

The John S. and Drucie R. Chase Building Archive  
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Mr. Edward Roby Oral History

- (Interviewer) Will you  
please tell us your full name  
and where you were born?

- My name is Edward Lee Roby.

I was born in Austin, Texas.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- In 1942.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

And I know that you've lived  
in different parts of East Austin.

Will you tell us some of  
the areas that you lived in?

- Okay, I lived on -- When  
I was a very little boy,

I lived on 10th Street, right by Ebenezer.

You know, I tell everybody that  
those apartments over there

belong to me because I  
lived over there first.

You know the ones right on the side?

And we moved there to 13th Street.

We moved from there to Gregory.

You know where Gregory is?

Right behind Holy Cross.

We moved from that to Cotton.

Moved from Cotton to Comal,

Miss Collins's old house.

We left Comal and --

We stayed at Comal until  
I finished high school,

and when I went to college,  
my mother, then, moved again.

They moved to Loreto Drive,

that's right off of Airport  
and Martin Luther King.

In fact, right next to St. James.

Well, St. James's parking  
lot backs up to their houses.

So, I guess that's how. Pretty simple.

Yeah.

- Wow.

- I think that's where it ends.

- (Interviewer) And what  
were your recollections of

growing up in East Austin?

So, we're going to talk  
about the schools as well,

but just in the neighborhood.

- Well, I grew up in the neighborhood.

Velma Roberts lived in  
that same neighborhood.

I don't know if you know Velma Roberts.

You know Dorothy Turner and Velma Roberts?

Well, Velma Roberts was

the other part of that.

Her family lived there,

lived there with the Tolivers.

Lived there with the first  
Black postman in office,

Mr. Lott, lived on that street.

I don't know. Your mother  
will know some of this.

Mr. Lawson, also, he had a place on --  
on 11th Street.

So, open up in the middle of the night,

then after we all came in,  
he would fry hamburgers

and all that stuff.

I grew up in a very,  
very large neighborhood.

I tell you one of the people  
that were in that particular neighborhood  
was -- You know Ora Anne Elliot?

She didn't live in the neighborhood,  
but her husband lived there, Gene Houston.

He also lived in that neighborhood.

And the strange thing  
about that neighborhood,  
everybody's gone except me.

I mean everybody's passed away except me.

It's kind of ridiculous, but  
that's the way it is, so.

But it was about two or three blocks.

I don't know if you  
would know anybody else

on that particular street.

You know, anybody wouldn't know of anyone  
that well known except for Velma Roberts.

And when I lived on that street,

I walked from 13th and Angelina  
to Holy Cross on Comal Street.

I mean, on -- Well, Comal was on one side,  
11th Street, Gregory, all  
the places right here.

That's where I went to elementary school,  
went there seven years.

Because when I was four years  
old or five years old --

I hadn't turned five, my  
sister went to school,

mother said, "You're  
going, too," so I went.

So I finished at Holy Cross.

Left there and went to Kealing

And about that time with Kealing,

I lived on Cotton.

When I got to be a  
senior, I lived on Comal

and went across the street to Kealing.

Then, when I got older,  
we walked from Comal

to where the old Anderson  
that was just torn down was.

The new Anderson had been,  
because in 1956 they had moved  
Anderson from Comal  
and Pennsylvania to out there  
where it was recently.

I can't remember if it's Harvey or Hargo,  
whichever, where it is.

So, that's what happened.

I played football at  
Anderson for three years,  
and I just played football.

I just did what they told me.

Look, I did what everybody told me to do.

I didn't have any problems  
in high school, so.

I wasn't a great student.

I wasn't a bad student, either.

I finished. I think I finished with 79.8.

I thought that was pretty  
good, 79.8 was pretty good,

and I was not tracked to go to college.

You see, we used to  
track people back then.

- (Interviewer) What  
does that mean, track?

- Well, folks figured

out, well, this is --

Oh, I didn't tell you  
my mother and father.

My mother was a maid,  
and my father was a cook.

And later on, my mother worked  
for Austin Independent School District  
as a custodian, as a head custodian.

But you know, they looked  
at you, where you from,

and they made an assumption,  
you weren't going to school.

The weird thing about that thing was

that everybody they said  
wasn't going to college

went to college, and all  
those that went to college

didn't turn out to be worth a quarter.

So, it turned out to be kind of unusual.

They just tracked us like that.

I'll tell you one more thing.

In junior high school,  
they also tracked us, too.

See, when you first got  
in junior high school,

at Kealing, they assigned  
you according to your scores.

I don't know where they got all that from.

But if you were a very good student,

if you got in seventh grade,

you'd be in seven-one.

If you weren't a very good  
student or a slow learner,

you got seven-nine.

So, you know, it was kind of  
-- I mean we didn't feel --

People didn't feel, you  
know, they didn't feel bad

because they were in seven-nine.

Seven-nine was simply a class  
where you learned slower

than everybody else did, so.

We used to call them dumb sometimes,

and we'd laugh about it,  
but it was all in fun.

But some of those kids  
really, you know, made it.

They made it.

It was kind of a unique community.

And my sister was on the drill team.

She was a twirler.

She was a high-stepping little girl,

but there was just only two of us.

There's only two Robys.

My sister passed in '13,

mother passed in '14

and the dog passed in between, (chuckles)

the dog passed.

In fact,

I think we had a bigger  
problem with the dog passing

then anybody else passing,  
and the dog passed.

- (Interviewer) So, this  
has been really helpful.

In thinking about the community,

would you say, because I feel like

there's a lot of misconceptions  
about East Austin,

so will you talk more about

what it was like in the neighborhood?

Was it close-knit?

Did other children's parents

kind of look out for other kids?

Like, what would you say like the --

- No, it's not a fairy tale existence.

We all lived in the same neighborhood.

Everybody was a -- nobody was a --

(sighs)

The so-called affluent people lived

between Kealing and Anderson.

You know, when we were  
over on Pennsylvania,

they had a section over there

where people lived that were doing well,

and we just all grew up



in the same neighborhood.

I don't think it was any distinction

on what your parents  
had, what my parents had,

and then, you know, the story,

well, Aunt Susan would,  
if I did something wrong,

Aunt Susan would whip me or something.

No, we never had that kind of stuff.

We just coexisted.

- (Interviewer) Got you.

- There was no problems.

Now, whoever's house we wound up at

at lunchtime, we'd eat lunch.

But you know -- And the  
neighborhood was very,

very supportive of the schools.

You know, you go to Holy  
Cross for a PTA meeting,

you might just -- people out the door.

I don't know how Blackshear was.

And we graduated, we  
graduated from kindergarten.

We graduated from elementary school,

and we wore white gowns and  
little hats and all that stuff.

So, it was -- We just grew up there,

and it wasn't all that  
storybook stuff about,

"Well, Miss Susan took care of me."

We were taught to do what  
we were supposed to do.

We were taught by our  
parents and our grandmothers.

We had a lot of grandmothers  
around at the time,

and your mother and father  
told you what to do.

We didn't have any problems  
with misbehaving in the neighborhood.

Now, we might kill a  
chicken if we found one.

But that's about all we'd do,  
and we played ball in the streets.

We didn't have very much yard.

We didn't do all that yard cutting  
because we'd run all the grass down.

And the affluent people  
in our neighborhood

was the Tolivers.

You know the man out here, Mr. Lott?

Mr. Lott, the postman,

and Mr. Lawson who owned his own business  
up there on 11th Street.

Those were the -- kind of the  
icons in our neighborhood,

but everybody else was kind of normal.

Velma Roberts had about five or six people in her family.

Maybe more than that. Six, seven, eight, I don't know.

She had a whole lot of people in that house.

- (Interviewer) The Mosbys right?

- Huh?

- (Interviewer) The Mosbys.

- The Mosbys were farther away from us.

- (Interviewer) They were more, what is it? Chicon, right?

- They were on Chicon.

- (Interviewer) Right, but they went to

Holy Cross.

- Holy Cross,

all the Mosbys went Holy Cross.

In fact, I went to school with all of --

Well, we went to school with the four oldest ones:

Eva, Mary,

James, and Richard --

and Bernadette.

Yeah, Bernadette.

I think Bernadette got in there some kind of way.

And then, all the rest of them started coming along.

But we went to school with them,

and everything was -- (sighs)

You know we were trained

to be respectful, and we  
didn't have all these problems

because nobody had to  
monitor you on the streets,

because you weren't  
going to do certain stuff

because of your parents.

Not because of -- Well, if  
Mr. Mosby saw you do it,

you'd have a problem,

but we didn't have all  
that much of problem.

In fact, I don't know  
anybody else lived in our --

Oh, the Kings lived in our neighborhood.

- (Interviewer) Hmm, Kings-

- John Kings.

- Okay.

- (Edward) But they lived on 12th Street,

and Roy Harris, he lived on 12th Street.

Who else lived over there?

Mr. Gibbons lived on 12th Street.

You know, his daughter  
still lives up there

in that house on the corner.

- (Interviewer) Hmm.

- Yeah, that's a person you probably --

if you haven't talked to  
her, if she'll talk to you.

They lived on the corner of  
San Bernard and 12th Street.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- They lived on up there,  
and she still lives there.

I don't know if it's her daughter,  
whoever lived there with her.

But they were pretty  
influential in the neighborhood,

as far as the parks and all  
that stuff is concerned.

