

ASBURY PARK AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC HERITAGE PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee: Rev. David Parreott [DP]

Interviewers: Jennifer Souder [JS]
Charles Trott [CT]
Melissa Keeling [MK]
Yvonne Clayton [YC]
Kathleen Melgar [KM]

Date: June 12, 2018

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Place: Asbury Park, NJ

[3:16]

DP: I'm Reverend David J. Parreott, Jr. Born in Asbury Park in 1934. Born 49 Atkins Avenue. Lifelong resident here, and my family's been here for over a hundred years. My grandmother, and then my mother came up, and somehow my father found his way up here, and they got married. He served on the police department for some 34 years, in the 19... whatever it was, when they started hiring black police officers. I served 29 years on the police department, and my son served 20 years. I come from a family of seven children, and I was the last one that was born in the city. The rest, the other two were born at Fitkin Hospital, Jersey Shore University Medical Center. The same year I was born, that was the year that the Morro Castle floated up on the beachfront. My parents, at the time I was born, they were living at 206 Dewitt Avenue, and then moved over to 1022 Mattison Avenue, in the three-bedroom home. Seven kids, two adults. My brother and I didn't have a room downstairs in one of those three bedrooms; we slept in the attic. My oldest sister, Gloria, she finally moved away, got married after going to school – I think she went somewhere in Alabama; maybe it's on one of these sheets here. She has since passed away. My next oldest sister, Almyra, lives out in Sacramento, California; retired school teacher. Next oldest sister, Tais, she lives in San Diego; a retired school teacher, too. She was in telecommunications after a while after she served in the Air Force; she moved from Asbury Park to California many, many years ago. My next oldest sister, Devilla, she went to nursing school after leaving here; graduated from Jersey Center Medical Center? Then she went to Seton Hall and got further degrees. She got married, moved to Philadelphia, worked in the hospitals there, worked her way up to supervisor. Two or three years ago, she pancreatic cancer; she passed. Then I came along, number five. After leaving school here in Asbury Park, I went away to A&T State University, the college in Greensboro, North Carolina. While there for two years, at that time, we had the

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draft. I had to go to the service. I spent my time overseas, and when I returned, I had some injuries, so the college didn't renew my four-year scholarship that I had for playing football, tennis, and boxing. Then I transferred to North Carolina Central, in Durham, that's where my brother was at the time. I was able to get a partial scholarship there, plus the GI Bill, and I met my wife. I knew what I needed to plan ahead, so after staying there for a year... and my mother had called because I had taken exams for a job at Fort Monmouth, and they called me for an interview. I came home, took the interview, and went back to school. They hired me, so I had to come home, and transfer to Monmouth University. Also, because of my father being on the police department, he mentioned and talked about that, I took the exam for law enforcement, and I got hired. I went to Sea Girt police academy, the fiftieth class myself. As we know, **Joseph Monteparow[?]**, we were partners. We went together. For my 29 years – it's on those sheets I gave you, what I did, how I went from patrolman up to captain. Acting, I guess, as a deputy chief for a while, in the office. Aside from that, I've just been involved in too many things. *[laughter]* Political, as well as community. Growing up in Asbury Park – I think that was one of the questions that you had – I had two neighborhoods, and I explained that on the sheets. At 149 Atkins Avenue, it was Dr. Robinson, E.A. Robinson – Earnest A. Robinson – was like a father to me. I spent most of my time here, at my parents home, at 1022 Mattison Avenue. This particular neighborhood is predominately single-family homes, however, across the street was a gas station. On Union Avenue, which has been eliminated now, there was a mom-and-pop store, across the street was Dr. Joseph Carter, medical doctor; across the street was a dentist, last name was Bailey, I think he was West Indian. Further down Atkins Avenue was the barber shop, a wellness baby clinic, that Dr. Robinson – E.A. Robinson – started. He also had like an optometrist of some sort, I guess, because he gave glasses. On the other side of the street, of course, was Second Baptist Church. That was the church my father attended. On Union Avenue was St. Stephen AME Zion Church; my mother attended there, along with all of us children. Next door to the church was F. Leon Harris funeral home. Also there was Arthur Polite's[?] real estate agency. There were two beauty parlors on the street, one run by a lady named Ford. That's where Bethel AME Church... right across from Second Baptist Church, that's where she was located. The other was at the corner of Mattison and Atkins Avenue. Growing up here again, my grandmother lived, she and her husband lived on the corner of Mattison Avenue and Atkins Avenue. He was a preacher – or a minister, I don't remember the church he pastored. I do remember his passing. Back in those days, they brought the casket to the house and laid it on the porch. My mother's mother... no, my mother's sister was named, we called her Mother Ella. She had a church at the intersection of Cookman and Prospect. She lived behind the church, what we called "holy roller church." That's where my mother came up to spend time with her sister; she lived there for a while. Across the street from that, at the corner of Cookman and Prospect Avenue, was Dr. Leonard Martin. On the other side, it was Barney Polpot sold barrels. There were several mom-and-pop stores on Prospect between Springwood and Mattison. On Mattison was a gas station; Farrow's gas station. There were two mom-and-pop stores; one on the northwest corner and one on the south—no, northeast corner: Etal's. Across the street from that was the Sons of Italy building, and they had a bocce court across the

street from that. The Prospect bar was on the other side, and on the corner was a soda joint there called the Sugar Bowl. Then, there were all single-family homes there until they built the middle school on our block, and they called that the Avenue of the Americas. Our next-door neighbors were a Jewish family. Joe Mattias, who was our mayor, lived on our block. Hank Greenberg, who was an attorney, lived on our block. The young lady that you met, she was also on our block. We had one Spanish guy, and a lot of Jewish families. There was a Jewish synagogue around the corner, which is now Bethel AME Church. Going the other way – and again, it’s on my notes – Bowdines, it’s called. Coming back down Bangs Avenue is Comstock Street. Near Comstock was a place, Manhattan Bottling Plant, where I had a job over there to... when we grew up, we didn’t have much money, but you could sell soda bottles and get a deposit on them. I was over there getting soda bottles to sell. They hired me to look out for people that were coming, they were taking bottles. They didn’t have any trouble after they hired me, because I was the one taking them! *[laughter]* But they gave me 50-cents a day and all the soda I could drink! *[laughter]*

JS: That’s great, how old were you?

DP: I don’t like soda now! That’s some of what was in that block. The kind of things that we had back then... My father working in the police department and my mother was always a home-maker, with all of us kids there, so she started a restaurant: Almyra’s Tea Room. Named after my second-oldest sister. Of course, that’s where I learned to cook, to be a waiter, a bus-boy, and all those things. We had some of those chores anyhow, everyone had to do something – mopping, cleaning around the house, making your own beds. As I said, we slept in the attic, my brother and I. My father cooked barbeque out on the pit he had built in the yard. My aunts and uncles and other folks, in the summertime, would bring bus-loads of people into town, and they would stop there to rest and to eat, along with going down to the beach. Four kids were in my area, and I want to go back. I think I mentioned it on here; if not, it’s on some of my CDs. The streets back then were dirt. They would come by in the summertime and sprinkle them, keep the dust down. Later on, they put some stones on it and spray it with some oil. Later, they put some tar. The kids, we used to get the tar when it was flexible, and we used that for chewing gum.

CT: The *tar*?

DP: The tar, yeah.

CT: What year was this, about?

DP: Late [19]30s... before the ‘40s. Before ’45, I should say. I remember when the war was over... no, they were tar and stones in ’45 – ‘cause we all came out of the house shouting, everyone in the neighborhood was shouting because the war was over. Across the street, that’s another thing – I don’t have my notes to get the sequence. Across the street from my house was a dairy called Field’s Dairy. I used to take a pitcher and run across the

street and get milk, and eggs and butter. Back in those days, the cream would be two, three inches thick almost. That was Field's. We had two dairies in Asbury Park. This one was on Mattison, and the other was on Comstock near Sunset. The name slips right now, but it's not in those notes, but in some notes. We got that from them. Again I say, on our street, it was like the Americas – there were gypsies, there were Italians, there were Jews, there were Syrians. We were the first – well, second black family that moved over to Mattison Avenue. Another thing – I know that Dr. Robinson had something to do with my parents getting that particular property over there. Gave them a loan or something like that.

JS: Can I ask you – you said you spent a lot of time here, as a child, in this house with the doctor. How did your families know each other?

DP: He delivered me when I was baby.

JS: He delivered you?

DP: And probably, as I recall, he delivered the whole family. In fact, this doctor, he delivered, I would say, a greater portion of the residents, incidentally black and whites. Because the Italians, the Chinese, they lived right around in this area. This was again, a mixed area, though everybody looks at us and says, “the west side's where the black folks are living now.”

YC: So, he had a mini-hospital here, so he could do...?

DP: Yeah. I practiced, too. *[laughter]*

CT: Dr. Robinson was a black doctor, or was he a white doctor.

DP: Black. There's pictures of him all over the place. In fact, he's in my book there. Second and third page. I say he was like another father to me. I guess, whatever took place, we kind of meshed together. My parents didn't object to me coming over here. I stayed here sometimes, I had a room upstairs. He sort of... I was sort of like a son to him, so to speak. He taught me how to play tennis, we had the Asbury Park Tennis Club here, he owned property at the corner of Springwood and Drummond, where we had a tennis court that I had to maintain. It was a clean court, so I had to keep all the grass off, and keep it rolled – striped, as we say. Put the markings on there for the court. We played a lot, he played – I played a lot of tennis on Springwood Avenue. And we played tennis with other tennis clubs in Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, as I recall. So, that's how I met Dr. Robinson. It was him delivering me as a child. It was like a father-son relationship, I guess. I had to be over here... if I didn't show up here at dinner time, Aunt Addie, who was his wife – Adderley – she would call my house and tell me he was waiting for me to get here for dinner. He would pick me up from school so I would be sure to get here, a lot of times. I wanted to do some after-school activities, but he told me

I had to be here. He also had a farm out in Tinton Falls. I spent my weekends, my summers out there, and we had a tennis court out there, too. I played out there, had a big backboard so I didn't have to have anyone to play with me, so I played against the blackboard. We raised chickens and pigs, and I raised pheasants and quail for the game warden, and we had dogs that went hunting – eight beagle dogs and four bird dogs. When you hear me say “our,” I'm talking about *this* family, on this side – Dr. Robinson's side. We had cow, calves, had a garden, had all these things I had to... I didn't *have to*, but I did. I was out there with him all the time. Next door to his property out there was Dr. Parker from Red Bank. The two of them graduated from Howard University medical schools together. They came north, flipped a coin: who would stay in Asbury, who would go to Red Bank? So, Parker got the flip to go there, so he went. On the farm, we had 21 acres, and Dr. Parker bought some property next door, and we had a gunning club, the Twin Sycamore Gun Club, where we shot skeet and trapped out there on that. It was Dr. Parker's property that stuff was on. I was out there all the time; I was a trap-boy for a while, before they let me start shooting. The trap-boy was the one who put the clays on the trap, that flew out and they would shoot. Go back now to Asbury Park. The West Side Community Center was the center for all of our activities, particularly for those black families. We just hung out over there, learned to shoot pool, played ping-pong. I can't think of his first name, but the owner of Scott's Music Store, which is on Main Street at that time... he came over to the Community Center and he taught us how to drum. He had a little pad, a little pieces of wood padded with leather, and we started drumming. Then we got the bugles. He had the music store, so he brought those over. They had French horns, and bugles, and the drums. My father was the drill instructor, and we had a marching band. We marched in a whole lot of parades up and down Springwood Avenue with the Elks and the Masons and others that came for the parade time. I'm trying to think of the other guy's name that was part of that group... But, that was one of the things that brought about music for us young people. My brothers continued with that, following in the footsteps of my uncle George, who played the sax in the Apollo Theater. He was in the pit band up there. He would come down, and he would play music in and around the house, and he would come to the church and play. But that's where we started, I guess, out with that. Along with my mother also played the piano way back then at Monmouth [?] Church. So, all of that kind of drew us into the music-playing. Then, we got in high school, and my brother talked about starting a band. We played talent shows in the area, we played at the Apollo Theater, also on talent night or something like that, Ted Mack's show. We also played the Saturday night or Friday night dance party in Eatontown. They had a drive-in theater then, and that was one of the first TVs – channel 58, I think it was. We played there. We played a lot of clubs, we played in Cuba's, Madonna's. I don't know remember we ever played at the Orchid Lounge, I don't think that was in play at the time. Because that, where the Orchid Lounge was, that was Middler's [?] Chicken Market, and across the street was Aschuler's Chicken Market. I think I got a list here; this list tells you, what I wrote down: what was on Springwood Avenue on the south side going from Main Street to [Route 35], and you got the north side. This is the south side of Springwood.

JS: This is wonderful.

DP: My notes. You know my uncle started the Manhattan Cleaners, and that was one of the only places that my father would allow me – or, us... or, me, because I guess I was more adventurous – to come and spend time. I couldn't hang out there on Springwood Avenue. When I went on Springwood Avenue, it wasn't because that was where I went. I *snuck* over there. *[laughter]* We were shooting pool so good, we decided... we heard about people making money shooting pool in the pool hall, so my running buddy, Archie Johnson, we decided we're going over there to win us some money. When the cops caught me in there, [?] Bryant, and he told me he was going to tell my father. I told him, "Please, Mister, don't tell." He said, "I hope you won't catch me back over here, kid." I used to sneak in and shoot pool.

JS: How old were you about at that point?

DP: 14, 15... well, under the age, I was under the age...

JS: ...that you weren't allowed to be there.

DP: I wasn't allowed to hang out on Springwood Avenue! Even though some of my sisters did... not some of them, my youngest sister, and not the next... two of my sisters used to hang out there. You also had the USO that was on your street, on the corner of Cookman and Langford Street. Later on, of course, the Masonic Temple bought the building and the USO moved over to Sewell Avenue where there's a daycare center over there on the corner of Sewell and Grand. They had these parties over there, and my sisters used to go over there to dance with the soldiers.

YC: My sister was there. *[laughter]*

DP: Was she? On Springwood Avenue, because of the activity that was going on, there was something going on 24/7. There was always something for you to do, whatever it was. During the war at the time, you had the military police there, both from the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy, and they took care of whatever problems that any of the soldiers who imbibed a little too much, they knew what department, what branch of service to turn them over to. And again, has been stated by many, many others, I guess you know what I'm talking about, the music. As soon as you hit the Avenue, you could hear the music. People playing at different places. One of the things I said on there, we played and practiced over top of the garage where the caskets were. At Leon Harris's Funeral Home, he had a loft, and we played there. Another place we played was over the top of the New Deal Tavern. I'm trying to remember the lady's name, but it was Jackson's mother's place. That's where we would practice. I forget where I was going now, got to talking, jumping all over the place, I don't have my guide, but that's okay.

JS: I can give you a guide, if you'd like.

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- DP: I'll go in there and print me another copy, but anyway. I should have done that before I came in here. Going down your list... "Tell me a little bit about your parents." Okay. I told you about my parents, and the activities they had in the neighborhood, being on the Avenue of the Americas, the mom-and-pop stores. Etal[?] was on the corner of Madison and Comstock. On the corner of Langford and Madison was the Moiners had that, that was a family, the male was on the police department with my father. When I was a little tight and thought I was going to the store, I'd pick up some stones and go down there to get some candy. I'd give them the stones for the candy, but they kept a book on it, and they got my father to pay the bill.
- JS: A little I.O.U. *[laughter]*
- DP: Oh yeah. That was common in Asbury, that people... because of the wages. If you look on some of the sheets I gave you, my father made \$2,900 per year. That was the starting salary, compared to what they're getting today. And he had all those kids. But anyhow, I used to climb out the window from the attic and come down the rope and go to the store, climb up the rope, and get back into the attic. My brother tried it, couldn't get back up the rope. That's when we got caught. *[laughter]* I had to come, because the attic steps ended up in the bedroom closet of my parents, so I had to come down and sneak across while they were sleeping. Hoping father wasn't home, was working, and I would come down to let my brother in. But I got caught. *[laughter]* That ended that. But I did pretty good climbing the rope.
- JS: That's impressive.
- DP: I think in the high school, I had about the fastest time climbing up one of those ropes in the gym. My coach then was Gus deville Vienna[?]. He had us. The Jewish Synagogue around the corner, the bocce court, I worked at that Manhattan Bottling Plant for 50-cents a day and all the soda I could drink. And I made soda. I remembered one time when I was putting the sugar into the vat – the vat was almost as big as this room, it was big, as this room – you dumped the sugar in the thing, and I fell in there. *[gasps and laughther]* But I wasn't in way too much, I was able to scramble back up. The sugar was trying to keep me down there, but I made it out of there. I think that was a night-time I was supposed to go on home, and I forgot to put the sugar in before I left. Tommy Smith called up, because his house was butting the back of the soda plant, because of the noise over there. Anyway, I got out of there. I made a bad batch of soda. Root beer. Tasted just like castor oil. *[laughther]* There was a Pollack guy that drove the truck, the delivery, and they made me go with him to go pick up all the ones that we delivered. I put the right ingredients in there. I used to eat a lot of meals over there too. I don't know how I did all these kinds of things, and was over here too.
- JS: Busy!

DP: Yeah. Of course you know, in my early days, the Bangs Avenue School that I attended, it was segregated. The blacks, they'd go down Madison Avenue, and you went in on the Madison Avenue side. Whites down Bangs Avenue, and they went in on that side. The boys, we were segregated boys from the girls, too. The boys went in on this side, the girls on that. If you'd look, you'll see it on... well, I haven't given you the CD. It's still up there, boys and girls. The neighborhood being mixed, me and the whites, we would come down Madison Avenue to Prospect, and we got Atkins Avenue, we kept straight, white kids had to go to Atkins to Bangs, to go to their side of the school. Inside the school, they had a chain-link fence separated the north from the south side.

JS: Inside it was chain-link?

DP: Chain-link fence, separated the north with chain... it was a metal fence. Also, in the auditorium – everybody used the same auditorium – but we had to come in the auditorium from the back.

CT: Behind the stage, right.

DP: They locked the doors on the other side, so we couldn't go to the other side. Same with the gym. When the gate was this way, you could go. When it was closed, you didn't use the gym. That continued until 1947, that's when I recall it was integrated. The black principal that we had, they made him the principal of the whole school. We called him "Mousey Moore." His name was Hyland, H-Y-L-A-N-D Moore, and he was the principal. We had a white vice principal. All on our side was all the black teachers. The gym teacher was Russ Villavillano[?]. You had shop teacher was a white guy. The girls had a white teacher for home-ec over there. I say, that ended in '47. The high school was integrated. The high school used to be at Bond Street before they built the high school where it is now. The sending districts, back in that day, you had Deal, Allenhurst, Loch Arbor, you had people here from Belmar, who were sending districts and stuff like that. The other elementary school, the whites went to the school on Third Avenue and Bond Street. If there were any blacks on the other side of Main Street, they had to walk over to Bangs to go to school.

CT: In your time, they probably weren't.

DP: Yeah.

CT: And they weren't north of Asbury Avenue either.

DP: No, you're right about that.

CT: I know. See, you were an adult, I was a kid, but I remember. All the black kids went to Bradley. Bond Street, by the time I came along, was only for seventh grade, but at any rate, I understand. That's where Thurgood Marshall [Elementary School] is.

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YC: I went to Bond Street.

CT: I heard about Bangs Avenue. I went there, but it wasn't like that. It changed.

YC: I think when I was in the sixth grade, after the sixth grade, they sent all seventh graders over to Bond Street, so I went to Bond Street. Then, they had eighth and ninth at the high school?

CT: Right, eighth through twelfth. Five years.

YC: Eighth to ninth at high school, yeah.

DP: So, my wife taught first at Bangs for, I guess, one year. Then she was at Bond Street with George Snow... was he the principal when you were there?

YC: I don't remember. All I remember is my teacher, Miss Carswell.

DP: Carswell! Yeah.

YC: And Mr. Young was the principal at Bangs Avenue school.

DP: Yeah, he became the principal of Bangs.

YC: Isaiah T. Young.

DP: You got a picture of him in one of these books, too.

YC: They lived in the green house on Bangs.

DP: He was, in fact, one of the first blacks who went over to the high school to teach. Let's see... We were talking about segregated schools, chain link fence, the auditorium... mom's store, [inaudible], then we had a black that ran, one of the first blacks to run for City Council – his name was Lonnie Moore. He had an upholstery shop on Prospect, just before you get to Bangs Avenue going north. A little farther down, Mr. Johnson had a cleaners on Prospect and Summerfield. There was a gas station across the street from him, at Prospect and Summerfield. Let me get back to my parents. My father, when he first came up here, he worked with the W.P.A. His job back then was painting asbestos, I guess painting *over* asbestos, under the boardwalk. The buildings on the boardwalk were heated by the power plant that's at the end. All of the heat went through these pipes, and he was part of that group. He later worked at Sheehan's Meat Market on Springwood, and Mr. Sheehan that told him, "You're a strapping young man, you could be a police officer." Any how, he went to work over there. Before him, there was a police officer named Dallas who they say couldn't read or write much. He couldn't spell "Springwood

Avenue” when a horse died, they tell this story: he dragged the horse all the way to Main Street so he could spell “Main.” *[laughter]*

JS: Where did your dad come from, before he came here?

DP: Virginia. My mother, too. My father was from a place called **Magrouter**[?]. The Air Force took over the town, and built the **Magrouter** Air Force Base. Moved all of my father’s family to the other side of the railroad tracks in Williamsburg, Virginia. The place that they moved them to, they called it Highland Park. The matriarch was my father’s sister, of that area, and they named all the streets there. I visited several times as a youngster. My mother was born in Newport News, Virginia. And of course, her mother, my grandmother, Maddy Graham, came through Asbury Park because her sister, Mama Ella was here. First she came up to Pennsylvania, with her brothers... my grandmother was married twice, she was a Fauntleroy and a Graham. At Bethel Church, she was one of the founding members over there, they have a Maddy Graham Society named for her over there. My mother being a home-maker, another funny story. My mother was running that Tea Room, she made these hot rolls, yeast rolls. She got the yeast, blocks of yeast from Kinips[?] Bakery. I had to go pick it up, or my father picked it up. She made about 100 or 200 dozen rolls, Saturday evening into early Sunday morning. As kids, we had to deliver these rolls to all the customers all over Asbury Park, who knew about her rolls. They were good ones. I tried to make the rolls, and I did a lot of cooking, but I never could make them like she made them. My rolls, if you didn’t eat them right away, they got so hard, you could throw them for rocks. But hers, you could keep them for a week, and they’re soft. My aunt was the only other one who could make them like her. She lived in New York at that time, moved to California.

YC: My sister talked about your mother’s rolls.

DP: Did she?

YC: They would come from Long Branch to Asbury to get a pan of rolls to take home.

DP: Get a pan of rolls. Yep. This story, and I know it was true, because the people were saying, the people thought my father made the rolls. They told me, “You know, your father can’t count.” “What do you mean, he can’t count?” He said, “I only got 11 rolls!” “There’s supposed to be 12 in there!” But what they didn’t know, I was eating, out of each bag, I would eat one of those rolls! *[laughter]* I say, my sister may try to make some of those rolls. She brought them over here, I put them in the refrigerator or freezer or whatever. One day, I went in there and I said, “Mom sent me some rolls! Mom’s been dead for 10 years almost.” I thought I had saved some of her rolls, but when my sister made them, they weren’t the same. But anyway. My father would be on duty, but he’d come to the house. We had to get up, and he’d drive us around. He had a big old Buick, long; it had jump-seats in it, they called them – they’re folded up. Anyway, he would come while he was working on Springwood Avenue, we would run and take the rolls to

the people before we had to be at Sunday School. I said my father attended Second Baptist, my mother attended St. Stephens. Talked about the Community Center and how we learned to play music. My brother starting the band. We played at the talent shows.

JS: You played the drums?

DP: Yes, I played the timbales and the congas.

JS: Now, the talent shows, we didn't talk about too much.

DP: Didn't talk about it too much, there isn't much to talk about. When they had those talent shows over at the high school, that's where my brother was learning to play the saxophone. Reggie Brown played the trumpet... what's that lawyer's name... it's in one of these books here. Anyway, we played music at the different clubs on Springwood Avenue, we played a lot of house parties, and some of the other places I mentioned – the Apollo Friday Night dance party. After we had practiced over top Leon Harris's and the New Deal Bar, we used to mainly practice at Martin's house. They tolerated us. That's about all I can say about that. It wasn't long after that, I was going away to college. The band sort of broke up because some of the other guys were that age. I went away to college, actually before I graduated from high school. Back in that day, because of some things I did in school, I had to stay another half-year to make it up. I decided I want to make some money, so I took a job out at Marlboro State Hospital. I dropped out of school. About three weeks later, after I found out what I had to do out there – I was the clean-up man, all these dead bodies I had to clean up and dress, some I had to take to the morgue. Others... I said, "I want to do what those guys over there in the white jackets are doing." They were technicians, I wanted to be one of those. They said, "Well, you have to have a high school diploma." Okay. I went back to school over there, and stayed until I graduated and finished up mid-year, and I went away to college after that. I say, that killed my time with the band. Everybody split up. After two years at A&T, I went in the service. When I came back, course my brother was now away in school, so there was nobody in the band. Nobody kept the band going when he left. That was about it with the band. I played with them for that time, and after that, my careers changed and I went on to not continue playing any drums, bongos, timbales...

JS: Not at all?

DP: Not at all.

JS: What brought you down to NC A&T? You said you got a scholarship, but why did you go? Was it because of the scholarship?

DP: That too, but Dr. Robinson had this farm, and I learned a lot about farming. So, he wanted me to be a farmer. I went away for Poultry Husbandry. While there, I can say I excelled in what I was doing because of the way that I knew how to make a chicken lay more eggs

than he wanted to... a female chicken. The whole thing is that, when causing the chicken to push eggs out, you had to put food in. The way that I did, or learned out here on the farm: feed the chickens, you come back an hour later, sprinkle some water on the feed, they jump up and start eating again. Another hour or two later, you come in and get them some more fresh chicken feed, they jump up and start eating. You kept doing this, and you push these chickens, the white egg-laying chickens, and you push the chickens so hard... you'll never get a chicken to lay 365 eggs a year, but you push them to their limit until they're worn out. The technique that I used was, I turned the lights on the chickens early in the morning – I set the timer to get the lights on. That way, they had a longer day. For a chicken, if you want them to be happy, you got to go to bed as the sun goes down, and it goes up on to roost, on the chicken roost. But my thing was, give them a longer day, so I turned the lights on a 4:00 in the morning or 5:00 in the morning, and it had a longer period to eat, and you filled him with... you don't have to know about that. When I used that technique down at the college, everybody had their project, and my chickens produced more eggs than anybody else out there. I didn't tell them what I did, but I used to get up, go over there and turn the lights on.

JS: Smart.

DP: But I learned that here. That's another thing we did. The chicken guy, named... I have the name right on my tongue. They were near the corner of Monroe and 1400 block. Garikov's[?]. Mr. Garikov was a distributor, egg distributor. He would only buy eggs from you by the crate – there were 30 dozen in a crate. You couldn't bring in just two or three eggs, you had to bring them buy the crate. We produced that many eggs out there on the farm, that I would bring him a crate or two crates of eggs every other day down here. The other thing that they did over there, there's a thing called "candling." Candling. You candle an egg, you look through the egg to see if it got any blood spots in it, if there's a little speck or something in there. You couldn't sell that retail, you had to sell that to Garikov wholesale. You got less money selling eggs wholesale to Garikov, than you did selling retail on the farm. I wasn't out there to sell eggs, I was still in school. So, we would bring the eggs in here by the case, 30 dozen. What they did with the un-candled eggs, or the eggs that didn't go. You weren't supposed to do that for Garikov. They take those eggs and they break them, and put them in five-gallon buckets and they sold them to the bakeries. Bakeries didn't care if they had spots, you eat them all the time and you didn't know – I told you a secret! *[laughter]* So, they eat them. I don't know whether they do that stuff now. You had to look through the egg, put a light behind the egg, to eat it. Old man Garikov could take the eggs in his hand like this and rotate of them at time and looked. We had a machine, a light machine, there, and it rolled eggs through and packaged them up. It kept the ones that were clean, with no spots, and put them over here for retail selling, and the others, the spotted ones, put them over there for Garikov. His place was over here on the corner of Monroe. There's a daycare center back there or something, they put in his place. Second house from the corner, in the back. Alright, let's get away from that farming stuff. I went away for farming. After I got there for a while and didn't want to bother with farming, I changed my major to Phys-Ed. Then of course,

the next year after, I got drafted with the military, and went I came back and went back to school, I decided to change to Elementary Education.

JS: You were in the Army?

DP: Yes. Anything else about the... where you at? You were asking about A&T.

JS: I was just curious why North Carolina, but it was the poultry program.

DP: When I came back and went back, as I said, they didn't renew my four-year scholarship. I was on the boxing team, tennis team, football team at A&T. Then I went to North Carolina College where my brother was to visit, and one of my football coaches was over there at that college, and he was able to get me a partial scholarship. I played football and tennis there. They wouldn't let me on the basketball team because they said one Parreott was enough! *[laughter]* Plus, he could play better than I could. *[laughter]* Then, when I came back, I went to Monmouth and I played tennis and whatnot up there. When I joined the Asbury Park Police Department, I went to Brookdale too, and was with the first graduating classes they had at Brookdale. Back here now on Springwood Avenue. The West Side Community Center was another thing that you asked about. I had a paper, I don't know whether it's in that book or... with some history of the West Side Community Center... maybe at the end, I think I put some in this one or that one. All the way at the end. *[APAAMHP team looks through DP's binders]* This was put out in 1982, the "West Side Story." Look the other way... is it there?

YC: No, this is Almyra Tea Room... Sunny Hunny.... No, this is stores... your autobiography.

DP: It should have been right in there.

YC: Here it is.

DP: There it is. It's on not that page, turn that page... there it is right there. It's right there.

YC: Okay. "The History of the West Side Community Center." 1942.

DP: There's a story behind the West Side Community Center. The West Side Community Center was a donation from Dr. Parks. Dr. Parks got into a little jam, because that was his house and his office, so, rather than lose the property, he donated it to the community. That's where we got the Community Center from. He bought a house across the street from the community center. I don't remember exactly what he did, but whatever it was, I think they took his license from him. Again, we talked about... down here now on Springwood Avenue: I told you that my uncle Charlie had Manhattan Cleaners, he started that. He also made hats from scratch, with felt. We had these wooden heads, different size heads, and you had to use your hands to mold that felt around that wooden head mold,

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for the different sizes of heads. He trimmed them and shaped them, and made hats. He even left here, because his wife, my aunt Emma, had asthma so bad, they went out to Colorado. Then they left there and went to Alaska, and he opened up a place in Alaska. From Alaska, he moved to Los Angeles, and he made hats for quite a few of the celebrities there. Michael Jackson and the rest of them. I kick myself because I didn't bring some of those heads and things back with me when I went to visit with him, because he wasn't doing that. Springwood Avenue, as we know, was a melting pot for everybody in this area – your parochial schools, all of these clothing and things, that's where they had it, at Fisch's Department Store. Anything that you needed was there, the clothing line, the hat line, the shoes line, you could get it at Fisch's Department Store. All these places were there before Ocean Township. Before others built their schools, they came over here. For their clothing. The activity on Springwood Avenue was 24/7. You hit Springwood Avenue, there was some music going on all day long, all night long. You got your music, you got your records, you got your groceries. You had Acme Market, on the corner of Atkins and Springwood, on the southwest corner. Across the street from the Acme was the Metropolitan Hotel. Later on, they had a grocery store under there. You had George's Grocery Market. You had Sophie's Dress shop, where the ladies bought their clothes; a lot of them bought their clothes there. You had the hotel, that was the Metropolitan. Old man Parham had the hotel in the 1100 block of Springwood Avenue. There were hardware stores owned by blacks; Paramount paint store/hardware store. There was a drug store owned by a sister and her brother – Bunce & Carter. In fact, that was the only place we could get to on Sunday. We used to go across town... You know, there were some folks that lived their whole lives and never crossed the railroad tracks. Because everything they needed was over here.

JS: There was no need to.

DP: Right. When you *did* go over there, and you went into Newberg's, McCory's, and Green's and one of those places over there where you went to sit down, you couldn't sit down. You couldn't sit down to get served, you had to stand up at the counter to get anything. Savoy Theater was the theater that most of us went to; the only one they let us go to at that time. You had to go sit upstairs in the balcony. But that was okay for me and my crew, because we would throw popcorn and stuff over the balcony. *[laughter]* Later on, the Mayfair and the St. James and those other theaters let you come in there. There was another little theater that we went to...

YC: Lyric?

DP: Was that the Lyric that was by the Palace Amusements?

YC: Or the Baronet?

DP: No, the Baronet was over there. That was the Lyric. We had that.

- YC: Oh, what a cutie pie! *[points to photo in binder] [laughter]*
- DP: There was a bar, liquor store, and a church practically on every block on Springwood Avenue. Store-front churches, plus the other churches. We had several cleaners there: Riley's Cleaners, Manhattan Cleaners, and New York Tailors and Dry Cleaners. One of the most famous places there on Springwood at that time was Cuba's. Minnie, Cuba's wife, ran a mom-and-pop store, and she never changed that black!
- YC: She never changed that dress! *[laughter]* She was heavy, and she sat outside on a chair, and she would sit there all day long, and in this black dress. I'm surprised it didn't fall off her. *[laughter]*
- DP: When he asked me about the dirt on the street, we also had, when I was coming up... we didn't have a refrigerator, we had an ice-box. The ice-man would come by, and you'd buy 100-pound of ice, 50-pound, or 25. They came in 100-pound blocks, but if you wanted 50, you could take an ice-pick and chip you off a 50-pound block – because some of them refrigerators couldn't fit. I got one downstairs, that was one of the first refrigerators – it looks like an ice-box – that's electrical. I was going to have it cleaned up and put it up here like a piece of furniture for me, but I haven't done that yet. We had the ice-truck come by, you had the vegetable-truck come by, you had the fish-man come by. You didn't have to leave home to go the Acme. We were walking to... there was an Acme here, there was an Acme on Main Street, there was an Acme down on... two of them. One here, Main and Lake, and the other one – or A&P whatever it was – on Fifth Avenue. You had coal deliveries, the guy would come and dump coal down in the cellar. We used to have coal here, and another one of my jobs here was, when you burn coal, it doesn't all burn up. So you had to shake the ashes and take out the lumps of coal. Back in those days, every little bit helps. You would go down to the railroad track and catch some coal that fell off the train, and bring back and bring it home.
- JS: When did you move into this house?
- DP: Let's see, my son is 51 years old... he was 3 years old when we moved here.
- JS: I was just looking at this picture. *[laughter]*
- YC: How did you happen to move into this house that was Dr. Robinson's house?
- DP: Didn't I tell you that I was like a son to him?
- YC: Yes.
- DP: I still had to pay, but it wasn't that big of deal.
- YC: Lovely! My other question is, when did you go into the ministry?

- DP: Back in... '69. In '69. I was still making notes, I was going to put that in there, thought about it. Been in the ministry since then. Pastored a church in Long Branch, in South Toms River, moved to Roseland Church in South Toms River and the Duncely Chapel in Long Branch. Then they wanted to send me to New Gretna. New Gretna is almost Atlantic City.
- JS: I remember driving through it on your to Atlantic City.
- DP: It's on Route 9. You've got one traffic light, one building house, the police, the fire, the city hall, and 59 miles from my house to there. I told... in the Methodist church you have a bishop who's in charge, and he tells you where you're going. Usually, every three years they move you to another church. But I told my bishop I wasn't going, and bishops don't like you to tell them anything. You supposed to jump to do what they say. But anyway, I was a member of St. Stephen AME Zion Church for 62 years, but I wouldn't go to New Gretna, so I put my letter in to withdraw from the Methodist church, and I went into an independent Baptist church, where I am now. I've been there since 1999.
- JS: I have a question, this goes way back, but when you were talking earlier, you said your uncle would come down and play at the church. What church did he play?
- DP: We were at Bethel. Because his mother being there; my grandmother, his mother. Yeah, we would put on, they had Maddie Graham Day or something like that at the church and he would come and play. I would imagine there may have been some times he came and played some at the clubs. Somebody invited Cliff Johnson or somebody who knew him, they'd be down there together. Or my brother brought him down here to play.
- YC: This is amazing. You have all these newspaper clippings from the riots and everything?
- DP: They're in here. I took pictures and put them in...
- YC: You have citizen complaints, you have everything in here. Pictures!
- DP: That was from the riots, we were over at the West Side Community Center, taking them. That's when Larry Larson was there, and McGown, and a couple others who were doing that at that time. Go back to you now. You were asking me about....
- JS: That's amazing. I was just curious, I had that in my mind, because you said "church."
- DP: Yeah, about him coming to play. He came to play. My uncle came to Asbury and played. He played over at my mother's tea room. They brought bus loads of people, and that's where they ate, because they had the problem of going downtown to eat, because they wouldn't let you sit in those restaurants to eat. So they came here.

- JS: I saw along the way, now I can't remember where, but I saw advertisements for the tea room. Also in your binder, too.
- DP: Yeah. Right. The tea room. Of course, father cooked the barbeque out there, and my uncle had a barbeque behind the cleaners, too, on Sylvan Avenue. That church is over here, St. Augustine Church was on Sylvan Avenue before they moved to Prospect Avenue. Knuckles Electric Shop was on Springwood Avenue next door to my uncle's place, or one store apart. Both of them lived upstairs over their stores, on Springwood Avenue. Bill Knuckles and Charles Fauntleroy, my mother's brother. My uncle had a daughter named Franchine, my cousin Franchine. Knuckles had a daughter, I forget her name, but they were buddies, too. As I said in my note here, I think I got asthma, I think I contracted asthma because he had me back there cleaning hats with Benzene. You soaked the hat with this benzene and you put it on a machine, a hat machine, to tighten it up. You swirled it, after you put the benzene on it, you have to spin the benzene out. So that's, I was doing that.
- JS: That could do some damage.
- DP: I think that's what did it. Okay. You asked about my venue, I said I had no favorite place on Springwood during my early childhood, except to hang out and shine shoes, and do work in uncle Charlie's Manhattan Cleaners, and going to the Community Center. Sneaking into pool rooms, and spending time with my other family over here on the tennis court. You asked about the police department, and I told you in here about going away to college and coming back and joining the police department. I started out with the Asbury Park Police Reserves, which was run by Pat Dibiano, whose son later, Frankie, joined the police department also. Back in those days, it was funny because Pat Dibiano, Congressman – Assemblyman Coleman, and a few others, you had two governing bodies here in Asbury, and a lot of things that went on at Pat's house was the other city government. They told the people what they had to do, and there was always a little disagreement between the elected body, and this body. But Pat got a lot of things done. Like, we had police uniforms, fire department uniform, we had our own trucks and we housed them at the Park Avenue Fire House, which now, the Board of Education had taken it over, I don't know who got it now. But, we had better equipment than the regular policeman did. But talking about this, when my father went on, and even when I went on to some degree, black police officers weren't allowed to come over to the police headquarters, which was on the corner of Madison and Bond Street. At that time; they moved from Madison and Bond when the building, the jail or whatever caught on fire, and then they moved over and built into the place on Bangs Avenue. The municipal court and city hall was downstairs. The municipal court was across the street. When my father came on, they hired him, but he didn't have to go to police headquarters, he had to go over to Springwood Avenue, because that was his assignment. All of them. The white police officer would come by with a clipboard so they could sign that they were at work, for years. Later on, he let Cecil Reade and Joe Reade, who were brothers, to come and direct traffic at Main Street and Cookman Avenue. The same thing with my father in later

years. He was assigned traffic at the corner of Bangs and Cookman. That was one of the worst spots in town, the way that wind would come through there. I think that was the only time he really got sick. When I got appointed to the job, and the city, the chief of police told me that he was going to use me where I could best serve the department. I got assigned to Springwood Avenue, from 10:00 at night to 6:00 in the morning, shaking doors, checking to see that the businesses had locked their doors. I walked from the railroad on Main Street, up to Ridge Avenue. That was my job, 18 months I did that. I think I mentioned some of that in here, about my assignments. Then, we had a black captain, who was my superior there. I said, "Man, how come I always get assigned over here? I want to go get down on the beach so I can see those bathing beauties and what they got over there? I'm over here walking Springwood Avenue! Can I get in the police car?" He said, "No, you're doing alright, just take it easy." I said, "Take it easy?! Can I talk to the police chief?" "Yeah, you can go see him." I was always outspoken, you know. I went over there and told Chief Fitzgerald – I got hired under Chief Limpke, Captain Bianco, and then Fitzgerald and Freely came in. I went to him and said, "You said, how can I best serve the department out there walking 10:00 at night?" They said, "No, no. Your shift will be changed." They changed my shift – I walked Main Street, from Asbury Avenue to the high school and back. I said, "This can't be what they got me out here for." They had another guy walking with me on Springwood Avenue, Nick [inaudible.] His son's godfather was on the city council, so he didn't walk too long. They put him on a car, he's going on midnight shift and I'm still walking. But when he had an incident on Springwood Avenue, he called me. Nobody would... he called for help, he'd want somebody to help him, but nobody would show up. Nobody would come to him, because they'd know that he wanted them to do the work. He didn't want to do the paperwork, so I did a lot of his paperwork, and I'm walking the street. Come by and pick me up. Some of the things I mentioned, somewhere in one of these papers I got here – this one, this one, or this one – there was a car accident on Boston Way, which was a one-way street. He wanted to know what to do. The guys said on the radio, "Give the tree a ticket!" Because he hit a tree. [laughter] Another time, a lady got hit near the corner in front the Hollywood Bar. It was about 30 feet, 40 feet from the corner of Dewitt and Springwood. The car knocked that distance. He was trying to write this report, and it was better for him to put on the report that it happened at Dewitt instead of where it actually happened – in front of the Hollywood Bar. He called me, and I shouldn't've helped him out. I found a piece of the lady's garment in the street there, with some glass. I reported that, and they ended up finding the guy down on Ocean Avenue, he was distraught because he knew he hit somebody, but he took off, and was parked on Ocean Avenue. They were able to match the cloth from the lady's coat with the cloth that was hung up in his car in the light. So, I helped him out. I did a lot to help him, some of the others, too. When he was walking with me, he always had to take a break, and I'd leave him sitting, and I walked the Avenue because he couldn't make it. But anyway, they put him in a police car. Later on, of course I passed exams and got promoted to sergeant – they had... Chief called me – no, this was before I was sergeant – chief called me one day and said to me that, "Come in Monday out of uniform. You're going to be the Juvenile Officer." "Juvenile officer? You got Sergeant Sheen, he's the Juvenile Officer!" "No, you come in." I said, "What am

I supposed to do?" He said, "You know what to do. I heard about you. You go into the pool hall, in uniform, shooting pool. You're shooting baskets with the kids over there. You're going to be the Juvenile Officer." So, I was the Juvenile Officer for six years. I had to report to Officer Sheen, and I had to work from 4 to midnight. He worked 8 to 4. But all of the school cases that came up, he'd tell them, the Juvenile officer doesn't come in until 4:00. But the school's closed. They would come tell me about what was happening the schools and everything. At that time, I was assigned to detective review, and I told... he didn't make the reports, I had to turn my reports into him. I said, "I don't think this is right." You know, always running my mouth. In any event, they told me I didn't have to turn my reports in to him anymore, I could turn them in separately. So he had nothing to report, because he didn't do anything, and I had all these cases. Finally, they told him, he was a captain, they made him a captain but then they had to reduce him because civil service wouldn't let them keep him on as a captain because he hadn't taken any of his exams. He finally retired after they busted him, and then I went 8:00-4:00 as juvenile officer. Then the riots came, and they needed somebody that they thought could talk to both sides of town. I had a lot of white friends that I knew, grew up with. Some of them had businesses in town, Neeson's Music Store... *[DP wife brings in water]*

YC: Your dog... when you patrolling, were you patrolling with a dog?

DP: Yeah. One of the first dogs that we had.

YC: Your dogs won...?

DP: First place at the obedience schools. If you see Henry Baquero, he'd say, "You'd still go that dog?" I would come down with the dog off-leash, tell the dog, give him a signal, "down, stay." I'd go in, stay a half-hour, and my dog's still sitting there. He couldn't understand that one, but I had trained that dog. This guy here, I'm trying to think of his sister's name...

YC: He's from Asbury?

DP: Yeah, he grew up in the Village.

JS: Robert Watt, right?

DP: Watt.

JS: Some of his sons live here still, right?

DP: That's his son.

JS: Oh, that's the son.

DP: *That's* the son.

JS: Oh, *that's* the son right there.

DP: That is the son.

JS: Oh I see, I'm a generation off. Somebody was just telling me this weekend, one of the Watts works up at the organization on Third Avenue, a security guard. Maybe grandson, son.

DP: Must be. Not his son, I don't think. He's in California.

JS: California, yes. We're about to speak with him.

YC: Bring all that music together. Can I see that one? [*points to binder*]

DP: That's the same as some of this stuff here, but that's in black and white. In any event, where was I... talking about walking the beat on Springwood Avenue. Midnight. Oh, when the riots came... I'm going to let you take one of those.

JS: Take one of these?

YC: This?

DP: Yeah.

JS: Oh my goodness. Thank you. I was just scanning it as you were talking.

DP: I got it all on a CD, but it's better if you take that. Anything you see that you want to take a copy that I don't give you, you can use my machine, it's no problem.

JS: Thank you very much.

YC: Wow, Lorenzo Harris looks so young.

DP: When the riots came, and again – go back to Dr. Robinson. I knew the president of the bank that was there, Press Plaza, because of Dr. Robinson. I knew the president of the power and light company because of my connection with him. I knew the president of the gas company through his association with him. So, they came to me, Thomas Smith did – you'll find another note in there – then the riots broke out in Watts and started creeping across the country, and then up in Newark and other places, they asked me what did I think. I brought down a hammer in, guy named Shelly Hedgepeth, who had a shoe-shine parlor. Bob Cambor, who had Bob and Irving's store. Detective Davis, Lee Davis... and obviously more was in the group... [*inaudible*]. We had a meeting, because I wanted to

tell them what the feeling was out in the community, so we met. In my comments, I told them was, the kids are restless. There's some things out here that needed to be done. Jim Howard was the man that I went to, or spoke to, and he spoke to the city about recreation, there was a problem with that. The city manager, the city manager was Sam Siciliano, he said, "Oh Parreott, you don't know what you're talking about." I said, "We got no recreation, nothing for these kids to play with around." So, after speaking with Jim Howard and he spoke to them, they gave me money to go buy equipment. That time, they'd started this urban renewal; they'd started it before. They took my parents' house that was on Madison Avenue. Over here, they had levelled all of this, and I had some gym equipment put up there – monkey bars, and a few other things. I bought baseballs and gloves, bats, and bases, and I played with them across the street. I don't know if there's a picture in there, where I was playing ball with them, playing ball with the kids out there, trying to make a change. This is after they made me juvenile officer and they knew I was doing these things. After the riots came, they wanted somebody to talk to both sides. So Tommy Smith said, "Parreott knows everybody." But, in any event, I put together these groups of business people to come and meet, and I got a grant from Sleppey, a state law enforcement planning agency. Got a grant, and hired Dr. Irving Goldoffer to come, and these companies; Holly Porter. I got to introduce them to all these people that I knew – gas, electric, the banks, and whatnot. I brought them into a meeting and we started holding what we called "confrontation sessions." If you read in the *Look* magazine, the story of our first ones was called "A Cop Named Joe." You've seen that?

JS: I think I have seen that, yes.

DP: Okay. From that, the grant that Goldoffer wrote, I wrote the next three grants to keep the police-community relations thing going, changed the name to police and community or something. We had about 12 meetings. We met with the black youth and the police; the Hispanic youth and the police; met with the business people and police; met with clergy and police; met with schoolteachers and police. Then, from all of that, I have my notes I just didn't bring them out here, of my meetings. I made a report to chief Tom Smith as to what transpired. Of course, I had to make a report to Sleppey for them to continue to give us the grant. I forget what year it was, but they gave me an award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the National Association of Police-Community Relations Officers, they flew me out to Las Vegas with my wife and gave me this award for the work that I had done. I guess it covered about 28 states that I had gone to talking, and preaching, and teaching about police-community relations. Got a lot of ideas from these different places and brought them back here. You'll see one the pictures, I put on displays at Monmouth College, Brookdale Community College, Ocean County College, and some of those places. Plus, I went to every church in Asbury Park, every school in this particular area, and talked about police-community relations and put on displays. Some of that's in here, some of it's on some CDs. That was my next assignment, or my last assignment, because after chief Smith left and went into politics, the new chief, Moses... maybe before that, we were having a little problem with policing. The police were being accused of some abuse, so they took me out of police-community relations

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and put me back on patrol. It was the 4 to 12 shift they were having a big problem with. The buddy I had with me at the time, Terry Lepmure, called me and said – no, he had been back to the unit, and they gave me Billy Dellow. Of course, you've heard of the Dellows, the police officer?

YC: Yeah.

DP: You know. But his son is on there now, Gene Dellow. Anyway, Lamayo got him out of the union and he went back to patrol. He called me aside, he said, "I hear you're coming back to patrol, as a patrol sergeant. They told me you're going to take away the shotguns and the night sticks and give them powder puffs, you're going to start kissing people." *[laughter]* But anyway, I came back to the 4 to 12 shift, and all the stuff that was allegedly going on stopped. The police became, I guess, we became a little better. I was doing more community relations. My job, in the time that I was in uniform – and there's some pictures either in there, or on one of the CDs – I stayed out on the street. I parked the police car at the corner and walked the block, greeting and talking to folks. We don't do that as much now. I haven't started this summer – yes they did, I saw a couple of them walk by.

YC: They're out walking again.

DP: Yeah, they're walking now. When I retired, I sat on my porch and waved at them, "God bless you!" I don't have to do that anymore! *[laughter]* After that, I came back and took over that 4 to 12 shift, I was later promoted to lieutenant. I was the shift commander, working midnights, primarily. Then, became promoted to captain and made in charge of the patrol unit. When the deputy chief, Tilton – I don't think he retired, he might have passed, or whatever but anyway – I took over his responsibility doing the scheduling and the budget, setting up the budget and those kinds of things. Of course, the brought Gary Wheery, promoted him to become the chief. I said, "How old are you?" He was a whole lot younger than me, and I didn't see any future for me to become the chief, because by the time that he might leave, I would've been over 70 years old, so I decided it was time for me to go. Plus, I was looking into political aspects of it. I thought I could do more, and I guess I did a little bit of something. I put my papers in for retirement at 29 years, didn't need but 25. I ran for city council. First year, I lost – first time I ran, I lost by three votes. That was a political thing. I was leading when the votes were first counted that night. But sometimes, the next day, or couple of days, they said somebody made a mistake in recording the numbers, and now I wasn't at the top of the list. I was still served, still in, but wasn't the top vote-getter. Then, of course, we had discussion amongst ourselves, the four blacks that had been elected on the ticket: myself, Henrietta Zachary, and Mike Corea, that was my ticket. Then, Sharon Harris, Tommy Smith, Jim Rufisee, and two other people on another ticket. The two of us... Harris and Thomas Smith got in. We had a little discussion about who's going to be the mayor, so they said it has to be the top vote-getter. Not so, but that's what they did. That's when the votes changed at the county level, and I wasn't the top vote-getter. But that was alright, I'm

here, so I'll do what I can do. Tommy Smith and I didn't always agree to a lot of things, particularly the way, when I was working with him on the police department, I would say some things. In one the notes, the meetings that we had, he made the comment, "Dave and I don't always agree. I don't hear the same things he hears." I heard something was going to happen. The kids were saying that there was going to be problems coming up, and he disagreed with it, because he said he didn't hear the same things I heard. When it came, everybody... of course, Fitzgerald or Freeland, they decided it was time for him to get out of here, both of them at the same time they made Smith the chief. I went on from then, got elected to city council, for four years I did what I could do. Ran the next four years, but didn't make it. It was good. I got out of that. But I still got hung up with getting my nephew elected, Kevin Sanders. I ended up serving on the zoning board, the planning board, second century board, corporations for building... I was on plenty of board. Plus, serving with the... what's his name... for the state. One of my friends recommended me to serve on that committee. What's it called... it's on my resume. Anyway I got tired of that too. I spent more time in those meetings than I did otherwise. But I had a good time, I think I did the best that I could while I was there in trying to do things for my community. I was part of the Guy Goldoffer's team, we went up to... not Newark, where was it? A couple of places that I went with him, because they were doing police-community relations work. Worked, I was a liaison with the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Did a lot of work with some of the federal agencies dealing with police-community relations. The year after I got my award, they based it, I guess, on some of the reports that I turned into Sleppey, they gave Tom Smith an award for supporting police-community relations.

JS: A lot of service, you've done a lot of service for this town.

DP: Okay, down to Springwood Avenue after 1970. My statement was "Devastated." A lot of the things that you'll see in that book there, that both young and old were talking about, that they didn't see as being helpful in the relations, and the fact that they're seemingly doing more on the east side in development than doing on this side. That's another story, let me tell you that one. I was chairman of the Asbury Park Housing Authority for 9 years of the 11 years that I served. I was also the president of the state of New Jersey Housing and Redevelopment Agencies. I was able to get some monies in here for the rehab of Springwood Avenue, but then the riots came. We amended the redevelopment plan to include Springwood Avenue in the urban renewal plan. Asbury Park was what they call "urban renewal 1" for the state of New Jersey. I had some meetings with the vice president, Hubert Humphry and a few of those guys. I used to go down there almost once a week for some meetings. In any event, I was able to secure this money to rehab, but later added it to the urban renewal project. But on Springwood Avenue, people were devastated. Folk over here didn't participate in the activities during the riots. Lost jobs, they lost their homes, they lost their income, they lost their place to shop and to go without paying a taxi to get to. And not only that, the business people who were here, and they were very causative in the sense that – as I talked about me and the stones, getting candy from the grocery store – they had a tab that they ran at these businesses. Some of

the businesses didn't treat them right, but at least they had a place where they could go and get some food, and get whatever personal needs, by putting it on a tab and paying when they had the money. So, that was lost, because a lot of the people were forced out of town. I said, and I always say, that the kindling for riots and civil disorder comes from the embers of lack of employment, underemployment, housing – poor housing, crowded housing. We got more of that now, with absentee landlords. This place here, there were 52 properties in my block that were privately-owned, I say, or whatever. Now, there are only 3 homeowners left. Myself on this property, and two doors over here, the Marcos, and one on Borden Avenue. Other than that, absentee landowners. They're collecting enough rent from these places to pay the mortgage or whatever investment they made, making money on it. That's I see, and saw, as a problem. I say this though: a lot of the Section 8 – and this is Section 8 housing next door to me, used to belong to family named Corbins, the Corbin family. Members of... what's the church over here... Allen Chapel Church. One of them's a police officer. Matter of fact, I'm the one who gave him the papers to get him on the job, get him started. There's a section 8 house, two doors from there is section 8, three doors from there is section 8, four doors from there is section 8. Some of it is good in the sense that the people that are living there are trying their best to keep up the properties, but those absentee landowners when they come to this house, they're painting, they're fixing up. Marcos, the other neighbor now, cuts the grass. The grass was up this high over there, I had to call over there to tell them and they gave them a summons, and now he cuts the grass. Has the grass cut. We have a property over here right now, the grass is up this high. It was owned by Joanne Rosie? She lives in Holmdel. When I spoke with her last, she said she sold the property; I don't know who owns it now. Her name's still on the books.

YC: Just call Coden. Just call Coden.

DP: Yeah, McKewen will get over there. They sent me a notice telling me that I had to take the bricks up, because my brick wall had fallen down. I told them I don't have a brick wall! It was the wrong property. She finally had the bricks, the ones that were on the side, they were picked up.

YC: It's like, the more things change, the way things stay the same. The same things that I read in here, the riots were because of lack of jobs and housing, and resentment that there was money being invested in the east side and not on the west side.

DP: I tried to explain to them, it's not the city's money. They think it's the city doing it. It's not the city doing it. Investor comes in, one investor wants to come and put good money after something bad. It doesn't work like that. How many years and how many contractors did I go through, serving on the council, and being on the housing authority, and finishing up this urban renewal area, until you come and got this group that come in here and do that. That name I threw out, there's a ton of papers from those people. But I say, these kids said there was something coming because of lack of recreation, other things that the kids couldn't do. Communication was very poor, loss of business, loss of

trust, loss of respect, and knowing that people were transferring the blame to those on the west side, loss of hope. So many folks displaced and forced from the area. Many of them were overwhelmed by what happened. Some sold their properties because the offers were good offers they felt were being made to them. There was so much red tape back in those days. Even now, when it comes to insurance, still red line. They tell me, "Oh, we can't insure you because you're too close to the water." "Where's the water?" "It's down at Wesley Lake." "There's no water here." That's one of the things they tell me. Then of course, the insurance I pay, I know I pay too much, but what are you going to do? You take a chance and don't have insurance, that's the end of you.

YC: Can't afford not to have insurance.

DP: Right. The music history and the music on Springwood Avenue, as I said it, well-known all over the United States and even outside. They knew about it in Okinawa, they knew about it in Japan. "Where are you from? Oh yeah." They called it all kinds of things, but they were talking about Springwood Avenue. "Springfield Avenue," some of them called it. *[laughter]* There's so many things, the articles that are available all over the internet now, and local library. I tell the people, I grew up there. I went through it when things were first, and when through it when things went down, and it's coming back. I think I played a little bit of a part there.

YC: I'm sorry, I have to be in Middletown by 2:00.

DP: Alright, I knew y'all were going to be here longer than your time.

JS: You've given us so much time, we appreciate it.

YC: I appreciate it. Just because I'm leaving doesn't mean anybody else has to.

JS: No, we have to wrap up pretty soon, because I have to go get my daughter.

YC: Thank you. I got your book back safe. This is a treasure, there's so much information in here, and quotes, and pictures. Whatever we can do with it...

DP: Yesterday when I was looking, this is a picture of the canteen, one year, over at the West Side Community Center.

JS: Wow.

YC: There's a guy who's in here who's interviewed, Allan Seagers, and he was in my graduating class.

DP: Seagers. Was he? Allan was my chauffeur when I ran for council, he had me in a big old limousine riding me around.

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YC: Really? Allan was my classmate. Okay, alright.

JS: You have all your stuff?

YC: Yeah, and I left my bag by the front door, I'll grab it on my way out. Tell your wife I said goodbye, good to see her.

DP: Good bye. You can go back there, she's in the kitchen somewhere. Just holler. Honey!

YC: Hello...? *[YC leaves]*

JS: We also want to make sure that things that we're coping is sorted through, that we don't take anything we shouldn't. We wanted to make sure that we ask you this question, which I know you wrote, which is: what is something you would want someone walking down Springwood Avenue today to know about the music and the history?

DP: I just told you, I just read it to you. The last comments on the page. That I was in it, that it certainly been something that we want to continue, bring back. I got the pictures of all of those – I don't know, did you see, who put it on?

JS: The exhibit over at Monmouth?

DP: Right, and up at Freehold at the Historical Society. I made a copy of all that.

JS: It was an amazing exhibit.

DP: Oh yeah. I tried to put a little music to it, some background music for it. But I put it on, the one that they had at Cookman Avenue, at Monmouth, and Freehold. I got it on CD, all the pictures there, I'm going to give you a copy if you want one.

JS: Oh, that's great. And also, this is as an aside, this is a huge effort. All the materials you have: have you considered at all... the New Jersey Historical Commission has a grant program for publication of things that are this far along, that they provide some funding and support.

DP: I tried, or looked into publishing this, but it's too costly.

KM: The New Jersey Historical Society can help.

DP: I don't want them to help, I want to give them the money and let them do it. I talked... what's the couple?

JS: The Horners.

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- DP: Yeah. I gave them a CD, and of course, he couldn't put it down. He said, "I was looking at it." Last time I looked, when I checked, they wanted \$5 per picture. I have too many pictures in there for \$5 per picture.
- JS: To publish?
- DP: To publish.
- JS: The Horners just applied to the same program to get a grant, to help publish. I know it probably doesn't cover everything, because it's a huge process, but you have so much material, I know it's so much work, money, everything to get something like that to this point, and then get it to the next point.
- DP: Yeah, that's what I looked into, but I said, no, I'll let my great-great-great-grands take care of that if they want to. Every now and then, I sit down and I add something to it. If it comes to remembrance, I put it down and put it in the computer. All this stuff in here, the newspaper clippings, I put them on a CD. Like this stuff I already gave you. This one, number 15... number 15 on here shows one of the parades that was coming down. That was a 16mm film. I had three rolls. I say I had them – Dr. Robinson had them, because he took pictures back in the day. That was the 1940s. Those pictures on there. I was going to put it on the thing so you could see it, but I don't know whether you can use any of that.
- JS: I'm quite sure. So from this, this interview gets transcribed. Melissa's been doing that. We'll send it back to you so you can look, if there's things you want to change or add or anything.
- DP: We've been here two hours, you're going to transcribe all of that? *[laughter]*
- JS: She's really good at it.
- MK: It's not as hard as it seems.
- DP: Yes it is! I've got a young lady copying some of my sermons. I gave her 50 of them, and I had to take them back, I gave her 10 of them. She still hasn't finished. *[laughter]* I write them faster than she can copy them! In any event, if there's some things you want copies of, let me know and you can take it with you. You can use my copy machine, I've got two of them, three of them in there. Some of these notes were, I was writing, and then I went back and changed some things. What's this one here?
- KM: This is about the Green Books.
- JS: This is question for you, Melissa: do you have time to do that here, or should we do it... I know I have to go get Morgan, so I can't do it here.

MK: Scan what, all of this?

JS: No, the photocopies.

DP: You don't have to photocopy that, you can have that.

JS: Thank you.

DP: That may not have everything that's in here, or here, in there. That was probably one of the first ones I started, but I'll give you a CD.

JS: That's wonderful, a CD is great because then we have it digitally. These materials, first of all, anything that would be used in any way would be credited to you.

DP: Okay. I'm not worried about credit.

JS: Of course, it's your material. For now, we just have a Google Drive that we're organizing materials on, so it's not really going beyond that. We're doing a program on June 28, I think I mentioned, June 28, at the library. Charles is putting together a small exhibit for that day, and I think some of this would be great to use. If we have a CD from you, and we have these that are already photocopied... that one we can scan, right? So I don't think there's anything we need to photocopy here, then. That will be scanned at the library and we'll get that back to you. I almost feel it might make sense, if it's okay with you, to make another appointment at a time that one of us, or two of us could come and look through things here, if that's okay?

DP: I knew it was going to happen.

JS: Of course, you said it on the phone, you said, "You'll be back."

MK: It's an amazing collection, congratulations on organizing all this.

DP: It's my wife, always staying on me and saving stuff. I got over 400-and-some... maybe 500 VHS tapes. Few thousand cassette tapes. I don't know how many of those mini cassettes. They're not all about Asbury Park, they're about everything that I've ever done. My assignments, my trips, tennis matches, and a lot of things.

MK: Do you have any recordings of any music being played in any of these clubs? We don't have anything like that. Music recordings?

DP: No, I didn't start that back in those days. I don't know whether you spoke to my brother, I don't know whether he has any, either.

JS: No.

DP: He didn't have any? The only one, he made a couple of tapes, did he give you those?

MK: No, I don't think so. He said they were lost, or destroyed...?

JS: No, that was Cliff.

MK: That was Cliff, I'm sorry.

JS: I feel like Dorian may have offered... we didn't walk away with any in our hands. But I feel like we talked about them. We'll have to look back. We definitely don't have any yet from him, but I think he said we had something we could have.

DP: He made a couple of DVDs, I don't know. I might have one here, I'll have to go look and see. This other stuff on these, that wouldn't interest you, because this was back in the '20s and early '30s when we had the family from here, we would have picnics on the farm and stuff, so that's not Asbury Park.

MK: That's interesting, but we have to narrow our focus, because there's so much.

DP: Now let me go see about that CD.

MK: Something I really do need you to do before we leave, sign the consent form.

DP: I got it right here, yeah. I didn't sign it.

MK: Wonderful.

DP: Today is what?

JS: Today is June 12. Thank you very much.

DP: Let me see about finding one of those old CDs. *[DP leaves room temporarily]*
[APAAMHP chatter, clean up] *[DP returns]* CDs.

MK: Thank you so much for everything.

[End of Interview]

For more info about the APAAMHP, contact Jennifer Souder - wardjennifer77@gmail.com

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Reviewed by: David Parreott,
Edited by:
Final edit by: