

ASBURY PARK AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC HERITAGE PROJECT**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

Interviewee: Fred Wynn [FW]

Interviewers: Jennifer Souder [JS]
Charles Trott [CT]
Melissa Keeling [MK]

Date: February 5, 2018

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Neptune, NJ

JS: Yvonne [Clayton] spoke to Dorian [Parreott], who said we had to speak to you for sure.

FW: Dorian was one of the first people I met when I came here – Dorian and bunch of other ones who passed on, some people that people don't even know. Any time stuff goes up there – Mr., what's his name? Mr. Carter's daughter?

JS: Madonna?

FW: Yeah, I knew her. Her brother was my drummer.

JS: Oh, really?

FW: Yeah.

CT: The younger brother -- Ernie?

FW: Ernie, yeah.

CT: Right, right. Because he had an older brother.

FW: I didn't know him, I didn't know his older brother.

CT: Joe is the older, Ernie's the younger. Just the three of them.

FW: When we got back from Canada, we needed a drummer. Because, Claude – you remember Claude, Claude's a barber? Jim's Barber Shop?

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

- CT: Hmm. I remember Jim's.
- FW: The short guy with the gold tooth? Everyone knows Claude.
- CT: I think so, yeah.
- FW: He used to train the barbers, kept up with the fashion hairstyles.
- CT: Back in that day, I hated the barber, I didn't go to the barber.
- FW: I didn't either, I cut my own hair, or Claude cut it. I cut it all off, now, getting a bald head, that's why I got this [hat] on. *[laughter]*
- CT: Well, I'm balding, it's not clean yet.
- FW: Oh, I cut mine off. And I had to grow *this* [beard] back, because two reasons. I take pictures, and I get my [business] cards out and they say, "What happened to your beard?"
- CT: Right, they didn't recognize you.
- JS: Part of your signature. So, we'll tell you a little bit about the project; I know Charles spoke with you on the phone. We have some questions we put down, but they're really just a guide. We can talk about anything you want to talk about. Anyway, we'll introduce ourselves as well. I'm Jennifer; I've been working with these fine folks for a while here. A number of people in town have been wanting to do a project about music history in Asbury Park, and there's been a lot of projects done already.
- FW: Yeah, I know.
- JS: The idea about this was to try to shine a light on Springwood Avenue, and the music that happened on Springwood Avenue, and all the amazing artists that came up. We've had the opportunity to speak to amazing musicians, like yourself. We've spoke with Dee Holland and Cliff Johnson, and Al [Griffin]. Another generation. What we're doing with what we're doing here – this is through the library, the Asbury Park Library, although some other people are working on it, too. We're recording these interviews. They'll be stored at the Monmouth University Bruce Springsteen Archives, so people can access them if they're doing research. We're going to put together a small publication – we call it a glorified pamphlet, or small book, somewhere in there – the idea is that the small piece of this project then hopefully will build into *more*. We really appreciate you taking the time to speak with us. I'll let Melissa and Charles introduce themselves.
- MK: My name's Melissa, I've lived in Asbury Park a few years. Not life-long, but it's my favorite place I've ever lived. I'm a musician myself, I play the flute. I moved to New

York about five years ago from Kentucky to get my doctorate in music. Now, I'm teaching elementary school in Red Bank. [Because I love] the music in Asbury Park, that's why I'm part of this project. Thank you.

CT: I'm Charles. Charles Trott. Yeah, I'm a life-longer of Asbury Park. Currently, I'm an arts educator, as well as a visual artist, which I've done all my professional years. I'm delving into history, and primarily the history of Africa by way of its diaspora – how it connects to countries and cultures all around the world. Here I am, because we are doing an African-American story.

FW: Okay.

JS: So that's us. As I said, as we go through these [questions], feel free to go in any direction you like. First, if you'd tell us your name and when and where you were born.

FW: My name is Willie F. Wynn. I'm from St. Petersburg, Florida. Born in a place called Benevolence – Benevolence, Georgia. I'm a sharecropper's son, you know what I'm saying? Goes way back. I've been working since I was four; driving a tractor at six. We moved from there to Ocala, Florida. I went to school there for a while, and I went to school in St. Petersburg, Florida. Until my mom passed; at thirteen, I lost my mom. Up until today, that's a lot of history, I don't know where you want me to go with it.

JS: What year? Did I miss the year?

FW: No. At thirteen, I left home.

JS: Thirteen. I mean, the year you were born.

FW: 1945. June 30, 1945.

JS: When did you start playing the guitar?

FW: Fifteen years, when I was 15 years old. One of the church members gave me a guitar, with a couple strings missing. I carried it around for a while, because, it's the same old story – people see you with a guitar, they want to know what you play. I didn't play; I was a singer. I was singing before I could play. But sitting in church, you passed the guitar. I wanted to do that, because same old story: the girls like that. You entertain, the girls like that. It's a connection. I started from that. I didn't finish high school until 1982. *[telephone rings] [inaudible]* It's back there, hello? *[answers phone]* Hello, hello? Hello? *[hangs up]* Where was I? 19--... My guitar playing in and out of St. Petersburg wasn't so good at the time. I could sing better than I could play. So, my voice took me, and the guitar I learned to play later. I mean, better at it. I don't know what you know about Barnum and Bailey's Circus?

JS: Mm-hmm.

FW: They used to have carnivals in and around there. The clowns, and the people that worked played banjos and guitars. Same old story – I was interested. So, I hung around with them. I'd go buy stuff for them, they'd send me here, send me there. You be a "gopher" – go for stuff. It started at that. I dropped out of high school because it wasn't what I wanted to do. High school wasn't teaching me anything. I learned more from the streets than I did from school. I was an honors student when I was there, because I wanted to be smarter, just like I see other people, you know, that was my thing. But music was the best resource for me, because I had a sporadic soul, I still got that. That's coming from wanting to do stuff. My mother says "a born leader," but I don't see it as that. Anybody that has the knowledge has the responsibility to give freely, I don't ever get paid for it. You know, a contribution back, and it's supposed to come back. It happens; I'm a living example of that. A couple people give me stuff all the time. All the time. That's why I wanted to see you at the store, so you could see all this.

JS: We'll have to come visit you there, too.

FW: Yeah. Where am I?

JS: You're in St. Petersburg. You're singing and learning guitar.

FW: There's this lady, I don't know what do you know her – her name is Etta James, the blues singer. I was a roadie with her. Set equipment up, the same thing – go be a gopher. I traveled around with her for a while. Then A.C. Jones and the Atomic Aces; you won't know them, but this was during the Deltones era, from California. Bick Dell – I don't know if he passed on, but he's still around; the *music's* still around. What do you call it, surfing era?

CT: Beach Boys.

FW: Beach Boys. And that Monticello and all these people was on, what do you call it? Doing the recording thing? USA? It was a technological schooling thing. Pulling cables, set cables, and this. So, I know how to maneuver enough to go to work and get paid. So I was doing this for a long time. Somebody said, "You should be playing yourself." I said, but I don't want to play, I want to be behind the scenes. That was just me. The people called Mel and Tim? Mel and Tim – Google them. Mel and Tim, and Sam and Dave – similar groups. Fred and Larry from Philadelphia. A bunch of other people, I can't think of right now; that was such a long story. I was leaving from there to go up and down, from coast to coast. It got tiresome. My thing was, you ain't going no place, you gotta do something. Put down some roots. I have four children down in Florida, I've got four children here. All my kids are doing well but one. A bunch of them play music, all

musicians that play. I always offer anybody that wants to get – what do you call it? – the capillaries in your brain expanded, learn to play an instrument. Because you’ll get smarter than you think you are. Because it slows you down, you get concentration, “where’d that come from?” It’s a learning thing for yourself. Some people like to do *[inaudible]*... music does that automatically. Somebody wrote somewhere that says, “Music soothes the savage beast.” That’s music that in your spirit, it quiets you down. I do that constantly. If I’m not playing, I’m listening to it. I’m not a TV buff, or all that, not even movies – though I watch it with my wife sometimes – it doesn’t do anything for me. I hear music, and I hear stories, and I’m listening; that’s my piece of mind. I haven’t set up my stuff in here, I don’t have enough space. I do have a little amplifier back here, *[laughter]* that I do stuff every now and then. I don’t bring my guitar home, because I can’t get the level I want. I’ve got too many neighbors, you know. Anyway, when I got to Asbury Park, there were so many musicians that weren’t doing anything. A lot of them; a lot of good players. Bumping heads with Bruce *[Springsteen]* up here at the theater in New Brunswick. He’s got, when you play your own music? What’s it called, when you play your own music? That’s the only way you can get in there.

JS: Originals?

FW: Original music. So, that’s still there in New Brunswick. *[inaudible]* They passed on. What did they call it? He was Bruce’s horn *[player]*? Clemons. Clemons was a teacher when he started to play horn with us, me and my cousin Claude. See, people don’t know that. He was teaching school.

JS: He was a teacher?

FW: When I met him, he was a teacher, and he used to play with us on the weekend before the riots. The Turf Club’s still there. We used to play in the basement there. There was – Sheryl Underwood the comedian? Her brother, Miller Underwood, was the guitar player for the group. These people were already here.

JS: When you said you came to Asbury Park, what brought you to Asbury Park?

FW: I’m an entertain, I go to entertain. I’m also a three-star chef. So, I work. I went to Ocean Grove, to Keating Cozy Cottage, the guy that ran the auditorium there, Mr. Keating. I came to work for him. He saw me down in Florida, and he knew I could cook, and he offered me a job. I said, “No, I don’t want to go, it’s cold up there, I don’t want to go to New Jersey.” He said, “Yeah, come on up, you’ll like it in the summer time.” I said, “Yes sir.” Generally, people know you, they talk to you, they know you, they’re from that era. So, I get here, they were in Germany at the time; I supposed something happened in the family. People saw me hanging around, quote-unquote: “What are you doing here?”

JS: ...in Ocean Grove?

- FW: *[laughter]* Yeah! So I said, “I got offered a job from Mr. Keating, but it’s closed.” Because he had to go because something in the family happened, he didn’t tell me what it was. I got a room, right from the church there on Atkins Avenue, used to be called Nellie Tutt’s, it’s a rooming house to stay in way back when. If the Turf Club’s here on Atkins Avenue, go across the street where they’re building something there now –
- CT: On the same side?
- FW: Yeah, a solarium. Right there, where they built that is where I stayed. 117 Atkins Avenue. Right across from the church, there used to be a rooming house there. Anyway, I stayed there with my cousin until they came back, and then I went to work. I was looking around, and all these musicians, and nobody’s doing anything. You know Carl, the keyboard player?
- CT: No. What year is this?
- FW: He’s not a teacher.
- CT: Oh, you’re talking about Carl Krudup.
- FW: Krudup!
- CT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know him.
- FW: *[laughter]* Carl, and all these guys, Carl would play with a lady –
- JS: Dee? Dee Holland?
- FW: Yeah, with Dee Holland. And another one, Pop Pop Rawlins. People don’t know Pop Pop. Pop Pop Rawlins, from Lakewood, was a keyboard player, and he said, “Man, you ought to come down here, man, ‘cause they got these clubs you can play.” I said, “Where?” He said, “Go to the 121 Club in Lakewood.” So Lakewood. People said, Lakewood, what? So, I go. Nice little hole-in-the-wall, and we play with Pop Pop. Pop Pop didn’t want to play with *[inaudible]*. I guess everybody remember Doris George’s place? Doris George had a little bar there, I can’t think of the name... She owned it, she owned the Checkmate also, it became a disco later on. We called it... what was the name of it? Jackson’s Tavern.
- JS: That’s in Lakewood?
- FW: Yeah. Doris George owned the Jackson’s Tavern. She also, George’s Bar, was the name of that little place. It’s coming back. So, I played there, in and around there. All up

everywhere, any place that had entertainment I played. That was the combo with Pop Pop Rawlins, and also my cousin [they all passed on]; and who was the bass player? He doubled as the bass player and played drums, my cousin Clo, the barber. Who else did I hook up with...? The Cosmic Birth.

CT: The Cosmic Birth, right.

FW: Walter Jones owned it [he's still alive; his daughter comes around the scene now and then]. He also owned the Blue Light Lounge.

CT: I don't know that one.

FW: The Blue Light Lounge turned into the Saturn.

CT: Oh yeah, okay. I remember. I couldn't remember the name.

FW: Okay. When Bruce used to come down to get in the Saturn, they would never hire him.

CT: This was what? The early '70s?

FW: Yeah, early '70s. I went on the road in... the late 70s. Before the riots, I had just went off too...

CT: Yeah, I wasn't here much.

FW: Yeah. There's a contradiction between the Cosmic Birth, and the Saturn Lounge with the locals. I only played at Mrs. Jay's, I couldn't get into the Stone Pony.

CT: They wouldn't let you in the Stone Pony?

FW: No, they wouldn't let me play in the Stone Pony. I wasn't playing rock.

CT: Right. *[laughter]* Exactly, because that was primarily a rock joint; well, *exclusively* a rock joint at that time.

FW: Right, all the time, you couldn't get in there. And Mrs. Jay's, all level groups could play there. I don't know whether you remember, it's torn down now – Morocco Lounge [the lounge was part of the Morocco Hotel].

CT: No, I don't know it. I remember *hearing* about it.

JS: Morocco Lounge?

- FW: Morocco. Morocco Lounge. It was hotel at the top, and at the bottom there they had a lounge.
- CT: This was between Kingsley and Ocean? I remember hearing about it.
- FW: Yeah. Do you remember...
- CT: Was it in the Albion Hotel?
- FW: No, no. The Albion was this far up. On Kingsley, they had a go-go bar there, you could play in there. Right next to it, they had a bowling alley.
- CT: Right, okay. The bowling alley right on 4th [Avenue].
- FW: We played in the bowling alley, and there's a multitude of musicians in there, all cultures and class. *[telephone rings]* Hello? Hello? *[hangs up phone]* I'm trying to think, there was another place where most of the musicians played...
- CT: I know that area has changed.
- FW: *[laughter]* Yeah. Oh, the Wonder Bar.
- CT: The Wonder Bar, yeah. Across from the Paramount and Convention Hall.
- FW: Yeah, we played there. I opened up for Patti LaBelle and the Blue Belles there. It was with Rare Earth...
- CT: Rare Earth, oh man, what!
- FW: Rare Earth, yeah, and a bunch of other groups that were there. We were the local home-group, called Little Charles and the Soul Kings. The Soul Kings featuring Little Charles. That was the group that took us out of here. Now, what's his name, big *[inaudible]* from up in Red Bank, red hat? What's his name, used to play with them, before he got with Bruce? Clemmons. The Red Bank Rockers.
- CT: Oh, right.
- FW: And the other guy, Johnny whoever he was, he was out front singing, he's still around. There were some good bands here, and there were all working.
- CT: I wasn't here much in the '70s.

FW: I was at the Turf Club and our road manager met another guy from Philadelphia, and they wanted to put us on tour. And hey, we were making \$1,200 a week.

CT: In the '70s, that's a lot of money!

FW: That was big! I worked for *[inaudible]*... I have several things I can do. I was their manager [of the washroom], the washer where you... *[inaudible]* ...make the adjustment so it works automatically, put it on the wheel, and it works by itself, makes it automatic. I was playing at Monmouth Medical Center in the entertainment room, I said, "People want me to go on tour, I need a leave of absence for two months." "No, you leave, you don't have a job." I said, okay, no problem.

MK: Good bye!

FW: Yeah. 1968.

CT: I was still in high school in '68.