I don't know who else  
lived in the neighborhood.

But I know Dr. King's --  
In fact, Dr. King's sons

are maybe about two or three  
years younger than I am.

Maybe three or four  
years younger than I am.

Marjon is -- I don't think  
Marjon was born back then,

her and Stewart.

But you know she has three brothers  
and two brothers that are PhDs, doctors,

but they lived in the  
neighborhood a long time.

But later on, they moved  
out to where they are now.

- (Interviewer) I've  
been doing some research

and talking to people.

Previously, somebody  
mentioned that on 12th Street

there was an incinerator.

- Yeah, over by Downs Field.

- (Interviewer) Right, and they  
said all of the city trash,

they brought it there.

- Yeah.

- (Interviewer) Wow.

- That's right, but you know,  
it didn't really affect us,

because they had that stack.

Now I don't know, it might  
have affected somebody,

but you know --

- (Interviewer) Right.

- They burned all the trash,  
and the stack was so huge,

so tall, it didn't affect anybody.

And most of us didn't live in that area.

You know, we lived closer to I-35.

Now, the people that lived  
right next door to that

was the Jacksons.

You ever heard of Ray Jackson?

He used to be a coach at LBJ.

There was about seven or eight of them.

And in fact, the house is still there.

It's still the only house  
next to Downs Field.

They will not -- I guess  
he's not going to sell it.

- (Interviewer) Wow.

- They surely tried to get it, but.

- (Interviewer) I can imagine.

So, I know Mrs. Wright, Margaret Wright,

I guess she was Pearson at the time?

She said where they lived,

like ashes would fall on  
their vegetables and stuff.

- Yeah, Margaret lived more  
or less closer to Chestnut.

I know that's where her  
grandmother lived, on Chestnut,

because her grandmother was a musician.

You know, she played the piano,  
and her mother played the piano,

and Margaret played the piano,  
and Elizabeth played the piano.

And the reason I know all that  
because they all went to my church.

They all went to -- Well, not my church,  
but they went to Simpson.

They went to Simpson, and you know,

as the mother got sick,  
then the daughter took over  
and then, when the daughter got sick,  
then Elizabeth took over, then  
Margaret took over it again.

So, Margaret's in my class.

We're in the same high school class.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

I think my parents are a little older.

- Your mother's a year older.

- (Interviewer) Older, yeah.

- Yeah, she's older.

She went to --

- (Interviewer) She claims she is.

- She was with Shirley --

- (Interviewer) Went earlier,  
but she's not age-wise.

- Well, she might be Jones.

I don't know who she was with.

I know she wasn't as old as (inaudible)  
and all those people.

She has to be maybe a year, 1958 or '59.

- (Interviewer) Yeah, she said '58.

So you're '59?

- No, I'm '60.

- (Interviewer) You're '60, okay.



- My sister's '59.

- (Interviewer) Okay, okay.

- Yeah, I just remember  
your mother's big house

from over there.

And you know, we had a  
classroom, kind of unique.

We had classrooms where  
it was two classes.

First grade and second  
grade was in the same room.

Third and fourth grade  
was in the same room,

and I think, after that, they  
moved to individual rooms.

You know, we had one  
nun, she taught us both.

- (Interviewer) Let's talk  
more about Holy Cross.

So, I've learned that it  
started as a daycare center,

the school, and then it  
turned into a school.

So, when you went there, was  
it still on the Holy Cross,

it was on the property,  
or was it in the school?

Like, I'm sorry, in the actual church?

- Yeah, well, it was a school.

I know it was a school, a hospital.

- (Interviewer) Right.

- It was a school, a hospital, and a church.

Went to church every day.

I went to church every morning, you know, and sung in the choir.

Sung in Latin.

(interviewer chuckles)

I didn't know what I was singing, but I sung it every morning,

(interviewer laughs)

(chuckles) But we'd go to church every day.

You know, every morning, we had mass, and it wasn't long,

but you know, we just had a little bit.

I don't remember when it was there.

It couldn't have been a daycare because I was there.

See, when I was there in -- Oh, Lord,

I mean it had to be late '49, something like that,

I would say, yeah.  
- Okay.

Yeah, they said this was in, like, the '30s ...

- No.

- (Interviewer) ... that it started as a daycare,

and then it switched to a school eventually.

- And it turned out to be,  
you know, it was real, real --

you know I thought we were  
paying big dollars for it.

I think it was a dollar  
and something a month,

you know, to go to school.

You know, which was --

Back then, it might've been a whole lot.

I don't know.

But my mother was a waitress  
back during that time.

You know where the Ritz is?

Okay, my mother used to be...

Mother used to be a waitress right across,

from a place called Tony's,  
it was a Chinese place.

