

# **AN INTERVIEW WITH J. DAVID HOGGARD**

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee White

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The recorded interview and transcript have been made possible through the generosity of a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant. The Oral History Research Center enables students and staff to work together with community members to generate this selection of first-person narratives. The participants in this project thank University of Nevada Las Vegas for the support given that allowed an idea the opportunity to flourish.

The transcript received minimal editing that includes the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator. In several cases photographic sources accompany the individual interviews.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the *African Americans in Las Vegas: A Collaborative Oral History Project*.

Claytee D. White  
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## PREFACE



Born Jeremiah David Wright Hoggard, a reverend's son, David Hoggard dedicated his life to the service of others. After spending his childhood in New Jersey, David was drafted and served in World War II. In 1945, he was transferred to Nellis Air Force Base, and those few months changed the course of his life. Recognizing the opportunities and the ideal climate the city offered, by the next year, David moved to Las Vegas with his two sons after being recently widowed.

Within a month, David joined the Las Vegas Police Department, becoming one of the first African American officers in the city alongside Herman Moody. David soon met Mabel Welch Wynns at the USO, and by 1947, the two were married, bringing together their three children into one family. David left the police department due to increasing frustrations with racial barriers, and eventually became the school district's second attendance officer.

Social, economic and political justice for all was a passion for David. As a child, David's parents would take him to National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) meetings, and he joined the organization before serving in the United States Air Force. David wasted no time getting involved with the local chapter, and served in various capacities, including four years as its president. His leadership in the community contributed to the end of segregation in the city's gaming industry as well as creating opportunities for African Americans on many fronts, in many industries.

After fifteen years with the school district, David went to work for the then newly-established Economic Opportunity Board (EOB), quickly working his way up to the director position. Under his nearly 30 years of leadership, the EOB became the largest nonprofit in Las Vegas, implementing successful programs like Head Start, KCEP radio station, Concentrated Employment Program (CEP), a senior center, grandparent foster program and much more.

David's impact on the Las Vegas community is vast and meaningful. His other contributions included serving on the city's Human Relations Committee, and working with the West Side Federal Credit Union. He continued to serve his community after retiring as EOB Director with the America Association for Retired Persons (AARP) running the Tax Aid Program.

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**Good morning. This is Claytee White. I'm with David Hoggard this morning in his home here in Las Vegas.**

**How are you today?**

Very well. Thank you. How are you?

**I'm just fine. Thank you.**

Good.

**Mr. Hoggard, I want to start this morning just by asking about your background, your childhood. Could you tell me when and where you were born?**

I was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, on November 25th, 1914, the eldest of seven children born to Reverend J.M. Hoggard and Symera Cherry Hoggard.

**What is her first name again?**

Symera, S-y-m-e-r-a.

My siblings are, in chronological order, Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard of the AME Zion Church who recently retired; Reverend Aaron T. Hoggard, now living in Philadelphia; Dr. Phillip P. Hoggard, doctor of education and a retired teacher and professor; and Joseph Francis Hoggard, who is a retired educator also living in New Jersey; and my sister, the youngest in the family, is named for my mother. Her name is Symera Hoggard White.

**You just told me something really interesting before I turned the tape on. And since no one is going to believe it, could you tell me where your family is from?**

Both of my parents came from a rural area in eastern North Carolina, about 45 miles south of Norfolk, on Route 13. It was around Piney Woods Chapel and Holly Grove Church named Palsville (phonetic). We were right between Windsor and Ahoskie on Route 13.

**Tell me a little about your early schooling in New Jersey.**

I attended public schools in New Jersey. My father was a minister in AME Zion Church. We lived in Jersey City until I was 15 and after I had started high school at Lincoln High in Jersey City. We moved to Hackensack. All my siblings finished school here and went on to a higher education. I don't know what else to say except Hackensack High School is where I finished.

**Did you go on to higher education also?**

I didn't receive a degree. I have taken courses at University of Las Vegas -- before it was that -- and some

correspondence courses at University of Utah in counseling and administration. When I was in the service, I took the Army Air Force courses in administration and counseling.

**It sounds as if your family really had a thirst for knowledge. You just told me about some of your brothers and sisters. Where did that come from?**

Not from my parents. When you look at the background that we knew about, right after Civil War days, my mother's father was a member of the Board of Education in Bertie County. This was during the Reconstruction period. He and my grandmother had 13 children, nine girls and four boys. Of that group, I knew all of them except one. One after World War I became president of a little college called Kitchel. That was the AME School in North Carolina at that time. After that closed, he went to Knoxville and finished his working days there. Of those nine girls, I think five of them were schoolteachers. Considering that they were born in the 1800s that was quite an accomplishment. The others went on to do some things to, and, of course, they all raised children. I had a lot of cousins when we were growing up. One -- by the youngest brother -- became a successful businessman. Another retired from the navy yard in Portsmouth.

My father, from what we have been able to learn and piece together, was the son of a woman named Eliza whose mother and her uncle were in Aulander. Aulander is a town about 30 miles from Ahoskie. Somehow they moved and lived across the road from my Cherry grandparents. It would take too long to tell all the stories I've heard. My father was a white man, which was not unusual then or now. But, of course, he was never accepted or owned by the father. That's another story that gets connecting there. He was a self-taught man and went to school at night in a place called Sacred of Norfolk Court (phonetic); it used to be called Campistella (phonetic). He went to school there and wanted to become a minister. He felt inspired and went on to become very successful. He had the largest congregation and building; he built the building for the AME Zion Church in New Jersey.

**Thank you for that information.**

**I wanted to ask you about your later life. When did you leave New Jersey?**

I left New Jersey in October 1943 at Uncle Sam's request. I spent the next couple of years in the United States Army Air Force. During that period, after leaving Fort Dix, I went to Gulfport, Mississippi, and Pecos, Texas. In '45, I was transferred to Nellis Air Force Base here in Las Vegas. As they say, the rest is history.

**What kind of work did you do between high school and the air force?**

During high school I had a job working in a neighborhood drugstore. I was doing general washing. You'd mop the floors, and you made the banana splits and the malts.

**Is that a soda jerk?**

All that soda-jerking. I learned quite a bit about merchandising during that period. During that period of time, I married in January '34. Then I did domestic work. Couldn't find anything else of a job. I had two kids and was making \$18 a week. That was it. So I did some domestic work. Then I took postal exams and passed those. I worked for periods long enough that were helpful in maintaining a family and whatnot.

Just before I went in the service I was connected with a man in Newark, New Jersey, who was the distributor for all of the black national papers, the weeklies -- the Pittsburgh Curve, the Afro-American, and Norfolk Journal and Guide. He had a distributorship in all of New Jersey. That's what I did for the last two years before I went into the service.

Service was not a happy experience for me because it was segregated racially at that time. Maybe I didn't adjust as well as some. I was able to have a PSI, what you would call a clerical position. A friend and I really developed our own positions. We developed squadron orientation. It was something that was required in the service at that time. Everybody had to go to orientation in their own area at least once a week. It was like class, and you tell them what great progress we were making in the war and all that. I don't want to get talking about that too much.

When I came here to Nellis in '45, I had never heard of Las Vegas. I had heard of Reno, but I had never heard of Las Vegas. We arrived at two o'clock in the morning, on the train, at Fremont Street in the station. It was where the Union Plaza is now. I had never seen any of these lights around. I had been to Times Square hundreds of times during my life. Just image at that time, everything down on Fremont Street ended at what is now Casino Center, at Second Street. There wasn't anything else there. But they had all those lights.

After I saw how the weather was here, I decided I could live without so much rain, snow, sleet and cold weather. I came here, and my wife and I had decided we would move the family here. She passed in June before we were able to get here. So I came here with two sons, nine and 11 years old. We drove out here in 1946. We've been here ever since.

**What are your sons' names?**

I lost my younger one several years ago in a tragedy. The one who survives is here now. He's Junior, J.

David Hoggard, Junior. He has made a career for himself here. He has been interim president of the community college before Dr. Moore came, between Mechum and Moore. He thinks he's a professional golfer now. He's retired too.

**He thinks he is.**

Yes. I was trying to continue that. He and his family moved here in '63. He married a college classmate from Portsmouth in '56. They moved here and had three boys. Two of them are here now. We had tragedy with some of us. I lost a grandson. It was 12 years ago. It was their oldest one. He was the oldest grandson.

**When you brought your sons out here in 1946, so that one then went away to college and came back?**

Yes. They both grew up and went to elementary school and high school here.

**Could you tell me whether or not the schools were integrated when your sons were attending school?**

Eventually. Before you get to that, in '47, I had met and married Mabel Hoggard. Of course, she was Mabel Wynns then. She was a great help in raising them, and was very conscious of interests as a mother of children that were not hers. She had a son of her own, also.

So far as integrated schools -- it's very difficult for people who were not here to realize that there was one high school at the time. There were no middle schools or junior highs. There were four elementary schools because we had separate districts. North Las Vegas was a separate school district. Henderson was a separate school district. It was not unified. By 1947-48, most black people lived north of Bonanza Road, and between the railroad and H Street. Westside School, which a lot of people don't know, was the school in the neighborhood at that time. It is where KCEP is now, at 320 West Washington. It was integrated, and at that time, it was about a quarter Caucasian, a quarter Hispanic, and about half black. Many prominent people were at the school. Among presidents that you might know, Gary Davis, the controversial judge; Mabel taught him. He was in her class in the second grade. At that time, Westside School only went to the fourth grade. Kids in other grades went to Fifth Street School, which is now a county building at Las Vegas Boulevard and Clark, the white building. I think it's still white with a red tile roof. That was an elementary school. That was the biggest elementary school in town at that time. All the kids from the Westside came; it was integrated.

As time went on there were a few blacks living downtown at that time: Barbara Martheson and her brother; the Christianson family; Barbara Bates Kirkland, who is now a retired teacher here. They lived in the area. Other kids that lived in West Las Vegas came over to Fifth Street School. It was not segregated

racially. I guess with the population growth, most of the blacks left their property, abandoned it, sold it or something, and moved into West Las Vegas. So then we ended up with a big population and they had to build new schools. That's when Madison School came and the others, Carson and Jo Mackey.

**When you said that black people sold, abandoned -- whatever -- their property, why did that happen?**

Those who were able to stay and sell got what they considered a good price at that time. It wouldn't be very much in today's market. Many of them were renting, too. Mrs. Dakrisha Stevens, who was the matriarch of the Christianson family, owned that corner of Second and Casino Center. She had six or seven houses there that were rent houses. The town was growing and they felt the pressure. They weren't able to fix them up the way they should. Then she sold that. When Berkley Square came along, she moved there.

People lived where California Club parking lot is now on Stewart. Vance and Grace Moore owned a home there right off of Main Street. Mr. and Ms. Wilson. There were two people right there on Stewart. There were people living between First and Second in the alleys. There were houses behind houses in the alleys and whatnot. I never had any count, but it was not that many. They lived up as far east as Third Street -- maybe it was Fourth Street -- between Fremont and Stewart.

Zion United Methodist Church was the first black congregation in Las Vegas. At that time, it was at the corner of Second and Casino Center.

**Yes. That was the Horseshoe parking lot?**

Yes. That's where it is now, where the garage is over the northeast corner.

**Right. You've just said so many interesting things. I want to get back to Mabel. Which school did she teach at?**

She was a primary teacher at Westside. She was the first black teacher contracted with the board of education. I have to carefully say that because people say she's the first black teacher in town. She was not. There was another woman who was here, a teacher from Texas named Georgia Simpson. Georgia did not work for the school district. She worked for the railroad up at Apex. She taught, but she was not in the system. Mabel was the first one in the system. Georgia eventually came in through the system, too.

**How did that work with the railroad?**

Do you know what a gandy dancer is?

No.

The railroad up here at Apex, 60 miles up the road, they had a little village. Men were gandy dancers. Gandy dancers were people who fixed the railroad ties on the track. They used to -- they ain't no hambone, boom (singing). There were enough kids out there to have a small school. She was teaching out there in the rural school.

**Thank you for that.**

**Did blacks own businesses in that downtown area that we were just talking about?**

At one time, yes.

**Was that before you came?**

No. Some of them were there when I came in '46. On the southwest corner of First and Ogden, there was a restaurant owned by a Reverend Adams and his daughter, Pearl Adams. She eventually married, and her name is Bankette (phonetic). They had that up until almost the 50s. There was a man named Uncle Jake. His name is really Jake Ensley. Frank Wilson, another man, and he had a club and a bar down on First Street. It had some gambling in there.

**That wasn't Clarence Ray was it?**

Clarence was not in that at that time, I don't think. I read something that he had a club downtown or something. He used to play downtown a lot because he was a professional gambler, as I understand it.

There was a woman, Ms. Johnson, who owned the Beldie Hotel on First Street. She happened to be one of those ladies who did not bother too much with many in the Afro-American community. She owned a hotel and stayed there with it until she died. They finally tore it down. She worked as a maid in the place and had white people running it for her. She was very wealthy. She ended up with a lot of money. She ended up going to Los Angeles.

**She left here and went to Los Angeles?**

Yes. I understand she died some time ago. She had a daughter; she was about your color. She lived in Los Angeles. I never really knew her, but I heard about her.

**I want you to feel free to say anything you want to say.**

I have heard that the city would not renew Jack Ensley and Frank Wilson's license unless they moved west of the railroad track. They wanted to keep the license, of course. And they were not thinking about it in a discriminatory way. They moved. They moved their club to Jackson and E on the southeast corner and called it the El Morocco.

There were a couple of other clubs that had come into that area at that time. One was operated by Chinese people at the corner of Jackson and F Street. However, when I came in '46, it had burned. There was a place called the Harlem Club that was where what is now Owens and F. That also had closed by the time I came. It's my understanding they both operated during the early war years.

At that time there was very little development north of Washington in what was then called West Las Vegas. People started buying lots. They'd buy lots for \$50 in the desert and put tents on them. Couldn't get sunburned. There wasn't any indoor plumbing in a lot of the facilities. But the population continued to grow. As that population grew, the businesses that were there also thrived. Jackson Street was a very thriving little neighborhood at one time.

**I want to go back and talk just a bit about the school where Mabel taught. So she had all white coworkers at a point?**

Yes.

**How was that relationship?**

Good. There were maybe 15, 18 teachers. She was the only black in '46. The next year Henry Moore, H.P. Fitzgerald, and Elizabeth Carter came on. They all taught at that same school. Fitzgerald and Henry went to Madison when it was built in '52. Elizabeth Carter, by that time, had become ill and was disabled. Mabel stayed over here, and others came on, one being Lucy Lockett. I don't know whether you've come across that name out at UNLV. Dr. Lockett, who lives in Boulder City, taught kindergarten at Westside School for a long time before she went to the university. Mabel always felt that she was an excellent primary teacher, which she was, and believed in giving kids a good foundation in reading. She refused to take administrative courses. She was satisfied teaching.

The relationship with the people that you knew was fine. Several of them had lunch every day together because there wasn't anyplace to go. At that time, Mabel and I lived on Morgan Street. They would brown bag their lunch. There weren't any restaurants. They would come and have a good time for lunch.

This didn't mean everything was hunky-dory with everybody. It was still segregated in a way, by act rather than by consciousness. The president of NAACP had many Mormons and more on the board of NAACP. There was a state convention of NEA at the Frontier hotel. It was a three-day deal with a reception at the end. Everything went along pretty good and people attended. There weren't but four blacks

that went at that time. Then suddenly the hotel decided that the blacks could not attend. Of course, it ended by them taking the reception away from the hotels, and we went to the Las Vegas Municipal Golf Country Club. But the Frontier was very adamant. There's another story about Josephine Baker when she was here and the Frontier.

**Your community activities, being so involved in the NAACP and so political, that didn't interfere with her relationships at all with the school board or anything?**

Not that I know of. We went every place. At that time there weren't no minorities, not only blacks, but not any minorities here in Las Vegas who were so-called clerical, administrative, professional-type people. We thought we had accomplished a lot when we got a first clerical worker in the city hall.

**Wow. That's wonderful.**

**When you first got to Las Vegas, tell me what it was like. Tell me what it looked like, the attitude of black people on the Westside, those kinds of things when you first came as an Air Force man?**

It was called the United States Army Air Force at that time. They wouldn't let you fly. You were service unit.

As I said, I had found the weather was good and was conducive as far as the dry living and desert climate. When you came into town from Nellis, there used to be a sign right about where Owens is now. Owens didn't exist then, or Washington. There was a road sign that said, "Welcome to Las Vegas, Population 15,000."

It was a very pleasant town generally speaking aside from attempts at segregation that were not attempts. It was actually segregated. The theaters were segregated, the restaurants were segregated, the hotels were segregated, and to some extent the schools. They were never really altogether completely segregated because all the kids lived in that zone. That's what brought about a lot of things, including the decisions to start busing and whatnot.

I found it rather intriguing to see people living so contently in what was essentially a segregated area. There was some opposition and a few people who were outspoken at the time. Arthur McCants was the president of NAACP for over 20 years. Reverend William Stevens was president after McCants.

**When did McCants stop being president?**

I think '46. He was the president from '28 to '45. Reverend Bill Stevens, who was president in '46-47, had

his own little protests. He used to take a newspaper and go sit in a restaurant on Second Street, and Bob Baskin. Bob Baskin was a city commissioner. They wouldn't serve him, and he would just there. They would ignore him, and he would sit on a stool at the counter and read his paper. Somebody would come sit next to him, and Bob would say good morning to the reverend, saying how are you? He'd say, oh, it would be a good morning if they would serve me here. He'd just sit there and people would become embarrassed about it. Years later, in 1960, we were able to eliminate that kind of a deal. But there are a lot of stories that people can tell you.

**How long were you here before you got involved in the NAACP?**

About three days. I was in NAACP before I went into the service. As a child my parents used to take me to New York to NAACP meetings. What really got me -- we had a mayor named Ernie Cragin. He owned the El Portal Theatre on Fremont Street. The only place you could sit was the last three rows in the middle section. Reverend Stevens was the president of NAACP and I had just come to town. I hadn't been here but a month or so. I heard about a meeting that was going to be Sunday afternoon at the USO building, which was then on Jefferson Street. I went and got into an argument with the mayor about the segregated seating they had there. At that time there were only a couple of other theaters in town. One of his main excuses was because when they were building the dam and there were no air-conditioned places. Laborers would buy a ticket and go to the theater because it was cool. They were mostly black at that time. He made some remark about how they were they dirty -- they had been working in concrete and all that -- and brushing up against the women. We got into an argument from that. We never became friends, but he ended up appointing me to a couple of committees in those early days.

**But the mayor attended the NAACP meetings?**

Yes. Reverend Stevens had invited him to speak. He didn't know he was going to get those questions. I've forgotten what he was supposed to have been talking about. Reverend Stevens was very upfront in telling him about this segregation, as I told you about in the theater.

**Can you trace the NAACP presidents after Reverend Stevens? Can you trace them through the 60s?**

I could get some of them for you. I have a piece of paper here now that I've been trying to get them in order again. I had them at one time. McCants, Stevens, Woodrow Wilson, Lubertha Johnson, David Hoggard. McMillan followed me in 1960.

**These are two-year terms?**

Yes. They were two-year terms. I don't have all of them because they lost the records -- they claim in the fire. When you get down to Lavelle Gaines, Eleanor Walker, Donald Clark, and Marion Bennett. Marion Bennett served two separate times as did McMillan. There are a couple of others in between there that I can't even think of now. Robert Archie was the attorney.

**He must have been one of the more recent ones.**

Bob wasn't that recent. It was in the 70s.

**Charles Keller was in there somewhere.**

Charles Keller. That's right. How could I forget him?

**Okay. Now, you held the office of president. Did you hold any other offices?**

In the NAACP?

**Yes.**

I think I was vice president. You serve on the executive board by virtue of your office and then executive committee. Then you have the other committee assignments, the Freedom Fund and civil rights. We were doing all types of things.

**Tell me about some of the issues in the late 50s and in the 60s.**

One of the first ones that we went for was for the housing. We got a bill through the legislature, a housing act, which became the basis for what eventually became the so-called civil rights bill. That was the housing committee. I have a copy of that somewhere. We presented an integrated front. I can't think of the woman's name who did so much work on that. George Rudiak, who was an attorney here, was on the executive board of NAACP. He was a state legislator, and was the one who introduced our first civil rights bill. They gave him the kiss of death. He never was able to recover from that politically. He went on and continued to practice law, but he never was able to do anything in politics after that. It was all because he was one of those liberal, open-minded people who expressed himself. And it didn't work.

