

PR: OK. So today is October 25, 2018. This is Paul Ringel from High Point University. I'm here with Julius Clark, an alum of William Penn. Class of 1968, correct?

JC: Correct

PR: How are you doing, Mr. Clark?

JC: I'm doing fine. I normally say if I was any better I couldn't stand it.

PR: Alright, great. So I want to start by just getting some of the biographical information. Were you born in High Point?

JC: Yes, I was. I was born in High Point by a midwife.

PR: Oh, OK.

JC: That was different. I was born in 1951, and they told my parents I wouldn't live a year, but I'm still here after sixty-plus years.

PR: So it was unusual for a kid or a baby to be born by a midwife?

JC: Well, it pretty much was the norm. It wasn't unheard of. It was something that was pretty much the norm. Either you were at the hospital or the midwife would come in, and this particular time I was birthed by a midwife.

PR: So do you have siblings?

JC: Yes. My mother had eight children, four boys and four girls.

PR: And what number are you?

JC: I like to say I'm the step-child, yes I'm in the middle. Exactly in the middle.

PR: OK. And so were your parents from High Point as well? Did they grow up here?

JC: No. My mother was born in Clio, South Carolina. And my father was born in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

PR: Clio, C-L-I-O?

JC: C-L-I-O.

PR: Where is that?

JC: That is a few miles up from Laurinburg. Right across the line. Bennettsville, down in that area.

PR: OK. And do you know what brought them to High Point, originally?

JC: Well, what brought my, let's go with my father first, what brought my father was his mother brought him to High Point. And his mother, I'd like to just add this into this, is the sister of Mary Baldwin, who is the mother of Rosetta Baldwin. So she came to High Point following her sister, looking for a better opportunity, because at the time they were living on a plantation, and she came from a plantation to High Point, which in their consideration was the big city.

PR: Right

JC: But for some reason she was fearful of the big city. She was here for a little short while, she played the piano at that time at Williams Memorial when they were located on Leonard Street. But she was so shocked with the movement of High Point that she chose to go back to Pittsboro, North Carolina, and that's where she stayed. But her son, my father's a twin, Macon and Marvin and the oldest brother was Howard, Howard Clark. He was the firstborn, and then the twins came, and for some reason Marvin stuck around and he ran into my mother. My mother, coming out of Laurinburg, North Carolina, she came to High Point. And she was looking for a better opportunity, because at the time she was uneducated, I think she only had an eighth-grade education, and when she came to High Point, she would have already had two girls, and then she got here and had another child. And so my grandmother was thinking the best thing for her was to come to High Point for a better opportunity, and that's where she met Marvin.

PR: OK, and so what kind of work had your mom been doing in Laurinburg. Was she working on a farm?

JC: She worked at one time for Terry Sanford, a domestic worker, and that's what she continued to do when she came to High Point, domestic work. Home cleaning and stuff of that nature. Marvin, before settling in High Point, he was in the United States Army, he became a sergeant and then he was discharged and then he came to High Point.

PR: Was he a World War II vet?

JC: Yes, definitely a World War II vet, and after being discharged he became an orderly for a short period of time in Philadelphia, but then he relocated here in High Point. And I think maybe I'm going to fast, because Marvin actually attended William Penn.

PR: He did? So he came here...

JC: Prior to going into the service, he was at William Penn.

PR: So he was here as a kid, then, with his mom. And his mom went back and he stayed.

JC: And again, with Mary Baldwin.

PR: So Mary Baldwin was his grandmother?

JC: Mary Baldwin was his aunt.

PR: OK, I'm getting the family tree a little confused.

JC: And that's how he got familiar with High Point. He stayed here. His mother went back, but he went ahead and went to William Penn, graduated, and went on into service.

PR: Do you know what year he graduated from William Penn?

JC: No, not the exact year. But I have a book that lists him as being in, and he was well known as probably the best dancer in his era.

PR: OK, so that's Marvin Clark. But his brother...

JC: Macon

PR: Macon did not stay.

JC: No, and he went on to , I'm not sure where he graduated, I don't have him listed as graduating William Penn, but he went on to enroll in Livingston College, and that's where he went on and studied theology, and he later on became the pastor at Williams Memorial in High Point, and went as far up as bishop. And when he died he was in Hunstville, Alabama, as bishop with that congregation.

PR: OK. So your dad came here as a kid, graduated from William Penn, probably in the late 30s, is that right?

JC: Right, because he was in the service in '42.

PR: Right. OK, so late 30s, early 40s, and goes into the army, and serves in the war, and then goes to Philadelphia after the war?

JC: Right, for a short period of time, as an orderly. We have a picture of him in his orderly uniform. But he came back to this area.

PR: And what kind of work did he do once he came back?

JC: Well, that's the thing. I don't think he did too much of work, because there's not too much record of him working, or we don't have the record. Because when I was born, he was around for maybe three years later, and then he left us, so my mother was a single parent and raised us. So it was tough, but we managed, and how we managed was—again, I always like to throw the Baldwins in because they were so significant in our upbringing. That's when families take care of each other, and so the Baldwin family stepped in and assisted my mother in raising us.

PR: So did your mom work as a domestic throughout your childhood?

JC: Throughout my childhood.

PR: And what neighborhood did you live in as you were growing up?

JC: Well, again, we started out on Leonard Street, which is right there in the area of what they call Burns Hill, Greenhill Cemetery, all in that area. And I lived on Leonard Street, but I was pretty much raised at 1408, at that time it was called Olga Street, in the Baldwins home.

PR: How do you say that?

JC: O-L-G-A, Olga. That's what it was before it was changed to R.C. Baldwin. And so the Baldwins took more in raising me because of the numbers that my mom had. And at the time when Mrs. Baldwin, Mary Baldwin's husband John Baldwin died, Rosetta Baldwin's brother came to live with us, his name was Alonzo. They believed a man should always be in the house, so he came to stay. So as far as the paternal upbringing, the man of the house was him, and so I got most of my manhood teaching from him.

PR: OK. So you lived on Leonard Street, but you spent most of your time as a young boy in the Baldwin house.

JC: In the Baldwin house and community. And then we moved to Daniel Brooks, which was the public housing. And when Daniel Brooks came online, it was somewhat of an upgrade for that community, we

believed that we were doing better, but again my mother was still a single parent. And so between Daniel Brooks and 1408, that's pretty much where I was raised.

PR: Do you know what year you moved into Daniel Brooks, ballpark?

JC: It had to be in the '58-'59-'60 years.

PR: OK. And that neighborhood where the Baldwin house is, what's that called.

JC: That neighborhood is called Burns Hill.

PR: That is Burns Hill, OK.

JC: Burns Hill community, directly across from Greenhill cemetery, where most of the African American pioneers are buried. So a lot of history is in that cemetery. Very familiar with all of that, we have a lot of prominent folks that come out of that area. It was just a natural way of growing up for us, Windley Street, Woodbury, all of that became a nice, close-knit community.

PR: OK, and what was your church upbringing growing up?