And it's kind of unique about  
it was that they had a bar.

You know a bar like this,  
that goes around like this

and on this side the White people sit

and on that side the Black folks sit.

But my mother, they were waitresses

and they waited on both of them.

- (Interviewer) Um-hmm.

- So, you know and she made \$18 a week.

But she might make \$18 a week,

but she might make, I don't know how much  
she made in tips, you know.

And she may not have got  
them from the brothers,

but she got them from the  
other people over there,

plus all my aunts worked there.

I had about four or five aunts

and they all worked at that  
same, and then when Tony died,

you know they all moved somewhere else.

- (Interviewer) So, this in my mind  
there's so many interesting things.

I'm learning a lot that  
I didn't even know about.

So from Holy Cross, you said  
there were two classrooms

when you were-

- Well, yeah, it was a classroom.

The first two grades,

first and second grade were in together.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- And then they had the  
third and fourth grade

in the same class.

- Okay.

- (Edward) And they may've had,

I don't know if they  
had the fifth and sixth.

I think they broke up the fifth and sixth.

I don't know, I don't recall that.

But I remember the first two classes  
and the kindergarten class where I was,  
was in a different section.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- It wasn't over with the hospital area.

See the school was with  
the, the hospital was there

and the school was also there with it.

And then you had the church

and it looks absolutely  
nothing like it looks now.

But then they had something  
like a section over there

where they had kindergarten  
people, like myself, so.

- (Interviewer) And  
your family went to Sim?

- My folks went to Simpson.

- (Interviewer) Simpson.

So that was a Methodist?

Is Simpson Methodist?

- Yeah, Methodist.

It wasn't United Methodist  
then, it was something else.

- (Interviewer) Okay, and  
I know that Holy Cross

was a Catholic school.

Do you know anything about,  
you were a child at the time,

like why your parents chose to send you  
to a Catholic school, to a private school?

Do you know if there was something special  
about the education or?

- Well, I don't think my mother,  
'cause she only went to the eighth grade.

My daddy went to the 11th grade.

Kind of funny, he went  
to 11th grade and quit.

And at the time he was going to school,  
11th grade was the highest you could go.

But he quit the first semester.

If he had stayed one more  
semester, he'd graduated.

But no, my mother never said.

Probably, because of daycare reasons.

You know my dad went to  
work, mother went to work.

My grandmother, I don't  
know, I guess she to work

and you know nobody, really, to keep us.

So when we got old  
enough, we went to school.

And that was more --  
and you could stay there

until your parents picked you up

or everybody walked home

and the neighborhood was,

as such, you didn't have  
to worry about predators

or anything like that.

Especially, my sister was  
worried about predators.

We never heard of predators  
with boys back then.

But with girls, you know there were still  
a lot of dirty old men back there.

So, that's the reason I think we went-

- (Interviewer) Went to that school,

'cause other schools  
maybe when school was out,

you had to leave versus  
Holy Cross you could stay?

- Yeah, you could stay.

You know we still had sisters there,

Sister Anna Maria there.

- (Interviewer) But that's the principal?

- I don't know what she was.

She was the meanest teacher I ever met.

And then Father Weber was there.

Now, they still have  
pictures of Father Weber

at Holy Cross now and he was  
here for a long, long time.

But I think that was  
because of the daycare deal.

- (Interviewer) Gotcha.

- That we went and we were really very educated.

We really got a real good education,

'cause there wasn't any, no foolishness around there.

- (Interviewer) The nuns were strict?

- Oh Lord, yeah, they were strict.

They'd hit you on the hand with them durn rulers

if you didn't behave.

There was no behavior problem.

We had no behavior problem.

And we always had, (sighs) you know all of the Mosbys

went there, so they were all topnotch students

and you know your mom and so on.

The Parkses and, oh Lord,

I guess the meanest people were the Hardimans.

- (Interviewer) Yeah?

- They lived right down the street.

There was about three of them.

I mean about five of them; Doris and-

- (Interviewer) John, right.

- Huh?

- (Interviewer) John was older.



- Who?

- (Interviewer) John Hardiman?

He's an older brother, I think.

- No, this is a different one.

- (Interviewer) Oh, a  
different set of Hardimans.

- They lived, you know when you go to,  
you know where the street  
you go from the church  
and then there's a street after you come  
to the church property, there's a street  
and then you go to the next block  
right across from the cemetery.

It used to be a family lived over there  
called the Hardimans.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- And it was about five of them.

- (Interviewer) Okay.

- They went, now this is, you got another-

- (Interviewer) There's another set,

'cause I know that there  
was a set of Hardimans

that go to Holy Cross now

and John Hardiman was mentioning that,  
apparently, at one point the school  
went all the way to the eighth grade,  
but only for one, like one

year, and then that stopped.

