

**YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

Farrell Race Relations in the 1960s

Personal Experience

O.H.1017

RUDOLPH HAMMOND

Interviewed

by

Ronald J. Rice

on

April 28, 1981

RUDOLPH HAMMOND

Rudolph Hammond was born in Farrell, Pennsylvania, on September 6, 1928. He has lived all of his life in Farrell and was raised by his grandparents. After graduating from Farrell High School in 1946, Hammond got a job at the Sharon Steel Company as a laborer. He is currently working at Sharon Steel as the manager of the train yard. Hammond went to work in the mill because he could not afford to attend college.

Hammond has been married to his wife, Myrtle, since 1946, and they have two children. His special interests include politics and raising his grandchildren. Hammond is the former chairman of the Farrell Democratic Party. He has run unsuccessfully for a seat on Farrell's city council, but still remains very much concerned about the political situation in Farrell.

Hammond is also concerned with the reputation of Farrell. He feels that the racial problems in Farrell throughout the 1960s have been exaggerated by the local news media. Hammond has some very concrete ideas about what caused the racial problems in Farrell during the 1960s. He hopes that through his efforts in politics that he can help better the lives of all blacks in Farrell.

**YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

Farrell Race Relations in the 1960s

INTERVIEWEE: Rudolph Hammond

INTERVIEWER: Ronald J. Rice

SUBJECT: Racial tensions and violence in Farrel, racial prejudice, Farrell politics

DATE: April 28, 1981

R: This is an interview with Rudolph Hammond for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Farrell Race Relations During the 1960s, by Ronald J. Rice, on April 28, 1981, at 333 Hamilton Avenue, at 4:15 p.m.

Mr. Hammond, tell me a little bit about where you're from originally.

H: [I'm from] Farrell.

R: Were you born in Farrell?

H: I came to Farrell when I was 11 months old. I was born in New York City. I came to Farrell when my mother died. My grandparents raised me here in Farrell, so basically all of my life was here in Farrell.

R: Did you grow up here on Hamilton [Avenue]?

H: No, I grew up on Staunton Street and Lee Avenue. I got married at 18 years old. I'm 53 now, and I've lived in two homes in those 34 years, one on Idaho Street and here on Hamilton.

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

H: Well, my mother died when I was 11 months old. My grandmother was part Cherokee Indian and part black. [She was] a strong willed woman with good moral standards. There were three of us brothers that grew up in Farrell. We were always brought up in the home to believe that color was never a problem, it was just what the individual made out of life. It could be, we were told, a little harder for a black in those days, but if you really believed and really wanted something, you could go out there and get it.

R: What was Farrell like back in the 1930s?

H: I was a youngster and very poor. [I] never owned a bicycle. I think about these things. I never owned a pair of skates like my kids. [They were] hard times. My grandmother did day work. [We] never had any kind of relief or welfare, never had an allowance, but I had a lot of fun.

R: Did you attend Farrell schools then?

H: I graduated from Farrell High School in 1946.

R: What was high school like?

H: I played in the band, my two brothers played basketball, and it was more or less like one big happy family. It cost 25 cents to get into football games, if you could afford it in those days. Most kids couldn't afford to get into a football game. Before I was in the band, if we wanted to see a football game we couldn't.

R: What did you do after you got out of high school.

H: I left high school in the very first week in June of 1946. In September 1946 I went to Sharon Steel as a laborer. Now I'm management. I conduct all of the trade traffic within the plant.

R: You've been at Sharon Steel since 1946?

H: Yes.

- R: Were there any particular factors that caused you to choose the mill?**
- H: Very few of us from Farrell in those days had an opportunity to go to college--unless you earned a scholarship--so there was no choice but the mill. World War II was just over then, so I missed the draft. I went right into the steel plant making 96 cents an hour, that was the going entry level rate in 1946. It compares with about \$13.00 or \$14.00 an hour now.**
- R: That's quite a change. Did you start as a laborer?**
- H: Yes. Then I worked my way up to cement finisher, and from there to a brakeman on the railroad, then conductor, then engineer, and finally yardmaster.**
- R: Did you receive any special training for your job?**
- H: On the job training, but nothing in particular.**
- R: What are some of your chief interests now besides work?**
- H: Educating my grandchildren.**
- R: You say you got married right out of high school, is that right?**
- H: I was married at 19. I got a job in September, then I got married in February of the following year. We dated each other in junior high school and high school. She was my first girl friend.**
- R: You have two children?**
- H: I have a daughter that is 33 and living in Pensulkin, New Jersey, a suburb of Camden, and I have a son that works for Mobate Chemical Company in Pittsburgh. He's an IBM computer analyst.**
- R: Let's jump to the 1960s. What was an average day like for you in the mid-1960s?**
- H: I was rather active in Farrell. I was city chairman of the Democratic Party and affiliated with the mayor here at that time.**
- R: Was that [John] Jerosky?**

