

**Sarasota County Water Atlas
Oral History Project**

**New College of Florida- Fall
2015**

Interview with: Mr. Wade
Harvin Jr.

Date of Interview: November
5th, 2015

Interviewer: Flannery French

Mr. Harvin was born in Crescent City, Florida and moved to Sarasota in 1940 when he was five years old. He was the one of the first black bankers in Sarasota and he brought Salvation Army bell ringing to the Newtown community. He has lived in both the Newtown and "Overtown" communities, and he attends Bethlehem Baptist church, which is the oldest African-American church in Sarasota.



Flannery French: Okay, you can start now.

Mr. Wade Harvin Jr.: We moved to Sarasota Florida June of 1940, and the old train station was where Madison restaurant is presently. Of course I met Mr. Butler and Ms. Spand who were moving the baggage around during that time.

But we moved to a place that's called Mother Jones' building. And we moved at that time with my grandmother, and we stayed with her for two weeks until we were able to find lodging for ourselves. So that was my mother, who at that time, my father and her had separated. So it was my sister, my oldest brother, the next oldest brother, myself—Wade Harvin Jr.—and my youngest brother Ramar Harvin.

And we moved to what was identified at that time as 821 Grove Street. And it was also identified as Delson's Quarters. We also had something else that happened exciting during the year that we moved. It was the year of 1947, it was the year that the big storm came over Sarasota. And because the houses that we were living at the time were not felt to be safe enough we moved to the cellar of Payne Chapel Methodist Church. And there we stayed until the storm blew over.

Following that time my mother went to work, began working with a home laundromat, and she stayed with the home laundromat until such time as she was able to find other jobs. And from there she went to Ms. Bisbum, who at the time worked, my mother worked for the week and following that she began working at another home laundromat and worked there until she was able to find more suitable labor. And she continued there until, as best I can remember from that date and time, we—I began first grade at Booker Elementary School.

Now Booker Elementary School was Overtown, and where we lived was noted as Overtown. But we went to school, later, at Booker High School, Booker Middle and Booker High School, which was in Newtown. Sarasota to me was interesting at that time because of the fact that I was six, seven, and eight, and at eight years old I began going to Booker Middle School. And it was interesting because I had never went to school that was completely in an area like Booker. Because first of all we had no school bus and we ended up walkin' to school. And later they came up with a bus that was an odd shaped bus, it was an old 18-wheeler that they just cut windows into and they found bus drivers that they alternated with different times of the week. So while it was interesting, at the end of the school day we went back Overtown to our homes.

One of the things that I enjoy most of all living Overtown rather than living in Newtown at this time is we had the Ace Theatre that we were able to walk to. And the folk—the kids from Newtown had to catch the bus to come Overtown to the movies. So I thought we had the better living area. I found it also something that I couldn't quite understand, we, we attended Bethlehem Baptist Church, which was Overtown. And our other classmates Overtown went to the Methodist Church and I couldn't quite understand as a kid why do we go to different churches, and no one could quite explain that to my satisfaction but I learned to live with it until later we moved to Newtown and there was three other churches in Newtown. For the most part most of us went to the same schools and the same churches. So I was fairly—pretty well happy with that.

But I began to get a greater understanding of the way that Overtown was set up. And I found I realized that the—most of the stores—drug stores, grocery stores—they were set up to accommodate the salaries that our families were making. And to explain that

further, you could walk into a store Overtown and if the sausage were sold by the links of sausage, well because you were Overtown you did not have to buy a link of sausage. You could buy half a link, because most folk did not have sufficient money to buy a link or two or three links so they allowed you to buy a half a link. So it—to me—it was accommodating the type of income that we had and I was really appreciative to that and we learned to live and to make ends meet because of the way it was set up.

And finally we noticed that most of the folk who were Overtown began making sufficient money, and their income became sufficient that they were able to buy homes, but the homes that were being bought were mainly in Newtown. So I didn't really think that we were poor. And as I heard one of our pastors say to us once, "I didn't really know I was poor until someone told me that I was poor." So we learned to live within the means. And I began to listen to who actually lived, and pick up who lived where Overtown. And usually by where they lived kinda told you if they were sufficient—had sufficient income.