FW: In 1968, I bought a 1968 Opel Kadett – one of those pregnant-looking cars, and pulled a trailer behind it? *[laughter]* I left. Me and the guy, he's the master bass builder – Robert Lee, his last name's Lee, he's out in California now, he also worked at *[inaudible]* guitar company. He was our bass player. He built basses. He's a brainiac anyway, I met him and I liked him because he was smart. I like smart people, I can pick them out. So, after we got to Canada, that fell through because some guys that didn't know how to write. That came to an end. Oh, the Canadian champion, one of the Downing brothers, I don't know if you know them, but I know so many people. Dartmouth College, right across the bridge from Halifax, they invited me over. They wanted me to entertain – for free. I said, "Yeah, okay." Because I hadn't gotten married yet, and if there's girls there, I'm going. *[laughter]* Excuse me, that's automatic. I went to play for them. Right now, they want me to go back for a reunion. The guy that owned the Era social club, that's the name of the club that got us from here to there. He was the Canadian champion's brother, the guy – he's a pastor now that I met out at Collingswood. You know, we're talking, he said, "I remember such-and-such." I said, "Hey, I know the owner's wife and her friends, and I don't know anybody else." I had a girlfriend that was living in Long Branch at the time. I've never been a womanizer, I like to have fun, you know, that wasn't my bag. And making \$1,200 a week? I was sending money home. I bought a place in Long Branch, you know what I'm saying? There was a down payment, they said, "Give me \$1,200 and you can have it, because it's a piece of shit." I said, "Okay, okay, okay." Took the side out, put a new border in, piece it back up again, and resold it. *[laughter]* I started working for *me*, and still entertaining. I had my own limousine service, I do tri-state. Dealing with, this is going to shock you. You know Leonard Hess?

JS: Leonard?

FW: Leon Hess, the guy that owned the Hess company?

JS: Yeah.

FW: Leon Hess, Silverman, and Brong – insurance financiers. Nathan, Mr. Nathan, Ziegland Nathan, from Nathan’s famous restaurant, right? You know, the hot dog people.

JS: Mm-hmm.

FW: They’re all friends. He hired me to entertain when their kids get out of school, down on at the... casino. On the beach, in Deal. *[laughter]* These are people, you know, you don’t go to play there, you know? Not on a recommendation. It took me two weeks interviewing, people interviewing me, because I’m the driver of their daughters, their mommas, and grandparents, and stuff, so they called me. Take them here, “my wife’s got to go to New York, she gotta go do wife stuff.” So I have to take her, but I’m their muscle, got to look out for the back, this type of thing. In return, I got paid \$100 a day. They had the number, take them there, please! Two trips, that’s two hundred bucks! If I got three trips, that’s three hundred dollars a day. Go from here, to, it’s called Summerville, New Jersey; go out to Whitehall where the golf course is there. They got to go out to... their meetings. So, maybe I don’t have to take them back, but I have to take the briefcases. So I’ll get paid anyway. I did that for... 1970-- when did they have the gas shortage?

JS: That was in 1978?

CT: Mid-70s.

FW: 1976, 1978?

CT: I remember the shortage.

FW: I couldn’t get gas but on the one side. Mr. Hess, Leon says, “Fred, go to Jersey City, Jersey City boiler company, and when you get there, tell them to call me [they gave me permission to get gas throughout my time there]. Fill it up.” *[laughter]* Now, when I played in Summerville, what they called it, the golf place, the hospitality room, I would say would be a better name for it. And they go, “Who is this black guy coming in the back door?” *[laughter]* “Oh, that’s just Fred, that’s just Fred, no, leave Fred alone!” So, it was just funny. At the same time, people back there, you know, didn’t realize that you know people, people know you, and this is a different world, changing; changing. So, he goes, after the gas shortage, Mr. Nathan wanted me to get a new Cadillac; I couldn’t afford the payments. “Fred! Thousand dollars a year. You can enjoy this. I’m going to pay it up front.” I said, “No sir. I’m getting ready to go down to Palm Beach.” Palm Beach

east where the rich folks live; west Palm Beach is where the help lives, that takes care of the rich folk. You know what I'm saying? *[laughter]*

CT: That's the story; I've heard this story before.

FW: *[phone rings, FW answers]* Hello? Hello? *[hangs up phone]* Don't answer it two times, ain't nobody there.

CT: That's a machine, yeah.

FW: So, I met, what's these guys' name... that's where I met the guys from the Realto's, a famous group, most people don't know them, the R&B group. I went back home to play at another hotel. Bobby Marshan? People called him "Bobby Marshy-Ann." One of the first gay person I've ever met. I didn't know he was gay, because-- just a regular person to me. He put a song on called, "There is Something On Your Mind." I the gig in a hotel that had five floors, and the top floor was for entertainment. The other side of that top level was called a bullpen for just guys. You could take showers and all, but the other rooms had their own little bathroom, essentially. So, I'm finding out that they have the radio station in the back. Which was good. I wasn't doing anything interesting in music, I mean, all of these people, I don't remember all of their names that come through to advertise – where they are, where they're going to be, from Tampa, to way before they put in Walt Disney World. *[laughter]* Orlando; I forgot about that. Orlando, before they put in Walt Disney World, the guy that – the same guy that I was telling you about before that worked for Consolidated Laundry?

JS: Mm-hmm.

FW: Stewart's Nursery. The guy was putting in... what do you call those things... solariums outside. You call them greenhouses. We called them solariums. Growing plants, and the plants was to go in to Walt Disney. My first cousin, he was a master electrician. Before he retired. Anyway, he also played. So, I played. I can play now if I want to, but I refuse to deal with people with no, *[inaudible]*. It's just that they want to entertain. They gotta put work in, that's one reason why I work with kids, before they get into that same old mode. I was taught, if it ain't your job, you become one. I get that, too. *[inaudible]* I skipped over that. I had a job at age 14, my own job. I would clean people's refrigerators and stoves. Now, they had a lot of good stuff in there, they didn't want to throw out, they'd be glad to see me coming.

JS: That's smart, that's a smart job.

FW: I would take all their food, that I would get, and give it to people. Especially when I was living up in a hotel, you know what I'm saying. They'd say, "Where'd you get all this food from?" You too. When the people figured out what I was doing, the older people

started doing it. They called it “Cleaning Service.” *[laughter]* I’m going, what? They’re going to do it, guys going to wash the house; before they had the power-washer, they had those little things, window-washing, you know, wash windows. Oh, man. I didn’t worry about it, because I’d go out on the beach and pick up mangoes and fruit, out of people’s yards. And people’d be glad because a lot of people don’t mosquitos and all these flies. “You can clean mine when you’re finished!” Okay? So, I take the wagon, and... *[laughter]* ...put it behind my bicycle. In the meantime, I’m singing, and people go, “Something’s wrong with that kid.” You’re happy, you’re singing, that’s the way it goes.

JS: So that’s when you were fourteen?

FW: Fourteen all the way up until... seventeen. And that’s when my first son was born, I was seventeen. The rest of them came later on: eighteen, nineteen, twenty, you know. It was a good run, but... I lost my first wife. Yeah. That was the second reason I left from down there, to come this direction.

JS: I’m sorry to hear that.

FW: Yeah. But, it was a, I guess you would call it, it was something... I don’t worry about things I can’t change. You get the feeling, and you get going because stress kills.

JS: This is true.

FW: Yeah, I learned that a long time ago. My seventh-grade English teacher – I have a speech impediment. She says, “Wynn, don’t you worry about it, things are going to change.” I says, “What’s this lady know? Tell me she ain’t God!” *[laughter]* But it was all good.

JS: She was right, right?

FW: Yeah, she was right. Yeah, most of the teachers back then – I don’t know about now – I mean, go *[inaudible]*. Going one-on-one, like when they come out to the store, is always nice. Because it makes you feel better – I can’t say good, I feel good all the time, sick or unhealthy – when you got people with the same mindset, can see and feel the same things that we do. You know, in that whole circle, not a square. So, it’s the teacher. Mr. Terrell, he has his own part of the story, he was a retired school-teacher for thirty-five years. He saw me out there selling in the cold – “Mr. Wynn, what are you doing out here, it’s cold!” I said, “What’s it look like? I’m working!” I’m sitting around crying for people to do stuff, they tell you you can’t do this, you gotta sign this, you gotta sign that, you gotta do that... and it’s uncalled for. You see somebody that needs some help, you give them help. See? “No, you gotta sign this, I gotta sign that,” and I have no problem. So, you know... I got access to this phone, same thing with this computer, you see people with stuff you can buy cheap, and you sell it high. They call it “wholesaling.” *[laughter]* The Dollar Store’s coming out with a lot of pretty stuff, okay, if I kick this up a notch, get a little crafty, you

know. Do this, and do that, and sell it for a different price. I did tee shirts and jackets, embroidered for social clubs. The clubs that I used to play in, like the Eastern Stars and the Elks and the softball leagues, and stuff. Me and the guy, *[inaudible]* store here, or out in Belmar. The only guy I could get to work with me, because I didn't have a license. So he'd buy stuff on his account, and I would take the jackets and I would do them by hand. Before, they call it, screen printing, was big-time. It was cheaper to do that, and it just knocked me right out. So, every now and then, I do a few and I hang them up in my store. People – "Oh, how much for a shirt?" "Oh, you don't want that shirt, it cost too much." "No, I'm just saying..." *[laughter]* You know? I'm getting ready to start back doing that. But, back to the music playing. I was at the Long Branch area. The music scene was – remember, I don't know what year it was here – Sarge? His name was Sarge, but off-broadway.

CT: Oh, I remember the off-broadway guy, I don't remember him.

FW: Sarge ran it, he became the owner later. All those bands from Long Branch. I mean, what's-his-name still lives there. "To Be Continued" with Fred Stevenson's. *[inaudible]* And what's his name, the group? New Era. They used to be special occasions.

CT: Oh really? I didn't know that.

FW: They still sing. You see them on, what do you call it, every now and then. All those guys was in it, it was working. It was beautiful. You couldn't get in. The last time I saw a vocal group, locally, was at the Turf Club. And Big Bill's. You remember Big Bill's?

CT: Yeah, yeah.

FW: Well, it went down the tube because the congressman right there... got hurt there.

CT: A congressman got hurt out there?

FW: Yeah, in the parking lot.

CT: Oh, this is when he was over on Springwood and Drummond in Neptune?

FW: Yeah, right there on the corner. From there, soon as that got up, one of the biggest things... The police department had an annual ball every year. The guy that still playing with them, called it The Waterfront? The band called The Waterfront? Well, they owned it. Leon Trent is the only one left, him and the other guy that plays keyboard. They call it The Waterfront Duo now, it used to be called Waterfront. We played at the policeman's ball down in, what is it... I can't think of it. Up 30; up 70 – up on Route 70. I can't think of the name of it. But, whew. They had a tight band, and we just like to *[inaudible]*. But they never participated with the Battle of the Bands that we formed in Red Bank. Used to

be there on, what they called it – West Bergen. West Bergen has a community center right there, and right across there is another, it's called a masonic thing. Right past the church.

CT: Mm-hmm. On the same side as the church?

FW: Right.

CT: The community center was across the street from there.

FW: Right, it's still there. Well, I don't know if whether it's *still* there or not, but that's the way it used to be.

CT: Right. The buildings are still there...

FW: We played there with the Battle of the Bands, and then from there to the Catholic church there.

CT: I don't know where the Catholic church is.

FW: The Catholic church – Red Bank Catholic Church. We used to do shows in there, because the kids wanted a cultural... what they called it... entertainment. And that's when we got in there. What's it called – Yarborough? You call Yarborough and the People? You dial them up sometime. Yarborough and the People – the only Yarborough was our drummer. You know. Benny Roundtree, from Black Ivory –

CT: Okay, I know Black Ivory. Well, I know *of* Black Ivory.

FW: Okay, all these groups...!

CT: The 70s was a waste for me. Well, not a waste, but I wasn't really in Asbury Park.

FW: I came and stirred the pot.

CT: Yeah, yeah, but that's why I don't really know you and know much of some of the places, because I was in New York, and then I was in Bermuda.

FW: Oh, okay.

CT: No one cares, shut up. *[laughter]*

FW: I took, of the knowledge I had accumulated from people giving me, “get these guys off their butt!” You know what I'm saying? It was nice, and I'm not one of those people that's in your face type. See? Even you do or you don't, I'm not responsible for you. But

I'm just going to give you input. I still have a weeder program with musicians that I work with. So, I work with *you*, but now, in order to work with *me*, you have to have a certain skill set. I have plenty of alcohol that I give to people, I drink when I want to drink. I'm not one of those – that's the other thing. At seventeen, I drunk myself into a coma.

JS: Wow. That's an early life lesson there.

FW: One time is it. I didn't go back. Still can drink. It's a long-serving habit. The man that owned the bar and the dancehall on 22nd Street – Mr. George Groban[?] – said, "Fred, you don't need to be here." You know what I'm saying? I said, "Where am I going?" He said, "Hey, with your mindset, skill set, you'll be alright." "Yeah?" I didn't get it. But once I left, I did. Same thing I said a minute ago. Ain't no job, you become one. Don't have to worry about getting in the car when you can work for yourself.

JS: That's so interesting, the things that you hear and that you remember the rest of your life, when someone makes a comment like that to you.

FW: Yes, yeah. Of course. It's a good thing for me, because I probably would have been in prison. I had an attitude. I'd hit somebody in a minute that said something and lied. My mom inside of me cultivates my soul. Right now, I got a problem, I talk to her and God. My wife says, "What are you laughing at?" I said, "Oh no, I'm just talking to mom." "I know; when we got married, I knew you were crazy." *[laughter]* We know about that "me, myself, and I thing." A lot of people don't. I have to tell myself I can't do that, because if you do, you'll say, "Why are you doing that? Why? Because you know better. Who is you? Me?" *[laughter]* In and around... reached in and out of, let's see: New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, I had opportunity to go to Atlantic City, but I don't like Atlantic City. It's was a little bit off-beat for me. I'm not a gambler.

CT: Yeah, it's a different type of city.

FW: If you like to party and gamble, that thing, all right. Atlantic City is like New York, but not as fast. New York is *[makes quick noises]*. But if you don't know how to slow down, you get caught up in that and get pushed along with the crowd. *[laughter]*

JS: Sorry to go back, but... this is going way back, but around what year did you come up when you went to Ocean Grove?

FW: Oh, Sixties. Late sixties. Sixty-four. 1964. Sixty-four, sixty-five. Because I had my first car I bought was a '65 Mustang. So it was '64.

JS: So when you got here, you said you were living in the rooming house on Atkins?

FW: On Atkins Avenue.

- JS: At that time – that was before the riots – on Springwood, what were some of the memories you have from Springwood at that time?
- FW: I was saying – the Turf Club, Big Bill’s, the Orchid Lounge, there is... Cuba’s? Cuba’s, he called it. The Cool Room, two of them. One on this side, and the other back there -- it was Hammory’s.
- CT: Hammory’s State. Hammory’s State Ballroom.
- FW: Yeah. Junior was our manager when I opened up for Patty LaBelle and the Blue Belles.
- CT: Junior?
- FW: Hammory Junior.
- CT: Oh, yeah, yeah. He just passed.
- FW: I hadn’t seen him for years. There’s the Capital, right there on the corner next to the Turf, there’s a little bar. Down farther on Springwood, next to where that liquor store is? *[inaudible]*
- CT: Alpha’s.
- FW: Where Alpha’s is? We called it the Two-Door.
- CT: Oh, okay. See, I forgot all this...
- JS: Because it had two doors, right?
- FW: Yeah! *[laughter]*
- CT: It wasn’t because of the English architecture, that’s for sure!
- FW: Down farther – Redmond’s Hall? Redmond’s Hall was where the dances were. It’s a Catholic place right there. Now, above that – no. Right at the bottom, they had, you could buy barbeque. But at the top was where they had the dances at; they called Redmond’s Hall. No, no, no! *Catholic* Hall! Redmond’s Hall is across 35.
- CT: This is still on Springwood?
- FW: No, no, no. We’re on 33 now. Right across from where they built the school there? Right across there, that firehouse is called Redmond’s Hall. Above it was where they used to have the dances. All the bands used to play in there. Now, back on Springwood – the

Catholic Hall and the Two-Door, and then Big Bill's. The Elks Hall, also. I would join, and the bands would play upstairs. Well, when the bar closed, everybody had to go home, but members or guests. They cleaned the bar, and other people went upstairs. You was there until daybreak, then went downstairs to get breakfast, you know.

