

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Farrell Race Relations Project

Farrell Race Relations -- 1960's

O. H. 494

FREDERICK HUGHES

Interviewed

by

Ronald Rice

on

April 28, 1981

## FREDERICK P. HUGHES

Frederick P. Hughes was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania on April 9, 1928. Hughes grew up in Sharon and had to work constantly to help his family financially while he went to high school. After graduating from Sharon High School in 1946, Hughes joined the Merchant Marines and served for a year on the Great Lakes. He then joined up with the U.S. Navy Seabees for three years. Upon returning home he then reenlisted into the U. S. Air Force for another two years. After being discharged from the Air Force in 1951, Hughes began selling insurance which he still does today. He is a member of St. Anthony's Church and belongs to the Kiwanis Club of Farrell.

When Hughes is not working he is actively working in the Farrell community. He wants to help better the city and help it grow in a positive direction. Hughes sits on the Farrell Planning Commission and is a member of the Farrell Committee for Progress. Many of Hughes' customers were black and he feels he knew them rather well. According to Hughes, most blacks in Farrell did not actively participate in any of the rioting during the 1960's. He feels that Farrell's racial problems were the direct result of only a very small radical "outside" group of blacks.

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INTERVIEWEE: FREDERICK HUGHES

INTERVIEWER: Ronald Rice

SUBJECT: Racial prejudices, Causes, Violence

DATE: April 28, 1981

R: This is an interview with Mr. Fred Hughes for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Farrell Race Relations during the 1960's, by Ronald Rice at 1314 Farrell Terrace, on April 28, 1981, at 10:05 a.m.

Mr. Hughes, could we begin by you telling us where you're from originally?

H: Sharon, Pennsylvania.

R: Did you grow up in Sharon?

H: Yes, born and raised there.

R: What was your childhood like for you then?

H: Tough. I was born and raised down in the lower section of Sharon.

R: That would be . . .

H: . . . what they would call the flats.

R: You were born when?

H: 1928.

R: So you lived through the Depression?

H: Part of the Depression.

R: What do you remember most about your parents and family?

H: We all worked to make money, or just to get food to live on.

R: Did your father work in Sharon?

H: Yes, he was a mechanic at some company. He was an auto mechanic all of his life since he was ten years old.

R: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

H: I have one brother and one sister.

R: Are they older or younger?

H: Younger.

R: You all grew up in Sharon?

H: Yes, all of us.

R: Did you attend Sharon schools?

H: Yes.

R: What was high school like for you?

H: Not bad I should say outside of the fact that I had to work all of the time. As soon as I got out of school, I had to head for work.

R: Where did you work?

H: Roux Feed Mill, my father's garage, in a machine shop, about anything I could get my hands on.

R: It was pretty hard then, making ends meet?

H: Well, at that time, yes.

R: Then when you got out of high school where did you head?

H: I went into the Merchant Marines.

R: Where were you located?

H: On the Great Lakes.

R: What were your duties there?

H: I was a seaman and a wheelsman for awhile. Then I left there and went into the service.

R: How long were you in the Merchant Marines?

H: One year I think it was. Not quite a year, it was more or less through the summer of a season. They close down, open in the spring, and close down in winter.

R: You got out of the Merchant Marines and you went into the . . .

H: Seabees.

R: Did you go overseas?

H: Yes. I was overseas in 1946 and came back in 1949, so about three years.

R: What factors caused you to join the Seabees?

H: To have a good time. No, more or less to learn the trade, the construction trade and that. I had a little bit of knowledge and they suggested I go into that.

R: Where did they ship you overseas?

H: First, they shipped me to Okinawa, then to China, then Japan, and back to Okinawa.

R: When you returned in 1949, where did you go then?

H: I was stationed at Cape Cod, Otis Air Force Base.

R: You were in the Air Force then?

H: Yes.

R: Did you have to reenlist?

H: I'm trying to remember how it went. See, I enlisted for three years. I extended it one year when I was overseas because they needed me. I automatically extended it--made it into a three year extension. It was going to be a total of six years.