**Do you remember about the year that those housing activities were going on with the branch?**

Yes. They were in the late 50s. I don't know. One of these days I'll get it together.

**What are you going to do with all of your papers that you have related to the NAACP and the other community activities that you've participated in?**

That's a good question. I don't know. I'm afraid that if something happened to me right now, my family would just put a match to it. It would all go up. I don't think anybody's going to take the time to sort them

out. I have boxes of papers.

**Do you know that we have an archive over at the library?**

Yes, I know about it. She used to make me so mad. I've forgotten what her name was. When I was working she used to call me trying to get me to come out there and tape.

**I want to ask you about --**

There's something else I can tell you about my early days. I was on the police force here. A couple of weeks ago, I had lunch with a woman, a dear friend of mine who used to be a teacher with my wife. There were four of us. That was the Las Vegas Police Department at that time. There are four of us on there. Walter Childs, Mack Venture -- where is Herman Moody?

**Mr. Hoggard is showing me a picture of the Las Vegas police force when he was a member of it.**

There's Moody.

**And where are you?**

You're going to have to make that little mark now to see it again.

**Wow. You're going to have to give me a copy of that picture.**

**What other jobs did you have while you were here in the early years, when you came back?**

I started on the police force in November '47 and stayed until '49. I just couldn't take it anymore because of the segregation and the practices. The fellow Moody that I showed on there went on in September '47 and he stayed to retire. He's still here. After I left the police force, I ran a gas station unsuccessfully. Then in '52, I went to work for the school district as a truant officer and stayed there 13 years. In between that and the police department I also did construction work. I also dabbled in insurance and real estate, and passed the real estate board. I lost my license because I didn't renew it on time. In '65, I went to work for EOB.

**Tell me about EOB. What is that?**

It is the largest private non-profit agency in the state. It came about as a result of the launching of the war on poverty by Lyndon Johnson and people there. Our first director was a woman who had contacts in Washington and was on the staff at University of California at Berkeley. She had also been executive director of the lung association here in the state. She had a sense of social responsibility and a nose for what was happening. We in the community didn't know what she was talking about at that time. Her name was Elaine Walbroek. Nobody knows her name now.

**What is her last name again?**

Walbroek, W-a-l-b-r-o-e-k.

The first offices were at the corner of Paradise Road and Convention Center, in what was the Landmark -- that shopping center that was behind there. They had a suite of offices in there. We moved from there. I went to work when it was still there, and she was still the executive director. I went to work as assistant writer.

**Assistant writer?**

Yes, a program assistant I think they called it. Then it moved from there to where Walker Furniture is now on Highland. It used to be an office building. They had a restaurant in there and several other things. It didn't belong to Walker at that time. We moved from there to West Owens in what is now Nucleus Plaza. We had three of those office buildings down that eastern corridor. We were at Norwest Bank, the corner of Owens and H, 900 West Owens. We had all kinds of programs. We even had funding for them at that time. Of course, Head Start was our biggest programs at the time. We had Planned Parenthood -- not Planned Parenthood, but same thing, and the WIC program and transportation.

That's how KCEP came into being. We got funding for that. It started as a ten-watt station in 900 West Owens. Leo Johnson was my deputy for Manpower and he came up with the idea. We just applied for it. We got Bob Bailey to teach; he was the first instructor that we had for that. We also had the first casino dealer training program. Clarence Ray was one of our instructors. Q.B. Bush. Calvin Washington.

**I'm with Mr. David Hoggard in his home this morning. It is November the 17th, 1997.**

**Listening to where we left off the other day, it seems that when you joined the military, and when you came to Las Vegas, the segregation was kind of a shock to you. What were the relations like back in New Jersey?**

Segregation was there. Racial discrimination has always been in the area. However, I was never really conscious of it until I was about 11 or 12 years old. I always went to an integrated school. We lived in integrated neighborhoods. The one thing that was missing was that we didn't have any black teachers. The elementary school I attended in Jersey City had their first black teachers when one of my brothers was in the third grade. I was in the seventh or eighth grade. But I really was not aware. I went to school with kids of all nationalities.

The first time I really remember we went to Atlantic City on vacation. I was 11 or 12 years old. My father, one of my brothers and I were walking on the boardwalk. There was a Coca-Cola stand with an

umbrella where they were selling Coca-Cola. Being kids we said, daddy, can we have a coke? We got in line, and went up there. The sign said it was five-cents for a Coca-Cola. When we got there the man said a dollar ten or a dollar five or something like that. My father questioned him. Of course, we didn't get the coke and we walked away. He explained to me that they were doing this because -- at that time Atlantic City was just as segregated as any part of the South. South Jersey was just like being in the South at that time. They had separate elementary schools all through South Jersey at that time.

**Another thing that I wanted to follow up on, the woman who was instrumental in starting the EOB here, was she a black woman or a white woman?**

She was white.

**She was kind of left out in the cold at one point?**

No. Well, I never understood that. She was a person who had political contacts in Washington and was the director for the Nevada Lung Association when the War on Poverty was passed by congress. She lived in Reno. After the legislation passed, she moved here and recruited a number of people to be on a board for something that was coming. This was before the legislation had actually passed. She became the first director. After about a year, she left to teach at the University of California, Berkeley, and taught there until she died.

**Were there people from Washington, D.C., going out to a lot of cities doing what she did here?**

No. I think that she just happened to have an inside track and thought Nevada was a good place for them to put some of these programs at that time.

You have to go back and think about, how it was in '65 or '63 and '4 when Lyndon Johnson came in. It was really a carry forward from the Kennedy Administration. I have heard or read that between Kennedy's election and his inauguration that they had a brain trust in Boston or at Harvard. His brothers and other persons who became members of the cabinet and the White House staff sat down, and that is where the idea of the war on poverty germinated.

**We ended the tape the last time by talking about that casino training program that you had at the EOB. Do you remember a little about that?**

It was about '68 when the Economic Opportunity Board was established. We were receiving contracts from the Department of Labor. The staff thought we ought to try to do something for employment. There were no black people employed in the gaming industry outside of those operating in West Las Vegas at that time.

So we wrote a proposal and submitted it to Department of Labor under what was called the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP). We submitted and were funded. We received enough funding to establish a miniature live casino as a training site. It was located at 900 West Owens, part of Nucleus Plaza. That's where a lot of EOB programs started, including KCEP.

We recruited men who were knowledgeable about gaming, who had worked in the casinos in West Las Vegas at that time as dealers, supervisors or investors. We recruited enrollees who were financially eligible. You had to be low-income, and had to take a test. We ran it just like a regular casino. They had to come to work with their white shirts and black ties. They kept the hours, everything as they did at the regular casinos. As a result, Clarence Ray and Calvin Washington are the two names that come to mind. There was a Caucasian man who was also one of our instructors. I cannot recall his name. But Calvin and Q.B. Bush. Q.B. is still a dealer at the Hilton hotel now. They demanded people get to work on time. If they didn't have the GED, they had to pass the GED. After a year there, the many of the people were employed. They were the first ones that really went to the Strip out of that group.

**A few minutes ago you said something about investors. How does that work?**

Investors?

**You said something about a person could participate as an investor.**

That's wrong; I didn't mean that. I was saying that we had recruited people who were in supervisory positions. What I was referring to were part owners of clubs that were in West Las Vegas at that time. We used Jody Cannon, Uvalde Caperton and James Calvert. Those are the main ones that had the Cotton Club, which was the club on Jackson Street at that time. We got people from their establishment. Some of them, like Clarence Ray, had a little piece of action in those clubs. But we did not have any investors in our training operation.

**Thank you for that. I'm going to get off the subject, but I want to come right back to it.**

**Were those clubs over on Jackson Street all black-owned?**

From the time I came in 1946, yes. The reason I say before I came here is because there was one at the corner of F and Jackson that had burned down and Chinese people operated it. Where the VFW is now was also a Chinese-operated club. At that time, it was out in the desert and dirt roads. There weren't any houses or people around there.

**Getting back to the EOB, tell me how it works. Do you send a proposal to Washington and then get**

**money? Just tell me briefly how the whole thing works.**

It's very difficult to do briefly, and that whole operation has changed a lot. When the federal government passed the War on Poverty legislation, local communities were invited to submit proposals under certain guidelines. One of the guidelines was you had to have a board consisting of one-third of people who were elected officials or in government; one-third who were eligible for the program and who were living below the poverty guideline; and the other third could be community people and representatives. That was the structure of the governing board, and that was nationwide at that time. Most of them opted to apply and become private nonprofit corporations. Some went to the cities; instead of going nonprofit, became part of the city structure.

In Las Vegas, we applied and were a nonprofit organization. The first grant that we received was the Head Start grant. You were known as a community action agency or a CAP. You could contract with other organizations in the community. The first contract the agency had was with Operation Independence and Lubertha Johnson.

We went on from that beginning; I've forgotten what the amount of it was. It wasn't very much money. I'm sure it was less than \$50,000. As the War on Poverty grew and money became available through the Department of Labor, particularly for training and getting young people to work on their GEDs if they didn't have it, we ended up being the largest nonprofit agency in the state at that time. At one time, during the height of those War-on-Poverty years, we had budgets of \$12 and \$15 million that we contracted for or operated. And it's continued to grow.

Now that money has dried up. There is very little money. The whole structure has changed. They now have what they community block grant (CBG) money. That's the War-on-Poverty money. Now federal government contracts most of it to the state, and the state spreads it out within the community. EOB is still getting the biggest part of it; they are administering most of the money and it's still growing.

**Were those board members or are those board members paid?**

No, they are not.

**How many board members are there?**

There was a formula, which I don't remember. When we started out I think we had 46 or 48. It was really unwieldy. Now they have seven, I think. Another person you ought to contact is the present chairperson of the EOB, Ms. Verlia Davis, who is director of Social Services for Clark County.

**What is her first name?**

Verlia, V-e-r-l-i-a.

**Thank you.**

**I'm ready to go back to the NAACP. You told me all you could about the presidents and how many there were and some of the issues. I want to know first which years were you president?**

I was president in '56, '57, '58 and '59. I went out in January '59. Dr. McMillan succeeded me.

**Do you remember any specific issues that your administration handled?**

It was during the time that we were making our first efforts to get a civil rights bill in Las Vegas. I would have to go back because I succeeded Woodrow Wilson, and he succeeded Lubertha Johnson. That whole decade practically we were all friends and we all worked together. A lot of that went on from one administration to the other. We did a number of things and were trying to make living a little more agreeable for black people in the community. That went on in every administration I think.

**I don't know if you were there or not, but can you tell me about the meeting that took place at the Moulin Rouge in March 1960?**

You want to see a picture of it?

**Yes.**

I was there.

**Fantastic. I want you to put me in the room and tell me everything that happened.**

This was a culmination of having meetings every night in the community, at different churches, trying to corral people, and get them involved. It was kicked off at our banquet the first of January when Tarea Hall Pittman, who was the regional director for NAACP, and a very dynamic speaker, was our speaker at the Freedom Fund banquet. The only place we could have it was at the Convention Center. The hotels would not give us a place. Her theme that night was: Las Vegas, now is the time. She electrified the group that was there. At that time we had quite an integrated NAACP board and membership.

From that time until that meeting in April is when we set this up; we had these meetings going on and were developing strategies. Dr. McMillan took over that night as president. We kept working on it trying to let people know the necessity for their being involved, and what they could do for themselves and their children once we could get this and got their support. The community was much smaller. The black community was much smaller than it is now. And it was much more cohesive than it is now. We went from

church to church, and carried people every week. We had a meeting every night. We had some reluctant pastors and members, but the momentum was going.

It got to the point where we finally set a date when we would march. Of course, the powers that be, the political structure was aware of what we were doing. This was a time when Martin Luther King was starting down in Montgomery. All of that was helping to get us going. After we had set the date, more people became more interested. We had a definite time to go.

Dr. McMillan continued to provide leadership and had a great deal of support at that time. On the Friday before, Hank Greenspun came to us and said that he thought we would not have to march. It was a week before because we worked all that week trying to work with people. I don't want to start naming everybody who was there because I'll probably miss somebody. But I'll give you that list; I have it.

### **Wonderful.**

We had a meeting set for Saturday morning. We were to march at six o'clock on Saturday evening. We had divided ourselves up and assigned people to go to every hotel and club, west of our casino, at least two together to see if they would be accepted. Saturday morning at ten o'clock we met in what I guess was a conference room at the Moulin Rouge. It was closed, but we met there. Hank Greenspun, Milton Prell. Hank Greenspun was a life member of NAACP and used to speak at our meetings. Milton Prell ran what is now the Sahara hotel. It was the Club Bingo then. There wasn't any hotel there. Quest Turner, who was a county commissioner, Mayor Gragson, Senator Cannon, and Governor Grant Sawyer were all involved. He sent word that we would not march; that our demands were going to be met. There was no equivocation involved.

It was kind of a letdown in a way, but it was something that made you feel good you had done it. We met for a couple of hours that day. That night, at six o'clock, we went to every hotel. We assigned people. We went to every hotel, every bar, to see if anybody had any problem.

We had no problems except at one place -- what was the Sal Sagev, Golden Gate now. A man named Miller owned it. It was privately owned. A lot of clubs were privately owned at that time. Miller told us that he would sell before he would integrate. Monday morning Dr. McMillan and I went to visit with him. And he told us again. I had had experiences there before. My wife and I had been thrown out of that hotel before when we weren't doing any of this. I knew this was going to happen. He ended up selling it. He didn't integrate and he sold it in a short time.

But, otherwise, we had no problem at all. We sent people to restaurants. Gave them money, but they paid for their own meals. We had them test the bars and restaurants, and gamble. Not a thing was said. We did not have one bit of trouble other than that one place that I know about.

**Wow. Thanks for that.**

**What I'd like to do at this point, because I want to get to know some of the personalities in the community, is I'm going to throw out a name and I want you to tell me about that person, whether they were a president of the NAACP, what kinds of things you remember about this person, any incidents, any stories, anything like that. Reverend Davis.**

Reverend Davis, the pastor of Second Baptist, has been a member of the board at one time. He has never served as president and has been supportive of NAACP, but not always very active because of his other commitments.

**Tell me about Dr. McMillan.**

I met Dr. McMillan when he first came down to town in '56. We've been friends ever since. He and I still go to breakfast every now and then. He has always been a fighter. After he got involved he was reluctant to take on NAACP. But after he got his feet wet and got a taste of it, he has stayed. He has filed for any number of public offices. He was successful in making school district board. He has filed for county commissioner and for United States Senate.

That's something else we ought to talk about; when we all filed. We had a bunch of people in 1960 to file, but none of us made it.

**File for what?**

Everything that was on the ballot.

**And you did that for what reason?**

I was one of the candidates for the assembly, and it kind of got out of hand. Other people filed. But we filed for the state senate, the assembly, the county commission, whatever was on the ballot at that time. We got a black. At that time we had Republicans and Democrats filing depending upon the position. That's another story.

**Tell me about Charles Keller?**

Charles Keller came here in '60 or '61, passed the bar and became, I think, the first black attorney in private practice.

He was very active in NAACP was during that time. He was never president of NAACP. He was very active, and became the lightning rod for our programs because of his activities, and his knowledge, experience and commitment. When the civil rights bill was passed, he was the one really behind that and working at the state level.

**Tell me a little something about Woodrow Wilson.**

Woodrow Wilson was one of the first people I met when I came in 1946. He was working in Henderson at the chemical plant. There was a man named Senator Pat McCarran here who seemed to be opposed to the integration movement in any area. Woody had taken him on because of a strike they had at the chemical plant. That's the first time I remember him saying he was involved. Woody became president of NAACP, and I followed him. During those years he also was the founder of the Westside Federal Credit Union, and was with that until two or three years ago, when he retired.

**Did you ever have anything to do with the credit union?**

Yes. I was on the original board and chairman of the credit committee along with some other people. There were three people on each of the committees. I remained active for about ten years, but I have not been active in it for sometime.

**I cut you off before you finished talking about Mr. Wilson I think.**

He was also very active in his church. He was a member of Second Baptist. Then he became a registered Republican, which was a rarity at that time. We Democrats had been promised that we would get support and elect a black person to the state legislature. Well, things never seemed to fit just right. At election time, Republicans decided they were going to show us what they could do. At that time the election was at large; there were no districts. Republicans financed his campaign and he won the primary unopposed. He won the general election and became the first black member of the state legislature. He stayed there three or four terms, and then filed for the senate. Senator Joe Neal and he ran against each other, and Senator Neal beat him. As they say, the rest is history. Joe is still there. Woody also served awhile as a county commissioner, too.

**Tell me about Dr. West.**

Dr. West was a physician and a man with an excellent medical background. He had worked in public health service in Africa before he came to Las Vegas. He came here from Detroit and became the first black physician in the state.

Going back to Dr. McMillan. He was the first dentist, too.

After he became established there, he became interested in community work and established *The Voice* newspaper. That was *The Sentinel Voice* or *The Sentinel* I think they call it now. Dr. West took the idea and went working with it from *The Missile*. *The Missile* was the NAACP's paper. We couldn't keep it going on a voluntary basis. We were circulating it, giving it away. Dr. West had the time and the skill to work on it. It went to become a very successful newspaper.

**Did Dr. West ever become president of the NAACP?**

No.

**The last person I want to ask you about is Lubertha Johnson. Tell me about her.**

I met Lubertha the same year I met Woody. She had settled here and was running a daycare center for the housing authority in Henderson. She had married and purchased property in Paradise Valley on Sunset Road. She was a person very committed to civil rights. She was the first woman to be president of our branch, which was a very successful period of time there. She was the first black woman to be a licensed practical nurse (LPN) license in Nevada. She used to come to my house on her way from work, and we would visit and talk. We had a very good relationship. After she gave up nursing and working at the hospital, she started doing community work on a larger basis and was the organizer of Operation Independence. Operation Independence became the first delegate agency of EOB. That's where the first Head Start program was.

**Is that all that Operation Independence did, Head Start?**

No. Go back to Department of Labor. Manpower projects were coming in at that time. Operation Independence received a contract for a Manpower program and probably some other things. I was on that board, also. But at the time I had left Operation Independence because I was working with EOB.

Lubertha was an ideal woman, a very close friend. I loved her very much as a person. She was a woman with high ideals and great character. You knew where she stood no matter the situation. She was a very thrifty person and was very fortunate in accumulating some degree of resources helped support her other activities. She was always helpful and tried to do what she could for people she felt would benefit from some of her help and support.

**Tell me a little about Lubertha and your wife, some of things that they used to do. I read that they sometimes would go to places before blacks were allowed. Can you tell me about one of those**

## **incidents?**

The only one that I can think of that Lubertha and Mabel were involved together with involves Josephine Baker. It must have been in '58, Josephine Baker came to town and was appearing at what was then the Last Frontier hotel. She came to West Las Vegas looking for a beauty shop to have her hair done, and for the president of the NAACP. Woodrow Wilson was president at that time. She contacted him and told him that she wanted the NAACP fill up a table she was reserving at her show every night. This stirred up the small community that we had then as the word got around. We had an integrated board at that time, and people were designated.

On this particular night, the group was Lubertha, Ruth Dewey, who was a Caucasian teacher, Mabel, and someone else -- I can't remember now -- and I was also a part of that party. And we went to the Frontier, stood in line. People were looking, wondering what we were going to do there. When we got through the line, a guy named Jacob Kozloff was standing there. He was one of the owners of the hotel. He saw what we were doing. Instead of the regular employee admitting people two at a time and seating you, he was there and he refused to let us in. After some discussion, we just stood there. Someone went to Josephine Baker and notified her of what was happening. She came out and told him what they had agreed to and that she was going to do it. If they didn't, there wouldn't be any show. So very reluctantly they sat us over in the corner table where you couldn't see the show very well.

That's the only time I know. Of course, Lubertha was the spokesperson. We had agreed that we would not talk. We sent people every night, though, while she was here. We ended up having a big soul food dinner for her -- that's what she wanted -- at my house before she left town.

Mabel and Lubertha used to go around together a lot. I was working. I didn't know where they were going half the time and didn't ask. I know Lubertha was not with her, but Mabel went to a drugstore at 15th and Fremont; at one time that had a soda fountain. I don't know what Mabel was doing down in that particular area, but she went in and they refused to serve her. She sat there for a while, made her protest and told them she'd be back. When we did the thing in 1960 that's where she wanted to go, to let them know she was there.

**Good. Did you use the funds from the Freedom Fund dinner to staff the office during those years?**

No.

**Did you have a paid office staff?**

We did not, not when I was involved. Everything was on a volunteer basis.

**Did you at one time get money from the Resort Association to help the NAACP?**

I did not, but NAACP did under Charles Keller. That's when they used that to have staff or part-time staff.

**I know at one time most of the blacks in Las Vegas lived on the Westside. Was Lubertha the only one living outside of the Westside?**

Oh, no. She was the only one with such extensive holdings in Paradise Valley. Levi Irving and his wife lived on Sunset Road, down from Lubertha, when they first moved out. He became a casualty at Lake Mead and his wife left. There was another couple living out in that area. Charles Keller bought a house on Washington Street, which was just at the fringe of the West Las Vegas area, when he came. Prior to his arrival in town, Mrs. Thom bought another house on Bonanza Road, just west of Martin Luther King.

**Tell me something about the Voters League. Tell me how and why that got started.**

The NAACP could not participate in partisan politics as such, so we organized the Voters League as the political arm of the Las Vegas branch of NAACP. This was in '61, I think. Dr. West was the first president of that entity. We had an office on D Street where we were publishing *The Missile* and also using it for Voters League. Since we were prohibited from playing partisan politics as NAACP members, we organized this Voters League and were effective in several elections. It's gone down to some extent now. I guess people feel there's no need for it now.

**How long was it active?**

They considered that it's still active at election time. I was not there at the last election, but I understand there was a meeting of Voters League. We charged a dollar for membership I think. We had cards.

**You were telling me just a little bit about the Voters League. So it's still active. Do you still have elected officers?**

I am not sure because I have not been for two or three years. The last time I attended we were still electing officers. There was not as many people involved as there had been.

**Do you consider it at one point very successful in what they were doing, helping candidates --**

Yes. I cannot recall which elections it was that they were most effective. It was probably the first election of Oran Gragson for mayor. There's been support particularly for the black state legislators that have been elected.

**Did you ever have anything to do with the Human Rights Commission?**

Yes, I did.

**Could you tell me how that got started and the purpose of it?**

It came as a result of our meeting at Moulin Rouge in 1960. Bill Deutsch, who is deceased I think, was appointed either chairperson or convener, and was eventually elected as the chairman. The purpose was to try to be a vehicle for people who were having problems with integration, as this was the same time when we were integrating the town. Lubertha and I were on that original committee. I can't think of what other black person was on the commission, but it was integrated.

**So how did it function? What did it actually do?**

It was a volunteer organization. We never could get any funding for it. We met at the city hall once a month. We listened to complaints, if there were any, and tried develop a remedy. We also were interested in trying to spread the word to other organizations, like the unions, the ADL Conference of Christians and Jews, and churches that would be supportive of whatever was going on. We never were able to get any money to really make it a human rights commission. Now that's the local commission. There was eventually a state commission that still exists.

**The state commission is the one that Bob Bailey was part of?**

Yes.

**Was Bob Bailey also on the local one?**

No.

**You said that it is still going on? The statewide one is still in effect?**

As far as I know. It's called the Equal Rights Commission now.

**Okay. So it's the same thing. We're almost out of time. I think you're going to have to leave in just a few minutes.**

**Tell me about our black community today. Could you tell me where you think it stands when it comes to equal job opportunities on the Strip or in the gaming industry?**

Very low in comparison. I think we have lost some ground. I can't prove it, but just my observations. There was something called the Consent Decree, too. Have you heard about that?

**Yes, of course.**

That is another thing Lubertha and I worked on.

**Tell me a little about that. That was Charles Keller and some other people also.**

We got that decree during Charles' time. The Resort Association agreed that they would hire, upgrade, so forth in proportion. I think it was proportion to the black population. We used it as an entree to stay in for a number of years. But the town grew and there are a lot of places, a lot of hotels, not a part of the Consent Decree now. I don't know that they still meet, but they might. The hotels that are members, if they are still meeting, they are doing so to stay in compliance. They meet, drink a cup of coffee and that's it; anyone who's been around the industry a little bit can see the difference. Other minorities have taken over. I don't know whether there's any blame on our side or not. They always say we can't get to work on time or we don't work.

**I don't agree with that.**

I don't either.

**But I know they say it. When that Consent Decree passed in the early 70s, could you see a major influx of black workers in the casinos, dealers and those decent jobs?**

Yes. There were quite a few dealers at that time, right after that and during that period. We had dealers, front desk people, a few cocktail waitresses and even an increase in the number of people in housekeeping and supervisory positions. I'm sure that we still have one or two people in top positions at hotels that we never hear about. There's a big executive there at Circus Circus and a guy at ITT, a big vice president.

**Why don't we know about them?**

I think there are a number of reasons. One, they live in a different world.

**This is Claytee White and I'm with Mr. David Hoggard in his home. Today is March 4th, 1998.**

**How are you this morning?**

Fine. Thank you. And you?

**Good. Thank you.**

Good.

**The last time we spoke we had just finished talking about that Consent Decree that passed in 1971. We were talking about some of the black people who were now in some of the higher-level jobs in the casinos. Do you want to continue talking about that just a little?**

I think what I was talking about some of the people who have risen to executive positions in the hotel industry and the gaming industry, that are not well known in the community. At various times there have been Afro-American executives working here for the Hilton Corporation. They move them to different

hotels quite often all around the world, but there's usually an Afro-American in a vice presidential position there. International Gaming Technology (IGT) has a man that is vice president, but I cannot recall his name. He works at their hotel here on the Strip. I think MGM has a person, or had a person when they were having a number of fights there. I think I saw him in a newspaper with the title of vice president. These are people that we don't know about who are in policymaking positions that did not get involved in the community usually.

**For those jobs that are a little lower than that, dealers and cocktail servers and some of those very visible jobs that usually pay quite good money, do you see enough African-Americans in those jobs?**

No. Percentagewise, we are losing out. We have less people in those jobs than we had 15 years or 20 years ago. This is partially due to the other influx of other minorities into the community. And there is still the thing called racial prejudice. In many instances, the hiring people prefer those of other descent than Afro-Americans.

In the early 70s that we had a higher percentage. It's hard to even see now an Afro-American in the lower positions. You can hardly find one as a porter, and porter jobs used to be our jobs.

**It's been mentioned several times over the past few years and now Mr. Johnson at BET is talking about it again -- what do you think about the idea of a black casino?**

Having gone through this for a number of years with various groups and talking about it all this time, I think that Mr. Johnson has a better opportunity to have a fruitful investment on the Strip than has been available before. We know the story of the Moulin Rouge and what had happened there. But I think it is ideal if Johnson can join in a joint venture with Hilton and blacks have control of the operation. I think it's one of the best things ideas that's come along.

The problem all along has been that we didn't have any money to finance anything. People who had a little property or a little money didn't invest it with that type of business. So I think it's a good opportunity, really. You can't tell what'll break through on it. We, as a group, have been shut out of the opportunity even purchasing any stock in any of these corporations except for the big international ones. Then the cost of the share is so high that most of us can't buy enough to make it worth our while for an investment.

**You just said something about financing that makes me think of another subject. In the early 40s, even before you got here, do you know how did some of those first migrants into Las Vegas finance their homes?**

My personal experience is that in '46, before Mabel and I married, we were looking for some property. We found property at 711 Morgan, which consisted of eight 25-foot lots and a house that was built by the then owner, who was an engineer on the Union Pacific Railroad. He financed the house. We paid \$6500 for the property, though I've forgotten the amount down. He just wrote his own contract, we signed it and had no problem with it. We financed it and paid him off in the regular rate and time. The interest was practically nothing. There were other people did the same thing.

Institutions would not loan money to buy houses on the Westside, or to owners of property or to build a house. It was a well-known fact back in the mid 40s, early 50s. You could go to either one of the two banks that were in town and borrow money to buy a Cadillac from Cashman, but you could not get a dime for your house or to build a house. Property was much cheaper than it is now. People were buying lots in West Las Vegas for \$50 a lot. At that time the average person was making less than a dollar an hour in wages. But they accumulated. People were living in tents and renting and living in shacks until they could get a foothold, particularly those that came from the southern part of the country looking for better employment opportunities.

Then there were several Caucasians who had been here a little longer than we had and had accumulated a little bit. And they started putting money up and you could borrow money, take a mortgage. There were several of those. The Cobbs were one. They owned all of that land up on the hill as we called it. That was Carlton Square where now you can't get in; many of the streets are named for ministers up there. I remember Mr. Cobb coming to a Westside Federal Credit Union meeting and begging people to take some of this land off of his hands for \$25 down and \$20 to \$25 a month for a lot. I've forgotten what the price was.

Same thing is true of that area encompassing Madison School and Cunningham. Cunningham Drive was named for Mrs. Cunningham, who bought that land from a man named Zogg. It was called the Zogg track. She bought that land from him and divided it up, all those houses along I Street, J Street, Madison, Monroe, in that area. Mrs. Cunningham died several years ago. Her daughter -- I think her only daughter -- died last year.

**Those names that you just mentioned, the Cobbs and the other people, they would carry the paper for you?**

Yes. That's correct.

**Okay. Not through an institution, but just them personally?**

That's right. They probably were borrowing money from an institution. I think that they had a personal conscious feeling that they were doing something to help, which I guess they were. A lot of people did not take advantage of it. If you worked and saved, you could save \$50 in a month, buy a lot and move your trailer on it or put a shack up, and put an outside toilet. That's the way a lot of them did in the early 30s and 40s. Some of them were still there when the big migration came in the late 40s.

**Do you know any of the women and men who worked in the casinos at that time ever borrowing money from the casino owners to build houses?**

I am not aware of that. But your question brings to mind a couple of men who were porters in the casinos, who seemed to do better than others, and had a close contact. At that time, you would see the owners every day and talk to them. I can think of Eddie Lofton who worked on Fremont Street at the Pioneer hotel. He was former treasurer of the local branch of NAACP.

Will Beckley owned it. He would let Mr. Lofton have money. He bought some property like that. Benny Binion was known to help some of his employees, particularly the Afro-American employees, the people who were maids and porters, and did not have opportunities to get a bank loan because nobody was getting a bank loan at that time, no Afro-American.

**Just remaining on the Westside for a bit, did you and Mabel ever go out in the evenings over on Jackson Street?**

Yes.

**Could you tell me what that was like, what it looked like? I know people have told me that you could walk from one club to another. Could you tell me what the atmosphere was like on a Friday evening or Saturday night?**

It depends upon the time you're talking about. When I first came here, the Cotton Club at E and Jackson, on the northwest corner, was the place. It had a little dance hall room in the back and a cafe in between there. They ran a bar and gambling. It was one of those smaller places. Across the street was the original El Morocco, run by a man named Lindsey. That was what he was known by. His name was Frank Wilson. That also was a nice place. It wasn't quite as large as the Cotton Club, and it didn't have dancing. Would you believe the original Ink Spots appeared there? They were in town singing, and they got them to come over there. That was back when Bill Kenney, who had that high-pitched voice, was in the Ink Spots. They

would have bands on the weekends sometimes. The Brown Derby was at the corner of Monroe and D Street. That is now a church. P.L. Jefferson owned that.

Three people owned the Cotton Club, as I recall: James Calvert, Jody Canon, and Lee Jolley. Then Jolley dropped out or was bought out, and Uvalde Caperton, who is James Calvert's nephew, came from Texas in '46. He and his wife became the operators of it.

In the early 50s, the Elks had a building a couple of doors from the Cotton Club on Jackson. On Saturday nights they would have jam sessions. At that time the black stars like Sammy Davis, his uncle and the trio would walk up and down Jackson Street, and shoot pool and come to the jam sessions. Pearl Bailey, who lived around the Shaw Apartments on Van Buren, was among those who appeared. Mrs. Simpson had a place at Adams and F Street that several of the so-called stars of that era, Sugar Charles Robinson and Arthur Lee Simpkins the singer, would be at. Lena Horne was coming to town, but she never stayed in West Las Vegas. I think Cab only came here once. Katherine Dunham and her group were here. What's the one who still sings the French song?

**Not Josephine Baker?**

She was around there. She was in Katherine Dunham's troupe at that time. I can't think of it.

**You just said a name that I'd like for you to spell. I think it's Caperton. What was that first name?**

Uvalde, U-v-a-l-d-e.

**And Caperton is with a "C" or a "K"?**

A "C." He's still living here.

**Oh, good. You just mentioned three of the more popular clubs over there: the Cotton Club, the El Morocco, and the Brown Derby. Was the Town Tavern also one of the more popular ones?**

Yes. When I came in '46, there was a beauty shop on that corner where the Town Tavern is now. Florence Elmore, Mabels' cousin, owned it. Over the years she got rid of it and Earl Turman started the Town Tavern. After Earl's operation ceased, about the time that Moulin Rouge came along, they opened the New Town Tavern. It was a very popular place.

These places changed names. On the opposite corner there was the Louisiana Club. Before that it was called something. There was the Club Ebony at the corner of E and Jackson on the southwest corner. It was not very large. Uncle Jake, whom we talked about in the early interview, and Lindsey operated that for a number of years. Around the corner from them was a little restaurant that Helen Hall was working at

when I came here. Vera and Joe Horton were operating the restaurant. Then a man named "Big" Jim Tatum from Oklahoma came and opened up a barbeque place in that spot. It was an interesting operation. Andy Bruner had the first liquor license store at the corner of D and Jackson. He also had a laundry mat. Alvin Bowles had the pool hall on Jackson Street.

At that time sidewalks were limited and it was rough walking. But people, particularly on weekends, would congregate in those places and go from one to the other. Most times except for the jam sessions you could just go in, sit, have your libation and enjoy whatever socializing was going on at the moment.

**You said except for the jam sessions.**

Jam sessions you paid to go in.

**So those were not just impromptu. Those were planned.**

Many of them were planned. But when we had the main people you never knew when they might or might not come over. Usually they would accommodate by just singing a song or two. They were not the main attraction there.

**I see. So if Sammy Davis Junior just happened to walk in?**

He might do a little comic stuff. He might not do anything. But if people see him walking into the Cotton Club, the word gets around and people started coming from other places. There's Sammy.

**I see. Was the Cotton Club the biggest of those four or five that you just talked about?**

At that time, yes.

**Thanks for that information. That was good.**

**One of the things that I did not get from you during our first interview when we were talking about family is I didn't get the name of your first wife.**

Her name was Margarite Chapman. She was born in Hackensack, New Jersey, and that's where we were married.

**I think that was the only piece of information I was missing.**

**You told me about getting ready to do that big march in 1960 that did not take place. One of the things you told me is that you had meetings almost every night at the various churches in the community. Who planned all those meetings? Who did all that legwork?**

We did. I can't name everybody, but NAACP was at the forefront of it. It was all volunteer work. We didn't

have any office anyplace; we just worked out of homes, and by telephone and personal contact. It was a much smaller community than it is now. The black community was much smaller. Ninety-nine percent of it was between the railroad and H Street, and between Bonanza Road and Harrison. We did not have anywhere near the number of churches then that we do now. There were six, seven, eight prominent churches at that time. That's where we usually got our strength, from the church.

**I know there were mostly men in leadership positions in the NAACP at that time. I think Lubertha Johnson was a president at one point. Can you give me some idea of some of the other roles that women played?**

At that time we had a very integrated board, racially integrated as well as sexually integrated. We had a rabbi, and a bishop in the Mormon Church. Earl Bruin, was his name. The first rabbi we had was Rabbi Leibowitz. Harry Levy, who was a very prominent city commissioner and a prominent member of the Jewish community, was on the board at that time. Ilene Brookman, who was a former senate person who still lives here, was on the board. Those are all Caucasian people. Flora Dungan was another one, who the university named a building after. I'm sure going to leave somebody out, but the names I recall now are Woodrow Wilson, Lubertha Johnson, Mabel Hoggard, and Ruth Dewey. She's Caucasian and was secretary of the branch for a while. Louise Darcey, Louise Hayden at that time, was the secretary for a long time. Louise Miller was another secretary. Those last two are still living here in the community. I'm trying to think of other women because we did have a number of women. James Gay the III -- I forgot him -- he was on the board.

**Was his wife active?**

Not too active, but she was supportive.

**Were there any special things that the women did that were memorable? The national civil rights movement had a lot of women that were very active. Those names didn't come out until years later. I would like to see if I can put together the names of the women. I know Lubertha and your wife, Mabel. I know how active they were. But those are the only two names that I really hear over and over again. Now that you've given me some other names, are there any special things that any of those women did that you remember?**

Yes. They spearheaded fundraisers for NAACP. I remember we had a very successful picnic up on Mount Charleston. We wondered whether people would pay to drive that far, but they did. It was spearheaded by

women, including Gertrude Rudiak, the wife of attorney George Rudiak. George was on the board at one time. Gertrude Rudiak and Peggy Ramirez were among a number of other people who did all the work for that barbeque. They carried the meat up on Mount Charleston and cooked it up there. People came to it and supported it. We did quite well with it. That's one of the areas.

When Freedom Fund Seals first came out -- we would have NAACP Christmas Seals drive -- women would often head that up. Ruth Dewey was one of them. We had a membership committee that was rather active at that time, gathering memberships year-round.

**The Freedom Fund dinners were probably your largest money raisers?**

Yes.

**Was a lot of that planning done by women?**

Yes. If you look back over the years, at some of the programs and the committees, it changes as people have stayed. In recent years, Sarann and Ida Gaines, Ilene Parker, Berla Davis have all been very active in helping. I shouldn't start naming, but when you look back to the last five, six, eight, ten years in the program, you see the people. They've had their share, now. It's true they haven't had but two female presidents, Eleanor Walker and Lubertha. I don't know that that was intentionally done to keep them from running.

**Are you still on the executive board now?**

Yes.

**Since I have been in Las Vegas, the NAACP branch here has been through a lot of turmoil. Can you give me some idea why you think that this is beginning to happen, not just one thing, but a whole series of incidents one after another?**

There are several things that contribute to that. One factor is we have had an influx of new people who are not well grounded in NAACP procedures, policies and programs. Another factor is the fallout of the problems that national office has been having, which comes down to the local level. One of the other problems is that many people become active in NAACP, but they bring their own agenda and run into trouble quite often because their agenda does not coincide with what they should be doing for NAACP.

**I have found some old newspapers on campus. I think I may be able to identify who was president when through the years, if I can find enough of the newspapers. Can you tell me who the officers are right now?**

Yes, some of them. President is Reverend James Rogers. First vice president is Linda Howard. Treasurer is Joanna Wesley. Secretary is -- what is that woman's name? She works at Caesars.

**We can come back to her name. So does the Las Vegas branch have more than one vice president?**

Yes. I can't think who the second one is. I think the second one is resigned. I think we've had two vice presidents, but I'm not sure either one is active at the moment or the position is filled.

I filed for the assembly. It became contagious and everybody wanted to file for an office. Dr. West filed. Dr. McMillan filed. Reverend Leo Johnson filed for the water district. We also had a hospital board at that time. It became too complicated and was a disaster. No one won. We didn't have the experience, and we didn't have the money either. Nobody was successful. Out of that was the next go-round for Woodrow filing. Sawyer was the governor. Democrats had promised us all this stuff, but they really weren't doing anything. Republicans picked Woody because he had been a lifelong Republican and was prominent in the community. At that time everybody ran at large; there were no districts. They decided they were going to show the Democrats what could be done. They got Woody to consent to run, and they elected him. He was elected by a white vote. There weren't two-dozen black Republicans in the county at that time, which shows that it could be done.

I have always felt that running at large is much better because all people who are elected are beholden to all of the voters. When you develop districts and zones, you get five persons on the city council, and you elect that one out of your black zone and say we have one on the council. But that's all he has, too, is that one. If he can't swing the votes from the other four, he or she is not going to make it. Same thing is true statewide. The county commission and all these people they didn't want to run because they had to go up to Mesquite and out to Pahrump.

**Before this you were just talking about that time period after the 1960 integration. I want to go back to 1955 when the Moulin Rouge opened. I want to know about that night.**

It was a gala affair.