H: Yes, Jerosky was mayor and I was city chairman of the Democratic Party. I have a lot of respect for Farrell, a lot of fond memories. We had, at that time, 16 committeemen and women in this city, three of which were black.

R: City councilmen?

H: No, these people were committee people. The committee itself elects the city chairman. There's a committee man and committee woman for each given precinct. We had eight precincts at the time. Three of us on the committee were black. I opposed fine, white people running for the same position. I received the votes and was elected three times to city chairman for the city of Farrell. This was one reason I've never had a problem or complex about being black.

R: What were some of your duties at that position?

H: I would formulate the campaign for all city offices in a general election. If you ran for mayor or for councils I would formulate a lot of their campaign activities.

R: Did it consume quite a bit of your time?

H: Yes. It had some good points, though, wherein if I had an individual that was a friend of mine--black or white--that would need some patronage, I had access to it if it was available. It was a good thing. I did a lot of good. It was rewarding in that sense.

When racial tension came into Farrell, I thought it was overplayed by the papers. This could be a biased opinion, but that's what I think. The mayor would call me in and ask, "How can we get peace here? How can we deal with this individual that's disturbed or upset?" Again, I might be looking at it in the wrong light because I've never had a problem in the community. I was fortunate to find a job. I've worked all my like. I never drew an unemployment check. I really had no problems like some of the young people had, so my looking at their problems was different than looking at my own. A lot of these problems were created by people who were trying to create a self image. I say a lot of these people were on an ego trip. They wanted to be in the papers and in the news media type things. This was their way of showing who they were and where they were coming from. It was all uncalled for.

I felt we had a fair town. Our police department was over-lenient with violators. I objected to this to the mayor and to the chiefs of police. I've dealt with two or three of them. I feel that when an individual breaks the

law, regardless if it's my youngster or your youngster, they've got to pay the price. Of course, here in Farrell everybody basically knew everyone and, therefore, some people got away with breaking windows, stealing, looting, and that type of thing. I was bitter about it. In most cases, in fact, in every case, it was uncalled for.

R: During the 1960s, what do you recall about some of the black minority leaders nationwide, such as Martin Luther King? Do you remember much about him?

H: [He was a] dedicated man. He believed in what he was preaching about. A great number of blacks, I didn't feel, were really practicing what they were preaching about. This guy, in my opinion, was a real hero in the 1960s for the black community throughout the United States, throughout the world for that matter. He wasn't preaching one thing, believing in something else, and doing something else. He really believed, deep down, that the way to receive justice was through demonstrations and marches in a peaceful manner. This is why he got the respect of the world and why he was classified as the greatest black leader that had ever come around in our time.

R: Do you remember how you first heard about him?

H: I think he was well on his way. I think it was the march on Montgomery, Alabama. He was in the Movement long before this, but he first drew my attention during the bus boycott of Montgomery.

R: Can you recall anything about some of the racial rioting in other American cities throughout the 1960s? Do you remember anything about it on the television or radio?

H: I was in the Philadelphia area several times and, to me, it was just a lot of blacks that had a gift to gab. They had a talent that should be used in other directions, just trying to make a mark or name for themselves. They wanted the leadership and they wanted the attention and publicity that Martin Luther King had.

R: What did you see in Philadelphia?

H: I saw some demonstrations there, some window breaking, some looting there in Philadelphia and in Camden, New Jersey. That's right across the Delaware Bridge from Philadelphia. It's a city about the size of Youngstown, probably about 100,000 or 125,000 in population. They boarded up the whole town during that period.

R: Could you sense any kind of growing tension in the city of Farrell during the 1960s?

