Lawrence Gilliam

Nov. 6, 2007

Driplolator Coffee Shop on Biltmore

Asheville, NC

This was an interview not recorded on tape, but tells us about Mr. Gilliam.

Mr. Gilliam was born in 1939; he had two brothers, the oldest of whom died in 2005. He has one son, 36 at this time and in Charleston, and one daughter, 33; who is currently a guidance counselor at Asheville H.S. His original home was Asbury Park, NJ, right on the ocean. His father was a Pullman Porter assigned to a run from New York City to Asheville.

At the age of 7, he moved with his parents to Asheville, where he attended St. Anthony of Padua elementary school, which had been founded by Franciscans in impoverished communities. His family lived in an area of single family homes. Pullman Porters made a comfortable amount of money, most of it from "hustling women and booze" for train passengers, especially those who used the route fairly regularly. Even during the Depression and W.W. II, Pullman Porters' families were fairly comfortable, and several lived on Blanton St. in an area where physicians, teachers, and other porters lived, many of whose houses were brick and substantial. In 1945, his father paid $8,000 for their house on Blanton, and there were no Caucasians on the street then. Now (2007) there are about 15 Caucasians. Young blacks can't afford houses here now, he observes. There are still 1-2 vacant lots around the Nasty Branch (which has been cleaned up and more or less largely buried, now running through pipes). This upper-middle housing neighborhood was next to a street for whites, the S. French Broad, where upper-middle class whites lived.

The African American kids did, however, have to walk through blighted areas to get to school. A trolley ran down Biltmore to the Vanderbilt House at that time. His father built four houses on Blanton, including their own. Even though he did not get past 4th grade, he was well read, and "eloquent." As a Pullman Porter, he was exposed to many types of professionals, and was well-read. He was able to be the architect and the contractor on those houses. His father worked 44 years and 10 months, and he speaks of his father with great admiration and respect.

After graduating from 8th grade, Mr Gilliam returned to Asbury Park between 1953 and 1957 where he went to high school. He attended a Presbyterian college in Charlotte, where as a freshman he finally encountered African American teachers.

Mr. Gilliam was inducted into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem in Washington D.C. because of his long-standing work at the Basilica of St. Lawrence.

St. Anthony's closed in 1970, and the African American pastor of St. Anthony's became a pastor at St. Lawrence. St. Anthony's was about 6 blocks west of where AB Tech is now, and at that time the AB Tech area was actually owned by the Archdiocese. St. Genevieve of the Pines was a girls' school known all over the Southeast for secretarial science, the entire faculty made up of nuns.

When he graduated from college in 1961, he enlisted with the Marines, since decent jobs for African Americans were hard to find and well-nigh impossible in Asheville. Most of his time in the Marines was in the Near and Far East, including doing clandestine operations in Cambodia. Mr. Gilliam is a Vietnam Vet, having exited Vietnam in 1967. He has been in Asheville since 1968. He did not have an easy time getting a job, even though he was a vet and had a master's degree in political science. It took personal contacts to get him a job carrying mail in the City-County building. There he met Bill Stanley, who was in charge of the Neighborhood Youth Corps who hired him. Then Neil Hanks, the executive director of Urban Renewal offered him a

job convincing people to sell their property to the City, but Mr. Gilliam backed out of the job. Mr. Hanks , from Mississippi, was a “nice guy.” He believes that his secretary, Marie Porter, is still alive.

Mr. Gilliam says that during “Urban Renewal,” houses were taken by the City, then destroyed, leaving vacant land, for there was no real plan,. The East Riverside Urban Renewal Program developed a program for buying a lot for $1.00, called the Dollar-a-lot program. The buyer had to build within one year and live in it for a certain number of years, but African Americans were suspicious of federal programs being offered them by the white government--his was the period, after all, of sit-ins, walks, etc. Larry Holt told Mr. G. about the program, and Mr. G. saw a track of land, a cul-de-sac and bought a lot on it, but it was too small for a house. So he had to buy the adjoining lot for its appraised value. He was the first to buy a lot on the cul de sac, and the 2nd to start construction. Since the street had no name, he had the right to choose a name for the street, so choose Gilliam Place. It now has four houses on it.

Mr. G. says all in all, he’s glad he reinvested in the neighborhood, but reinvestment “got bastardized” when spec builders were allowed in to build on the still vacant lots. In the 1970’s, construction slowed down and many vacant lots were still left. A program known as the “235 Loan Plan” for financing a home opened up, and most low-income homeowners used it. The homes were not as good a quality as the earlier ones, and it was a balloon payment plan. Hence when African Americans’ balloon rate kicked in, they could no longer make the payments and lost the property. Homes were foreclosed and speculators doubled their investment. for they built cheaper houses, not meant to last for decades, and the people who had the cash to invest were white. So they really made out selling to Blacks.

Dirt Asheland, Dirt Eagle St., Valley St.--these had a number of below-code houses--houses he referred to as shot gun houses (you could stand at the front door and aim a gun down the hallway and the shot could go out the back door)--houses

cheaply built by landlords, with no insulation, single pane glass. Nobody in the community knew what Urban Renewal meant, for very few had TV's and there was no time for local news and not many bought newspapers; they were a luxury. So people did not knew why the government was taking their house, and their children and grandchildren got upset. The hostility is still present.

Did people get fair market value for their houses? Probably not, but the money provided them an opportunity to get out of substandard into better dwellings. Some opted to buy other dwellings in predominantly white communities, including older homes in Montford. But when it was time to rehab those, people could not afford to do it for in the mean time, Montford was a historical district, and the African Americans could not afford to meet the historical designation's requirement. So those home were sold to whites.

In the meantime, property taxes were rising, parents who had bought the homes were dying, and their children did not want the houses, because there were not good jobs for African Americans in Asheville. So their children sold the houses and left town, looking for better jobs.

African Americans who stayed socialized in black fraternities and sororities and their churches.

. Another job he held after delivering mail was fighting drugs in Public Housing for ten years, where he wrote grants and developed plans trying to fight corruption and graft. In the 70's, construction slowed down and lots were still left vacant, even after the dollar a lot program. The next program allowed spec houses to be built of lower quality by white contractors. The "235 Loan Plan" for financing a home was aimed mostly at low-income homeowners, but the homes were not as good a quality. The plan offered balloon payments and when African Americans' balloon rate kicked in, they could not afford it and so lost their property through foreclosures. Speculators moved

in and doubled their investment. The name of Neil Hanks, Executive Director of Urban Renewal, came up in this context.

Mr. Gilliam is certified by the U.S. Equal Opportunities Commission to do investigations for discrimination in housing, under Title VII of the Discrimination Act. The owner of the Asheville Mall was investigated for discimination and fined $10,000 during this period. Then a job opened up in CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training) which provided training for job opportunities for underemployed and unemployed, particularly during the '70's and '80's. He was the only African American to hold a job as head of a system. But he was fired from that for largely racial and political patronage reasons. He managed a budget of about $28 million, and not one dime was ever missing in an audit. He says that the V.A. was the only employer that actually kept the African American apprentices sent by CETA.

Then he went four years without a job, but had supplemental income from the Janitorial Service he had started in 1968, where he still works three afternoons/evenings each week. He says that since about 1969, the three janitorial services in existence at the time were all owned by African Americans. His largest contract was in the Courthouse; another is with Ballard Appliances. It provides him with a solid income and he knows enough about the community to know whom to hire .

In the late 60's and early 70's a community coalition led by James Harrison and Kenneth Michalove developed plans to ease police and African American community relations. The Human Relations Council was also investigating civil rights disparities at the time, with George Gregg as its executive director then.

He maintains that the APD's current attitude about the drug problem of Asheville's African Americans is largely a "ruse", for there's general apathy in the APD about black on black crime, and only one African American has ever reached the lieutenant rank. .

He also observed that while Asheville gets much funding based on children who qualify for free and reduced-priced lunches, only 50% of those actually graduate from Asheville H.S.

Lawrence Gilliam

Date: Nov. 8, 2007

Place: in Mr. Gilliam's car, touring the neighborhoods

Karen VanEman: You said Black St. doesn't exist anymore?

Lawrence Gilliam: Black St. used to run--well I'll show you; it won't make sense right now , but once as soon as we start into that part of the East Riverside Development area, I can give you a general idea of the extent of Black St. and what's left of it as of today. That st. was closed when the properties were acquisitioned and demolished, and that land is used now for houses--public housing.

John St.--if I can think of anymore--I'll take you through the entire area.

KV: Dirt Asheland?

LG: It's Asheland Ave. now, but there was a section . . . .. You're forcing the low-income, economically disadvantaged people out of corporate city limits because of city taxes and ability to purchase homes and all that, and you take over with all of these condominiums and townhouses and downtown revitalization and the tourist industry--I just don't see the tourist industry being strong enough to support all this. And of course there's the Grove Park Inn, which has the largest room facilities in Asheville, and then next to that is Lake Junaluska Assembly, which is second only to Grove Park, and Lake Junaluska is like 45 miles away, but when you think of all these hotels around here, it's a nightmare.

KV: It's going to be a town just full of developers and the super rich.

LG: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. That's what's going to happen.

You know this is the Basilica of St. Lawrence. We lost our education building, which was right here-- that's a parking lot. The city threatened eminent domain if we didn't sell it. And that's a long story. They got it and then they got into it and found out that the granite and all is such that they would probably threaten the dome of the Basilica with the vibrations from the blasting. They can't go subterranean as they had planned to put 2 stories underground.

This property right here, that's the Chamber of Commerce Bldg., which is going to become a hotel. I keep wondering about all of this development. And of course you know this is south and as soon as we cross Patton Ave. we'll be in the East Riverside Dev. area. It starts right here.

KV: So Patton Ave. is the north end/boundary?

LG: Yeah, and a lot of people will say Hilliiard Ave. but there were a lot of single family homes on the right hand side of this st., down for years before the Industry for the Blind was here. Yeah, there were a lot of lovely single-family homes, like upper-middle class; oh yeah, lovely homes. Here, this gives you an idea of what they were like. This whole street, this is the street that was the racial divide as far as race. Whites lived on French Broad. One block over were blacks, that community started.

KV: Grove?

LG: Now Grove is blocked off a little bit. If I took a left right here and went one half a block, I could turn right and you'd be on Grove St., but that was blocked off when they redesigned.

This is Aston Park. This was single family homes for years. And what I'll do . . . I'll show you. And then you can see where public housing came in. Oh, there were lovely homes along here.

KV: What was the rationale?

LG: Well, just a high rise for seniors and people qualified for public housing. This is part of Grove St., but, to try to make you understand . . .see this was all redesigned in

the “Urban Renewal.” Now called Daley Drive. Ruben Daley was an African American attorney, and the 1st black in the history of Asheville to be elected to City Council. Yeah, and it’s called Daley Drive, and I’ll show you his house also. But see what I mean how the street is blocked off. Now this is Grove St.; this still is Grove St., but it went all the way to Hilliard Dr., and when they actually allowed commercial construction over [here], this st. was blocked off, so you don’t have Grove St. going all the way to Hilliard anymore. But ironically on the other side of this street is still Grove St. which is where the Unemployment Security Office is.

KV: Was this retail then?

LG: This was residential, all the way up to Patton Ave.

KV: How did the City justify the taking of the houses?

LG: Well, that was a part of it. See, all these were single-family homes in here. This doctors’ facility bought the house that was here; that was a single family home.

KV: We’re looking at a parking lot on Grove.

LG: This is sort of new the way this comes in. Now we’re looking at Daly Drive. This is Grove St. We’re back on Grove St.

KV: I didn’t realize.

LG: We refer to it as S. Grove St.--in fact that’s what it is; that’s because the other Grove St. is on the other side of Patton Ave. And Morgan St. was always here.

KV: And that area that looks industrial--was that always here? [on Asheland]

LG: No, those were homes. All of these buildings are new. This was all part of E. Riverside Urban Redevelopment. This house was owned by-- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, these 6 houses were deemed standard and met the City code, so they did not sell; I think they had an option to sell out, but the families opted to stay there. [We’re looking at houses with addresses in the 160’s here].

Now you asked about Nasty Branch; it started coming off right in here, but it’s all underground here. At one time it was wide open, but it’s covered now.

KV: So it starts out behind 140?

LG: And everything here is a part of urban renewal. These are homes that were replaced after the land was acquisitioned and torn down; all of these are new all with the exception of two houses. All of these are new, with the exception. of this house currently under construction; and that lady fought it so hard. Her husband was a Pullman Porter, also. These two are older homes.

KV: These are nice-looking--195, and the one to the right of it.

LG: Now these houses here, these houses are all a part of urban renewal You can tell that these two--you can tell that these brick houses. The appraisal was based on comparables in the Neighborhood. So we spent, say, $65,000 for the houses that we built, but then some guys came in and put them in for probably $38-42,000., but the appraised value on 'em put them up to $65,000. So all of this is urban renewal. This one's not.

KV: [Those brick houses were 203 and 201.]

LG: These houses here are all new, and then this S. Grove is what we just left, but we're on S. Grove right now , but now it's Blanton St.--Blanton St. starts right here.

Now one of the guys, one of the nicest houses built originally is right here; he worked for the railroad. He was a diesel mechanic. All of these [others] are new--this is a part of urban renewal This is Gilliam Place [Gilliam goes off of Blanton; Gilliam is a new cul-de-sac from urban renewal period, when a person could bid on a lot, and Mr. Gilliam acquired adjacent lots and it was turned into a cul-de-sac] -- this is where I live [a newer house]. Now this house here is one of the older homes that was grandfathered in--that guy is a Pullman Porter, and he's still alive. (That's 51 Blanton). And then this is a cul-de-sac. All the houses here were built and occupied by the people who built them. These are not spec homes in this cul-de-sac. This street, that's probably on the map, named Dewitt--Dewitt is one block over--anyway, Dewitt is directly behind these houses right here. Dewitt St. is a st. that was single-family homes.

This st. was a part of what once was called S. Grove. This has been reconfigured. And that's no. 10 where I live.

KV: That's nice; great yard.

LG: We used to work together, and I told her about it and. . . she bought 2 lots too . John Davis was a Pullman Porter and a photographer. All of these houses are new--all a part of urban renewal. This is one of the original homes; I don't know who owns it.

KV: I can't see the no. on it.

LG: This is Phifer St. and all of Phifer. St.--this house was grandfathered in, and then that house--[The house that was Hart Funeral Home.] This house is new. This was an African American st.; these houses here (23, 21, 10, 19, 8) were all grandfathered in. This house is part of urban renewal. Now this is S. Fr. Broad; this was all white at urban renewal time. And Vernell St. is right here, it goes off of French Broad; there are a lot of older homes there, but Vernell--keep in mind that it was an all-white community.

KV: So they lost fewer homes?

LG: Yes--just fact--nothing personal in this right now; I'll let you know if i'm biased. This was all Phifer St.; it was all single family homes on both sides.

KV: This would have been African American.

LG: This is Hart Funeral Service. This is Phifer St., and this is where Dr. Otis Michael lived. This st. has been reconfigured.

This is Asheland Ave. Asheland Ave. back to the crest of the hill--this was all African American homes

KV: solid?

LG: And when we first started across Fr. Broad--they were all white. On this side, was part of what we called Dirt Asheland.

KV: So are you're saying that Asheland Ave. was reconfigured then? And paved?

LG: Yes. And Asheland Ave. was single family homes from here, it's a different configuration. In fact it was straight line; they curved it to make it go into McDowell .

But when I first came to Asheville, my father's house was about right in here, and all of these were single-family homes on both sides of the street, from about this yellow stake up, where there was a school, that was called Asheland Ave. School,.an elementary school for Black kids. [We're looking at the area where Asheville Family Medical Ctr is now for the school.]

Right here that was single family homes all owned by whites, all the way to Patton Ave.

KV: from Skill Creations on north?

LG: Correct. Now I'm going back down and have to turn but Morgan goes on; Where we are right now directly across was the school called Asheland Ave. School.

KV: We're parked at Skill Creations on Asheland Ave.

LG: From here on down was single family homes all owned by African Americans. And this corner (of Morgan and Asheland) was a street called Silver St., and that was where the corner neighborhood grocery store was. And you can't -- O.K.-- The Nasty Branch as we call it falls this way

KV: [Specifically, down the hill--south--we're headed south on Asheland.]

LG: And again all these were single family homes owned by Blacks, on both sides of the street. But the street was actually straight into then what we call Dirt Asheland. The paving stopped right here at Phifer St. And actually--I'm going to take you on the back side so you can see it and appreciate what I'm talking about. Can you see the concrete abutment right there? That was the bridge for Phifer St.; you had to cross a bridge because of the Nasty Branch. So Nasty Branch is still there but it's underground, under this cul-de-sac. And this was called Dirt Asheland. . . . But, see the street?

KV: We're looking out the far end of Hart Funeral Service where a blockade prevents one from driving through onto a street.

LG: But if you can see that street and if you can imagine, that was part of the street [of Asheland], and it was all dirt, and it was a straight line right through to that concrete

abutment, and the Branch is still below that. I'm going to take you to where you can still see a part of it. Where it's there, and you can see that the elevation is different from what you see at Choctaw and McDowell, but this was the original.

And had we been able to go out that gate [at the funeral home], the home that was displaced-- from right here--they just picked it up from here and moved it a block over. But this is--will give you a feel for the --its real name is Cripple Creek--but the Nasty Branch is directly under where these cars are now. And if you lined up with the concrete abutment that I was pointing out to you, that was part of the bridge that was at Phifer Street. And when they put in the new Phifer St., they widened it, and that's when they took the house out.

Hart Funeral Service is one of the ones that benefited from the urban renewal package because Hart F. Service was on French Broad, and keep in mind that French Broad had these lovely, elegant houses, and the mortuary/funeral home was actually in one of those houses. And when the high rise, when they acquisitioned property to build the high rise, naturally he was displaced so he built it here. And this was Brown Temple Church; now this is new. The older church was very elegant, brick--now we're on Blanton St. now.

KV: Was there a church then? was it acquisitioned?

LG: They just had to do some work. There was a branch that flowed through here--You can see remnants of it, that flowed into the Nasty Branch.

This house was grandfathered in. [on Blanton] All of these are older homes that were here originally --now keep in mind that this was an affluent community for African Americans. This particular house right here [97 Blanton]--just a bit of history --is the birthplace and the home of the noted civil rights attorney James Ferguson. He's in Charlotte now. He's with Ferguson Stine and Becton. They got racially bombed out in Charlotte. He's noted for his civil rights cases. In fact he won a major multimillion dollar law suit in racial discrimination and actually gave a million dollars to the NAfrican

AmericansCP Legal Defense Fund. But that's the birthplace [97 Blanton]. And this was the home of the Rev. Robinson--I don't remember his first name. And I'll show you the remnants of his church. But these homes were quality to the point that there was no reason to acquisition or demolish them

KV: [we're looking at a massive house numbered 102 on Blanton].

LG: Now this street did not exist until urban .renewal and the name Talulah--is the lady--the house that I showed you is currently under construction. She was the dissenting figure and very eloquent and loquacious in her refusal to let urban renewal take her away from here. So she stayed until she died.

KV: So she got the street named after her?

LG: Yes, it was named in her honor posthumously.

Now these homes were here; it's what we called Dirt Asheland. [The street sign says "Old Asheland".] But it was Dirt Asheland. And you can see that at one time, these were very elegant homes. For some reason, this property is owned by heirs, and they won't sell it and nobody can agree on it so that's why there isn't any house there. This is obviously newer construction here (this is where Nasty Branch is, on our left) . See all of these are newer homes in here. Now this particular--the reason I brought you here--this was a blighted community, except for the one house back there. And when I say "blighted," it was substandard, tenant-type construction, apartment complex-type construction that was poorly, poorly constructed. And they've lowered it--because the Nasty Branch is down that side, but this would have run into Southside -- it's parallel to Southside Ave., now called McDowell. But McDowell didn't start at that time. But I thought I'd bring you around here. But this was all dirt, it was called Dirt Asheland.

KV: And yet it had nice houses on it.

LG: Yes. And the Nasty Branch is--can you see the dip--just past the trees? That's still the Nasty Branch; as you get further down, it's still covered over, but then it opens back up. And you see they refer to it as Old Asheland. Talulah Lane didn't exist.

KV: And it [the creek] would have gone straight through where the Hart Funeral property is.

LG: Now this is the house that is the birthplace of Dr. Otis Michael; that's the one that was moved from over there to right here .

KV: This is the house on the corner of Talulah and Blanton on the southeast corner.

LG: O.K. all of these were homes--that was a Pullman Porter [112 Blanton].

LG: Is he deceased?

LG: Oh yeah, many years ago. These were two educators [114 and the one to the left of it]. All right, this house has been renovated. These were demolished and single home construction put up, so that's new. That one was grandfathered in (115 Blanton), also a school teacher. This one's a Pullman Porter home [at the corner of Bartlett and Blanton with the "For Lease" sign on it]. This home was owned by a mortician (other corner of Bartlett and Blanton). That house was constructed prior to urban renewal and owned by an educator. The legacy there--are you familiar with the story about the Delaney Sisters? The book was Having our Say. Logan Delaney was their nephew who actually built that house and lived there. He and his wife, Francine Delaney School--all right, that's where they lived. They're both deceased now. All right, this house was owned by a Pullman Porter (137 Blanton). This lady was mysterious; nobody knows what she did. She didn't work, stayed to herself, very reclusive, but she had beautiful wild cherry trees and a beautiful grape arbor in the back [143 Blanton]

KV: And she's deceased?

LG: Oh, yes, many years ago. This house was a Pullman Porter (146). This is the house my father built.

KV: We're looking at brick houses when he's referring to Pullman Porter houses here.

LG: This is the home--she's not home, or I'd have called her to have a cup ot tea with us. This is the home of Dr. Galigo (?SP). (148). His daughter Louise still lives there. And she's the widow of Osmun Hart of Hart Funeral Service. The house that was here

was so substandard (153) that they had to tear it down. This one was grandfathered in, and the people that owned it were in food service, domestic kind of work. But Blanton St. as you can see, all of these homes are original, all of these. This particular house here was owned by a family, Camp, who actually owned the largest African American hotel in this town for years, which was on Southside.

KV: I can't see the number, but it's brick with green frame.

LG: So this was like the rich neighborhood Same thing here-- I can't remember the dynamics of everybody. But this one here is brand new. You can see that at one time, these were very elegant, well-taken care of and the whole bit. As you noticed people didn't have big yards then because they cut the grass using push mowers then, by hand, so . . .

This actually went into what was called Southside, not Choctaw [now it's called Choctaw]. They've extended that; this was called Southside, and Southside is where Dirt Asheland ran into Southside and went further out. And this is elevated; this is not the original Southside.

KV:: But we're on what is called Choctaw right now.

LG: Right. These homes are new in here, but this is the famous Nasty Branch we've been talking about--[Choctaw is running parallel to Nasty Branch at this point and Congress runs between Choctaw and Livingston]. This is Congress St. Street level was much lower than this [before all the reconfiguring that came with the Riverside urban renewal project]. Street level was ten feet from that branch. You could - - - I remember as a kid going to school, I would come down Blanton St. [which runs into the current Choctaw]--the streets don't exist like they did when I came here-- and I remember one day as we were walking to school, there was a dead body in here. It was a natural death--wasn't a murder or anything--the guy just toppled over in there. This ran from where I showed you--now you can see the terrain and the depth of what's there and that branch was probably ten to fifteen feet at the highest level, street level.

KV: So was there a bridge here then?

LG: Oh yes, there was a bridge to get over.

And this Congress St. is original, but it's much more elevated [now] than what it used to be. And all of this is East Riverside [urban renewal project], but these homes also were ones that were very much up to snuff so they weren't destroyed; they weren't acquisitioned. But you can see how it looks and how wide it is and it's channeled--its real name is Crippled Creek--and how they channeled all that water and dug culverts to redesign everything.

KV: So the houses up Congress, a lot of them have stayed?

LG: Oh yes, all of them. I think there's only two homes up there that are not original, that were constructed after. In fact I think, I know this to be a fact, that most of them are post East Riverside. Gaston St. is not the real Gaston St. That's reconfigured.

KV: We're at the corner of Gaston and Congress.

LG: But that's not the original Gaston. This all was urban renewal-redesigned. Along this side now called Choctaw [then] was called Southside, which was down close to the branch. And everything in here was totally, totally substandard.

This is Adam St., and Adam St. actually went into Southside; it did not go into Choctaw. Choctaw is an extension from McDowell over, and all of these homes are original homes that were all occupied by Blacks and basically well cared for. This is post urban renewal right there.

KV: But this is an original starting again at 42?

LG: Yes, all of these are. These were elegant homes. This home [38] was owned by a Pullman Porter, and this home--now that's new [27 and 28]. This one [23] was owned by a minister; his church was over on Herman Ave. This is the same way--this one was here, so all of this what you can see, was elegant at the time

KV: I can't see a number for it; it's right behind the stone church.

LG: St. Luke's Church. This-- the same way. This is one of the elegant homes, with balconies and the whole bit.

And then this is Bartlett St. (all African Americans here). Now this, Bartlett St. actually went straight, straight right through this property line down to what we called Dirt Asheland. And this was all single family homes, with the exception of one, and I'll show you in just a minute. All these are single family homes, and this particular home, this one here was a school for African American women to learn cosmetology. (55 Bart;ett) Stewart's School of Cosmetology. The woman here was very enterprising, going back to the Madame C.J. Walker concept. She lived upstairs and she had a school downstairs, and they actually came there and did their work and got their certifications. This was the home of a very prominent person/family that went into the insurance business--N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co. Austen was the name.

KV: It's to the left of 55, driving west.

LG: These were all single family homes that were all original. Keep in mind at this corner, at this intersection, is where the Black community stopped, the white community starts at French Broad. This church [corner of French Broad and Bartlett] was a white church. [Verick Chapel now.] One year-- the year that Gerald Ford came to Asheville, he was invited by a guy who met him at some event who said, 'If you ever come to Asheville"--I'm paraphrasing--' come to see me.' And he actually took him up on it. The guy was with the Asheville City School Board, who still lives there right now. His name is Roy Harris. And one day the President actually came to see him. And it was amazing--the security and all the preliminary stuff that took place before the President got here, including securing that church and everything across the street and everything else before he actually came in.

Now if you crossed, there was a home here that was actually African American [owned].

KV: We're looking at a vacant lot at the corner of S. French Broad and Bartlett.

LG: All of this is where the blacks and whites split. All of these homes here were grandfathered in and they were all owned by whites.

KV: We're looking down S. French Broad.

LG: All of these homes. That was Dr. Harrison (278). This is city councilman Ruben Daly , the one of Daly Drive. He built that house there. His wife was in the city school system.(272). None of that was here then.

You mentioned Vernell St. and this is Vernell St. All these homes were occupied by whites and now occupied by African Americans. But you can see the size and the architecture and get some feel.

KV: Wow, look at the size and the fretwork around the windows on that one, #7.

LG: And none of these were a part of the acquisitioned process, and they didn't bother these homes. And the truth is, I can't really say that they were really disparate; the truth is that they were really quality. That's the back of Asheville Middle School. But now when that school was built, that school was built to replace the Stephens Lee H.S., so it was all Black when it was first opened.

KV:The all black h.s.

LG: Yes, up until '69. Now all of this commercial in here was occupied by very low income African Americans and a few whites, poor whites, who lived in substandard dwellings in there. And that particular settlement, if you talk to anybody who's over 65 years old, they're going to call it "Mud Cut" because of the water flow and drainage, it was constantly muddy there, and the streets weren't paved and all of that. So that was referred to as Mud Cut.

KV: Oh, look at the lay of the land. I can imagine,

LG: Yes, you can see how it all goes downhill.

KV: So did Vernell kind of go through or what?

LG: It went around to a dead end before the school was built, but when the school was built they blocked it off.

KV: And how did people get in and out of Mud Cut?

LG: From the Depot St. side. We're going to go down to the Depot St. side. And [they got in and out] from the Bartlett St. side.

KV: And now we're headed south on French Broad.

LG: And basically you know I'm coming from --all of this was white all the way down. I'm going to go . . . . Now all of these homes were owned by whites before urban renewal; now they're owned by Af. Americans. You can look at the architecture design and see the quality. And then there was substandard dwellings in this area; that was a st. that went down into Mud Cut also. That was one of the ways of getting in. It was dirt, and just to give you some feel (We're on Bartlett St. now), and that's the Bartlett Arms Apts. This was all blighted, and ironically, as I told you part of the property that was in this area was owned by Blacks and part by poor whites. So that's how that came about. And then this neighborhood (towards JerOrr St.) after urban renewal started, you had the white flight, when Blacks started coming in, so this is Jer St. that we're going to John St. on.

But this is new--well, you can pretty much tell by the architecture of the homes.

These two homes are new (85 and 88); you have a migration; now whites are starting to come back into the neighborhood. This church was a white church. This property here was substandard that was acquisitioned and demolished and this was a care facility for the mentally and physically challenged. They raised so much opposition throughout other communities, they silently, clandestinely put it in the Black community. This street--Ralph St.-- was occupied by Blacks all along both sides of the street, and they were all demolished.

KV: And there's absolutely nothing on one side of the street here.

LG: They truly were justified because it was blighted. And you'll see remnants of--well you can't see it from here. I'll go down and come back up.

KV: Now we're on Ralph St.

LG: See the culvert? Now that's the Nasty Branch. See the Nasty Branch goes straight down to the French Broad River

KV: but there would have been houses along here?

LG: Oh yes along both sides.

KV: They got rid of a lot of houses, didn't they?

:G Oh yeah, there were a lot.

KV: And that's a whole parking lot.

LG: There would have been homes all along there. That part, we would have been on Southside, which would have been Black. It wouldn't have been French Broad the way it's configured now.

O.K. this is Jer St. ([that's the house where the challenged are], and this st. is John St. And John St. is in close proximity to Ralph St., so along here on John St. was an African American community and it was all substandard. So the Housing Authority, after everything was acquisitioned and demolished, actually bought the land and constructed public housing. All of this is new and destined for people who came in. This is back to the dollar-a-lot program I told you about. All of these were dollar-a-lot homes in here. And this side is public housing. But these were homes, I mean this was substandard in here. This is part of urban renewal. These homes were here white-owned, white-occupied (158- and 154) on John St.

Now we're on Bartlett St. This is new construction, and this is new construction-- part of urban renewal. That's part. See the old steps? That's original. Now this was white-- this neighborhood was white, both sides of the street. That house was acquisitioned and demolished and that's new, but you can see the walkway and everything that went with the original. That home is original.

KV: That's a beauty!

LG: And then there were homes here, but they got demolished along both sides of the street.

KV: We're looking at a huge vacant lot here on our right.

LG: And I've already showed you Ralph St. Tthat was all black, but it's all gone now.

KV: There are no homes on Ralph St.

LG: Yes, there are no homes on Ralph St.

Now we're on Depot St. and it was all commercial as it is now. The Hotel--I'll pull over--this is a little bit of history, a little bit of tribute--this particular facility right here which is being renovated to something else, used to be a store that was called the Sends. And it basically catered to the railroad community. Everything from food to clothing to whatever, and the railroad people, including their children --and we're in very close proximity to the St. Anthony school I wanted you to see--could come there and just by visual i.d. my mom could say, "I want 5 lbs of sugar and a ham and 3 doz. eggs and the whole bit and just sign her name and walk out. And come payday, the railroad, the Pullman Porters, and everyone that worked for the railroad would just come there and pay their bills. The Train Station itself--we're going to pass this where the Train Station was--in fact in the flood of 1900 or whatever it was, the water was over 40 feet into the Train Station. So that hundred year flood thing HAS been in effect. This particular bldg. on the left was called the Glen Rock Hotel. Now with that in mind [the corner st. is Depot after it curves], the Train Station sat right in here.

I can't tell you how many times in my life I came here to get on the train with my mother and my brothers going back to N.J. And we had to ride the Jim Crow car--you know the Blacks were relegated to this one car--it was always at the end of the train.

KV: Just one car?

LG: Yeah. And you know it had the steam engine which was fired by coal, so when the train was blowing off all that black smoke, guess which car it was coming back in. And we didn't have air-conditioning back then, so you had to close the windows to keep from getting soot and all of that in, or if somebody had them open and you sat down on a seat in the next run, you can imagine what your clothes looked like. But what would

happen, my father--and all Pullman Porters did this--it was that fraternal thing I told you about. We had to ride in the Jim Crow car until we got to Greensboro, N.C., and Greensboro is where they did what they called a "switch." They changed engines and cars that were going different places, because it was a combination of passenger and commercial. Then when they hooked the Pullman car in Greensboro, my father would come get us and take us to the Pullman car, and then we would have Pullman car all the way to N.Y. But we couldn't eat in the dining room but we ate the best because all of the cooks were black and all of the waiters were black, and they would fix up bountiful platters and my father would bring them in and we'd have a royal feast in the room. And of course the toilet facilities were there, and all the sleeping facilities were there, so we got treated better than the folks who were paying.

The Glen Rock--directly across the street is the Train Station. The Glen Rock--the folks who were traveling on trains or worked the railroad that didn't live in Asheville would get rooms there or HAD rooms there. Now I told you yesterday about the prostitution and the alcohol, where Pullman Porters made their money; the black Pullman Porters were not allowed to go in there. But there were a lot of white prostitutes who worked for the Pullman Porters. So if they worked their way, say, from Richmond VA to Asheville, and gonna' work their way back, when they got off the train here, they worked in the Glen Rock Hotel until time to go back out. Now with that in mind, all of that up here was totally substandard dilapidated occupied by blacks, all the way up hill, referred to as Depot Hill, and it went all the way up the hill. And the Blacks would come down onto the railroad and scavange coal from the droppings that were thrown off, and used that to heat their homes with. And they acquisitioned and demolished all of that and put in public housing. All the way entire, up to the top of the hill. But now we're going to stop and see if James Green is in. I hope he has his book with him.

[Arrival at Green's Mini-Mart on Depot St.] Mornin' Mr. Green. How you doing?

James E.Green: "I'm here." [laughs; chatter between Mr. James E. Green and Mr. Gilliam]

Mr. Gilliam: Here are some treasured things about East Riverside.

Mr. Green: Here's some stuff collected by Mountain Housing, actually for appraisals, when they were acquiring these properties around here. No, not Mountain Housing--the Housing Authority, for Urban Renewal. This [referring to pictures] is of the homes they bought and tore down and relocated the people. These are grown people now. This is the neighborhood right around here right now. Wilson Alley doesn't exist anymore, but we know exactly where it is; it runs directly behind this building.

LG: She was asking about Nasty Branch and I showed her where it starts up.

[Looking at photos in an album of Mr. Green's:] Mr. Green: It actually starts up on Tunnel Road.

KV: Oh, did it?

JG: It still does. Tell you how they found that out. One day we had a fish kill back there. so I called the Wildlife Dept., and they said the water actually comes all the way from Tunnel Rd so they don't know what could have gotten in there. Something got them [the dead fish].

This is Jesse Ray, Sr., his son works at UNCA, Jesse Ray, Jr. And Ray, he was a mortician who went to Europe in W.W.II to reclaim and send the remains back to the U.S., and I don't even know how accurate this is, but the story is that that's how he financed his mortuary, which is now Ray-Allen Associates. That's the original Jesse Ray.

JG: They brought to me some highlights, but I'll show you somebody else and you see if you can guess who it is.

LG: : That'll give you a great feel for what some of the homes looked like. I don't know who that is.

Green: That's not the man; you'll know who I'm talking about when I get to him. (Tape is turned off while people chatter and laugh.)

LG: [Back in car] That hotel would be about right here, and this would have been South-side, the lower part., so all of this was business and the hotel was there, commercial and hotel and residential, on what was called Southside Ave. that does not exist anymore. Probably [ran to] the level of the Fire Dept. [the fire dept.building now on French Broad as it approaches Depot] Now this is referred to as Depot Hill and the blighted community . . .

KV: we've turned right, off of Depot, into public housing

LG: was all in this area, every where. There's a drug dealer there; he's waiting because he doesn't know this car, so he's waiting. But you don't have to have any fear or anything; what people don't understand is that drug dealers don't want any trouble, nor do they want any attention. He just wants to sell the dope. So he's not going to attack anybody.

This barrier there was created by man when they put this construction in because it actually is a drop-off straight down to the railroad tracks. I was telling you earlier that people who lived here used to go down and take a sack and pick up coal to heat up their homes with, straight off the railroad tracks and this goes all the way up the hill. And it's just amazing. And if I had to argue, were these people fairly displaced, my answer would have to be yes, because the quality of life, the substandard housing was such that it didn't mean that they didn't own their property, and it doesn't mean that it elevated the integrity, but just the basic essentials of electrical and plumbing--just that norm itself was poor at best. So when they took this out, it was fair.

And this construction really is quality construction. I've had relatives come in from NY and NJ and my son and my daughters who had friends in some of this complexes, and they thought it was private property, compared to Brooklyn, Harlem and the Queens and places like that.

Now all of this, I'm going to take you a tour through here [we're going up hill on Depot around Palmer St.]. All of this here [gesturing] was substandard housing also. But these homes were nice--these were all black owned. All of this community was black, this entire community. And the homes were nice--that [street] goes again down to the railroad. It's now a dead end. These homes were well-kept, well-maintained

KV: [we're still on Depot, just past Scott].

LG: These are all original. This home here was one of the homes of the owner--the family who lived there owned one of the nicest restaurants for African-Americans in Asheville, and that restaurant was on Eagle St.

KV: the Ritz?

LG: No, no, on the other side. It was called the Royal Garden. But all of this here [moving on] was blighted. This is all public housing now. We'll just step out so you can get a better feel for what we're talking about. See how close they were in proximity to the railroad? So what the people living along here would do, they would just go down the hill to the railroad. See, there are even coal cars down there now. But keep in mind then, the engines were steam engines, and this thing was powered by-- fueled by-- coal, so they had easy access to send the kids down to get a bag of coal for the night or the whatever, just picking it up off of the tracks. Or I'm sure that they probably had to climb up into the bins.

KV: Is that Riverside way over there?

LG: That is Riverside Dr, and the French Broad River. This was all black, all blighted. There was one man who owned, I would call it a stable; he was very enterprising. But the guy actually had mules, not horses, but mules. And it was about in this area right here. And he had this team of mules and a wagon and he plowed all the gardens in the community for everybody.

And this shows you how history goes; I don't remember the year, but I'm guessing it was about 1949, 1950; there might be a date on here. Nope, no date. In any

case, this is called Walton St. Pool. That pool was built around 1949 or 1950. That was THE pool and THE bathhouse for Blacks in the city, paid for by City Parks and Recreation. And here, some sixty years later or whatever, it hasn't changed. It's the exact same configuration, same bathhouse. . . nothing [to improve it]. I was on the City Parks and Rec. Advisory Board when this part was built through the Outdoor Recreational Funds. This is the only regulation Little League baseball field and regulation softball field in the corporate City limits that's lighted. And for the longest it wasn't even even utilized by the Black community; and I think that since the organization of it, now you don't even have that many black kids playing in it anymore.

Now I'm going to show you the famous St. Anthony's Catholic School that we were talking about. The vast majority of income for these people in this community as I remember was high, as I told you--[this belonged to] the lady who owned the restaurant called the Royal Garden.

KV: [this is the blue house on Depot; the blue house is next to 561]

LG:: The rest of these I think are hospital and VA Hospital workers I think. But this st. is all African American, and this is Walton St. All of these homes, a lot of these, were skilled artisans, bricklayers, carpenters, were the ones that owned these houses. This Quonset hut was built in 1946 or something like that; I saw it go up as a kid in the elementary school. This was the parsonage for the priest, the Franciscan priest who came, and where the nuns stayed.

KV: [no. 55 is where the nuns stayed, and the parsonage for the priest is right across the street.] Why'd they put up the Quonset hut?

LG: That was the most financially astute thing they could have done; this little school didn't have--there were eight grades in there, four classrooms. And it went first through eighth. But the first and second were together, third and fourth, fifth and sixth, seventh and eighth. But there was no indoor recreational facility at all, nor was there any kind of lunchroom facility. So somehow, the Franciscan priest got money from the north to

construct--you know quonset huts were cheap back then--that was a W.W.II concept. And he got that in, so everybody thought we were in Paradise, to have a cafeteria and a basketball place. But many, many of the better kids academically that came out of Asheville came out through it-- St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School. See, 1936. I was born in 1939 and came to Asheville in 1945.

KV: still looks pretty solid.

LG: Oh, yeah. Now we're still in E. Riverside Urban Renewal area. These homes again were constructed and owned by African Americans's and as I said, most of the income of these were guys who were in the building and construction industry: carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers, painters. So you can see that there was a really nice quality of life. I still remember one of my very good friends to this day, we were at the golf course caddying one time, and we came home through Biltmore Forest--we were at Biltmore Forest Country Club--and he walked in and he found his father dead. His father committed suicide. His father became a quadriplegic when a tank bomb exploded in W.W.II. He was very abusive and the whole bit, but the pain was so excruciating that he just ended up committing suicide.

[that was at no16 Walton.]

KV: This is a vacant lot.

LG: This was a home that got demolished. Again this has something to do with heir property. I don't know anything about it. This was a very prominent family who were also Pullman Porters [no. 2]. Yeah, this is Hibernia and Walton. Now I'm going to divert you from Urban Renewal for just a minute, E. Riverside. But this community here, all this in the back was African American. This back street goes back to where we just came out at the swimming pool. Now the people who built this house, which has been just recently renovated, owned a small grocery store--African American.

KV: 115; beautiful stone-built house.

LG: That in the back is brand new. All these homes along here were owned--this one was a mortician; that's one of those guys who went over seas to send back remains--that's where he made his real money. The guy who owned this one, his name was Daugherty; his son lives there now. He owned the first black cab company in Asheville--John Daugherty was his name.

KV: [can't see the no, but this is a brick house we're looking at here.]

LG: I don't remember all of these people. This house here [no. 93[was owned by the longest reigning coach for the Black H.S. --Stephens-Lee H.S., Clarence Moore.

This home here, ironically, this is now a bed and breakfast, was owned by a Black family, and it is huge. You can't see it from here; I'll show you the back side of it later, but it is huge. This guy here, this particular house [near corner of Oakland and Erskine], was owned by Lacey Haith. Lacey Haith got his master's degree at the Univ. of Michigan. He taught industrial trades--carpentry, bricklaying, and that at the high school. And when he got ready to buy this house, the bank would not loan him the money because the bank said that no Black man should have a house that size and own that tract of land that he owned. And he said, 'Thanks, I just needed something to tell my wife.' But he owned all of this land.

KV: We're looking at no. 83 Oakland here

LG: But anyway this is the Lacey Haith house. He also contributed--he saved the YMI Cultural Ctr individually. He's the guy who put up the money to save the YMI from demolition. He's been deceased for about ten years. These are single family, African American homes.

KV: Nice large houses here

LG: Pullman Porter (no. 67). This was Lucy Herring, of the Lucy Herring Elementary School, where the Asheville City School Administrative offices are now. This was a Pullman Porter here (no. 63)--McQueen, Coonie McQueen; He was the one used to own the Ritz restaurant [Walton St. to Haith's house].

[Haith Dr.] Haith owned all of this property, so he started building homes himself; he constructed that home first and it was owned by Dr. David Hall, a dentist, African American (number. 12) This whole community was African American. He built all of these all the way around. So that's where his wealth came from, all of this land and the whole bit. The second house he built was this house right here, owned by Clifford Eddington. [no. 4, Haith Lane] Clifford Eddington is one of the sons--I was telling you about the first Black minister of the Presbyterian Church across from the Stephens Lee Gym? Clifford Eddington was one of the sons also.

Now the other reason I brought you here is, everything else from this property line that wasn't owned by the Catholic Church was owned by AB Tech. I mentioned the Smith-McDowell Home? And all of this in here when Haith bought it was apple orchards in that area. He sold the lots, he developed them, and when he retired from teaching school he was making $13,000 /year, but he made his money from buying land and constructing homes. All of this was vacant. But I told you yesterday about St. Genevieve of the Pines and secretarial skills; all of this property to the left [turning onto Oakland], every bit of this was St. Genevieve of the Pines. This is new construction. in here. But this property was owned by them [theArchdiocese]. This was the St. John Hall, the seminary. Now AB Tech.

Oh there it is, do you see the little white house back in there? That was the summer home of the Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh. The Catholic Church owned all this property. It [the house] tied into the Smith-McDowell House, which is right there, the oldest house in Asheville. The single homes in here--I think the wealthiest family in here was really the Radeker family, But all of this was owned by St. Genevieve's [the Catholic Diocese and looking up Victoria Rd.] And I'll show you more, back in the E. Riverside Urban Renewal area.

This is Erskine Ave. All of this neighborhood was predominantly Black, but it wasn't densely populated, and historically it was black. These homes have been here --

I got to find my bearings--this is pre-urban renewal, all of these homes are. This particular home (# 33) and this home (#35) were both owned by a Pullman Porter. And the Porter's wife started a floral business, and they had a grocery store on Black St. Now Black St. would have been about where those two trucks are going down the hill.

KV: And Black St's no longer there?

LG: There's a little section down there, but not much. See the proximity to the Catholic School property? Now my father owned land around here. This right here is the home of the late Dr. John Holt, who was buried about three weeks ago, with the Asheville City School Board probably his major contribution. Then in his humble way--look where he lived. Now he could have lived in North Asheville, anywhere, but he opted to be in the community. None of these homes existed.

KV [We're at the barricade and on the other side is public housing.]

LG: This was done to stop the access and egress of drug dealers; you've got one way in and one way out, right now so if they want to run in a vehicle and come here and they're just caught. That was one of my designs when I worked in Drugs in Public Housing.

My dad owned [land] from right here all the way over to Livingston St. Everything on this side of the street [across from Dr. Holt's house]. You know I was telling you why they honored him? Can you see the Stop sign? That would have been part of Black St. KV: And the grocery store would have been down the st.?

LG: Can you get a better feel seeing it?

KV: Indeed.

LG: Mrs. Herring--I told you about Lucy Herring the educator that the school was named after. And her son actually went to Tuskegee and actually was a Tuskegee Airman.

KV: [We're at the corner of Oakland and Erskine. It's a largely brick house.]

Haith had a magnificent place there--their house is 100 ft. long, and the basement is just as long as the house. When they started renovating this house [he's pointing at a different house, a stone house], they found bags of money in it--in the walls and every place. Yeah, it was unreal. Angel was the name of the people.

This is Hibernia, that went into Black St. There were houses on both sides of the street, all substandard; all of this with the exception of one home that was very nice, well kept, (no. 30) and the guy here--his wife worked at the V.A. Hospital and he was a Pullman Porter. This house here, that family--the reason there's a 3-car garage there, is that he started a cab company, and he bought a luxury Packard vehicle, and they have three Packards still in there. His wife won't do anything with them, won't sell them or anything. But that was--he was very enterprising. He also had a laundromat in some other building he owned on what was Southside.

This was Water St., again a very low-income, economically disadvantaged people. This is just the back of Oakland Rd., but this is the back of the house I was telling you was a bed and breakfast, which is right there, which is huge. This little house here (no. 46) is the first house I ever bought in my life, when I first got married. It was so funny: I paid $14,000 for it, and had a 20 yr. mortgage, and my payment was $67.00/month. I thought it was a prison sentence--20 yrs. I bought that house in '69. And this house here (no.41) was owned by a brick mason, another one in the construction trades. It was just amazing. This neighborhood here was low income, making $3,000/yr. or less. That's one of those (no.42) original shotgun houses --you've heard the term "shotgun house"? [You shoot a gun in the front door and the bullet goes straight back to the back door.] I don't know a lot about this area or the people, but Dr. Holt owned that apartment house right there (no.37). This was sort of an area of ill repute. Basically the people who lived here bootlegged booze during Prohibition, and a lot of the clientele were black and white. A lot of violence took place during that time.

KV: Are most of these houses survivors of Urban Renewal--I mean the ones we're looking at right here?

LG: These are. Canby did not exist; it's new. That did not exist. We're back in public housing. The grocery store --owned by the Pullman Porter who had the flower shop--his name was Gus Morrison . He and my dad were the best of friends. Pullman Porters--I've said this probably 100 times to you--Pullman Porters looked out for each other's kids and families. And Black St. --that parking lot down there would have been all that's left of Black St.

KV: What grade school serves the kids who live around here?

LG: Back then it would have been Livingston St. School, where the Reed Ctr is now. Now, they'd be going to Claxton, Jones or Claxton would be the schools. So bussing is very much . . . . (voice trails off)

KV: We're going down Hibernia now.

LG: Black St. would have run all the way up to the top where my dad's property was. Those . . . they're dealing dope, but they're looking at us because they don't recognize this vehicle. They don't want any trouble, either. But all along here--this is all part of E. Riverside Urban Renewal because all of the homes in here were terrible, absolutely terrible.

KV: [We were looking at Hibernia when he said that.]

LG: This is Palmer St. All of this was urban renewal. These homes existed back then; these were people who rented. They've been sided, windows put on them, the whole bit. These were people who were really low-income, who rented, who worked on the jobs on the railroad--not the high-paying jobs, but the jobs that were relegated to Blacks at that time. They were in most of these right here. This Church is new, post urban renewal. What happened with it--a property was available. You can see where some of the people never developed in some of the areas, including the church property. They owned the land but they haven't done anything with it. Good piece of land, isn't it?

KV: It is, isn't it?

LG: And this side here is starting to take favor with reintegration. This particular house right here, there was one that was with this drive that got so substandard that it was demolished, but this particular house is the birthplace and the original home of the Bowman family. Richard Bowman plays with the Asheville Symphony right now and his wife is Dr. Janet Bowman who teaches at Mars Hill College [now at UNCA]. That was his legacy. Let me see--Richard, and Raymond, and Nathaniel, Gloria, and Edna, so 5 kids. (20 Palmer St.) He tried to get the house back, but the price, the marketability just escalated beyond. And this particular house (no.22) was the Michael house, the uncle to Dr. Otis Michael. Dr Michael's father and this guy, Jake Michael were brothers, and they were sort of from upper-middle income family background anyway, basically all physicians. And he made his money in hospitality management, and ironically, y'know back in the late 30's, early 40's, up until the War ended, you didn't have supper clubs and dining places you could go to as African Americans, and he started in his basement--which is huge, it's the same size as the house--a place he called Jake's Lounge, and the people would come there to entertain. And his wife worked in the lunchroom management of the Asheville school system for the black schools, so the educated segment would come there to eat on Friday nights and to have their drinks and music and the whole bit.

KV: These look like really interesting houses.

LG: Oh, they are; they're fantastic.

KV: And you said this neighborhood is reintegrated?

LG: Oh, yeah. A white family has taken the Bowman house.

KV: Now we're going back down Depot, turning right onto Livingston.

LG: But remember if it were Southside, it would be over by that branch--the Nasty Branch is over right beyond that fence line. And we just looked down on this street, this part of S. French Broad. But all of this in here--the grocery store--the lady with the rock

house, the grocery store was right on this corner [Livingston and French Broad]. Now all of this [Livingston] on both sides were single-family homes on both sides, and of course they all got demolished to put into public housing.

KV: This is all vacant lot up here.

LG: This is owned by the church, New Mt. Olive Church. This is Herman St. The originalchurch was right here on this corner, and I don't know what happened, but they finally got to it. This was THE school for the community, the elementary school that was known as Livingston St. School. Both sides of this, all of this st. was substandard housing, so it all got demolished, and that's when the Church bought the property and did this part of the bldg., and they ended up using the community room as the sanctuary. They never did get to build a sanctuary for it. But this was all a part of Gaston St. that doesn't exist anymore, if you were looking on some of the old maps.

This is a trend of thought, and I personally am one of the ones that would advocate it--I wish there were some way to get City Council to rename this facility to Livingston St. Ctr, instead of Reed Ctr. The guy, Bill Reed, for whom the center was named posthumously, was an appeasement to Black folks in terms of what happened with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreational moneys that became available for Parks and Recreation. And that's his picture right there in the center [of the bldg's front]. Bill Reed was--the only contribution he had, and not demeaning him or taking anything from him, was he worked for Parks and Recreation and he had a drill team that the kids would get in and perform in parades and that. And there was a lot of unrest in terms of how money was being handled. I was on the City Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at the time and one of the things that happened that was totally wrong was that when they did the renovation of this, the Center was supposed to have had a swimming pool. The Director convinced the people in a community meeting that yes, we had the money for the pool; we don't have the money to maintain it. And he used that tactic. So subsequently no pools--not a single pool went up in the African American community

where they had the money to do this stuff. And it really should be called Livingston St.[Center] in legacy to the teachers and the hundreds of kids who went through it for school vs Reed Ctr. And I just don't want to fight that battle. I'm sort of frustrated with it. That's my biased take on it.

My dad owned all of this property--that was Dr. John Holt's office there--this was all single family homes, and starting from where that sign is there back was white; everything else on both sides was black [we're on Livingston St. and Erskine]. Everything to the left [on Erskine] was what my father owned. In fact he built two houses in here that he sold to other people. In fact, James Harrison, that you met at Green's store, his mother and father bought one of the houses from my father. But all of this was his property, all the way up to the Catholic School property I was talking about--this whole track of land all the way around to where Dr. Holt's property is. Remember the barrier you just saw? He sold all of that to Public Housing.

KV: He owned all of that? At the time was it vacant?

LG: Oh, yes, yes. When he bought it, I don't remember, but I was a kid. My father, I told you this, I think, my father didn't go past the fourth grade, but he worked, I mean he was around all these very wealthy people-- and he got his education-- I say he got his Ph.D. on the railroad. So he understood investment; and he could go to the bank, and the same guy he's providing the Pullman service and whatever other services they wanted, who was also the bank president in Asheville, when he went into the bank he dressed in the best of clothing and his bow ties. I still have his gold watch and all of that. And he was able to get the investments in things he needed, or they would advise him on what to do. So when he got this, I think my mother told me that the timber on the land alone paid him more than he actually paid on the property back then. That was in the 40's when he bought it. Right at a decline of the stock market, that's when he was able to get this property. The property line is right at the end of this fence.

We're still in E. Riverside project. Again, these were all single family homes. This was the first hospice center originally, until the new one came up. [Blue Ridge Bone and Joint] That's where I took my hospice training right in there. And all of these homes along here were substandard. This one's the original. All of these [on the left] actually are original. The ones on [the other side] just got wiped away. And this land got changed. There was a lot of bulldozing and earth-moving to make that parking lot and all. It had a severe drop [before]. You see they're redoing homes and shoring them up and the whole bit (no. 60). This whole street is known as Pine Grove and Myrtle were all black owned and have been. I think there are 1 or 2 white families who've purchased in here recently.

` This is Congress St. And on Congress St.--that one's obviously new--but the rest are all original. And this was an all Black neighborhood. Again, the wealthiest guy on the street at that time--as gossip goes--was right here--no. 90. That guy was a Pullman Porter. KV: Another one!

LG: This was the area that they lived in. That's new, that wasn't there (no.91). And that was Dr. John Holt's office. Dr. Rosenberg is there now.

KV: Is he an M.D.?

LG: Yes. He took Dr. Holt's practice. As Dr. Holt got up in age, he didn't have hospital privileges, but he still had his faithful few, and he still had a need to go to his office. And I really don't know what legally transpired, but Dr. Rosenberg obviously bought or inherited his practice nine or ten years ago. But all of these were elegant homes then. That's new [a major build there]. The guy who owned this house (no. 66) owned his own cab business. The rest of them--look at how it's got concrete block, but they're putting siding on. This one is new (no.55). This one--the people who live there (no.54) now are heirs to what was the first motel for African Americans in Asheville. It was on McDowell St.

KV: Was that Rabbit's?

LG: Yes, Rabbit's.

KV: What's going to happen to that property?

LG: I don't know; he's [his heirs] just holding onto it now. But again, all the folks in here were basically educators, schoolteachers.

This is Choctaw. Again this would have been Southside, but it would have been much lower. This was all elevated, brand new this part.

KV: So they put in a lot of fill?

LG: Well, they just cut, when they tore down the houses, they just raised it because of the flood plain. That was the real reason. We've been through here before.

KV: The property that Mission Hospital is on now, was that undeveloped or what?

LG: No there were a lot of homes in that area.

KV: Was that part of urban renewal?

LG: No, no, no, that had nothing to do with Urban Renewal.

This minister in the house here, talking about Rev. Robinson (no.102), he was also a skilled tradesman and built the church--the original church which is gone. Right on this corner here was a Jewish family--what was their name? Anyway, they owned and operated the local neighborhood community store. I mean it was amazing. They had the butcher shop, everything in there. You got everything there--your flour, your sugar, your milk, your eggs, your meat, everything, right on this corner. The mortuary owns all this now [the Hart Funeral service]. And this would have been-- Green mentioned it--that bridge, that's where the Nasty Branch was, and the street would have been as wide as from there to this sidewalk. And the corner [We're at the corner of McDowell and Phifer, looking on Phifer] from what he said, to show you the oil place, we'll go out that way. Now this is an old building that's been everything from an oil co. to a stable, the whole bit. And this is the level that the Southside Ave. would have been. [It's now Keystone Laboratories.] And all of this was African American families, blighted neighborhood. And Rev. Robinson's church was right here. And what happened:

obviously the old church got demolished, and they got together and put in the new church [St. John]. Same congregation, same ownership and everything. But they would not relent in terms of giving up this property. The medical profession has just about acquisitioned everything else in here. But they had the one total African American entity that's left in this whole development.

KV: Surrounded by medical bldgs.

LG: This side of the st. (west side of McDowell St.) was owned by blacks to this corner [Choctaw and McDowell], and then it turned white, except for Rabbit's which is up the street [looking south]. See they widened the street, and they took up all the homes along here. Rabbit's was out this way, the first African American. motel in Asheville I told you about. And the Jesse Ray I was telling you about that went over to WW II, that's his mortuary. But now this property was owned by African Americans, and at one time was a drive-in restaurant type deal. So that was a transition, but it was definitely black owned.

The same with Olive St. I don't know if that's on your map or not. But Olive St. had some elegant little kinds of homes in here. None of these got displaced with urban renewal. The quality of construction was such that they stayed. That's brand new (no. 30). That's one from Habitat for Humanity. But when you look at the solid construction of the masonry. . . and as I said earlier, masons /artisans--they could do that kind of stuff themselves, so they could build decent quality homes. And the same thing when you see the backyards. The people relished the backyards for sustainability more than anything. This one is new--there was a house here, but it's been gone for I don't know how many years, but I'm sure that's speculation--that house. This community, the same way. All of these have been here, these streets [Churchill St]. This black church and parsonage--this is part of Urban Renewal. This guy, he died, he was probably 100 years old --Rev. Grant that got that. [corner of Churchill and Choctaw. We're back on Choctaw again, which would have been Southside.]

[Going north on Fr. Broad]: So in this area, when Blacks started buying homes and the white flight took place, in this whole area--this was an all Black high school--that's what it was built for at the time [currently Asheville Middle School]. The Y.W.C.A. was not here ; this was single family homes. Here, they were taken out for construction. Hart Funeral Service, Hart Mortuary, sat exactly where this building is right now (the Housing Authority). There were elegant homes through here. And these people were some of the ones who moved over to Montford community.

KV:But these would have been white owned?

LG: But when Urban Renewal started, a lot of blacks had bought homes in here. And these are the ones, basically the ones who got displaced and who reinvested over in the Montford area [the African Americans in this territory of the Asheville Hsg Auth. and Aston Park area].

Now I'm going to take you over to Montford. That was Aston Park Hospital (on Hilliard, near S. French Broad), and a dr. bought it and started the children's medical ctr there.

This was Hill St.--where this Interstate is now, that lane was all property where single family homes were. Hill St.--This was all white. A physician's house used to sit here [where the Asheville Chamber of Commerce is on Montford]. I've forgotten his name. But all of this entire street was black, and single-family homes were jammed side by side. All of these folks got displaced [with construction of I-240]. With that in mind, this Gudger St. and all of that was Stumptown. I'm going to make a kind of circular tour. All of these homes that were along here, including Bay St. and Michael St., and I told you about--the properties gone now--but you can remember all this was here, Jason St. All of this--this property right here was another Michael, Dr. Otis Michael's other brother--the second brother--I showed you the house where they used to have the restaurant and the night club downstairs. That was Jake Michael. Dr. Michael's brother who was a professor in education lived here in a very elegant home [at the corner of Jason and

Hill; it's just a vacant lot now.] See Michael St.--the street was named after him [at Michael and Hill; and all vacant lot now]. But these were all homes. When they knocked out Barfield, when they built this school here, the new school, there [had been] a HIill St. School, but it was nowhere near the size of this. And extremely elevated--I've seen pictures of how high it was elevated. So if you can imagine the displacement of all of these people at that time, and some of them got really handsome sums, at that time, for their property. And they bought over in what you know as the Montford community.

KV: And there would have been some businesses along here?

LG: Oh yeah! All kinds.

Greenlee St.. is another community. Named after Greenlee. In fact in the book I saw at Green's (Mini-Mart), there was a Greenlee in there from W.W.II that was a Tuskegee Airman, who was a part of that family.

KV: Is Tyrone Greenlee related?

LG: He is, Tyrone of New Mt. Olive and Building Bridges, that's his ancestors. [cell phone interruption]

This was a part of Stumptown--these were grandfathered in. We're so close in proximity to Montford, as you would refer to it, that it's unreal. But you can see the houses in here--there was no reason to take them down. I think the vast majority of these are occupied now by whites vs. African Americans. And this is basically what I was telling you about. The flight (of Blacks)--the children are taking their money and moving on. They don't want to go through the upkeep and the maintenance and the taxes and all of that to be rental landlords. So you have a lot of change. We're in such great, great proximity --this is all new construction going up in here. They might have Mountain Housing signs out. I'm trying my best to show you the proximity of Stumptown and Montford. I don't come through here enough to just remember everything.

KV: Right now we're on Courtland. Would Courtland have been a part of Stumptown?

LG: It is. More new construction. I think that's one of the ones owned by Asheville Housing Auth. It looks like one house, but there's actually 2 or 3 apartments in there. Same thing here--these are duplexes that were put in. All of this was referred to as Stumptown (Courtland Place). This again was white flight. Look at the difference in the quality of home construction here as relates to other sections of Stumptown. Again, it's being reclaimed; whites have reinvested in this community. And what I was telling you, Blacks who came in here can't afford to maintain these homes and fix them up again, pay the taxes and everything, so that's why you see what's going on here now. That one's new.

KV: That large one?

LG: It's new. These are older homes. And all we have here are basement homes--built into the side of the hill. This part of Stumptown was owned by whites--in fact this wasn't properly Stumptown.

KV: Was this a through st.?

LG: At one time. [It dead-ends and it's 19/23 on the other side.]

KV: Now we're on Courtland.

LG: This was originally white, and blacks moved in and whites moved out. Now this is Stumptown. Jersey St. is definitely Stumptown--has been and still is. This [around the cemetery] is Stumptown. You can see the homes are gone. That would be Jersey St.--the ball fields and all. This is owned by City Parks and Recreation, and there's the Montford Community Ctr right above us. But now, all these homes that were here--this is the Stumptown that Blacks are referring to. And it's called Stumptown just because of the construction and where the homes are. Look at how substandard that is now. The drains--obviously they've got moisture problems and everything else. I can just look at that house and see that from here. This little church has been here for years. In fact, it's just been sold. I saw that in the paper. This is new, and these are new--I haven't been in here in years. But you can see the streets [these are narrow streets, single

tracks]. This was a Black neighborhood: there wasn't any planning, any development and all of that stuff. These are designed to look like old, but these are new. I think this is Gay St. The little houses--that's a renovation (no. 24)--all of these are original, but they've had siding put on them. This is the true Stumptown--there's the proximity to the cemetery up there .

KV: Richie St .; now we're turning onto Jane St.

LG: . All of this is Stumptown. The big cemetery is just over the hill there. And all of these here--I don't know which house they used for the Robin Williams movie; I don't even remember the name of the movie now. This is THE Stumptown. With that in mind--that's new; that's been here for years --Madison St.

Now we're into Pearson Dr., and as far as I remember, but I don't know the total history of this community--I think this was white owned and then acquisitioned by African Americans starting in the mid-70's, early '80's, with the exception of one or two houses, and I don't know which. But look at the Biltmore Estate architectural design--these were obviously white owned. And the Riverside Cemetery is there. These were originally white-owned. It used to be African American, but I don't know what it is right now, to be honest with you. But then you can see the elegance of them[e.g., no.120].

At one time--I'll show you ones I know were owned by African Americans but now no longer owned by African Americans--they've already sold them. This house right here, this guy goes to my church (St. Lawrence), Cleotis Tate. (127 Pearson Drive). I've been there many, many times. A lot of these have been, this house here was originally owned by African Americans and it's back on the market now. These are people who got money being transitioned from Stumptown and Hill Street. One of the ones that's a lovely bed and breakfast, the guy who had this house on the corner (Pearson and Tacoma), this one man had about eight children and he was a barber--all he did was cut hair. And he got to use his money wisely to buy that house and when he died and the kids got greedy or whatever happened, they ended up selling it and now

look what it's worth now. But we're obviously in sight of what is the historical part of the Montford community. [Now on Watauga] This particular home right here (no. 48) is owned by African Americans; this one (no.440) and it's back on the market, and this green house right here (no.36); in fact I think they still live there--the Ruff family. [still on Watauga.] But now with that in mind, as we go up Montford now [towards downtown] and I could be wrong--let me show you this other community since we're doing this.

A lot of the people from Hill St. where their homes were displaced, there's this development called Klondyke, and that's where a lot of them migrated to. Obviously you could tell this was all of equal if not higher income to N. Asheville when you look at the palatial homes. That's all brand new--what UNCA built recently. This community was all white and it's African Americans now, but I understand it's recently reintegrating .

KV: Santee?

LG: Yes. This is the public housing development. where a lot of the folks who left Hill St. were able to occupy, and it was a whole different concept as far as quality of construction, individuality as best you could maximize with public monies, this was an ideal place, because basically you weren't door-to-door, side-by-side in apartment complexes. You were basically--you had your own home. These are single family type deals; these aren't duplexes. All public housing. So a lot of people occupied it, but here's the down side to that: Now this is my biased part: Public housing was never intended to perpetuate. It was to be used as a method of dealing with a part of your life until you could get out and do better. But now, with 5th and 6th generations in here, and making mountain living and the whole fresh air--just look. And unfortunately that has turned into five-six generations of people living here.

KV: It's hardly transition. On the other hand, given the price of housing around Asheville . . . LG: And these homes here, these are 30% of adjusted income, so theoretically you could have somebody living in one side paying $50 / month, and

another paying $300/month, based on income. And I would guess that, as you talk about social ills, and this is a biased opinion, as long as there's public housing, there's going to be poverty. It's just going to be perpetuated because people are not going to opt to take on a 30 year mortgage at 6% or 8%. Or the other thing, there's no such thing as 100% financing; you've gotta' have some kind of equity to get there. So it's sad, but there are some ills along with what the government does in terms of trying to provide safe, decent, sanitary housing to everybody. And that's a downside, but a true fact. And I don't have the answer to that; I wish I did--I'd be wealthy enough to give it away.

KV: Or you'd be president.

LG: I can't remember all these individually. There were several African Americans in here [we're at 250 Montford], but there were several in here and now there are none. Those folks have all moved on. How many could afford the taxes on that (no. 230) or do the maintenance and upkeep and keep it in its historical composition. This house was black-owned at one time

KV: To the right of 208--can't see the no.; that's a major house!

LG: Here's another one (no.182) I know for a fact, right here.

KV: 182 was Black owned?

LG: Yes, yes. And when you look at the rest of them and at the quality of the homes, again aside from the maintenance and upkeep, the taxes--and people, you know say, 30 yrs. ago when they were in their 30's or 40's and now they're in their 70's, who wants to keep up that yard, paint every other year. And the kids--there's no real great reward to achieve academically and then come back to Asheville and try to get a job--these kids are selling out and in the vernacular saying, "The hell with Asheville. I'm not going to live there."

That sort of wraps up our little tour.

The return from Montford to the Dripolator included the following:

On getting an education and coming back to Asheville:

LG: Cecil Holt, his brother who's an architect, had no reason to come back to Asheville. There's Earnest Fair, a medical dr. who came to Asheville and had to leave--couldn't get anything going. There's Robin Michael, who graduated. from Duke Law School who came back to Asheville. Her father's Dr. Otis Michael, and Robin couldn't even get a job cluring the summer in a law firm here.

KV: Honest?

LG: Honest. And that list goes on. . There's James Byrd, Dr. James Byrd, a medical doctor. These are all kids that I know who I've seen grow up. There's Stephen Hall, who's an academic Ph.D. who teaches at N.C. State who--the only job he could get with his Ph.D. was teaching English at Asheville H.S. These are people that I personally know of. There's Tiger McElveen who graduated from Georgia Tech in chemical engineering who couldn't get a job in Asheville. And I'm talking about a decent job that pays comparable to your education and your experience, or just parity to anything else. It's just amazing.

KV: Seriously, it's still like that? In Asheville? But this is 2007!

LG: No doubt about it, though.

Larry Holt [former deputy director of Asheville Housing during Urban Renewal] lives in one of these--[we're on Haywood] invested in one of these downtown condo's.

In banking, I could think of so many people whose children have come here--they've been off to colleges and universities and gotten degrees. One of the barriers is 'You don't have experience." and they want you to take less. And this is just true. There's no bias in this one: the good old boy networking system--if you're not upper middle class white male, you can hang it up as far as having anybody to sponsor you or support you in an effort to get your foot in the door, as the adage goes. It just doesn't exist. And then again, the gay and lesbian community, they have a strong hold, and if

you're not of that persuasion there's a lot of other jobs that you can't get. I think about people that I've known personally--there was Logan Delany who was head of the Model Cities Program and then went into Community Relations for the City of Asheville. There was Lonnie Burden (sp?) who was Director of the Opportunity Corp. There was Melvin Woods who was dir. of Buncombe County Child Dev. Day Care Ctrs. There was myself in the Model Cities program and in the CETA program. There is Amy McKnight who was with the Buncombe County Business Dev. Program--she's the only female I can think of. But all those folks I mentioned to you --jobs as CEO's, now everyone of those jobs is occupied by white females. We have had a severe erosion of African American principals that were in the Asheville City School system, basically through attrition and retirement and death or whatever. So that attributes to a lot of . . . [voice trails off].

KV: And whites took their jobs?

LG: Whites got those jobs. And the best qualified aren't necessarily the one that gets hired.

I'll show you--I'm going to turn because I'm going to show you a restaurant. These two bldgs on the corner right there were owned by a Black man. Those two on the end there [on Biltmore south of Mast's.] He's still alive. He sold them because he couldn't get any business to do anything. You know I showed you the blue house where the owner owned a restaurant in Asheville. All right, that restaurant, I guess, was in the basement right there where that truck is on Eagle St. [in first block Southside of block]. The name of that place was called the Royal Garden. Everybody who was anybody--that's where they dined on Sundays and weekends when they wanted really quality meals. And this part was a barber shop. ["This" refers to where Limones is now on Eagle St.] The same man who owned those two bldgs [on Biltmore] owned that barber shop. His name is William Buford. He lives in Greensboro now. But when he sold the bldg., it was because he couldn't get anybody to occupy anything. Nobody

wanted to reinvest in the entire bldg., and now look at it. But that's where that Royal Garden was.

And Mt. Zion Baptist Church--which has been there for years--just about everybody who left out of Mt. Zion would came up to the Royal Garden to eat on Sunday. I mean, home-cooked meals, you couldn't get any better. And of course we passed by McQueens' house, who owned the Ritz restaurant which is right there.

KV: My understanding is that this entire territory was African. Amer.

LG: Oh it was. And a lot of the blighted stuff on what was Dirt Eagle and Dirt Asheland. Dirt Eagle is in that same community there--it went right past Rev. Grant's Church where that parking lot is now, about midway of that parking lot was a dirt street that went back in to substandard type dwellings, and it was referred to as Dirt Eagle.

KV: I'm under the impression that there was more housing going down Biltmore Ave. here that was torn down.

LG: There was quite a bit. There was quite a lot on this side [the right side looking south on Biltmore from the Orange Peel] that I remember. This particular place right here was a drive-in kind of restaurant before fast foods, but ironically Blacks could not eat there. And this building on the corner was the Jesse Ray Funeral Home which is now Ellison's law firm. That was the Black hospital in Asheville at one time--referred to as the Colored Hospital. This whole territory, well, this is a good place to show you real quick.

That as you know is S. Charlotte. The original name of that, and the road has been redesigned somewhat, was Valley St. (in parking lot of the Dripolator, looking down on S. Charlotte). And from Middle Mount Flowers up, that entire side of the street was single family homes occupied by Black people. And some apartments, some duplexes, two-family and three-family apartment houses on both sides of the street. And they're all gone. Everyone one of them. And of course they also had a laundromat, a mortuary, 4 or 5 little mom-and-pop type stores, a coal yard, a gas

station. And all of that led up from if you went down by Mt. Zion Church in the bottom, that's where the coal yard and the gas station were. And you could go straight across and up the hill to the Stephens-Lee H.S. But all of that and the street behind it which is now Martin Luther King Drive wasn't what you see today. Single family homes in that neighborhood, but less sparse than what's up there now with that development. This part here where that blue house is and all that, none of that was--I think there were one or two homes in there but they had nothing to do [in the way of business]; African Americans lived in there at that time. I think it was whoever owned the baseball field or some other properties in there were the ones who lived up in that area. And then flight took place-- there's a public housing complex in that area called originally Mountainside Apts.--I think 160 units or something. And of course when they put that in there was a lot of flight out of that entire neighborhood.

KV: Is Mountainside the one that was closed?

LG: Yes.

KV: And this territory that's got City Buildings?

LG: All of that were homes or apartment buildings, everyone of which was owned or occupied by Blacks.

KV: And the area where the Jail is?

LG: No, not up that far, just on the Valley St. part. Nothing close to the Court House.

KV: Oh really, they wouldn't let you get that close?

LG: Yeah, they wouldn't let us get that close.

What I was saying about racism was out of my own personal experiences in the North and the South. When I grew up in NJ, being Catholic and growing up in a predominantly Catholic community, I didn't feel any of that. And then when I got South to go to college, I found out that if white Southerners don't like you, they let you know it. I mean, I can remember Alabama and Geo. Wallace saying "Segregation now and segregation forever." And at the Univ. of Alabama with its president standing there with

a bat in his hand. And that still abounds but it's more subtle today than it was before. In the North--New York, NJ, and PA and that area that I can speak for, having grown up in there--racism was a lot less subtle there than it is here. A lot less. Folks had a way of disguising it but they didn't make a big deal out of it, and nobody spoke up publicly. But here in the South you had the Ku Klux Klan, y'know. In the North you had the Sons of Italy. But y'know--see my point? Big different thing. Basically you were segregated up there by language and finance. Here it's just a different thing. I think most of us appreciate the fact that you'd rather sit at the table with your enemies because you know who they are. But that's here, now, it's just abounding, but it 's subtle--literally you can't put your hands on it the way you used to . And I think that's because of the migration from the North, and liberal thinking. I remember right on Pack Square as a kid they had the Black and the white--no Colored and White drinking fountains and rest rooms. Now it's not uncommon to see all kinds of combinations of couples together: used to be the black male, white female; now it's the black female, white male, or multiethnic relationships, and even people who don't like it or resent it can't afford to voice their opinion or go burn a cross in anybody's yard anymore. And then it's become popular that people who are liberal will voice their opinions. At one time, if you didn't like it, you just didn't say anything, ya' know. The community you live out in in N. Asheville, if you felt comfortable inviting somebody to dinner or to your house, you just do it because you have that right. Years back you wouldn't dare let anybody know you had a non-Caucasian person at your house for entertainment, or dinner or whatever. So that part has changed.

But when it comes to jobs, class and caste are still the same. It's amazing how much you see that day in and day out.

KV: And basically it's still whites who are opening the door for other whites?

LG: Oh yes, Oh yes.. And that's understandable, but there IS a bias there; there's a prejudice there. I mean, again, we talked about yesterday: in the whole history of the

City of Asheville, there's only one person who's been academically qualified to be anything above a lieut. in the Police Dept.? I mean, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to be a police officer. And that's not demeaning them; I'm just saying that there's some things that are hallowed. The Fire Dept. the same way. There's no non-Caucasian person capable of being the Chief in the Fire Dept.? I don't think so. Ya' know--that kind of a thing. The City Manager. The President of UNCA. Instead of hiring a Black--nothing wrong with a
woman--they get a woman. When it comes to corporate America, you can't--I don't think the day will ever come, and I realize this is very pessimistic, I don't think there will ever be a
Black-owned vehicle dealership in Asheville. But you can go 100 miles down the road in Charlotte and there are three.

KV: Really?

LG: Yes, it's just that kind of thing. There are just numerous avenues and venues out there that racism dictates who'll get the job. And that's sad.

KV: And it doesn't bode well for African American kids growing up here in Asheville.

LG: Right. It doesn't. And that's what I'm saying. My daughter, summa cum laude graduate and a doctoral candidate and she makes I'm thinking $46,000/yr. And her supervisor has only been in the business two years, and she's been in there six. And with that in mind, you gotta' remember we just had a Black superintendent, but I can tell you that I don't think the African American community was impressed with his managerial skills as they related to the motivating, upgrading, or enhancing the ethnicity of the Administration. I don't think he had more than one person [Black] that he hired in Administration the whole time he was here. I mean out of all the opportunities, whatever number they are, even though they might be few, he didn't do anything. And then I don't know the reasons why. Those deals are just unreal. I think about James Green. He probably wouldn't ever talk about this just because his blood pressure would

go up. But what he had to go through just to be able to sell gasoline because of how the oil and petroleum industry is controlled in this area. There's only one person--and you just saw him today--in the entire corporate city limits of Asheville or in Buncombe County--that owns his own business where he sells gas. And that speaks volumes. I mean, if he had every African. American in the city of Asheville buying gas from him, chances are his limit on the amount of gas he could get would be such that he couldn't do that. There wouldn't be any monopoly. Exxon [Green's Mini-Mart has dealt with Exxon] and all the rest of 'em aren't gonna' let that happen. And they can say, 'Well, you can sell all you got, but we'll only give you 2,000/day.' I mean, you can't sell 400,000 if you don't have the supply. You know, in the crunch, there's no telling when they might get there to fill his tanks up.

KV: No kidding!

LG: Oh yeah, that kind of thing happens. You just got to be aware of what goes on. And I have some very close, near and dear Greek friends, and I admire what the Greek community has done in this area and throughout the U.S. coming from the Old Country and yet being unswerving in their support for each. And that's very admirable. The Oriental community the same way. One of my sisters-in law is Chinese, because my brother's in Hawaii. But to see how the Chinese community bands together socio-economically. Unfortunately for us African Americans as a race of people, that kind of bond isn't there. And the rest of it you already know. I mean, we're the biggest consumers and produce nothing. I remember Parks Sausage, which was made and manufactured in Baltimore. Parks became a multimillionaire, but when he sold out the business, there was nobody there that could even afford to buy it. When you talk about Ray Crock, and whatever the other guy's name is--the founders of McDonalds, they were in their 60's--the point being that it's never too late to start. But finding that niche of getting into the System--I have a friend here, local African. American guy, who went through all of the training for McDonalds and has his money and everything, and then

he got offered some of the worst stores. You know they want you to go on and be the Jackie Robinson kind of a thing. He turned it down, so much so that he actually complained so much that they actually went to him and said, “Look, you’ve done the training, you’ve completed everything, you have the money, the financing, we want you to have a franchise. We want you to have a franchise, so here’s a list; you pick the one You want.” And then he backed out. I thought that was very remiss on his part. But he at least had an opportunity to pick one, but by this time--and not defending him--but I think he was so paranoid, [he’s thinking] ‘They can’t be this good to me; there’s GOT to be something wrong with this.’ Again, I just showed you the two buildings owned by William Buford. And he’s very, very brilliant kind of a man, very low key, very modest; his wife is the alumni director for the Univ. of NC A & T College in Greensboro. Amazing the deals that people offered him that were completely ignorant to present to a man of his caliber in terms of buying the two buildings he sold on Biltmore Ave. and the other one where Limones restaurant is now where downstairs was the Royal Garden. They did not realize that they were not dealing with a dummy. They were offering him like pennies on the dollar, and he laughed at all of them. Financially astute enough to where he didn’t have to sell if he didn’t want to, so he got his price. But that’s one in a few.

The house we saw where Dr. John Holt lived--now that’s an elegant house. But marketability--I don’t know that anybody’s going to come in there and pay $350,000 for a house next door to public housing. I wouldn’t. I’d protect my investment--wouldn’t have anything to do with race for me. There’s an elegant home that has solid brick, hardwood flooring and all of that, but will probably--but his one son’s a doctor, the other son’s an architect; I don’t know what the daughter does, but they obviously don’t need money. So they might just keep it and use it for a summer home or rent it out for sentimental reasons or whatever. I don’t think they can get the fair market value for it. But anyway, I’ve got to go. I enjoyed all of it. Hope that helps you some.