R: How long were you in the service then? In 1949 you were still in the service?

H: Yes, I was still in.

R: When did you get out?

H: The first part of 1951, somewhere around there. I'm sorry, 1952 rather. I got married in 1951 so it would be 1952.

R: You got married in 1951 and you met your wife in Cape Cod?

H: No, I met my wife here. It was 1945. I was assistant manager

for the Columbia Theatre.

R: In downtown Sharon?

H: Yes. Frank Sinatra was there, that's why I remember it now.

R: He was at the Columbia?

H: Yes.

R: You finally got out of the service then in 1952, and you were married?

H: Yes.

R: You came back and settled in Farrell?

H: Yes.

R: What line of profession did you go into then?

H: As soon as I came back I worked a short while at the General American, got laid off, and went back to work for Westinghouse. I worked with the Westinghouse before I went into the service too; that was another place I worked in until I got laid off. Then I got a job tending bar and digging ditches. I got a job at the Sharon Steel, got laid off, then I got an insurance business. I've been in the insurance business about twenty-two years.

R: So you got into the insurance probably around the late 1950's?

H: About 1959 is when I actually first started in the insurance business.

R: You've been with the same company since 1961?

H: Yes. Twenty years from last February.

R: Did you receive any special training or anything before you got into the insurance business?

H: Oh yes. I had to go through a training process for schooling while I was in it and until I got my state license. Then after awhile I went to what they call IUTC, which is a school on insurance by all insurance companies. It is a two year course, and I passed. I, in fact, ended up to be a teacher in it for other agents for about three years.

R: You're basically in sales now?

H: Sales and service they call it. Mine is a . . . it's a little bit different than most insurance ~~men~~ that you run into. I go

to the homes, collect and service the insurance right in the home. They just don't go on appointments, most of your agents today now. Years ago it was strictly what we call debit men, today they're called salesmen, and it's just strictly sell and that's the last you see of them.

R: Right, in the booths and everything.

H: See, in mine I go right to their homes and I collect their insurance premiums and turn it in and everything and handle all service pertaining to the insurance and claims.

R: What are some of your chief interests besides work now?

H: Making sure the city of Farrell keeps going the way they're going.

R: Do you have a good interest in politics?

H: In a sense, in a background I should say. I'm on different commissions and I work for different political figures to get them in office to continue building the town up. I'm involved in one big one right now for the councilmen.

R: Which one is that?

H: That's the four councilmen who we're pushing for to keep the town progressing like we have been the last five, six years.

R: Formed a sort of coalition?

H: More or less. Or the group will push to get state grants, federal grants to build the town up. We have a couple; we have another faction in town that is against all this.

R: They want to keep Farrell small?

H: No, they just don't want to see them going into . . . getting these grants for doing different things for different reasons. Why, I can't understand, but they complain. You've probably read it in the paper about our Puff Committee, that's the one.

R: You have more than just a passing interest now?

H: In a sense, yes.

R: Could you describe what an average day was like for you in Farrell during the 1960's?

H: Well, in the 1960's is when I was working as an insurance agent in Farrell and, in fact, in the lower section where they were having all those problems.

R: The racial problems?

H: Yes.

R: You basically went door-to-door?

H: Yes. I was right in the homes that these people were, I should say not the people who were doing it, but the people who lived there who actually were against everything that was going on. They were black.

R: Did you cover most of Farrell all over?

H: I had the one section between Idaho and Roemer Boulevard. I could sell all over, but as far as servicing into the homes, it was in the one lower section where most of the damage was.

R: Down on Idaho?

H: I actually worked between French Street and Roemer, from Broadway up to Wallis.

R: That's a pretty much square area there?

H: Yes, and that was primarily all black at that time.

R: During that time, say in the mid 1960's, do you remember how you felt about some of those black minority leaders such as Martin Luther King?

H: I didn't have much thought about him because he had . . . no, as far as I could see, he had no influence over the people here. The leaders that we had here that caused the problems were just radicals; they weren't actually leaders of the people themselves.

R: Do you remember hearing anything about him though?