H: Not really. I would imagine that my attitude twenty-some years back was one of complacency. As an example, my daughter at that given time was either in her senior year of high school or in her first year at Youngstown University. She was president of the youth branch of the NAACP in Mercer county. They had formed a group to picket the high school. I can recall the incident, but I can't recall the individual. We had lost a school director at Farrell High School--he resigned--and the school board appointed a white. Upon doing this, the black community--not all of it, just part of the black community--wanted to picket around the school system. My daughter came home from college that evening and the president of the branch contacted her and wanted her to get the young group together to draw some signs and do some picketing. So, I took her and my son into the living room, we sat down, and I told her she couldn't do it. That was my opinion. In the first place, I think that there was room on the Farrell Board of Education for a black person. We should have been represented. But once these gentleman made a decision, I thought we had to live with it. They're competent people, and they had a responsibility to the community. Good or bad, when you are in a responsible position, you have to make decisions and live with them whether they are right or wrong. So why would you go out and corral some youngsters to start picketing? Some irresponsible person can come around in a car, throw a stone, and hit a youngster. You can get hurt, you can get killed. For what? I didn't permit my family to get involved with the picket anymore.

R: You don't think there was any growing tensions through the 1960s between blacks or whites in the city?

H: I don't think so. I think there were some blacks that felt it was a chance to explore positions they weren't qualified to go into. They made demands that were uncalled for. Again, this is my personal opinion. They even harassed private businesses. At that time there was no federal law that you had to employ a minority. So, my belief at that time was that if you owned a business, you worked, you sweated, you put it together, invested your money and your time and you wanted to employ me, fine. If you didn't want to employ me you had that right, too. I think that in city government where everyone is paying a tax dollar, it should have been spread out among all groups of people.

R: What about the Black Youth Action Committee?

H: Black Youth Action Committee on Staunton Street had, at that time, some leaders that I thought were just exploring the issues of the time. They wanted in the headlines of the papers and what little TV coverage there was, which was not a whole lot in those days in the Farrell area. They took advantage of the times, but there was no need. The little troubles we had here--breaking windows, looting the sports center on Idaho Street--were all uncalled for and ran a few small businesses out of town.

There were rumors that the whites were all geared up for it with extra ammunition and guns in the hill district in the east corner of Farrell. "Let them come up the hill and start something. We're going to settle this once and for all." It never materialized. We were thankful for that, but there were rumors to that effect.

R: Would you say that what happened in Farrell was the result of a sort of domino effect in the country?

H: [There's] no question in my mind that it was a domino effect because basically Farrell had been a community where you could go where you wanted to and do what you wanted to do.

If I may, I'd like to tell you about an incident. We had a meeting at a church here in Farrell. In fact, it was the largest black congregational church in the city of Farrell. Roy Brockleer was sitting on council here in Farrell. He was dean of council at the time, but he became ill and wanted to resign. He called me into his home and he said, "Rudy, I'm going to resign from council providing that you agree to take my seat." "Well, if you like, I'll give it a shot," was my answer to him. He said that was fine. In the meantime, he said, "Well, let's bring the black community together and let them know what we're doing." I said I had no problem with that. So, we used this church I referred to a moment ago for a meeting place. The mayor and two of the councilmen, which was the majority at the time, were sitting in on this meeting. I called the black leaders in. We sat down and we talked. The mayor, Jerosky, talked, Roy Brockleer talked, and councilman O'Neil talked. They were looking at me to sit on the council.

So, a black doctor stood up. He didn't know me other than seeing me at a few banquets I had to attend. He spoke to me, I spoke to him, but he didn't know me personally at all. I guess he had heard a lot about me. He said, "We don't want Rudy Hammond to sit on city council." The mayor asked him why. He said, "Because we don't want a man with black pigmentation. We want a man that thinks black, and Rudy Hammond is one of these people who don't think black." He said that he was from the South and that I knew nothing about when he was in college in the South trying to get a

degree in medicine. He said I didn't know about he and his family not being allowed to stay in white accommodations, or be allowed to eat at white places, or allowed to ride the bus.

I had a chance to answer him. I agreed with the guy. I didn't know what he went through, and I didn't question that he hadn't gone through these trial times when he was in college. But I did know about Farrell and the Shenango Valley. If I wanted to go Eagles Avenue--at that time Eagles was Lee Avenue--up to the Shenango Inn and stay, I could if I acted like a gentleman and there was a vacancy. I said, "If you have a real hang-up or a problem about what happened to you when you were getting your degree in medicine, go back to the South. You picket, you demonstrate down where you had a problem. We don't have a problem here in the Valley."

In the end, though, the judges ended up appointing a council man because the mayor and the councilmen couldn't get together on it. Before they could make an appointment Brockleer had to resign. Once he resigned, there were four votes, not five. That left me with two for me and two against me. These are the kind of things I went through in the 1960s.

R: Who did they end up appointing?

H: A Republican to fill a Democrat's spot.

R: Just one judge?

H: No. If I'm not mistaken, all the strong candidates were called into District Justice Frank Hammer's office one night and interviewed by Judge Ackar. He just asked us basic questions on why we wanted to become councilmen. In the final analysis, the two judges, Ackar and Stranahan, appointed a Republican to fill in the unexpired term of Louis Brockleer. I wasn't their choice.

R: It was political?

H: Yes, that's what it amounted to, but nevertheless it was legitimate. It was done the way it should have been done because the law at the time gave council 30 days to make a decision. Upon the end of the 30 days, if there was no decision made then the county common pleas court would appoint someone to fill the vacancy. It went beyond the 30 days and the judges stepped in.

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

H: No, we were fortunate. We were never threatened.

R: Not even at work or school?

H: Never. My youngsters, I think, were a little bit put out. They never came out and said anything openly about not being permitted to demonstrate the appointing of a white and not a black to that school board position. We have heard some stories, but I don't know them to be fact or not. I heard some stories about black homes being threatened and some phone calling. I had none of these problems.

R: How about your neighborhood? Did you live here on Hamilton at that time?

H: At that time I lived on the 900 block of Idaho Street. I had no problems. I felt like I had respect of the good blacks and a great deal of the whites. I really had no problem.

R: Do you know of any of your friends that were affected at all?

H: Not personal friends of mine, no.

R: What can you recall about any of the burning or damage done to some of the Farrell businesses, such as Pic Electric or Mark's Music?

H: It was frightening to me because I watched good people who I knew personally, not just as business people, lose everything they had. I had been in these people's homes. I watched good people scared out of their wits. They had their life's savings, their life's work tied up into these businesses and they were threatened with losing everything. They couldn't get insurance. Their insurances were getting cancelled. Bill Hamilton, the druggist on Idaho Street at Hamilton and Wallace, told me on several occasions, "Rudy, one more breaking of my windows and I'm moving out of Farrell." We didn't need that. Fortunately enough he didn't move out of Farrell. Those type of people we don't want to lose. The Picciardis', who own Pic Electric, their life is in Farrell, their hearts are here. They took a beating during that period but stuck it out. They never threatened to leave, but they were disheartened. I know it ran Meyers Frank out of Farrell and into the Hickory Plaza. Just prior to that time, one of the finest furniture stores in the entire Shenango Valley was here, but they left.

R: The building is deserted now, isn't it?

H: Yes. The windows have been broken dozens of time.

You sit around helplessly. I felt like I was helpless watching these people being harassed for no good reason. These were good people. Maybe there were some bigots, some racists in town, but I certainly didn't come into contact with them. But the people that were being harassed and the people that were being hurt were good, honest people .

R: Would you label what happened in Farrell during the summer of 1969, when most of this happened, a riot or not?

H: No, no. There was never a riot in Farrell. I've never been in the midst of a riot. I would interpret a riot as being a mob, uncontrollable, and that never happened in Farrell. Every incident that happened in Farrell--and there were a number of them, too many, in fact--was a hit and run thing. [They] never defied the police department, never defied the law. One time--I can't remember what the incident was about--Mayor Jerosky called me, Ted Perillo, the chief of police, and the state police in. There was a rumor there was going to be a big riot that day. Mayor Jerosky called me in that afternoon and told me he was going to call the state police in. He was afraid his policemen were tired and overworked. They had a 21 man force and with guys on vacation, guys on sick time, guys with days off, would leave two or three policemen to patrol the whole city on a given day. So, he talked to an officer in charge of affairs up in Mercer. They refused to come because there was no riot situation. It wasn't a situation where the city policemen had proven that they couldn't handle the situation. If this would have occurred, they would have come in.

R: What can you recall about the Black Youth Action Committee? Do you know what their demands were to the city?