One in particular was Mr. Leonard Reid. And I never quite became close with Mr. Reid because we were told that he was a very important man and that kids couldn't stop him and talk to him like we could other men there so actually I, I didn't warm up to Mr. Leonard Reid. And I noticed too that he, where most of the black folk lived—the 821 Grove Street where I lived and the other homes that was rented within that area—but Mr. Reid lived across from what I call the black area to the area that was called—it was actually moving towards Highway 41 at that time. But his home was the only home that was in that area—of a black person—so I wondered why that was and why are we not able to strike up a conversation with him. In later years I found out some of the reasons why but his home was the last home Overtown that was torn down. And I believe it was the first home that was noted in the history of Overtown. So it didn't bother me greatly but I still didn't develop a conversation with him. But there were other men who were—other black men—who would stop and talk to us about different things and—not only the black men, but we were—there were white owners of businesses Overtown and they usually had conversations with us about different things.

And the other—there were the barbers who were in that area and they would always talk to you about different things, "How are you doing in school?" and they would always show an interest—that whatever you do, do your best. And I wondered too, well why are they concerned about my doing my best and not really my relatives. But pretty soon I found that they just had a interest in the community and they wanted you to do your best. Of all the men Overtown, that had business there was a Greek man named George Hariganis, and he was just a fantastic human being, he, he always asked me how I was doin' in school, he always asked me what was my next grade. Just a genuinely interested person. And at that time, it's, while it may not be clear, well

understood—quickly understood—but it was unusual that a white person would strike up a conversation with you, especially about your well being. But George Hariganis would ask you, and he'd ask questions about school, he'd ask questions about—surprisingly enough, “Do you have a little girlfriend?”— and I just thought that was strange, but he, he would ask the questions and we became great friends.

And strangely enough, when Mr. Hariganis passed on, I was at the time, in the— had just started a banking career. And one of the commercial banks that would replenish our funds had a young lady that worked in there and I kept noticing wondering, “Why does she remind me of someone?” And this young lady I was giving my bank the replenishment for our funds was George Hariganis' daughter. And I kept saying to myself, “You know God made the world large but he also made it small”. And we became great friends. My brother who lived in California would come home every December for Christmas, and I took him across the street to that bank and he met George Hariganis' daughter. It was almost as if he felt that they were very very close. Not friends, but relatives. So we grew up loving, and still care very much for that family.

But over and above Overtown I started listening to, what actually is going on in and around. And I began to look at the buildings on, on Main Street. Not that I went in to buy anything but I would just go in and see, basically, what, how does this business run itself? And I've always been a lover of music so surprisingly enough in our neighborhood WSPB from the Island came on every morning and every afternoon. And we in the community started listening to it. And I began loving WSPB. Bandolin came on in the morning and, and Fleischmann would be on in the afternoons. And we would sit there and listen.

And finally in the smallness of God's word—world—I met Hack Swain, an organist that would play every single day at 5 o'clock. And when I told him that I listened to Hack Swain as a 6 and 7 year old boy he said, “Where'd you listen to it?” I said, “In the neighborhood that I lived.” He said, “You go to the neighbors?” I said, “Every neighbor that was on our road listened to Hack Swain.” He said, “Well I'll have to tell my dad that.” I said, “We listened to him every day at 5 o'clock and I enjoyed his music.” And surprisingly enough there was a bar that had a, some kind of news at 5 o'clock. And it was called the Elbow Room on St. Armand's Circle. And I grew up wondering, “What actually goes on in the Elbow Room?” And as most of the business—white businessmen there had a conversation about how the chores of the day went. But I tried to become as interested as possible so as to what was going on. And I took information that I received there and I brought it back to Overtown and to Newtown and told them what I heard on the radio and the music that I listened to.