H: Yes, I heard about him, but not that much, not even from his own people, very little.

R: Did any of your friends or relatives ever mention anything about him?

H: No, never talked too much about him. Once in awhile they would maybe have a discussion over him and what he was doing and how he was accomplishing anything, but nothing was . . . I wouldn't say that we would really sit down and talk.

R: How about the people whose houses you went into, the blacks where you were soliciting insurance?

H: Very little. That's what surprised me.

R: What can you recall about some of the racial rioting in other American cities through the 1960's? Do you remember hearing

about that?

- H: Oh yes. I read quite a bit and most of the ones that I could read about were primary to almost the same as ours. It was just a few radical people who got some of the younger people to follow along more or less, and once it got started it couldn't stop.
- R: How did you receive most of your information about what happened in other cities? Was it newspapers?
- H: Through newspapers, TV, radio, everything.
- R: During the 1960's could you--since you were pretty much on the streets, you know, with working in the house--sense a growing racial tension in Farrell at all?
- H: Only to the younger people. As far as the older people, there was no racial tension that I could see whatsoever. In fact, I made a good living from the particular people down there and I was always welcome in their home. I never had a problem of getting in, never got threatened, never was told to get out of their home, the older ones, I should say, from thirty on up at that time.
- R: A lot of people feel that Farrell was pretty much a melting pot of several ethnic neighborhoods.
- H: Well, about that time I would say it was better than forty percent black here. So, this is an ethnic town; it started out to be one. The Italians had their sections; the Slovaks had their sections; the Croatians had their sections. But as time went on they kept moving away and more blacks were moving in. We've had a good majority of the blacks I would say from Shenango Valley.
- At one time we had more public housing for blacks than the whole Mercer County put together. We had over 300 units in this town alone. They didn't have that many in the whole county.
- R: What do you think were some of the causes for the growing tensions among the younger people?
- H: I wouldn't say it was because of lack of work because at that time there was a lot of work. I would say mainly it would be the education of the younger ones because those particular people couldn't get what you call good jobs because they didn't have the education.
- R: You mean college education?
- H: Well, even high school.

R: Did a lot of them quit high school?

H: At that time. Now a lot of them are graduating, but at that time very few graduated from high school. I think because they couldn't get the good jobs is why they were upset and that some of the people were making good money and they weren't. Then you have what you call your trouble-makers and primarily I think the whole thing was just from a few people itself.

R: A small group of people caused it?

H: You know you can get a lot of kids, primarily say your age or a little bit younger who are followers. They don't stop to think on their own and that's just what happened. They just fell right in with them and that was when it all started.

R: Do you think the violence in Farrell that happened was a result of a sort of domino effect throughout the country? Some people feel that, you know, rioting started in the bigger cities and sort of spread across the country.

H: Only to the point of these few. Now I still think, and to this day and I talked to a lot of blacks, it was just these few who came in and used it as an excuse. They said, "They're doing it there, they're getting this, so why don't we do it?" In other words, it's for their own benefit, only for that few. Most of the people that I saw who were involved in it did not gain a thing from it and a lot of them learned an awful lesson. I mentioned one man who was involved with it and what a change just over what happened, what he had seen happen. You would be surprised how many had changed.

Their own people were against them because I would go in the homes where the older people who weren't involved with the riots had shotguns sitting there waiting for them to come in and do damage to them. The damage was all done to their own property, or I shouldn't say their property because it wasn't owned by them. Most of the area was owned by two or three people, but they were places where they lived, hung out, or did business.

R: So it was actually young blacks damaging the older blacks' property?

H: Right, in a sense. Well, it wasn't older blacks' property, it was like I say, two or three people who owned the property and the older people were renting. But they didn't gain a thing from it.

R: Was your life or any of your family's lives affected by any racial tension or violence in Farrell itself?

H: No, never. It was like I mentioned earlier, I grew up in what they call the flats area and it was about every nationality going plus a lot of blacks. At that time when I was growing up, the flats had their gang; the south ward had their gang; the north ward had their gang. We protected everybody in our particular area: white, black, or whatever they were.

