

1643

audited

Buxton Project: 424-2104
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Interviewers' Names: Elmer Schwieder & Joseph Hraba

Q. *Let's return to Buxton. You spent a good part of your young life in Buxton?

A. That's right.

Q. *What stands out in your memory about the things that went on in Buxton, about the times that you had there? What would you tell people, what good and bad things?

got out
A. Well what stood out with me in Buxton was the parade, the big bands you know and the ball games and things like that and the YMCA. That's was what stood out. It really stood out because we got all the training in the world in there you know and we had a terrific gym, game room, tennis court.

Q. *What did you do in the gym, gymnastics or basketball or just what?

A. What did I do?

Q. *Yeah, or what could you have done?

A. Trained to be a prize fighter.

Q. *Oh boxing?

A. Boxing, I took up boxing. Never could box but _____. I was one of the _____. They were terrific. I couldn't beat them, nobody else could beat them.

Q. You mentioned music, did they have a good band there?

A. Oh Lord they had a terrific band.

Q. But you didn't play any instrument?

A. Oh no. I had a cousin *in the band Warren Taylor* I wasn't.

Q. Were they giving music lessons in school or did you have to buy private lessons?

A. _____ the YMCA give music lessons.

Q. They'd give music lessons at the Y?

A. Yeah, down at the Y. See the Y cost you a dollar a month and they taught you all this _____. All they gave us was supervising.

Q. *But were in the Glee Club?

A. Oh yeah in the Glee Club. Me and my brother both. How many did we have in that Glee Club, 210 or 215 of us.

Q. That's a big Glee Club.

A. Oh yeah, we had a big one.

Q. *Did your mom participate in any of these organizations?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. *What would she do?

A. Oh she would mostly work in church.

church Q. *She was a church worker, huh?

A. Secretary, she was secretary. She would go to church 5 or 6 times a week.

Q. Now you were not married in Buxton were you?

A. No.

Q. You were a single man all the time you were there?

A. I was single all the time I was in Buxton.

Q. *Did you ice skate and sled in the wintertime?

A. Oh yeah, ice skate and sled. We had plenty of that . Beautiful ponds, skate up at big pond.

Q. Plenty of clothes to wear and kept warm.

A. Oh yeah plenty of clothes.

Q. Well fed, and you never remember

A. No, we were never hungry

Q. Was there a slum?

A. No.

Q. That's what we've heard. There wasn't any bad poor, really very poor people in Buxton.

A. No, but some people that don't give a damn, that wouldn't work.

Q. That would hang out behind the bars?

A. No, they'd hang out around Sharpe End, but not down in Buxton. They'd be out to Sharpe End and places like that, not in Buxton.

Q. *Most of the people in Buxton were hard working people?

A. Oh yeah. Everybody was dressed up on holidays and Sunday, went to some kind of affair. There wouldn't no ragged people in Buxton, no hobo people, nothing like that, didn't have to be.

Q. *Did whites come down to the YMCA too?

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A. Not too much.

Q. *Not too much?

A. Now to the show, the theater, a couple of theaters down at the Y they would. The Y was theater. The theater was in the Y.

Q. *Now you said until you're 21 you couldn't go into Sharpes End and some of the places where they had sporting houses and gambled. Did you when you were a kid?

A. No.

Q. *Not at all huh?

A. No, you didn't go around no place like that. You go down there, they'd kick the shit out of you, anybody if you was a kid. See 18 and 19 years old you wouldn't no man, not in Buxton. And they proved it to you too. Men wouldn't low enough to associate with you. You know associate with them at functions like church and things but anything like that. Nobody was running a place like the private pool hall where they were betting or anything, they wouldn't let kids come in. They drank in them see but we had pool halls. Let's see we had, got a lot of them tables in the Y, in groups, 12 and 16 and 16 to 18 ~~to~~, 19 to 21. They all played with certain age groups and they did, _____ the YMCA see. And they had checker room, domino room, basketball. They'd play basketball _____. Had about 6 tennis courts there.

Q. *Telescopes?

A. Tennis.

Q. *Oh tennis?

A. You said telescopes? Yeah, they were up at the school.

Q. Is that right?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Sounds like it was a pretty up-to-date school.

School

A. It was some smart people there. We had some smart teachers. We had Dr. Carter, he was born and raised in Buxton. He was a doctor of associations in the state of Iowa before he left, when Buxton fell. Undertakers, lawyers, attorneys. There were a lot of professional people there, black ones.

bankers,

Q. Do you remember any really successful ones?

A. Yeah.

Q. Made a whole lot of money?

A. Well Hobe Armstrong was a millionaire, Gaines, the Bells, the Coopers, the Olivers they run a furniture store in Chicago, yeah. But them people they went to larger cities. The people, most of them went to Milwaukee and Chicago and a lot of them out in California and Minneapolis.

Q. You mean after Buxton closed down?

A. Uh huh. People with money they went and opened a business up in places. But we didn't have anything, we didn't know nothing about, didn't have enough people that knew enough about trying to save, or get some kind of investment.

Q. *Who were your close friends when you were growing up?

A. Who?

Q. *Who were they?

A. Oh I had so many.

Q. *So many?

A. Yeah, but the closest to me was one guy that calls me every Christmas from Milwaukee, Julius Sylvester Washington and I had another one, Pete Ace they call from Minnesota every year. That's my age bracket. Then I have one guy here Sunday that I hadn't saw for 54 years. Me and him was raised together, Tucom Massery we went out the other day with him. We really had a lot of fun. He was 74, the 4th of July and I was 74 the 11th of March. Me and him was pretty well together, and Paul Wilson. Of course I'm older than Paul. Paul always, he always wanted to be with the big boys was and so we went along with it. We let Paul come, He liked to be around us. But I had a lot of friends. I don't know all the people in the Glee Club & Glee Club. Actually I loved all of them in the Glee Club and in my Bible class, _____ class _____ school, I liked kids in my class.

Q. *Did teenagers date? Go out together in Buxton?

A. Yeah.

Q. How was that done? Did you have to have a chaperone or would you go call on a girl at her house?

A. No they didn't sneak and meet. They had to be pretty well 18 or 19 years old to go to a girl's house.

Q. *18 or 19?

A. Uh huh. You couldn't go in the girl's Y in Buxton at all and it was right next to ours. See the swimming pool in the girl's Y and we'd go in there it wouldn't no girls in there at all, come out. We couldn't play in the same ~~swimming pool~~ tennis court with the girls.

Q. *So sexes were pretty much kept apart?

A. Until they got around 18 _____. We used to stand down tennis court a talk to the girls through the fence. Oh you know they'd go out and see each other but you didn't play tennis with them I can tell you that right now nothing like that. The older ones did, the older guys, a man and a woman play, four of them would be playing. A man and woman on this side and man and woman on this side. They weren't brazing like kids are today. When you were a kid, they weren't brazing like kids are today.

Q. When you think of families, I would guess that divorce wasn't very common then either, was it?

A. Well _____, Over there wouldn't nobody divorced over there _____.

- A. You never heard of nobody divorced, not back then. I know I didn't cause it was new to me _____. People had kids they had to stay together the rest of their life. You know I didn't give it a _____ I just took it for what it was. You never heard of stepfathers and stuff like that back then.
- Q. We've kept you going almost 2 hours. I've got one more last question for you. Out of all the Buxton people that you know that come back for reunions and things, ever heard any black person say anything bad about Buxton?
- A. Well I didn't cause if they did I'd know they was lying.
- Q. This is what we've picked up. We have never heard a black person say there was anything bad.
- A. I know all the gang in Waterloo you know. The ones that really was in Buxton _____ cause they know I'd know they were lying. Say when Ms. Parlor died, our school teacher, we all met up there to view her body. We didn't go to the funeral but I went to the funeral home. They waited till we all got there and we all went _____.
- Q. *Who are some of the people from Buxton that now live in Waterloo? What are their names?
- A. Oh let's see, we got the Wrights up there, we got the Reasby's, we got the Conners and the Walkers and the Whites, Browns.
- Q. _____ Margaret.
- *What took them up to Waterloo, work?
- A. The John Deere factory out here.
- Q. *John Deere?
- A. I remember when it wasn't but 2 men in Waterloo, just two black men.
- Q. *Before the Buxton people ^{started moving there} _____ huh?
- A. No. We got a lot of people from Buxton there. Most of the people in Waterloo is from Water Valley, Mississippi, blacks. _____ right down the track, that Illinois Central.
- Q. It stopped there?
- A. See Deere built that plant up there. John Deere built that plant and the started hauling blacks. They used to wouldn't _____ blacks. They would in Cedar Rapids but not in Waterloo. They didn't have any blacks in Waterloo too long, not too long. See I remember when thirty or thirty-five black families live in Knoxville, Knoxville, Iowa _____ out there where that soldier's home is in Knoxville. The **black** district out there.
- Q. Is that right?
- A. Where the blacks used to live, down on the other side.
- Q. Joe, can you think of anything more?

1648

Q. *No, that's it.

I don't want to get you to darn tired out. We might want to come back and talk to you and we may listen to this and say there's something we need to know more about and come back.

A. Well all I told you I know, I experienced, I saw it. I heard some things _____ like on television.

Q. Well you've told us some things we never heard before like the White Socks. We know about the Buxton Wonders. We never knew there were two baseball teams.

A. Yeah, we had the White Socks too. You remember the White Socks don't you Dorothy?

#No, I remember the Buxton Wonders.

Huh?

#Who was on the White Socks' team?

One that you would know about living now would be Clyde Cartright.

#Clyde Cartright.

Johnny Murphy. Johnny Murphy was the star pitcher.

#I had a picture of that but I don't know where it is, the younger.

A lot of people played the White Socks and think they're playing the Wonders.

#I knew it wasn't Wonders.

No, but a lot of teams they'd play. They were good too.

#The White Socks must have come after I left Buxton.

None of them _____, See the top group that you had was the _____ Wonders, George Neal, his daddy.

#Do you remember they used to Car wheel

I remember when they knock a fly and he'd turn two summersaults and get up and get up and catch it. Yeah, he'd do that all the time. Uh huh, but he could move with that ball ~~team~~ field. Oh he could move out there. Anything was knocked out there, he would get it. You better not knock it out there, if you didn't John _____ was gonna get it, tell you that right now.

Q. Two summersaults and then catch the ball?

A. Huh?

Q. He'd do summersaults and then catch the ball?

A. Them long ones, he'd do a couple of summersaults and then catch it, never miss it.

Q. *Was that a characteristics of the Buxton Wonders, they would do a lot of theatrics playing ball.

A. The Buxton Wonders, it was according to who they were playing.

Q. *If it was an easy game?

A. But when they got a tough game, then they'd put their serious players in. See the Buxton Wonders hardly ever started a first string against anybody, you know like

Bowling

Small

A. in these white towns, they hardly every started. When they started the first string, they'd have New York Black Yankees there or be the Home 4 Braves, Philadelphia Home _____ Braves, Birmingham Black _____, Kansas City Monorach, Chicago Giants, some of the big teams from the big towns, then they would. But through Iowa here, they didn't start.

Q. *How many people would show up at a big game like that?

A. Huh?

Q. *Philly came to town or Birmingham would come to town or Kansas City?

A. They would load the stadium down, as far as you could see, you couldn't see nothing but people. And Ben Buxton sat right there and wanted to know if anybody thought they could win. If they did, just bring it on up here.

Q. Laying some wages ^{rs} huh?

A. Anybody, didn't care who they was playing. If you wanted to bet you could beat the Buxton Wonders, Ben Buxton had all the money in world *Saying you couldn't*

Q. *Did they drink at those games at all?

A. I imagine they did, I don't know.

Q. *You were down on the field?

A. It's two things you didn't do in them days as a kid and that was associate with your elders. They'd be doing a lot of things they was you know _____. We didn't bother in things like that _____ things like that. You never hear of anybody from Buxton being a stick-up man or robbing _____.

Q. Ended up in the penitentiary or something?

A. Oh no, *there anybody ever* isn't go in penitentiary in Buxton.

Q. *I have one last question. Were your parents pretty strict with you or were there rules that you had to follow.

A. To the tee. My dad said 9:00, he didn't mean 2 minutes after 9, a minute after 9. He meant 2 minutes before 9 or right at 9. Of course I was with my kids too. I wouldn't need no police to help me raise my kids. Nowadays the police raise the kids. If I tell a brat to be in, when my kids were going to school, I ain't, unless they were having some kind of program or something, to be out pass 10:00, even when they were in high school, not my kids. They know better. When they ask me something and I tell them no and close the subject, that never comes up again. I told them now the subject's closed, that's it, _____. Of course I had a lot of help with my kids because they were Catholic see. Them Sisters they'll murder _____. That law just goes in them public schools. _____ them sisters can too. If they wouldn't they always got some Brothers that can, the Priest.

Q. They'll do it?

A. Oh I don't know, the way the kids are being raised now and I just hate that ADC and all that stuff. All that ruin this country so bad. We got kids 28 and 29 years old raised on ADC. That's where your fights. They figure people should

- 1650
- A. give them something the rest of their lives. America's got to straighten that out. They ain't never gone go nowhere. The army, they go in there and make dope find friends out of kids and all that. We've got a _____. I don't care what nobody says, a person without a principle is nobody and a country with a principle ain't nobody, the school without a principal ain't nothing, a millionaire with a principle ain't nothing. Principle is all, you gotta have a principle. You gotta to have something.
- Q. Something that counts?
- A. Huh?
- Q. Something that counts, makes sense.
- A. What's this we've got now?
- Q. Well we've got a permit form which you can read which simply.