But here's some of the things I remember most about Sarasota. The people that I've met, the people who became lifetime friends— who I—the barber, Jetson Graves and I met, met in second grade and we've been friends ever since. We have—we're not kinda friends. And I thought to myself, "We, we have never separated, we've always done things together." And when I decided I'm going to Florida Business College of—try to get a grip on life and really get a real final job. And two days before I was gonna mention to him where I was going to college he said to me, "Oh, by the way, what are you doin' next weekend?" I said, "I don't know, I'll probably find a dance to go to or something." He said, "Will you go to Jacksonville with me?" I said, "Jacksonville for what?" He said, "I'm going up to Jacksonville to register to try to get into a college there." I said, "Are you jokin'?" He said, "No." Because we had never been separated, and I thought certainly we'd go to college and he'll go to Miami and I'll go out of state somewhere. But we went to the same col—not the same college, but in Jacksonville. So we never separated from each other.

FF: What college was it?

WH: He went to Florida Barber College, I went to Florida Business and Vocational College. And, the thing that was really showing me it was something by just not— we were supposed to be together was the old saying, "When your best friend get married, it won't be long before you'll get married" Well he, he got married in December and I held out until July. But the very, the next July is when I got married. I was his best man and he was my best man. And we're still buddy-buddies. But it's—I think that some things just meant to happen to you because the saying it's, "Even if your good friends usually the—your wife and his wife won't get along, or something'll happen to separate you." We've never been separated.

FF: Do- do your wives get along?

WH: They get along because my wife's a great southern cook.

FF: I love southern food.

WH: Yes, and Jetson loved southern, southern food. Well I said if it came to who—for our eating habits you probably should've ended up married to my wife. I really don't eat that much. But I like certain southern food, but she's a great cook, a great cook.

But those are pretty much the things that—that kept me in Saras— well one thing that kept me in Sarasota—when I proposed she said that because I was really thinking of living in Jacksonville. And she said, "We live in Sarasota if you're gonna marry me." And

so we've been in Sarasota ever since. But we've pretty much liked it, she's been—well was a great dancer—she can't dance like she used to. But we both love dancin' and Jetson's wife loves dancing, and Jetson's a pretty good dancer. So it just, we just, hung together. We, we genuinely loved Sarasota. And it's not because of what we can get from Sarasota. It's what we've always felt that we could give to Sarasota.

To me one of the greatest things I stepped on to do, over and above the banking, over and above some other things I did—when we were growing up, and I—it was near Christmas time and my mother and my grandmother was living with us at the time, and they was kinda talking on the front porch. And I didn't know what—exactly what they were talking about but I knew—children feel things and it—and I kept hearing my grandmother mention something, “Oh I wish we could go shopping I wish we could, I would do it if we had the money to do it with. And I kept listening to that conversation and I thought, “My goodness. I'm not old enough to work, we don't have any extra money, but I hear how disappointed they are in their lives right now.” And it must have been two hours maybe later after they had the conversation that I heard a knock [knocks on table] on my back porch. And we went to the back porch and they said, “Merry Christmas from the Salvation Army.” And there was two boxes: a box with groceries and another had some toys in there. And I took a solemn oath that if ever I'm an adult and become an adult and have sufficient money, no one would have a bad Christmas.

And it was years after that, but I became a member of the, Sunrise Kiwanis. And one of our projects were to help supply the Salvation Army with toys and food. And I was a member and I made sure and I started with them, I worked with them and made sure we had sufficient food. But Sarasota was still separated then, you had the beach, Longboat Key and the Downtown area and the—Newtown. And I said, “What, what can I do something different and then really help out?” And I went to the president at the time and I said, “Well how do you get a kettle to do bell ringin' in Newtown?” He said, “Just ask me.” “I'm askin.” I went together and I asked the businessmen of Newtown. I said, “I want you to do something different for me this Christmas.” And they said, “What are you gonna do, Harvin?” And I said, “I want you to bell ring for me.” They said, “Bell ring? Nah they doin' it downtown.” I said, “No we're doin' it here in Newtown this year.” And I took the mortician in Newtown, I took the guys who were in banking, I took every professional guy that was in Newtown, and I told him what—the hours he was gonna work and where I wanted him to work. But the most workin' in Newtown.

We came in second. Now, you think about it. Newtown. We worked four hours in one day and we came in second. All you've gotta do is do it.

FF: Were people surprised?

WH: More than surprised. When I came in second I'll tell you what they—they were insulted from the other groups. I never came in second ever again. And I said to them guess what? But the children won. The children won. There wasn't a kid that didn't have somethin'. You know it almost brought tears to my eyes because the toys that we gave out—my mother and my grandmother would have been shocked just to see the brand new things—and on top of that we had extra money to give her. And fortunately-UNfortunately for the lady—she thought—but it was fortunate, there was one lady in the project that—who told the kids, “Keep the doors closed, because they have nothing to give them for Christmas.” And she said, “I don't want the kids to know you don't have anything.” And to be able to say to a person, “No, open the doors. Open the doors, the toys are coming.” And not secondhand toys, brand new items. But for the way that people, you know the Salvation Army normally starts the day after Thanksgiving. We were the day before Christmas. The Saturday before Christmas, which—we weren't doin' it Christmas Eve. It was the Saturday before Christmas. And I mean it worked for four days. Four days. And they looked at my kettle and went—I had a check in there from—you've heard the—Berry College in Rome, Georgia. I had a fifty dollar check in there from the lady—from the niece of the lady who owned Berry College. And there—everyone tryin' to figure out, “How did that check get from there up here?” I said, “All we did was just ring the bell.” I said, “Maybe we had a different tune then you had.” But I, I rubbed it in, I rubbed it in as much as I could as long as I could.

FF: Why do you think that—that you guys got so much money?

WH: There were, there were people in Newtown that actually were wealthy but no one ever rang the bell in Newtown. In my, I started with professional guys. And then I thought about the kids who come home from college doing their time. Those guys just loved me. They would call me before they come, “Mr. Harvin what day are we ringin'? When are we ringin'?” And they would just like—because they'd see their classmates at this time. And I said, “What I want you to do”—and there's nothing illegal about this, “What I want you to do is the first time you get a dollar bill hold the dollar bill in your hand and ring the bell and say, “Salvation Army donations” And I said, “Don't take that bill out of your hand until you get five. Once you get five, put the four in the kettle and then leave the one out. But keep doin' that and if the four—and in most cases you have to tell them what you really want. If you walk out there with a handful of change and ringin' the bell they'll give you some change.” And then the first day the guy said to me when he picked up our kettle, he said, “You guys didn't do very well, this is—it's not heavy.” And I said, “We have dollar bills, that's why it's not heavy.” But the—to beat those guys—Longboat Key—certainly they sure had more money. But they were putting

change in. And until they, until they stopped them from doin' that they'll keep the old habits.

But it was, it was—and some folk—I wish I could say everybody liked the fact that I'd did that. There was some folk who'd say, "But that's a white organization. Why aren't you doing something for the NAACP or whatever?" I said, "I'm ringin' the bells. And if you want something done for the NAACP then you do that. They have more money than we have here." But they're—no matter how good your thoughts are and what you're doin' everyone never agrees to everything. You can't get—no matter how good it is. Now I'm gonna carry it a step further. When you think about it it wasn't all the people in the world who said don't put Jesus on the cross. He had very few people who said, "Let him go." So when the—what, if it's good to you and God keeps tellin' you to do it, do it. Do it. And if I, the only thing—this year I kept saying, "I'm not gonna do it." But they—The Herald Tribune had an article in the paper that we came in second. And I said, "I'm gonna put in here that I'm gonna do it again." And I said, "No I'm not, no I'm not. If it's supposed to happen then someone on the Herald Tribune should have picked that up."

And one year the black guys from Sara—from Newtown did this and came in number two. And they did their own—I'm satisfied with that. But to me just to know that the Lord moved some hearts of the people. And I was happy with that.

FF: Did a lot of the business owners, white business owners in Newtown did they live there too or did they just have businesses there?

WH: Most of them just had businesses there.

FF: Were there a lot of, like, black businesses there too?

WH: Yeah, yes. And let's see, 1, 2, 3, who was doin' business with my office, my bank. So when I walked in their place they said, "Ok, I hear your're bell ringin' out there." I said, "Yes sir, anything you can give us we'd certainly appreciate it." And the one gentlemen just said to his wife, "Write Mr. Harvin a check." She said, "Well how much?" He said, "Write him a good check." So I don't know what it—the amount, but I know the size of it. It was sizable. But they—they give and, and one of the bankers who was there—it was raining when he, and as he went by, I was ringing the bell and he went in the street I guess a couple blocks and then turned around and came back and he said, "You know something Mr. Harvin? They know who to put out here in this rain, because if it had been anyone other than you I wouldn't have stopped in the rain to give you this. I would have given it to somebody else and told them, 'Bring it up here.' But when I saw you I—." Well we've been here a long time, we've been here a long time.

And in 1945 my granddaddy was the manager for the black baseball team. So I got known pretty well, and I wish that I could say it was all good reports, it wasn't all good reports. But the time, at that time granddaddy lost all the money out there tryin' to keep the team going because he didn't have any money in the bank. But by the same token it didn't stop him from doin' it. So folk look, they really watch the people who don't quit. I mean just, it gets bad but don't quit. There's just something about a person who will do it in spite of, when others would quit. So I kinda, I had that in me.

FF: Do you think the community helped people to not quit, like having the support of other people or was it more on their own?

WH: No, no no no. You're told—that's one of the things that Dr. King talked about. But over and above Dr. King I've—I don't want to sound like I'm boasting. My family, with my mother and dad separating that way it, we, we didn't have, ever have, two or three suits. That, that was not—the first year that Booker came, it had a cafeteria I think. We may have been able to eat two of the days at the cafeteria out of the five days. But we didn't ever think about not goin' to school. And when we—I guess when things were, we kinda feel that this person has this and we don't have it. But there were a time when there were four brothers and one sister. There was a time when the four of us slept in the same bed. And I don't mind sayin' that because when that youngest brother who was at the foot of the bed, when he retired he was director of housing—West Palm Beach. That's one of the richest counties in the state. And my mother used to always say, "Take care of your baby brother. Take care of him. Make sure he gets—help him as much as you can. You really need to watch out for him." Well when he retired he had bought four houses and had a trailer that I used to love to go down to Okeechobee and fish and I could stay in his trailer. And everything was in that trailer. But he never, never thought that he couldn't do what he set out to do. Never thought. And the other three wasn't poor. My brother, they retired as principal of Oakland Middle School. He had a home in Oakland, he had money. He had four cars and a motorcycle. They wasn't exactly poor.

FF: What about your sister?

WH: We lost my sister she was 23 years old. And, and, and each of us had pledged something to her. And my brother in Oakland was the worst student in our family. The worst. And he said, "I'm gonna get my doctorate degree. I'm gonna dedicate it to our sister." And for him to do that the sky's the limit for the rest of us. But somehow having less gave us a lot of pride. Having less made us more ambitious and made us feel that we had to—there was no way in—and when my cousins and my aunts in Crescent City

heard that I was branch manager on the seventh largest branch of 35, they couldn't—some came here just to see it. Just, just to see it. They said, "Well how'd you do that?" I said, "I just tried. I just tried." And I tried to live a clean life. And that's that's- that's what did it. And I feel like, like I'm going overboard with this but thank God that we believed, and our family made us believe in ourselves. You just, just try. And you never know what you can do until you try. And that was actually the truth.

When I retired, I said, "I'm gonna do something that's unusual." Now most of the, well maybe I'll say half of the blacks, well it was whites as well as blacks, but the families get a little bit outta tune with life. And sometime they have their children havin' to raise their children to help out because it's just not, it didn't happen that one goes whatever way—it just doesn't, it doesn't work out. The marriage didn't work. The other thing then, well you keep sayin', "Well they goofed up, but what am I gonna do?" You know, I don't have anything to give them, I was tryin' to live myself. I came up with the idea that before I retire I want all my classmates to be at my retirement party. Now how in the world do you have a retirement party that has all of them there?

And I didn't want it just at a regular restaurant. No, I wanted some place that they'll feel good about where they are. And I mentioned to my wife, she said, "Ok, but I don't think I like the way you're doing this one." And I said, "Well, let's just see what—" But I, it's strange I can't even remember the name of the place now. Names drop on me now at my age. But anyway the restaurant it's over on—well that's strange. I had—in fact I even brought a picture. But anyways I invited all the girls that were havin' a rough time. I said, "Now, I invited you but you cannot bring a guest, I'm inviting you." So I had each of my classmates that's still alive came to the, to my, my retirement. And unfortunately I didn't get a cheap price. But I asked them because sometimes if you've never had anything big happen to you, to me you need to have something big one time happen. So I asked this manager, now I'll think of the name of the place, I said, "I've invited my classmates here and whatever the price is, but I'd like to give each one of the girls a yellow rose. And I'd like for you to present it to them." And you know he, he didn't just openly refuse. He said, "I could, I have people here that, that works under me, I could have them do that." I said, "Well I plan on givin' a decent tip. But if you do it I plan on givin' you a decent tip." He said, "No, I—I'll be too busy. Let me—I'll have them do it." And that one kinda broke my heart.

But each of those girls came, made certain they came by and I told them they—I said, "I don't want you to give me no gift. Don't gimme no gift. I want you there because I want you there." And they came, 2- 3 of 'em gave me a gift. And the others just came over and her and I used to butt heads in math, in school. She came in and gave me a gift and a big hug and a kiss. And she said, "I know I beat you doin' that because you never

thought I'd kiss you." And we, we really went at it, tongue in cheek. But then anyway, that gave—a lot of 'em even now said, "But you invited me to that retirement party and I've never forgot."

FF: I heard that Booker still has a really good theatre program to this day.

WH: Oh! Yes, yes, yes they're very—no I'm not, I'm not braggin' because I graduated from that school, but it, they are good, they are good. And I'm, I, I'm proud that my kids graduated, I'm proud I graduated Booker. But, I'm very—if we had been a better level, I think I'd still be flyin' somewhere. But they—they are good, they are good.

FF: So your kids graduated from Booker too?

WH: Yes. And believe it or not, three of us graduated the same year. The one with the doctorate degree, I didn't think he'd ever graduate.

FF: It's funny that he's the one with the doctorate degree. You never know.

WH: You never know. You never know! And I, I couldn't believe it, I thought, I said as much as his mother, I said—he didn't just graduate, he went to Bethune Cookman—I said, "If he can just graduate from high school I think that would be good for him." That's—I was thinking that all he's gonna be able to be capable to do. He got his doctor—uh his masters from Bethune. He moved to California. And every kid needs to be in a good environment where folks say, "Oh you gotta go to college." You got—then all of a sudden he was in college. He was in college and he was doin' good.

And when I took my summer vacation with my family and it's—his bottom—den at the bottom of his house, and he had paper just scattered everywhere. And I said, "What're you doin' with all these papers?" He said, "I'm workin' on my doctorate." I said, "You'll do what? Have you lost your mind?" He did. He did. So it, it—life's been good to me and, and no matter what folks say about Sarasota, no matter what black folks say—how hard it was—it was hard when you made it hard. It was hard when you made it hard. We didn't have money. But guess who paid for my cap and gown at my graduation? A man that I had worked for in the summer. And he didn't—he asked me if I was, "Wade, are you gonna graduate from high school?" and I said, "Yes sir". And he said, he noticed it was the confidence I was saying it because if you're certain you're going to—I said I was certain I was gonna graduate. I was certainly certain that I would try. And he paid—he said, "Whatever you need, you tell me." And my family didn't have the money to pay for those things. And I didn't miss anything. Mr. Edward Bainbridge for everything. So it,

it—if I quit, if I gave up, it never would've happened. Because I said, “I—I’m gonna keep tryin’.

Okay, are we close?

FF: Yeah. Did people at—was Booker segregated—like the—who was going to Booker when you were there?

WH: The two, the three black guys who became doctors in our neighborhood: Cupid Reece Poe, Booker—Booker T. Poe, and Spurgeon Poe, who—Spurgeon was not the doctor, Spurgeon was a principal in Macon, Georgia. Cupid and Booker were—became doctors in Tennessee A and I. And Cupid tutored me a couple times when I was in sixth grade. But he was just great. You knew—I mean nobody had to guess—this guy was goin’ somewhere. It’s like Ed James’—I don’t know if you’ve ever met Ed James’ son. My god, I don’t know what he’s gonna be but he’s gonna be great. But, but Jerome Dupree, he was the only one that George Hariganis that work at this drugstore—he would leave him there. I mean it was unheard of to do. He would leave Jerome Dupree there. Jerome Dupree spoke in a mixed group of I Speak for Democracy. And that was, that was the first time they had a contest that was integrated. And he didn’t win. But he’s told me even as late as last month that a lot of the white kids came up to him and said, “You should’ve have won. You should’ve won.” We’ve had basketball players, great basketball players. Great, great football players from Booker. But we never, we could never get the publicity that that we could.

