

Oral History Newark Library

Interviewee: William Payne

Interviewer: Robert Curvin

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Robert Curvin: William Payne, who is one of Newark's most prominent and distinguished citizens who has been involved in the struggle for civil rights injustice in Newark and in the United States for well over fifty years. And so Bill let me ask you to start, when do you first recall having some sense of the inequities that exist in American society and how they affect you and your thinking?

William Payne: My first conscious awareness of the role we were relegated to in this society was when I was approximately in my teenage years and actually that came about when I was a newspaper delivery boy carrier and approximately sixteen years of age, I used to read the newspapers as I deliver them in the mornings and back then there was the winding down of the Second World War and beginning of the United Nations et cetera and I used to read the newspapers about what was going on in the world. I became more and more aware of things and one of the things that I remember reading about was when some of the soldiers were coming home from the Second World War, the- which was— what, I guess the war was over in 1945.

Soldiers began coming home 45-46 in there about and I began reading about black soldiers coming home from the war just having fought for democracy around the world and getting on buses coming into New York harbor I suppose getting off troop ships, getting on trains and buses to go back home, many of them live in the South. And then I began reading about some of these soldiers in uniform actually who were mistreated as they got further South. In some instances, I read where soldiers in uniform were even attacked, and some were lynched as a matter of fact.

And these were people that had gone overseas to fight for democracy and when they came back home they were relegated to second class citizenship or worse. And I remember reading stories about them being mistreated and it seemed to me that it seemed to be such a dichotomy that the, the same men and some-my uncle was one of them as a matter of fact, he lived in- at that time lived in Newark and Montclair but that was when- it struck me that this seemed to be so demonic, so unfair, that these men in uniform often got to the South, stopped to get something to eat on the way home off a bus or what have you or the train and were told to get to the back of the bu- go to the back of the

restaurant or back, some window in the back, couldn't use the restrooms et cetera and this- this struck me then from time to time I read about these kinds of stories so that's when I became aware of- I felt at that time as being a product of the Newark [unclear] School Systems which are relegated again Black experiences and the whole era of enslavement et cetera was all very very negative, there was nothing I learned in [?] Silverlake where I started school about anything positive about African Americans.

So, through my formative years, early on, this second-class citizenship was kind of subtly or even overtly impacted upon me. Everything that you saw in books that I read, starting out with Little Black Sambo in the early grades, first or kindergarten, first grade, that was a depiction of the only black family I ever saw. Dick and Jane and Spot however on the other hand was a family- white family, alright there was a tree line streets, wonderful neighborhood et cetera. And the, the juxtaposition of Little Black Sambo to Dick and Jane and Spot was something that stuck with me through the years and [unclear] slavery and slaves picking in these- Old Black Joe and things like that.

That's the only things I learned about African Americans and whereas on the other hand I learned how brave the people were who fought the Revolutionary War, all of whom are white, the picture of George Washington was one the wall all the time but everything that was positive was white, everything negative was black, so that's the kind of background that I grew up with until my teenage years when as I say I began reading about these things and I had an epiphany, you might say, an epiphany really when I read in the newspaper one day about a man called Ralph Bunche, black male like me, colored or whatever we call at the time and I read about him and found out that this man Doctor Ralph Bunche had risen to the heights that he had in the United Nations and not only that but he had been sent to the Middle East to [unclear], to mediate the Middle East war after Count Bernadotte who was really the first peace mediary that was sent by the United Nations.

He was killed or he died, it turned around that there was no one else there. And they looked around, he was- Ralph Bunche his assistant so they sent him over to the Middle East and he negotiated a peace. And as a result of that ofc course he won the Noble Peace Prize. Well, that was my epiphany. That was the time that I realized that even though we were black in America that we could overcome that too and that's whom I identify with, Doctor Ralph Bunche, and that's the reason from that point on, I guess sixteen or thereabouts, from that point on I knew that I was as good as any man that walks this Earth, that I would not stand on the sidelines anymore and allow the kinds of things to go on- that were going on, second class citizenship and worse and not do

anything about it. That's when I changed to what I am now, that's how I got my start.

Robert Curvin: When did you start to do things about it and really become engaged in organizational efforts and individual efforts-

William Payne: Right.

Robert Curvin: to change things?

William Payne: I- When I graduated from high school, I got a job-

Robert Curvin: What high school was it? [?]

William Payne: Barringer High School. I went to Barringer High School in New York, and I got a job working at the Newark Public Library, high school graduate job working at the library, except that my job at the library was being a helper on a truck, a delivery truck. We deliver books to all of the branches around the city of Newark, and I was a assistant to a fellow by name, the driver was Terrence Kennedy. Anyway, I- during our break period, we would come back to the library on Washington Street in Newark, the main library, and pull onto the yard and we would have lunch, etc. Well, one day during the summertime during our break period, a truck pulled in. It was an ice cream truck, you know, lunchtime, the ice cream truck, similar to the Good Humor truck, but this one was called Tiny Tim and came in to sell ice cream. And the guy who was the vendor, the driver was a black guy, was the very first black guy had ever seen with the white uniform on selling ice cream off one of these trucks, you see.

And it turns out that this black guy was a fellow by the name of Everett Felder. Everett Felder had gotten a job, had raised a lot of cane with that industry, and he was hired as a ice cream vendor on these trucks. And it turns out that Everett Felder, who lived in South Orange at the time, was active in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] in Orange and Maplewood. Everett Felder talked to me. I met him and he told me about the organization and encouraged me to join. And I did. I think membership was only it was for the youth Council. It was about \$0.50 or a dollar when I joined. I became a member of it. That's how I got started in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], learning more and more about it. And although I lived in Newark and Newark had a fledgling youth Council of NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], I did become affiliated with the Orange and Maple Youth Council. And our- the woman who was the guidance- the counselor for us, or rather the mentor, I suppose the adult advisor for our youth group was a woman

by name, Misses Madeline Williams, Madeline Williams, who also made an incredible impression on me.

Misses Williams opened my eyes to all of the possibilities that we had to fight against discrimination, second class citizenship, etc. Misses Williams was my mentor, and it was in Newark. It was a woman by the name of Misses Mary Birch, who was a mentor for many young people in Newark who belonged to a group called the Junior Leaguers. My brother Donald was a member of the New York Junior Leagues, and Misses Birch was more or less his mentor. But Misses Madeline Williams was the person who opened my eyes to this whole area of civil rights and fight for. She was incredible. She was one who directed us and showed us the way to become engaged in this fight. And that's how I got active. I've always been one that was rather impatient. So, I joined the youth Council in Orange and Maplewood and I looked around and there were not too many members and I said, my goodness, you people don't have any members here. So, they said, if you think you know so much then you become the membership chairman, which I did. And I said, I've never read anything about you in the newspaper about what you're doing, what not.