I often pass around a story about the barber who had three children. I remember two of them. The one girl had a date with a boy from Farrell. We allowed her to go out. When she came home, after he brought her home, after he dropped her off, we beat him up because he was from Farrell, and we were from Sharon. Two different areas, see?

R: Yes.

H: She was still black. It was just the idea she lived in our neighborhood, that's all. So we were more or less clannish people in that neighborhood. From what I can remember as a young child, every area had them. Now you've probably read or seen movies about New York gangs?

R: Right.

H: Well, it was similar to it, but not as radical, not as bad. We would go out and maybe raid somebody's garden or something like this here or have a fight between another gang of kids, but nothing to hurt anybody.

R: Did the racial tension affect your job at all?

H: No, in fact it helped my job in a sense. More and more people would invite me in their home to sell them more insurance because of what was happening. They were afraid of things happening to them.

R: How about at school for your children, do you remember anything about their lives changing with the schools?

H: They changed when they were getting into school. I would say it changed better for them because when they were younger they used to ride with my wife when she would come down to pick me up, and they would see a black person and wonder about him; they couldn't understand it. As they got older and started going to school . . . like I said, at the time there was forty percent black students at that time at the school--maybe it would have been higher--and never had any problems. They associated with them; they were in plays together; they more or less ran around the town together with them. I never had any problem. They never had any problems that I knew of with any of them.

R: How about in your neighborhood here, were there any problems?

H: No. The only problem I ever had was kids coming home from school. I was trying to plant grass or something and--that had no bearing of black or white--they would knock down my stakes, my lines, stuff like this. I would make them pick it up and do it all over again. I've never had any trouble as far as any black or any kids here.

R: How about in any clubs or organizations you might have been in Farrell here?

H: I belong to the Kiwanis Club and we never had any problems because we were, more or less, oriented to take care of the slow learners in the town, which were more or less half black and half white as far as the slow learners. They were not quite retarded.

R: Mr. Hughes, what can you recall about the burning and damage done to some of the Farrell businesses such as, I think Pic Electric? It was damaged pretty bad.

H: Well, like I say, it's done in that particular area where they were living at.

R: Who did most of the violence and most of the damage?

H: They were more or less the leaders of them I should say. I won't say they did most of the damage because our own people were involved.

In this town, we have more barrooms than any town like this size in the world. In fact, at one time this town was in Believe It or Not by Ripley, on record as having more barrooms and churches than any other town this size in the world. You would have to check back on that, but it was in there.

R: So a lot of people came from out of town to the bars?

H: To the bars that we had here, because on every corner we either had a bar or a church. What I mean by bars is regular bars or clubs. We have a lot of clubs in this town yet to this day or different nationalities from being an ethnic town years ago.

R: Right. Some people have told me that at night you'll see a lot of out-of-state plates too.

H: Yes, because they're right there. Like on Sunday, for years you couldn't buy liquor in Pennsylvania on Sundays, but you can in the clubs. We have more clubs in this town than, I think, of any town around here and it could be in the world too, especially for its size.

- R: Most of the violence happened in the summer of 1969. Would you label what happened in Farrell during that time a riot?
- H: Yes, I would label it as a riot, but like I say, it was instigated by a certain few and the rest of them just followed along. Before they knew it they got into doing things that they didn't realize they were doing, and caused more damage which actually hurt them more than it did anyone else in the town. They did more damage to themselves.
- R: What you're referring to here is the Black Youth Action Committee?
- H: Well, I won't say it's a Black Youth Action Committee, what I'm saying is . . . say we have a few people here who are agitators and then we had a few come from out of town, so they combine together and then they got a lot of the younger kids. The younger people followed them and as long as they kept getting more people with them, the more they wanted to do something. As long as they stayed in a small group, they didn't do anything.
- I believe what stopped them from coming up the hill farther -- that's where they started the damage--there was a rumor that went around that we had a lot of Italian people here that were supposedly connected with the Mafia. Word was passed around--I heard it when I was down on the street--that the Mafia would come if they didn't stop and that's as far as they went. It's just a rumor as far as I know; I've never heard of any or have seen or met any Mafia people here that I know of--I could have.
- R: But it was supposed to do that, right?
- H: Right.
- R: Do you remember anything at all about that Black Youth Action Committee?
- H: Not too much, outside of hearing, well, they would be the outspoken people. They did the speaking. I think what they call it now is the silent majority; they just sit back and listen, don't say anything. Most of those people are like that down there, but you get these few that would speak out and we would hear them. I know of a few who were involved.
- R: Roger Winston was one?
- H: Roger Winston was one. Reverend Stewart was another one. Reverend Stewart hasn't changed any that I know of. He's still about the same.
- R: Is he affiliated with the church?