Just as—what they did with us about the bell ringin’. They did an article—they made certain that it was over into the afternoon. They made certain that everyone was, should’ve been out doin’ shoppin’. And the officials from Salvation Army who was supposed to stand there with us, they made certain that everybody else had somethin’ else to do. I mean I’m not sayin’, just—I’m not thinkin’ evily but I’ve watched it happen. Little things, just incidentally, “They couldn’t be here at this time.”, “They had an engagement that came up at the last minute, they can’t—” and I kept sayin’, “Is this happening this way or is someone makin’ this happen?” And it was, it was strange. They put, they put the article down, they put the picture, my picture, along with my secretary’s picture. But it was the dullest picture. I mean just a, just a horrible—I told them, “Is this pathetic or what? We’re not gonna show this picture to anyone, just leave the article, and take this picture off here.” But it, it’s happened to us many times. Many, many times.

But we had, in terms of sports: football, basketball, baseball, we, we had MVP for the basketball tournament. We have all the big— well that kinda thing. But they would

always find a way to put the big articles when something horrible happened to us. And I kept saying, "Will you ever write one that we might—that one of us from Newtown may happen to get to heaven." No! That's impossible. You know? But that's that, we had, we have had—and from Overtown the—lemme see what was he—John Cheney, who was a coach—what's a college in Pennsylvania? It's in Philadelphia. Now he's a great coach there, but he was at Bethune Cookman when H.T. Rainey who was—lived on 6th Street Overtown. He was at Bethune Cookman with John Cheney, and they all said, all the folks said, "There ain't no way in the world that John Cheney can be a coach. And Henry Rainey, another coach." But we—it just always seemed that someone who—just wouldn't vote for us or whatever happened. But we've still done well. In some areas we've done well. So I'm not complainin' I'm not complainin'. But I wish that—have you talked with Jetson?

FF: No, no I haven't.

WH: He usually keep up with the sports a little bit better than I do. But—and he did something, I don't know if you've talked to him yet.

FF: I haven't personally.

WH: I'm certain Vicky's probably talked with him. But Jetson to me did something that—well he had something happen to him. The midwife in Newtown used to deliver babies. She adopted him. And then a black man of cuban descent made cigars, back when folks had this Havana cigar. Well you don't see a lot of black men with that one. You actually don't see a lot of white men with this except in the country club. But that man made the cigars in his house. He had a line of people bought nothin' but his cigars. So he never did any other kinda work. And he lived in Newtown. So once a month he'd get his cigars up and he'd go to his clients who—none of his clients were in Newtown. He went out to Sara Bay country club and those kinda places. But he made a good living. Jetson's family I believe had the first T.V. in Newtown. He had a—I'll never forget—he had a silk suit for some kind of affair they had made for him. I said, "My goodness. How much money are they makin'? A guy get's a suit like that makin' cigars?" But those were very expensive cigars. And the other thing I'd never heard of—he would always tell me, "Wade, when the Major Brooks died we kept his body in the house for a week." I said, "You did? Why did you do that?" And he said, "Well we just kept it in there." I said, "Well what happened when you got ready to go to the refrigerator and he's right there in the middle of the room and you had to go around him." I said, "We'd never do that." And he said, "Well I didn't ask any questions. They said he was gonna stay in there for a week and he stayed." And I thought, "God, I don't think I'd be able to sleep in that house with that." But they did. But yeah he had a much better life than many of us had. And he was

a guy who believed in giving, he really did. He believed in giving. He was such a giving person that folks would give him and he would, he wouldn't know how to accept anything. But he was—and not only just a—I was his friend so I expected him to do things for me. He had a, a 1955 red convertible Chevy. And guess who drove it more than Jetson? I drove it. He was my best friend.