But I think he's quite a bit older.

- Yeah, well he mighta  
been quite a bit older,

'cause I don't remember that.

When I went, it stopped at

sixth grade.

- Sixth grade, okay.

I have a few pictures from  
some of the schoolyard play.

- Yeah, that's probably us then.

(interviewer laughs)

Yeah, we were always a bunch  
of happy kids over there.

You know, no fighting,

no worrying about all  
that stuff right there.

We really had to go to school,  
though, and that was it.

And the nuns, oh yeah, they were strict

but they were really very,  
very good, very good teachers

and they demanded so much out of you.

And you know we learned a lot.

I had a heck of time learning  
fractions or whatever,

but I finally got it.

Boy, this is a long time ago.

One of them might've been my sister.

(interviewer chuckles)

See boy with a big old head, that was probably me.

(interviewer chuckles)

- (Interviewer) Did you all interact any with Blackshear

like during the school-

- You know what?

I never knew those kids at, well, if they lived in my neighborhood, I knew them but I didn't know them, I never went to Blackshear.

I mean the whole time I was there at Holy Cross, we never went to Blackshear.

- (Interviewer) Okay, it was right next door.

- Yeah, well, it wasn't as close as it is now.

- (Interviewer) Oh, okay.

- You know it was some houses there prior to that.

Prior to that, there was some houses right in that section where the playground is now.

So, it's not as easy to just walk over to Blackshear.

And the kids, it's kind of funny,

the kids either went out the back of Blackshear

or they went to the east of Blackshear.

It was kind of rare for them

to come down 11th Street by our school.

- (Interviewer) Hmm.

- Although we did have some kids,

they went out the back of Blackshear,

went down to Rosewood and went home.

But it wasn't very many  
and the people that lived,

see 9th Street was a...

See now, you know Paul?

You heard of Paul's store.

You know where Paul's store is.

Ask your mother where where Paul lived.

You know it used to be two stores there.

One used to be on the corner

where Huston-Tillotson is on Chalmers,

one used to be where Chalmers is

and one used to be one right  
across from Holy Cross,

but around the corner.

And we all went to the stores over there.

But it was, kind of a unique situation.

And I'm going to get to  
answer some of the questions

you want really-

- (Interviewer) No,  
this is it, definitely.

So from Holy Cross, then  
you went to Kealing.

- Yeah, I went to Kealing.

- (Interviewer) And what was Kealing like?

Bigger, much bigger school  
than you were used to.

- Yeah, and I was supposed  
to go into seven-one,

but seven-one was crowded.

You know was too many smart  
kids in there already.

So they put me in seven-four

and I stayed in seven-four,  
eight-four, nine-four,

you know all the way through

and had very, very good teachers there.

I can't think of any of the teachers.

I know Mr. Lynch was there

and I don't know who else was there.

I don't know if any of those  
people ever went to Holy Cross.

I think they were all Baptists.

They went to Ebenezer and  
all that, the teachers did.

- (Interviewer) Right. Calvin Lynch?

- (Edward) Hmm?

- (Interviewer) Calvin Lynch

or is it a different Lynch?  
- You talking about the son.

You know a Calvin Lynch?

- (Interviewer) Calvin, it  
was Calvin and Florine Lynch.

- Let tell you something, I  
don't know nobody's first name.

- (Interviewer) Right. (chuckles)

You all didn't then, right?

You all never knew the first.

- No, 'cause I had to give a...

I had to talk, Miss Winston died  
and I forgot her name already.

Miss Winston was one of my teachers.

She was a senior advisor

and everybody in the church knew her.

I knew her, so when she passed away,  
they asked me to speak on her behalf.

You know on the school's behalf

and I had to go find out  
what her last name was.

You know Vivian is her  
first name, Vivian Lynch.

But I didn't know anybody.

You know you mention people  
and I don't know anybody.

You know I didn't know any teachers.

My high school coach, I  
didn't call him coach,

I called him Mr. Timmons and  
Coach Jackson was my coach,

but I never called him coach,  
I called him Mr. Jackson

and Mr. McDonald and Mr. Brown.

I mean that's what I called them

and that's what all the kids called them.

Look, we don't know anybody's first name.

The person that would  
have really have been good

for you to interview, too,  
if she comes back to town,

if you're not through with it by then,

maybe we can get her down here.

Her name is Carolyn Hall.

Carolyn has a PhD and  
she's a Harvard professor

and she knows everything.

She knows who had to  
leave town and do this.

Who had to do this.

Who had to do that.

Who died. Who went with who.

You know she just knew it all.

Because what we do is we collaborate.

When she comes to town,

she tells me what happened  
the first 50 years

you know when we were growing up.

