

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Oral History Office

EVELYN T. BURRELL

Interviewed by Susan Conwell

The Governor Theodore McKeldin-Dr. Lillie May Jackson Project
An inquiry into the Civil Rights activities
of
two Maryland leaders
during
the mid-twentieth century

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Interviewer: Susan Conwell
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I. Well, I guess the best place to start for us, is at the beginning - what you were just telling me - about your early years.

A. Well, I became interested in fighting civil rights causes at the age of twelve years. This came about as the result of an effort on the part of a man who was known as Prophet Kewai Castonie, who had come to Baltimore with the direct purpose of attempting to get employment for blacks in this city. The first project that I was aware he had underfoot was an effort to get blacks as clerks in the Baltimore City's A & P stores, which of course is known as the Atlantic and Pacific chain stores. I lived on Fremont Ave., in the six hundred block, and one of the chain stores was located at Harlem Ave. and Fremont. We were coming from school, my lifelong friend who is now deceased, Elva Davis, and I, and we saw this man and a group of young men whom we knew coming out of the store, and we asked what was the purpose.

We learned that they had been ⁱⁿ to talk with the manager of that store, attempting to get his feelings about having black clerks. The manager had told them that as long as he was manager in the store, no blacks would ever work with him. Well, at that time, we didn't refer to our race as being "black". We said "Negro" or "colored". So Mr. Castonie was heard saying to the manager as he was coming out of the store, "We'll be here in the morning with picket signs." Elva and I heard this, and we proceeded to go to her father's cellar (her father, incidentally, was a mechanical drawings teacher), and he had all of the materials necessary for making signs.

During this time, it was very interesting to note that we used to have trucks, and stand on various corners and talk to the people. And it was quite fascinating that this was all done when it was not popular for blacks to advocate anything through a display. Whites just did not accept blacks' efforts without them being overt to the point of coming out and being forceful. We were a small group at that time, but as time went on, of course, we did interest other people.

And then, it was interesting to note that "Miss" ~~Lillie~~ became the president of the N.A.A.C.P. and all of us young people became members of the N.A.A.C.P. and went into fighting those civil causes - civil rights' causes.

Now we undertook the task of getting black policemen into the police force.

I. When was this?

A. This was about...let me see...I would say, this was somewhere around 1935-6, something like that. We were successful, as you know, and I think there were four black policemen hired at that time, I'm not sure of that; I think they were. And one of them was a woman - Miss Violet Hill ~~White~~, who went on to become a most outstanding policewoman who at the time of her retirement was, I believe, but I'm not certain, ^{she} was a lieutenant.

Our next effort took us into the field of getting blacks employed in the Baltimore Transit System, the Fire Dept. and I'm somewhat amused when I hear young people of today speak about the fact that their parents did nothing to help fight our cause. Because I was a part of the fight that went on, and when I tell these young people that they take for granted that we've always had black on buses, and we've always had blacks in the Fire Dept,

and we've always had blacks in the Police Dept., that there was a time we couldn't even have blacks in the stores on Pennsylvania Ave. where the trade was nothing but black. They look at me, and they say, "What are you talking about, Mrs. Burrell?". Then I have to go through reviewing to them the things that were done, and the people who were responsible for this kind of action.

One man that came here to Baltimore City that was very helpful in the movement was named Furman Templeton. He is now deceased. Along with the Mitchell family. We went on to strive for those things. All of this was really a terrific fight. And I don't mind telling you that some of us were arrested, but we fortunately were not treated like they were in the South when Martin Luther King started his movement. We were not hosed down by the Police Dept. and certainly were not whipped with their night sticks, but we were harrassed, and we kept right on fighting. We never did get tired.

And so we went from there into our fight at the University of Maryland to get blacks in the Law School there. I'm trying to think (as well as I know him), I'm trying to think of the person... his name was Murray, the first black that was admitted to the U. of Md. Law School. I believe his first name was Donald, I knew him very well...but right now...I think it was Donald Murray who went on to finish with honors and to become an ^{outstanding} lawyer in the city. And then, one of our fights, ironically enough, that I participated in was to get this agency - right here - on board. We had to go down to Annapolis. We had to fight all the way in order to get a Civil Rights Agency under the auspices of the city government.

Of course, some of the names of the people that have been in the more modern civil rights movement that I worked very closely with, of course, it was David Glenn, Rev. Vernon Dobson, Troy Bailey, ^{Deleate} Lena K. Lee, ..oh, Walter Carter, who is now deceased. But he was one of our most outstanding civil rights' leaders. And, I'd like to say here, that those of us who have been very active in civil rights causes have been rejected by the "city fathers", the present "city fathers" particularly. But we found a great deal of assistance was available to us by the late Governor Theodore McKeldin. We found him to be a man of..a very fair man, and a man who not only listened to what we had to say, but went out of his way to help the civil rights cause here in Baltimore City.

Another person that I failed to name who has been a great help in the most modern civil rights causes in the City is Judge Howard. Judge Howard has been a very, very outstanding man in fighting civil rights causes here in Baltimore City. I don't think that I need to explain to you that even city government and state government and federal government did not employ many blacks. And we went ⁱⁿ to that area and fought for blacks to be recognized in employment in those areas.