JC: [chuckles] Very strange, very strange. I pretty much thought we were members of three different churches as a child, because we had to attend three different churches. I pretty much was more embedded in the Seventh Day Adventist Faith, because of Rosetta Baldwin, John and Mary Baldwin, because when they came out of Graham, North Carolina, they were smitten with the Seventh Day Adventist faith, so their whole home became Adventism. But the two siblings in the family, Warren Baldwin and Fannie Mae, decided to stay with the Zion AME (I do believe I'm pronouncing that correctly) St. Stephen instead of going with the Adventists they decided to go with the ZME, because their father originally was ZME. He founded the Longchapel Church in Graham, North Carolina, but later was smitten with Adventism so he moved to High Point.

PR: Where's Graham?

JC: Graham is Highway 87. Between Highway 87 and Highway 55. If you get off of 40, to the right at exit I think 147.

PR: So it's south of 40?

JC: Yes, south of 40.

PR: So that's two of the churches. What's the third one?

JC: As I said, Williams Memorial, St. Stephens, and Baldwin's Chapel Seventh Day Adventist Church.

PR: You spent a lot of time in church as a kid.

JC: Almost seven days a week. But it was interesting because my Uncle Macon was the pastor at Williams Memorial, and as I said Fannie Mae and Warren was at St. Stephens, and Fannie Mae Baldwin founded what they called Buds, which is a little youth group that served the community pretty well, and so we was raised, when she was in town, we was there. And when Macon was doing his thing on Sundays, just as a form of babysitting too, I thought that's what it was, to keep us from running loose, they had us in church all the time so they could keep an eye on us. So we got plenty of religion.

PR: OK. And so in terms of school before William Penn, where did you go to school for elementary school?

JC: Again, I know it sounds funny but I have to keep saying Baldwin.

PR: That's OK.

JC: In 1942 Rosetta Baldwin started a school in the living room of her home. And being born in '51, as I said, her mother assisted her, because actually her mother tried to start a school before that, but in 1942 Rosetta started the school in her living room and her mother assisted her, so in 1951 when I was born, her mother lived for two years taking care of me because as I said they didn't think I was going to live. But Miss Baldwin, Mary Baldwin, told my parents to bring me over there, and that's where I stayed. I was raised in that home. And they nurtured me, and after two years she died, and Rosetta Baldwin decided to take over, and take on the task of raising me. So my education was started right there in the house, at Baldwin's Chapel School, at that time it was called Rosebee, but in 1952 they changed the name to Baldwin's Chapel, because the church added a school in the back of the church, and so the name changed to Baldwin's Chapel.

PR: So was it a Seventh Day Adventist School, was that the faith?

JC: It was a Seventh Day Adventist school, they decided to keep it in that denomination. But the thing that was different about it, she didn't necessarily teach that denomination, but she taught about Christ and the love. The three Rs we always had, but we always started with prayer and ended it with prayer, but all the other courses we had.

PR: OK. I have two questions, and one, if you don't want to share that's fine, but what was the medical condition that you had as a baby that made them think you weren't going to live?

JC: I was born premature, that was the first setback. It was very premature. The nurturing that Miss Baldwin gave me, and most people hear about Similac and all the other milk. I wasn't raised on that, I was raised on buttermilk, and to this day I still love it. I was raised on buttermilk and prayer and comfort, and I never was sick until I was injured later on in life and went to the hospital. But as far as medical conditions, I didn't have any.

PR: So it was just that you were premature.

JC: Premature. Very small. That much I do remember, I was very small. But I'm still here.

PR: Alright. The second question is, how long did you stay at the Baldwin School? When did you shift to the public school system?

JC: I shifted to going to the public system in 1963-64. My first year at public school was in A.J. Griffin Middle School for the 9th grade, because Baldwin School went from kindergarten to the 8th grade. So my year after graduating from Baldwin's Chapel I went to A.J. Griffin for my 9th grade year. And then after the 9th grade year...

PR: You did three years at William Penn.

JC: I did four years at William Penn.

PR: OK. How big was the Baldwin School? How many kids were there, roughly, when you were there?

JC: The largest I can remember of students was fifty, she had fifty students. And the funny thing that most people don't remember about Miss Baldwin was she pretty much taught all of those different grades by herself, from kindergarten to the 8th grade. But we didn't have a mass number of students. The largest number was in the kindergarten, and then it dwindled down to the first grade and second grade. Sometimes maybe you'd have five or six in one grade. And in my year when I graduated from the 9th grade, there was two from High Point in the 8th grade, and two from Greensboro, and I think one from Winston. And they combined their graduation classes together when it was time to graduate, so we always would have Greensboro joining in with our class. That's the way it was, and she did it. I never figure out how she could switch her mind from kindergarten to third grade to fifth grade to eighth grade, but she was able to do that. And she only had assistants later on in life. The older students would stick around and teach the younger kids, and I remember doing that several times. And she had a lady coming out of Greensboro, Miss Viola Barnes, and at that time she was from East Market Street Seventh Day Adventist School, and she would come in and she would teach music. Even though music, Miss Baldwin had the knowledge of music, Miss Barnes would come in and play the piano whenever we had recitals and programs, we had that assistance.

PR: OK. Was it a big culture shock for you to switch from Miss Baldwin's School to Griffin?

JC: Whooo, very much so, very much so. Where there was discipline and respect and obedience, I saw the opposites. There was talking in class, and I remember this story I like to tell: we never saw people throwing spitballs until I got to public school. They were throwing spitballs in class, and it shocked me that they were just moving around and such. Whereas, you come in to class, you either open your book and read until the teacher comes in, and so that's what I found myself doing most of the time. I tried to stay pretty much attentive to what was happening.

PR: OK. Did that happen at William Penn, too? Was there a lack of discipline when you got to William Penn?

JC: Well, when I say lack of discipline, they were comfortable doing what they were doing, whereas coming from a more strict upbringing, I was sort of timid about doing some of the things I saw the other kids, plus I knew better. And so I just, and let me add this, I had a teacher there that was somewhat my overseer when I got to William Penn. And her name was Mrs. Kendall, Mrs. Vertie B. Kendall. And she was of the Adventist faith. But she went to church in Greensboro, so she told me I had to be a role model for the other students, because I was different. And so my conduct was much different from the other students at William Penn because I was from a different culture.

PR: Did you know most of the kids at William Penn before you got there, or was this the first time that you had much interaction with them?

JC: I didn't know most of them, but one of the things that brought us together, was usually during the summer, we had Washington Terrace Park and everyone would gather there. So you got a chance to know people just in playing with them, swimming with them, or interacting with them. There were very few that came from my neighborhood. I guess my childhood friend that I ended up at William Penn with was Hank Wall. From the same community, he lived on Windley Street, and I was like I say on Olga Street, but we played together, as we like to say sandlot together. And we went to William Penn together, and the funny thing is that when we graduated, he went off into the army and I went into the United States Navy. But we ended up coming back together. So now what is so wonderful about our

class, we're the last class of William Penn, Class of 1968, and we seem to come much closer than we once was from the beginning. We know each other, and we're always glad to see each other.