They said, why don't you become the publicity chairman? Which I did. I became a publicity chairman, so I was a membership chairman and publicity chairman at the same time. And then, of course, I said, well, there's no sense to me, why don't I be President of this group? And at that time, Bob Harrison was the President. He was from that neighborhood. I'm a stranger now. I live in Newark, and I've come up here with all these kids from Orange and Maplewood, et cetera. It was the first integrated group that I was involved with because some of the Jewish kids from South Orange and Maplewood, et cetera. They also belong to the organization. But I said I'm going to run for President, which I did at first. I joined- the first meeting was in September. I believe I ran for President of the youth Council. I think in November, of course I lost. Bob Harrison became the President, but I was active. That's why I got active in the NAACP- really was eye opening. Incredible. I mean, Misses Williams, I gave her all the credit for having directed us. And in that effort, there.

Robert Curvin: What were some of these specific targets, or issues that you dealt with as a youth chapter, that wasn't just discussion and socializing? Was it-

William Payne: No, no, it wasn't as a matter of fact, in those days and the years I have to calculate what years there were, but in this area, there was a great deal of discrimination, segregation, etc. The skating rinks for instance, in the area that there was a couple of skating rinks I remember down at Twin Cities and Elizabeth and Dreamland, Dreamland. These were

skating rinks where teenagers went and skated there. But African American kids were not allowed to skate there, except on Thursday nights, I believe. And, and so we, of course, felt that that was wrong. And we had a test case that was I mentioned that little while ago that we had some, some white members of our group of youth council. So, what we did, we went down to the skating rinks on the off days, the days that only whites were allowed to skate. And we the black kids will go up to the window and try to buy a ticket to go in. And they've said, oh, no, you can't come you have to be a member of the of the skating club or skating rink or whatever. So that was okay, fine. Then we'd leave and then our white members of our team would go up, and they were not members the first time there and they were allowed to go into skate, etc. So that was a test case, we use that then to prove that Dreamland and Twin City had- would discriminate against us. And so that was the way that we began breaking down these things by having these test cases having our white members go in and being able to be admitted to places like that. And we had documentation that the place was discriminated against. And so that's how we began breaking down some of the barriers to racial barriers that existed.

Robert Curvin: We're really talking about the maybe mid 50s area, right?

William Payne: Yes. Yes, we are.

Robert Curvin: And-

William Payne: Yes.

Robert Curvin: Can you say a little bit more about what generally, race relations were like, and the opportunity structure of the community was like, during that period of time?

William Payne: Oh my gosh, yes. When I went to Barringer High School, back in the early 50s, just- Yes, I guess was 50s, early 50s, late 40s, early 50s. I remember crossing- crossing a- a crossing guard rather, where I lived- I lived in North Newark at the time, crossing Broadway to get a bus to go to down to Park Avenue. Well, one day I happened to see a black woman who was a police officer, the very first black police officer that I remember seeing in the city of Newark, because there were no black women, certainly. And very, very few black males. It was Sally Carroll. She was a policewoman. And Sally Carroll was- later became active in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and national chairman, national member of the national board. But there were no black police officers to speak up. There were no

black bus drivers. No black bus drivers. I remember seeing the very first- what appeared to be African American bus driver. He had an Indian name. I don't think he- I think it was American Indian. But no black bus drivers. There were no black telephone operators.

There were no black clerks in the stores and department stores downtown. Nobody's working these- the only- and there was one store Bamberg is- which would hire fair skinned African Americans to run the elevators. That's all they did. You see, there was a Hanes department store, they had no black employees, none whatsoever. And this- this is- these were the conditions that we grew up in, there were no opportunity. There were no black principals in school, no black administrators in the schools. Years later, we had a big fight to try to get the first black principal. Philip [unclear] was the person that we nominated as who was qualified to be a principal school. But those are the conditions we were living under at that time, no opportunities for African Americans anywhere.

The major insurance companies- major companies Downtown, they didn't hire any blacks. And in fact, some I'm told that even some companies wouldn't even hire African Americans as maintenance people, you see. So those are the kinds of conditions that we, we grew up under. And began to say, well, no, this can't be and that's how the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] was able to direct us to redirect our energies and to bring down to somebody's barriers that existed then it was incredible. Can you- I tell youngsters now, can you imagine not seeing a single black police officer, not seeing a single black bus driver, not seeing a single not- no one working for the phone company?

First person I know who got that job with the phone company was Walter Chambers. He was- worked at City Hall and then he got a found out the phone company needed to do something about it. They found this, this young fella who was the fit the mold, I suppose, and Walter Chambers got the job as one of the first in corporate America. I got a job years later on Prudential, one of the first blacks that was hired in the main office down here, you see, so. But the conditions we lived in was absolutely incredible. I mean, unbelievable.

Robert Curvin:

Tell me about the NAACP general program in New York at that time. And I know it had a very broad membership and an integrated membership, I would assume. And it also had very strong ties to the political leadership of the city. How effective was it in your mind, and promoting and changing some of these things?

William Payne: Well, many- when I came along, of course, in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] youth division, the people in the in the senior chapter, [unclear] chapter were products of a society that relegated blacks to a second-class citizenship and, and I think that many of them more or less, looked upon their achievements etc. as, as a black achievement, I mean, in other words, the total spectrum wasn't looked at, for instance, if you could become if you were, if you were descended from a European, European American, you could become president of New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, or Prudential, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But as an African American, you just kind of knew that you would never be there.

So therefore, if you got a job there as a manager at one of those companies, and that was kind of a successful because that was the black Brahmin. I mean, that was the success of it. And so many people were active in NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] at that time, their sights were not set as high as they should have been, I don't think but they were they were. So, I'd say they were shaped by the conditions on which they, they grew up in, for instance, Ted Pettigrew was the President of the North branch of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], a man by the name of Ted Pettigrew.

Robert Curvin: At what period?