And then we did something else, we went into the private sector, we fought as I have said before through the Urban League, and through the efforts of the N.A.A.C.P. and these leaders that I have named to get into private sectors. Troy Bailey was the union man that fought very hard with the union to accomplish this. So Baltimore has come a long way. Unfortunately, we are, and I say this because it's my own personal observation as a result of my experiences, we have digressed in the last five years at least ten years from where we were in the late '60's.

Another man that I did not name, but was very active at the time we started out in Baltimore City, and he is now deceased, but he was an attorney, and a most outstanding man and he was lawyer Al Hughes. And ironically enough, Al Hughes was our attorney when we first started our battle with the A & P store, and then later on Thurgood Marshall became our attorney, and then he went from there to the N.A.A.C.P., and from there right on up the ladder to of course, where he is today, in the Supreme Court, the highest court of our land.

Now I have tried very briefly to give you a picture of Baltimore, but if you would prefer that I be more specific and you ask me some questions, I'll ~~be~~ gladly try to answer them.

I. Okay. I'll be happy to. Now we have the general picture, I'm ready to "zoom in".

A. Okay. Go right ahead.

I. Okay. How many people can you think of, that you were talking when you said/ⁱⁿthe beginning, in the '30's, a small group was involved. By small, are we talking about eight or ten?

A. When I said "small group", I'm talking about approximately fifty people whose aim and desires were to interest the black community in Baltimore City. Now there may have been more than fifty give or take a few, or there may have been less, but we.. I didn't mention something to you too. During all of our fights, we were out here ringing doorbells to try to get people to vote. Because we recognized the power of the vote. And we used to go from door to door and ask people to register and take them down for the purpose of registering, and getting them out to vote. We used to hold meetings- public meetings - to acquaint and educate the community with what their responsibilities were in order for

us to win our fight. So I would say that the original group was in the area of fifty people. But we of course, held meetings first in Sharpe Street Methodist Church, and then we went to Bethel Church. And each Sunday morning, we each had an assignment of several churches. The ministers were very cooperative in letting us come in and make our presentations to their congregations. We had many ministers that were very helpful in our Civil Rights Movement. (interruption)

I. What role did the ministers play other than allowing you to come into their church?

A. Well you know, we used to, as I said, hold ^{many} meetings. They opened up their churches for us to hold these meetings. One of our most recent ministers that was so helpful and involved personally in the movement was Rev. Frank Williams. But as I recall back through the years we had such ministers as Rev. Kelly Jackson who opened his church to us and who spoke to the congregation trying to educate them. Now that I'm trying to recall some of the names, and this is terrible, of the minister that was at Bethel A.M.E. Church was one of the most outstanding, I can't think of his name at this point. Oh, I can't remember his name. But, that's where the City-Wide Young People's Forum used to meet every Friday, and then the N.A.A.C.P. used to hold meetings there.

We had....my mind is a complete blank on these minister's names, but they helped us, as I say, when fighting for our cause was not very popular. And it was necessary, and it wasn't an easy job to educate their congregation in what we were all about. Unfortunately, I can't think of their names now.

I. They may come to you as we sit and talk. What about during World War II, ~~inasmuch as~~ ^{things must have -} the movement must have changed its pace and people who were involved ^{obviously} / some of the young men...

A. Well, that's what I was going to say. You know, really to tell you the truth now, it's been women, usually, who have been at the top of this. Because anyone who knew Miss Lillie Jackson knew that she was very pushful, very motivating, dedicated woman to the cause of Civil Rights, and she trained her children to do the same thing. And the same amount of inspiration that she... Well, what I want to ~~say~~ ^{say} you is, it rubbed off. If you knew Miss Lillie and were a part of the movement, it rubbed off. So, many of us in the "movement" were females, instead of male. Although, there were males. But the push came from the females.

We did, of course, lose our young men to the service, but by the time that the war came about we had been able to get jobs for a number of these young men, and women, too. But, when they came back from the war most of them had jobs ^{if} waiting for them. And we kept right on fighting. I don't think that/your question was asked to show that there was a slowdown of the movement, there wasn't.

I. Oh, no, no ..what was happening, ~~the~~ ^{the} change shifted probably. Certain kinds of things.

A. Yes, well - certain kinds of things, but the women were the ones who pushed it and it survived, quite the same.

I. What about the fight or struggle at the University of Maryland Law School? How was that carried out?

A. Well, first of all, an effort was made to get the President whose name was Curly Byrd to accept blacks in the school. And all of these efforts proved to be in vain. And so then the N.A.A.C.P. took the matter into court, and it was fought through the courts.

I. Were there any particular young black lawyers at the time who were involved in this struggle? I remember Col. Harris mentioned, Judge Watts...