PR: So you said there weren't a lot of kids from Burns Hill at William Penn?

JC: Not my class, not in the class of 1968. Very few from the class of '68, but there were very many students 'cause we had Southside, we had East Central, as they call it now, but one of the differences when I say not many is that we were limited from our going out of the community. And so one of the reasons of knowing Hank was he was just right across the street, pretty much. And so once we left Olga Street and went into Daniel Brooks that started to open up. I remember seeing other folks, the Wadsworths, I remember them, we used to walk to school together. So that horizon started opening, I started to see more people, and the community changed because I was then in Daniel Brooks.

PR: So the Burns Hill neighborhood was a little self-enclosed?

JC: Well, when you look at it geographically...

PR: It's across the railroad tracks, right?

JC: That's it, that's the key. And so it was sort of, one thing about High Point, you could tell by the kind of person the community from which they came from. It was hard to distinguish most people, but you could look and tell a person by how they look or act that you're from Southside.

PR: So what's the way that a Southside person acted as opposed to the way a Burns Hill person acted?

JC: Well, Burns Hill, and I speak more Burns Hills because that's where I have the most, they too, well I don't want to offend anyone from Southside, to them they were normal. To us, the thing that was different, there was a closeness about us in Burns Hill. They had a group called the Burns Hill Sympathy Club, which most parents or most families were a member of. So if you knew anyone in the community that was sick, it passed through the community. And it wasn't necessarily your obligation but it was your duty, your parents would probably give you something to take to that family, whether it's a bowl of soup or cake or a card, whatever. So I felt as though we were a little bit more close-knit. I'm not going to say there wasn't violence, there was crime in every part of the city, but we sort of seemed to be more responsible for each other on Burns Hill.

PR: And do you have any idea why that might be? Was it because it was a smaller neighborhood?

JC: Well not so much necessarily because it was a smaller neighborhood, but it is limited. But what I saw was, because my upbringing in Burns Hill was somewhat sheltered from the rest of Burns Hill because it was a church school. We were raised from a church school, and we couldn't go but so far. We couldn't cross the street in a sense, as once you crossed the cemetery and crossed Leonard Street, now you're in the public sector. And so the statement always taught to us, and we understood the meaning but most people thought it was just a saying- be careful about crossing the street. It had a significant meaning not only about watching traffic, but the culture changes when you cross the street, so be careful about crossing the street because you can be easily influenced. And so growing up in the church school community, we were sheltered away from even two blocks away.

PR: OK. You mentioned crime, was there a lot of crime in High Point when you were a kid, or at least in your neighborhood?

JC: I would say yes. Not a lot, but there was normal crime, but again you have to remember, when you're raised up in a church school, you're sheltered. And what I mean, you don't look at things the same way. And you're protecting yourself from the elements of crime because you're being watched over a whole lot more than the public. The public sector, you're free to walk and go where you want to go, but there was more of a watchperson over you the whole time in church school because we were different. The culture that we grew up in was very different, and we were looked upon as being different from the community because there were kids constantly picking at us because we went to private school, and we didn't per se do the things that they did, and our language wasn't quite the same and we were more respectful. And the community could tell just looking at you that you were from Baldwin's Chapel. They would say, "Oh no, you go to Miss Rosetta's school because you act different." And so that was the way we came up.

PR: But you don't think there were fewer kids, you think it's just a quirk of your class, you don't think there were fewer kids from Burns Hill that went to William Penn than other neighborhoods?

JC: No, because of our growing up in an environment that I was growing up in, it was limited in going into the community. You couldn't go but so far. And if you did go somewhere, it was directed by an adult. You're going to a senior citizens home and you'll come right back. And if it wasn't people that were members with St. Stephens, or Williams Memorial, we wouldn't necessarily associate with them that much, because we were sent there by directive, and directed to come straight back.

PR: Alright, so now I just want to ask you some questions about your experience at William Penn. You talked a little bit about this with Ivory in the interview you did with him, and you talked about some of the teachers who were important to you. You mentioned Miss Vertie, what's her name?

JC: Mrs. Kendall, Vertie B. Kendall.

PR: As one of them before, I remember, I went back and reviewed the transcript last night. Are there other teachers who were particularly important to you in your time at William Penn?

JC: Yes, before I got to Penn, the first person who really took an interest in me as far as guiding me was Mr. Donovan.

PR: OK

JC: And that was at A.J. Griffin.

PR: And what did he teach?

JC: Sports.

PR: He was a coach.

JC: Yeah, he was the coach. And the other person I want to mention is Mr. Turner, and he taught woodworking. And then when I went to William Penn, the first person that became an icon in my life was Mrs. Bostic, Dorothy Bostic, because she was my homeroom teacher, and she taught economics. And then I can remember Mrs. Stuart, who was very influential. They all had this drive about teaching us how to deal with society in the present and the future. We were already conscious of the fact education was limited to us. I remember looking at books that was outdated, but they said don't let that be your holdback. You learn the contents within the book, not the cover of the book. I like to say that we learned

to read and write and comprehend at Baldwin's Chapel. That set me apart, I like to think, because being born premature the first thing Miss Baldwin taught me to do was read. When I was sick and trying to recuperate, she was teaching me how to read. I learned at an early age, and I loved reading. At William Penn, other than Mrs. Kendall I remember Mr. Gary and Miss McConnell. These were people who took a personal interest, and the reason they took an interest was they lived in the community in which we lived. So they would see you walking the street or they would see you after school. So the interest that they had, you would see them at church, and it was a family-oriented type of feeling. If you tried to do something that was not quite right, before you even finished doing it, you were caught. Somebody would see you, and before you got home your parents would already know about it, and you're trying to figure out, this is long before this technology they have today. But it was a sense of caring, and I think that's what really made us the people we are today. We knew we were loved, we knew we were cared about. And they took the time to make sure that they received that which they were trying to teach you. We had a lot of people that seemed somewhat slow, but by the time the teachers got through with you, we were all even. And they made sure you was able to get what they were trying to teach you. And so we all talk about Mr. Burford, because he was the leader. And he put the bar up so high that you always kept looking up. And I would like to quote what he taught me out of all the things that I've learned. At the end of the year, after composing our alma mater, and most of the students won't know that, that Mr. Burford wrote the words to our alma mater. It is from the song Shenandoah, but he recomposed it. And in our graduating class, after all the teaching he had done at William Penn from 1933, he came up with a motto that sticks with me today and which I somewhat live by. And he said I want this class to understand your key to success is these nine words: don't talk about what you're trying to do, be about what you're trying to do. And I've lived that, and I think listening to our teachers and believing in their wisdom at the time of my coming up made a great deal of difference. So one of the things I try to teach when I'm talking is the fact that the teachers had to believe what they were teaching us. And to inspire us, we had to believe in what they were teaching. And so I tell people when you hear about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcom X and W.E.B. DuBois and all of these others, Booker T. Washington, they had to teach it to us in order for us to know it. If we don't teach it to others, they will not know it. It's one thing to say there's a book, but if you don't put the book in the child's hands and teach it to them, they won't learn it. And so that's what has driven me all these years is deeds, not words, 'cause people talk about what they want to do, and what they're going to do, and out of that home at 1408 it was taught nothing happens unless you make it happen. That's my motto, but it's a derivative of deeds, not words.

PR: That's great. What was your favorite, what were your academic interests at William Penn? What courses did you like?

JC: [chuckles] U.S. government. I received an award from Miss Shirley Little. She gave me my U.S. history award in government.

PR: Is that Dr. Little's wife?

JC: No, no, no. Different Little. But I remember Miss Little. No, this is a different person. And Mrs. King was my English teacher. But Miss Little had a way of teaching that sparked my interest in government, because I had always wanted to understand the injustice. And I always believed the government was the controlling factor. Even when I was at Baldwin's Chapel, I would get a whupping because I asked the question why. My question was always why, why? And sometimes I would get a whupping because of that, because some things they wasn't ready to answer. But Miss Little was one who inspired me. That's

why, people think I have a political ambition, and I tell people I'm not a politician in a sense. All I am is about injustice. I will speak about injustice, and I care about it, but position. It's not about being important, it's about doing important things.

PR: OK. And what kinds of extracurricular activities did you do? Were you an athlete, were you in the band? Did you do any of that stuff?

JC: No

PR: None of it.

JC: No. I didn't do the band, and I didn't do sports, simply because of my religious beliefs, because they practiced on Friday night, or the game was on Friday night. And so Miss Baldwin was teaching me how to play instruments, but I couldn't grasp it. But my brother Bobby can play the piano, and he plays it by ear. So everyone thought that you ought to be able, and so I found that my as they say talent, my grandmother says your mouth. And so you love to talk, but you talk pretty well, but that's what you do, that's your talent, you talk.

PR: Did you have a job after school or on weekends?

JC: Well, I had a job from childhood up. I worked in the garden. I worked in the school. I worked with Miss Baldwin, because as I said Uncle Lonzo took me in, he paid my tuition at the private school, and so as repayment he would take me out and teach me how to build, he taught me how to farm, gardening, he taught me all of those skills, and when he didn't have anything Miss Rosetta would have me working in the school, dusting books, straightening things out, things like that. And then, after I went to William Penn in the public sector, after graduating I worked the first year at High Point Parks and Recreation, that was my first big...in between I cut grass, made a little hustle that way, because I always believed that seniors couldn't get out and cut the grass so I would make a little money knocking on doors and cutting grass. But I worked for Park and Recreation, and from Park and Recreation I enlisted in the United States Navy.

PR: OK. So did you work at the Baldwin school after school while you were at William Penn? You worked at the school then?

JC: Yes. The thing what most people don't know, that was the first year-round school. So I was there pretty much every day, if not every day, once a week, twice a week, three times a week, I was there consistently and constantly. Everyone pretty much though I was still living with them, but I had long moved out. I felt an obligation of trying to say thank you to that family because of what they had did for me and my family. So going over to Miss Baldwin's home was not necessarily a job or a chore, it was just a way of showing my gratitude for what they had done for me. And there was always something to do.

PR: So you mentioned a couple of minutes ago about the idea that some of the kids in the class were slow, or were seen as slow, not that they were slow. Did William Penn have different tracks, like academic tracks where there were certain classes that were geared toward kids who were going to be going to college, or did everybody kind of go together.

JC: No, there's no one quite the same, no person is the same. And depending on their background from whence they came, the struggle is a little harder for some if not for most. They wasn't necessarily separated, but you could tell from the lifestyle that our young people were coming up in, that they were

destined to do better because of their parents and their lifestyle and their home. Those that were less fortunate had a harder time, because most people did not concentrate on high academics as much as everyday living, and the reason to get your next meal, and there was a lot of things going on. And to be poor, high academics was not necessarily pressed on your mind, and then there were people who were telling you that you would not be college material, that you would not do this, you would not do that. Some people fell into believing that and some didn't, but if your parents was well-off and had good jobs, then you were pretty much destined to be doing better. Those that were less fortunate had to try a little harder. They were fortunate to come out, some were, and then some fell through the cracks and the ones that came up in poverty, some remained in poverty. And so even when public housing came, some fell into the trap of believing that that was it, it was as far as you could go, and reality was it was just a temporary stay, but some folks made it a permanent stay, generation after generation after generation grew up on public housing, so their future was somewhat limited.

PR: So it wasn't the school that was sort of deciding the tracks that these kids would go to college and these kids wouldn't, so much as it was their families and their backgrounds.

JC: Right, because if your family is, let's say educated, then they're pushing education to their children, because they are a product of education so they know the outcome. But if your parents are struggling day-to-day trying to make ends meet, then what they're pressing into their children's minds is that you need to make sure that you eat, and that your clothes- to be borrowing clothes and receiving hand-me-down clothes, it had a mental effect on some folks. That's the way life will be. I was very fortunate to grow up in a home with a single parent, but have the family involvement that made a difference for our family, but at the same time I saw a lot of families, even being in public housing, were not able to excel. And so it had an effect, and I'm still friends with most of them today that are still living, that no matter what upbringing you come up in you're still a person and you still have a right to succeed if you have a mind to.

PR: Right. OK, so I only have a couple more questions. One is about civil rights and civil rights activism. So you graduated in 1968, this was right in the middle of everything. Were you involved in any kind of activism like that at William Penn?

JC: 1968- that was probably the roughest year of our lives, because that was the death of Martin Luther King.

PR: Right

JC: We were all in an uproar, dismayed, shocked. Some was in fear, because we did not know what the future held for us. Was I involved? As I said earlier, I've always been involved somehow with my mouth about injustice. So being involved and opening my mouth, it wasn't a second thought for me. Any time I saw something was going on, I would speak out. But growing, in '68 that was the hardest part because we were running around and the words that were coming around in the community about the leader, and because I was raised up different, my statement was we all were leaders. We could not just focus on Dr. Martin Luther King as the premier leader. He had a strong message, and his action was of leadership, but there was others that was also leaders. And when we fooled ourselves to get locked in on just one person, then that's the end of the battle. So the way I was raised is we all are leaders and there is always something for all of us to do. And there's more than one trumpet to blow, and again I refer back to my upbringing the Trumpet of Gabriel, and all the other trumpets. So we all have trumpets we need to

blow, and that was, '68 was probably the most fearful time, because there was so much going on around us that we were not quite sure what was the next thing, whether there was going to be violence in this city, in a bad, very terrible way. There was some uproar, but it wasn't as bad as across the nation. And so we thought it would spill over here, and we had to do something, but I was taught that you let the Lord handle it. You do what you're supposed to do and let the Lord handle the rest. And so as we transitioned into the change, things started working out. I won't say that everything was accomplished, because it wasn't. I don't think we're better off because of merging the school system and all this thing that went on. Because when we look at what was and how proud we were, and the things we were accomplishing, it changed. Not for the better, it changed for the worse. Sure, we're able to sit down and have dialogue together, that's good, that's a good thing. But separation is still there. Discrimination is still there. Racism is still there. So some time I wonder what it is that the people have learned, and if it was for all people, then why aren't we in a better state today? You look at from 1968 to the present, we're still having issues that we was fighting back in '68.

PR: Were there protests or anything at the school after the assassination? I know students were upset, were there any kind of concrete actions that were taken? Were there marches, was there anything like that?

JC: Well, the marches had already started prior to '68, but then once Dr. King was killed, everybody thought that they were going to riot or march or whatever.

PR: Now there weren't riots in High Point, right?

JC: There weren't riots. And because of the calmness and the intellectual minds of our teachers, our clergy, our parents, they tried to explain to us the repercussions behind it. Your intentions maybe good, but you have to look at the whole picture. If you burn down this store in your community, that's a store you can't go to. If you create violence, and you are arrested, then you're not home to provide for your family. So you have to use the intellect of all of these things that they were trying to tell us to do. And what we came up with was education is the key to success. Educate yourself, put yourself in the position to do better, to bring about changes. And so that's what a lot of us decided to do, was how best can we make a change? Well, we have to better ourselves first. We can't do anything for anybody if you haven't done it for yourself, and so that was one of the primary things that I learned out of all this moving around. But again I had the church to help me get through all of this, and once I got through that and went into the military, which was not an easy thing to do, because we really wasn't welcome. When I went into the United States Navy, it wasn't a welcome invitation for us to come in. but I was able to get through it, leaning on what I was taught and learning how to get along with people. And it ended up being a very successful time for me in the United States Navy, and I came back with the knowledge that I learned out of the Navy, the knowledge that I learned prior, and trying to put it together and to try to do a service here in High Point. And that's all I've been doing for the last forty years, being of service to High Point.

PR: How long did you serve in the Navy?

JC: I was in the Navy a little over two years. I got out on a medical discharge.

PR: Did you go to Vietnam?

JC: No, we did a Mediterranean cruise. I was on the east coast, and we saw action against Jordan, Israel.

PR: So you were in the Middle East.

JC: yes, was in the Middle East, and it was very, that's not an experience that I'd like to live over again. And what I mean by that, I think it was 1970, and it happened at night. And one of the things that I always remember every time I see Fourth of July celebrations at night, it reminds me of the Middle East.

PR: The bombs?

JC: The bombs. And you see this flare coming up [pause] from a distance. You're looking, and you know, you're out at sea, and you just propel something out, and next thing you see something light up, light up. And I remember it was against Jordan, and the next morning it was a cease fire, and negotiations started and that was the end of that skirmish. But it always let you understand, there's a consequence behind every action, and I saw the consequence behind the actions. And it's a humbling experience.

PR: Did you go to college when you came back, or did you go straight to work?

JC: No, well I went to work first.

PR: Right, Parks and Rec, you said.

JC: No, that was before. When I got out, I was the first African- American to manage an Exxon station here in High Point.

PR: Oh

JC: Up on North Main Street. That was a wonderful experience. And then I left there and I ended up at United States Postal Service.

PR: Oh. Ok.

JC: And I went in there in '78, and I told you earlier, I learned how to read and I learned to read the manual, and I was fortunate and able and blessed to retire at the age of 33.

PR: Wow

JC: So I'm humbled by that. I'm blessed, it was just a blessing. But when I came out, they welded, they nailed, they did everything they could to shut that door so no one else could get out like that. But sometimes your path is already laid out. And after that, I got involved a little bit in politics, I ran a couple times for public office. Today, many folks think I'm a public figure. I don't think that, but that's what they think. But it's a learning experience. I wanted to learn about the operation of city government. I studied government, so when I got back I said well let me get involved in government. Again, it's all about injustice and the people. How can we make this city better for all? You can't say the city of High Point if you're not talking about all of High Point. And I'm always chastising them when they get up and they speak, and then you ask certain individuals well have you traveled to this part of the city? What do you know about this part of the city? And their response is I don't know, I haven't been over there, but you say the city. So I think it ought to be a prerequisite that you travel all over the city, and get a feel for the living environment of every sector, so that you can represent in a better way. And some people have their own personal agendas, and that's what's caused dissension in the city of High Point, because those that are involved can see it, and we said we're getting away from discrimination, but discrimination still

exists. But that's no place in government, but that's part of government, they tried to teach me, but doesn't make it right.

PR: So you were part of the last to graduate in '68, and after that the school closed. Was there a movement within the black community to fight back against the closing of the school?

JC: The largest argument that we had about the closing of the school was why are you closing the school? There's nothing wrong with the building. The answer was, well we believed was, the whites did not want to bus their children over into the African-American community. So rather than do that, you'll close William Penn but you go build a brand new school. Well, when you look at the ratio of those you sent to the new school, it was predominantly black. Then you have tension in that group, and so we said well why not keep this building open? And for a year they kept it closed, and then they tried an alternative school, but we all thought there was no justifiable reason for closing the school. Integration was there, but you can do that without having to close the school. But those powers to be and the influential folks decided that was the answer. But look at the consequence behind their actions. And now they can question and say well was that the right move? And today we'll say no it wasn't- it was not the right move. But you can't unfold what has happened, so they tried it with alternative school then they ended up with what we have today, the magnet school. But if you dissect it, you will find out there's still problems within that particular decision, but still we as citizens of High Point have to accept change no matter how it comes, but you can correct the bad part of the change and make it better. That's what I'm hoping they decide to do. Living environmental city- who came up with that definition of High Point? You understand, what is the living environmental? One of the biggest things that I don't understand is how you can boast to be this wonderful city, or this wonderful county or this wonderful state, and you look at the literacy in this area. And you look at HIV and poverty and all of those things, and yet still you boast. And then I say well if we have the best academics, and we create and challenge our students, I guarantee if you go out and survey or challenge the students that are coming out of the school system, they wouldn't pass the grade. I'm honestly sure about that. I'm talking about the middle school, high school- you still have kids coming out that cannot read or write. The intellect is not being taught that "uh" is not a word. "You know" is not a phrase that is part of the English. But we accept those things from our students as though they were acceptable. And I hear people even talking "I seen him." I thought it was "I saw him." "I seen him." Do we become complacent and accept because we have head count, and head count means more money? Or are we about education? And that's some of the things that drive me, so I hope people don't get offended.

PR: That's OK.

JC: That's the way I think. And those are the challenges, when a young person comes and talks to me and they use those terminologies, I'm like Judge Judy. "Uh" is not a word. It's just one of those things, how we teach it doesn't change. And when we look at our academics—and I'm very proud of High Point University, very proud. Because I remember times when we could just walk across this campus, play basketball in the gym, and to see it grow to where it is today, very proud. It makes High Point proud to have this institution here. I'm very proud, because I remember back when. But I have a responsibility for the young people and children who are coming through this institution to make sure they're educated. I like to see them being involved more. And I see them creating their own, but you've got to look down to the lesser, the least fortunate. People that had to endure, people that had to suffer, and you say well they can pay taxes. Well, most of them don't make enough, they're not living in that particular situation

where they have to pay taxes or they can. But the city will be better when all of us prosper from the growth, rather than, well no we've built apartments, we've done this, but you haven't changed the lifestyle or hardship of the families. If you address the whole need of the family, and make that better, the city's a whole lot better because then they become contributing citizens. So that's my drive on what we're doing.

PR: OK, just to go back for one second on the closing of the school. Was there a movement, was there a resistance?

JC: At first, yes, yes. We fussed and argued and fussed and argued about that's not the right thing to do. And we thought at the time that there was no justifiable reason. So we had groups come together, we approached the school board. We went at our teachers, trying to tell them this is not right, and what can we do? Well, there's not much you can do because the decision has already been made by the school board. And then when we look at the school board, we were upset that the people making the decision wasn't necessarily favorable to our request. So we thought it was a losing battle, even in the argument, because they always countered that we didn't make the decision, the school board made the decision. Well, look at the makeup of the school board.

PR: Was the school board all white?

JC: Not totally, but predominantly. And they didn't have an interest in William Penn. The one person that we had the most respect for was Dot Kearns. She was a strong advocate for William Penn. Even in the closing she still stayed true to trying to keep William Penn alive. Dr. Phillips was another. But when you look at people like Dean B. Pruet, wasn't necessarily on our side, didn't necessarily think that was what we needed. But you could have kept William Penn open and still built another school. So we thought it was a slash against African-American communities just to close the school because it meant so much to the African-American community. That was the drive of our argument because you can build another school. Why close William Penn?

PR: Did the William Penn teachers, did a lot of them go to Andrews or go to High Point Central, or did a lot of them lose their jobs in this transition?

JC: Well, there were a few that left and went on to Central, like Mr. Wright, I remember he went to Central. And there were a few that went to Andrews- our music director, Mr. J.Y. Bell. I mean, when you do that and you split up a nucleus, we call that division. And there's more than one way, and I'll say this now regretfully, Jim Crow worked many ways. Many ways and we thought that was one of them. To come in and close William Penn, and then split the folks. You could have kept the people there and built another school and kept moving forward toward integration, it had nothing to do with integration. So the movement, yes there was a strong movement, but it was to no avail.

PR: Did Mr. Bell go to Andrews after William Penn closed? He did.

JC: Yes, he was the band director.

PR: I know Mr. Burford went to Andrews for a couple of years.

JC: Yes, he was the first African-American principal of an integrated school, But Mr. Bell went with him, that's why you see the rhythm that Andrews had, when they first come in. It was the flavor of Mr. Bell. Even A7T had the flavor of Mr. Bell.

PR: Did Mr. Bell have a connection to A&T?

JC: I would think so, because I tell the story, when you look at William Penn marching band before they closed, A&T had nothing on us. And when they invited William Penn, they invited them and at the time they was 150 strong, and that time they was on Yanceyville, that stadium on Yanceyville.

PR: Yeah, I live right by there.

JC: OK. Can you imagine 150 students walking in there single file, dancin' and struttin'. That's a long time. And they cut up so bad and so good that A&T never invited them back for the homecoming. But Mr. Bell had a strong influence as well as Miss Brown, from the band to the chorus. It was a close-knit family, and a very productive family. The graduates of William Penn, I would put them against anybody, because they're educated, and, well, [pause] they're educated. And I'm very proud to be a member of the last class of William Penn, very proud.

PR: OK< so my last question, and then I'll leave it open for you. We talked a little bit about civil rights, and we talked about the decision after the King assassination. Now I know about the sit-ins, and I know there were marches in '65 or '66 or so. One of the things that I haven't been able to figure out yet is were there protests, were there marches, was there a kind of a resistance movement in those last few years, '66-'67-'68 around the school?

JC: There were, but again it was small, because the opposition made it very clear that this is something that was going to happen.

PR: Oh, I'm sorry, I don't mean closing the school, I just mean in general the civil rights movement.

JC: Well, again, we didn't know what the future was going to hold, because here Dr. King was just killed. Here it is down the pipe that William Penn is closing. There is a movement of, as we liked to say, eradication. You're trying to get rid of the African-American community or people in High Point, because you're closing the school, you just killed Dr. King. The movement to march because of the civil rights, well what's the repercussion behind that. See, there was a lot of threats going on, that you should not do this, don't do this because this is what's going to happen. There were small skirmishes of uprising. I mean the police cars were turned over.

PR: That was after the assassination?

JC: Yeah, yeah. And there were fights. Lot of fights. And the thing was, nothing done because the decision has been made. And you're only hurting yourselves, that's what kept coming back to us. No matter what happens, the decision has been made, you're only hurting yourselves.

PR: And when you say it's coming back to you, is that coming from the teachers? Your parents?

JC: Both. Even the clergy would stand up and say, we can get mad at the government, we can get mad at city hall, and the people that at the time was sitting in city hall, we don't want to say they had a deaf ear, but it was a non-changing ear, meaning "we hear you, but there's nothing we can do." They would always pass the buck. It is not our decision, this decision's been made. If I were you all, I would galvanize and try to approach the school board. If I were you, I would galvanize, and maybe you could protest and have...but we knew that there was a decision being made. And when they closed the doors, I have to always reflect back, when they closed the doors of William Penn, it was just a tremendous shock.

Because we just saw a movement coming. After Dr. King being killed in April, the next thing that happened was William Penn closed. So we were afraid of what's next, what is going to happen next. And it just had us....and then there was still racial tension going on. I'll say this, and it happened to me so I'm going to tell what happened. My first year working at Washington Terrace, I mean Park and Recreation, I was an overseer of a crew, we was cutting grass, and the unfortunate thing we was cutting grass at the main office, and one of the employees was being defiant, and he used the N word. And after having what had happened, and to resurrect that back up, I ended up in a fight. Right in front of the lead person, the boss was Ray Kazai, I remember him today. He didn't justify what I did, he understood why I did what I did. But he said I would not have taken action if it had not happened right in front of the office. Because they were standing in the window, and they saw the results. And I didn't run, I came up and brought the other person, told them just what happened. The person, you know. And he said, I understand, but because it happened right here in front of this office, I have to take action. And that was my only trouble, but before getting in any more trouble was when I enlisted in the United States Navy, because at that time the draft was happening, and they had drafted my brother in the army. And I didn't want the Marine Corps drafting me, so I chose to go into the Navy.

PR: OK. So when you say they were going to close, was this the school board? Was it the mayor? The city council? Was it a combination?

JC: Well, the school board was the one that made the final decision.

PR: But where do you think the decision was coming from?

JC: The people of influence, the white community that had the influence. They're the ones that decided to do this. Not only did they decide to do that, what people don't talk about is the closing of Washington Terrace Park.

PR: They closed the park?

JC: At one time, they closed the park. And if you look back over history and look at the pictures, we had the only park that had a two-tiered, and the dance floor was on the top of the pavilion.

PR: I've heard that.

JC: And this is the truth, I was there when it happened. The reason that was given, they did not want the people to gather, because of what had happened, and use that as a platform.

PR: So when did they close the park? Was it in '68, also?

JC: [pause] I want to say before '68. I'll tell you who was in office, because I remember that was her doing, and that was Judith Mendenhall. She was in office when that happened, and she said we don't want them gathering and using 27 acres. And I think it was before '68 because Dr. King's name was mentioned coming to High Point, because he had been here once before. They just thought if a movement was coming, the blacks would have a center stage to stand on top of.

PR: So how long did they close the park for? The park was closed almost for a couple years, because they used the excuse of renovations. They even took some of the equipment from Washington Terrace and took it out to City Lake. They kept the park closed and forced people to go to City Lake. When they re-

opened it, at one time Washington Terrace had an Olympic-sized pool. They downsized it and downsized it. They kept closing it and kept forcing people to go to City Lake.

PR: And they took the two-story building down?

JC: They took the two-story building down. They took the train.

PR: That's the train that's at City Lake, right?

JC: That's right. And so you can imagine the animosity, and they used the excuse well people are not using Washington Terrace Park, and they argued they're using it for drugs and all the negatives. And we had to prove to them that was not the case. And one of the days we came there to prove it was the City of High Point, or Parks and Recreation, their own park rangers were blocking the entrance to the park. Not at the front, midway, so if you turn to get in, you have a backup. It was causing a backup on Gordon Street, and at the time I was the president of the NAACP, and so I went down to see what the problem was, and I remember the ranger, it was George Timberlake. I said "Why are you blocking the entrance?" HE said, "We're trying to control the people that's inside the park, and they're causing all this backup." I said "No, no, no, no- YOU'RE causing the backup, because everyone that's in that line is not trying to get down here to the park." And once he moved his car, he saw the flow, and that solved that problem. But we had to stay diligent, and then we encouraged the community to get back to using the park, so now it's well-used. It's one of those things, you know. So we have to stay diligent about what is happening in High Point.

PR: So you gave me another question I wanted to ask.

JC: [chuckles]

PR: You keep springing other questions on me. The other end of Washington Street. Did they cut off Washington Street to build Centennial or to build the display rooms for the furniture market. Did Washington Street...

JC: You mean College Drive. Kivett Drive

PR: Well, no, I'm thinking on the other end by Centennial.

JC: I know.

PR: Did Washington Street used to extend beyond Centennial?

JC: Yes, it did. It went all the way up to Main Street. And yes to your question, they call it urban development or something of that nature when all of these changes came. And it was systematically done to kill the life on Washington Street. Now whether they want to admit it or not, that was the reality of it. We saw that, and we were trying to ask why would you do that when it was a thriving area. And they didn't want us on Main Street, so they stopped it.

PR: So when did that happen, do you remember? Around?

JC: Well, the first time it started happening was in the fifties, when they first started to move it. And we had people that called themselves representation of the African-American community, or the community at large. But just to be stroked on the back, or be invited into the Emerywood Country Club was the elite place. And we resented those type of folks that would accept those things and say they

were doing it in our interest, but yet at the same time we were suffering. We kept seeing things happened in the negative rather than in the positive. And so you saw those people that was in representation having positions, but no service to the people. But if you actually interview the truest folks they'll be honest, there was a disservice rather than a service, and we still have it today when we have public people running for office, and they're saying they're transparent and such, and representing the community in which they're running, and you ask what has changed? Well, what has changed is your name is listed somewhere and you're invited to these events, but you can't stand up and say my ward is better off because of this, we have brought about this, we have brought in new businesses, we have constructed a convention center or...The people are no better off. If you're only going to vote for a person because of color, and I had a discussion with someone, they're trying to encourage my direction. And I said it is wrong to vote for a person of color just because of color. Because the end result is what have they done. If they haven't done anything prior to them running, then why would you vote? That's my take on all of this that's been going on.

PR: So one other question I had is about the police chief. So I think around '66 or '67 they brought in Laurie Pritchett from Albany. And I know the stories about Laurie Pritchett from Albany, so how did that change

[Break]

PR: Alright, go ahead.

JC: Now your lead question was what year did you mention about Chief Pritchett?

PR: So I think he came in about '66 or so. I think that's about when.

JC: OK. My first encounter with Chief Laurie Pritchett was in 1972, I do believe. I was coming in from, I had just getting out of the military, and I was coming from Thomasville, say about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, from a party. And we was coming up what then was English Road, where the old bus station used to be, the Greyhound/Trailway bus station. There was a three-story house across the street from it, and it was on fire, it was blazing on fire. And we pulled up, and we were looking at the people standing and looking up. And we jumped out and said "Is everybody alright?" And they said "No, Miss Johnson and Miss Wilson and another person is still in the building." I said "You're all standing out here looking?" Well, and before I knew it I had climbed the side of the building, something like a trellis. And got to the first floor, and kicked in the window, and the woman was standing right there so we brought her to the edge of the roof, and by that time the fire department was pulling up. And then we climbed on up to the next flight, and I think her name was Mrs. Johnson. And I said Mrs. Johnson, and I kicked the glass in, the room was full of smoke. She was on the floor. And I told her Mrs. Johnson, we need to get out of here. She said "I'm trying to find my medicine." I said "Mrs. Johnson you come on. We'll buy you some more medicine." And as soon as I got her to the edge, they were putting the ladder up on the edge of the porch. And the third flight was Miss Wilson. She came right on out, smoke had filled her room, and we kicked the window out. And just as we got her down and was starting to descend, the roof caved in and I jumped. And I hit the ground and I rolled over, I got up and walked away. And I went on home, got in the car and went home. And my friend that was with me told them my name. I never knew that they knew I was there. His name was Ernest Straighter, and he did the interview, and anyway it ended up being an article in the paper. And Chief Pritchett was brought notice of it and he called me in and invited me to join the High Point Police Department. And I told him thank you but no thank you, because I had just

gotten out of the military and I did not want to get back into a situation like that. And then I started picking up on the history. His conduct and things of that nature. I can't say other than he invited me to the police department, and then hearing some of the racial tension that went on with him, and that was coming from Mr. Leake, Mr. Amaker, Mr. Roseboro, these are African-American police officers. And it seemed to me that it was the Jim Crow movement really starting to crank up, because the black officers couldn't arrest white people.

PR: Hm

JC: And the black officers, when he dealt with black people, he would feel that he could beat you. And I speak of Mr. Robert Roseboro, I saw him actually pull out his baton. But in a way he was actually justifiable in doing that, because my father was an alcoholic, and he was very abusive to my mom. And Mr. Roseboro lived across the street, and he told him "If I ever hear about you jumping on Ruby again, I'm going to get you." And sure enough, he did it again, and I saw him beat him with that baton. And Mr. Pritchett didn't do anything to Mr. Roseboro on that incident, but we thought that was just fine. But to hear and see the way Mr. Amaker and Mr. Leach, Mr. Roseboro, Mr. Ramseur, what's another one? There were several African-Americans, and they wanted to sort of teach us how to act. Tell us what to do, and we thought it was, again, that double standard- you tell us one way, but you let them do certain things, and so Mr. Pritchett was not what we called our favorite officer. Other than him offering me being on the police force, I didn't necessarily, because I'd already lived right across the street from Robert Roseboro. He'd give us one side about Pritchett, but then he'd give another side about family and stuff. We didn't know who to trust, and so when Mr. Pritchett, we was told, "Don't trust him." Because he come from the area where they don't like, and they going to come in and they're going to clean up High Point. In fact, I had an article in there about him. And they just, it's just one of those things I remember what he offered me, but at the same I saw what was happening within the police department, so I chose not to join the force.

PR: But you didn't have any kind of awareness of him until that time. You didn't have any awareness of him in high school?

JC: Oh, no. No, no. Because again we were sheltered. Once I leave William Penn during the 60s, when I get out of school, we went right back into Daniel Brooks, and then from Daniel Brooks I would leave and go right back over to Olga Street.

PR: Yeah, and I didn't mean that you were getting in trouble or anything. What I meant was did the high school kids know about Chief Pritchett. There's a new chief and it's going to change the tone of the city.

JC: Oh, yes.

PR: So they were aware of that.

JC: Oh yes, because he came in with a big stick. But because of the way I was raised, we were taken away from that. When you get out of school, go here.

PR: But you were aware when he came in that this was a change.

JCL Oh, yes.

PR: OK, that's really what I wanted to know.

JC: Change with a big stick, and he had an attitude toward African-Americans. So we knew that, so you've gotta be careful. Don't get caught up in that. But again, I was always pulled away from that.

PR: Do you think that was part of the reason there wasn't as much protest in the later 60s? Because of him and because of this new attitude from the police department?

JC: Well, the repercussions. I think more so the repercussions behind it. If you went up against the establishment, what are the consequences behind that?

PR: And the consequences seemed worse once he got there?

JC: That's right, because rather than having a dialogue, it was going to be a physical confrontation. And they would always win. There's no question about who would win the argument, or you try to tell your story, you'd get drowned out. I remember there was a time when they would lock you up. You wouldn't see the person for a while. And we were certain that they probably were being beaten. There was something happening. And when they came back out, you didn't hear them talk negative about what happened to them. They just wouldn't say anything. And so we witnessed a lot of things, but my position was, I was always taken away, because I had something else to do. You go home, do your chores, and me, I'd always say "I'm going over to the house." We called it the house, and I'd say I'm going over to the house because to me that was safe haven. I didn't have to worry about being in trouble or being around trouble, because when I went over there, it felt like being in a safe haven. I had the garden, I had chores to do. Then in the afternoon I'd go back home.

PR: Did you, and you might have been away during this time period, what was your impression of the Black Panthers in High Point, and Brad Lilly and that whole organization.

JC: Hm, I only had a brief knowledge of them in High Point because I had a friend involved in it.

PR: Your friend was one of the High Point Four?

JC: Mm-hm.

PR: Which one?

JC: Well, I don't know about the High Point Four, he was a Black Panther, I'll just say that. I don't want to say High Point Four. I don't know maybe how they defined themselves, but I know he was a Black Panther.

PR: No, when I say the High Point Four I mean from the shootout that morning. But that was in '71, I think you were in the Navy.

JC: Yeah, I was in the Navy. But only thing I know was I had a friend in there. And they got out, but I don't know what involvement they had because I was never, I never really had a relationship, say, dealing with the movement of the Black Panthers. I don't know if they had an impact on High Point, per se. I just knew I had a friend that was involved with the Black Panthers, and they let it be known. And even years later we had a person come from Oklahoma that was involved with the Black Panthers, and so I had that knowledge, but not a personal relationship.

PR: Is that friend who was involved with the Panthers still around in the area? Is he still alive?

JC: Sure, sure.

PR: I'd love to talk to him if he'd be willing to talk to me. Is he a William Penn alum?

JC: Oh yes.

PR: I'd really like to talk to him. We can talk about that after I turn this off.

JC: Very good, very good. I'll let you seek that out.

PR: OK. So that's all that I have. Do you have anything else that I didn't ask about that you'd like to mention, or anything that I didn't ask about that you think is worth talking about?

JC: Well, you know I'm always going to promote African-American history. And that's the thing that is dear to my heart is African-American history of High Point. The reason that we created the African-American museum was simply to educate the people about the contributions of African-Americans to High Point. From the teachers to the storekeepers, those people that were instrumental in guiding people, guiding our people, to do things positive and constructive, but made up the fabric of High Point. We had our own stores, our own tailors, our own shoe shops, everything of business, we had. And to watch as you mention about the road, Kivett Drive, coming through and cutting off Washington Street, that was the dagger that killed Washington Street. And also it cut a whole lot of businesses out, because that highway came in and the first person that who was affected was the Kendalls, who had Kendall Oil, and that was a V-shape in the middle of what is now Kivett Drive. So when I decided to create the museum, I was trying to instill this sense of pride that is slowly being eradicated from the African-American community, because if you don't know your history, you'll soon die of it. So that was the thing, and when you look back at the Class of '68, and you look at the teachers and you look at the former yearbooks and see the former teachers and all that they were able to accomplish, to make High Point, at the time, it was the International Home Furniture Market. So that says something about this community of High Point. But when we don't talk about those folks, to instill pride, I tell people you're walking with your pants down because you have no sense of pride. And it's our duty to put that pride back in there. And a lot of people that's moving into High Point are not from High Point, and so we have a lot of things, you don't have a sense of passion or concern because you're not really from here. And you're detached. And even the employees and the people that come into High Point, a lot of changes happen because of the detachment, the non-association with folks. And we think it's for the better, but you're also killing the past. And I don't think any city without a foundation you will stand. And so the foundation for African-American history is at the African-American museum, because we're directly across the street from the cemetery. And the cemetery is created because they didn't want any more whites to be buried at Oakwood, so they created Greenhill. So when you stand on the porch of the museum and look across the street, you're looking at the African-American history. So I tell people it's incumbent upon the city of High Point to embrace it. The museum and the cemetery, because that's part of High Point. And if there's any way that we can get that instilled into the history books of High Point, because you can't talk about High Point without talking about all of it, I always say that. And so that is my driving force, just to make sure that all of High Point is included when you're talking about High Point and improvement from the past to the future. You have to include it. Other than that, that has been my driving passion, just to make sure the history of High Point is being told. And me as a person, as I said earlier, I don't care about being important, that's not my drive. My drive is to do important things, so that once it's done you can pass the baton and keep it going, but if you as you say if you kill the messenger, there goes the message. So that's all I have to put into all of this, and I really wish you well in what you're trying to do with this history. Because there's a whole lot more people out there who you need to interview, who hasn't been

mentioned. That's why I brought the yearbook to see if you'd talked to some of them, and I'll answer your questions off record.

PR: That sounds good. All right, Mr. Clark, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.