William Payne: During the- during the time when the charter change- that's right, [unclear] because I guess in the 50s, because one of the major fights that came about during that time was who should be the first African American to run for councilman in the city of Newark on Central Ward at that time, the Central Ward was predominately African American. So, it appeared that of the five Wards that the Central Ward would be the ward which would be most likely to elect a, an African American to the city council. And the North Ward was put an Italian and therefore you expect an Italian in East Ward was- was a mixed community. You know, Polish people from Poland and Eastern Europe, European types, and some Italians as well. And the South Ward was predominantly Jewish. And so therefore, it was expected that the Jewish community would have representation.

North Ward would have Italian, the West Ward was predominantly Irish at the time. And East Ward was kind of Slovak and mixed into Central Ward, however, was the ward that where they figured that a black should be left to be elected. Well, Ted Pettigrew was the president of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People] at that time. Ted Pettigrew was also- worked with for the federal government in the post office. Theater Pettigrew was, was second in command at the New York Post Office. And there was a couple of fights that went on. One was Ted Pettigrew- when a vacancy came about up a few years later, we thought that Ted Pettigrew should become the postmaster however he was who was overlooked he was bypassed, but during this fight with to get a an African American on the city council, the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], was, was involved in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], had called together the community and said, this is our chance, this opportunity, let's, let's come together.

And there were those in the community that said that Roger Yancey, who was a lawyer at the time, and I think a judge wanted to be the council wanted to be the counselor first black councilman. He had the credentials of being a lawyer etc. On the other hand, you had an activist so a man by the name of Irvine Turner, Irvine Turner, people call it Irving but it's Irvine, I-R-V-I-N-E. Irvine Turner had been active in the community. Irvine Turner was one who decided he wanted to run for city for, for councilman. He had been- he'd run for Commissioner, I believe, early on active in politics in Central Ward. He had a newspaper that he operated the local newspaper where he highlighted many of the conditions that existed there. Irvine was a newspaperman [unclear]. I became active at that time I was elected to as the first African American male ever elected to the Democratic County Committee in Newark in the North Ward, North ward that is.

I was 21 years old. That year, what year would that have been that seat? Fifty-two or thereabouts. And I registered to vote very excited about it, registered to vote. I was 21 and I went to vote that day and when I went into polling place in the North Ward, in North ward of Newark, to 12th District North Ward, which is on the corner of Broadway and Delvin Avenue. I was very excited about it. And I voted. And when I came out of the booth, I looked around the room and there were people working on the books and doing all kinds of things. I didn't know what they were doing. But I asked them, I said, what are you doing here? They said, well, we're recording the people who come to vote, et cetera, et cetera. I said, the neighborhood that we live in, is about at least 1/3 Black and it seems to me that it should be some black representation on this board, you people. So, a guy came over from somewhere, and he said, I'm the district leader here. My name is whatever his name was, I don't know.

White fellow. And he said, I don't want any black people here. I said, excuse me. Oh, no, I don't want any black people working on the books working here. I said, well the neighborhood is you know, more and more blacks moving in. It should be- I don't want any here. I said, well who are you? He said, well I'm the district leader here, and I've been a district leader for 25 years here. And as long as so and so- I said [chuckle] oh that's ridiculous. So, I went home and talked to my brother who was younger at the time. I, 21. I said some guy up there by the name of his name was maybe Tony or Veto or whatever. But he said he's a district leader, which I didn't know what was about.

And I said, I'm gonna run against this guy, because I don't like his attitude. I don't like the fact that he doesn't want any blacks working in that area. So anyway, I did that I, I got my petitions and went around my community and neighborhood and got signatures, etc. I got on the ballot, and I ran for district leader, the following, following spring. And it was quite a- quite an election. Because no one had ever challenged his fellow and certainly no black. And I was only 21. So, I campaign and what have you. And during that time, during the day, I was campaigning, Leo Carline was also running for mayor for the new chain, new form of government.

But Leo Carline had seen me in my neighborhood campaigning for my district leader posts while he was campaigning for mayor. And the, the, the election came, and I beat this guy, you know, I won. So, the word went out, you know, in the neighborhood I grew up in the community would say, well, the word is gonna go out, the word goes out and spread all over. The word spread in the entire community, and I was talking to some kid by the name of Bill Payne- beat Tony. What do you mean, Tony has been there for 25 years? What are you talking about? Bill Payne, I beat the organization that I- that's my first introduction to running for office. I won. That was- so we made it we made history I suppose then.

So that was my first involvement. I recall that that time that that Eisenhower was running for president and Adlai Stevenson, you see, and I was very much impressed by Alec Stevenson knew that he should be the president and was so terribly disappointed when Eisenhower beat Stevenson for President. It was a very, very disappointing thing. And then four years later, he was the same thing happened four years later. Very, very disappointing.

But anyway, that's how I got first got involved in politics. went over to the Central Ward, then because- then the, the election for the first

African American First City Council was coming up. I went over there. And by this time, I, having beat the organization in the North Ward, I just figured I was a pro. I mean, I just knew all the answers. So here I walk into the Alumni House, which was a place where we met in the Central Ward, on High Street, near Core Street. And that's where the committee was meeting, Ted Pettigrew had called this meeting, a woman by the name of Jenny Lennon was active in politics and people like Honey Ward, who was the, the Ward Chairman at the time, and people like Jack Hicks, who was a ward guy, or an attorney, etc. And so, it was a debate going on. Who should be there? Who should be the representative for the black community?

Everybody turns out I should. And I looked at everybody, turn and I said, no, no, and I looked at everybody, Roger Yancey, and a lawyer, etc. Of course, he should be our representative. So, there was a big battle going back and forth. And Ted Pettigrew, who had called the meeting together, saw the meeting was breaking down, falling apart, he started crying. He's the president of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] in the North Branch. He started crying. He said, we've come so close, we've come so close, please, let's stick together. Let's stay together to get- at that point, Jenny Lennon, got up and said- she got up. She started pacing back and forth. She said, when I get angry, I don't cry. I just fight. I just fight. I think that we have that- and she just went on and on and told us how we better get ourselves together. And that this meeting should not be over until we decide on one person. Well, there was a recess today. So, we're going to take a break for a while. Irvine turned and came to me, here I was 21 years old, because I'd got to make by speech about what I- what we should do.

Irvine turned to me and said, hey, kid, come over here. He said come with me- across the street. He lived across the street. Irvine had an office on the second floor. I went over there with Irvine Turner. And he had an office and a file of newspaper articles and other kinds of things that he had been active in. Irvine Turner had led the fight against the merchants on Springfield Avenue who wouldn't hire black people, who overcharged black people, who sold them things that never paid for them. It was the people who paid for furniture- inferior merchandise for years and years and years by these merchants who were being taken advantage of by these merchants Irvine Turner led the fight against the- Irvine Turner lead the fight to have African Americans employed in various places. I didn't know these things about Irvine Turner.