A. Oh, Bob! I forgot to even mention Bob. Bob Watts wasn't an attorney, he was just a youngster, in fact, he is a few years younger than I am, but he was one of those who was in the fight. And there was Emerson Brown who was also a young student. We were all students, and Judge Harry Cole. Now these guys went on to become attorneys, but at that time... Let me see - who else? Of course Donald was the one who went to the University of Maryland. And, of course Juanita Mitchell herself was right at the helm of the fight along with her mother. She too, went on to become an attorney later. I can't think offhand of any... I believe I said Emerson Brown. I can't offhand now, think of any. I know Attorney Calvin Douglas who is now deceased was a struggling young attorney at that time. Oh, and another one of our members who went on to become an attorney and judge/^{who was} in our fight is Theodore Hays who is now a master in juvenile court.

And then I did not mention some of the younger men such as Juanita Mitchell's sons, one of which is now Senator Clarence Mitchell and also Michael Mitchell who is now in the City Council. These are all youngsters that were in the civil rights movement. And I failed to mention the assistance given us by such black legislators - I named Lena K. Lee. I did not mention Delegate Isaiah Dixon. I did not mention Delegate Loyal Randolph. I

failed to mention the efforts of such people as City Councilman Robert Marshall who is now deceased.

I. What about Mr. Sinclair? *Mannie Sinclair?*

A. I don't know him.

I. And Charles Cornish?

A. Charles Cornish. I failed to mention him.

I. Were they involved in the same kind of work at that time as you were?

A. You mean, such as this work? In putting forth the effort, and pushing. Yes, yes, yes. We used to go down to Annapolis so frequently and collecting money, and all this kind of thing. And I mean it was a door-to-door kind of thing. I was trying to think.. When you ~~remind~~ ^{remind things} sometime, you fail to mention what you ought to mention. But during the days that we were members of the City-Wide Young People's Forum, we had a great philanthropist and I can't think of his name who used to contribute quite a bit of money to our cause. You mentioned Rev. Cornish and of course he was one of our outstanding pushers and he was affiliated with Morgan State College where he had a group of young men where he could, well, women, too, but of course I mean being head of young men that he could interest in the cause. He did much to fight ^{back?} that. We had a young man by the name of Maceo Howard that was very outstanding in our early years in civil rights fighting. And then of course, Parren Mitchell ^{who} ~~that~~ is now our Congressman, who was a youngster, who grew up as I did fighting Civil Rights causes here in Baltimore City. And then more recently ^{we had Delegate} Hildegard Boswell who is interested in fighting civil rights causes and also those of the black woman.

I failed to mention Rev. Marion Bascom who has been an outstanding leader in fighting civil rights causes. Oh, and one thing I might tell you that I forgot to mention was that we had a change during this in the neighborhood pattern. This was another thing that was fought. At one time blacks, in my early years, blacks only lived - and then if you lived on what was determined Druid Hill, McCulloh and Madison Ave., you were in the upper income bracket.

Most of them lived in smaller streets, so we had to fight in order to get housing. As we spreaded out we were just too cramped up and we had to fight to get on certain steets in Baltimore City. Believe it or not, blacks weren't known to live above North Ave., across Mount Street, Eutaw Place,

in West Baltimore. And in Northeast Baltimore, there were streets over there that they were not allowed to live in. Of course south Baltimore was a run-down area and blacks were cramped down there. So we had the housing problem that we fought along with the other battles such as employment.

And then, of course, when we started buying property we had problems with the lending institutions. We had to breakdown those barriers. Now I'm saying all of this; I don't want to give the impression that we are still not in many of these same fights. We are.

I. In the 1950's, as we shoot up in time, Dave Glenn has mentioned that the Urban League was the real, primary moving organization, of course, associated, I mean people ~~were not happy~~ ^{were two hats,} in a sense - ~~the Urban League~~ ^{the Urban League} ~~wasn't~~ ^{around} and the N.A.A.C.P. and CORE, ~~OK~~ ^{of course} CORE wasn't ^{around} here at that time, but, he said in one of his interviews, that the Urban League was really pushing in the period of say '51 - '57 particularly with public accommodations and jobs.

A. That is true, very true. Furman Templeton, that I mentioned earlier was in charge of the Urban League during this time and they took a leading role in pushing, but many of us wore, as you said, many of us wore two hats. We belonged to the same organizations and we were fighting the same cause, but that is true - the Urban League did both locally and nationally.

I. Were there any conflicts at that time, between the Urban League and the N.A.A.C.P., ~~between~~ ^{between} what Dr. Jackson was trying to do and what Mr. Templeton was trying to do, were there any conflicts?

A. No, no. One of the things that I think has always made our efforts prior to these most recent times, and when I say these most

recent times, I'm talking about the last four or five years, maybe six years, one of the things that we did here in Baltimore that I feel made our efforts successful was that we had a certain amount of unity. Now that isn't to say that there was not criticism from one or the other about methods, but basically our aims were the same. ^{We} Just ~~through~~ ^{threw} our efforts together, because we realized that in unity there was strength. But there wasn't a great deal of friction between organizations as we find existing now. No.

Even CORE, when they first came to Baltimore, were greeted in a different sense than ^{what} CORE is greeted today. And I think you ^{no doubt} ~~about~~ know why - because their philosophies have changed. And many of the things that they are doing now are not as well known as the things that they were doing then, and their leadership has changed drastically. But we didn't have too many organizations, you know, so those that we did have usually banded together and we didn't have a lot of friction. I think that's what you are asking.

I. Yes. Was...what I'm ~~getting~~ ^{at} here I guess is how the establishments, ^{the} ~~of~~ city government or state government, then Gov. McKeldin - how did the city and state react to what Dr. Jackson was trying to do and the Urban League in the '50's? ^{from} ~~That was, from~~ ^{Not}/what I understand, when demonstrations and active picketing certainly at least from Urban League members was.. at a high pitch, shall we say.

A. Well, as I've said, Gov. McKeldin we found to be a helpful individual in our fight. We didn't have that cooperation on the city level until such time ^{0.5} ~~that~~ he came back to be Mayor. We again had that help. I don't mind saying that we had a great deal of ~~public~~ resistance on the part of.... And then we had Agnew who was governor, and believe you me, we got a great deal of resistance

from that angle. You know, we have had many "bar fights" in Baltimore City (bars being built near schools) - ~~he~~^I participated in an outstanding fight that was known as the Far Side End Bar that was allowed to be put up. There was a law written for city schools that no bar was supposed to be within 250 feet. This bar, proposed bar-owner happened to be the brother-in-law of our now present Governor Mandel. And Mandel was speaker of the house, so it was because of political strength that the man was allowed to put his bar there. We've had many civil rights, and CORE was very, very active about bars and something else I forgot to say was - the integration of bars.

That was during your early '50's and we had a great deal of trouble with this bar situation in Baltimore City. We were able to get some help from city government on this particular fight.

I. How were these fights carried out? In the same way?

A. Through organizations, through picketing. You know, one of the things that was a great weapon, though we always ~~are~~^{were} reluctant to use it, was taking it to the street. It just seems like we were never able to get anything done until we took to the streets and naturally, our court fights.

I. In the early '60's to '64, it seems as though a lot on the books changed. The ^{Omnibus} Civil Rights Bill of 1963 when of course Gove. McKeldin became Mayor of the city. And from what I understand, Tommy D'Alesandro..

A. I'm so happy you mentioned him. I failed to mention the efforts on the part of our Mayor Tommy. Now his father was inclined to be in sympathy with the movement, but it was actually the son, (well maybe, I shouldn't say actually the son) because I think the time wasn't as "right" when his father was Mayor as it was when he became Mayor. But he was a very helpful Mayor who recognized the

problems of all people in the city, who recognized that blacks were becoming a major portion of the population, and that they too, should be considered. He was an active Mayor who believed in going out into the public and listening to what they had to say even as president of the City Council.

I. What was your reaction and what was felt when the Civil Rights Bill was passed in 1963?

A. Well, of course as we look back now, we find that it wasn't as much of a great victory as we thought at that time. ~~But~~ Because we'd been struggling for such a long time to get such a type thing. But the time that it did come into being, we were all happy and we felt that our efforts had not been in vain. There were moments now that we were desperate as to consequences of our actions. ~~At the same time~~

I. At the same time, I understand that there was another public accommodations bill that failed to pass in the city, in the same period.

A. In the city or in the state?

I. May have been in the state, my memory is a little askew, of sections of the Civil Rights Bill that didn't pass.

A. That didn't pass. And still recently there have been efforts...let me say this to you - one picture that changed was that we were able to get more black legislators, I'd say, in the 60's and there was a great deal of legislation introduced that did not pass in both the city council and the state government. Those bills that were on the books had to be tested and were tested. Now some of them did not prove to our advantage. Some did, however, prove to our advantage. One of the outstanding fights that's

been going on for a long time is the fight about who should appoint the police commissioner - the governor or the mayor. And it has such an impact on blacks because of police brutality. And when I say "police brutality" I'm saying that in quotes.

There has been and there continues to be a great concern on the part of blacks because of "police brutality" and we've had that fight constantly. So blacks were interested in who would be a commissioner because there has been a lot of controversey about our presant commissioner. And just recently, as you no doubt know, the much, much offered bill was signed into law by the present governor that the police commissioner be named by the Mayor of the City of Baltimore.

Now, ironically enough, the City of Baltimore pays the salaries of the policemen, but they have no say over the Police Dept. So we have to wait and see now what develops.

I. Yes, we certainly do. And Col. Harris was speaking about that on Wednesday, and he had the same feelings.

A. I suppose he told you of his own experience in the City.
(small inaudible exchange)

Incidentally, he and I grew up together. And he became a very, very influential (he might not have told you this) but he became a very influential figure during the riots - I don't call them riots - I like to refer to them as "civil disorders" in Baltimore City. He had always been able to establish rapport with people in all walks of life. And the word that was most outstanding during those days was "militants". But, in my day, when I first started out we were called "radicals". So it went from "radicals" to "militants" and. Box (at a very early age in life Col. Harris was given the nickname of Box) Colonel Harris was known as Box Harris, and the militants used to say, "Send us Box." And Box could go amongst them and

establish. And, of course, he was head of the first community relations division of the Police Dept. And Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro (the son) had a black on his, in his administration whose name was Joe Smith. And you see, here at this agency, although I've been here since 1967, most of my experience has been working in the Community Relations Division. I was not doing what I am doing now. And my responsibilities was working directly with the community. And I had the occasions, during those very, very hot summers that we refer to as "the riots" to work directly with Col. Box Harris, with Joe Smith, directly with the Mayor, too. And of course, David Glenn was head of our agency at that time, and Marguerite Campbell was also working in the Mayor's office, and we got out there in that street. Believe me, were out there all hours of the night trying to keep things "cool" in the city.

And Walter Carter whom I mentioned sometime back, head of CORE at one point, and a very outstanding civil rights leader in Baltimore City, Rev. Vernon Dobson, Rev. Marion Bascom, Parren Mitchell, Juanita Mitchell, her mother - all of us were out there in that street trying to bring about an understanding between blacks and whites and city government. One of the things that disturbs me now is that we do not have the rapport between the black community and city government that once existed - under this mayor - we don't have it.

I. On that line, from what I understand, Dr. Jackson was pretty much able to walk into the Mayor's office...

A. Dr. Jackson was pretty much able to walk into anybody's office. But I will say this! Dr. Jackson was recognized by the Commissioner of the City of Baltimore Police Dept. She was able to "get his ear" when nobody else could - nobody else could.

And she was respected by top level administrators in the city.

I. Did she have the same kind of rapport with both D'Alesandro and McKeldin when they were mayor?

A. Oh yes.

I. She was able to deal pretty much with anybody who came along?

A. Oh yes, She was recognized and respected highly.

I. After 1966, and the CORE National Convention in Baltimore City, and the setting up of the Target Youth Program - the Target City Youth Program ^{in East} ~~for the youth of~~ Baltimore and the disturbances, or disorders (whatever word one wishes to use) in Cambridge, and then after Martin Luther King's death in '68, what kind of role was Dr. Jackson and yourself - what kind of things were you doing during the summer?

A. Well, I mentioned to you that we were acting more or less as liason people between the black community and the city and state government. And that was basically our role. And I mentioned to you the fact that Box Harris had rapport, and Joe Smith had rapport. And I mentioned to you my own small part with the community. And Parren Mitchell, I forgot to say, was out there, too.

We played, I like to think, that we played a very important part in bringing about the solutions as quickly as they were brought about. And Dave Glenn was another one that was out there all hours of the night pitching. And I do feel, in fact, I know that it was because of such people as I have named as I've gone through this, that we were able to create..Rev. Vernon Dobson opened up his church where we had spontaneous meetings whenever it was necessary...to keep our finger on "something" that was out there - you know, the "grapevine" is a tremendous instrument in finding, in keeping your finger on things. And this is what we did. And I really believe, sincerely, that the Mayor appreciated the efforts of the Black leaders in Baltimore City. They were recognized by him, and this in itself showed

I. How did you and these other leaders who had been involved for so many years working in a certain way, and pushing with certain approaches, react to H. Rap~~p~~ Brown and Stokely Carmichael and people, and ~~SNCC~~ and the Black Panthers that started here in 1966..

A. Let me say something to you before I answer that. I failed to mention to you that one of the ~~things~~ that was highly necessary was to have good "press" during that time. Mr. Carl Murphy was then living, and was the head of the Afro American. He was a great help through his paper, and through his personal efforts in helping to bring about peaceful settlements.

Now to answer your question as to how such people as Stokely Carmichael and Rap~~p~~ Brown, etc. were accepted - those of us who worked directly with the problems could understand where such people as Stokely Carmichael and Rap~~p~~ Brown came from. We - those of us who worked directly with the problem, did not always approve some of the methods used, but we felt that it was better to join with them to try to get them to understand us, as well as for us to understand them. But, as far as the general public was concerned, I'm afraid that many blacks did not understand where these people were coming from. The transitional period was difficult.

I. Would that be about..

A. The area that you're speaking about - '66's, 7's, this kind of thing - it was very difficult to understand. But I think through the efforts of people who worked directly with these individuals, and "Box" was one of them, when, I know Stokely came to town several times and there were meetings held with Stokely, and "Box" was a part of these meetings. Of course it was later said that these two young men were a part of national

government, and that was their purpose. That has never been proven, it is only a strong belief. We had a young man here in Baltimore City, no doubt someone has mentioned him to you who was with CORE and was a very, very strong influence on the Civil rights movement and the civil disorder period and his name was Danny Gant. He was very helpful, and it was later said that he worked for the Mayor of the City of Baltimore. That has never been proven. But let me say this. Such people as Danny Gant, Stokely Carmichael and Rapp Brown served a good purpose in many ways, though some of their actions were not always approved nor were they understood. I hope that answers.

I. My goodness, we're just zooming right through here. The Panthers...

A. Oh, you asked me about the Black Panthers. Now, I had the pleasure, and I say, pleasure, because the program that I saw that the Panthers put on in this city, I felt was outstanding and very helpful. Of course, one of my responsibilities as Community Specialist, when I was in Community Division was to work with every element that was found in the community. We had a group that was known as the Soul School just about the same time as the Black Panthers. I worked directly with many members of both groups - the Soul School, and the Black Panthers. We had an organization that maybe someone has told you about that was called the Black United Front.