H: Well, I don't know if he has a church. If he calls himself Reverend Stewart, I don't know where his church is at.

R: Does he live here in Farrell?

H: Only thing I know of, he's got a box number. Now he did live here, yes. I don't know, because he lived on Emerson Avenue. His mother, I think, lived on Hamilton not too long ago, but as far as where he lives at right now, I couldn't say. I know I've heard him go to the city to complain because he wasn't picked as a policeman because he was black and also because the manager didn't like him. He gives his address as a box number, so that means he could be living anywhere.

R: Right. Well, how do you think the Sharon Herald reported the events in Farrell during the 1960's?

H: They were biased to a certain degree or I mean against the blacks actually because a lot of the blacks moved from Sharon.

Sharon had a redevelopment going down there. They actually didn't start; they were trying to get the redevelopment in the lower end of town started and a lot of blacks moved out of the town in a sense. You couldn't pinpoint it down as who was responsible, but word was out not to rent anymore homes or apartments to blacks for they were moving into Farrell. A lot of them were related so naturally they took them in. I would see apartments, one-family apartments we'll say of three rooms, that had three families living in it because these relatives had no other place to live.

R: So there was some real estate . . .

H: Oh, there were a lot of real estate problems then as far as blacks are concerned.

R: How do you feel the Farrell police dealt with all the racial problems?

H: Actually, very good. I was really surprised. I thought they would go wild themselves trying either to protect themselves mainly and do a lot more damage, but they didn't. In fact, I remember one incident with the city building where the police were standing on the steps and the mayor was talking to a group of people on the street and a young boy, black boy, ran up and stole the policeman's hat. He chased him, got the hat back and the boy spit on him and he didn't do a thing to him. To me, I think, if somebody would do that I would let loose somehow. But he was very calm and cool and all because there were a bunch of blacks there, you know, a big crowd arguing about different things that they wanted.

- R: How do you think the city government overall handled Farrell's problems then?
- H: I think they gave them too much pull. In other words, it's not that they did anything for them or anything, but they allowed them more, it was more lax with them and should have got the ringleaders that caused all of the problems.
- R: Do you think they're letting them get away with too much?
- H: They let them, to me. I think if they had got the ringleaders that caused everything and pressed charges on them, it would have been a big help as far as holding everything down.
- R: Do you recall any group of people or a movement which tried to better the race relations in Farrell during the 1960's?
- H: None that I can say that did very much at it.
- R: Mostly churches?
- H: Well, the churches all tried and they wanted to help the people on a whole, but we had a lot of people who were, to me, helping themselves, not the people. In other words, I think they only did it to benefit themselves.
- R: Can you recall any specific examples of racial prejudice in Farrell during the 1960's, say for example in real estate?
- H: Oh yes. In fact, the real estate people themselves did it too, plus the people. They didn't want to sell. The neighbors got on them; they didn't want them to sell to blacks. The real estate men guided people away from here. In other words, after we had so many blacks, they even guided the whites away from here.
- R: Told them not to settle there?
- H: No, they didn't tell them not to settle there; they said, "Why would you want to buy down in Farrell with all of the blacks and all the trouble they're having down there?" Real estate was very low as far as that goes here because of that situation, although it has increased tremendously since.
- R: How about an economic prejudice such as on jobs or in the job area?
- H: I've never seen it actually. I worked in the different mills and there were a lot of blacks. In fact, a lot of blacks were brought here by mills. In my insurance business over the last twenty years, we try to hire blacks who are hard to get. It's hard to get them to have enough education, to be able to do

the work, or pass the state test which is the biggest thing. When we did hire them the blacks wouldn't deal with them.