Irvine Turner was doing on Springfield Avenue in central ward what Adam Clayton Powell was doing on 125th Street in New York. I didn't know that about Irvine Turner. That changed my mind. But what are the qualifications? What are the credentials a person should have to be in public office, you know, Irvine Turner, then I, of course, I changed, and I supported Irvine Turner. And as it turned out, Irvine Turner became the person that was elected as the first African American Council- Council in the city of Newark, Central Ward, that that was a very eye-opening experience for me.

Robert Curvin: The group never agreed on one candidate, right.

William Payne: The group? No, they didn't. I think Roger remained and-

Robert Curvin: he ran [unclear]

William Payne: Right, right. But Irvine Turner won. As a matter of fact, what happened was Irvine Turner and his people had studied the map that had been drawn, what the central Ward was supposed to be the ward that we were supposed to elect[?]. And what had happened is that those who drew the map, included others in that Central Ward, where they would never have been able to elect an African American Irvine Turner discovered that and took that map, to Trenton or to Washington and said this is unfair for decades, and they redrew it. They redrew that Central Ward to invi- inclusive of African Americans, so they can win. But they had attempted to gerrymander in such a way that blacks could not get elected.

Irvine Turner led that fight, along with people like Tim Steele, who was a wonderful person, Timothy Steele who lived in the Central Ward, Jack Hicks, of course, and Johnny Barnes, people like that, who were active in politics for years and years and years. But yes, Irvine Turner became known as the man who made it possible. The man who made it possible because he's the one that had this map corrected, you see. Oh, yes, Irvine was a pioneer, and he was out there fighting all odds, and he won. I really give him a great deal of credit. Roger Yancey went on to be, I guess, say, a judge etc.

Robert Curvin: Let's move up towards the further towards the latter part of the 50s. When you were at the university actually, can you talk a little bit about that?

William Payne: Sure. What happened was when I graduated from high school, no one in my immediate family had ever graduate from high school. And so,

when I graduated from high school, we, my brother and I, and my sister we were living with our grandparents and, and our aunt and uncle. What happened was early on, we were living- born in Newark, but moved to Silverlake, just outside of Newark, part of Belleville. And then, in the 40s, early 40s, my mother became ill- my mother. My father's name was Willie Payne, and my mother Norma Payne, my mother became ill. And so, we were living on- we were living on a third floor, cold water flat, [unclear]. And it turned out that my mother was not able to negotiate those stairs any longer. So, we found an apartment in Newark, on High Street in Newark, which was a predominantly Italian section actually, High Street and Park Avenue, etc.

And we're living there and then in 1943, my mother died. She was 30, 30 years old, 31 years old. So, my grandparents- my father's mother, and step grandpa, my step grandfather, my grandmother and my step grandfather, Mister, Misses Williams, and my aunt and uncle, Sally and Lincoln Williams got together and said, you know, Willie, he's too young to raise these children on his own, you know, he's, he's only 30, 30 himself, you know, and they said, We'll buy a house and bring Willie's children's to come and live with us. That's what happened. So, we went to live in North Newark. That's where I went to school there and North Newark and Elliott Street School. That's- so we live in with my aunt and uncle on the second floor, my grandmother and grandfather. And first of all, we had our own our bedroom on the third floor. So, when I graduated high school, my uncle who at that time, was working for Sears Roebuck, but he was a porter there.

And Uncle William, we call him, would go to work every day dressed in a suit and a vest and all that kind of business and have a briefcase. Well, actually, the briefcase was his work clothes. I mean, he was a proud man, but he was he was a maintenance guy, they said, but when I graduated high school, Uncle William said, Well, that's great. You know, you do graduate from high school. And that's, that's just fantastic. And then I had an opportunity to get a job, a civil service job working for the Newark Public Library, but it was through working as a truck driver. Didn't matter. I'll go I'll go into my room and telling me that, you know, people die to get civil service jobs. When you get a civil service job, you'll have it for life, you know, be able to retire you don't have to worry about anything. So, so I took the job. I thought it was great. I started working at the public library and but what happened was that I really- this wasn't me.

This is a- I started I moved up a little bit in a library, been working in the catalog department. And what happened then was I used to meet youngsters who were going to school during the daytime. Rutgers, they will work in the library at night. And here I was buggo logging things like this. And some of these same young people were doing it that way, so I decided to go. Interesting thing. One of the persons that I mentioned before was done this truck driver that it was working with. Terry Kennedy had a speech impediment. Terry Kennedy was not able to speak very well. However, I learned in driving through the city with Terry that he had a master's degree, that he had graduated from Seton Hall University, that he was a lab teacher at Central Night School, where he taught physics etc.

Alright, but during the daytime, people ridiculed and made fun of him because he couldn't express himself. Many of them the other people that he worked with at the library maintenance people and other lower-level people. They would joke about- tease him and say, etc. But at night, Terry Kennedy would put on his suit and go to school. He was, he was a teacher that he say, he was the one, Terry Kennedy was the one as I drove through the streets of the city of Newark, and went to branch libraries and took the lug books into this place- Terry was the one that influenced me to go to school. He was unknown to a lot of people. He was a very intelligent man, very bright, but had very few friends because-

Robert Curvin: records[?] [unclear]

William Payne: I went to night school first. Terry said, you know if you can't get your dates go at night. So, I took a couple of courses that night, I started going to Rutgers evening school, Rutgers University College, and I went there for about four years actually, and finally decided, well, I have to get this over with and I transferred to day school full time, and that's where I met some I met- well I renewed my acquaintance with Bob, Irvine and met people like Ed Stevens, etc. But Rutgers, Newark campus of Rutgers, had a quota system, that it was, it was a racist institution, that they, they determined the number of minorities blacks that would get very, very few, they allowed very, very few into the, into the school Newark Rutgers. And so, when I was there, I was at that time, I had risen to the national chairman of the youth and college chapters of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People].

And I was the chairman of college chapters all around the country and many states, many colleges, had college chapters when in New Jersey

there was not a single NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] college chapter at any college in the state of New Jersey, none zero. I said to myself, how can I be the national chairman of the youth divisional NAACP, and go to a school where they don't, they don't have not a single one. So, got together with few people, Bob [unclear] being one of them, Ed Stevens, etc. And we organized the first college chapter of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] in the state of New Jersey, I represent Newark.

Well, while we were getting the petition signed in order to do that, came to the attention of the Dean of Students, Dean Durant, who, who was very upset that we would try to organize an organization like that on the campus here. He said, hey, we have no problems here. I don't know you're just causing trouble. Well, we went around and got signatures, enough signatures to head a charter from the National Office of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], and many of the students who are white students who've signed on to become members, they were called into the dean's office, what are you doing hanging around with those troublemakers? That guy? Will Payne is nothing but a troublemaker. We don't need that organization here. And I remember specifically some of them telling me that they were called into the dean's office, I was called into dean's office.

So, I was a troublemaker, causing trouble et cetera so anyway, make a long story short, we organized the college chapter of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. I became the first President when I let Bob [unclear] after he left Steve became the President. But we had a wonderful organization, and we then took up some of the fights we went down downtown Newark and we had picket lines out in front of Hanes and, and the five and 10 cent stores which were brand Woolworths places like that. We did some more things up here too.

So that's the way- that's the how the- we got started here. And one of the great things was during that time Malcolm X was, was, was here it was here, very active. And I think at Stevens, one of our friends had met Malcolm X very, very, very impressed with Malcolm X. And this is before Malcolm gave up the black, the black Muslims and became a Muslim general sense. Well, anyway, and Stevens had met him and was impressed with him. I had heard him speak was impressive as well. And somehow, we invited Malcom X to come to Rutgers, Newark to speak to our group. Well, of course, I would imagine Dean Durant

probably must have had a heart attack. But we ended up- we invited Malcolm to come he, at that time we had to in North Newark there was a pharmacy school at Rutgers, and that's where we had the meeting that evening. We brought Malcolm to speak at, at Rutgers University in Newark.

At that time, this is before Malcom had a debate with, with Professor Brown, Rutgers, you know, so this is the first this is this first introduction of Malcolm to Rutgers at that time, we're getting into some kind of debate with Malcolm. After he spoke, I went up to the front. And I raised some questions with him.

I said, Malcolm X like Mister Malcom, whatever I call him at the time, so, you are one of the most powerful African Americans in this country. Very, very influential. But your, your people don't vote, don't participate in elections. And I said that you- if, in fact, you told your followers to vote for a candidate in particular, you could probably turn the tide for that candidate, you could probably be effective and having that person. I said, so why don't you Why don't you vote? He said, young man. He said one thing, you must remember he said, I'm a minister of my faith and Minister of my faith. He said, and you are probably a Baptist right? I said, yes. He said, you go to church, and like[?] they say when you die, you go to heaven. Correct? I said, yes. He said, oh, oh, he said the only other thing I asked was how are you gonna get two separate state? If you remember, Malcolm was talking about the Muslim will get a separate state, as how are we gonna get to separate state? And that's when he said, oh, you're probably a Baptist you go to church? Yes. He said, well, when you die, they say you're gonna go to heaven. Correct? I said, yes. He's- well, how are you going to get to heaven? Are you going to take an elevator? Or you can take an escalator? I mean, how do you get from here to there? He said, understand the same thing with our separate state. Every religion, he said, has a mystique about it. When your preacher tells you how you're going to get from here to heaven. That's when we'll tell our people how we're gonna get that separate state. He said [unclear] every religion has Mystique, you know.

Then I talked about the election and voting, I said, your people don't vote, and you could probably influence an election. He's a young man, that would be like a person, a hunter going out into the woods to hunt, it has only one bullet in this chamber. And then there's a lot of targets that which one do you shoot at? He said, when we decide which is the best to build, then we will use that vote. He said, but we will not do that

until that he said otherwise, we might just be wasting it. He said that's why he said at the time, we will, we will do that.

But I was- and then after that he had to- he apparently nodded to someone that he was ready to leave. Because suddenly I'm standing and talking to Malcolm. Suddenly I was surrounded by the fruit of Islam. And they went to the door. They went walking out and I was I could not get out of the circle took me out with them. And then when they got to the car to let them in, they open up and let me go. I was married at the time. And my wife said, my God, Bill must have said something make them angry because they're taking them out. They're taking them out with [chuckle] but that was the hour of my introduction of Malcolm and influenced by-

Robert Curvin: [unclear] Into the 60s, how do you recall the dynamics of race relations, civil rights, the intersection with politics and leadership during that period?

William Payne: Well, [unclear] was a congressman for many years from this area of Newark, and had a, had a good relationship with African markets, amiable, not very amiable guy, you know, etc. Leo Carlin was the mayor of Newark, had been for a while. Leo Carlin came out of the Labor Movement. I believe he was a Teamster. But he was- I thought he was a fair mayor. I got to know Leo Carlin. And as a matter of fact, when I was a student at Rutgers, he was the mayor of Newark. And I had met him when I went- when I became a district leader. Because I was at Rutgers then too.

I had gotten elected to become a district leader when I was still a student at Rutgers. And I had met Leo Carlin and he had given me his private phone number. And he said, you know, just give me a call some time, whenever you need anything, which I began doing, I would call and it's Leo Carlin's secretary would answer and I'd say this is Bill Payne, let me speak to Leo. And she said [unclear] his phone number, I guess so I knew I would speak to him about whatever it was. And one day I decided to, during a break in class decided to walk down to City Hall to go see Leo. And I got there up to the mayor's office. And I said, I'd like to see Leo. And so, this woman said, who are you? You want to [unclear]? I said, Leo Carlin. So, who are you? I'm Bill Payne. So, you mean to tell him that you're the person who calls on his private line and he takes call? You mean to tell- you, you're just a kid.
[chuckles][laughter]

So, you came, hey, Bill, how you doing? So, he came out. He said, what are you doing? Now I swapped time, some time, he said, good. I'm gonna go to the Cadillac Club, which was a club that was in the restaurant in the hotel on the Douglas Hotel, on Hill Street, and they were having a meeting of the frontiers which is a group of black, black men middle, I guess there were businessmen or activists, etc. The frontiers group was a charitable group. And they were having a meeting and they invited me to come and do a luncheon speaker. He's to come out with me so anyway, I went over there with him, and I have my khaki pants on and my buckskins shoes and kind of a crewneck sweater, whatever. Not dress properly for this thing, but yeah, come on.

So, I went with him over there and I sat up there with him he made us-- he introduced me to them as his good friend, etc. So that's how I got along with Leo Carlin, and I was able to call him on when I was a district leader, Leo, you know, there's no stop sign for kids crossing the street going to school. Next thing, you know, stop signs are up until someone would call me call me one day and said, hey, my name is Mrs. Jones or whatever she said, I've been trying to get into public housing for a long time. And I was told that if I knew somebody by the name of Irvine Turner, or a fella by name Bill Payne, that that would help me. I don't know anything about- there was just a district leader at 21 years old. I call, I made a call and call up the Housing Authority. I say this is Bill Payne, County Committee, 12th district North. What I understand Misses Jones has not been able to get an apartment, I want her taken care of. Shortly thereafter, Misses Jones got an apartment. And that taught me that if you become active, and you say, there are many people, so why don't bother voting, etc, you know, and he's standing outside, you become a part of it, I became a part of the political process.

And because I represented X number of voters in that area, I was able to get some things done. If you participated, I made my [unclear] to participate in it, then maybe you could bring about some changes, you know, and that was- I found that to be the case and, in many instances, etc. However, the dynamics of Leo Carlin and Addonizio- Addonizio decided that he wanted to run for Mayor. Wanted to leave Congress and the mayor had come to Newark to make some changes, I suppose. For himself, maybe. But he did come, and it was that contest between Leo Carlin and Hugh Addonizio.

Robert Curvin:

Why did Carlin lose that election? I mean, everyone agrees that he had been a relatively reform minded Mayor [unclear] you attest to the fact that he was responsive- important things, particularly in the larger

community. But he lost- he actually was really whipped. I mean, he did not win a single award in that election,

William Payne:

The winds of change, were beginning to blow across the country. And what happened was, Leo Carlin had some of the old- had some blacks with him on his in his cabinet or his, they were close to him. But they were they- those African Americans that were with Leo Carlin had not kept up with the times- didn't you know, they didn't see that there was a yearning on the part of African Americans for more freedom and more opportunities, etc.

Hugh Addonizio had been a congressman who represented a predominately African American district, a heavily African American district- had, had a relationship with African Americans and his home secretary was a woman by the name of Larrie Stalks. Well, Larrie Stalks had, you know, obviously had her ear to the ground, and she knew everybody was going to African American woman. And very close to Irvine Turner- very close to leadership in the Central Ward. So, when Addonizio decided to run for Mayor, Larrie Stalks was very visible and was identified with him as a person that had been treated fairly by, by Addonizio.

And the other thing about Addonizio was that he was very comfortable his, his body language was such that when he was at events, where African Americans were, he was very comfortable, he just fit right in. The difference with Leo Carlin was that when he was at these events, even though he had some old low line, African American politicians with him, he was- you could tell that he was not at ease, not comfortable. Addonizio was one who came across as being very comfortable, and Addonizio then reached out also to a young African American fella by the name of Richard, George Richardson.

George Richardson had had been elected to the assembly in the State Assembly, George was from the Central Ward as well. And Addonizio reached out to him, and made George Richardson, his co campaign manager for his campaign. Well George had a network of people that that included many people in the Central Ward and beyond. And that was one of the ways that Addonizio was able to communicate with, with the African American community.

He demonstrated through his actions that he was comfortable around African Americans that he had provided some opportunities for African Americans, etc. As I said before, the bar wasn't very high for African Americans. The very fact that Larry Stalks was the was the Home

Secretary, it was really just a person, you know, the local home office with the district or the congressman, had a staff person there that was black and so to set the bar was very high in our communities. That was great. And that was fantastic.

She was not the congressperson, but she worked for the congressperson, and that that was something that was new, and Addonizio was able to go to every part of the city. Every part of the African American community was, was, was, was greeted, was comfortable, etc. And so, I think that's one of the reasons why he won. He had been in Congress for many, many years. He was a partner with, with Peter Rodino. And if you remember, Peter Rodino, had been a strong supporter of civil rights. He was an ally of Adam Clayton Powell and people like that Rodino was and also Addonizio voted that way, as well. So, I think that he had a reputation as being a person that we could get along we do as mayor.

Robert Curvin: How did he do as Mayor? In your views, I mean, aside from what the- what happened at the end, but how would you rate him?

William Payne: You know, I think that Hugh Addonizio- he gave opportunities to African Americans. Larrie Stalks, in fact, became a department head and others became a pipe in his administration. Like, if I'm not mistaken, the police director, Hubert Williams, was the first African American Police Director and there were other opportunities that Addonizio's administration provided for, for African Americans. So, I think that he was a person that was sensitive to those kinds of things. As a matter of fact, what happened was he however, he later on appointed another Police Director by the name of Zizzo, I think his name was who was not as enlightened in race relations, as, as Hugh Addonizio was, and as things began to heat up, the police department in the city of Newark became more and more overt, and hostile, etc. militaristic because the director is, as the name says, is the police director Spina.

But Spina Yes, Dominic Spina was one who was kind of militaristic, because I recall, when there were situations were developing in the community, Dominic Spina, his method was to try to bear down on the community. As a matter of fact, he ordered his patrol cars to begin putting helmets in the back windows- their riot helmets in the cars that became visible. And also, shotguns in the front of the of the police cars. I remember, the police cars had brackets in the front where they had shotguns etc. Well, our community, our community at the time, when

Addonizio became Mayor- was mayor of the city of Newark, there were abandoned cars everywhere.

The African American community, the minority community was just filthy. The streets weren't clean, the garbage wasn't taken up on time. There were abandoned buildings everywhere, there was a flight to the suburbs, there was signs for sale signs. And Weequahic section in particular, they would put up with scare tactics all daylo kinds of colors on these buildings, to let people know that the community is changing. And so, what was happening is that the residents who lived in those areas, began moving out, began fleeing. And there were I think Jordan Baris was a realtor in the area.

And this, the signs that they had, where they stood out, blocks away this place for sale, which then began to put the fear in the minds of many of the Jewish community that was living there, they began feeling a sense that they were being pushed out, etc. And so, there was that feeling of Newark was declining, and we have to get out of here, blacks began moving into those areas. But as I said, the conditions were, there were abandoned cars, as I recall, cards that were just left on the streets and never picked them, they were removed. Houses that became vacant, were boarded up and they stayed boarded up, nobody ever did anything with them. When they were broken into by people, nobody were monitoring, the, the administration did not enforce code enforcement, etc. And was just- it was terrible. I mean, the conditions were so bleak in the city of North, but Addonizio was the mayor at that time. And we began making, we began meeting with the Mayor, I was active at that time living in Clinton Hill section with the Clinton Hill neighborhood council. And we would bring these kinds of conditions to the city and say that the streets need to be cleaned, garbage needs to be picked up etc. And I remember sometimes Addonizio was so such a good politician, I suppose that I recall being one of the leaders of the Clinton Hill neighborhood council and going down and having meeting with him about this condition of streets and about the schools etc.

But before the meeting would start Addonizio would have a buddy in his office in his nice big office, etc. And before the meeting would start, many people who were angry when they said we're gonna go down and we're gonna tell the mayor this, he was all before we go, let anybody want coffee, and he would go get coffee, bring it up- call the sector- come bring in some, and what you know, kind of get people's go, you know, smoothed over the relationship.

But by the time the meeting started, many of the people who were so angry when they were outside and suddenly they were having a coffee and whatnot and it became a meeting where no one would raise the questions I would look around the room and say well, we came down here to talk about the filthy streets and the schools and whatnot and nobody else would be able to join and very, very few others would join in on that guy. So, he's very smooth that way, you know. And then it will turn out that those fuels are expanding winter is and Bill Payne and some others who will live in the area who active we will look like we were alone. I mean, what, what is this all about? And I looked it appeared that we were out of step with it. The community but he was smart that way but one of the things I would did say to him as things got hotter in that summer of '67.

I began noticing, and I'm sure you did, too, that the police, as I said, were demonstrating overt demonstration that we're going to control this thing, you know, but as I said, with the helmets and things like that in the back of the car, and one of the things that Addonizio I said, he brought in Spina. And he said, I said, you know, Mayor, this is nothing, doing nothing but, but stirring up things in a community. I said, your police officers are showing that they're just waiting for some, some anything that happened, they're gonna take, you know, beat us down, et cetera. And I said, and this is a manifestation of continuation of police brutality that's been going on in the city anyway. And so that's not helping anything.

So, he called Donald Spina and he said to him, I want you to have those helmets taken out of the back windows, I want you to take those shotguns down. Also, that's not the kind of presentation we want in the communities. Without an explainer did not like this. He resented it. But he stood up at attention. He said, you're the commander. And I'm just, I'm just in [unclear], the ranks and yes, sir. I'll do it- at you. If that's what you want- Spina. Addonizio recognized that was a troublesome situation, ordered his Police Director who resented it, but followed his orders. And for a while they did, they did take out those- it was like an incendiary kind of thing having those.

Robert Curvin: Where were you when the rebellion occurred then?

William Payne: I remember having been out of town at that time, Bob I was working at Prudential insurance company. I was one of the few- I had run for office when Addonizio went for office I, I ran for councilman at large. I was 29 years old. I ran for Councilman at large at the same time that Addonizio was running for Mayor. And I remember running simply

running because as I said, I was active in the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council.

And Weequahic Neighborhood Council was active as well. Lee Bernstein was over there. And conditions were bad. I mean, the schools were terrible. As I said, the conditions were terrible. And we used to go as representatives of the Clinton Neighborhood Council, go to the city council meetings, to tell them about the conditions in our community. And at that time, Callahan- fella by name of Callahan was a councilman and others were there too. Well, I remember that they were able to smoke and all that kind of business. You know, there's smoke everywhere. And I remember standing in that part- before the city council, describing the conditions that existed in our community and asking them to do something about it. And they would just kind of- I remember, they would smoke and be blowing smoke in our face just about, and I said, there's nobody up there paying attention to our needs, no one.

That's when I decided to run for council. And I said, I'm gonna run for council on myself. So that's when I ran for council. And at large, I was 29 years old. And we had a small campaign headquarters, etc. And we ran and had a fantastic campaign, had very little money. And I was number 19 on a ballot. I remember running for Councilman at large, I think I was the youngest person to run for at large council and the first black to run for citywide office. I ended up with 14,399 votes, which no- left me 14,000 [unclear] votes and left me 399 votes short of the runoff. I finished number nine, had I finished number eight, I believe I would have been the only African American in that, that runoff and probably would have gotten elected that time, but we missed the runoff by 399 votes. But then that's the reason I ran for that office.

The- later on I received- I got a job at the Prudential Insurance Company. And during that time, the- we had the school fight going on. Remember Parker Callahan situation, etc. And I remember speaking down at the Board of Education meetings late at night, after work hours, because meetings would go on to one o'clock in the morning and that kind of business because the community was, was riled up on a number of things that led to riots where one was the fact that we were looking to have Wilbur Parker, to become the Secretary of the Board of Education. He was well qualified. He was the first African American CPA in the state of New Jersey. And so we said why not him?

So, we the [unclear], Addonizio I believe it was- wanted Callahan to be the Secretary. So that became the Parker Callahan issue. And so, we

went down and spoke about the qualifications that that Wilbur Parker had and compare it to those that Callahan did not have, et cetera. And I remember speaking down there a number of times, and then one day I got back to work the next day, and I was called into the office by a Senior Vice President and said that he told me that you are- I understand that you were making trouble down the Board of Education. Listen, what are you talking about? As I understand you made a speech down here, very inflammatory speech, and what you said that you were going to throw some bricks through a window and set a fire, started. I said, what's it[?]- what are you talking? He said, well, that's what I heard. I said, what did you get there? Well, we have a recording of what you said the police were recording our speeches, you know, and took it to the to my job.

And I told this guy, so let me tell you something. What I did say was this, I said my son and my children go to the Newark schools, all right, and their future is at stake, alright? And I want to do everything I can to make this a better school system. And if in fact, it took for me to take a brick and throw it through a window and start a conflagration about this, then I would do that. Ah he said you're gonna throw bricks through windows, I think they'll start fires. Well, that's not, not quite exactly what I said. Anyway, I was supposedly reprimanded, I said, how dare you? I said, this was all my own time. I guess what I'm gonna have to do is go through NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and let them know that this is happening to me here at this downtown. Anyway, that that that went but the Parker Callahan issue was one that was heating up in the community. And the- there were other things we were being I think that some of us were listed on some as troublemakers by the police.

None of us were listed as those who are causing trouble in town. But the, the- I was out of town that day, that evening, and I was coming in over Route 22, the wind up coming in, and I looked, and I could see in the distance fire and smoke and whatnot. And I had not had my radio on. I didn't know what was going on. So, I got down and coming in on Broad Street. And I was stopped by the police officers. I couldn't go any further. And I was told to park my car there. So, I got outta my car and I walked up to City Hall, actually to the federal building down here across the street from the police department on Franklin Street. And there I ran into Al Brown who was at that time, I think he was Assistant US [United States] Attorney or something like that. And this was about one or two o'clock in the morning. And when I was talking to Al about

what was going on, police activity, etc., a woman came down, very distraught.

And she came over, a black woman she said, I'm looking for my daughter. Like I can't find my daughter. She I think she was swept up with the police. I think that they have her inside there. But they won't let me in there. They said I have to wait a while. So, Al said well, I have an office here. Why don't you come up? So, let's have a cup of coffee, etc. So, we did went up to his office and we came down just dawn- came down and they let this woman inside. And so, she went in and came out with her daughter. And so, Al and I was standing out there and watching her walk. She went home. She lived in the projects. So, she went home. And then later on I was on the board of the UCC, United Community Corporation.

And we had a headquarters over on Bradford Place right near there High Street. Right onto[?] Bradford Place there and I was up there manning the phones during the day after the, the Riot had started. And phone rang around- oh I didn't know sometime in the morning 11 o'clock thereabouts. And I answered the phone and they said we need help up here. Someone has just been shot. [unclear]. It was a woman What was the name? It was Spellman. She was the same woman, the same woman that I had spent time with downtown with Al comforting her etc. Remember what- her walking home as the sun came up. And she was killed that day. She was in her apartment up in her apartment and she went to the window because one of her children went near the window. She went through a window to take the child back from the window and they shot her from down there, a sharpshooter shot and killed her. Miss Spellman, Eloise Spellman.

And as I said I was working at Prudential, and after everything calmed down, we- a couple of my coworkers, we kind of adopted those kids and brought them down to the Pru[?] and took them up to this place up on Bergen Street to buy some clothes, etc. It's a week, we were involved with their family for a little while, but the same woman that that we had helped. So that's where I was that night of the riots. And then, of course, I had been active with the UCc [United Community Corporation].

Even before was formed. I was- went to Washington with the- this administration. And so, when Lyndon Johnson signed the law, into being etcetera, but we- that's, that's where I was. And I remember I took my family out of town rather than [unclear] at the time, had a wife and two children. My wife was expecting a third child and took them to

Elizabeth where her parents lived. And I came back. And I did run into Jim Street, who was at that time working for the City of Newark as Human Relations guy, and we were out there and we were, we were the good guys. We wore armbands. We were given armbands to go through the streets and tell people not to ride quiet, you know, calm down. And, you know, I don't know what you know, we were we were what, I don't know what we would call

Robert Corvin: Now you were involved with Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council. Were you involved at all with the, the Tom Hayden group that came in and what was your reaction and relationship with them? Okay, Bill tells me a little bit about your relationship with the Tom Hayden group, the SDS[?], kids that came in and what were your perceptions of their role in the city at the time?

William Payne: You know, as I recall, at {unclear}-

Robert Curvin: Was a community union project.

William Payne: Yeah. And we were working, as I say, in the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council about the condition bins that existed, absentee landlords abandoned houses, no garbage collection, etc. We- our organization, Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council was working in those, those areas, right? Meeting with the with the tenants, etc. And we felt that our best way to attack that is by bringing it directly to the mayor and people like that. So, Tom Hayden group, I remember we said that will go down and meet with the mayor and city hall. And their thing was no, we will not go down and be with him.

We demand that the mayor come up here, you know, we demand will have a meeting with what we want him to come up here and be right in the middle of where the conditions existed.

I said, well, if our purpose is to ameliorate the problem, we have a meeting with the mayor. Let's go there. And let's, let's meet, well [unclear] and in fact, even suggested that we take the garbage and dump it out of City Hall steps, I mean, to raise attention to this thing, you know, and my thing was, no, I'm not sure that that's going to resolve anything if we do that. And the other thing was that the people who were leading that charge, were folks who were weekend warriors, more or less lived elsewhere. I mean, there was some of our white the people that were involved, who lived Tom Hayden lived in California.

And whenever things got bad, he couldn't always go back home. I said, these people live here, when this is all over, they'll be here. And they'll have to confront the police and anybody else that's here. We had other people that lived in suburbia, who, every evening went home on weekends, they went home, they were here during the week, but these people who lived on, on oh, I don't know, [unclear] avenue. And people who lived in the Central Ward, people who lived in under these terrible conditions will be there after you guys go back. I saw them as oh, I don't know, armchair kind of fighters, good ideas, etc.

But incendiary, which maybe that's what we needed, except that the folks that lived there would be there when you guys went home. And I always viewed them as being able to, at any time just relieve themselves of what was going on here to go back to California or to South Orange, or Short Hills, etc. Some of them were wealthy white kids who came, and this was their idea and helped organize the community, etc. But again, it always struck me that, that the ones who were being victimized by this- by the system, were ones that will be here ongoing, they're, they're ones that have to continue to fight that they could not just suddenly say, well, I've had enough of it and leave here. So, I didn't know I didn't know, their tactics were a little bit beyond what, what we were.

Robert Curvin: See positive results from their activity?

William Payne: But what had happened?

Robert Curvin: Of the development leadership, or?

William Payne: Well, I'll tell you, one of the things that really developed new leadership was the, the anti-poverty fight, the United Community Corporation, I had been on, and I guess that the years let's see, I was 63 to 68. During that that period of time, prior to the riots, we had brought- organized the United Community Corporation, hired a fella by the name of [unclear] Tyson who came over from [unclear] etc. And with the plan to have, to empower communities, to have area boards etc. Where the people who are the indigenous folks there would be empowered to identify the problems that exist there and develop strategies to overcome them.

And I think that those area boards were the ones, were the ones and I don't know the juxtaposition of the time when the Hayden people here [unclear], etcetera, and the United Community Corporation being formed, but the United Community Corporation can get a lot of credit for having organized and bringing into those communities, some

empowerment strategies, etc. You know I think that's what came up with a lot of the people that got involved with people like Duke Moore and people like that, were in relationship with people like Tom Hayden and the community kinds of folks. So, I do believe it brought about an awareness and people that were living in the conditions that were substituted that was the kind of condition they were living. I think it did open their eyes and put some people in leadership positions. Yes.

Robert Curvin: I'm gonna stop here, Bill. Okay, I know you need a break anyway. Thanks a lot.

William Payne: All right. Okay.

[End of Audio]