Now, this was a strange organization. And I say it was "strange", because it was made up of members from controversial organizations, such as the Black Panthers, the Soul School, and other "militants". It was made up of some of our most outstanding leaders/^{such as} Homer Favor at Morgan State College, ^{Parren} ~~Danny~~ Mitchell,

ministers such as I've named in the past such as Rev. Vernon Dobson and Rev. Marion Bascom, David Glenn, Evelyn Burrell, ~~Box~~ Harris - I mean it was what you'd call a "melting pot". And though the Black United Front was looked down upon by the Police Dept., it had to be recognized for what it was. Because it was - one united effort on the part of people from all walks of life who had a basic concern. And that was doing something about the problem here.

I, as I said before, enjoyed working with the Black Panthers and I worked directly with them. I have had the occasion...to be called..

with the Police District Court. I've had the occasion to carry clothing to Baltimore City Jail when members were arrested. But it was my experience to enjoy working with them and the causes for which they stood.

I. How many Panthers were involved?

A. That was a little hard to say, because they came and they went. And many members that were members of the Black Panthers were also members of Soul School and vice versa. But, it was a little hard to determine how many were Black Panthers. You didn't always know who was a Black Panther. You didn't always know.

I. You, I gather, must have dealt with Warren Hart for some time. Could you tell me a little?

A. Yes, Well my dealings with him came about as a result of their Breakfast Program that they set up for school children. And I worked very closely with him on that project.

I. Was that successful?

A. It was quite successful.

I. Where was it held? Was it held at a church?

A. It was held right over here...oh dear...oh, the church.. it's a Catholic church.....

I. On Eager Street?

A. Well now, on Eager Street..see when they first started, they started out in the church and then they carried it, you know, into other areas. But, I'm trying to think what the name of the church was where they started their big program. Well, go on, and we'll come back to that, I was looking for it. Right over here..(lapse as Ms. Burrell's looks up name of the church)
St. Vincent de Paul's!

I. Where did the..how was the recruiting, or the selection of students for the breakfast program carried out?

A. Frankly, I don't know. I cannot tell you how they got the children's names. I know that they worked with, they started their work in East Baltimore basically, and they worked - went into recreational halls and schools - that kind of thing. And whether they used that as their recruitment ^{source} I don't know. I cannot tell you, but I know that they were concerned in getting children that were low poverty and low income children, and they made no discrimination.

I. Do you know if this was at the very beginning, when they first started here, when they carried out this program - in '66, '67, '68?

A. No, they had been here. This was after that.

I. When I talked to Col. Harris, he said that at one point they had an office or a headquarters on Gay Street, and that during the disorders of '68, that they threatened to shoot police officers and took "pot shots" at them. Do you remember any of this kind of ^{role} ~~work~~, that made the police antagonistic..

A. There were many accusations made that the Black Panthers, we all know, ^{were anti-police} ~~that~~ ~~that~~, we all know that. There were many accusations made against the police, I mean against the Panthers insofar as the police were concerned. There were even some killings that the Black Panthers were accused of, there were bodies found of men who were said to be infiltrators of the police dept. to the ranks of the Black Panthers.

I. On this line did you have occasion to know Cheeky Young... I gather he was one of the sages you were speaking of.

A. Yes, ironically enough, he was on staff here until a few weeks ago.

I. He was here?

A. Yes, he was a member of our staff. I covered Old Cheeky's trial - when he was on trial. I knew him very well.

I. And what kind of role did he really play? If you knew him well, maybe it would kind of assess what was happening in this period insofar as..

A. If you recall, I said a few minutes ago, it was hard to tell who was a Black Panther and who was not a Black Panther. There were a group of young men who said they were sympathizers with the Black Panthers. That was the role that Cheeky claimed he played.

I. Where is he now?

A. He has gone to work up in the office, I believe--no, he's not in the same office with David Glenn, but he's gone to be a counselor for ex-offenders in the State Department.

I. Maybe while we're on this subject we could talk a little ~~at length~~ ^{bit about}..you could tell me about Freedom House and its purposes, and how Dr. Jackson set it up.

A. I'll be glad to. Freedom House came into being because the particular area where Dr. Jackson resided as well as performed her lifelong work, was plagued with a great deal of robberies and general neighborhood problems surrounding the police department and their efforts to do something about it. That was basically why Freedom House came into being. After it was started, people from all sections of the city began to come to Freedom House and present their problems. The basic aim was to acquaint the police dept. with the direct problems of the people and as a result of acquainting them with the problems, to do something about it. That is one of the reasons why - there is a strong belief that there was some kind of connection between the police dept. and Freedom House. There was! But it was a wholesome, healthy connection

because it was felt that the policemen could be educated about the problems of the people. And the people could be educated about the problems of the police dept. But, Freedom House went on, to be concerned about the problems in various areas of the city. Housing was one of them. Employment was one of them. Summer employment for young people became another project. And at its annual dinner, they would make awards to various members of the police dept. as a way of saying, "Thank you, -for understanding and doing something about the problem."

I. Did Col. Harris receive one of those?

A. I believe he did. Yes he did. And Colonel Watkins.

I. When Freedom House was set up, Lillie Jackson was in her later years and-did Juanita Jackson Mitchell have a large influence?

A. Oh, but definitely. Because it was in the declining years of (I always refer to her affectionately as Miss Lillie), it was in her declining years, and it did necessitate a great effort on the part of Juanita as well as Bowen.

I. What kind of relationship did Juanita Jackson Mitchell and her mother have?

A. A beautiful one.

I. It's been said that Juanita was her mother's right arm. Was she?

A. She was indeed. She had a beautiful relationship with her mother. She really, in all the years I've known her, Juanita was always right at her mother's side in fighting every cause that her mother was interested in - that became her cause also. And of course, in these later years she was a very devoted daughter to her mother in every sense of the word, every sense of the word.

And now, very often, when I talk with Juanita. She says, "Oh Evelyn, I miss Mamma so much." And she says, "Sometimes, even though I know it was her wish that-she often said, 'this old body was old' and 'Why don't God take me?' and 'Why don't I go' ?/.she says, "It's hard sometimes, even though it was Mamma's wish. I miss her so very, very much."

I. Did her sister play as much of a role?

A. Well, you see Juanita has another sister whose name is Marian and she is a concert artist, but both Virginia and Marian live out of Baltimore City. Marian is in California, and of course, you know Virginia lives in Atlanta. So, even though they were concerned and they were always on beck and call, they were not here. Bowen was living in California also, at one time. But he came back home and Juanita was very happy when Bowen returned to help her with some of her mother's business - real estate business, aspects, ~~and office.~~

So, even though they were dutiful children, they were not here on the scene as was Juanita.

I. There were some criticisms of Dr. Jackson and her real-estate that she owned.

A. Yes, that's true. There have been criticisms of Senator Mitchell's real estate. He's been into difficulty about that and a certain amount of criticism, I mean about the real estate that he owns.

I. Would you say they were founded, or..?

A. I am in no position to say whether they were founded or unfounded except to say this: that Senator Verda Welcome too, is another person who has been criticized, ~~for~~ her real estate interest. These problems came about because of housing inspectors. And you know, their belief about the upkeep of, and meeting the standards

of the city insofar as property is concerned. So all I can say is that much of this was attributed to what came out of the papers, and this is all that I know about it.

I. You mentioned, and I've heard the comment several times now - almost in fact by everyone I've spoken to, or read the transcripts of the interviews - that there has almost been a backsliding^{idling} in the past four or five years.

A. But definitely.

I. In 1970, and maybe this has also been mentioned as the last time that the black community was unified when Judge Howard, and Joe Howard, and Milton Allen and Paul Chester ran on the same ticket against this "establishment" and won. Since that time, of course, I guess it was Mr. Allen or maybe it was Mr. Chester who was defeated just recently.

A. Mr. Chester.

I. Mr. Chester?

A. I mean, both.

I. Both of them.

A. Now wait a minute. Paul wasn't defeated. He got into difficulty, okay?

I. Uh huh. I'm trying..in other words, what I'm trying to do is to get you to kind of pin down what happened in that sort of shady period between after the "riots", after the disturbances, and peaceful settlements worked out. And then something happened. I was also told, and I guess ^{what I'm aiming at is your} comments, that Joseph Howard was shifted around City Hall for being outspoken.

A. You say shifted around City Hall. I don't understand what/ ^{you me}

I. Before he became Judge I guess. He was sort of shifted in different positions in City Hall...State's Attorney..

A. You mean as State's Attorney; he was an assistant state's attorney, and because of his out-

spokenness he was controversial. He became a controversial figure. But he went on to ^{stand} an election and won an election as judge. And that didn't stop Joe from being an outspoken person. I think what you are asking me is, why did there become a disunity. I think that's what you're asking me.

I. I'm just bring^{ing} the 1970 election and this up as ..

A. And certainly whatever I would say would be my personal opinion as to what caused the disunity. We, at least, I have watched many of the people who were the backbone of the fight, because of the fact that they were not financially independent, become targets of the political arena. And I suppose, in some instances, by and large, it has been because of monetary greed. There has been a complete breakdown of leadership. It seems that black people in this city who were outspoken have had certain pressures brought upon them and as I've said before - unless they were financially independent, just collapse.

We don't have many people that are financially independent and able to stand up to the status quo. One of the things that I knew Miss Lillie always used to say was that she would not become a member of any board because nobody was going to shut her up. And when you become a member of a board, you are asking to be controlled in some manner. And I think that many of the outstanding jobs with high paying salaries to black people, mostly black male, has been one of the reasons why there is a disunity. I know that I was a member of the original Model Cities Board, and during my strenuous efforts with that board I watched certain people who received certain jobs just back off and stop pushing. And that in a nutshell is my feelings. You just, in this city now, run a terrific risk for doing anything that is in the black cause.

I don't know whether you've heard this before. It may have been said to you in different ways. I'm trying to be tactful in saying it.

I. You've certainly succeeded.

A. I've lived through it, and am presently living through it. I don't know where we're going, or how we'll end up.

I. Is there anything you'd like to add?

A. I think not.

I. Okay.

A. One thing that I certainly do not want to forget to mention that is - the integration of the school system here in Baltimore City. Now that was a great chore. And as you know, still is.

I. Oh yes.

A. But during the integrational period, we had many uprisings in the schools themselves, where the students were concerned. This agency, along with Box Harris' community relations group were called upon, on many occasions, to go into the schools and to attempt to quiet disturbances. We had parents in certain areas, such as the Hamden area who became directly in (and I'm speaking of white parents) who became directly involved in hostile actions. And this agency was called upon to literally "police" activities in areas where this was being done. We created here in this agency, what we termed a...I can't recall, but anyway - we started with a group of ministers who would go out and observe as disinterested parties what was happening as a result of the "brush fires" that we had during the time of the integration. We certainly played a great role in bringing that about. This agency also set up workshops and we set up workshops not only with the school situ-

ation. We did this with housing trying to bring groups together in better understanding during the transitional integration period in housing. We were called upon, and I suppose to a certain extent we are now called upon to act as liason in the educational disputes, housing disputes, in bringing about a better understanding between community and city government.

Much of our information comes to us through what was established under Mr. Glenn and known as Rumor Control.

I. How did that function?

A. Rumor Control? Downstairs on the fifth floor we have telephones set up with, and this came into being as a result of the riots in '68 (or "civil disorders"), and the public is asked to call Rumor Control^{- it's} for the purpose of clearing rumors that might stir up problems. And Rumor Control's responsibilities are to check the rumors out, and to give reports on what their findings are.

I. When was the transitional period in the school integration fight? That's been going on for a very long time.

A. Oh, it certainly has, and for you to ask me "when".

I. I assume that period you are talking about is the more recent period.

A. Yeah, yeah, of the more recent period, as efforts were made on the Board of Education to integrate certain schools on a larger scale than what they had been doing. And of course, this was because of H.E.W.'s insistence that they do more sincere integrating than what they had been doing. So, as the momentum picked up to become more integrated, we found more problems coming about. And this just has been going on ever since 1967 on a large scale.

I. I assume again that the Jackson family was in some sense involved in this push. Did N.A.A.C.P. pick up on this campaign, or did any individuals - the Jacksons, any of the Jacksons

A. I'm trying to think when it was that Mrs. Jackson stepped down as the president of the N.A.A.C.P. During her regime there was nothing that went on in Baltimore City that the Jackson family wasn't involved in, I'll tell you that now. But, I cannot recall the year that she stepped down. I might say that the N.A.A.C.P. has never been as active since she stepped down as they were while she was president. But there has never been any great issue that created any problems that they were not part of.

I. Was the city cooperative - the Board of Education, cooperative?

A. Now we get into a whole new ball game, when we start talking about cooperation...

the Board of Education. You may or may not know, that we've had a whole lot of problems with the Board. We've had people leaving and others named, and they've been controversial, some of them. The superintendent - we've had a great problem maintaining a superintendent. And I personally feel that we had two outstanding superintendents in Dr. Sheldon and Dr. Patterson. Both of these men became involved with the political structure, and since the Mayor named the members of the school board - with that friction there, and we still had friction. And it's just hard to say when there was any congenial understanding because the children had just been pained of this inter-fight between the school board and the superintendent and the Mayor, all this kind of thing. And it has been a bad, a bad situation, where our progress with education is concerned.

They've fought with HEW - I mean it's just been an awful sad situation, an awful sad situation. And I will say this, without fear of contradiction, I believe it's been because there's too much politics. Not that we haven't found politics existing in the past, but it's right now overt.

I. Before when we turned the tape off until we'd finish up, you said you hadn't talked about the merchant situation.

A. Another problem that we had that denoted as a result of the "civil disorders" was that many merchants were victims of the disorders. One of the things that we attempted to do after things quieted down was to organize the merchants in several areas. I think this even started before the "civil disorders". Palmer, on Pennsylvania Ave. called upon us when they were in the midst of organizing their organization. They wanted to become useful in the community because, of which they served, and they wanted to put

Something back into the community. This agency was helpful in setting that up and working with . The Gay Street merchants were another group that we worked with and helped to organize so that they could do something. Then we had the Pratt St. merchants which we helped to organize and work with the community. And that group. We had the Monument St. merchants association, and we were very helpful in working with them in advising them how to go about doing what they wanted to do.

I. What kinds of things did they want to do?

a. Well, as you know, one of the things they were concerned about was the prices - the community was concerned about the prices - and we would hold meetings and we'd have consumers come in. The merchants were a part of this. Another thing is, the merchants were willing to provide prizes, awards for oratorical contests to children who took part. The Palmer and the Monument Street workers at Christmastime gave baskets to needy people that they served. And then there were councils set up between the members of the community and the merchants.