And then I tell her what, well,  
she tells me what happened

from kindergarten to high school.

And I tell her what happened

from high school to the present day,

'cause she's been gone all that time, so.

- (Interviewer) Wow.

- But she would really know,

you know if you really have any real,

any questions that people  
are trying to hide,

she knows them, so.

And the lady that was, your  
mother probably knows also,

is Miss Harrison and I don't  
know what her name was.

Her name was Janie Harrison,

but she was a teacher over at Blackshear.

And my wife worked at Blackshear  
one year under Mr. Rice.

- (Interviewer) Hmm.

- When she came here in, probably  
when you were born, 1967,

she worked at Blackshear.

I never worked at any of those schools.

I worked at Kealing.

Worked at Kealing, Williams and Reagan



and that's how I matriculated  
on down, you know.

- (Interviewer) So from Kealing,  
then you went to the mighty L.C. Anderson.

- Um-hmm, and we were.

I went there in '57, we  
won the state championship.

'58, we lost one game.

'59 when I was a senior,  
we lost a couple of games.

But the teams in 1955 to  
'57 did not lose a game

and they won two state championships.

And the reason they didn't win  
the third state championship

was because Port Arthur and  
Lincoln beat them in '55, '50?

Yeah, '55.

'56, '57, they won the state championship

and most of those guys,

yeah I should have brought you a list of

all the guys that we brought into

the Prairie View Hall  
of Fame that were fans,

L.D. Washington, Charlie Bonner.

We just brought, you were there,

we brought in, I think, Jack McDonald.

You know I try to bring all the, in fact,

I think I brought in

80 people from Austin.

I mean some of the guys with me,  
we brought in 80 guys from Austin  
to the Prairie View Hall of Fame.

And you know you were there last year,  
it's quite a spectacle.

One year we had 1,500 people there.

Now we had almost 1,100  
or 1,200 this time.

But next year there'll be  
another 1,100 or 1,200 people.

I mean different people,  
it's not the same people.

It's different people,

because you have different  
people being honored.

And you know we just try to, really...

The Anderson people never  
got a fair shake here,

because we went to state.

We got an article that big,

well, you know when I was born '42,

they won the state and they  
got an article that big.

Austin High won the state  
and they had a whole page.

So it's just, and we're  
still fighting that battle.

We're still trying to,

I mean I'm still fighting that battle.

Nobody else is fighting it,

but I still think we need  
a lot more recognition.

Got anything else about Anderson?

- (Interviewer) Yeah, are  
there are certain teachers

that stand out for you?

- Oh, everybody knows Miss Frazier.

Yeah, Miss Frazier was,

I think Miss Frazier,  
she was quite a teacher.

She said I was smart, I  
couldn't believe that.

Said if you could speak  
as well as you write

or did she say if you could  
write as well as you speak,

it must've been.

It must be if I could  
speak as well as I write,

I'd go a long way. Miss Frazier.

My favorite teacher was Mr. Crawford.

Okay, you know where  
Martin Luther King is?

You know where that big truck  
is backed up right there,

right next to St. James?

Okay, that's where he lived.

He was the Ag teacher.

Mr. Raymond Timmons, who  
was the football coach,  
was a super mathematics teacher.

He taught geometry and trigonometry,  
which I avoided both of  
those, if it was up to me.

Mr. Mosby taught us,  
he taught us woodwork.

No accidents in his class.

Who else? We got Miss Frazier.

Miss Johnson was a business teacher.

You know she used to, Miss Johnson,

I don't know if Miss  
Johnson was that tall,

but I think she looked like she was 6'5"  
as far as, her heels were that high.

And who else did we have over there? Hmm?

Well, you know those  
were probably the most,

G.P. Norman was a math teacher.

I had one teacher was a chemistry teacher,

but we'd all have always have  
a difficult problems with him.

'Cause see, he would  
write a word on the board

and he'd write like, if it was ambassador,

he'd write A-M and then  
he'd just do a line.

So, when I turned in my paper

and I had to spell something

and I spelled the first  
two letters, I did a line

and he said, "Edward, that's  
not the way you spell that."

I said, "Well, that's the  
way you been spelling it

the whole time."

And Miss Brigg was over  
there too at the time,

but she was in the office.

G.P. Grant was there.

Mr. Grant was the counselor.

C.P. Johnson was a history teacher.

Mr. Akins came in 1959, came from Marlin,

Marlon or Mexia, I couldn't  
remember which one he came from,

but he came in because he  
was my homeroom teacher

my senior year.

Miss Adams, Miss Adams  
was the health teacher

and she was quite a teacher.

Tell you, "Stand up, boys.

Stand up like you got  
some money in the game."

I always remember that.

She said, "Walk straight and stand up."

So, she was a good teacher.

And Miss Long was there too.

Miss Westbrook Long, she  
was the English teacher

and Miss Frazier was the other teacher.

Kind of unusual.

I went to Miss Frazier and Miss Long  
they both taught senior English.

But Miss Long's daughter  
never went to Miss Frazier,  
she went to her, so.

And we had Louise Isabella Stewart.

None of the Lotts,

I don't know about the  
Lotts ever going in there.

Not the Lotts, oh yeah, Joyce's a Lott.

And see the Lotts used  
to own a lumber company,  
it burned down.

Her name was Joyce Lott.

And the football team was  
tremendous at that period of time.

Mr. Griffin had just  
come there in around 1958

or something like that,  
'59 something like that.

A lot of these people  
came from somewhere else.

Now, the most unique  
thing about our school,

most our teachers had master's degrees.

It was against the, I don't  
know if it was against the law

or against the rules, you  
couldn't get a master's here.

Teachers had to go out of the state.

- (Interviewer) Black teachers.

Right.

- Yeah, Black teachers

and they got master's  
degrees from Indiana,

you know Southern Cal.

You'd be surprised where they  
all had master's degrees from.

And then later on Prairie View

started having master's degrees  
so they could get them here.

Prior to that, Mr. Timmons, I  
think he got his from Indiana

and Miss Long got hers from  
somewhere in California.

You know it just wasn't where you could,

you had to leave the state

and they weren't paying you for master's.

And then once the White  
folks got master's,

then they started paying us for them.

But because all our teachers  
had master's degrees

when I was growing up,  
they were master teachers.

They were really good. Very good teachers.

So, yeah.

But.

- (Interviewer) All right.

So the last question to wrap up is about,

I mean, obviously, you  
know how gentrification,

displacement, change has  
impacted East Austin.

And part of the work we're  
doing is trying to hold on to

the legacy, you know preserve the history

for generations to come.

And for the people that are  
moving in to East Austin,

is there something that  
you would say to them

as far as, what do you  
think they should know

about the history of East Austin?

- Well to be frank about it,

there's not very much East  
Austin left, gentrification.

My mother's house is still over there

and the darn taxes is about  
\$4,000 or something like that,

god doggit.

You know what they're doing is,

and then every time a house goes down,



they build another house  
up which is much larger

and then what it does  
is run all the taxes up.

So that's where it is.

And most of the people  
that are not like I am,

my mother passed away in '14

and everybody wants to buy the property,

but I kept the property

and my daughter lives over there now.

But all she has to do  
is just pay me enough

to pay for the taxes and the insurance.

But you know it's easy  
for what she's paying

to live there for 4,000, maybe  
\$6,000 for the whole year.

You can't beat that.

So, but they haven't been  
successful on Rita Drive

with gentrification.

They haven't been successful on that.

But the rest of Austin they have,

because not only do people,

people did own the houses,  
but they sold them.

They sold them or people died

or they got a problem with the taxes

and you know the taxes  
get pretty durn high,

'cause I had to pay  
something like \$15,000.

My mother died and they  
kept sending me the tax bill  
that she was paying.

So I paid it, but then they  
go back and get you on that.

So they can go back as far as five years  
and so they made it about \$15,000.

I was just lucky I just  
happened to get some money

from somewhere else and paid it right off.

But that's what they're trying to do.

I doubt if I know of anybody  
that lives in East Austin

that lived in East Austin  
when I lived there.

See I'm in Northeast Austin,  
but I moved there in 1970.

But prior to that, I lived in East Austin.

You know where Pennsylvania is,

you know where Cotton is,

you know where all of Simpson is

and all those places right there

and we don't live there anymore.

Our people don't live  
in that part anymore.

In fact, we the great Alphas,

we (chuckles) were going  
to register all our voters.

You know we had our own little voter deal.

We're going to register all our people

and every house we went  
to, nobody lived in them.

You know they were all Anglo people.

They moved into our  
particular neighborhood.

University of Texas is  
notorious for taking property,

Blackland.

Blackland has no more...

I don't know any more,

I don't know any Black people in,

oh, I know Roscoe.

Roscoe Overton lives in Blackland now.

Well, over in that area.

You know over there where  
the girls' stadium is

and you know the Alpha  
House is over that way, too.

You know we love the Alpha House.

You know we bought the property for \$3,000

and now the house is worth 500,000,

but we don't pay taxes

'cause we're a nonprofit organization.

I mean we pay a little taxes,

but we don't pay as much taxes  
'cause we're a nonprofit organization,  
so it gives us a cut.

We may pay about \$600 for one,  
'cause we rent out the  
room in the Alpha House.

But the regular Alpha House  
is under 501(3)(c) or C3?

3C.