**What does it look like? Put me inside the Moulin Rouge. What was it like?**

It was a beautiful place. It would compete with any casino that existed in Las Vegas or Clark County at that time. It was staffed correctly and fully. They absolutely had the best waiters in town. People really couldn't believe it. They had found some from Omaha and Kansas City who had been waiters on trains, and had experience at other supper clubs in other parts of the country. Had the maître d'. They were fully dressed

and looked real good. They had on those red jackets, the red uniform with the brass buttons. Everybody acted as if they had been doing it all their lives.

The place was jammed. The first three nights the show was by invitation only; they had one night for public officials, one night for the local community -- just as they do now when they open these hotels. NAACP went the second night. I remember it very well. I'm sorry I lost that picture. Lubertha, Woodrow, Mabel, Ms. Dewey, Peggy and Phil Ramirez. We were all in this big fanlike topper back to the booth. That was the decor of the place. It was kind of off-purple orchid motif. It was just like going to any other place in town. Most of us had not had that experience.

Everybody who was working was polite and glad to have a job, from dishwasher to -- I'm not sure what they call the top black person in there. I can't think of the man's name that fronted the money. Clarence Ray, Jimmy Gay and Q.B. Bush were casino executives. They probably brought some experienced hotel people, black people from Chicago or someplace, to work the front desk at the executive level. I can't remember who worked other than that.

**Did you ever know what the breakdown of the employees were, the African-American percentage, Caucasian?**

I never thought about it, but it must have been 99 to one.

**In favor of?**

Afro-American. There were two or three very top people and owners that were known. They must have had a payroll of at least 25 of the 250 to 300 people, counting maids, porters, and everybody. All the maids and porters were black. All the dealers were black. There may have been a Caucasian who had some say over the casino. I don't know whether we had any trained slot mechanics. There's an area where they may have had to hire people from other hotels or that worked in other clubs.

**Tell me about the attitude of people who lived on the Westside, what their attitude toward the opening of the Moulin Rouge, the business owners over there.**

The average person thought it was great. No question about that. Some of the business owners became concerned because they felt it was going to kill their business, but it did not. It really enhanced their business because the people who were in the show and who had these good jobs were now -- in order to get away from their place of work, the only place they could go was the Town Tavern, the Cotton Club or the El Morocco. The New El Morocco had just opened. It did not hurt their businesses at all. One or two became

leery and probably expressed some feeling about it.

After the Moulin Rouge closed, there was a big drop in that business on Jackson Street. That, coupled with more access to public accommodations across the country, affected the black business area of Las Vegas, as it did in a lot of communities during those years.

**The Moulin Rouge closed in November of 1955. So there was no integration at that time.**

That's right.

**The business on Jackson Street wasn't affected right away.**

That's right.

**Okay, good. When the Moulin Rouge casino portion closed, did the hotel continue to run or did the whole thing close in November?**

They operated the rooms and suites for a while. The hotel was comprised of three separate buildings. There was one where the casino was, which had a hundred rooms. There was the Momark Motel, which is still exists and is right beside the Moulin Rouge now. On the Westside of that was another motel called West Motel. That one has since been destroyed. It was all under the complex of Moulin Rouge. I don't know the intricacies of the association, but they were all owned by different groups of Caucasians. I presume they had a corporation at the top. When the casino closed, they still operated this, and the Momark and the West had their own operation. Momark is now used by state and county inspector, and is full all the time of public assistance recipients.

**So those other two other places were not actually part of the Moulin Rouge?**

It was all the Moulin Rouge at that time.

**Today, I know that the Moulin Rouge is being remodeled. Do you know anything about this or about the person who's doing the remodeling?**

Nothing except what I read in the paper.

**That's all I've heard also.**

I've heard that he's moving along with it quite well. I have never been there. I have not seen it.

**The last thing I want to talk about is a little about Mabel. I know that she taught school. I want to know how she had time to get involved as much as she did in the community -- and I know how difficult it is to teach school.**

We did a lot of things together, particularly being involved in NAACP and the civil rights movement, going

to places, being thrown out and that kind of thing. But I don't know how to answer you when you say find the time to do it.

**I know that women usually especially at that time --**

And she was a good cook, a good provider, home person.

**That's what I'm saying. Most women had to take care of all that. I know that she was rearing a son.**

We had two sons.

**And she had a son.**

He was not living here at that time.

**So she was helping you to rear two sons, and teaching school full time. I know that she was really, really good friends with Lubertha and they did things together. I just wanted to know how she just found the time to squeeze that in. Did she do it along with her church work or --**

Some of it I guess because she was also member of the church. Her mother lived with us for a few years. After she died in '52, she was freed up for a little more. But I never thought about it as being confining. As I said, we did a lot of things together. I was doing various works and working at the time, sometime having two. But you still got it done.

**A lot of people get it confused because at one time there was a march on the Strip that was led by Ruby Duncan. Was there ever a march here in Las Vegas, a demonstration, a march on the Strip led by the NAACP?**

No. There was another one -- I don't remember the year -- the night of a fight at the Convention Center. Bob Bailey and a group were protesting jobs or something. They tried to have a march. But NAACP never did march as a group. Some of us went and supported Ruby at the Stardust and threatening all that. And some of us supported this other one I'm talking about.

**Was that just a demonstration someplace or was it --**

I think it was a demonstration. It wasn't a march. You might ask Bob about it.

**Okay. I will.**

**I want to thank you so much. We're almost out of time. Is there anything else that you would like anyone listening to this or anybody doing research that's going to include the African-American community? Is there anything else that you'd like for them to know about early Las Vegas?**

I cannot think of anything now. I've enjoyed the time we spent and I hope it meets your satisfaction when

you get it together. I am hoping that I am able to repeat most of this once more for my family and do my family history, as well as the early days in Las Vegas because there is a lot of information. I'm sure we've skipped over and missed a lot not intentionally, but time constraint. I would like to stay in touch, and see how you make out. I'm sure you'll succeed.

**I know that you're going to put a book together or something like that. What have you decided to do with all of your papers? You probably have more information here about the NAACP, about Mabel being one of the first teachers in the county. What do you plan to do with all those papers?**

I don't know. I have several pieces of paper that I know libraries would like to have. For instance, somewhere I still have Mabel's first contract. I also have the original when I filed for the assembly in 1960. Those kinds of things; they are in boxes out here. I don't know how I'm ever going to get through it all. I've told my son that if I leave it unexpectedly, I'm sure a lot of it will be lost because nobody is going to take the time. I have boxes of stuff.

**When you go through those boxes and run across pictures, I want you to call me because I want to come out and go through pictures with you.**

Okay. I will do that.

**Okay. Great. Thank you again.**

You're welcome.

**(End Tape 3, Side B.)**

I am Jeremiah David Wright Hoggard, and I reside in Las Vegas, Nevada. This is July 13th at 9:00 a.m. Pacific Time. I would like to talk a little bit about my family background. My maternal grandparents, both of whom I knew in my youth, both were raised in North Carolina. Both of them were the product of white slave owners and black women. My maternal grandfather's name is Wright W. Cherry. He married Melinda Gilliam sometime after the Civil War. There are several stories about how that came about. They had 13 children, four boys and nine girls, several of whom became educators. During the Reconstruction days, my grandfather was on the school board in North Carolina in Bertie County.

My mother, Symera Cherry, was next to the youngest daughter of the nine children. She married my father, Reverend Gerald Myer Mathew Hoggard, on June 26th, 1912. I am the oldest of seven children of that union. Six of us lived to adulthood. We had one die as an infant; his name was John Hayward. My mother, prior to marrying my father, was a schoolteacher in North Carolina. Of course, it was a segregated

system then. She taught in small places called (Padacazie) and (Roduco). My father had been previously married and was a widow with two daughters when they married. He was pastoring in the AME Zion Church in New Jersey Conference. After they married, he brought my mother to Westfield, New Jersey, the AME Zion Church in Westfield on Dinah Street. That's where they went as a bride and bridegroom. In the early part of 1914, they were transferred to Jersey City, New Jersey. That's where I was born on November 25th, 1914.

My siblings are: Jay Clinton Hoggard, retired bishop of AME Zion Church ,who devoted all of his life to church work; Reverend Aaron T. Hoggard, a retired schoolteacher and a minister. In fact, all of us are retired now. I'm naming them in sequence. Dr. Phillip P. Hoggard, my brother, who has a doctorate in education, taught in New Jersey and also at the University of Pennsylvania at what use to be Chaney. It's something else right outside there. Then the youngest brother -- there were five boys. The youngest one is Jay Francis Hoggard, also a retired teacher. He retired from the Newark school system and still lives in New Jersey. My sister is Semer Merriam Hoggard White, a retired social worker who worked in New York and New Jersey, and retired last year from that profession.

The childhood days I can recall go back to about the end of World War I. I remember one of my mother's brothers coming to our house in Jersey City. He was on his way home after having been overseas for some time. He was also an educator and became a college president at Kitchell College for the AME Church in North Carolina for a while. He then taught at A & T, ending his career in Knoxville College.

I had a very happy childhood. I guess I did not realize how well off we were until we were grown and saw how other people did not have all the things that we thought necessary for good family living. My parents were very understanding. My father was practically a self-made man as a minister. He did several things before he went into the ministry. After he got to Jersey Conference, he attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City and built the largest AME Zion Church in Jersey at that time and had the largest congregation. He, as far as I know, had very little education as a young person. He dabbled in photography and in logging in the woods. He also was a coachman for white families in those early years. That was in the days of his previous marriage. However, our parents did provide us with a good foundation, a spiritual foundation, as well as an academic foundation.

I never attended a racially segregated school. I was amazed when I got to see college. It was like Lincoln in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and how those institutions were not as I had pictured segregated

schools were. They were really --

**This is the black schools you're talking about.**

Yes. In my early education, I went to Public School Number 12 in Jersey City and graduated from the eighth grade. It was an integrated school, but there were maybe 25 to 30 black students in a school of 500 to 600 kids. That's the way I grew up and that's all I knew. Although New Jersey was a free state supposedly, even when I was a child the southern part of the state was segregated education-wise. They had separate so-called colored schools in New Brunswick. However, we did not have that problem in Jersey City. I went to that one school for eight years. Most of my siblings also graduated from that school as the years went by.

Then I went to Lincoln High School in Jersey City, which was within walking distance of our home. We lived in a parsonage that was next door to the church my father had built on Communion Paw Avenue. The library, the high school, the elementary school and the city park were all within walking distance of our residence. Our neighborhood was integrated. There were some Polish families and German families that lived across the alley behind our house. And kids played together. There were a lot of European immigrants who came over at that time particularly as masons and bricklayers. Their children or grandchildren all grew up. There were some Polish, some Jewish, some Italian. A lot went in businesses for themselves. We knew all of them.

**There was a true melting pot.**

There was. The thing that was missing, and I didn't realize at the time, was that there were no Afro-American teachers. I had never had that opportunity to have, when I was in school, a black teacher. My brother, who was the third born, had the first black teacher assigned to the school that we attended, as his third grade teacher. Her name is Lorraine Gray. But I never did, and it never crossed my mind. I must have been ten or 11 years old when I realized all these kids I played with and went to school with; we walked to school together, we had no problems, but then on Sunday, I was at church and they weren't there. There wasn't anybody there. I didn't see them. They were going to their church. They were Catholic mainly and Jewish. The Jewish kids, even in those days, went to synagogue after school, and had school after regular school was out.

I realized that there was something. About that same time in 1925, we went to Atlantic City as a family. My father and mother carried us to vacation for a week. My father, my brother Clinton, and I were walking on the boardwalk. There was a Coca-Cola stand out there with an umbrella on it, and it had a

five-cents Coca-Cola sign. As kids, when you saw the sign, you wanted a Coke. We went up to the stand, and my father ordered three Cokes. He put the 15 cents down for the three. The guy told him it was three dollars and 15 cents. He said no, the sign says. He said but for you it's a dollar-five each. Of course, we did not take them. I couldn't understand really why at the moment. My father explained to me. That's the first real experience I had with knowing that segregation was discrimination. Atlantic City at that time was a very segregated community.

In my sophomore year at Lincoln High School, my father was transferred in the AME Zion Church to Hackensack, New Jersey; the three older siblings went to Hackensack, my two older brothers and myself. This was a different experience for us. It was a community where the people. This is back in the early 30s when the Depression was on. Most of the black people in that community were domestic employees for wealthy white families. Some of the best jobs people had then were chauffeurs. They wore a uniform. Women, of course, did housework. One or two men were butlers in homes that could afford them at that time. At that time, there were five or 6,000 black people in the community. There was no segregation as such, no written segregation. But in some of the theaters you couldn't sit where you wanted. That type of a thing. Some restaurants would not permit or accept you as guests in their establishments. As a rule schools were not segregated. It was a new experience because it was still kind of a rural area. A lot of the people had come from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Maryland in the early years between World War I and II. Most of the people had nice homes. There was not a real slum area anywhere in the town at that time. It was conducive to education and social life.

That's where I became involved in YMCA. We had a Y group that was all black, but we couldn't use the Y except on certain days. Russell Logan took charge of that youth group. We had a basketball team and that kind of thing. By the time you're 14, 15 years old, you realize that there's something else out there besides just the education.

In 1939, I left Hackensack. My folks had moved to Newark, and I went down there looking for better employment. I became involved with a man who had a distributorship for all of the Negro papers in northern New Jersey: the *Amsterdam News*, the *Afro-American*, *The Virginian*, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, all of the national papers. Jet was just coming out then. He needed somebody to work for him for a while. In between, I took the post office exams and worked as a temp in a post office in summers and holidays. I also worked in a black drugstore as a soda jerk. I used to make the sodas, the banana splits and all of that. I

had worked in a black drugstore in Hackensack, too, for four or five years, a couple of years while I was still in school and a couple years afterwards.

During that period is when I married my first wife, Margarite, and had two sons, Dave Junior and Donald. In '39, we moved into Newark, and the war came along in '41. By October of '43 I was drafted, and went into the service. I went to Fort Dix, New Jersey. We were disbursed on military trains there. I went from there to Gulfport, Mississippi for basic training in the United States Army Air Force, which was completely segregated.

After basic training in Gulfport, I was sent to the Pecos Army Airfield in Pecos, Texas. Ten us of us were sent as a group, all had the IQ potential for OCS. Pecos Army Airfield was where black personnel could do nothing but be the servants for the white cadets who were becoming the 90-day wonders at that time. I stayed there, suffered through that period. They didn't know what to do with the ten of us. They had a white CO from Philadelphia and an adjutant from Texas. But they didn't know what to do with us. I ended up working in the PX while in the service then also developing, along with a couple of other guys, schooling where we did orientation. We made jobs for ourselves because everybody else was either working on the line washing planes or cleaning them up. There weren't any mechanics or radio people until '45. They served these cadets who were flying the warplanes.

In '45, they closed the base; the war was winding down. In April 1945, a group of us were shipped here to Nellis Air Force Base. We arrived at the UP Station, which no longer exists, at three o'clock in the morning. I saw were all those lights down Fremont Street, more lights than were in Time Square at that time. We found out that it was not open to everybody. It was segregated. I went out to Nellis and stayed, working in the PX there. I went home in August on furlough, came back and was scheduled for discharge in December. However, I chose to have my discharge at Mitchel Field in New York because it was close to home. But I had already decided, if possible, I was coming back to Las Vegas. I had found out it did not have to have a lot of rain, sleet, snow and cold weather. Plus, I thought that there was an opportunity for real personal development and growth here in Las Vegas. I had learned to like it.

So I went back home and got my discharge in December. I lost my father in January, and in February, I came back here to Las Vegas. During that previous two or three months, my wife and I had reconciled, and we said we would move to Las Vegas in June after the boys were out of school. I came to prepare, expecting that to happen, but it did not. My wife became ill. She had been ill for sometime, but it

worsened and she died in June of '46. I had two boys, eight and 11 years old at that time. Since we had planned and she had told them they were coming to Las Vegas, we moved.

I went back there and came back in August of '46. I drove across the country in a '39 Dodge (turtle back) with these two boys. At that time, you still couldn't get good tires. So it seemed like every hundred miles you were blowing a tire. However, we came, and took off from that. They got into school here.

I had met Mabel, who later became my wife. She was working at the USO before she was teaching. The USO used to be on Jefferson where Jefferson Recreation Center used to be. During the war days, when the war was still going on, they had separate USOs. That one on Jefferson, between D and C, was for the black military personnel. There was a place at the corner of what was Second Street and Ogden. It later became the Wildcat Lair. Was that still going when you were here?

**No. What?**

The Wildcat Lair, they turned that into a school. It was like a Y for the kids from Las Vegas High School.

**I see. Wildcat Lair. Okay.**

Yes. At that time, I had to look for some employment. I had met Mabel's cousin Florence O. Moore and her mother, May Harris, whose husband and Mabel's brother were on the police force at that time. This is in fall of '46. I had also met Herman Moody. Something was going on within the department though I don't know what it was that started it. Herman Moody went to work in September of '46, and I went to work in November of '46. In the meantime, Joe Harris, who was working when we both went on and who was our instructor, became a detective. There's no record of this, but he was the first black detective in the Las Vegas Police Department. An inspector named Chuck Morrison hired me. Joe Harris took me down to the police station then, which was in the alley behind what is now Binion's Horseshoe Club. There was a police station and jail called Blue Room. He took me down there and said to Inspector Morrison, "Here's a man just out of the service that needs a job and I think he's a good man. Why don't you hire him?" Chuck Morrison asked me what I did in the service and how old I was. He said why don't you come to work Monday morning? And that was it. So we did. We worked with Joe for several months, several weeks. That was all the training we received.

During this time people like Harry Claiborne, who I used to meet with every day at the PX on the base, was an adjutant on the base. George Allen and a couple of other guys who were out on the base came to work for the police department. Those were the people that could get on the police department very

easily then, particularly if they had MP training.

But that didn't come to us. We were assigned to West Las Vegas. At that time West Las Vegas consisted of the area between Bonanza and Harrison, and the railroad track and H Street. H Street was a dirt road at that time. There was nothing west of H Street between Bonanza Road and Harrison. Owens did not exist. Harrison was the best of it. There was nothing on the other side at that time except Bonanza Village. It was a vast stretch of desert land between H Street --

**There were no homes there.**

No, there were no homes there.

**What did West Las Vegas look like at that time? Describe the homes and the structures.**

There were not many homes that met code. I was not here in the height of the war. When people were moving in and working at the plant, they still had a number of people living in tents in '45 and '46. A lot of places did not have any running water. There were outside toilets in several areas.

Right at Bonanza Road, as you come out of the underpass, was a little convection area store called Snyder's. On the corner of D was a place called Gilbert's Grocery. There was the Bravo Market on Morgan Street owned and operated by the Bravo family. Westside population was at that time was approximately 25 percent Hispanic, 25 percent Caucasian and 50 percent black.

Ms. Lucille Hughes had her grocery store. Roland Johnson had his place. It was on Van Buren before he built and moved on D Street. The Brown Derby was there where it is now. The Town Tavern had not been built. There was a beauty shop on that corner operated by Florence Elmore. Across the street on the northeast corner of F and Monroe was a club operated by Chinese people that had a fire. The Cotton Club was here at E and Jackson, which is now converted into a church. The old El Morocco was on the southeast corner of E and Jackson and was run by Jake Lindsey and his nephew, Popeye Powell, who's a teacher now in Los Angeles. A restaurant at E and Jackson operated by Joseph Horton and his wife, Vera, was a nice little place to eat. Later the property was taken over by Jim Tatum, and he had a big barbeque place there for a while. This is before Andy (Indiscernible) Liquor Store and Sander's Building were built.

However, that was a part of the territory we were supposedly restricted to be.

**When you say supposedly restricted to, you're talking about --**

I did not accept the restriction. They, meaning sergeants and lieutenants, would let you know that you had anything between the railroad and H, and Bonanza and Harrison.

**Which was predominately the black community?**

Yes.

**That was your territory to patrol.**

At that time there were a lot of white people living along Bonanza. There were a couple of trailer courts there. We used to have problems in there. We'd go in there and get people. I was never told that you could not arrest a white person, but I heard that is what had been said to some people. Moody and I worked together for at least a year before they took on some other black officers. We did arrest them when it became necessary. I stayed on the force until '49. I served three years.

There was no chance at that time for any advancement. Almost everybody was coming out of the military. We had a chief named Nalburg who held inspections every week. One day he was walking through on inspection with a sergeant and he told him about a suggestion that had been made by one of the other white officers for improvement. He said, oh, that's a good idea; make him a sergeant. That's the way it was done; just like that. I decided I didn't see any future in it and didn't like it that well. I didn't stay. I worked a year with Moody, and after that, I worked with Banks and Walter Childs (indiscernible) during the rest of my time there.

After that I tried to operate a gas station. There weren't any gas stations around, but there was this little two-tank gas station at the northeast corner of Adams and E Street. I thought I knew something about it and tried to operate that. It wasn't successful. I went to work for the *Review-Journal* as a district manager. I had a bunch of kids that were delivering papers. Home delivery was a big deal. I did that for three years. I did some labor work, mason tender, pushing cement at housing projects all around Nellis and all around town here. Harry Jones and H.P. Fitzgerald were among those working together at that time and a couple of the Coopers.

In '52 when they built Madison School, I applied to the school district for attendance officer because at that time we had one attendance officer. His name was Barney Burger and he was also the juvenile officer. There were only about five schools in town. I used to know the exact number then. Ms. French, the principal at Westside School, was having difficulty.

**Doris French.**

Doris French. She thought it would be a good idea if we had somebody to chase down some of these kids or these parents, and see about attendance. John Wells was the principal at Madison School when it opened. I

went to work as an attendance officer and stayed with the school district for 15 years until '65 when I went to Economic Opportunity Board.

I'd like to maybe insert here that in '46 Mabel had applied for school district and they did not have any openings at that time. However, Ms. Maude Frazier, who was the superintendent, encouraged her and told her she would get her on as a substitute. She did some substitute work in the spring of '46. The Board of Education finally granted her a conditional contract for the '46-47. I think the salary was something like \$2400 for the first year. After that the school board questioned her. Dr. Smith, who was on the board, wanted to know if she wanted to teach in an all colored situation, meaning just colored children. She told him no, she would teach all children, whoever was in her assigned class.

About six years later Dr. Gile Graves was superintendent. When the school consolidation took place in those early years, North Las Vegas had their district, Boulder City had theirs, Henderson had theirs, and Las Vegas had theirs. I'm not sure how the county fed at that time. I don't know whether they had anything -- whether they were on the county commission or --

When I went to work in '46, only elementary schools were Westside: John S. Park, Fifth Street and the two in North Las Vegas, Jefferson and Washington, which used to be in North Las Vegas, and the school off of Bonita. There were about seven or eight schools in the district at that time.

**This is Tape 2. Mr. Hoggard was starting off on EOB.**

**Anytime you're ready, sir.**

This is Friday, July 17, 1998. EOB, which is the acronym for the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County, was incorporated in 1963 and became the main carrier for federal funds under the antipoverty program. Head Start was the first funded program. It was funded through EOB to Operation Independence.

Operation Independence was formed and incorporated a few months prior to EOB. Both organizations were really the result of information the community received from Elaine Walbroek. She had contacts in Washington and knew that Congress was working on this bill and that it would be funded, and felt that this was an opportunity to help poor people. She was into some type of social service work herself as the executive director for the Tuberculosis Association in Reno. She came to this community mainly due the assistance of Harvey Dondero, who was an assistant superintendent. A number of people gathered at Kit Carson School where Ms. Walbrook said that money was coming down to help poor communities, and she felt that Las Vegas, and particularly the West Las Vegas area, would qualify for whatever came down.

A board was developed. The Economic Opportunity Board was incorporated and held its first meeting in the Walapai Room at the old Thunderbird Hotel. Shortly after that money did come down. Mr. Dondero was the first chairman of the board, and Ms. Walbrook was hired as the executive director. Shortly after money arrived the first office was established in that shopping center adjacent to the Landmark Hotel, at the corner of Paradise and Convention Center Drive.

**Approximately what year was this?**

It was probably '64 by the time they got there. I went to work for the Economic Opportunity Board. They were still in that office in November of '65. It had a staff of five people: Ms. Walbrook, Sylvia Staples, Dorothy Johnson, Morris Peltz and myself. I was brand-new, hired in November '65. Dora Longhearst was also there, but she was funded through the Department of Labor and was a director for Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) program.

Shortly after the first of the year, in '66, it was decided that we ought to move to another area since we were not anywhere near the poverty area. We found quarters in what is now the Walker Furniture building that runs along Martin Luther King Drive. At that time that building was a three-story building. It's been remodeled. You can't see any windows now, but it was an office building at that time.

**The main Walker showroom?**

No. The one that's right on the corner.

**That they use for the sales stuff across the little alleyway there.**

No. You went in the same driveway. The showroom at that time was east of this building. This was a three-story office building. There were other organizations in there. EOB was on the second floor. There was a training class for culinary art. It operated a restaurant that was open to the public. At the back end of the building was a deal that Dave Hoggard, Jr., was running before he went to community college. He had gotten a grant for that.

We moved into that building, and money became available. We had it open to a neighborhood council project prior to that, though. For the first project EOB had, we hired a number of people and registered everybody in Clark County for Medicare. This gave us an opening into all the outlying areas -- Overton, Mesquite, Pahrump. We had a number of people working who stayed with the program and eventually went into employment security. Many of them have made careers out of that.

During the Johnson Administration, when the antipoverty program increased in dollars as well as

activities, our EOB also grew. We were serving more people than we ever had anticipated, and were more diverse in our program activities. This, of course, included the growth of the organization and the respect that it began to receive from the larger community. We became the largest nonprofit organization at the time, serving underserved and underprivileged people in throughout Southern Nevada.

During this time, Ms. Walbrook resigned and left to take a chair at University of California at Berkeley. The board selected Mr. William Cottle, who had been a former city manager in Boulder City, as her successor for executive director. Under his administration I became the assistant director, and the program continued to grow and expand. Mr. Cottle served approximately a year and a half, and the board then selected me. I was named the director in July of 1967 and held that position until my retirement.

During Mr. Cottle's administration we again moved from the Walker building to Owens, what is now Nucleus Plaza. We had those three offices in that building. Around this time, the Department of Labor was making money available for communities to do all kinds of innovative things to get people, particularly minorities, into training programs that would lead to successful employment. The Concentrated Employment Program was passed by congress and funded. We then moved into the large building that had been a grocery store at 900 West Owens. By this time, we had increased the number of programs, but the Department of Labor funding was the largest source of funds.

We had many programs. We set up the first computers. Even before computers we had 30 reading machines where we taught people to read. Jean Dunn was the director of educational programming. I'm not sure even what that machine was called. When they closed the program down, they took the machines back, but we had those for about two years and held regular classes.

During those years, we also established a work program for people who wanted to work in the hotel industry, particularly dealers. We set up a full-fledged casino in the building with all the accouterments to run a casino from chips to dice and everything that was needed. Clarence Ray, Q.B. Bush and Calvin Williams headed that. It was a very successful program, and we also gained national attention. We were written up in the congressional record and accused of using taxpayer money to teach people to gamble. *The New York Times* sent a representative from Los Angeles here to interview us and see how we were spending the money. It was a very successful operation. The first dealers that worked in any of the casinos outside the Strip came from these classes. People were taught. They had to wear their white shirt and black pants to work. That was the standard dress for the industry at that time, with a tie. You had to be on time. They had

to present themselves as they would so they would stand a chance of employment. We were fortunate enough to get Governor O'Callaghan to be the graduation speaker for the first class. Some of those people are still working on the Strip. I've met a number of people who have said they came through that program. In addition to those who were working in casinos, we also recruited and trained those who were interested in becoming cocktail waitresses and front desk personnel.

**What was the climate that made it possible for blacks to even get jobs like that because before they couldn't even have jobs like that?**

That's right. We go back again to 1960. The community decided that something needed to be done. Through the NAACP, we organized the community and threatened to march on the Strip. In January 1959, we had a Freedom Fund dinner at the old convention center. Tarea Hall Pittman, the NAACP's executive director for the region, was the speaker and gave a very inspiring, soul-searching talk entitled "Now is the Time." He said that now is the time for Las Vegas to do something about the terrible attitude that the industry had towards Afro-Americans or any other minorities. From that evening we decided to organize the community. We did threaten our march and never had to march; they capitulated through the help of Hank Greenspun as a negotiator and Governor Sawyer. That created a new atmosphere in the community. It didn't do away with prejudice, but it made people aware that people had to be treated equally and give them at least an opportunity to make a living.

**So this had to do with blacks not only with jobs but being able to enter a casino to gamble, also.**

That's true.

**Or a showroom.**

Without a hassle. There were always those exceptions or people that you can find that claimed they had no problem. But the average person could not walk in and participate on anything in one of the clubs.

**Tell me your Josephine Baker story. I think this is an appropriate time. I know we're going to get into entertainment and so forth, but that happened before the Strip was integrated that you went to see Josephine Baker at a show.**

I think '52. It was the last time she was in Las Vegas. She was showing at what was then the Last Frontier. She came to town, took a cab over to West Las Vegas and stopped at the corner of D and Jackson. She did not know where she was. Andy Bruner and his wife were running a liquor store at that corner. Josephine Baker went in there and asked Mrs. Bruner if she knew where the president of the local NAACP was, and

where she could find a good beauty shop. She wanted her hair done and she wanted to see the NAACP president. Mrs. Bruner directed her to Woodrow Wilson, who was president at that time, and she found him. She told him that she had made arrangements for a table to be reserved for her for every show, and she wanted the NAACP to get people to sit at that table every show for the time she was here.

Of course, we agreed to it. I think we had a little meeting, but it was a done thing. At that time we had a fairly well racially integrated NAACP executive committee. The people mainly involved were Mr. and Mrs. Wilson; Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Gay; Ms. Ruth Dewey, who was a Caucasian schoolteacher at Westside School; Mabel and David Hoggard; Mabel Sexsmith, who was also Caucasian and a teacher at Westside School; I can't think of Mr. Mason's first name who lived right across from Westside School on the corner of Adams and D, Leonard Mason's father. There were some others, but I don't recall. We designated who would go when. There were two shows a night. Most of these people were working, and we tried to spread it around. The first night -- Lubertha Johnson.

**You can't forget her.**

The first night Lubertha Johnson, Mabel Hoggard, Ruth Dewey, Woodrow and I went. When we got there Josephine Baker had told us if there was any problem to call her. She was staying in a cottage on the place at that time. We got there. A line had formed. We went and stood in line. Of course, people looked, but we didn't say anything. When they opened the door and started letting people in, we got to the door and the maître d', or whoever that person was that seated people, said that we couldn't come in. We asked why. He said, I don't know, I just can't let you in. We said, well, we're not going to move, so let us in. There was a long line of people standing behind us. He called a security guard, and the security guard called the manager of the hotel at that time.

In the meantime, one of us -- and I think it was Woodrow -- left to go use the telephone to call Josephine Baker. The manager said we could not go in. There's no way. If you don't move, you'll be arrested. In a couple of minutes Josephine Baker showed up. That was the end of it because we were seated; she had made her agreement and told him this is what was going to be. We had no more trouble the rest of the time. After that incident that first night everybody that we sent was seated and treated fairly well.

**Fairly well.**

Yes, fairly well. Maybe you got a drink; maybe you didn't. Maybe they served you; maybe they didn't. But we were sitting in the room at that time.

On her last day in Las Vegas we asked her what we could do to show our appreciation for the help she had given to us. She said I would like to have some collard greens and cornbread. So we said okay. Josephine came and couple of people from her staff. We fixed a soul food dinner at Mabel and my house, and had over those people that I've already mentioned. Most of them attended. Josephine left then. When she left here she was going to Mexico. I never saw her anymore. But we had a good time at dinner. They did the whole thing, ham hocks, turnip greens, cornbread, and potato pie or potato cobbler.

**But describe her. Was she as flamboyant in person?**

No. She was a very positive-speaking person. She was calm except when they had to call her out from the dressing room to come let us in that night. She had told him in no uncertain terms what was a part of her contact and that it would be honored, or there would be no show.

**I think we need to do a section on entertainers and the Strip and the whole thing. But you were in the flow on EOB. I interrupted you. Maybe I should stop in just a minute so we can get our bearings and see where we are.**

**Okay. We're rolling. KCEP.**

Another program funded through the Department of Labor led to the establishment of radio station KCEP. Reverend Leo Johnson was the director for the Concentrated Employment Program for EOB. He came in one morning and suggested that we should look into applying for a radio station as a training station for some of the enrollees in the Concentrated Employment Program. I was not aware that there would be funding for it or that there was any way that we could apply since we didn't have anything. I encouraged Reverend Johnson to look into it and get the information, and we would go from there. That is how KCEP came along. We submitted the application, and were funded. We got an FCC license for a ten-watt station. We received funding for training people to be announcers as well as maintenance of the equipment.

**Where was KCEP first located?**

The first station was the southeast corner of the building where the office was and where we had the laboratory. We had a lot of other offices, print shop in that one building.

**At 330 West Washington.**

No, it was at EOB office on Owens.

**In the Golden West Shopping Center.**

That's right. The building has been remodeled now. The most easterly part of the building is new. Before

that there was a large grocery store there. 900 West Owens was the address. That's where KCEP was. Bob Bailey -- Dr. Bob Bailey now -- was our first instructor there. And the man who runs UNLV radio station? **Fuller?**

No. That's not him. I'll think of that name later on. Bob was the first instructor, and we started from there. As far as KCEP is concerned the rest is history; it has grown and continues to grow. I think now it's a 50,000-watt station.

**Ten thousand I believe. It's broadcasting from Black Mountain, not from --**

We had a hard time putting the antennae up and finding a place for the first ten-watt station. However, I think it has become quite successful. From what I understand the ratings are very high for a station with that wattage and that the type of station.

**Can you name some of the other people who were involved with the station during those early years other than Bob Bailey?**

I was trying to think of the fellow's name. You would know it if I could think of it.

**We'll come back and revisit that part.**

Okay. I don't want to leave the impression that all the money for EOB came from the Department of Labor. There were other programs that were funded through community action funds known as antipoverty funds. Most people do not realize that EOB established the first senior center in Clark County. If you ask most people, they will say Dula or one of the other places, but we had the first in Clark County. Since then, because government money has become available, several others have been established throughout the county. EOB is now housed in the Westside School property, but they are planning to move soon to a new building at Martin Luther King and Carey. It's a joint effort with joint funding from federal, county and city money.

We had the first family planning clinic funded through the antipoverty program with doctors, nurses and a complete staff. Later on we funded the first foster grandparent program in the state. I went to Washington, wrote the program and came back with the money. That was unheard of at that time but because the money was available, and it was near the end of the fiscal year and they wanted to fund a program in Nevada. Another name that escapes me at the moment was there working for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which funded it. It has been one of the most successful programs in the state now.

**What was the role of national elected officials from Nevada, and even local elected officials, in assisting the growth and development of EOB?**

At the federal level it was lukewarmly positive. This is a time when Cannon, Bible and some of the others were there. They never voted against the funding of the antipoverty program or any of these Labor Department funds when they came up, but didn't they overtly support us in any way either. We had more support at the local level and the county level. The city, even with the changes in administration, usually went along with us when we would make our presentations. We would have to have their approval. They had a representative on the board when we had 45 members on the board, and had to have 23 for a quorum. Public officials were one-third of those representatives. We had representatives on the board from Henderson Council, North Las Vegas, all the areas, as well as the county commission.

Much of this went on during Mayor Gragson's tenure. He was always very supportive and positive toward the agency and participated quite often. In fact, he came to a meeting when we had to close the doors. One night in the mid-60s he came to a meeting, and the Black Panthers were standing at the door. He wondered whether or not he was going to get out. This was during the time when we used to have these little uprisings at meetings, and people would become vociferous. But nothing ever happened.

**Is it true the mayor came to town on a freight train as a bum? You hadn't heard that one.**

No, I hadn't heard that. Mayor Gragson?

**Yes.**

No. I knew him first when he had a store on --

**A furniture store?**

A furniture store on Main Street just above Ed Ferris' garage. He moved the furniture business to Charleston Boulevard just east of Maryland Parkway. As much as I talked to him, I don't remember ever hearing that story. I do know that he still makes trips to Arkansas and still has a farm. I think they have a big chicken farm down there, a poultry business.

Going back to some of the accomplishments that I consider highlights during my EOB days, I'd like to expand upon on the dealer school that was funded through the Department of Labor, through the Concentrated Employment Program. We received funding for a program to train minorities, and particularly Afro-Americans, for a dealer's school. There had not been any opportunities for this. I do believe we had the first dealer school in the county. This was right after the civil rights deal had come about

and hotels had agreed to employ people, but they had very few trained people.

With the funding we hired experienced people. Among them was Clarence Ray, who is well known in the local gaming industry as an instructor. We were located at 900 West Owens at that time, part of the Nucleus Plaza, but that part has been destroyed by fire. We set up a complete casino with keno, blackjack tables, crap tables, everything except slot machines. We did not have slot machines there.

We received applications from eligible men who indicated they wanted to work in the industry. Our first class had about 20 or 25 people. They came in and put in a full day from eight to five. They had to wear the white shirt, the black tie and the black trousers. These were made available to those who could not afford them because we were dealing with impoverished people. Many of them did not have that type of an outfit or black shoes.

I'm sorry, I can't think of that man's name. He was a Caucasian who was a good friend of Clarence's and had many contacts in the neighborhood. Q.B. Bush was one of our instructors. Calvin Washington was one. These were people who had worked in the black casinos along Jackson Street for a number of years. They agreed to be instructors in their off time. We developed a full curriculum for the casino work.

The word got out we had this school. The casino personnel from Strip hotels used to come by to observe what was going on, just to look and see. They were also observing the students to get first pick on the ones they wanted after completion of the course.

During this period a representative from New Mexico -- I don't remember his name -- read into the congressional record some remarks that accused the federal government of funding a program in Las Vegas, Nevada to teach people to gamble. Well, it is true. We would teach people to gamble. But we were teaching them to gamble on the other side of the table. They were not losing anything. They were trying to make a living and increase their opportunities. One of the press lines picked this up. It really didn't impress me at that time, but I guess it was more impressive to the public than we had thought. I'm not sure whether it was *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Los Angeles Times*. One of those papers sent an investigative reporter to the EOB to look into what we were doing. Nothing ever came of it. They put a small blurb in the paper and that was the end of it. I've forgotten. I don't know whether EOB has that blurb or not, but I don't.

Governor O'Callaghan came down to our first class of graduates. All that first class -- and I think there were 20 something of them -- were hired on a probationary basis. Many of them did well. I think even

today there may be one or two still working. Some have retired. That's how long ago it has been.

That was the only dealer school federally funded in the country during that time. Nevada was the only place at that time that had legalized gambling.

**Before you leave that topic, you want to talk about the racial climate at that time because if there had never been casino workers -- relate that to what was happening to make their employment available or possible.**

All of the enrollees in that particular program, the first ones anyway, were Afro-American. The casinos realized that they had to do something after we had won the victory in 1960. They were getting to move in that direction, and everybody wanted the best of the top or the cream of the class as you understand. Once they started working I never knew or I never heard of any incident where customers of the casinos resented minority people. All of our enrollees were male. They never resented having a black person deal to them.

Those old stories that you hear, many of them like that they want to rub your head to get luck. They didn't do it our people as dealers, but they used to try to do it to porters and people that were sweeping the floors. Maybe I shouldn't have gotten into that.

**No. I think you should.**

Back in the early 40s, when I first came here, the only position black people could have was as a casino porter. Those were the jobs where they swept around the tables and picked up. It was common in many hotels that people who were gambling would like to rub the head of a black porter, thinking they're bringing them luck.

I think it was in the second year of our funding. We got a grant that we trained minority, black cocktail waitresses. That was very successful, also. We had people from hotels who came and taught the classes, taught them how they should act, what to do. It was a shorter course than it was for the dealers. They had to come dressed as if they were going to work. At that time a lot of the cocktail waitresses would still wear white shirts and black skirts. They were very successful. All of the cocktail waitresses employed right after 1960 were not graduates because some of them had experience in places like Atlantic City, Detroit and Chicago as waitresses. One of them is still working at Caesars Palace now.

**You've seen her there at Caesars Palace?**

Yes, she's there. Sarann's daughter-in-law, married to one of Sarann Preddy Knight's sons, not James, the next one. Her name is Peggy.

**Okay. Back to some of the other programs, was Head Start started when you were there?**

Yes. Head Start was the first federally funded program that we had. We were located on what was Highland Avenue, Martin Luther King, in what is now Walker Furniture. That's where the agency's offices were. It was a small grant, and was delegated to Operation Independence. Ms. Lubertha Johnson had the Operation Independence going.

It has been the mainstay. It's been such a successful program nationwide and it has grown every year dollar-wise, as well as service-wise. EOB accomplished Head Start centers in several areas of the county at that time. At one time we had them in Pahrump, Sloan, Searchlight, Moapa Valley, as well as North Las Vegas, Henderson and metropolitan Las Vegas. I'm not sure what the particulars are now. When I left we were serving about 500-600 children in the program with full medical care, qualified teaching staff and a hot meal. One of the things I liked about it is that it also involved parents. Jean Dunn was the director of the program. She did an excellent job for a number of years. She left a couple of years ago. The staff was constant for a long time because the first people stayed and did very well.

Head Start is the one that congressmen who support the program and who don't support the program believe should continue to grow and has helped children. I understand from the testing -- and we used to get reports every year -- of kids who go to preschool and Head Start classes are proving to do much better earlier and quicker, and are usually at least one grade ahead of children who don't go to school until they're five and six years old. It's been a wonderful program. It is one of the programs with the most resources; Congress still continues to pour money into Head Start. I think it's a good pouring because I think it has paid off over the years. It's the highlight of what's left of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1963.

**When you say what's left over, what's left at this time --**

The dollars have shrunk in many of the areas. During the Nixon years it went to community block grants. The antipoverty program is what really got minorities and poor people working and thinking for themselves. The opportunity was there, although they tried to shut it off. And they did to some extent. Instead of being a private nonprofit cooperation such as Economic Opportunity Board is, the government -- during the Nixon Administration -- took them over. They became public antipoverty programs. City of Phoenix, they took all the employees and made them city employees, those that they could, the top echelon. That gave them the control of the money. In the early days, we controlled the money. We had the board. We had to account for the money and how it was spent. You had to apply for it.

There was no pressure politically or otherwise locally to try to do anything to us. At one time the Economic Opportunity Board was the largest nonprofit agency in the state. It was the larger than United Way at one time, in dollar amount.

**You want to talk about some of the other programs, whichever ones you might think are important. We talked about KCEP and how it got implemented.**

There's several. Most people in our community now do not realize it. In 1963, the Economic Opportunity Board established the first senior center in Clark County. That was before Dula or any of the other senior centers that have come up since. There was funding from the Division of Aging for them. After that original funding, it went to the governmental agencies in most cases. The counties and the cities have contributed to them. They're all much larger and offer more services for neighborhood seniors than has Economic Opportunity Board. I understand now they have funding now, and they're building a new one over on Martin Luther King. It will probably increase its services because of the population around it. But it was a success.

Foster grandparent is another program that has provided opportunities, particularly for seniors who meet the poverty guidelines and are capable of offering services. Foster grandparents had services to offer to all types of students. Some of them are considered slow learners and disadvantaged, some with physical and mental handicaps, and then some that are really normal. They work in centers where they are grandparents to the kids and read to them. Many children in that lower economic level never had the experience of parents or grandparents reading to them. It has a number of students. Today they had their foster grandparent annual luncheon at Union Plaza. It certainly is one of the shining lights under Economic Opportunity Board.

Another one is the family planning and health care. There are centers all over now as with Head Start.

Let me go back to foster grandparents one minute. Foster grandparents also are tied into the school system, and in some cases, go to schools and help make life better for children who meet that problem. I think that's a big help.

**What does the foster grandparent program do? Describe how it operates.**

The applicant is screened to see what they may have to offer. It does not necessarily have to be a college degree or even education. But the person has something and a personality that kids seem to cling to. They

are sent to different agencies -- churches, schools -- with day care programs. They work 20 hours a week. They get a small stipend for 20 hours, minimum wage. They do a number of things. In some places they help teach kids if they're young enough how to dress, how to speak. They talk about table manners, that kind of thing. They work four hours a day, five days a week, assisting kids and enriching their lives.

**All right. Did you want to move on to another -- let me check this first. You're talking about your observations of Ruby Duncan. Go ahead.**

Ruby was a very determined person, sometimes antagonistic because of the nature of her programming. She was head of the welfare rights mothers. There was probably some interplay and jealousy between the two organizations. EOB was the top funding source from federal government for antipoverty programs. Poor People Pulling Together was another organization here in town at that time headed by Irma O'Neal and another group of people. These people felt, not understanding at the time, that EOB could do things that they wanted done without having to account for it, or without having to go back to the federal government and seek funding for it. However, we tried working with them. This was also a problem with Operation Independence and Ms. Lubertha Johnson at times. They had their board. They felt that they were being mistreated. EOB was the big dog, and they were trying to get some of the money. There was a type of competition that was not always friendly. But we never lost friendship, at least I never did. I don't think anybody else did. This spilled over into people in the community, too, who were not in any of the organizations. We had a group of ministers come to the EOB one morning. They met me when I came to work and said that they wanted to tell me what they were going to do and what we had to do. They didn't have an appointment.

**Why do you suspect they would make a power play on you? Was it because EOB was the powerful entity?**

Yes. EOB was receiving the most money of any organization. People had a tendency to think that poor was similar to being a minority. The majority of poor people were not minorities, even those that we served in some of our areas particularly. We had more Caucasians and Hispanics than we did blacks come for health services at one time. I'm not sure how it is now. We had a doctor on the staff. We had three clinics going. Money became available at the federal level and other areas. Housing was one of the things that was of interest to Operation Life. That was Ruby's organization. Ruby Duncan (indiscernible) now that was a result of some of that on Owens Street.

**But EOB is still involved in housing, isn't it?**

EOB is still in housing, but they have no relationship that I know of with that piece of property.

**You did not mention some of the other smaller entities within EOB. Did they come later? I know at one time there was a westernization program and a fixed ranch.**

Westernization came while I was still there. And transportation, which we had --

**Transportation came when you were there?**

Yes. We established the transportation program.

**Will you speak about it? Speak about what came into genesis during your time.**

We started the transportation program in the early 70s. I was fortunate to have some good planners over there. Sylvia Staples started out as a planner; she's deputy director now. She was the first writer. Then Blane Rose -- Bob Rose, the Supreme Court justice's wife -- was one of our writers. She was very good. Barbara Ravenholdt was also a writer for a while.

**Dr. Ravenholdt's wife?**

And a woman named Mary Kozloski.

**Oh, Mary. I know Mary well.**

You do?

**She lives up on Mallard, has for years.**

She's where?

**Lives up on Mallard. She's got a daughter.**

Two daughters, doesn't she?

**One that I know. I don't know about the other one.**

We participated in establishing what is now the rape program of women.

**Rape crisis. Florence McClure?**

Florence McClure came out of that office.

**I didn't know that.**

Yes. Florence is still fooling around with that or doing something. I see her name once in a while in the paper. I haven't seen her for a long time. Florence was housed in EOB's office when she first started that, and we gave her some help and assistance. We tried to do as much as we could. Money was not as available as it is now, and we couldn't meet all the requests for funding. EOB is now the main funding source here.

The majority of money flows from federal government to Carson City, and then down to EOB. EOB contracts with Carson City, and then they subcontract with the local agencies.

**Are you saying that that format has been to the detriment of EOB? The change in the direct funding status kind of --**

It's lost some of its autonomy because, and that was the intent because many of the community action agencies in the 60s and early 70s ran roughshod, and did not feel they had to be accountable. Once they got the money they were not always prudent in what they did with it. On the other hand, that was one way also of showing their dissatisfaction with the status quo in the country. Some of them ended up carrying it too far and going to prison.

I think it was during the Nixon Administration. He's an author now. I see him on TV. He was in cabinet, and was a director of the program. It changed from Concentrated Employment Program to Concentrated Employment Training Act (CETA). A lot of people were then trained in other agencies. You take the people when you get them ready, but then you place them in an agency, and they get the training there instead of the agency coming up with equipment and everything to train the people. In the beginning that's what we did because other established agencies were not interested.

In 1963, when I went to work for the Economic Opportunity Board, there were five other employees. Neighborhood Youth Corps was a program, and its director was Dora Longhearst. Elaine Walbroek was the executive director. Morris Peltz was a program writer. Sylvia Staples was secretary and administrative assistant to Ms. Walbroek. A local young lady named Dorothy Johnson, who was a graduate of the school system here, was the clerk, secretary and the typist. I became a program writer. I was coordinator something; I can't think of the title now.

We were located at that shopping center that used to be on the property with the Landmark Hotel. It's all gone now. We moved from there to the Walker building on Highland. Then in '64 the agency moved to West Owens shopping center, which is now the Heritage Lounge down by Carter. We had two rooms there.

After Ms. Walbroek left in early '64, Bill Cottle, who is the director of housing for Clark County, became the director. He stayed until July of '65, and I followed him. I was there until '72.

**Mr. Hoggard, today's date is January 19th, 1999. We're continuing with your oral history.**

**Mr. Hoggard, could you please describe what it was like to be black living in Las Vegas in the 40s and**

## **50s?**

In a nutshell, it was like living in Mississippi in the 40s and 50s to a great degree. When I first arrived in '46 there were very few, comparatively speaking, black people in the community. Ninety-five percent of them lived in what was then called the Westside, which was the area by the Union Pacific Railroad, Bonanza Road. Harrison Street was as far as it went north, and H Street was the western boundary of that area.

Many of the people here at that time, when the war was winding down and was over, worked in the plants in Henderson. People thought that they were going to go back to their homes. Most of them were from southern states. Of course, they did not go. They decided to stay. Housing was very bad. Employment was bad. About the only employment at that time, except for the two, three, four black men that were on the police force, was with the city's sewer maintenance department. I don't recall anybody having any type of a clerical job. There wasn't even a black teacher, or a doctor or any professional person. Around '48 or '49 we got the first person to be employed by the city in a clerical position, a black woman. It might have been Barbara Marthis.

### **Why would black people even want to live here if conditions for blacks were so bad?**

I imagine many of them had the same reason that I did: the weather. I had learned being in the service that you did not have to have all the cold weather and snow and ice that we have back in Jersey. Everybody had the dream and the expectation that money was growing on trees, and you would become a millionaire overnight. It's never happened, nevertheless. There were jobs. Most of the people who were employed worked as maids and porters in the hotels and clubs. We're talking about a time when there were not any minority people hired in any of the hotels or clubs for any position other than maids, porters, cooks and dishwashers. The community was beginning to boom, and many men were able to get on as laborers in construction.

### **Those were good-paying jobs.**

Those were good-paying jobs. I think it was '48 or '49 they raised the wage for maids and porters at the hotels to a dollar an hour. That was good pay. Men who worked as laborers on construction sites were making around two dollars an hour and up. Everything was comparative at that time pricewise. There was still a shortage of housing.

### **What did people live in?**

They had houses, but they were jammed up. There were still a few tents left in the West Las Vegas area that

people were living in that were carryovers from the 30s and early 40s. Jody Canon, who was a partner in the Cotton Club, which was the main club in West Las Vegas at that time at E and Jackson, built a house on Van Buren in the 300 block. It is still there. It was the first house of that type built in the area. In the process of constructing the house, they ran short of cash and went to the bank to borrow some money. He also owned a new Cadillac. The bank told him they couldn't lend him anything on the real estate, but they loaned him some money on his Cadillac. So that really happened.

**Is it a black man?**

Yes, he was a black man. There were a few blacks, though, still living the old downtown area. There were several people who lived on Stewart Street. The Pullman family owned that property and had that house at Stewart and Third, opposite the southwest corner -- opposite the post office. They moved that house to F and Jackson right across from the Town Tavern. It's torn down now. A couple named Grace and Grant Moore owned property, and had a duplex, just off the corner of Main and Stewart. A man named Levi Irving owned property on Third Street. He was a doorman at the Last Frontier Hotel.

**Which is now the Frontier.**

Yes. I had forgotten about Mr. Irving. He was one person who was not a domestic-type employee at the hotel. Of course, it was for show, too. They liked a good doorman. He owned property and lived on Third Street. The Bankheads had a restaurant at that corner of Ogden and First, where the Las Vegas Club garage is now. The Christensen family owned property at Stewart and what was Second Street. It's now Casino Center. Mrs. Christensen, the matriarch of the Christensen family, had several rent houses on that property. There must have been eight or ten rent houses there. They were small. Now we would say they were shacks, uninhabitable, but they were renting it at the time.

**What you're saying is that blacks lived there. Would it be fair to say that West Las Vegas wasn't the original home for most blacks; that they lived elsewhere, and then over time West Las Vegas was established as a place where most blacks chose to live?**

I don't think that came about just like that. Prior to World War II, even when they were building the dam, there were a few blacks living here. A lot of them lived downtown. There wasn't anything in West Las Vegas north of Washington Street. The population was still spread out. There were some people on this side of the tracks. The area between Bonanza and Washington was populated by Hispanics mostly, and white people. My understanding is that there were not that many blacks. I wasn't here then.

When I came in '46, the Westside had expanded. The story is that a man named Jake Ensley had a club that was operating on First Street. At that time the city council controlled the gaming license, and they had a police commissioner in charge of gaming. I have heard that he told Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Ensley that they were not going to renew their license unless they moved to the Westside on the other side of the tracks. That's how they started. The El Morocco Club was the first black-owned club west of the railroad track. It's no longer. The original one was torn down years ago.

**So you're saying a black had a gaming license downtown?**

Yes.

**I never knew that. A lot of people probably don't know.**

Yes. It's written up there. Frank Wilson, who is known as Lindsey, and Mr. Ensley, Uncle Jake, had a place where I think the Horseshoe garage is now. They weren't going to give them a license. The migration then, with the war and people coming in and places segregated, you couldn't play in what few clubs that were here or gamble or get a hotel accommodation, anything. It was completely segregated and off limits to black people at that time.

In addition, there was a woman named Mrs. Nettles who had a son and daughter-in-law named Clarence and Hattie Hodge. They had a store on the corner of First and Fremont. It was a little sundry shop, shoeshine stand, newspapers and tobacco, and that kind of thing. A couple of guys would go around to law offices, lawyers would take off their shoes and give them to them, and they'd take them back, shine them and bring them back at the end of the day. It was a very profitable business. I don't know whether they ever lived outside of West Las Vegas. When I came, Ms. Hodge lived at the northwest corner of McWilliams and E Street.

There was a little activity. Plus, their trade was mostly white. At that time you got the morning paper. You went in and bought a paper and got your cigarettes or whatever, little sundries. They made a living on that.

**You mentioned two businesses. Do you recall any more that were located in what's considered to be the Fremont Street area?**

There was a woman named Mrs. Pinkston. When I got here she was not in business on Fremont Street, but she ran a restaurant on Fremont Street. This was during the time when Rex Bell and Clara Bow were married and on Fremont Street. Mrs. Pinkston had a relationship with a Caucasian man. I don't know

whether they were ever married or not. But she was known. I did not see him. I think he had died. They tell me what she had a business between First and Main on Fremont Street. The business was gone when I got there. I met her because she lived over on McWilliams and had acquired quite a little money they say. There are probably some more that I can't think of.

**During that time frame when you first came here, how much interaction did you have with whites on a daily basis, or did the average black have with whites on a daily basis?**

You had very little social interaction. You made it as you moved about and met people. After 1947, after my wife started teaching, I got to know a lot of educators who were in the system, and particularly those who were teaching at Westside School. They were all white. It was a fairly small school at that time. There were any number of people that we had at home and made good friendships. I still hear from a woman named Ruth Dewey, who taught at Westside School in 1946.

**Say a little bit about the location of Westside School. It's a site now of KCEP. So it has a double meaning for you. It was a school and now it's a site of a radio station that you caused to be established there. Just give a little reflection on Westside School.**

The building housing the radio station is the oldest educational building standing in Clark County now. It's my understanding that the building, according to school records, which was a four-room building, was built in 1921. In '44 or '45 the population had grown due to of the war, and they had moved the two-room barrack building onto the site of the school. Then they built another two-room building that used to sit right behind the original building. In time, the barracks building and that building were torn down. I believe in '47 the brick building that is there now and the school were built, because the population growth expanded from that.

Doris French was the principal during all of those years. Before her was Howard Washington. He used to be at West Charleston when he came back. He was drafted or went into the service, and Ms. French became the principal. When he came back from service, they opened the first West Charleston School.

The particular site, through the help of the City of Las Vegas, is now registered as a historical site. I don't know how long they will keep it because of the maintenance. When we finally got that property from the school district, it was our idea to make it a museum. At that time they were just building I-15, and they were planning an off-ramp onto Washington. Because of local politics -- I don't recall any names -- they moved that ramp so that you missed the building. It was supposed to go on the other side. We thought we

were going to profit and help the Economic Opportunity Board with a souvenir-type station or something there.

**The way they did it, it kind of isolated it more and made it an island. It's hard to access unless you know where you're going.**

That came about because we refused to sell it.

**I never knew that.**

**Okay. We don't have much time left on this. Back during those days when you first came here, what did people do for fun? What did they do for recreation? What did they do to rejuvenate themselves? Were there dances? Were there social functions? Did you go to people's homes?**

Oh, yes. They had dances. The back of the Cotton Club was the largest club in West Las Vegas at that time. There was a room where they had dances. The Elks had a hall at 504 Jackson. Almost every Saturday night they would have music and live entertainment. It was entertainment from the Strip. Since we were not going to the Strip, most of the black entertainers had jam sessions at the Elks on Saturday nights, after the shows.

Churches grew. Many of our people tend to use that as a vehicle for entertainment as well as spiritual enhancement.

Entertainment was mostly in your home. There was a lot of family game playing, games like Pokeno and Monopoly. People had their own little groups. There was quite a bit of that going on. You can't find anybody that wants to play pinochle now. There were very few outlets. Some people went to the movies, but movie houses were segregated. Many of us after being thrown out just refused to go. So we missed a lot of that. Of course, this was before TV. So you listened to radio. A lot of people road horseback. There was a man named Ray Christensen from that same pioneer family of the Christensens, who had horses at the northeast corner of Van Buren and F Street. Mr. Christensen would rent horses, organize hayrides, take people on trips to Red Rock, spend the weekend, and out to Paradise Valley. Lubertha Johnson was one of the few places that had enough land. Skats used to go out there, bib-whack overnight and walk out there. You created your own activities, whatever your penchant. I never thought about entertainment that much.

**It's the 25th of January, 1999, J. David Hoggard continuing oral history, gaming in Las Vegas then and now.**

**Mr. Hoggard, if you want to just give us your reflections about blacks in the primary industry that serves Las Vegas, gaming.**

When I first came here gaming was a primary factor in the area's economy. Of course, it was a much smaller population, and much smaller industry than it is now. People really had no sense as to how fast and how widespread the major industry in Clark County would become.

When I first came to the community in '46 there were three or four clubs operating in West Las Vegas, on Jackson Street and Monroe and D. All these places in West Las Vegas were owned and operated by black people. They hired a number of people, and off course, were open 24 hours. P.L. Jefferson operated the Brown Derby. Jody Canon and James Calvert were major owners of the Cotton Club, which was the biggest one, located at the northwest corner of E and Jackson. Boisie Ensley and his wife, Ina, operated the Ebony Club. That was at the southwest corner of D and Jackson. Down at F Street was the Louisiana Club. Before that it was the Chickadee Club, and then became the Louisiana Club that was there for a long time. Now it's a grocery store operated by the Hughes family. Just before the Moulin Rouge came along in 1955, there was a place called the Town Tavern. It became the first New Town Tavern operated by a man named Earl Turman, who was quite an entrepreneur in the black community. He was also deeply involved in politics, particularly in the city elections.

Those were all good operations, and they afforded opportunities for employment; there were no blacks working outside of the West Las Vegas area in gaming per se. If they were working in the clubs, they were either porters or maids. There were no dealers or keno writers. These clubs, particularly the Cotton Club, had three shifts of keno writers, three bar shifts, and had a dance hall in the back. It was I think the most affluent, if you can use that word, of all the clubs. Shortly after the war was over, James Calvert's nephew Uvalde Caperton and his wife took over as managers. They were there for a number of years until they sold it. But whatever was going on was peanuts compared to that in the greater community. Even that cannot be compared with what is happening now in the county and the city in the gaming industry.

There was a club on Fremont Street called the Boulder Club that was the main one. Binion's, it was changed. It was the Apache Hotel at the corner of Second and Fremont, right behind the city jail. It was called the Blue Room sitting in that alley behind the Apache Hotel. It's part of the garage there now. There was very little on Fremont Street. It was all confined from what was then Second Street, Casino Drive, to Main Street. The Sal Sagev and the Las Vegas Club on the corner of Union Plaza did not exist. That was

the UP Railroad Station. There was the El Rancho Vegas, which was at the southeast corner of what is now Sahara, then San Francisco Street, and Las Vegas Boulevard, which was Fifth Street.

There was a club opposite where the -- what was that woman's name? She was well known. Her daughter and son-in-law were also well known. That was around the time in '46, '47 when Bugsy Siegel came and started the Flamingo, which really kicked that part of the community up as far as construction. They started advertising. As the Strip grew, up until 1960s, black people were not employed in any positions other than those of maids, porters and gardeners. For a long time they resisted hiring any of us. NAACP at that time tried to have some conferences and finally got an injunction from the Department of Justice. That involved the Resort Hotel Association. Some say it's still in effect now, but I'm not sure that it is.

**You're talking about the Consent Decree.**

Yes, the Consent Decree. I don't know how much further we can go on this subject.

**From the standpoint of this, what was it like? Were you able to go on the Strip ever? Was there ever any opportunity for you to go into the hotels? Did black groups rent space in the clubs even though they couldn't go in to gamble? Could they rent a room? What was it like? Other than to go in as a maid or a porter in a menial capacity to work, was there an opportunity to get inside the hotel to do anything?**

There were isolated cases. You'd hear stories of people who because of a personal contact would have opportunities to see the shows. Often you would not be able to get a decent seat or they wouldn't give you a decent seat, but they would let you in. But it was always done on a personal basis. A lot of people had contacts and could get people into the showrooms. That is as a custom. You would not work in the establishment.

**You mentioned the black clubs and so forth that existed then. Compare that to now.**

It's very difficult because there's very little to compare. Jackson Street was the main thoroughfare in West Las Vegas; it was a jumping area. There were places that offered the employment that I've mentioned before and also opportunities for recreational outlet. The Cotton Club had a dance hall. The Elks used to have jam sessions on Saturday nights. It was Silver State Lodge was housed at 504 Jackson; that property belonged to the Pullman family. Around 1970, the Elks built the building, an Elks hall, at the northeast corner of D and Jackson where the Muslims are now. That was the Elks' home. Through poor

management -- I was involved too -- we lost the building. It became a library for a while. Then Ruby Duncan had it for a while with her Operation Life. I assume the Muslims have bought it. Maybe Ruby still has it; I'm not sure.

Give me your question again. I'm sorry.

**I was talking about comparing to now.**

Now there is one club in the area, and it seems to be having difficulty surviving. It's another one of those New Town Taverns at F and Jackson.

When the Moulin Rouge opened up, some of the owners of the clubs already in existence were fearful that they would be put out of business. They either sold out or gave up. By the time integration came along in the 60s, most of these clubs had gone. There was a hotel at the corner of D and Jackson that was built. It's been torn down. There were two hotels there. The Carver House was a multi-story hotel. It had entertainment. It had full service and everything, but it didn't survive. I think that people lacked the capital and division, along with the managerial experience necessary or competency in the field. If they had really stayed I think they would have survived. The few months that the Moulin Rouge was open those clubs did tremendous business. The Moulin Rouge employees would go to these other clubs on their off times or right after their shift.

It's unfortunate we don't have an operation. I don't know if any minority person has any unless they have stock in one of the gaming corporations. I don't think they're profiting.

**The statistics indicate that there are over a hundred thousand black people in Southern Nevada now. Most of them do not live in West Las Vegas. There's an indication that about 30 percent of all blacks now live in West Las Vegas as opposed to in the 60s probably 90-something-plus percent.**

**Could you comment on the dispersion of blacks throughout the valley and the fact that West Las Vegas is still the main place where blacks live in a concentrated fashion?**

I have no qualm with people moving out of West Las Vegas. It has had some side effects, but I think people are entitled to live wherever they can afford and wherever they desire. We fought, worked and argued for years to make this possible. In the millennium we may have full integration and that's what we really want. However, because you have full integration and they may not have that full acceptance, it does not mean you have to give up your cultural backgrounds or your feeling about identifying with, quote, black, unquote, organizations, churches, social groups, whatever they may be.

There have been some other side effects. There are those who will say that we have lost political strength. We lost political strength when we lost our concentrated vote in the community. I think that with so many black people now living outside of that community they will become more effective in their own neighborhoods or precincts. It's going to take awhile because the majority people are coming in at a greater percentage rate than we are. It's one of the side effects of integration. The law that says one man-one vote, in the past, diminished our strength politically locally as well as nationally. However, when we look at all the minority mayors, city council people and city managers, and black people that are out of the south that we never thought we would ever see, it could probably be justified in some people's minds.

I have never felt that it was any benefit to us to have gone away from the practice of requiring all candidates to run at large because once you are elected, even if it's just one black person on the city council, it's still just one vote. They all used to run at large, and they had to beg for everybody's vote. I think you had more strength in looking for your improvements.

**Let me ask you about politics in West Las Vegas. We just had an election for NAACP president in January of 1999. I want to know what your thoughts are on the leadership that lives in West Las Vegas being reluctant to allow anyone who is considered an outsider to have a position of status within the community.**

I'm not sure that I am aware that there is such a thing.

**There's never been a black elected to a position who was not considered to be an insider or who lived directly in West Las Vegas. Dr. McMillan may have been the only person who physically lived -- and I don't know. At one time maybe he did live in West Las Vegas. But I don't know of anyone that doesn't live in West Las Vegas to be president of the NAACP and when most blacks live outside of West Las Vegas.**

Back in the early days --

**How can a minority of blacks control and have a lock?**

Lubertha Johnson never lived in West Las Vegas. She was the president.

**But she was considered to be a local. I mean she was a native more or less. But you get my drift?**

I don't know. Tying this into NAACP, I don't know what is --

**That's just for example. Why is it that West Las Vegas tends to not embrace people who are not considered to be from West Las Vegas or have a close attachment to West Las Vegas?**

I'm not sure that there is that type of demarcation. You're talking about people who lived in West Las Vegas.

**Tell me what kind of demarcation do you see then if that's not? I'm just trying to get the topic that the traditional leadership seems to prevail when we have incorporated so many new people into the community. That traditional leadership continues to exert itself.**

So many of the people who are new to the community do not participate. I've heard many of them say when you ask if they know where West Las Vegas: I've been over there once, but I won't go again. There are people who come from all parts of the county to attend particularly church functions in West Las Vegas. Many of them are also participating and have joined churches in the neighborhoods where they are living.

People who consider themselves old-timers may resent to some degree the people who have come in and who are in a higher economic bracket than most of the people who used to live in West Las Vegas. I think that has something to do with it.

Different types of housing are available. People are living all over the county now. I think that's good, but I think it has some drawbacks. Some of the drawbacks are political. It also has a tendency to pull particularly the young people away from developing a knowledge and history of our people, our race and our culture. There has to be an extra effort to get that out. On the other hand, you see kids that are achieving and doing well. Some of them are black, not as many. A lot of the Hispanics and blacks are also dropping out and not making it. So I'm not sure where we want to go on that.

I don't want to say that there's resentment. That's not the word I want to say. But there is a lack of support from people who still reside in West Las Vegas to be supportive of NAACP or Urban League.

**Some say that they try to get involved and they're rebuffed. You have people from Detroit. You have people from L.A. You have retirees all over the valley. You have younger people who moved here from somewhere else who are professionals who, as you say, don't go to the Westside except on rare occasions. Why is it that we don't have togetherness?**

I guess my question is who rebuffs? What gives them the reason to feel that?

**Who feel that, who express that they are rebuffed when they try to get involved.**

And who am I to rebuff anyone? I have been involved in NAACP particularly and several other organizations. We have had people, without calling names, who came and tried to work and volunteered. But I don't know that they were rebuffed. I think they became disenchanted because the level of ability that

they had expected to find in some leadership capacities was not present. Yet, they would not stay to help develop it or bring the level up to their expectations. It's a two-way street. But I understand what you're saying.

**If you're not grandfathered in, it's next to impossible to get in, is my point.**

Grandfathered in to what? I know what you're saying, but I'm not sure that that is really the truth because look at local black weekly newspaper. Look at the ads of all those people that are in mortgage lending and automobile selling and whatnot. They're looking for business from anyone. They do participate to that extent and try to get business because then it's a dollar figure.

**We're just going to cover one other thing real quickly. Berkeley Bunker passed last week. I don't want to get into a discussion about the church or anything like this. But just give me your reflections on Berkeley Bunker quickly.**

I really could not say anything but good things about him. I knew him quite well. Back in the early 60s he solicited my help in the business. I was the first black person to participate in Bunker Mortuary Services. It was one of those restricted things. There was a little retainer paid, and I was used at black funerals and services.

**You were on retainer for black funerals. Could you continue?**

Yes. Berkeley Bunker was a very conscientious, capable person who was devoted to his church. That did not keep him from excelling as an elected public official at almost all levels of the government. He was also a businessman. He came from a family with long-standing association with people in the community. It was a small community. He was certainly a well-known man. When I met him the Bunker Brothers was located at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Stewart Street, where the city parking lot is now across from city hall. That's where they operated. He was always very open. I can't recall ever having discussed religion with him. Our relationship was personal quite often in later years when I was chairman the city zoning board. Quite often he would be appearing before the board in some business matter. I had not seen him for a number of years. He was very honest and moral person.

**The date is February 1st, 1999. We're continuing the oral history of J. David Hoggard, Sr.**

**Mr. Hoggard, we're going to talk about some people today and your recollection of them.**

**Let's begin with Pat McCarran.**

My recollection of former Senator Pat McCarran is rather limited. It's worthwhile putting on the record that

many people may not understand it and know. He was already senator when I came to Las Vegas. He did not have a reputation of being a good liberal. He was a conservative-type Caucasian person that was typical in office at that time. He was anti-labor, anti-black in his attitude and his actions.

The one incident that I have been told about him that stands out was back in the late 40s, early 50s. Woodrow Wilson was president of NAACP. They were having a strike at the Henderson plant. I think it was Titanium. Senator McCarran came down, and Woodrow was on the picket line. My understanding is that they had a confrontation there. Of course, Pat McCarran was on the side of management, and went into his meeting and made some rather threatening remarks to those on the picket line. They were not all black, but many of them were. Their remarks were -- I am taking them out of context -- we will settle this at a later date because you don't have the rights that you're talking about and picketing about. A few years he died.

**So you're saying that Pat McCarran was not fair to people of African-American decent?**

No. I am certain that he did not campaign in what was then the Westside area, and was not looking for the votes of black people, although he got some of them. I've forgotten who his opposition was in some of those elections. No, he was not a fair-minded person. That's my impression.

**Do you recall the timeframe that the airport was named after him and was there any discussion or debate about that?**

I don't really recall. The airport became McCarran International Airport somewhere in the mid 50s. It was still a small airport at the time. Prior to that it was the Las Vegas International Airport, and was adjacent to Nellis. They moved it south where it was established approximately on what is now part of the Hughes Airport. It was the site of the original McCarran International Airport.

**As an aside, how did people travel back in those days? How did black people especially travel? Did they fly? Did they drive? Did they ride the bus?**

You drove mostly. We're talking about before the so-called Civil Rights Movement. We drove. I used to drive cross-country every year. I'd take my two boys and my wife, and we would drive. Sometimes we went twice a year. It was a tough deal because you never knew whether you were going to find a place to stay or get anything to eat. A lot of people traveled by bus too, people who didn't have cars, and train. Airplane rides were comparatively expensive at that time. It is much better, of course, than driving. But who could afford it?

**Do you have new general experiences to relate about driving and stopping in cities to try to find a**

**place to stay or to eat?**

Yes. I have friends that now live in Southern California who tell about their experiences coming to Las Vegas and trying to get a place in the 40s and 50s, and places to eat. Some of them found a room in Boulder City, but they couldn't eat there. Others could not eat in Las Vegas and could not find a room. There are a number of stories from friends who were traveling through here. There weren't any freeways, only two-lane roads.

Going across the country, I remember one morning we reached Amarillo, Texas and were looking for a place to eat. We saw a black man standing on the corner and asked him about a restaurant. He said, I'll take you right around there to it; let me direct you to it. And he did that. I had him get in the car. It was a few blocks away in a different section off the highway. I don't know where we were going. It was a typical mom-and-pop restaurant. We went and they took our orders. We ordered ham and eggs. He went back in the kitchen and came back in a few minutes and said could you pay for that now, so I could go get some ham and make your ham and eggs? That's a sad commentary on how he was running his business and how poor the business must have been. But it was good ham and eggs after we got it.

In Pennsylvania, we were on our way back from New Jersey. My wife Mabel had a broken foot. She had hurt her foot in a snowstorm when we were traveling east. We were coming west. We wanted a place to stop, and I went into this motel. It was late at night. At that time, I guess because of the light and all that, he said nothing and I signed the book. We got ready to go into the room. Because Mabel was a darker person than I -- I don't know what they thought I was. I had a little confrontation with the manager. He wasn't going to let us have the room, but I talked him into it. But he would not have given me the room if he had known I was a black or Afro-American. This is just one of the stories.

**Thanks for relating those stories. I know you could talk on and on and on. And maybe we'll do some of these anecdotal kinds of things later. That's good flavoring for the whole thing.**

**Let's move on, though, with the people-watch portion and have you focus a little bit on this name very prominent in Nevada politics, Howard Cannon. Tell us what your recollections of Howard Cannon.**

Some of my thoughts are beginning to fade about some of these people. I think Howard Cannon was stationed at Nellis Air Force Base in the late 40s or early 50s, about the same time I was there. I did not know him then. I think he became a policeman while he was waiting to take the board. He left the

department when he got his license, and he went into politics. But if that is correct, then there were two prominent people like that. Harry Claiborne is a prominent attorney here. We used to drink coffee every morning at Nellis because he was the adjutant, and I was working in the squadron PX, which was adjacent to the jail. They don't call it a jail back there.

**Brig or whatever.**

Brig. He was there every morning. That's how I got to know him very well.

**We wanted to talk about some of the things that you held near and dear, and what you felt was instrumental over the years. You mentioned the NAACP. Can you catalog some of the things that you did, accomplishments first, just enumerate them beginning with the NAACP?**

I certainly think my years as an officer and member of the Las Vegas branch of NAACP were some of the most satisfying days as a person in the community, in trying to make a difference with limited resources, and considering the small population. I became president after Mrs. Lubertha Johnson or Mr. Woodrow Wilson. I've forgotten which one I succeeded, but I have that date someplace. We had a really dynamic branch that was the basis eliminating segregation, in 1959 and '60, in public accommodations here in Las Vegas.

During those years we had an interracial branch. Our board was interracial. At one time we had the one rabbi in town as a member of the board. We had several Caucasian educators who were very active officers and members of the board of directors, as well as some people who were members of the LDS Church. We worked together. We didn't make the progress that we had hoped, but during that time we began to introducing bills.

George Rudiak, an attorney in Las Vegas, became a member of the state legislature, and introduced a civil rights bill during a legislative session in the late 40s. That was during his first and only term as a legislator; he was annihilated by the other people in the state for having been so forward and pushing for the introduction of such a bill. This was just prior to the beginning of what we call the Civil Rights Movement.

**I understand it was a great personal sacrifice because he lost business and lost the election to be reelected.**

He lost business. He was never reelected again. He and his wife had been very prominent members of the board. His wife was a good fundraiser for us at that branch during that period.

During those early years, from '46 until '61, were the most fruitful time and where I probably made

the greatest contribution to changes in the way life was in Las Vegas. At that time, we had our first black educators and our first black medical professionals to come to Las Vegas. We had even the first black person work in a clerical position. The NAACP was instrumental in preparing the black community, as well as the majority of the community, that they would have to accept people who had skills and give them opportunities to practice their professions. A lot of other things went along with that during that time.

**You want to talk about how the NAACP was perceived then compared to now? Was the NAACP the premier organization? Did it have the degree of respect that we usually associate with an organizations such as that?**

Yes, I think we did. There were naturally people who resented and resisted our program and the objectives we were setting up, trying to inspire the community to be a part of an organization that had fought for civil rights since 1909, continuing until 1927 when it received its charter. Arthur McCants was the first president. Those that wished to maintain the status quo perceived us as troublemakers. We went on and succeeded.

Reverend William Stevens was the president of NAACP in '46-47. He used to go down Fremont Street, buy a Wall Street Journal, walk into a restaurant, and sit down at the counter. A city commissioner named Bob Baskin ran this particular restaurant. They would not serve him. He would just sit there and read the Wall Street Journal. Eventually somebody could come in and sit next to him at the counter and say good morning; it's a nice morning, isn't it? Reverend Stevens would reply yes, it would be if they would serve me here. Then they would say, oh, they don't serve you here? He did that on a regular basis. And they never served him there. He and his wife moved to Massachusetts. He went to Boston University to further his education. He was president of the branch at that time.

One of the other very satisfying things was being involved with the Human Relations Commission. William Deutsch, who was an insurance agent, was its chairperson. It was an interracial committee appointed by the mayor or city manager, and was a result of successful integration of the city and the county. We were appointed. There was no funding for it. We had no authority, but it was an advisory board that met monthly. We heard complaints about segregation still existing in certain areas or certain places. We had a couple of ministers on the commission. Lubertha Johnson was on there. At various times, various people were named. We were effective in one-to-one relationships where there were incidents. It was all volunteer work on our part, but it was very satisfying. Sometimes we dealt with people who thought they

were being discriminated against in employment, sometimes something about schools, the way the system was running and parents felt the child was not being trusted justly, those types of things. But as I said, we had no effect. It was a matter of trying to mediate these problems, and trying to get publicity. Those were two fulfilling experiences.

I was on the Las Vegas Police Force for about three years. It was not a very satisfying experience for me. This was mainly because of the segregation, and the front that I encountered at within the police department, with coworkers as well as superior people.

**Could you arrest white people?**

Yes.

**Did you arrest white people?**

Yes, we did.

**Frequently?**

Yes. We were told that the Westside was supposed to be the area where you work. There were white people living in West Las Vegas all along Bonanza Road. Gary Davis and his family lived at the corner of F and Bonanza Road. John Mendoza's grandmother lived in front of me on Morgan Street. There were a number of non-African-Americans who lived in the area at the time. I did not hold back if it was necessary. I did what I thought was my duty and job. Some superior officers resented it, particularly if you arrested whites, brought them into jail, and booked them. Sometimes they really did not want you to be bringing them in. That was the way the department ran at that time.

**You were one of the first black police officers in Las Vegas.**

Yes. It depends upon the time frame. I went on in November of '46. Herman Moody went on in September. We were the first ones after the war. The year before or two years before that, around '44 or '45, the first two uniformed black officers were Andrew J. Harris and Milton B. Welch. Andrew J. Harris eventually became a detective. Very few people remember that or knew it. He was a detective in '47-48. Neither of them stayed on the department. I replaced Welch. I don't know why he left. Andrew Harris was my and Herman Moody's mentor as young recruits.

**Comment on the phenomenon of the -- I call it the HNIC where an organization, if they choose to have one or two blacks if they move on will replace them, but they don't usually expand the numbers. They kind of keep the numbers. Do you see that especially during that time when they were**

**separating the races? If they hired someone it was because they wanted to show visibility of blacks in employment? Or why? Why do you think that they hired you?**

I think we were able to exert pressure on hiring personnel in agencies, as well as in the private sector, to help bring it about. The school district was a good example at that time after they hired one. The next year they hired two, and the next year they hired three. Mabel Hoggard was the first, and then Henry Moore and Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Carter, all of whom are deceased now. They all taught at West Side School. It was not until the late 70s or early 80s when the school district really opened up and began hiring in what we think was a nondiscriminatory manner.

**You said what we think.**

Yes.

**You think it's still nondiscriminatory?**

No, I don't think so. In every organization like that there are people who exert their personal choices in their position. I cannot prove anything, but look around now and you see black educators, administrators supervising Caucasian or white staff successfully. I think that the school district does not appear to be as prejudice in its operation as it was at one time.

All public employment is different. We have -- what? -- four black head of departments in the county with responsibility for large budgets and staff. Most people don't realize it because the county is so big and now they just take it for granted. There was a time there wasn't anyone in any of those places.

**So there have been gains, but still there's something lacking in terms of racially equality?**

Yes. I think the hiring people and the policy of the agencies -- well, agencies are forbidden by law to discriminate. But people get their personal vendettas going sometimes. You hate to think that, but they do.

**Talk about your other employment record in other areas.**

The other long-term employment that contributed to changes economically, educationally and socially for a number of people was my employment with the Economic Opportunity Board. When I left the school district in '65, I had no idea that I would ever be fortunate enough to be director of that agency. During that time we grew and had a good, solid foundation for the expansion that has come about since I retired. It has grown tremendously. I think it has had a positive effect on the entire community, and the entire state.

**You've already talked about a number of things that -- programs that went on at EOB under your leadership as executive director. Can you enumerate some of the things such as Head Start and**

**KCEP and those kinds of thing that you're proud of having helped to form?**

In '65 or '66, we established a senior center. It was the first senior center in Clark County. People do not remember. Others have come around since then.

The other thing is the Las Vegas Sun Summer Camp Fund, the first program started at EOB. There wasn't any summer camp fund. We had money from the Department of Labor for a camping experience for pupils who met the poverty guideline. Mrs. Charlotte Hill, who was on the board at that time, was in that first group of directors. Our director from EOB was a woman named Mullins. She's Moon's sister.

**I remember her vaguely.**

Robert Moon was the first judge municipal judge in the community.

We also established the first -- it's not a Planned Parenthood clinic. It was not really one of those, but it did turn out that we had the medical. That is still a very good program.

We had the first foster grandparent program in the state. I went to Washington at the request of a member in the department of ATW, wrote the program in Washington, and came back with a funded program. It has been going on. Foster grandparents is also one of the better programs.

Head Start was the one that was funded. EOB, as far as I know, is still the only Head Start center. A lot of these programs have changed over the years, but have increased in most cases. Head Start has a lot of money and serves a lot of people; the children would not really get the head start that we would like for them to have.

We had other programs at the time. We've already mentioned KCEP.

**KCEP, right? That started when you were executive director.**

I was the director. Reverend Leo Johnson was in charge of manpower in the agency. He found out there was money available for nonprofit agencies to establish ten-watt stations. He approached me. I said, yes, let's go for it and see what happens.

**Had you not given it your blessing, it would not have happened, though.**

That's true I guess.

We had other programs at various times. During those years the agency grew and became the largest nonprofit agency in the state, as far as personnel and dollars were concerned. I think it is still pretty close to it, if not the most. I think that's a legacy that will stand after we're all gone.

The agency was very fortunate. I hired Ty Lee as an assistant in the late 70s. He has carried on

successfully. They have increased their dollars tremendously. They have been fortunate enough to get some foundation money. It's not all government money now.

**Talk about your involvement with AARP because you are quite involved. Is that an outgrowth of the work that you did previously with EOB?**

I think so. It's another opportunity to make a difference in people's lives if they will take advantage of it. I became involved originally in 1984. I came home from a vacation back east. Ruby Garland called me and said now that you're retired, I think I have something for you to do that would interest you. She had met a lady in Washington, D.C. of AARP who was looking for somebody to take over what is known as the Tax Aid Program in Nevada. Beverly Jones was the contact person. Ruby said she had given my name and phone number to this lady. She called me, and after a little conversation I was appointed as the state director for the Tax Aid Program in AARP. I took national training, went to a couple of conferences, came back and ran a very successful program here in the state. You're only supposed to work the maximum of four years as the director. I worked eight. That's another program that grew.

There are very few minorities who were taking advantage of these programs. I had a difficult time recruiting anyone to take the tax aid training in order to do income taxes for low-income and moderate-income people. I never was able to recruit anyone in the state outside of Clark County who was a minority person. I had one or two, three or four over the years here. This program is a joint program with IRS. IRS had more African-Americans than AARP did. Many of them were IRS employees, but they volunteered their time to do taxes. It's a free service for senior citizens who are low-income and moderate-income. When I took over they were doing about 2,000 tax returns a year in Nevada. When I left we were doing over 10,000 throughout the state. The last year was 10,800. It's an organization that depends upon volunteers. There's no salary at the volunteer level. That's what you are, a volunteer.

I'm an information assistant at Howard Cannon Center twice a month; we answer the phone and make referrals to people seeking assistance on volunteer basis. AARP has referrals of all types of insurance. They have a credit card system. They have an employment system and a number of other ones.

The chapter organization is the basis for AARP. In '90 or '91, Ruby Garland again was instrumental in organizing chapter 4395. Thomas Labors was the first president. We have been operating since then. We meet once a month at the West Las Vegas Library and have had a very successful operation. The chapters are interested in legislation regarding Medicare, Social Security and long-term care. Those things

that seniors are particularly interested in are its main goals.

As a result you also have members on what is known as the state legislative council, state leadership council. The legislative council works on the state legislation supporting whatever may be the hot topic for that year or that session. The leadership council is made up of people who hold county positions in AARP. I'm also chairman of the community council, which involves all the chapters in Clark County. That group meets once a month hopefully to discuss with the other chapters on what's going on. The idea is that we should be concerned about things at the county and city level, and making appearances there and so forth.

**Your chapter is the only black chapter in the state?**

Yes.

**But you are over all the chapters. You're a chairperson of the --**

The council here in Clark County, which is all of the chapters.

**Of the white chapters.**

Yes.

The president of each chapter is a member of the council and people who are running or directing other AARP programs. For instance, the man who operates the 55 Alive program, a course you take to get your car insurance reduced; the woman who operates the Widow Persons. They are program persons who are also members of this council.

But we are the only black chapter; we are 99.44-100 percent black. We have a little integration. I don't know of any other minority chapters outside of Clark County in the state. There may be. Reno has the largest chapter in the state, but I don't know how many people, if any, are minorities.

**You speak with a passion about AARP. I'd like to wrap up here by just you summing up why you think AARP is such an important organization.**

It has grown. A retired teacher, Andress, founded it in the 1930s. A lot of people, once they retire, don't have anything to do. It becomes very dull and slow for them, and they aren't happy. I've never had that problem. I hope I don't. I think the AARP tends to espouse the things that senior people are interested in.

I had the impression before that the AARP was something for white middle class and upper-middle class people. It really is not, and they're trying very hard to diversify. They're implementing a program for diversification. I'm amused because that's what we've been doing for a hundred years in NAACP and Urban League.

**So it follows the same mold that you're used to being involved with in NAACP.**

In helping and gives you that satisfaction.

**Right. Mr. Hoggard, I don't know exactly how old are you. Tell me.**

I am 84. I was born November 25th, 1914.

**All right. That ends today's session. Today is Monday, February the 7th, 1999. And that sends our session today. Thank you.**

**The date is February the 24th, 1999. Continuing the oral history with Mr. Hoggard. We're here at his home. After looking over his material here today, he's going to give us a summary of when he came here and a chronology of some of his experiences from that point in just a concise manner without going into very much detail.**

**All right then, Mr. Hoggard, you're going to give a chronology, sort of like an overview, a concise overview. If you would just begin with your, first, coming to Las Vegas.**

I came to Las Vegas on a troop train in April 1945 as a member of the United States Army Air Force. I was being transferred from Pecos Air Force Field in Texas, which was being closed down, to Nellis Air Force Base. I stayed at Nellis until December of '45, and then went to Mitchel Field in New York and was discharged there.

I returned to Las Vegas in February of '46 as a civilian having thought over the possibility of moving to Las Vegas with the mother of my children and our two boys. I had become attached to the area mainly because the weather conditions were much better here than they were in the east. Naturally, having made that decision, I had to think about some housing and other economic problems that all families have. We decided when I had come this way that my wife and the boys would stay in New Jersey until June, and I would go back and bring them out here. Between February and June I was trying to establish some type of work program for myself and was looking for housing for the family. In June of '46 before I could get home, unfortunately my wife died. Of course, she never was able to make it here. The boys and I came and arrived here the last week in August of '46, just before school started. They were nine and 12 years old. The rest of that part of the story, well, is history.

My first employment was with the Las Vegas Police Department as a patrolman.

**When was that? What was the time frame?**

I went to work with the police department in November of '46 and worked until March of '49. I voluntarily

resigned because I was making no progress in trying to have them see that integration was necessary if they were going to have quality people from the Afro-American community employed in positions there. That's another story.

From '49 to '51 I was self-employed as I tried to operate a service station that no longer exists. It was on the corner of E and Adams. I had no business trying to operate that, but I thought that we could. It was a failure.

I then turned to construction work between '50-52 as a laborer. I did not have any experience, but learned. The position was known as a mason tender or bricklayer. I worked with some other prominent people in the community -- we were all doing the same thing -- among them Harvey Jones, who was a well known landlord and property owner in the community; H.P. Fitzgerald, who eventually went into the school district; the Simon brothers, Dave Simon; and several other well known people of that era.

In '53, I went to Clark County School District and became an attendance officer. At that time, there was only one other attendance officer, Barney Burger, in the school system. There were a number of schools in existence, about five elementary schools and one high school. This was the year that Madison School opened and I went to work there. I stayed there with the school district until 1965. I was the first black to go since there were only two of us, Barney Burger and myself.

I was responsible for recommending Jim Cox, who is now retired as an attendance officer, and Dr. Lonnie Sisum, who worked under me for less than a year. He left and went to optometry school.

In '65, I applied for the Economic Opportunity Board for a program assistant position, and was fortunate enough to be hired. That was the last position I held in the organization as a paid employee. I went there in '65 as a program assistant and became a program coordinator in '66. I became a deputy director and coordinator January '68, and then became executive director in August of 1968, where I remained until December of 1982. In brief, that is my record of employment in Las Vegas area.

**Why don't you turn now just to family and talk just a little bit, whatever you'd like to contribute, about your family over that time and any benchmarks, things that you would like to note verbally?**

I married Mabel Welch Wynns in 1947. She had one son who was in the service at the time, and I had these two boys, nine and 12. She was an excellent mother to them. We had a very close-knit family, a good family life. Both of the boys did well. The older one, David Junior, attended Fifth Street School when he came here and was in the seventh grade. Donald was in the fourth grade and went to West Side School

where Ms. French and others on the staff helped him develop good reading habits. He was a bit behind in reading for his age and grade level from the time he came from New Jersey.

David Junior-- he's Jerry to the family -- was a good student in Las Vegas High School after graduating from Fifth Street School. He became very active in baseball with the American Legion team. He, Hooker, Brooks and some other boys went on to become well known athletes. When he got to high school he participated in track and football. He didn't play football until his junior or senior year. He also marched in the band in the Helldorado parade. We had a lot of parades down Fremont Street at that time.

Donald became very good at track in high school. He finished his high school years in Newark, New Jersey with his grandmother. Afterwards he enrolled at University of New Mexico in Albuquerque for two years. He came home summers and worked. They both did.

David went to West Virginia State. He wanted to try to get into either Arizona College or Pacific because of his baseball skills, but both were beyond our means at that time. An opportunity came for him to go to West Virginia State, and graduated with his bachelor degree from there.

Donald also ended up going to West Virginia State, transferring from University of New Mexico the year that David graduated. He never did finish it, though. He went to Chicago chasing some girl who was a year ahead of him and graduated. He felt he couldn't go back because she was not in the college. We tried to get him to stay, but he didn't. He ended up being drafted and served in the army for three years. He became an instructor and a noncommissioned officer. In 1971, he met an untimely death here. He had moved back to Las Vegas and was driving for the bus company, and met an untimely death in one of those accidents up on Jackson Street.

David, as you know, has stayed here since and was married to Jackie Taylor from Portsmouth, Virginia. They moved here in '63 with two boys. Their youngest son was born here. He went on into education through the community college system and did some matriculating in the doctoral program. He is also retired now, but has served as an administrator in the community college system at several levels, the last one being interim president between Dr. Legion and Dr. Morris Dime for about six or seven months.

I think we've had a good relationship with each other. I think our family in those years was close-knit. We tried to instill into the boys the necessity of having a personal relationship with God and going to church, attending Sunday school, being involved in the community. We did this by example, too, because their mother as well as myself was both involved in a lot of community projects during those years,

including PTA, NAACP, West Side Federal Credit Union and a lot of other things.

**Do you want to talk about your church affiliation and the role that you have served in the church?**

I joined Zion Methodist Church in 1947 when Reverend Bill Stevens was the pastor. When Mabel and I married, she had recently joined a Catholic church and was a member of St. James. In the first year or two after we were married the boys went to both churches. Eventually as they grew older -- Jerry used to teach Sunday school when he was in high school here, and Donald participated in programs. We had a series of pastors at the Methodist church. It's now the United Methodist Church and has moved from Second and Carson Street where the church was located in '47 to some property that the Union Pacific Railroad Company had given to them sometime prior to that. That congregation was the oldest and the first black congregation in Las Vegas. It was established in 1917 by a group of people. The names are not easily recalled now, but Pop Mitchell, Mrs. Nettles and Mrs. Hodge were some of them. The church was downtown on Second and Carson.

**It was a black church?**

Yes.

**In 1917?**

Yes. Las Vegas was established in 1905. The few black people or Afro-Americans -- they were Negroes at that time -- that were here and were Methodist went to the First Methodist Church down at First and Bridger. They did that from 1905 to 1917. They decided they wanted to have a separate congregation. First Methodist Church helped them get the property through the railroad as a donation. That property we sold in '46. I was not here when that was negotiated, but I have heard about it. The church took those proceeds and moved the house from Ninth Street over to 911 G Street as a parsonage, and then bought those lots at the northwest corner of G and Washington and built a church there. That church is now the one that Bishop Carruth Hall has, Church of God and Christ. In '63, under Reverend Bennett's tenure, the church moved to where it now is at 1208 is Revere.

Mabel eventually left the Catholic Church and joined the United Methodist Church. I have been an officer almost ever since I joined in 1947 in one degree or another. I've been an active member of the Methodist Men. I have been financial secretary for a number of years. I've also been the delegate to the annual conference, which is held in Phoenix or Mesa, Arizona. At the conference, I'm almost the senior person so far as attendance or being a member of the conference; I don't think I've missed over two

conferences since 1960 or before. I don't have the exact dates now.

**Reverend Bennett has been here for sometime. Do you want to just speak for a minute about that? I even remember that there was some talk of him being moved by someone higher up in the church somewhere else that wanted him to go somewhere, but he stuck it out and stay here. I don't know if you want to comment on that.**

My only comment is that he has been here now for 37 years and came in 1960, and I think has the second highest rate of seniority mark in the conference among ministers. Bishop Golden and/or Bishop Kennedy approached him some years ago. I'm not sure which one offered him to move, offered him a larger charge in Los Angeles area. He chose not to accept it and has been here ever since.

We're in a difficult situation in a way because Zion is the only predominately black congregation in the Desert Southwest Conference in Nevada. In Phoenix there is one, Wesley. Out of about 130 churches there are a couple of Hispanic congregations and a couple from the Tongan area. You put them all together, and it would be less than half a dozen out of 130 churches. It has its drawbacks when you're outnumbered like that. People still now say good things, that they want diversity and all God's children are equal, but they don't always act that way even in the church.

**Oral history project with Mr. Hoggard continuing. Today is March the 30th, 1999, Tuesday morning, at Mr. Hoggard's home.**

**We're going to talk a little bit this morning. Dr. McMillan just passed away recently and you had some additional reflections and wanted to set the record straight on some points. So just talk to us if you would.**

Without intending to be critical of some of the things that have been published during the last week since Dr. McMillan's death, I would like to correct one that appeared in *The Voice* that said that Dr. McMillan was president of NAACP from 1956 to 1960. It's a date error. He was president from 1960 to 1954 (sic) on that first term I do believe. He succeeded me as president. I turned the gavel over to him at the Freedom Fund dinner in the convention center in December of '59. As the saying goes the rest is history because by April 10th, after he had been president for about four months, we had that famous march that was called off. We didn't have the march. But the march was called off at that time.

**That was the march that was planned to integrate the Strip, but it was unnecessary because they gave in.**

It never came to fruition. That's true.

I would like to reflect a little more on my personal association with Mac. I knew him when he first came to town in 1955. We had a warm working relationship as community workers. I can recall one of the first trips I took with Mac up to Carson City when we were going to testify on the civil rights bill. We drove up there. Mac had a Corvette. I had never ridden in a Corvette before. It's a two-lane highway driving to Reno, and it was very uncomfortable riding with him at 125 miles an hour going up that highway. We used to laugh about that trip quite often. We made the trip several times.

He also was, without a doubt, the wind beneath our wings as a community for moving the civil rights program that had been worked on for years prior to his arrival. He came along at the right time and was able to, with the help of others, organize the community and have a very successful group going into that April 1960 night when we all went out to test to see if it were really true and could happen.

To my knowledge, all the casinos and hotels that were in existence at that time, except for two -- I used to say it was just one. It was the Sal Sagev Hotel at Main and Fremont. And I have learned later that there was a little discussion held between the people who went to the Dunes Hotel. Major Riddle was the manager or the owner at that time. The people who went attempted to play blackjack and crap. We had given each group money to test all the hotels. I understand now that the boxmen and the dealers refused to take their money when they went in. They ended up going and getting into the show and calling for Major Riddle. When they came out there was no problem at all. The word just had not gotten down that low I guess.

Mac was without a doubt the inspiration for many people not only in civil rights but also in economic development. He had several projects. Some came to fruition and some didn't. We tried to put together a bank at one time. We had urban developers and were not able to get that on. However, he was able to, with some other people, have some success in some projects economically.

He was also interested in young people, and the schools in particular, as evidenced by his finally successful funding of the school board and serving there for four years.

He will always have a special place in my heart and my mind, and was an influence in my life for his understanding, his ambition and all the other attributes that go, compassion, in making up a person who fights to help other people and to be something, to having a positive effect upon other people's lives.

**Continuing on with Mr. Hoggard's oral history, 3/30/99. This time we're going to focus again on**

**education, more specifically on Claude Perkins, first and only black superintendent of schools, Clark County School District 1978 through '81.**

I'm not really sure when I first met Dr. Claude Perkins. It was before he became superintendent of schools. He held a couple of positions in the school system prior to becoming assistant district superintendent. I probably met him at Zion Methodist Church because he and his family attended that church during those early days. He took a great deal of interest in some of the church work and volunteered as a trustee for a number of years at Zion.

During the late 60s and early 70 years he also became quite involved in the community, and was actively supportive of NAACP and other organizations, particularly those trying to increase the possibility of success for school-aged children. He also became a member of the Economic Opportunity Board, which I was the director of at that time, and eventually became quite active. We went on several trips for the agency during those years. He became chairman of the board and was one of the most successful ones up until that time. During that time we had some of our greatest growth while I was the director. He was always very supportive and cooperative, and always had time to give you some help or try to help direct your thinking. My thinking as executive director and he as chairman was to ensure the continued success of the board.

Dr. Perkins came to Las Vegas to fill the position when the court introduced the sixth grade program. He supervised that program under Dr. Guinn, now governor. After that he became assistant or deputy director for the Clark County School District. After Dr. Guinn left he was given the opportunity to serve as the superintendent of Clark County School District. He did so successfully for more than four years. He left his mark with the school district and was quite innovative in introducing changes for the betterment of the students and the people who worked for the district.

**Could you talk about the historic West Side School building? I think Dr. Perkins was involved in the conveying of that building eventually to EOB.**

I am sure that his help and influence was responsible to a great degree for the Economic Opportunity Board getting the use of that building and working it out. At that time the Economic Opportunity Board had been using the building that was no longer used for classrooms. They were instrumental in getting it on the national register for monument. It is the oldest educational building in Clark County and still in use.

The Economic Opportunity Board tried to work out a deal during the antipoverty days. When the

freeway was coming right beside the school, we tried to get them to put an off-ramp right by the school. That didn't work out. It was our idea to have an off-ramp right there and have the first stop in Las Vegas for people to stop. Tourists came from the north to get hotel reservations, brochures and all those things. We thought we could have done that, but that didn't work out. We still had the building, but the ramp bypassed us. The Economic Opportunity Board is still using it for community services and projects, particularly, KCEP which has been there longer than any of the other programs.

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