H: Their demands to the city were that they wanted blacks in the fire department. We had a black, but he resigned on his own. Ernie Evans was his name. He was appointed during the time I was city chairman. He left and went to the Washington D.C. area. Out of the 21 police officers in Farrell, we had 3 blacks on the force. One was a police guard and two were on the desks. So, I felt we had proper representation within the police department, based upon the number of people that were employed there at that time.

They barked about the housing projects here in the city of Farrell. The city of Farrell itself had little to do with that. The city would cast orders to permit, say hypothetically, 35 units to go up on Market Street, approve it,

sell the land to either the Federal government or the Mercer County Housing Authority. When the units went up, they were no longer the city's jurisdiction anymore, the Mercer County Housing Authority was in charge.

They complained about the hill district being treated differently than the lower end of Farrell as far as city services were concerned. This wasn't the case at all. The truth of the matter was that the people in the hill district had decent investments up there, newer pieces of property, better spaced out. They took care of their property.

R: What do they consider the hill district?

H: We're talking from Indiana in Farrell to basically the east corner. That would be Lynn Boulevard, Judy Lynn Drive, Memorial Drive.

Like I said, the point there was that the people there took pride in their properties. They had some large investments up in that area, newer properties. Downtown we never educated people to take care of a nice yard. I lived in an apartment when I was a youngster. We never owned a house. We never had a decent yard to take care of. We came out of the house and we were on street level, no nice back yard, or side yard, or whatever. This is how it in most cases downtown. This is the way towns were designed at the turn of the century. We lived that area, but not by choice. In most cases, it wasn't by choice.

R: Do those people rent downtown?

H: We had to rent. We had no money to buy. My grandparents weren't aware of the fact of the value of investing in the properties. They had gone through a Depression when I was one, two, or three years old. They wouldn't take any credit, they were afraid of debt. We missed the boat in that sense. The black community missed the boat.

My grandmother came into Farrell from South Carolina in 1917. She could have bought all of the hill district had she the money and the foresight. She just didn't have that. It wasn't like, "Because you're black you stay on Lee Avenue. You can't go on Beechwood, you can't go on Judy Lynn Drive." We could have gone in my time. I could have bought any place in Farrell I wanted to buy if I had the money.

R: How do you think the Sharon Herald reported the events in Farrell?

- H: Biased. Farrell was a scapegoat to the entire pulse of the Herald. We were the scapegoats here in Farrell. We had no more car stealing than they had in Sharon, or Sharpesville, or Hickory at that time. We had no more crime than the other communities had, but we were more publicized than all the other communities.**
- R: Do you think the Herald was more or less looking for news?**
- H: It made good reading.**
- R: How do you think the Farrell police, overall, handled the situation?**
- H: Luckily, very well.**
- R: Do you think it could have been worse?**
- H: I say luckily because they weren't trained to handle this type of problem. They had never dealt with this type of problem. There were no serious injuries to the participants or the police officers. There was no one ever convicted of any major crime. To me, this was a plus. And I think it was luck.**
- R: How about the city government, how did they do?**
- H: I felt like I was part of it, so, again, it could be a biased opinion. I thought they did excellent. I was afraid for Mayor Jerosky the day he called the state troopers for assistance into Farrell. There were rumors around that the uprising was coming and they were going to burn the city building down that night. His wife was scared to death. But John Jerosky came down amongst hundreds of blacks, some militant and violent, promising he'd do anything in his power to satisfy their needs and wants. He had no protection around him, no police around him. To me, it took guts and this guy had it.**
- R: Was there any group of people or movement that you know of that tried to better the race relations in Farrell besides the city government?**
- H: Yes. John Jersoky met privately with Ministerial Alliance weekly. He asked for their support and ideas to help make better relations between whites and blacks. That's the only group I personally know of.**
- R: Can you give me any specific examples of racial prejudice in Farrell during the 1960s, such as in real estate or on the job at Sharon Steel?**

H: It happened to me at Sharon Steel. I was in the department I'm in now, transportation, and I was a full time conductor of the regular crew and relieving as engineer. The fellow that was in front of me seniority wise passed away. It left a vacancy. They had a younger fellow there, a real young white fellow. He had less plant seniority than me, and he had less job seniority than I did. They moved him in as relief yardmaster. I was happy with my job, I wasn't eager to move up. But the guys started to needle me a little bit. So, I stopped in the superintendent's office, he was an Irish fellow by the name of Wendell. I said, "Wendell, I'd like you to change that yardmaster's job. I'm older than that fellow that's relieved me. I have more plant seniority than he has and more job seniority. I don't have a college degree, but I read and write as well as he does. I can do the job." He said--and boy this really got me mad--"Hammond, I can't keep you from running the engine, I can't stop you from conducting because that's bargaining unit. But I can keep you out of the office because that's management and I don't want you in the office."

R: Did he say why?

H: He left it at that. I said, "Wendell, as long as I know where you stand at, fine." A year and a half later his assistant was a black man. Five or six months after that he caught me out in the yard. He said, "Rudy, I heard you had a run-in with Wendell last year." I said, "Yes, I asked him about advancing up to the yardmaster's job." He said, "Well, we'll get into it a little bit later. We'll work something out here." A year and a half went by and Wendell retired. In fact, he was forced into retirement by Sharon Steel. The black fellow became superintendent of the department. He was the top man. I went on 13 weeks vacation. I came back and the yardmaster came up to me on Friday at three o'clock when I was ready to quit and he said, "You'll be in the office tomorrow." In other words, the superintendent told him to move me up into the office as relief yardmaster. I worked in that position for about a year and a half until a vacancy came up. There are four yardmasters in the plant. The vacancy came up and they called me in to ask if I'd like to go on as steady yardmaster. That was an advancement, so naturally I took the money. That was six years ago.

R: You can't recall any specific real estate prejudices?

H: Not in Farrell. There were areas in Mercer County that they were talking about racial problems. If they didn't want you in there, they'd price it out of your range. That didn't happen in Farrell. The homes on Patton Drive are similar to what I have here; story and a half, 30 or so years old, same floor plan. They were selling for about \$32,000 and if I wanted to buy one next door to you it would cost me the same price. There was no problem in

Farrell. The problem in the 1960s was getting financed. The banks were a big factor. They were a bigger culprit than the real estate people or the seller.

R: Dishing out the money?

H: Yes. Blacks, including myself, have only been able to go to the banks and bank normally for a few years. The black community--I'm speaking about Farrell so I know what I'm talking about--had to go to private lenders. We had to go to Household Finance if we wanted to buy a car or furniture.

R: You had to hire a financier?

H: We couldn't go to the bank. It has just been since the 1960s that we were able to go to the bank like any other individual and acquire loans like anyone else.

R: Do you think any single group was responsible for the racial unrest and violence that took place?

H: No. Again, I would say that it was black opportunists that were looking for headlines. [It was an] ego trip that they might have been on.

R: Selfish motives?

H: Right. They brought this problem on Farrell. There was certainly room for improvement in Farrell. Farrell has always been, and still is, a long way from perfection. But it's not like you can't sit down and talk about it. It has always took place in Farrell since I wa a youngster, I'm talking about ten or twelve years old. I can go back that far. There has never been a mayor in Farrell that couldn't sit down and talk your problems over. I don't' know what results you might have gotten back in those days, but the door was open.

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

H: Less federal dollars brought into Farrell.

R: For the housing?

H: We were the granddaddy of federal redevelopment monies. John F. Kennedy was in the White House. They brought monies into Farrell. But I think we're further behind in the rehab programs than any other community in Mercer County. I think the money has just been misused and poorly spent.

R: You risked too much too fast?

H: You go into neighborhoods that rehabilitated and you can see hundreds of thousands of dollars on a block and physically they look no better now than they did before they brought that \$100,000 into it. These kind of things bother me more than anything.

R: Mismanagement?

H: Yes. They deal basically with older people. We have old houses, company houses, here in Farrell rehabilitated with houses originally worth \$8,000 or \$9,000. They put like \$14,000 into rehabilitating some of these houses. I just can't justify taking \$14,000 and putting into a piece of property that's worth \$9,000. If you had to go out to a local lending institution, they would laugh you out of the bank. At a lot of places, you got up to \$4,000 if you were on a fixed income and your income was low enough. But to me, the contractors did shoddy work and overcharged.

R: There was a lot of abuse then?

H: Yes. And to me, the sad part is that they were older people who were ripped off. You would never tell me to come in this house that's probably worth \$23,000 to \$25,000 and spend \$50,000 on it. That's what happened there. I'd know better.

R: Do you think something could have prevented some of the violence in Farrell if there would have been more playgrounds or recreation centers?

H: No, we had enough facilities. Basically, Farrell's a basketball town. We had Buhl Center, which was always available, and the high school was available year round. We had as many playgrounds per square mile or per population as any community in the entire county. That wasn't a problem. That wouldn't have solved anything in Farrell.

R: Do you think what happened in Farrell was inevitable?

H: Yes.

R: It was part of the whole domino effect?

H: It had to happen.

R: Did any of the groups or organizations you were try to deal specifically with some of the racial problems?

H: No, we didn't. We faced them if anyone had a problem. This wasn't only when John Jerosky was mayor, this goes back. If anyone had a problem, you could always go to the city government here in Farrell. Like I said, I found this to be true my entire life.

R: How different are race relations in Farrell today compared to what they were in the 1960s?

H: I don't think there's a great deal of difference. I think the black community has become more complacent. The blacks here that want employment find employment. In the 1960s there were a great deal of blacks who really didn't want employment, they wanted to be on relief roles. They wanted a handout. They had a lot of time on their hands. Now if you check statistics, there's more retirees in Farrell than any other city in Mercer County. I think that if you go and you check the average age, Farrell would be the oldest city in Mercer County. So, you've got people in Farrell now, blacks and whites alike, at a stage of complacency. They're satisfied. They sit in their home and they mind their business. They go to their jobs and come back home. They're all doing their own thing.

R: How do you feel the problems that Farrell had during the 1960s affected the reputation of the city in the greater Shenango Valley?

H: It hurt us, no question in my mind about it. It left a mark. It left a mark here, that has become a reality. In fact, Farrell is a red target area, a red line area for insurance. You take this home here that you're in right now. You put it up in Hermitage or in Brookfield, it's worth \$10,000 more that it is right where it's sitting now. The same amount of yard, the same house. This is the type of thing that Farrell was left with. Insurance on this home, no doubt in my mind, is higher than it is in Hickory, Brookfield Center, and the better part of Sharon. This is the price I pay for living in Farrell.

It all started in the 1960s. Real estate is hard to sell in Farrell. People in Farrell have got good or decent homes. We have some good, expensive homes in Farrell. People who have homes in Farrell are stuck with them. It's cheaper to buy a home here than anyplace else in the county because

of what happened in the 1960s. People are afraid they live too close to blacks and blacks don't care for their properties. All of these kinds of things came out of the 1960s.

R: Do you think the damage has been irreparable?

H: I think so.

R: What do you think the city can do to change its reputation?

H: Nothing really. I think time is going to change it. That's the only thing that's going to change it.

Like I was saying a moment ago, people in Farrell that have good, expensive homes are stuck with them. They can only get \$40,000 for it, but it costs \$60,000 to replace it somewhere else. They just can't afford it [to sell]. So, people who would like to leave Farrell are stuck because of this, they can't get out.

R: Do you think a lot of the problem was caused by the people in Farrell or the out-of-towners?

H: The city definitely wanted to believe it was out-of-towners coming in causing problems, but basically it was people who were living in Farrell. At the time, Farrell had the largest number of subsidized units in the county. There were more units here in Farrell, I think about 230 rental units. Eighty percent of these units for a transit type of situation. They're there for nine months or a year and then they're moving out. So, you had people coming in and out of there all of the time. A lot of people from Farrell were moving from one part of town to the other. I feel like once you establish a residence in the community, you are part of that community. Whether you've been there 50 years or two years, you are part of that community.

A lot of the politicians, including John Jerosky, and the police department wanted to blame it on outsiders. They named Brookfield, they named Youngstown. Farrell has been a community that has been lax in letting people live here for a great number of years while they're running around with Ohio [license] plates because you don't have to get that inspection on your automobiles and it's a lot cheaper. But these people would live in Farrell. They maintained residence here. That was the case in the 1960s. It wasn't a great deal of outsiders like they want the people to believe. The problem was right here in Farrell.

To me, it wasn't a great problem. It was something they wanted to do. Now, in a lot of larger cities they tell me people came in by bus loads and stuff. We never had that problem here. It never happened, not once. But they would have liked to have blamed it on them.

R: Is there anything else important that you would like to discuss?

H: No, I can't think of anything.

R: Well, I thank you for your time.

H: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW