh....I don't know exactly what he did. He always smoked a pipe and went fishing. He liked to go hunting and his house which is right there at eighteenth and Broadway still stands, although nobody is living in it. My Uncle James, as I said earlier, made sure there was a place for black kids to play in J-Town. So he made sure and got the land for what was Sky View. When Ruck Regal tried to have it named after him, we put up a stink so he backed off. That was a couple of years ago because his wife Viola was still alive. I want to say it was 97-96, somewhere around there. I was just furious, how dare he. I can remember as a kid, my aunt would go over there some times in the evening, or we'd go over there in the evening. There was a big sand box. You could play in the sand or you could throw horse shoes. There was usually somebody's game going and they all sold popsicles and hot dogs. A lot of time we would go over there and my aunt would be over there or my aunt Vi would be over there and uncle James was always over there. So that's what we would do in the summers. During the rest of the time of the year, on sundays, Christmas or holidays we were usually there. When you were there, you would have my aunt Alberta and all of the brothers and their wives. She would teach you things like the appropriate ways to set the table. You don't put the ice tea in first. Then you have to be very careful because then it gets too much water and you'll have to pour it out. How to make the bread so it would stay hot. She used to do apple dumplings. We never saw a whole lot of things like chitlings and stuff. You might do a lemon meringue pie or we'd get my aunt to make apple dumplings because he liked apple dumplings.

When we emptied out the house, we found lots of things that were actually my grandmothers. The chairs that you saw in the picture, that's my grandmother and my grandfather and the kids, except for my father who wasn't born yet. I have those chairs. They are Queen Ann chairs. They are old. The only difference is they have been re-upholstered because originally they were leather. Now there is some

different kind of fabric on them. There is a set of four. We have a platter that was a pig platter, a little piglet platter. It's huge. We've got this toilet thing that I didn't know that it was my grandmother's. There is this big pot that she made jams and jellies in. This thing is about two feet deep and about eighteen inches wide. I have no idea what to do with it but it's sitting in my garage. We kept things like crazy quilts. My grandmother liked to quilt. So we have some quilts that she did, 1932, says Bill Wilson. We've got a crazy quilt that's hers. It stays pretty wrapped up because some of the fabric is really delicate and it's beginning to try to disintegrate. A crazy quilt is made of fabrics like velvets, satins and silks. Things that are not really substantial and they do a lot of designs on them and embroideries. It's more decorative than substantive is the way I look at it. She did that, we have that. We have a couple of pieces of German porcelain so we went through stuff. Anything that had a mark on it or that was ugly, we kept. There was one particular piece, and it is the most God awful ugly thing. It's got impressions and yellows and greens and flowers. I took it to be appraised and they appraised it for about four hundred dollars. That was funny. My sister said what we ought to do with it? I said it's ugly. She said OK it's ugly so that means it's gotta be worth something. I said OK. It's sitting in my house. It's just God ugly. She was very happy with very pleased with it. We've got two other pieces of a different maker, but also German pottery that they appraised at about four hundred dollars. I believe my grandmother got those from the Wattersons. A couple of other pieces, like we have a little demitasse cup that my grandmother kept but was given to my aunt from the Wattersons. A little bitty thing. We've got that and there are a couple other pieces that she has. When she was in her early eighties, my grandmother stuff she had in one place so she started telling me, this is this and this is that. We've got a jar of nothing but buttons. It's about eight inches tall that my grandmother collected. It's still at the house. We have a couple of rolls of yarn, and rope that my grandmother collected, she told me yes that's what it is. We just didn't throw it away. It's still there. We still have the family bible and all of those kind of things, and what she had written in it and so forth.

What we've tried to do is explain but she was pretty good about that, she had it all marked, save, this is for this. She even laid out what she was going to be buried in. Unfortunately, by the time she died, she was substantially smaller than the size fourteen that she was most of her life. She was very short but she had a full bust. She talked about how much trouble her mom had trying to find clothes to fit her because she had a full bust and she wasn't very tall. My aunt had this way of doing things. She would watch and if she saw something that she wanted, clothing

whatever. If she thought that she could reproduce it she would. Then she would show you. I can remember going to stores with her. She would say, OK, the difference between this shirt or this jacket and this jacket is they're used this type of stitch and this is that kind of stitch. When I wanted to have something made, she would go with me and say, Ok you want this fabric. This fabric is not going to hold up because the weave is loose, it's going to snag, or how to make mens clothing. Certain types of gabardine get shiny if you wear it a lot. The different weights.

It used to be that we spent a lot of time going down to Bears because she did all of the sewing. I have my deb dress and prom dress. She made some of our first clothes out of organdy and all kinds of stuff. We were all matched, the three of us. She did those kinds of things for us all the time and we grew up thinking it was normal for having people to sew. It never looked like, as my mother would say, "mammy made." She sewed too but she couldn't sew the same way my aunt did. My sister still sews a lot of her clothes. I don't quite have the patience. My aunt did quilts. She embroidered. My grandmother embroidered. I didn't learn that skill. She was very good about sort of spoiling us. She didn't marry, but she was very strict with us. So when we went out there, there wasn't candy and those kinds of things. You might get fruit, which we weren't crazy about, but we'd get fruit. She'd comb your hair which would be totally different than the way my mother would. She didn't do that very often. She bought my sister a doll house. My sister still has that doll house. It's sitting up there in the attic.

She took us on trips around town, if we were going to the store or things like that. As she got older, she had two things that she loved. She drank coffee all the time, ice coffee. That was one thing that I remember. She drank ice coffee, put ice in it. She could have coffee all day long. She had this refrigerator and it was a nice refrigerator. You could step on the little pedal and it opened the door. We used to think that was neat. She had this old, old stove that was an antique. It had been my grandparent's and we had hoped to keep it. There was a wood stove at one point but this was one of those chamber stoves. My uncle got in and cooked and cooked and he warped it. When we moved her out, I tried to see if anything that could be done with it and they said, mmmmm. So what we did, anything that we didn't want, we put up for auction.

A friend of mine had said she had done that. She is 88 and anything they couldn't use or divvy up for grand children and nieces and nephews went up for auction. That's what we did with just about anything that we didn't know what it was. We had old books and things like that. I hate to admit that a lot of that stuff is still in the house. I really don't know what we are going to do with it. My aunt was

a saver and she marked things that said, save, keep. She was very frugal but if she wanted something and it was high quality, high caliber stuff, she would just wait. I can remember there was this particular coat. It was at Hytkens and she watched that thing until it went down. That's when she got it. It was a beige coat with a fur collar. When she moved to the nursing home, that coat was still there. We gave it to Good Will. She's so short, there are not a whole lot of people who could wear her things. She taught us, if you want something you wait and take your time. She said she got that from her father, terms of good caliber stuff, you just have to wait and figure out and do that kind of thing to get it. With some time, you can have those things. That's pretty much the way we grew up with her.

My education is, I graduated from Louisville Male High School in 68, went to Ball State University in Muncie. Got a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree from there, currently a doctoral candidate here at U of L. I will end up with two Masters' Degrees. My major is Elementary Education. The only thing I knew is to teach. I liked chemistry but I didn't know what to do with chemistry. I knew people who taught school. My mother taught school, my dad taught school, my uncles and aunt taught school so teachers, that's one thing. They always said if nothing else, that's something you could always fall back on. So I got an elementary education teacher's certificate. But I didn't teach elementary, I went into higher education, working in student affairs, student personnel areas, primarily with minority types of initiatives. Academic support service types of things.

I was the superintendent of Personnel for six years at the Transit Authority of River city. I worked in Personnel Training for the City of Louisville, under Harvey Sloan and I worked with Vermont America for a period of time doing benefits. So I have sort of done the human resource's area. I got interested in multicultural education, probably from graduate school because I worked with a woman who is still my friend, who was heading up the international center. So, I got to meet a lot of students. She is 88. It's just always been interesting. I think the other part of it is my dad was stationed in Liberia, in the army. I remember him talking about how much he enjoyed that. In fact, we have a book that he had over there. He was there when Liberia was just starting. The material and stuff that was sent back and my aunt collected clippings and things so we have some of that stuff. There's some old books from that time. That was just something that you were suppose to do.

As a kid, my dad decided, OK, we're going to Los Angeles. We went to all of the monuments and museums. That was like, that's what you're suppose to do. When the state fair was here, we went to all of the agricultural stuff. My mom used to can so we looked at the canning. We looked at the animals, the corn the tobacco.

In fact, I find myself still doing that. I can't convince too many people to go with me into the animal section but that was what you did first and foremost. During the spring, there was the KEA. This was the association of all the black teachers. They used to come to Louisville and they would have this big association meeting. They would all go do stuff and I just remember all of these people being teachers. My aunt was involved in the organization too. That was the way they kept up with people, kept up with their friends. That was sort of like the norm to me, I thought everybody did that. I subsequently learned differently. A lot of those friends, they kept most of their lives.

My aunt wasn't as involved in the black community as she was related to the school. She was very active with the Red Cross and the things in the school and teaching the kids. When she taught, she not only taught home economics, but she taught tailoring. The tailoring and that piece were sort of a separate vocational piece, so that was like half of a day. My aunt could make anything with a pattern. She could make a pattern and she could make things without a pattern. Like you go in and you buy a Vogue pattern. I'd pick it out and she'd say, no, you're going to have to do this, this and this. This is not as easy as you think it is. I'd say. Ok and I would leave that alone. She could make men suits. She basically helped send my dad through college at Kentucky State. In fact, there's this coat she bought for him that he kept. We ended up giving it to my sister because she was the only one who could wear it without having to cut the sleeves. He was like 5'11". I'm putting it on and it's got my arms all crooked up, so she ended up with that. There are still some things of his at the house. There's still some things of my aunt's at the house.

My uncle James taught at Central too but he taught woodwork. She wanted this particular, what they called shadow boxes, a box that you could put things in. She had priced them and it wasn't in her ballpark. So, my uncle made her two and we have those. What she had in them was these porcelain like flowers and birds, those things. My sister has those and the book case that were hers. I didn't realize they were valuable, I just thought they were weird. I remember her saying, these weren't the exactly real, real ones but they were what she could handle. I couldn't tell the difference between them and the others. I can remember going and seeing her price one that was like a rose and different ones. When my uncle Milton died, she had cashed in her life insurance to take care of him in the nursing home. She grew up with the responsibility of taking care of her younger siblings who were all brothers.

I can remember her telling me things like, you don't need a man if you've got to take care of him, you should be able to take care of yourself and have your own

money. You shouldn't have to listen to a man if you don't want to, taking orders. She was very, very independent and very, very strong willed. Even up until the time she died, she was in full control. She decided at the last that she didn't want a funeral. She said she wanted to be cremated because all of my friends are dead so it doesn't matter. So we did. She pretty much laid out how she wanted everything done. Even when she died, a number of her students came and gave tribute. It was a wide range of ages. Some of these women are in their 60's, and some are in their 40's. She basically took care of her parents, took care of her brothers and she lived in the house after her mother died. Everybody willed her the house for \$1.00. Which did not necessarily go over with all of the sisters-in-law's, especially my mother. She didn't like that.

We now have the property. She gave the property to us. My sister lives there. It's on about a third of an acre. It is a nice piece of property. I guess education was sort of a given. You were supposed to do those things, be careful with your money, plan what you want to do and take care of each other. She also stipulated not to be the one as the oldest to get stuck with taking care of all the other sisters and brothers because that's what happened to her. She always told me my sisters should be able to take care of themselves. There are just little things. I can remember asking her, she never really talked about my grandfather a lot and I remember asking her why didn't she. She said, 'I don't know that I didn't, I just assumed you knew'. I was like, nooo. That's when I learned that my grandfather was well respected in the community, partly because of his station being a butler and connected to Henry Watterson.

I started doing some research myself to find out more about him and his parents. His mother was dead when he came to Kentucky. When you find him on the census, you see him connected to Henry Watterson with his father. I believe I found him on the 1920 - 21-census, somewhere in that area. My grandfather died shortly after that. He was attached to Watterson. I haven't been able to figure out whether he came with the wife or some other way they showed up with Watterson. Because they show up with the family once he married. I went back to look at some material on Watterson at the Filson but the kind of material they had there didn't give me that information. Because he wasn't born in Kentucky, it simply says Virginia, and his mother was deceased. I did find her name on his death certificate so I did get that. Now I just have to figure out from there. I'm guessing they probably came with Mrs. Watterson because that would have been the normal kind of behavior at that point.

My grandmother did not come with him because she was already here in

Kentucky. I don't really know that much about her and I haven't done an investigation on her. I just know she was born in Mount Washington. She was a Davis and a twin. They had a twin brother name Charlie Davis. All of his kids are now deceased. He was a real rogue, as my aunt would say. He was into everything he was big enough to do. With my grand father being big on the education, it was really sort of interesting because my aunt talked about how important it was to him that she got an education. She was the first to go to college. She can remember him driving her up to Kentucky State so she could go to school and making sure she had what she needed to go. That was a big thing for him. Some of that may have come from the environment that they were in, in terms that the Watterson's being educated. I get the impression that it came from them as well. Some of them may have had reinforcement but they got that on their own.

My grandfather was a trustee and all of the kids went to J-town. We've got their report cards, and pictures of them and things like that. It's been interesting looking at them but my grandfather was about 6'2", very light complexion, had this square chin, sort of like mine, my father had that same square chin. My aunt was crazy about her parents, and certain types of traditions like fruit cakes. My grandmother made fruitcakes. My dad didn't make fruitcake but he would buy fruitcake. He would soak it in bourbon, and he would start soaking that bad boy around Thanksgiving.

He had that same looking around until he found what he wanted. He wanted a crystal wine set and he looked and looked and looked until he found the one he wanted. He got it from some older woman that he knew through being a postman and we have two colored and clear glass wine decanters that are my grandfather's. My aunt talked about my grandfather and this other guy making wine around the holiday and drinking it from this because the red is about 6"-8" tall it's got a stopper and if you flip the stopper the other way, it's a glass. So we have both of those pieces and I grew up looking at those in a built in cabinet that set in the kitchen at the top. All the way at the top shelf. Nobody could reach it. It just sat there. So when she had the house redone, she put it in the cabinet and that's where it sits now. You don't use it. It's just sitting there.

There are other kinds of pieces like silver ware that was my grandmother. Some of those, one is, my aunt called it a jelly spoon and it's silver and gold on the outside, but it was given to her as a wedding present. I spent this last couple of years just asking lots and lots of questions. What's this, where did this come from, what did you do with this? Everything was supposed to be a place setting of twelve. So when I got married, my mom said, you don't do twelve anymore. She had a

whole place setting and my sister got six and the other sister got six. She was very aware of all of the appropriate etiquette. We have old books that say what the etiquettes suppose to be. You set the table, note that the dinner fork and salad fork and you need to know this fork and this fork because you should never go anywhere and be embarrassed because you don't know which fork to pick up and which spoon. She pushed that and what to do with the finger bowls because evidently, the Bickles did some very serious entertaining. She wanted to make sure we knew what to do and how. So, when we had dinner over at her house, she'd say, nope, the water glass goes here, the tea glass... she would make you go back and redo it. She also had this habit, if you were stitching, and making a hem, and put in a stitch that was not perfectly straight, you took that bad boy out and you would take it out over and over again until it was perfectly straight. That's when I found out that you get this gage on the sewing machine. I made a scarf and I know I took that stitch out seven times. "It's not straight," ugh. She was a stickler about those kinds of things and that's the way she taught her classes.

I can remember hearing people talking, 'yeah she used to make you take those stitches out if they weren't perfectly straight'. She was a tough little old lady. A tough little cookie, yes she was. She was tough. They were well respected in the community. My uncle's history is still there because the park says, "Dedicated to James Wilson." Although, most people who go over there and play softballs don't know who James Wilson is, or that he was a black man. When you go to see the kids play softball, you very seldom see a large number of African Americans over there in J-Town. If you take Watterson Trail, as you go down the hill, its back off of what they call Bluegrass and it's over there. They do all of these softball tournaments all year round.

I remember there were all of these houses where black people lived over in that area. Now, all of that's industry. There are occasional houses but it is pretty much industry. There's a natural gas place over there and it's hard to imagine that was a place where black folks lived and that's where blacks had to go because there wasn't anyplace else in J-Town for the kids to play. They went to church there and there's a cemetery and my grandparents are buried in that cemetery. I don't know the name, all I know is it's the cemetery next door to First Baptist Church. It's on that corner right there. My dad used to go over but I don't like cemeteries, so I haven't been over there to look but I know that's where they are buried. There are a couple of guys that maintain it. After my uncle stopped hunting, he decided not to keep the dogs. We could play with the dogs until they got a certain age, then you couldn't play with them anymore because, then they weren't any good for hunting,

beagles. Then he got rid of them, and he had a bunch of old guns. I've got those too. Don't ask me what I'm going to do with that stuff.

The Filson Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
CARRIDDER M. JONES - PROJECT DIRECTOR

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

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Interview with Richard F. Greathouse, MD - Re: Jeffersontown/Rev. Thurmond Coleman - July 20, 2001- By Carridder M. Jones

My name is Richard F. Greathouse, that's my full name. I was born July 28, 1923, which makes me at the present time 77. I was born in Wilmore, Kentucky, the home of Asbury College. My mother, for years was Chairman of the Speech and Dramatics Department. This is a very religious school in Central Kentucky. They also have a theological seminary there.

My Mother's name was Gladys Greathouse, my father's name was Robert Greathouse. He, for years during the depress and all when people were suffering, he had a steady job with the Post Office. He was a mail carrier and worked in the Post Office for probably forty or fifty years. Then he went into real estate and selling real estates, houses, farms, bluegrass farms and so on. He was 99.7 years old when he died. My mother was 84 when she died. She taught later at Taylor University up in Upland, Indiana which is another religious school. They came from a very religious background.

I had one sister and her name was June Dickinson. She married a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary and he loved to fly. He was in the Navy and he also carried a dual duty. He was on an aircraft carrier and he was the Chaplain and also a flight instructor. So, he conducted the services plus flying all weather interceptor squadrons in the Navy fighter planes. Unfortunately he was killed on active duty. It was right after the war. He was in the war but he survived that and he got killed after the war was over, training young fliers.

I went to grade school at Wilmore elementary. Started out at Asbury College and then I went into the Navy when I was very young , WWII. I was 19, went into the Navy at 19. I went to Boot Camp at Great Lakes and from there I went to Hospital Corps School in Foregan, Idaho. From there I was sent to the U.S. Naval Hospital in Seattle. I went into the hospital corps because I was going to go to medical school. When I was about 12 years old, my sister and I had been out to get a Christmas tree. It was snowing and bad weather. When we came in, after that, I got pneumonia. Our old family doctor had gone to school at the University of Louisville Medical School. He came out and all they had in those days was sulphur drugs. He said, you got pneumonia. I don't know if this will work or not but that's all I've got. So, he, I think saved my life. I really looked up to him. I thought he was wonderful. If he saved my life, I could do the same thing he did. So when I

was in high school, set my goal to go to medical school. The war interfered with that.

I went from the Naval Hospital in Seattle to the U.S. Marine Corps. They had to provide a corpsman, medical corpsman which was a terrible job. You had to live with them in the fox holes, mud holes, in the jungle and everything. It wasn't like a ship. I was stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. Then I shipped out to Pearl Harbor and then from there I went to Guam. I was on Guam, the island of Guam with the Fleet Marine Force Pacific. Also, the Third Marine Division. I was there in early 1945 and I left there after the war in 46, January 46, came home.

I took care of some people that had been shot up and suffered injuries and stuff like that. Then of course I wanted to go to medical school so after I came home, I went back to the University of Kentucky, which had a larger variety of subjects than Asbury had. I had taken most of the basic medical subjects at Asbury, chemistry and physics and so on. I went to UK and I got to do some things that broadened my prospective, which I think all doctors should do. Not just stick their nose in a physic or chemistry book.

I took Kentucky History under Thomas Clark. Dr. Clark was a wonderful professor and I studied Kentucky History. I did my thesis under him on, The Tobacco Growers Cooperative. Which in those days, the farmers were having trouble selling their tobacco so they had to get a cooperative, almost like a union. I did my thesis on it. I went to UK then I was accepted in medical school here. I only applied for one medical school. I knew where I wanted to go and that's where I applied. That was Louisville here. So then in 1947, I started in medical school and moved here. At that time I was married to a gal from Lexington, Martha Mann.

I got married in 1945 at the Seattle Naval Hospital. Too young to know better. I came home, my wife and I moved to Louisville to go to medical school. Then when I finished medical school in 1951, all during that time I stayed active in the Navy. They sent me for example, to Turkey, Palestine and over in Hypha. Over there where they were having that war. They were shooting up the U.N. and we had to go down there and evacuate those people on our Carrier. They killed two of our boys and we brought them home.

It was at that time that I came to realize there would never be peace in the Middle East. Because, the Jews and Arabs will fight until the end of time. They are going to do it. Now, I don't care who they send. They had a wonderful man there, named Count Folk Bernadot, who we met at the hotel. We took all of that stuff up to Rhodes, a Greek island up in the Aegean Sea and flew a company of Marines and patched it all up... fixed it all up. We were there about three weeks and Count

Bernadot negotiated a peace...a truce. So, we took all of that stuff back down to Hypha and dumped it. We hadn't been home a month till they killed Count Bernadot, the mediator in 1948...the U.N. Mediator. It was tragic. Right then, I decided those people will never resolve their difficulties because they are religious difficulties. They're going to fight until the end of time and they can send Jimmy Carter...he tried and he didn't succeed. I don't know who else tried, maybe Reagan or somebody. I don't think he made much of an effort.

I came back and finished up Medical School but I would go in the summer and do work for the Navy. I went to the Naval Academy one time and took care of Alexander Hague. The NATO people came into the Naval Academy for a meeting. Took care of them. I went to the American Cup Race in Newport and took care of Ted Turner when he won the boat race up there. There are several things I did for the Navy. Then I retired from the Navy in 1984. I just couldn't keep up with the Navy, the Corner's office and the medical practice. It was impossible.

After I got out of Medical School, went back to Lexington in 1951 to Good Samaritan Hospital and did my first year residency there. Then I went back from there...I decided I wanted to do Pediatrics. I came to Children's Hospital in Louisville which had a marvelous training program. I spent several years there. Worked through the Polio epidemic, took care of a lot of kids. At one time, I had 50 people in respirators on one ward at the Old Louisville General Hospital. That's how bad Polio was in those days. Thank God Dr. Salk came along and I got to go to Pittsburgh and meet him and worked with him for a couple few weeks. Came home and we started giving the Polio shots. It stopped the epidemic. We gave them out in Jeffersontown. We went to the high school there...Jeffersontown High School and gave Polio shots...polio immunizations. It stopped the epidemic and stopped a horrible disease. Then Sabin vaccine, the oral vaccine came along.

Then I decided that I would come back here to practice because I liked Louisville and it was close to the Medical School and I could stay current on things. At that time we did not have a medical school in Lexington. UK only got their medical school after that. University of Louisville is one of the oldest medical schools in the country. I came here because they didn't have a medical school at UK. I would have come here anyway because my family doctor had come here.

I set up practice here at Triangle Center, but I had met Reverend Coleman before that. When I got out of my residency, I worked down town for a Pediatrician named, Martin Harris, Owen Ogden and Dr. Paul Scott...E.P. Scott, they had offices in the Heyburn Building and across the street over the Brown Building and down in the Kentucky Building. Dr. Scott, I think, had an office in the Heyburn

Building and that's where Thurmond worked. He was running stocks for a stock broker. A messenger for a stock brokering company. I met Thurmond then. I've know him every since then. As I recall, I think he was going to school at Lincoln Institute and he was out here walking on the road. Looked pretty lonely and didn't have any way to get anywhere so I stopped. I said, hey, you need some help...you want a ride? I picked him up and brought him into town. I told him I would help him out and give him a ride. I picked him up every Monday morning after that and brought him to work. Me and him didn't have very good cars. He didn't have any and I had an old beat up car.

We just kept our talk going and I liked Thurmond tremendously and he liked me. We just hit it off like brothers. I moved to J-Town when I started practice. I moved down there on Taylorsville Road, I can't tell you the name of that subdivision. Then after that I bought a home, right down the street from Thurmond's church, which I loved very much. I lived there for years and years and years and raised my family there. So, I was a stones throw from Thurmond's church.

I thought Black people in J-Town got along very well. A lot better than the Black people did down in the inner city...in the Western part of the city. As I remember, we didn't have so much trouble with drugs and alcohol. I felt that the Black families in J-Town and out in Thurmond's church, had much better control and discipline and family duties and obligations. They took care of their families. They didn't have kids and run off and leave them and throw them at the mercy of social agencies and foster homes and the Home of the Innocence. They took care of their kids. They knew what they were doing, mostly. I thought the Black people in J-Town got along well. I took care of them from the day I got there.

I think all of the Black people that wanted to work got a job. I guess there could have been more but I don't recall a lack of work. They could do farm work if they wanted to. A lot of farmers would come in there and pick people up to go out and do work on a truck farm and stuff like the. They could work if they wanted to. I think all of the Black people and the young boys and girls that really, really wanted to work could find them a job, even if it was doing house work. It might not be at an academic level so much where they would be doing high paying jobs but they did much better, I thought than the people down here.

I have really grieved for the Black people in West Louisville and down in this area. I went along and I became Coroner in 1974. I became Coroner because I saw a lot of people abusing their children. Saw a lot of people had Sudden Infant Death. They would walk into the bedroom and find their baby dead in bed. They had been

taking care of it , apparently quite well and all of a sudden they found it dead and shock. There is no shock any greater to a family to find a child dead, unless they find one of their kids hanging in the closet...Suicide. So those three things, suicide, teenagers and young people, child abuse, oh Lordy, it's gotten worse and worse. We had a women last week over here on Gardiner who stabbed her ten month old boy. Cut him to ribbons. That kind of thing is awfully distasteful but still somebody has got to look into that. So I decided to go on and take the Coroner's job. I took it in 74 and started work in 1975. We've been working ... this is our 26 year.

I never dreamed that I would still be here this long. I guess I must be doing a pretty good job or people would have tossed me out. We had some awful bad cases during that time. Very ticklish cases. One of the first cases that I remember was a black minister who lived down in West Louisville and I can't recall his name, very prominent man, was a friend of Martin Luther King and all. One of the shocking things, I had to go...my chief deputy went down there. He lived right off Shawnee Parkway and, oh Lord, this has been 25 years ago and my deputy said, Doc, I think you need to come down here. Reverend so and so is in the bathroom dead. I went down there and he had fell over across the bathtub, he had a syringe in his arm. I said, oh my Lord, we've got a bad feel here.

Phyllis Knight and all of them kept bugging me, wanting to know what happened. I finally very honestly had to say, well, somebody gave him too hot a dose, more than he thought and he just popped it and it got him. Cases like that was very disturbing to me. When I took over the Coroner's office there had never been a Black Deputy in the Coroner's office. I said, I'm going to end that. I hired Mr. Robert Carter who was a retired Louisville police officer who had got shot through the neck catching some boys robbing a drug store down in West Louisville. They shot him through the neck and they had put him kind of disabled for police duty so he came and worked for me. Wonderful man. Worked for me until he retired. I have always had Black Deputies working for me because when it comes to investigating and dealing with certain things, they are invaluable. I have gone with them down in the Black homes and you can't tell me that the reception that Black Coroner, Black police officers get in the Black community is better than sending White officers down there.

I don't go to all of the deaths. I couldn't possibly do it. We have over three thousand cases a year here in the Coroner's office. We have nearly a hundred suicides every year. People don't know how bad that is. Depression. Teenagers, we have eight or ten a year, six or eight or so, kill themselves, hang themselves, shoot themselves, put a gun to their head, put a rope or belt around their neck and

hang themselves from the bathroom rafter. That's still a huge problem. Then this business of child abuse has gotten worse. The trouble is, and this has affected Black families as well as White families. The glue that holds the family together has disappeared. The mothers have these kids then run off and leave them with grandma and take up with some bum and drink and take drugs and don't take care of the kids. Or, the father's abusive, or the father takes off and leave the mother without any money and won't give her any child support. The family values have deteriorated so badly in our community, all over, that it's partly responsible for the social and moral decay of our society. We have got to get that back.

Reverend Coleman was like a beacon in holding the Black people of Jeffersontown focused to family values and keeping them together, providing programs for them in his church. He was active in the community in other respects. He would preach in other churches. Last time I heard Thurmond preach was in a White church out off of, I think it was Billtown Road or Hopewell Road or somewhere out there. The only thing, I wanted to kid Thurmond a little bit. I said, what are you doing in there preaching to all of these red necks. But, anyhow, he gave a good sermon. I said, are you hoping to convert them or something. You better baptize them in different water.

Thurmond has helped me. We have some difficult cases like we have police shooting Black boys. This Desmond Rudolph thing down here in the West end where they shot this boy driving up a thing. That could have been handled differently, no question about it. All they had to do when they found that stolen truck was lock it up, haul it off. Uh-uh, they didn't do that. They ran the kid out of the house and he ran and jumped in the truck. Well, Thurmond was on my jury, along with some other people. A black lady from another church. I equalize my juries so the representation is there. I call them. I don't pick them out of a barrel. I don't know where they get some of these juries. They just pluck them like an apple out of a barrel.

I have six people and every now and then I have difficult cases and he's helped me several times. The trouble is, with Western Louisville and other areas where there is a Black community strong, is they don't have enough Thurmond Coleman's. I mean they've got guys taking advantage of them. I used to go to Reverend Hodges church.

When I worked for another doctor Thurmond had to come in through the side door but when I had my own office, he came in through the front door. I wouldn't have it any other way when I'm running my own show. Oscar Hayes was an OB man...GYN. He took care of Thurmond's wife. I didn't believe in that, you had a

few White people that turned up their nose. I said just too bad. If you don't like it you can go somewhere else. We have still got to work against racism in our community. It's pretty good out in J-Town because we haven't had any police shooting of young J-Town Black boys lately. The problem I had with that, if you noticed, most of these cops that shoot these Black boys and all are young cops. They're mostly young fellows. You take cops that have had 15 or 20 years of experience on the force, have more experience of handling situations like these that escalate. Now I'm not saying it's all their fault or anything, I'm just saying, some of the Black boys, they ain't going to behave. Some of the White boys don't behave... just bad. But, you don't mess with cops. When they tell you to stop, you stop. If they run over you and bust your leg, they get all excited and throwing led around.

They need more Thurmond Coleman's in the West end. I'm not knocking Lewis but Thurmond has great skill at handling himself in difficult situations. An example that I can think of, and I have told Lewis Coleman this. Lewis, you are going to stand down here in front of one of these crack houses one time too many. They're going to kill you. He says, aw Doctor, the Lord's looking after me. I said, but the Lord would like for you to help look after yourself too. That's all I told Lewis. I know Lewis Coleman. Anyhow, I don't think Thurmond would do anything which I consider kind of stupid, you know. He would get at it a different way. And, Thurmond wouldn't get in a position to have some TV camera poked in his nose every day. That's where the trouble is. Thurmond is not a publicity hound. Very gentleman. He's not no spring chicken anymore.

I'll work as long as I can remember the phone number of the Coroner's Office and my cell phone number, 744-0926, my social security number and where I am and my appointments and so on. I think the worst thing a man can do in a professional position, especially a doctor whose worked hard all his life, is suddenly quit and throw in the towel. He doesn't do anything after that but deteriorate. I've had friends that quit practicing medicine and within two years, they are dead.

Grandchildren. Yes, I've got two little boys and my daughter had them in Albuquerque. Her husband is an engineer for Hollerman Air Force Base there. He's a fire control engineer. Her name is Carolyn. I had four children, I had two boys, one went to Stanford and then to Northwestern Journalism School. I had one son went to Washington University in St. Louis. My other daughter died as a result of a traffic accident on Taylorsville Road a number of years ago. Thurmond knew all about that. Her name was Cathy. The kids were going out Taylorsville Road about 12 or 1:00 in the morning and her boyfriend was, I think, drinking some, smoking grass and stuff. He goes around a car and had a head on collision. She lay

in a coma for 13 years. Never recovered. Finally died in St. Matthew Manor Nursing Home. So I still have three children. My son is a computer programmer in Washington, D.C., and Virginia. My other son lives with his mother out on the old place in J-Town and my daughter lives in Albuquerque. That's about it. I never remarried. What would I ever want to get remarried again for? I tried it once and that's enough.

I enjoy keeping my activities at Children's Hospital. I'm still Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the Medical School in the Department of Pediatrics. I go to their conference every Friday morning at Norton's Children Hospital. And I still enjoy seeing a few kids in my office, always something new.

I had thought racism was about dead but my friend owned a team. Joe Gregory, he owned a team. He got a boy named Goose Lighon out of the penitentiary, he come to play basketball. He said, I need somebody who knows their way around to find him an apartment, and find his mother a job. Well, I found his mother a job working as a cook in the kitchen at Methodist Hospital. Then I went and tried to find them an apartment. I went on Gray street, right down from where she was working. They had all of these guys from Mexico and Indian and every where else. I called and got them an apartment. As soon as he found out that my friend was a Black ball player, he wouldn't touch it. He wouldn't take him in there. I said, what do you mean you won't take him. He said, well, I can't upset my other people in the apartment.

I had to go out on West Broadway and get him an apartment. I was surprised. I thought, well I don't understand this. I said, you've got people from China and Mexico and other places and you won't take a Black ball player. That really upset me. I found him a nice apartment. Since then, the change has been pretty good. Over the last 25-30 years, we have made considerable progress in this community in that regard but we have still got a way to go. You can go out and buy yourself a nice home, anywhere in J-Town, almost now, you know.

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CARRIDDER M. JONES - PROJECT DIRECTOR

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Interview with Reverend Thurmond Coleman, Sr. - Re. Jeffersontown, Kentucky -
June 11, 2001 - By Carridder M. Jones

I am Thurmond, T-h-u-r-m-o-n-d. Most folks say Thurmane but my name is Thurmond. My momma said Thurmond and that makes me move. Thurmond Coleman. No middle initial, I don't have a middle initial. Thurmond Coleman, C-o-l-e-m-a-n. Thurmond Coleman, born in Logan, West Virginia September 19, 1926. I am now 74, moving toward 75 in September. My mother name was Parlee Coleman and my daddy's name was Charles Coleman. They were born in Tennessee. My dad was born in Athens, Alabama, that area and Tennessee is close together and he left there for a better way to leave that area and come to West Virginia. You remember back then, they were bringing blacks from the southland to mine coal. Working in those, coal fields and onto the steel mills in Jersey and up to Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh area.

Then, my daddy left there to come to West Virginia and left all of the family back down in Tennessee, like they normally did back in those days for a better way of life. He finally sent back for momma and the children. We had a family of eight. Some of them were born in Tennessee and some were born in West Virginia. I'm one of those in West Virginia. I'm one of the younger ones. I'm next to the youngest. I have a sister younger than myself, Blanch.

I've been in Kentucky now for fifty-five years this June, which is right now. This year will make fifty-six. I came to Kentucky for an education. I received my call to preach for God and I said, well, I've got to go back to school because I quit school in tenth grade. I quit school, I felt you don't need an education to use an ignorant spoon. An ignorant spoon back in those days was called a shovel, coal mining shovel. Sixteen tons and whattta you get another day older and deeper in debt. So that was a big popular song in the coal fields of West Virginia. West Virginia called it West Virginia billion dollar coal field. Worked one day up there and I said, 'no, that's too much for me'. I didn't want to go under ground. My daddy wouldn't go underground either. My daddy was a barber and no, I did not go underground. One day I hit a high wire and almost electrocuted myself and I quit. I said I'm through with that. One day was enough.

Those were the war days. WWII broke out. WWII broke out and everybody was going to service. I did not go because they said I had bad knees. I think my momma's prayers were answered there because we already had three sons in the Army at that time. I was the last one and I came back and said they turned me

down because of my knees. They said OK and that's when I just hung around and did nothing. Which I wasted a whole lot of precious time and I do not wish it on anyone to waste time. Time is too precious. But I did that and you can't recall those days but I do know it was a waste of life and piddling around and precious energy.

So I quit school in the tenth grade and received my call to preach when I was about eighteen or nineteen year's old. Then I came to Kentucky to finish my last two years of high school. I received my call...I was down ill for a while. I do not understand it until this day. I used to sing quite a bit. We had a group called the wide-awake Gospel Chorus. The wide-awake Gospel Chorus was a tremendous Chorus and I was the lead base. Of course you can tell that by my voice, not a tenor. I was in Williamson, West Virginia one night and a lady said to me, an old lady, her arm in a cast, I sang lead quite a bit. She said to me, she said, 'Boy you've been called to preach'. My daddy was a preacher, my grandfather was a preacher, my uncle a preacher, got quite a few preachers in the family. I said to that old lady, I said, 'yes ma'am'. I looked at her and I said, uh huh. She said, I tell you if you don't go and preach boy, you're going to end up like I am. Look what the Lord done to me. She showed me her arm. I said, that's bad ma'am.

I went on and it wasn't but about six months, I was down flat of my back. By that time I was serving as Assistant Superintendent of Sunday School in the church, one of the Trustee's of the church. When I got flat on my back that was painful. In the coal field, we lived in a duplex house, daddy was a preacher so he had the duplex house, eight rooms in the house and I lived in one part of it because everybody was gone except me, from the nest at that time. My daddy's office was next to my bedroom. So one night I crawled out of my bed and started reading books. I acknowledged the fact, I said Lord if that's what you want me to do, preach, I'll preach. I couldn't hardly walk fifteen feet without being out of breath. I thought it was rheumatoid and rheumatic fever. They did everything trying to find out what my problem was. But the moment I gave my life to Christ in a special kind of way, and made a vow to him that I would preach his word, I started on the road to recovery, just like that. It was amazing.

The preacher came by to see me and I said, Reverend, I want to preach my initial sermon, I've been called to preach. He said, you have a boy? I said, yes sir. He said, all right. So they gave me an opportunity to speak my initial sermon. By that time there's a man in the coal field called Nelson Bailey. I used to hang around his place. Back in those days they had numbers and he had a joint and all of that stuff. I never will forget that, hanging around with him. That wasn't no account in

that kind of joint and stuff. That's part of wasted life. Anyway, I remembered his son. He had sent his son to Lincoln Institute, Lincoln Ridge, Kentucky. It came out of Berea College because of the Day Law, remember that? The Day Law said they could have no blacks and whites go together. Berea set up this school here called Lincoln Ridge. By that time, he interceded for me to come here to Lincoln Institute.

Brother Whitney Young was head of the Institution, old man Whitney young, the father, not the young Whitney and Mrs. Young. A.J. Pickney, all of those teachers were there. I packed my little bag, preached my initial sermon on a Sunday, packed my bag on Monday, arrived in Kentucky along about Wednesday or Thursday. It will be fifty-six years ago this month. That was the same year that the dormitory burnt on the campus of Lincoln Institute. The used to say that dormer burnt, it was where the girl's dormitory burned to the ground. That was when I came and started at Lincoln Institute on a works program. They allowed me to come and pay my tuition by working.

I worked in the kitchen. My responsibility was to keep the kitchen clean and to make sure all of the food was up for the cooks to cook. I was in charge of the kitchen detail, pots and pans, all those things to wash and doing to pay my tuition. That's how I got to Lincoln Institute. Classes were great. Tremendous caring teachers of the campus life. Remember, that was also because of Day Law, young folk came from different areas of the state. Some from out of state because they also accepted out of state students. Some students who could not make it in, like Chicago, Detroit, some areas, they were trying to save their children. That's what they were doing, trying to save their children. They would send them to Lincoln Institute. When soldiers came back from war, they were also eligible to come there. Quite a number of them came back to school. That meant you had some grown guys on campus, twenty something years' old guys on campus.

I remember well that being on campus the teachers were just tremendous teachers and it was good work done on campus, caring atmosphere was great. They maintained a good atmosphere. You didn't walk the girls to the dormitory, you walked to a certain point and you had to let go of her hand. You didn't get no close quarters and all of that kind of stuff. But every now and then, somebody would mangle it. They would manage every now and then to break over. They'd catch over there in the dormitory somehow they would crawl over the fire escape, hang out the window or something. Where there is a will, there's a way.

I worked and did all of those things for the campus life. I didn't get finished there. I married Cora Elizabeth Todd. I saw her. I was playing football for Lincoln Institute. I saw her because we were in the same class. We were Juniors together.

She was a pretty little girl. I said, ooh, she's a pretty, beautiful young lady her hair and everything. I said, wow, she's attractive. By that time, I started looking at her stronger and stronger. Turner Billy Fleming was also, at that point, he was our captain of the football team. His wife, they are still married, Billie and Jackie. Billy Fleming, he was the captain of the team. He was a senior. Being a senior and living in Shelbyville, they were called Day Students, because the bus brought them from Shelbyville to Lincoln Institute. Taylorsville students were bussed in, Eminence kids were bussed in, all of that area. All of the kids around were bussed in. Some of them stayed on campus. Being bussed in, that made a difference.

I met Cora and helped to make her Miss Lincoln. Then we had to call Mrs. Lincoln, I helped make her Miss Lincoln, I was the president of the class and the next year I made her Mrs. Coleman. That messed up my twelfth year. Then I had to go to work to support my family. I worked on Lincoln Institute. From Lincoln Institute, I married Cora, I remember working at the Undulata Farm. My mother-in-law was a cook there. It's out there now, I think it may be a golf course out there now. It's a great big beautiful place.

I was called a butler, but I was a butler, chauffer, gofer, whatever they say you will do you do. So I'm out there hauling out the manure out of the horse barns. They had saddle horses, show horses. Being at Undulata Farm, in the morning time, I'd put on my white coat, come up there and serve the old master his breakfast. Serve their breakfast and then get through breakfast, undress again and go out and clean the horse stalls. They had about two big nice barns with horse stalls that you had to go and clean 'em out, shake it, the manure and put in fresh straw. And then you had to take the old manure and everything out, straw out to the fields and fertilize the fields with it. You recycled it. The farm had about nine hundred to a thousand acres of land. White fences everywhere. When I got through that, I had to start back to the house get out of my clothes and serve lunch. Redress again, go back to the farm, and sometimes paint fences because those fences were miles of fences. They wanted them white. So I'd paint those white fences and then come back in and the misses wanted to go to town, get out of my clothes, put on my chauffer cap, take her into town.

Oh Lordy I was there for...my daughter was born there. We named her Jane Carolyn. She was named after the lady's daughter, Jane. See back then you thought naming your child they were going to take care of you. You know, you ain't got to worry about a thing, we're going to take care of you. Jane Carolyn which was her namesake, her daughter's namesake. I remember being there, getting tired of it, cause all during the winter time they were gone. They were all gone to

the Florida home. We had to stay back there and keep the old house going. That's the time you'd clean the house, re-polish a lot of brass. Brass was everywhere. All of the carpeting, everything had to be done. No spider webs and all of that stuff. Everything had to be clean, every week that was done.

When they'd come back, they would come back along about April and get ready for Derby because they had a great big Derby Party. It was tremendous. They were Myers. They were Jewish, big Jewish people. I remember well my job was to have the place spick and span, ready for the Derby Party. I remember her daughter named Jane Myers and the old man and his wife. They owned the O'Clair paper company up in Wisconsin. It's Perk now. You still see Perk Napkins. If you look around, you will still see them. It's a Perk Napkins, probably they are bought out, but that's what they owned. They had a home here in Kentucky, Florida and also they'd go down in Georgia. Then they'd go up to O'Clair Wisconsin. All of those things were part of it.

I worked there and I got tired and I wanted to get off that, and I moved into town out of the farm house. Big farm house in the back, Butler's quarters and all of that. My wife and I stayed back there and had children and we shared the house with a horse trainer back there. Finished up there and went into Shelbyville, Kentucky, That's where we lived, in Shelbyville. We lived in one of my mother-in-law's houses. She had two houses. One, two, three room houses. A three room house with a bathroom and five kids. But, we had use of both houses. She had two three-room houses side by side and we'd just go back and forth.

I'll never forget it. It was wonderful because all of our children were born there. Remember in that day they were born in the hospital. My first daughter was named Jane Carolyn and our next were a set of twins. I was not aware we had twins, then we went to Saffell hospital in Shelbyville, Kentucky. It was an old black hospital. They'd take you over to the white folk hospital and do surgery and bring you back over there. That was something, you just think about it, and the brought you back over to the black hospital called Saffell. Daisy Saffell. By the way, Mrs. Saffell right now in the hospital. I'm going to send her some flowers. She's back in the nursing home. The closest nursing home in Shelbyville, they are closing Shelbyville, Kentucky. This last month it was in the paper because of deficiencies and they had to give notice to 118 patients or something like that. Anyway, she's one of those that didn't transfer here in Jeffersontown, Kentucky.

So, I was sitting in the house waiting for my wife's announcement of the birth, which we were only about three doors from the hospital on High streets. 9910 High Street. They came and said, well, you've got a son. I said, good, I'm glad,

great, great, got a son. Great, great. And a daughter. I said, now which one do I have? They said, well, you've got both. I said you've got to be kidding, twins. I said oh, no. So we had twins, amen. We had twin children and having twins made a difference. We then had all of our children close together, pretty much close together. We had five all together. That's where we were, Shelbyville, Kentucky.

By that time, I was going back to school at night time. I worked, started working in town and then I worked out cutting lawns, worked at the tobacco warehouse in Shelbyville, Kentucky. I did about three or four things a day, trying to make it because of five kids. I started school at Central High School. Mrs. Johnson, who was then Betty Taylor. I remember it well, she was at school, I had to go to night school. We graduated from night school at Central High School.

I'd go back and forth. Some time I would remember passing Eastwood, Kentucky and sometime I'd wake up almost in Simpsonville, Kentucky, driving. I could see the road and I'd wake up sometime on the other side of Shelbyville, past Lincoln Institute, which is Simpsonville, Kentucky. I'd wake up and shake my head and say, WOW! I don't remember passing anything. I remember once or twice going off the road, hitting the roadside waking me up. There were times I didn't wake up until I got to certain areas. It's an odd thing but God was good to me. Then I'd get up the next morning and get on the road so I could get back to Louisville to work. Tough days.

Then about 7:00 in the morning, I'd get on the highway in Shelbyville, Kentucky. By that time I had become a worker in a brokerage firm called Goodbody and Company, in the Heyburn Building. I was a Board Marker. Board Marker, that's taking the quotes from the ticker tape. Ticker tape runs through a trans lot slot over fifteen hundred symbols of companies like GE, Motorola, Mo, whatever else. My job was to take off the prices and put them over on the big board. I'd write them on the big board. It was as long as this wall here, which carried over eleven-hundred names, companies. I knew them in my head, knew them. And the price would change, fluctuate, I had to move fast. I put on a show pretty well, put on a show and said, I can do it.

Back then whatever you could do, you'd do it. Shine shoes, you' learn how to pop the rag, that meant your tip was a little better. They'd sit and watch me mark that board and I could back through here about as fast as men doing the moon walk. I did the moon walk then. Shoot, I could back that thing up there, mark that board up and down, changing figures. And I was the first black to do that, in the southland that I know of. That was a white folks job but I got the job because a lady where I used to wait tables at the old Stone Inn and she knew me and wanted to know if I

wanted the job. That's when I got about \$75.00 every two weeks. That was big money then.

I would hitch hike a ride every morning from Shelbyville, Kentucky. The bus would cost you about thirty-five cents. Even thirty-five cents was important to me. Thirty-five cents was money saved and it meant a whole lot. I'd hitch hike from Shelbyville, Kentucky to wherever and be on time when the Stock Exchange at opened around 9:00. I had to get there and make sure I was on time to be there before the Stock Market hit the gong and off it runs. It closed about 2:30, steady all day long. I look at the stock market now and it's awesome now compared to those days. If you had 9,000 shares trading that day, you were tough. It was tough to sit there and watch it all day long.

Those are the areas I worked in. When I'd get through working there, I would come back and cut some lawns somewhere. Hitch hike back and cut some White folks lawns over there on 42, wash down walls or whatever I could do to make an honest dollar to feed my kids and the family. I'll never forget, I'd come back to Simpsonville and stop at the Old Stone Inn and ask them did they need anybody to help that night, like waiting tables. Some time they did and sometime they did not. When they did not, they'd say, 'well you want a piece of chicken?' I'd get a piece of chicken, get a roll, stand around there, then get out of there if I didn't work, go down to the road and catch another ride and get home. On the night they said, 'you can work,' that was a good night for me. I'd pick up five or ten dollars and go home to family. Pick up the next morning. I was back at it, on the road hitch hiking, getting back to Louisville. In that process, it is amazing what God will put in your life. You know biblically, it talks about the bread cast on the water how God has foreknowledge of your needs there and he will also meet your needs. I've always been a tither in church.

Then I hitch hiked and I met a doctor on the road. He was courting up in Harrisburg and he would go home every weekend. He was also going to medical school. He stopped one morning and picked me up, this fellow did. I didn't know who he was. He told me who he was, a student going to school. We talked and rode all the way to Louisville. He said, 'I'll tell you what, I come through there every Monday morning, I'll be happy to pick you up every Monday morning.' I'd get right there on tenth and Main and he'd come right there and pull up. He got to be a doctor. You know who that doctor is today? It's Doctor Greathouse who is the Jefferson County Coroner.

Dr. Greathouse took care of all of my children, took care of every one of them. It's amazing, God puts people in your lives. It's rough. All of my children, all

five of them and my grandchildren. Dr. Greathouse. Our friendship is tremendous and I love him dearly. His wife lives right back here. And what happened in their lives fell apart, but I'll leave that alone. But it is just tremendous. Every now and then, I'll say, I'm calling his building. I was blessed by knowing him and he had another friend, Dr. Hayes, then he was in the Fincastle Building. I could go there but I had to go to the back door, side door. They wouldn't let you in the main door when they'd see you were colored. He'd say, you be there at 4:00. I'd knock on the door at 4:00 and they'd open the door and let you in so the White folks wouldn't know you were in there. Because White folks couldn't stand you being in the same place, I guess that's what it was. Anyway, they didn't risk it.

I remember just as well meeting Dr. Hayes because he was a friend of his. He said, I'll tell you what, I've got another doctor. My wife was sick a lot at that point and he took care of her, even though we had to use the side door. But he was always there. I'll say I know a dentist who also took care of my dental work. The Lord blessed me right along through those areas, blessed in so many ways. My wife had a lot of different problems early in our marriage but we came through it all. Dr. Hayes, Dr. Greathouse and Doctor Vanburen. Vanburen took care of my wife and also my momma. My mother died, he was her doctor as well, a good doctor. They would see us although you would use the side door back in those early days.

When they finally started letting you come in the front door, I had already been going to the side door. I'll tell you, there was an advantage in going through the side door because you didn't have to wait. When it was four o'clock, you would be there and they would take you right away. You would be back out of the side door and gone and those other folks would still be out there waiting. Those were some of the things that happened.

I've been in J-Town for 45 years, 45 years last year when I retired. J-Town was this little sleepy town. Church was a little wooden church with a small membership, about 125. Not that many regularly attended but we had about 125. Small town, Negro's lived in certain areas, pockets. On this road called Watterson Trail, there was a pocket of Blacks, Will Brown was one of the chairmen's, Deacon. Go out on Billtown Road. There was a little pocket of Blacks, about a half dozen homes where Blacks lived on Billtown Road. Then you come back on Watterson Trail again, no Blacks lived on the right side of the road but they lived on the left side, facing one another. That was going down that stretch on Watterson to what was called the Old Lodge Hall.

When I came here, that's what it was and I found out later on when I tried to buy a house here, the real estate man told me that you just couldn't buy one out

here. The bank wouldn't even back you. You couldn't buy because of the fact that it was just laid out like that. Then another pocket of Blacks, was what we called, 'down in the field blacks'. The Brown Cadillac people owned a whole lot down there. Blacks down there pretty much worked for them, Brown Brothers. There were other pockets, the William's family was down there, had a little patch of ground also. Right where the built Nachand Lane, that corner area right there is where the William's owned. He was a lathing man. He put laths for...in those days they did the real stucco, like concrete. They had the lath and they did those kind of things for Whites back in those days. Not many Blacks could afford that. They lived down there in the field. We called that, in the field. They would walk from down there up here to church.

J-Town was a sleepy town. There was one road going into Louisville, called Taylorsville Road. See this is Watterson Trail, Taylorsville Road comes right through here and goes up to Taylorsville, Kentucky and to Louisville. I remember well, back then, when I first arrived here, Blacks had their place, of course, like any where else, you had your place. And they got along all right. If you behaved yourself, you got along. I remember in the bus, we could sit any place on the bus back there. There was one bus going out of here to Louisville. At night time, the last bus ran about 9:30 or 10:00 at night. That would be your last bus to get back to J-town.

Then I watched J-town begin to grow. When I arrived here, this church was called First Baptist Church, Colored. The other church down there, they wanted to be First Baptist Church, even though this church, historically is the oldest church. This church came out of a settlement of Baptist, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans. Colored would sit up in the loft, something like that. I told the man up town, I said, pardon me sir, all of our places where we did business, I said I'll tell you what, we are not going to use the word Colored. That's after the war. We're not going to use the word Colored. If you do not want to put down First Baptist Church, our address here, Which is now 10600 Watterson Trail, that's all you need to do and it will get here. The other church down there on Taylorsville Road, we are First Baptist Church, not Colored, First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown. They didn't like but I said, if you want our business that's the way it's going to be.

I remember one of the old deacons saying, 'aw Reverend, you're just trying to create some trouble'. I said, 'naw, that's just business, time for that to disappear'. We would go to City Hall. City Hall was up in here in the middle of the square. We had one fire truck. We'd push it out and have the town meeting inside. I did most of the prayers at that time. Even then we opened with a prayer at the

town meetings. One thing that has always been a pain for me, Blacks still do not become part of this process. It really is a lot of their fault. We don't involve ourselves. We're busy reacting. It's pitiful, reacting to what is already done. It was done then, it's being done today. That's sad, very sad, the saddest thing in the world. I'd go to the meeting all of the time. I'd find myself being a part of what was going to take place, I knew was taking place. If I objected, I objected to what was taking place.

We had one policeman, weekend. He'd come in on Friday night. A weekend policeman, Friday night and Saturday night. On Sunday, J-Town would become a sleepy town again. Everybody'd get ready for work. We had one joint called Corn Field Inn. Remember that old joint called Corn Field Inn where Negroes' would go and have corn whiskey back in those woods. They didn't bother you as long as you stayed back in there. People came from all over to go to Corn Field Inn. You thought you were going some place. I said, 'man, that must be some place, like Turner's Inn. Turner's Inn was in Berrytown. There was another one over on 60 called Green's. Negroes' went from Green's to Turner's to Corn Field Inn. Wherever the joint was jumping, that's where Negroes' went. I said, 'man, that must be some place. I want to see that place'. I got up there to Green's and Turner's. I said, what in the world. A whitewash wall, people urinating all out doors and against the wall. I thought I was going to see some club. It was filled from Friday night, Saturday and on Sunday evening, everything died. All of the Negro's had to get ready to meet the man.

I also remember a park called Sky View Park. A place where Blacks would come. Sky View Park is where the Blacks would come to play ball. They had to take care of it themselves, maintain it. That's another story too. It created me some heartache and pain. The park was there. Blacks would keep it cut and this kind of thing. Yet, it was part of Jefferson County Parks. Well, we were going to have a church picnic over there. Mr. James Wilson, right now we are still maintaining his name on the park but had to fight for that too. Then you had to do the best you could, run around and cut grass, do this and do that, but Black folks were happy because they had a place. I said it's a shame, we don't have any swings or nothing.

By that time, Jefferson County Recreation Department had hired a Black guy, I can't remember his name but he came from Cleveland, Ohio. I did not know he was down there at the time and had been hired in Recreation. I go down to Recreation trying to get some balls and bats. I didn't ask Brother Wilson to do this. I decided that I was going to do this and see if they couldn't fix the park up, fix the

swings and all of this kind of thing. You know how I am. When I got down there, I said, I want to see someone about parks. So I sat there and sat there. Out come a Black man. I said, I can't believe this, oh that guy, I think he left here and went to Atlanta, Georgia. I said, I want to see about a park. He said, what are you talking about man? I said, uh, anyway I said, you what? He said, yes can I help you? I said, well, I'm looking for somebody to help me with a park. He said, well, that's what I'm about'. You mean you are about the park? I said. He said, yeah. I said, I'm from Jeffersontown, Sky View Park out here, Blacks had about three different parks. A park here, Newburg had one and Griffeytown had a little Black place. I said, I'd like for you to help me get some equipment on the parks.

He said, I'll tell you what, I'll meet you out there. Give me time to get there. I said, who is this Negro, he can't do nothing. Anyway, I said, OK, I'll meet you at the park. Lo and behold, he was there on time. We met at the park. He walked down on the park, Sky View Park. He said, damn, you all don't have a damn thing out here. I said, no. He said, you all don't have anything out here. I said, this is the Colored park. He said, is there a phone around here some place I can use? I said, Yes, Mr. George Robinson lived up right on the park. They were all school teachers.

He went up there and called. I was standing there, I said, huh, this Negro might can do something. It wasn't but about two hours and here come two or three trucks. I looked around and they started changing that park completely. That made some people angry, thought I was trying to take over the park. Then it got back to Baptist Stuff, Baptist and Methodist. The Methodist church was down below. They started talking about the Baptist trying to take over something. We've been running our park here and Reverend Coleman comes here trying to create some problem. Our park is all right. I said, I'm not trying to take over no park. I just want to help clean the place up.

They put swings up, put a riding thing around there, gave balls and bats and nets for the basketball court, fixed the court up, you could play on it. It was fantastic. I told that guy, I said, I'll have to apologize to you Doc. I thought you were just a...I didn't know what you were. I didn't think you had any strength. He said, no, it's changed. You all didn't have anything because you didn't ask for it. I said, well, you're right. Mr. Wilson never would ask for anything. Blacks wouldn't ask for anything. They were scared and thought whatever the White man did, he did. Anyway, we got that park cleaned up but I caught sand, even those long years, there was a hostile atmosphere. They said, Reverend Coleman's trying to run something. And the only thing I ever did was try to make the place a better place

and they were grateful because they had lights around the park and all of that stuff and some bleachers to sit on.

The School. There was one school out here called J-Town Colored School, right down there in the curve. That's the old Lutheran Church over there. A lot of people think that's First Baptist over there. J-Town Colored School. Mrs. Sadie Abstain was one of the teachers at that time, a long time educator, she and others. All Colored went to school to the sixth or seventh grade or something like that, may have gone to the eighth. Then they would leave there and go to Central High, or Jackson or Russell. Most went to Jackson. Ms. Wilson was one of the teachers. She was at Central and J-Town. They lived on Billtown Road, had one of the houses on Billtown Road. She went to teach at Central until she retired.

The school was there and that's when I started fighting for a high school for Jeffersontown. I started fighting for a high school because there was no high school in Jeffersontown. J-town had lost its high school. Whites were going to school down here, called Jeffersontown Elementary. But this was called J-Town Elementary Colored, a big old sign up across there. Not having high school, the war's over, integration's come now, whites began to flee, leaving the inner city coming to the county. J-Town was blooming, flourishing. They built Seneca High School. That's where the Unseld all went, Redmond, Mike Red, all of those boys played ball, Cosby. They all played ball down there and became champions, remember that story.

Eastern High was over here in Fern Creek. Some Blacks went to Fern Creek, Some Blacks went to Eastern, and then some Blacks went to Seneca. I pleaded then there was a school back then, Vanhooose. Vanhooose was a tough man, Vanhooose was the board, that was his school system. I never will forget, we had the meeting and I said, 'we need to have a high school out here'. I became part of the spoke's people for having a high school. I remember we met in the little old place, and we had little meetings for the city. I was driving the school bus then also. I was driving the Jefferson County School bus and going to the Seminary then, Southern Baptist Theology Seminary. I'd drive the bus, pick up the kids, Dr. Greathouse kid, I'd pick him up first and carry him to school and drop him off. I'd leave the school run at about 8:00. Everybody was in school. I'd pick up two loads of elementary kids and picked up two loads of high school kids.

I went to school at about 8:50 at Southern Baptist. I'd pull the bus in there under a tree and run to classes. I audited the classes at that point in time. They allowed me to audit for two years. It was great. I stood up to Mr. Vanhooose about the system and why we couldn't have a high school along with other Whites who

lived in our community, Lenhart and those folk. The next morning, I had gone to work at J. C. Penny's to pick up some money for Christmas time. I drove the bus and during the holidays, the man said, would you like to have a job mister? I said, doing what? He said, being a floor walker. Anyway, I became a floor walker, that's another story. Floorwalkers were detectives, store detectives to keep people from stealing and to catch them when they do steal. Try to keep them from taking the store out, keep them from taking all of the merchandise out of the store.

I knew after I stood up to Mr. Vanhooose, the next morning, here comes my buddy who was over the transportation department. He walked in and said, Hi brother Coleman'. I said, Hello there, how are you doing sir? He said, I'm fine brother Coleman. If you've got time, I need to talk with you a few minutes. I said, Lets go and get a cup of coffee and we can talk. He said, OK brother Coleman, so we went right across the street to McCoy, sitting there having a drink of coffee. He said, I heard you were at the meeting last night. Blankenbaker was his name, Earl Blankenbaker, he was White. He lived up in Fisherville. I said, Yes, I was at the meeting the boss man was there, Mr. Vanhooose. He said, I heard you spoke up, you said some things out there. I said, yeah I did. I guess you want the keys, don't you, I said, here, you can have it. That's when I lost my job as a bus driver.

I gave him the keys. I don't know if I drove the bus back here or not. I know it was my last. That wasn't my main job. Then I was a floor walker at J. C. Penny's and had church out here. He just came and said, I heard you spoke up at the meeting. He was part of transportation. He was a nice fellow. We see one another now all of the time and talk. He'll say, Brother Coleman we've really come a long way since those days. I said, yes we have.

Let me get back to the growth of J-Town. At that point we began to grow because of what? Integration. Whites began to what? White flight. Then GE, GE is one of the greatest growth party of J-Town than we have ever had, because GE hired about 13 or 14000-people back then. It was the largest employer we had. All of those homes back over behind the school on Six Miles' Lane, all of those homes were built because GE people were coming in. All of that down through there, Huntsinger Lane, all of them folks. A lot of folks started hunting jobs and buying out here, they escaped Louisville and came out into the County. J-Town began to grow and with growth there come other problems. We began to move off of that one weekend policeman and hire other policeman.

I'll never forget, when Martin Luther King was speaking in Frankfort and we had a march on Frankfort. I remember I was president of the Ministerial Coalition here in town and I asked men who would go with me to Frankfort, which one of you

guys want to go to Frankfort? Not a one of them would go, except one guy. I'll never forget, old Mike Constanzo, he pastured the Presbyterian church. He and his children and my children, we went together in a station wagon. The rest of the guys would not, uh uh, didn't go. We couldn't put a sign up town. I wanted to put a sign up but they said, no you can't put no sign up here about the march. They would not allow you to have that. My kid tried to set at the counter up there, you know how drug stores used to be with a counter and milk shakes and that. My kid, unbeknownst to had sat at the counter and my deacon came by and said, your boy's trying to create some problems up town. You need to do something about it. I said, what's that? He's setting up there at the counter trying to create some disturbance and he knows he's not suppose to sit up there. They were struggling for civil rights. I remember just as well that this town was tough.

It was not a real race situation. You just had a nice quiet town. Everybody knew where they were. I moved forward to have some activity going on with some ball teams and that kind of thing and began to break some ice. I began to grow and became political. I made myself known. I didn't back up from them. One thing about the Black, he can be free if he wants to be free, if he wants to be free. I didn't see no need to bow and scrape to White folk. I had done the job well and I respected them and I wanted them to respect me. Every where I went, I changed the name of this from colored and got the school going over there. We also formed Little League ball teams. I was also at that time, Umpire Chief. During the week, we scuffled around trying to get...you know how J-town was, I remember the Lenharts and other Whites who were gung-ho in the community. We would sell hot dogs and hamburgers and popcorn and have Little League. We'd clean the field off so we could play ball, our kids could play ball together. We integrated the teams back there then, little bitty fellows. I was right there working and I stayed there with them, selling hot dogs all day long.

Then I had to go to work, waiting tables, I'd go about 4:00. Come home and get a shower and go to Shelbyville, Kentucky, wait tables and be here Sunday morning. We had the Little League here. I was the Umpire Chief, I worked on the board, then we would have libraries on the porch of Mrs. Ettleman. Mrs. Ettleman boarded the library on her porch. I'll never forget it that we moved forward to change the library off her porch to enlarge it. We didn't have a library in J-Town. You had to go downtown. See Blacks then went down to the East end. You'd either go to that one or you would go to the one right beside the Y in the West end. Then I was able to work with them on the library. We moved the library off of her porch to the old doctor's building. Dr. Peters was there. He moved out of his old

office and moved to a new office. He left that to the library so we put the books in there. Then we moved it again to Jack Derrick Shopping Center. From Jack Derrick Shopping Center moved it again to the building over there..that building, a lot of people didn't realize but that's where the poor folk used to stay. Indigent, they stayed there until they died. See that building over there called the Senior Citizen Program Building? That's where the Black folk were and the Sun Shine Lodge is right in behind it where the kids were. There was a lady here, Mrs. Kraft, she was one of the cooks there.

Blacks and whites would sit on that porch until they died. A number of people have not realized it yet but that's where they brought them to when they had no place to go. That was Jefferson County. Then, many of them were right out here where the ball field is, right down in this corner. See there's nothing in there. People are buried in there. That's when people could not bury themselves, right over there. That's when they started digging and found out there were bodies over there. They stopped digging. It's a little corner over there where that ball diamond is, a little corner back in there. They knew they were there and they had to be careful how far they would go. They knew they were down in there some place. Some people who were old enough to know, knew there were some people buried over there. Blacks and maybe some Whites are buried over there.

That was the system back then. We moved to have schools integrated, the balls integrated, we had a basket ball league and we integrated the basketball league out here. Played ball together. Then I also found myself involved in everything about the town. I was on the Planning Committees and all of that. It was part of J-Town's growth, right here. Those were tough days but we made it well without having a whole lot of confusion.

We buried the people from my church in Cardwell Cemetery, right down there on your left you'll see those gravestones out there. Right there about two blocks down, three blocks and you will see the graveyard. There is no where to bury anybody else except for those who had a hole down there. Now there is a committee for graveyards, graveyard keepers. There are old headstones. They now try to take up collection to try to get folk to help take care of it. So, it is kept clean, but J. Williams knows more about that. J. Williams, they are an old family out here in J-Town. It's like anything else, you have to go help keep cleaned up and all of that.

The Simpson Garden right beside it now. Mrs. Sadie Abstain used to live in that area. She sold her property to the Simpson or somebody. I know they've got now, the Simpson Memorial Garden right in the back part of that cemetery. If you

drive that way and look back there you will see it, right beside the old Cardwell Cemetery. That's the old part. It used to be kind of swamp land that would sink where water stood there. It kind of built up, they didn't have too much drainage. Simpson Memorial Garden is where they bury there now. There are some Blacks who go in there and bury, old J-Town, not new people.

The history of J-town was also the area whereby, the growth has done so in an orderly way and then with the coming of the plant side made a whole lot of difference as far as tax base is concerned. You look at the paper today and it says that Jeffersontown will experience a tax cut. You have over 35000 people working here in a 24-hour time coming out of the industrial park.

The historical part of J-Town, some of the biggest fights we had then was fighting to make sure a whiskey store didn't come into town. We kept them out. When you look around and see a lot of church folk going to town meeting, you knew they were going to try to bring up something. You won't see it here even today in J-Town. Liquor was very hard to come by putting it in J-Town.

In the early days, Blacks were maids and butlers. This farm area was called, Y Singer Farm, old man Watterson...it was called Watterson Road down through here. All down through there is Watterson Trail and a lot of Blacks worked there, farmed and everything else. First Baptist, historical Baptist, somebody may want to say it different but, historically...you know what First Baptist is usually about, do you know the difference? How do you think First Baptist came into being. If you named a Black church First Baptist, usually that meant the house Negro. That's yellow Negro, remember the house Negro's with yellow complexions? They were what? Elite. They were maids and butlers and chauffeurs. Anytime you go into a First Baptist church, they started that. Where do you see the handkerchief head Negro, the field hand Negro? Second Baptists down at St. John, over there at St. Bartholomaei Baptist Church, look at it, Antioch Baptist Church. That's where Black folk...field hand Negroes' never could get to be a First Baptist. You weren't going to be no first nothing. Field hand Negroes' he was more what? He was emotional. The house Negro was what? He was above...that's class system again and White folk kept it that way and Negro's bought into that area. We are better than the field hand Negro's. He what? He's in the house, he learned to read, he heard the conversations, he learned the hymn's.

Black folk didn't learn the hymn's. He learned what? He didn't learn the hymn's but they learned, A mighty fortress is my God... You go to the Methodist Church and there are some Black Episcopalians, they were house Negroes'. They became school teachers, undertakers, Black lawyers. They didn't go down to

Second Baptist. The bush harvest people, they are shouting and kicking, they worked hard, sweat just rolling. House Negroes' hands were soft, well kept fed well, weren't beat, unless they got a little out of place. Until you become a ... and you realize something's got to change. Check it out wherever you go. You will see that Black's First Baptist was called First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown. It's where they worked, maids, butlers, chauffers, farmers. They learned how to do Lath work, skilled and then the Wilson's, remember they went to school. They began to graduate and they all became school teachers. Some of the Wilson's worked for the Watterson on that old Watterson place over here...They were all well, White folk looked out for them, took care of them.

So J-Town had a history to it out of First Baptist. You will hear people talk about it now, who? What church? Aw, out there, them's high muckity muck Negroes'. This church is not like that. It has a diversity. My coming here, it was hard at time because they had some high feelings about themselves. And, there's nothing wrong with that. They ought to have pride and they have always taken pride in the church, keeping it clean and looking nice. Always, they believed in that because they were what...maids, butlers, chauffers, nice educated in the system. Only thing back then they would teach you that was about the biggest thing they had. Black's had a doctor, here and there, a lawyer, here and there and so what you had was class system again. We can't seem to get away from that.

The Catholic Church here in J-Town used to be out in the middle of the square. There may have been some Blacks, two or three if there was any at all. I know the Reynolds family was in there. They were Catholics. They moved to down town I think it was Clayborn Catholic Church. Most Catholic here went to it in town. That's when they had the Catholic school for Blacks in the West end. The Blacks from here went to town to church all of the time. I don't know if any of them went here until way late. They moved out here and that's when they began to grow likewise. So that was another move in J-Town's history.

Then we got a bank. It was a homeowner's bank at that time. They'd let you have money or they wouldn't let you have money, it was home owned. They controlled it. When I first arrived here, we went to borrow some money from them. We had some Pews where people had painted them and the paint would get on your clothes. The bank would let you have money selectively, very selectively. If you're one of them good niggers, all right. If you handled yourself well, stayed in your place, yes sir... you were OK. Mr. Will Brown was chairman of the deacons when I came here. He owned land all along Watterson Trail coming through here, had a fishing lake on it. He's had several pieces of property. Will Brown was pretty

strong. I'll never forget, we went to get the money, to borrow money to put a furnace in downstairs. We had an old coal furnace we wanted to convert to gas. We went to the bank and the man at the bank said, I'll tell you what, where is Will Brown? He's the only one we'll loan to. There were about two or three deacons but he said, if Will Brown's name not on here... That's when we started to make a turn because it insulted them. These men were Lather's and all, they were workers. The only way we could get some money was if Will Brown had signed for it. That's when we made the change and by the time we got ready to get the furnace in, we had enough money to pay for it.

We have never been behind and that's the best part about it. In those days, back there were some days. J-Town areas are little pockets. There's another little pocket up here where at the street called Cottage. There's where some Black's live who is also a Lather, Plaster is what they call it. Those guys were good at it, they were good at what they did. Blacks were good at it and they kept good jobs all of the time doing work. White folks had a lot of houses they were building and they had to use that Lather. Those lathes in there, those wooden laths they had to put that stuff on. All of those older houses got that in them. It's like concrete almost. This stuff now, it's not like that. So those guys were good at it and there was some concrete men, they were good.

Dr. Bell, you remember Mrs. Bell? They are from J-Town. The Bells and her sister and all lived out here. They were among the wheels in here. They were teachers too, all of them. Remember Mrs. Livers. She was a school teacher. Mrs. Bell married Dr. Bell, that's when they moved out here. That pocket down through there was theirs. They were very comfortable Negroes'. In every area and every age, there have been some comfortable people who have made it in spite of. The tragic part about it, when you make it . . . my pain is, when you have made it and you forget to bring somebody else with you.