And it's nothing you can do about it  
(sighs) because nobody likes  
to go into East Austin anymore.

You know if we have an  
affair in East Austin,  
people don't like going  
over there, I'm thinking.

But East Austin's  
probably the safest part,

East Austin's probably the  
safest part in the city.

You don't have all the crime  
and all that stuff there.

Because in the projects,

I think it's mostly  
Hispanic people live those.

The Booker T projects, that's  
where my grandfather lived,

the Booker T projects.

And over in the old  
Rosewood projects, mostly,

yeah, mostly Hispanic people in there.

We don't live in East Austin anymore.

11th Street you see  
Anglo people walking up

and down the street with  
dogs at 11 o'clock at night.

When I grew up, we wouldn't walk up

and down the street with  
dog at 11 o'clock at night,

'cause it's dangerous.

But its just changed that much.

Black people don't live  
in East Austin anymore.

And you know what the law  
was before, don't you?

The reason we're all in East Austin.

- (Interviewer) Right, yeah.

- They had passed the  
law that all minorities

had to move east of Austin.

And it's a little different now,

because when I grew up the Hispanic people

all lived south of 3rd Street.

They all lived south of 3rd Street.

We didn't know any Hispanic  
people in my neighborhood

when I grew up.

And then you know you had the Shaws

and you were talking about somebody,

about the church, St Mary's?

What's the name of the church you were?

- (Interviewer) St. Annie?

- Yeah, we had some people  
live in that section of town,

the Shaws and all that, right.

Plus, we still had  
another section of people

lived on the other side of Austin High,

whatever you call it?

- (Interviewer) In Clarksville?

- Clarksville, yeah, Clarksville,

probably one of the most  
talented areas in there,

but those kids they didn't  
get bused to school.

They had to catch the city bus

and come to-

- Right.

- (Edward) And the kids from South Austin

had to catch the city  
bus and come to Anderson.

They didn't have buses.

The only buses they had was the buses

that went from St. John  
to Anderson High School.

But all the rest of those kids

had to get to school on their own,

but they turned out just fine.

- (Interviewer) You know  
my mother's father's

from Clarksville.

- Oh, he is? Yeah?

- Um-hmm.

- I lived in Clarksville.

I used to be the playground leader  
in Clarksville back in the early '70s.

- (Interviewer) Wow.

Yeah, there are 15 freedom communities

we're finding in our  
research all around Austin,

from Barton Springs, Congress, St. John,

all of those that as you  
speak to that master plan,

then being in these different  
ways forced to come over.

- But they're not there anymore.

None of them's left.

I don't even know  
Clarksville still exists.

I haven't been out there in years.

- (Interviewer) There  
are four Black families,

left out of 100, and, I think-

- I wonder if the Fudnicks  
or Fudnits are still there?

- (Interviewer) They  
moved away from there,

but they still come over.

I do a lot of research in Clarksville,  
so I'm there quite a bit.

So they come around.

The Bayers, there are some  
of the Bayers still there.

- You had the Matthews,  
you had some Matthews.  
- Matthews, the Browns.

There's some Browns that  
still have homes there.

But normally,

and there are people that  
still go back to the church,

they go to Sweethome, but  
it's predominantly White.

- Yeah, and the Harrison's  
lived out there.

A lot of the guys got in a  
lot of trouble out there.

In fact, one time (chuckles)  
went to man a softball team

and I'm down at the softball field,  
waiting on my players to come.

He said, "Coach they're not coming."

I said, why ain't they coming?

He said, "Well, they all  
got arrested last night,"

'cause they accused them  
of molesting somebody,



but they didn't do it but  
they put them all in jail.

Put my whole softball team in jail

and I'm waiting on the softball  
field for them to come play.

They let them out,

but it was after the  
softball thing was over.

But that was way back in,  
that was back in the '60s

or the '70s, '70s.

Doug had already left  
and a guy named Williams,

we just brought him into the  
Hall of Fame not too long ago.

You ought to see that list  
of guys in the Hall of Fame.

It's quite impressive.

And you know when you ever get a chance,

you get to put those things back up,

those Life Membership pictures up,

you'll find out that  
all the Life Membership,

we have only five professional  
athletes on there.

All the rest of them are  
doctors, lawyers, CEOs,

you know various  
principals, superintendents.

You know it was just, LCNs,

and it was just a mecca for success.

You know everybody had,

whether they said you  
wouldn't going to college

or not, a lot of us still went to college.

In fact, when Texas Southern all them guys

that went to Texas Southern  
played on the football teams,

were captain of the teams.

We all went Texas Southern  
various different years,

we were captains of the football team,

which is kind of unique, I guess you know.

But you have five or  
six guys from one city

in one period of time,  
captain of the football teams.