CT: I'd be P.O.'d...[?] *[laughter]*

FW: And right there on... it's still there, what's that called... right there on, past the fish market.

CT: I don't know if I know the fish market.

FW: There was a, it's still there.

CT: Oh, you're talking about on 35 -- Jodi's?

FW: No, next to Jodi's is a little place *[inaudible]*...

CT: Redwood?

FW: Redwood! We played down there, that's where I met Sammy Pugh.

MK: Oh, right.

FW: Sammy Pugh.

CT: Sammy's gone now, right?

FW: Yeah, long time. He was a senior citizen almost when I got here. Him and Pop Pop Rawlins. They called him Pop Pop *Rawlins*, but I always called him Pop. You remember Sandy Wilson? She was the singer for Dee Holland.

CT: Oh yeah, I remember Sandy Wilson. Where is she? I never see her around.

FW: I talked to her. She's out in the Cape.

CT: In the Cape? Cape May?

FW: Yeah.

CT: South Jersey?

FW: Yeah.

CT: Oh okay. I haven't seen her, in oh...

FW: Her son's a drummer.

JS: So she started as a drummer?

FW: Her *son*. Her son. Her son's a drummer.

JS: Okay.

CT: But she's a singer.

FW: Yeah, she's a singer. She's crazy, too. Crazy good. My friend, you know. I used to have her when I couldn't find a singer; I would call her – "Alright Fred, alright Fred." You know, she calls me Freddy. I got rid of Freddy, because "Freddy" means "cold." "Freddy, Freddy, Freddy!" You know, in Creole, "freddy" means "cold." One of my past girlfriends told me about that, she being Haitian, you know. I speak the language a little bit.

CT: Creole? You said Creole, right?

FW: Yeah. Patwah.

CT: Well, right, right; okay.

FW: There's a difference; two differences. One side is from Louisiana, the other is from out of the States.

CT: Right, right. Well, Haiti and Louisiana, especially New Orleans, have a history most people don't know about.

FW: Yeah, I know.

CT: Well, I don't know *a lot* about it either.

FW: I know *a lot* [laughter], a lot! That was during the time when I was sowing oats. Before they moved the Mardi Gras from Mobile, Alabama – people don't know. It was called Fat Tuesday. Fat Tuesday became the Mardi Gras, down in –

CT: New Orleans.

FW: Yes.

CT: Oh, but it was in Alabama first.

FW: Yes.

CT: Oh, okay.

FW: Where I got ran around the bush a couple of times makes me... what you call it... not so easy to let people in. People will take advantage of you. I thought people would be nice. You know, you're nice, I'm nice. Hey, hey, you know. And then they'll take everything you got while smiling in your face. So, I got stranded in Mobile, Alabama on Davis Avenue. We were playing at the Cool Cats Club. I come back, and the guys that were sleeping there, just took everything I owned. So, now how do I get home? No money. That's when I went to work on the bay there. Mobile Bay. People called the "rousters,"[?] that's a day-worker. And how do I get my money when it's sent to me? I have skills. Down town, got this carbon paper, a coat hanger, and a rock. Turn it into a circle, tap tap tap, put the circle on it, you know what I'm saying? Take the small pieces of metal, and put my name in it, signed it on a hard piece of cardboard, rough it up a little bit, and went and got my money from the Western Union.

CT: So, what, you're making a seal of sorts?

FW: Yeah, I make a seal, put a seal on it. All you got to do is put an imprint on it, get some carbon paper, rub it over the top, and what do you got? Identification. It was only \$14 to get me a bus ticket from there back to St. Pete.

CT: Early graphic arts skills.

JS: That's resourceful. What age were you at that time?

FW: Twenty-two. Twenty-one, twenty-two years old. But it was fun, I mean, time passes so fast. It's just one of those things. People used to say to me, "If you don't slow down, you're going to run off the cliff." That's old folks talk for, "you're going to kill yourself." So, I'm having fun, and I'm always gonna have fun. I have fun now. I have fun all the time.

JS: Good, that's the way it should be! *[laughter]*

FW: Learned that at an early age, you know. Yep. But the last job... my oldest student lives up the street there, he's 94 years old. He was supposed to be here today. He comes out. Like I said, I have to talk to him, for his mindset. He's a World War II vet. His name is Charles Harrol. He says to me, "Mr. Wynn, I don't know how you do it." I said, "What, I don't know, I'm only 72." I don't want to... you can't stop from growing older, that's

chemistry, you know, that's the way it is. But I'm going to play as long as I can. He said, "My hands!" I said, "My hands been hurting me since I was 30, nothing new." You don't think about it. You take your mind off it, you don't feel it till you start thinking about it. Anyway. I don't know all the places I played in Trenton, and in and around there, but there's a lot of them. Out here, they got – people don't know about this – Hubby's Inn.

JS: Hubby's Inn?

FW: Hubby's Inn. It's out in Jamesburg, Englishtown. All of the bands that was anybody playing, would play there, because during the day, that's where you would ball. They had softball games, especially women's softball games, that's why they had it out there. And the other one is Jamesburg. Outer Circle Loop[?]. So last time, they turned it into a country-western bar, and they went down the tube, because people don't want to do country-western. They didn't have many people. You know. We had country and western in and out of the same clubs, because everybody, they don't care, but constantly? No. Can't do one thing in one place. It's like rap. You can't do that; people don't want that. But do just a little bit, and leave it alone... I was at Gators[?], out here on 33, I think that was the last professional job that I did. It's a seafood restaurant. They had, what they called it, the boats came in there, coming from over in the city, and they would dock there for brunch, or for lunch, whatever you want to call it. And the Key[?], right up 33, this side of Sandy Hook?

JS: Oh, up north.

FW: The Que, whatever, it's a French word. And Gators. You know, both of those was my last professional jobs. No, it wasn't... I played with somebody once, wasn't my job, can't think of the name of the place. *[phone rings]*

JS: Do you remember the last time you played on Springwood Avenue?

FW: Springwood... it was about... the last time I played on Springwood, I played for, oh god. No, that was when I left here. I left the restaurant... The last time I played on Springwood was before I went to Canada. It had turned from the Turf Club to Wakey's. *[laughter]*

JS: I did not know about that, okay.

FW: Name of the club, Wakey's, but it would say "The Turf" up at the top. Wakey's Turf Club, it was called. From then on, I never played back on Springwood, but I played at the Saturn Lounge, and Skies. It was around the corner from there. Yeah, Skies is still there.

CT: Skies?

- FW: That little restaurant they got there, double-decker. Used to be the Deckhouse.
- JS: Oh, on 35.
- FW: No, right down Lake Avenue.
- JS: Oh, oh; Neptune.
- CT: No, Asbury.
- FW: No, in Asbury. If you look from Ocean Grove, right where that water there? Right where, there's a double-decker restaurant and stuff. Because, right around the corner used to be the boat station.
- MK: Moonstruck?
- FW: Let me get you your bearings.
- CT: Kennedy Park –
- JS: Kennedy Park, okay.
- CT: Get to the back of it, on Lake Avenue. Look to your left, the big house, right there, it's about four... it has verandas.
- JS: It's not... Moonstruck?
- CT: Moonstruck, right.
- FW: Yeah, before [it was called the Moonstruck], it was The Deckhouse.
- JS: I did not know that.
- CT: For a long time, yeah.
- FW: The next thing [the current-day Moonstruck] was named was Skies. That's when I played at Skies [it was a disco club]. Around there... what's the name? Cookie has a little place there, we used to meet where the bank is, on...
- CT: Where the bank *used* to be.
- FW: Where the bank used to be, right next to it was small restaurant club thing.

- CT: There was, huh?
- FW: Yeah, Cookie. Cookie owns a couple of places down there.
- JS: Not At the Table [Sur la Table]? What street are we on now?
- FW: I'm on... let me get this right. You see where they got all these little things they just built right there, the restaurants and stuff? The street right there?
- JS: Bond Street?
- FW: Yeah, it *is* Bond Street. Right on the corner, not on Cookman Avenue, the first street before you get there. On the right-hand side. There was a club there at Cookie owned, they sold cocktails and had entertainment.
- JS: I did not know that. On Bond Street?
- FW: Yeah, right there. There ain't no parking, ain't no place to park. I don't know, it's still there. She hired us to play there, to have jam sessions and stuff there.
- JS: It's not At the Table? There's a restaurant there called At the Table.
- FW: That's the name of the place? That's probably what it is, then. Right there at the corner.
- JS: It's on Bond, kind of –
- CT: It's right near Bangs, just off of Bangs.
- JS: Yeah, yeah.
- FW: Bangs?
- CT: It's on Bond, but it's between... it's closer to Bangs Avenue than it is to Mattison. On the corner of Bangs and Bond is a new construction, I don't know what the name is.
- FW: Well, they were building something there, but you had to go in a ways. If you come in from the other street, it's not too far. Because it's a one-way we're talking about.
- CT: Right, right. It's a one-way going to the left, going south.
- FW: Yeah, if you're coming right in – 'cause there's a studio there, so the studio there... I don't remember. I know there was a bank there, and there was a little restaurant there, the only way to get there was to come in from the Bangs Avenue side.

JS: I think that's probably At the Table, because the bank was then Trinity and Pope[?].

FW: Yes, yes, yes; that's it.

JS: Makes sense. We also saw a bar, a listing with you playing at Crossroads, on Main Street?

FW: That was it, yeah. I used to do the jam... Me and David Quail ran that, a jam session. David Quail is my blue-eyed soul brother from another mother, from back a ways. He's out in Farmingdale, too. Whenever I play, I usually use him as a saxophone player, or a bass player, or a guitar player, because both of us can interchange. He's also a crackerjack mechanic. He has two garages out in Farmingdale. He builds cars, take them down, cut them up, and make cars. *[laughter]* So, that's his passion.

JS: And then we saw another listing, Melissa found, of you playing with Stringbean at the middle school?

FW: Middle school, Stringbean; yeah. The trumpet player, Freddy... I forget what his name is, I can't think of his name. People just thought he was my son, 'cause my son plays trumpet. Me, and who? There were a couple other people. There's a video of that.

JS: Oh, is there? At the middle school?

FW: Yeah. It's called Jazz in the Afternoon. *[phone rings]* Hello? Hello?

JS: It's non-stop, that's why I don't want to have a house phone. They call all the time.

FW: Yeah, I don't want them calling this one. I usually let it go to there, and don't worry about it. There's a lot of people that's on that card. Frankie Bell, Breeze Waker, all these guys are living in Freehold. Breeze, he does the video thing, you see him all the time on Facebook and Tinder, whatever you call it. He does music videos and stuff. Him and, that's what Robert does also. Jay Pickney[?]? Bass player. All those cats; who's left? Who's left? Not many.

JS: Now, Stringbean's still around. He's got a daughter my son's age.

FW: Yeah, yeah. My son and his daughter went to school together, that's how I knew him first. You know, he's a harmonica player. He goes, "I know you!" I said, "I know you, too!" Me and my son went to, what you call it? PTO, PTA, and stuff. He's going, "Dad! Dad!" "What? Oh..." My son figured I'm getting in somebody's face. *[laughter]* But yeah, I've known him for quite a while.

JS: When did you start having your business out at Collingwood?

- FW: Let me see, my son was out of school, went into the service... it'd be fourteen years, fifteen years? Fifteen years, or more. I was inside fifteen years ago. Then I went outside, because I couldn't afford the rent, it's \$400 a month. So my friend, my Muslim brother of mine, I've been back in now two years. He gave me part of his space, and he helped me; I help him make rent when I can get it.
- JS: That works.
- FW: I do that. I have people bringing me stuff. I have a charity thing. Ted Kipocky[?], I can't pronounce his name, brought me an Ibanez guitar. One guy brought me, for the troops, a Les Paul, a Les Paul copy. This guy up here, Mr. Horel, brought me two keyboards, you know what I'm saying? I said, hey, we don't have no money Fred, but sell it, you know, you make your contribution to pay rent, or give the rest to people that have these charities. I have a jar there for taxes. I don't pay taxes, but I put it in there, so, for a rainy day program, kids come up – "My momma won't let me..." Okay, alright. So, you know, it's worth it. They say, the more you give, the more you get back. You should see my store. There's a guy – there's the other guy I mentioned – his name's Bill Carter, I used to play with Dee Holland, the keyboard layer. Bill Carter was the saxophonist for her. He was doing a thing in New York, he brought me tons of records; matter of fact, *a lot* of records. Jazz. And CDs, and outrageous amount. I had to make space for that. He just came and said, "Fred, instead of giving it to..." -- what do they call it over here? The charity place?
- CT: I don't know.
- JS: Goodwill.
- FW: Goodwill?
- JS: Goodwill?
- FW: "Oh no no, *you're* Goodwill." And he gave it to me.
- JS: Wow, we'll have to go see you. I've been out there. I don't let my husband go out there, because he comes home with...
- FW: Tons of stuff. Well, I mean, you know, I enjoy being there, because it beats being home, even though when I'm here the phone rings most of the time. So, most of the time I don't answer it. I have my craft stuff here that I do. Behind the couch over there I have my seedlings. As soon as it gets warm enough, I'm going to plant my plants.
- JS: Right out front, or where do they go?

FW: They're going to go in pots, on the inside. I can grow them in a closet, believe me. I use the grow lights and plastic, you know, get the humidity with a humidifier. Then the rest of it, you spray spray spray like rain. You can grow anywhere, people just don't realize it. They got a video out now, people telling you how to grow stuff *in* your closet, like I've been doing all my life. *[laughter]*

JS: Smart.

FW: I have one right here. See the sprout coming in? That's ginger. My wife, "There's people coming in here!" I said, okay, I'll put them all back here. *[laughter]*

JS: I have the same arguments, I have cuttings all over my house, need places for them.

FW: It's all good though. When you're doing stuff from there, it registers.

JS: We've taken a lot of your time, and we appreciate you.

FW: No, no, no. What they put down the boardwalk there, they left out so much, it kind of – excuse my language – pissed me off. Now, they did this twice. My friend, Lee, came up and said, "Why didn't they call you?" I said, "No, I don't mess with people." I'm posted on Facebook, said, you know like, when people going to do stuff, they should ask somebody that was around at the time. I don't know it all, but I still got stuff that I'll probably remember after you leave, comes down to musicians, where we played, what we did, all that stuff. Even Asbury Park High School, we played over there. There's a guy, I'm trying to think of his name. The Pete brothers, the Perkins brothers, the Gesga sisters. The Gesga sisters were from Long Branch. The Pete brothers lived right there on the corner, we was talking about across from Cassidy Hall. Bryan Pete –

CT: Larry?

FW: Larry Pete, and there's another one out in California, he's a drummer.

CT: There's a *third* brother?

FW: No, Larry is a cousin. Bryan and David was the brothers.

CT: Oh, okay. See, I knew Larry and David, I forgot; David is the younger of the two.

FW: Bryan was the bass player. And they're all gone.

CT: They're gone?

FW: A long time ago.

CT: All three of them are...?

FW: No, no; Larry's out in California. He plays with Robert.

CT: Larry's the only one left.

FW: That I know of. If you go on Facebook, they're all there.

CT: Okay, yeah; this is... okay. *[laughter]*

FW: Yeah. Bryan... let's see. Bryan played for me a while. Then, that's the other guy I'm talking about – Bill Carter. The rest of them, they had their own group. I left here. I went back to Florida in 1980 to go to school.

CT: Yeah, David was a trombonist.

FW: David? No, David was a trumpet player.

CT: Oh, he played... okay.

FW: He was trumpet; maybe he played trombone too, but his main instrument was trumpet.

CT: Okay.

FW: Okay. So I went back to school in 1980, because I couldn't go back to school here. People would be *at* me to go do a job, and I would go play. So, I went back to school and got my high school [degree]. *[inaudible]* I took night school classes and got my G.E.D., after 26 years. *[laughter]* Constantly telling my kids this and that and the other about education, and then, "Well, dad, you know *you* didn't finish school!" I got that, I got that. My oldest girl, she's a school teacher. My other girl, down, now she moved back to south Atlanta, she was a master chef like me, for Panera.

JS: Panera Bread?

FW: Panera Bread. The others are TCPA, and whatever they call them. They all got good jobs. My twin boys just went to college, starting this year. It got the point where, *[inaudible]*. *[laughter]*

JS: A lot of them are around here?

- FW: I only have one daughter here. She lives up there, [inaudible], lives right up the corner there; she teaches in Asbury. Her husband teaches, he's a coach, teaches up in Newark? Jersey City? Somewhere. I know it takes him a while to get back and forth. It's all good. They're all doing something that's profitable, trying to help back and give back.
- JS: So, if there's something – if someone is walking down Springwood Avenue today, what's something you'd want them to know about music history on Springwood Avenue?
- FW: It was a fun time, and it wasn't racial. They had some of the biggest name people that came there. It wasn't just the Turf Club, there used to be another hall, there used to be a dance hall. I forget the name of it. Oh, I can't think of it. But, the era I was here was great. People – the dress code was nice. You walked on one side of the street, go across here, then come back. That was most of the time. Big fun. It wasn't all about the beach. The boardwalk wasn't even a big deal. The boardwalk was for tourists. [laughter] But it was all good. One of the best times I had when I got here, I was trying to get people, especially musicians, you could always play. I don't care, all the clubs had bands in it. You would go here for a while, there for a while; have a good night. They had the restaurants there. Plenty of good restaurants. Whatever happened to it, I don't know. When I left... Oh – the riots. After the riots, everybody... air went out of their sails. Nobody wanted to invest again. Now they're trying to, and that's not gonna work. That ain't gonna work. What they're doing ain't gonna work. Number one, when they set up framewood there, they put... you know where they put the park? The people don't want to go, they can look out of their windows, they're right there. The people, if they got something they want to play, they can still hear it, and go to their friend's house. All their friends are there, and they get it free. That ain't profitable. See what I'm saying? And look, where they put the clinic is, in that corner right there? It's not big enough, but it would be out of eyesight [inaudible]. I hope they do go at it, but I don't think they will.
- JS: We have; Melissa printed this out. I don't know, you've probably seen this around. This is a map that was done of Springwood Avenue. I know it's probably hard to see on that scale. That was a mural, a drawing done... I don't know exactly *when* it was done – I think about 2006 or so? Rainette Holomon put it all together, but it shows a lot of the places you were just talking about. We don't know exactly what years they were trying to capture there.
- MK: Pre-70.
- CT: Right, definitely pre-70.
- JS: Certainly.

- FW: I'm trying to see where he's starting from. Oh, Railroad Avenue? Then you're missing out on this side. Railroad Avenue was where, like Memorial Drive. So, what about this side?
- CT: Well, they were staying with the west side. The west side, the demarcation line for the west side and east side is actually the tracks. The proverbial tracks. On Railroad Avenue.
- FW: I know.
- CT: From the tracks to Main Street, I don't know how to say it.
- FW: No, I'm looking at this, I'm looking at this. You see the west side, and this side; here's the railroad tracks. If you're gonna go across the railroad tracks, you'd have to be, it'd have to be like this [*flips map around*]. Because the railroad track's here, you come across this railroad track. On this side of the railroad track were all the places I was talking about starting with... on the right side of the tracks would be the Orchid Lounge.
- CT: It's there. It's noted here somewhere. Here's a picture of it, I don't know where it points to.
- FW: But that's on *that* side of the tracks.
- CT: Right, on the west side.
- FW: See, it's on *that* side of the tracks. See what I'm saying? It'd be this way; it's upside down.
- JS: It's oriented wrong.
- FW: Yeah.
- CT: Well, yeah, it depends on...
- FW: No, if you read a map, you're going to read a map, it's right across the tracks here; right here is Railroad Avenue, it's Memorial Drive. You see all these, the pictures are on the wrong side.
- CT: Does she put where north/south is?
- FW: I don't know, I don't worry about that.
- CT: East is here, you got east here.

- FW: I don't worry about that, I'm looking at what I see here. I know Asbury, and when you go across that railroad track, when you go across there, you're going to go down Lake right there. This is supposed to be Main Street. On this side of the track, starting there on the right-hand side, if you come across the track, is –
- CT: Lincoln Village.
- FW: Yeah. Memorial Drive is the next street. It's right there. Right there.
- CT: Memorial would be... Railroad *is* Memorial Drive.
- MK: Hmm.
- FW: All that's good, but it's on the wrong side. I don't know if you can look back at it, you can see that.
- JS: I'd have to look back at it.
- FW: No no, if you look at it. This is the west side; this is printed wrong.
- MK: It makes sense to me, but maybe I'm thinking of it wrong.
- FW: No no. It's just printed wrong. Backwards.
- CT: She's got that pointed star, but there's no indication which way is south.
- MK: Right. Well, it's kind of like an artistic version, not a one-hundred-percent historical.
- FW: Yeah, but it's still backwards. The Orchid Lounge was right across the track, right there on Memorial Drive. Across there – right here were that plaza is? Used to be another... right at the crossing, I forget the name of it. It was another bar, right across from where... New Jersey Transit is? Right there at that corner was another bar. I forget what the name of it is.
- CT: What, when you cross the tracks, going to Main Street?
- FW: Right across the tracks, right across from where the public works is?
- CT: Going to Main Street, yeah.
- FW: Right across that street there, there used to be a club there. Right in the corner was another club.

CT: Right, I don't remember the name.

FW: In the back of there was Bob and Irving's.

CT: Right, exactly.

FW: We played [inaudible]. Put mics in the corner. All that's where they put the complex for the police department and all that? All that used to be entertainment area.

CT: On Springwood?

FW: Yeah, yeah. There were two bars, I played them. The Horseshoe and... Horseshoe was in the corner.

CT: Of Springwood?

FW: No no. Horseshoe up on the corner, there, across from where the school is?

CT: The school...?

FW: The new school there, right across from where the barber shop sits now. There's a church there.

CT: Oh yeah, where St. Peter Claver used to be. You're talking about that school, the sisters? St. Peter Claver. The black Catholic Church.

FW: No no, that's way down there. I'm talking about right here at the railroad track.

CT: I don't remember a school there.

FW: Well, okay. Near Prospect Park.

CT: Oh, I know what you're talking about. The school, the little school in Neptune on 33 and Memorial.

FW: Yeah, yeah. Uh, no. That's farther up. Go back to Springwood Avenue.

CT: Right.

FW: When you come across where the light is right now, where the light is right now, right across that where the Turf is. If you go back the other way, you're going to go to the railroad tracks. Right across from the railroad tracks was another bar sitting there. Right on the corner. Used to have big bands and a lot of artists come there. Around the corner

there, there was a street, coming in from the other side of *[inaudible]*. Right around the corner there, there was another bar sitting on the corner. We played there, we played there.

CT: Yeah, yeah.

JS: That was before the transportation center-- where that transportation center was built?

FW: Before that came. Behind there, where they put *[inaudible]*, that's where they got the police department and the transit authority and all that. When they renovated that. I played in both of them. All the superstars would come into that little place, until they got to Cuba's. Whatever they called it. That's father up Springwood. That map got it right, but in the wrong direction.

MK: I see.

FW: If you turned it around like that and folded it under, and turn it around, you got it. Just reverse the print, that's all. There used to be, right down that railroad track, used to be a recycle center, where you would take rags and old iron, and all that stuff. Before that street even went past, before they put in that little school. There was nothing there. You couldn't go no farther than Lincoln Village. You couldn't go right up there; there wasn't no road there.

JS: It's a new road, right? Because someone was saying...

FW: Memorial Drive is new from 33 back this way.

JS: To Springwood.

FW: Yeah, back to Lake Avenue. My '54 Chrysler broke down right there, I can remember that. *[laughter]*

JS: Not going to forget *that*.

FW: I just had got back from Florida, it couldn't make it up... where the Orchid Lounge is there.

JS: Is there anything else—Oh, what we do with this is we take the transcript, we write it all up, Melissa's been doing that. We'll send it to you to see everything that we just said, if you want to change anything, or anything, you let us know.

FW: I don't think there will be anything. I'm speaking of *some* of it, but I know there's so much. All this stuff's there, but like the map. Most of the stuff's that's there, even the

streets—you can dial it up on Facebook, or Google it; you can see it. Plus, what's the name? Donna Carter.

CT: Madonna, yeah.

FW: She's got photographs of all that stuff.

CT: Yeah, her book.

FW: You've seen her book? She wanted to send me one, but she's got another one coming.

CT: She's got another one coming.

FW: Yeah, another one coming. She asked me about people I knew from back then. You know, it is what it is. Most people going on. It's sad.

CT: You said the Pete's... David! David's only a couple years older than me. Brian, I don't remember. Larry's my age, we went to school at the same place.

FW: Yeah, yeah. They've been gone a long time.

CT: I didn't know that.

FW: People used to say "it's a small world." No; people don't talk enough.

CT: Exactly.

FW: You need communication. That's one of the reasons why I'm happy out there, because when people come, "Hey!" Do you remember the Ramses?

CT: Ramses? I think so.

FW: Big Ramses. Used to ride around in a [inaudible], until he got so heavy, he was in one of those go-karts, chairs. His brother comes out every now and then. He kept talking, and kept talking; I kept looking at him. I said, "Do you know Ramses?" Because I used to live up on Prospect.

CT: The name was James Ramsur? I think, and there were some brothers.

FW: Named Jay. Lived up over the new hill; the new hill right there? That's the other place I was trying to think of, the bar – The New Deal.

CT: That's the name of the bar on Springwood?

FW: The New Deal, yeah.

CT: Just as you cross the tracks, going east?

FW: No, no.

CT: Across the street from... where the public works is now, there used to be a bar. Right on the corner.

FW: Yeah, right on the corner. That's the one I don't remember. There's one right on the corner, and if you pass it, there's another one right there on the corner, in the back of Bob and Irving's.

CT: Okay, yeah, yeah! On the other side.

FW: Yeah! *[laughter]* Right!

CT: Go left down the street, and you *had* to follow it around, and it'd take you right back into Cookman Avenue.

FW: Cookman. That's right! That's right, yeah.

CT: Yeah, I know where you're talking about. There *were* two bars. See, I knew the bars! *[laughter]*

FW: I played in all of them. That was my thing, I had to play them. New Deal, Capitol...

CT: I know the names, I just can't remember...

FW: The Capitol was on the, right where they got the park in there now? Right on the corner *[inaudible]*.

CT: Oh, that's the name; the Capitol.

FW: *[inaudible]*

CT: Okay, I just didn't remember that was it.

FW: Yeah, well. The other one was right next to the Turf Club. I want to make sure you guys... I know the Capitol was there. Right next to it, because the Turf was another bar. That might've been the Capitol. I know one of them was named the Capitol. *[laughter]* With those bars, I played in all of them!

- JS: Is there anything else you want to let us know now?
- FW: No, no. I think, let me see. The big Elks, the little Elks, Redmond Hall; you just named the other one, it was a soda joint, where all the nurses came down to drink – the Redwood?
- CT: Oh, the Redwood Inn. Yeah.
- FW: Yeah, okay. *[laughter]*
- CT: Oh yeah, because it was in Neptune, not far from what is now the Jersey Shore [Medical Center]. So I can see that.
- FW: The hospital, yeah. Oh yeah. What's his name – Coach Wood? Coach... Jason's.
- CT: Jason's?
- FW: Lounge, right there in Belmar.
- JS: Oh, Jason's.
- FW: Jason's Music – Jazz and Blues Club. Mel Hood.
- JS: Yes. Mel Hood.
- FW: Mel Hood was a coach, even people didn't know he was a coach, but he was. He was the one that hired us to play in his club. Used to be the Wellington's Lounge, you know, had a sort of water fountain in the middle. It was beautiful for a long time. But he needed more space when he started getting nice people playing in there, playing music people wanted to hear, he needed space so he took it out. *[laughter]*
- JS: Took the fountain out to make more room.
- FW: Yeah, Mel Hood and Sarge were two of the best.
- CT: I didn't know them; I knew *of* them.
- FW: Sarge also ran... Sarge also ran the enlisted men's club out at Fort Monmouth.
- CT: Went back to Fort Monmouth, okay.

FW: Yeah, you know, we played at Fort Monmouth. Before the changeover, you wouldn't get to play in the officers' club. So, they changed that. We played the officers' club whenever they couldn't find anybody.

CT: Changeover? What changeover?

FW: The enlisted men can go dine and dance with the officers, before the changeover. But before the enlisted men had their own area, and the officers had their own area. But the officers would have the type of entertainment that would keep people coming in and keep the place open. So, when they put them together, it worked. *[laughter]* You know, the song used to say, "Say it loud! I'm black and I'm proud!" Know that song?

CT: Yeah. James Brown.

FW: People came to the stage, yeah, came to the stage – "Where have you been? Where ya'll been?" I said, "What?" "We're having *[inaudible]*." I said, "Oh no, I ate. I thought ya'll was getting *[inaudible]*." "Ya'll gotta come back, come on, come on!" "No, I'm good." Before the changeover, you know.

JS: So when was that changeover?

FW: I don't remember the year, but I know it *[inaudible]*. You can Google it.

CT: End of the '60s.

JS: Dolores "Dee" Holland saying she played at the NCO and the officers club.

FW: Yeah, I did too. Yeah, I did too. They changed it over, you could play at only one. You can only get booked there by Sarge, and Sarge owns the off-broadway in Long Branch. See, me and Dee played two different types of music. She was into the jazzy type of things, and vocal stuff. I know, you gotta... what you call it? I never played that type of music. Could've, but you know, you had to be a special person to hang out with people that relied on you. *[laughter]* So, I didn't do much of that.

JS: Do you have recordings?

FW: No. I'm on Facebook. Dial me up as "Willie Wynn." Says, somebody put it on there, because I ain't got nobody. I said, "What's the point of doing this?" One of my old drummers, Breeze Raker, Breeze Raker put it on there. That's the only one. Him and a couple more, I don't know where they are right now. I'm getting ready to do some more stuff, but I'm going to do it live. I'm trying to put a radio station out there, but to do that, I need a radio antenna, because my reception's not coming through like it's supposed to,

and I don't like that. Just like having a defect when you're working on your PC. It goes out. So, I just got a new receiver a couple days ago.

JS: Do you use email a lot? What's the best way to follow up with you?

FW: You can call me on the phone. I have an email address, but half the time, I just delete what I don't know. Gotta put some stars or something to catch my attention.

JS: Can you give me your...?

FW: The email address is my name, [censored].

JS: I'll send it to you with some stars. *[laughter]* We'll send you this, so you can see it. If anything else comes to mind, just so you have... it'll come from "Ward, Jennifer." My maiden name is Ward, W-A-R-D.

FW: I'll be on the lookout, what, a couple weeks or a month?

JS: I'll say within two weeks, probably. Melissa does an amazing job of typing up everything we just said.

FW: I'm going to write this down, your name is...?

JS: I can write it down for you. Ward, my email, I mean. My last name is –

FW: Ward.

JS: Well, that's my maiden name. My last name is Souder. *[spells name, exchanges contact information]*

[End of Interview]

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