We brought a young black up from New Castle, put him to work in the black area down there. He had one of the hardest times I've ever seen a man have as far as servicing insurance or selling it. We transferred him back to New Castle, put him in an area that was eighty percent white; he did better down there than he did here with his own people.

In fact, this Roger Winston that I mentioned, he's assistant executive director of the redevelopment. But blacks, a lot of them dislike him because of the position he's holding, even to this day. They're this way when a black tries to get ahead or gets ahead; then they're against them.

R: Is it sort of envy or something?

H: Well, it could be, but they don't want to deal with them.

R: Right.

H: I always get the idea that being that that black got that job he must have been doing something crooked or is crooked, that's how he got the job, so they don't want to deal with him. Why they got this feeling, I don't know, because as far as Mr. Winston is concerned, right today, he's doing one of the best jobs any black could possibly do that I know of. He's not only working for blacks, he's working for whites too at the same time.

R: Basically we've sort of come to the conclusion here that it was mainly a single small group that caused most of the problems here?

H: Yes, more or less they were the leaders and there were too many people that I've found out are followers. I have the same problem in my own family. I have two boys, one's a leader and one's a follower. The one boy just reminds me of all those people down there who followed this radical bunch. So far, like I say, the one boy is a follower. He doesn't get in any trouble, thank God. He never did in fact even with all this dope going on, but he just seems to be a follower like those people. In comparison to my other son who is a leader, he's got to lead everybody; he's got to be the boss in other words. If he would turn his thoughts to the idea where some of these radical people did down there at the time I think he would be one of those leaders.

R: Do you think alcohol or drugs had anything to do with all the problems Farrell had?

H: Back then, no. Working down there night and day and I mean

I worked down there as late as eleven o'clock and midnight, I've seen very little drugs. Now we had people who were alcoholics, but they didn't actually cause the trouble.

R: Looking back at the 1960's and the racial unrest that happened in Farrell, what changes would you like to have seen instituted in Farrell or your neighborhood or the city as a whole?

H: In the city as a whole, to get the people to have more pride in their town, to take care of it. If they don't have any pride in it they're not going to take care of it, I don't care if you're black or white.

As far as the change, I would like to see more people, especially the younger ones, get a good education where they could understand what's happening, what they can do to work within the system, not against the system. There's another illustration which I like and I talk about quite a bit. Young Roger Winston, who was working against the system at the time, is now working within and he's doing more good than he did then.

R: Right. Do you think more recreation facilities for the blacks in Farrell could have possibly prevented some of the violence that happened?

H: Maybe at that time, but nobody had that much recreation around here. We had the two parks, the one in Sharon and the one in Farrell here, but the one in Farrell didn't have much on it, just to go up there and play around, throw a ball, or whatever it is you wanted to do. The city of Farrell was always great for sports and the blacks had a tremendous opportunity on that as far as I'm concerned because this city was well-known all over the United States.

R: For basketball?

H: For basketball.

R: And McClosky.

H: He's one of the toughest taskmasters I've ever run into and he had primarily blacks on his teams. They were the majority, but he checked on those kids. He set rules and regulations and they had to abide by them or they were off. If you remember some of our back history, Julius McCoy was one of the top starts to come out of here; he was benched because he wasn't in his home at nine o'clock at night. The coach himself went around checking these things and when he took the boys out they had to behave themselves and be well dressed. Going back talking about the Farrell teams that went out of town to play for state playoffs and that, they were well-behaved and well-dressed at all times when they were out of town. Because the coach said that if you didn't follow his rules, you were off no

matter how good you were because he had better players sitting in the bleachers than he had on the team.

R: He was well-disciplined?

H: Right.

R: Well, do you think the racial problems Farrell has had were inevitable?

H: Yes, because like I say, any town that has any radicals in it, you're going to have a problem.

R: Do you think Farrell was pretty much caught up in the 1960's then?

H: Because of that and the idea that the bigger towns were . . . I have been into bigger towns where racial problems are bad and they start these riots, so it just more or less is a shoot off that all the other little towns have had.

As far as the blacks in this town even at that time, the older ones, not the younger ones, I never had any problem talking to them. They all worked up to good jobs in the mills. I won't say they were in the higher echelon part of it, but they all had good jobs that they worked up to, from labor on up. They didn't get into the management part, maybe there they would have some squabble, but as far as this town--strictly a laborer's town in a sense--most of them all had good jobs, made good money, as same as the whites.

R: Okay. Mr. Hughes, have you participated at all in any group or organization concerned about the racial problems in Farrell?

H: Yes. The things I'm in right now are to stop racial problems and to better not only the blacks on a whole, and everybody in this town, but primarily in the area where we had all the trouble.

R: What organizations were those?

H: That was your Planning Commission that I'm on, what we call now our Charter Review Commission, which is a charter to help everybody. Any meetings that I did go to, that were being held by anybody . . . I'm also Chairman of Fair Housing Commission, and one of the things the federal government wants from us is if there are any discrimination against blacks buying homes in the town. In the last two years, there hasn't been one complaint. I talk to a number of people who live up in this area, people who live down there, also people who belong to different religious groups, community action groups and none of them have heard of anything in the last two years. So that hasn't been the changes

Blacks live almost anyplace in the area up here, in the whole town now. As far as this area right here, it originally started to be formed at the time of the Sharon Steel. Well, at that time it was another mill. In fact, we lived up here.

Right now, one of the best homes we have is right on the corner here, a black family. Right up the street from me is a black family, on the next corner there's one. So actually it has intergrated the whole town, even all the way up in the top.

R: They're no longer kept down on the lower end?

H: No, not kept down there. The only ones that actually are kept down there are the ones who don't work or can't work.

R: Can't afford to get out.

H: So they can't afford to come up. I have yet to see a home being sold up in this area at a higher price because blacks want to buy it. I wouldn't say that back ten years ago.

R: They used to?

H: Yes.

R: How different are race relations overall today in Farrell compared to what they were in the 1960's? Are they better or worse?

H: They're a lot better, a lot better. We have more blacks involved in different things. These commissions I'm on, we have blacks on them. We have blacks, I think, on any commission going in here. We have, I think, one of the first Human Relations Offices for the blacks that handle these complaints. They get very few complaints on jobs, housing, about their school.

R: How do you feel the racial problems Farrell had during the 1960's has affected the reputation of the city and the greater Shenango Valley?

H: It got more blacks involved. Instead of standing back like these radicals I mentioned and causing problems, it got more blacks to get involved with the system itself. Going to council meetings airing their problems, going to different commissions that may have any bearing on anything that would help them, that would get them to go to it, air their complaints and have them checked out. In a lot of cases in the 1960's they did have problems; there was no getting around it. As of today though there is that much of a change, very few problems today.

R: Do you feel Farrell has been given an unfair reputation though around the Valley?

H: Oh yes, and that was through prejudice with the Sharon Herald. Anytime there was any trouble in this town it was publicized.

R: Blown out of proportion at all?

H: Well, I'll just give you an illustration. Just down the block or two a young girl one morning was knocked down and they thought the black fellow was attacking her, a big spread in the paper. That same day there were two rapes within blocks of the main part of downtown Sharon and nothing was ever put in the paper.

R: Were they looking for news, in other words?

H: They got the news here. Automatically they're looking for news here, but not for there. We have our own people causing problems here too. In other words, they'll write letters to the editor of anything that ever happens in the town and it automatically gets in the papers.

R: Well, is there anything else important that you would like to discuss that we didn't cover?

H: We covered the riot pretty good. I would say I would like to see more people who you would talk to in an interview that have found that it worked better to work within the system than against it, such as that Roger Winston.

R: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW