

(GOODMAN) When the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were added to the constitution after the Civil War, I guess everybody was aware that everybody was supposed to have equal rights, particularly the Black people who were able to be free. The modern notion of civil rights occurred for me as an individual in the late 1920's during the Depression period. Following that, it gradually developed.

(CARTER) I was born in 1940 so I can remember my great-grandparents who came here from Georgia and Tennessee and other parts of the South, came here primarily seeking economic freedom. My great-grandfather and great-grandmother in the late teens joined the Second Baptist Church which at that time was under the leadership of Robert L. Bradby who was an outstanding minister here in the city of Detroit. He was the minister of the oldest African-American church in the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan, founded in 1836. The story goes that Rev. Bradby could pick up the phone and call Henry Ford the first and was able to secure jobs for his membership. The word of course got out into the community and certainly beyond the boundaries of the city of Detroit. I can remember my great-grandfather coming to church along with men of that era in the late 40's. He died in 1954. His name was Appleton Lawrence. They would wear their badges to church.

I can remember the stories of deep racial segregation. The fact that Blacks had a certain day to go to certain places

of entertainment like the Graystone and some other places.

I believe the civil rights movement obviously started here in Detroit with the great economic move, the great migration to the northern cities. In particular, in the city of Detroit, the auto factories were paying \$5.00 a day at some point and allowed many African-Americans to upgrade their standard of living. I didn't understand all of that as a child growing up in what is now Joe Muir's parking lot. That was the street that we lived on, Waterloo, which was the same area that a lot of African-Americans lived at that time. Coleman Young's father was the tailor. Charlie Diggs father was the undertaker, the funeral director. There were others. Joe Louis was my great-grandmother's paperboy. There was a very tight neighborhood around that area of the city.

The migrations patterns here in the city of Detroit forged, I believe, one of the most significant middle class African-American populations in the entire country based on what the unions provided during that time in terms of equal pay.

I remember as a kid I participated in handing out flyers for William Patrick. Before that Rev. Charles Hill of Hartford Churches was one of the first African-Americans to run for the city council in modern times. I remember Erma Henderson and a number of other people, Coleman Young and others when they were quite young participating in that campaign. I was there and just a kid of 12 or 14 but was real

interested. I want to point out that William Patrick was not the first African-American elected to the Detroit city council as most people think. There was another in the early part of the century while they still had the ward system.

(HALL) We lived in a Polish neighborhood. Being Catholic we were not allowed, we had to go to a Black Catholic Church. We tried to go to the local church. St. Josephats was two blocks from us. My mother went and they said no you can't. They said, "You don't speak Polish" or something. This is when my mother turned her religion around. She got mad at the church. But we went to St. Peter Claven.

We lived a kind of conservative life. Moving here, the main thing my parents were concerned about was education. That was the most important thing that they thought that we could get in Detroit because they lived down South. I graduated from Northeastern High School in 1933. When you went to high school, you took a college course or a general course or a commercial course. So I took a general course because they told me "Missy, you won't go to college". It included chemistry, biology. I went to summer school. I took just about everything. There were not jobs. I went to Cass to summer school. There wasn't nothing to do. We were kind of close, people allowed me to do a lot of things so I went to summer school because then I wouldn't have much else to do but sit on the porch and I didn't like that.

When I finished high school, I took a Post Graduate

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course. I passed all the civil service examinations: the federal, the state, the city, the board of education. When I showed up I didn't get hired because they found I was Black. I never got a reply of why they turned me down. My mother was wondering why because I'd get an 85 or 89 and I'd take the test over. Once I got a 92. But they would offer me a job to do some work like in the kitchen, cafeteria. I went to the Polish people had a store on Hastings Street where they sold milk. I was hired there to work.

(MARKS) One of the more important assignments I had in the military, I got a break because I left an infantry position and a bunch of us were sent to school. At that school, which was in Clinton, NY, we studied French and German language. We were all destined to become interpreters after we graduated and be seated throughout the service and then go overseas and be positioned as an interpreter. In that unit, out of 200, a good 50 of the soldiers in the unit were Black. That was the first time that I had any living experience with Blacks. We were completely segregated. We lived in dormitories but on a segregated basis, but none of us, I didn't even cotton to it. I didn't even realize it. It was just so neatly arranged and never anybody talked about it. The experiences were very interesting because soldiers had been assigned to this unit regardless of their rank or background. So you would sometimes have drill sergeants who were Black leading this 200 man complement in military

exercises and drills. Our classes were not segregated in any way. We were completely integrated and some of the Blacks and Whites, some were native speaking Germans and French. Others were trained linguists. Some had taught in colleges and things like that. I came to the unit claiming only one language which was Spanish and they weren't teaching it there. That was the first real contact I had on a living basis. We played poker together. We surfed together. We went to school together. We went into town together. That was in 1944. That's really late in the spectrum of things to be getting into the subject of race.

When I went overseas, I went over with an all White unit. When we got overseas, about the time of the battle of the Bulge when things were very short. Our unit was assisted by a segregated Black tank battalion. As it happened, in service there were lots of feelings about race. Particularly with a segregated Army which we had, Blacks were usually in a quartermaster corps, in the support units. Most of the fellows who were assigned to infantry positions where life was at risk, always felt that was pretty cushy back there. There was a lot of hostility of a racial sort. Our unit, when this Black tank battalion was assigned to us, they proved to be such courageous soldiers and did so many really heroic things in relationship to our men that attitudes in our position changed almost completely. I was in a position to observe that because I was in a military police unit. Whenever we

pulled duty, when we would have to patrol towns and that sort of thing, when our soldiers if they were Black got into trouble, in this particular unit, we didn't have any problems. We could solve the problems. Whereas we would have fights going on constantly between the American soldiers and the British soldiers. The Americans would call them Limies and the British would fight back. You just had a hullabaloo on your hands. That was sort of the genesis of my own, the basis of which I really got straight on the subject of race, subject of how you measure a human being.

When I came back from service, we came back to the city that Mr. Carter has described. It was a thoroughly segregated city. You couldn't go to a major hotel downtown and have a cup of coffee with a colleague. I couldn't. When I joined the staff of the Mayor's interracial committee, one of the first things we discovered is the fact that we had to take advantage of the Diggs Act, which theoretically guaranteed the right of people to eat in public places without discrimination. We discovered that we ourselves had to be forcing on that issue. I joined the staff of the committee in July 1947.

When we had the police crackdown on Black citizens, that infamous period at the end of Mariani's mayoralty, where the police were very upset. It was a very specific period in which the policy of the police department was to "aggressively police". Which meant that they stopped people on the streets,

primarily Blacks, who appeared to be not where they should be. Inevitably, that meant that they were picking up judges, union officials and people that were in the community doing what they had a legal right to do. It got to be an inflammatory period. That would have to be about 1955 or early 60's.

(CARTER) When I was in high school, we knew them as the "Big Four". I don't know what their formal name was but we certainly recognized them riding these big cars and four police officers coming out with rubber hoses and cracking us across the back. Every police station had a big four. They would stop indiscriminately on the street corner as boys would be walking from school. At that time I was 16 or 17. I was a student at Eastern High School from 1954-1958. That was the time of the reign of terror of the fig Four. We were frightened. While I was not personally involved in any altercations with the Big Four, I certainly knew of incidents that my friends encountered. That was a real concern in the African-American community. I think it probably based on a number of meetings that I attended with my Godmother Erma Henderson, who much later became city council president. It precipitated the eventual election of Mayor Cavanaugh and paved the way for other events that occurred during the 60's. There was a strong negative, very negative reaction to that kind of utter brutality.

(GOODMAN) In about 1947-48, George Crockett and Elvin Davenport, he was not a judge, and myself, represented the

family of Leon Mosley. We had an inquest which was at that time a legal procedure. It was a citizens jury that sat and they recommended that the police who shot the 14 year old, in the back because he was running away, be prosecuted. They did not issue a warrant. That ended up in a complete fiasco which was not uncommon in those days. What happened was that the policemen were charged with the crime. At that time, the defendant could waive a jury if they wanted to and try and have a trial before a judge. The police were able to make sure that the case was assigned to a judge who would be understanding of their point of view. That was Judge Gordon. When these defendants were tried in front of him, he ended up the case with a long statement in which he blasted the NAACP for having been guilty of conspiring with myself as an attorney and Maurice Sugar's law office was mentioned in his statement in which he found the defendants not guilty. The defendants were ultimately the NAACP and myself. That's the way justice was administered. It was not too uncommon. I don't remember whether he had taken a loaf of bread or not but they claimed that he had engaged in some sort of criminal activity. All they actually saw was this young guy running away because the police were there and quite likely that he knew if they were to get him they would beat the hell out of him. They didn't do that. All they did was kill him. Those were the alternatives Black people had in the community at that time with the police department.

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(WHITE) The Ford hunger march and subsequent efforts to organize workers. It's where I encountered people that convinced me that which I literally suckled at my mother's breast, mainly that Blacks were less than Whites. To overcome that kind of background. The trade union and the people I encountered, most of whom were labeled communist, whether they were or not. I didn't know the difference between communism and rheumatism but I was still labeled even though I was attending discussions in a Catholic trade union circle which subsequently became the ACTU. Those were the people that had the greatest impact on me.

I worked in a factory at General Motors where there were 12,000 workers and to the best of my recollection, before the war there were 3 Blacks. Two of them worked on the bailing machine that bailed the cardboard and scrap metal. The other one that I remembered worked in the garage of the executives washing the cars. Those were the only three in that number of people. That was the plan too primarily. It was about 60-40 women and men. I was fired in 1929 for participating in a work stoppage that was encouraged by some of the people. I was fired again in 1934. All of these were before the union. Each one of the experiences, you encountered people that altered your attitudes and questions. This was a process of divesting myself of all the racist ideology that I had been exposed to. And also anti-Semitism and anti-foreigner. I often think of my father who was a trade unionist who once saw

me as a kid and said "Who's that girl you were with?" I told him it was an Irish girl. He asked what parish she was in. He said "Why don't you find a nice Irish girl in your own parish". That's how provincial they were. That was not uncommon. That was true of Italian, Polish and Hungarian and all the ethnic cultures. These were enclaves in this state that were pretty tight.

Black Bottom and those blocks down St. Antoine, you would go there on Saturday for cheap whiskey and entertainment at the blind pigs. Which was considered the up thing to do among the Whites. Many of them were clubs with very few Blacks. They were mostly Whites with Black entertainers and Black ownership.

(CARTER) I can remember during the late 1940's and probably through 1950, there were integrated groups of people meeting around the city. My reference point would be strictly with my parents and Erma Henderson but I remember going with my parents as a child to her apartment on Canfield and Woodward. I believe Coleman Young stopped by once or twice during that period of time. These were Saturday evenings. Blacks and Whites. There was strong coalitions at that time between Black activists like Erma Henderson, Coleman Young and others and the Jewish community. This was in about 1947. I remember them talking about the lynchings in the South.

The highlight of that period for me actually occurred in April of 1954 when I got a phone call at home. It was raining

that day. We lived on Holcomb and Mack. Erma Henderson lived on French Road?? near Canfield. She called me and said "How would you like to celebrate your birthday today?" I said well it's a little early because my birthday was April 27 and this was somewhere around the 14th or 15th. She said "There's a really special man at my house and I'd like for you to come over and meet him". I said OK. It was raining so I got on my bike. My mother was already over there. I rode my bike from Holcomb and Mack to French Road and Canfield. Erma Henderson met me at the door and introduced me to this very huge man with a very warm smile. It was Paul Robeson who stayed with her during that particular period of time. There were many African-Americans and Whites and others who wouldn't be caught on the same block as Paul Robeson because of his views. There were some African-American and certainly many, many, many Whites. Again, he was surrounded by this cadre of people, African-Americans and Whites and others who worked with him and supported his cause. I remember the roast beef Erma had cooked that day. It was the first time I had ever seen anyone eat rare meat. I was very, very impressed. We must have stayed over there for four or five hours that evening.

He talked a lot about his life and the singing. He told us a lot of stories. I don't remember the details but |I do remember us sitting at the table eating and doing a lot of laughing. He was a very kind and gentle person and there were a number of other kids over, Black kids and White kids at the

time. Erma Henderson's children and some of their friends. We just had a delightful time that evening. Later on I learned much, much more about that era and what was going on. For me that is a very important memory, that one evening with Paul Robeson, my mother and Erma Henderson.

(GOODMAN) In all this discussion, one persons name has not been mentioned which should have been mentioned: Reverend Charles Hill. Rev. Hill was a great leader in the Black community in many different ways. So few people remember his name and what important role he played in this area. He should be remembered much more and his life is very important to the development of civil rights in this community.

Here are some pictures that we took during the Progressive Party campaign. One was in Rev. Hill's basement. Paul Robeson sang at Rev. Hill's church, Hartford Baptist church. Paul Robeson, in those days was not permitted in most places. He couldn't sing any more as he used to in Masonic Temple filled with 5000 people. Nobody would have him. But he could come to the Hartford Avenue Baptist Church and Rev. Charles Hill. This was the house that Rev. Hill lived in. After Paul sang in the church, you'd go over to the house and we'd have sort of a little party.

The Progressive Party was a party that was developed when the Cold War began in opposition to the Cold War and what it meant and the different foreign policy in that sense. It was organized on the basis of complete equality of Black and

White. It took a strong, firm position on many of the domestic issues.

In 1950, we decided to form an interracial partnership of lawyers, the first such interracial partnership that we knew about in this country. That's how our partnership began. Bob Millender came in 1962 or 1963. Claudia Morcum was an associate member of our firm in 1959, I think. That story is an interesting one for anyone who is interested in civil rights because we spent a good number of years doing nothing else but handling civil rights cases. We didn't make much of a living but it was a hell of an interesting period.

(WHITE) Rev. Hill had come to some of us in the labor movement and suggested that during the Korean War that we organize a delegation. There was a rally against the war in Chicago. He suggested that we try to get a labor delegation. We were influential in getting 700 delegates from Detroit, a lot of them from the Ford local and other UAW locals to go to Chicago and attend the peace rally. While I was there with the delegation, Dr. Dubois was presiding over that. There were 10,000 people. He called me up from the audience. I went up there and he introduced me to the audience and commended us for our large labor participation. I went to sit down and I sat by Paul Robeson. We got to talking. Subsequently he came to Detroit for a concert. I had fallen off a scaffold and was babysitting with the kids while my wife was working. I got a phone call one day and it was Paul

Robeson, he asked me if I could come down to the Book. He'd like to spend some time. I said I'd like to but I was babysitting. He said by all means, bring the children. So we went down to the Book and Brown his accompanist, he asked us if we'd wait until he got through with his concert. He knew my Irish background and he had spent a year in Dublin. He was tremendously impressed and he told me stories. He regaled us with some Irish songs. He was such a huge and gentle man.

(CARTER) Everyone remember the march down Woodward when Martin Luther King was here and the march on Washington but there was another march right here in this area. It was somewhere around 1962 and 1963. It was in down Michigan Avenue in Dearborn. I participated in that and I've never been so frightened. I did not participate in any of the marches in the south but I felt like this was a time of war.

I do remember being extremely frightened. Marching down Woodward and the eggs being thrown at us, and the oranges and the fruit. "You niggers get out of here. We don't want you". I think it started somewhere around Schaefer on Michigan Avenue or maybe even near the city hall there. Hubbard was still the reigning monarch there.

Certainly it was a tremendous day when Martin Luther King marched down Woodward with mayor Cavanaugh and all the rest but some of us felt that we had to do more than that. We had to go to the front lines to march and to show our support for our brothers and sisters in the South. That came as close as

I ever experienced in terms of confronting the ugliness and the terror of racism here. It was more subtle in Detroit. As a kid, we knew we couldn't go to this place and there were restrictions as far as restaurants and hotels but that was just the epitome of racism in terms of being very aggressive and very hostile. The name calling, the physical contact. Some shoving and pushing occurred but we were very well disciplined. My friend Leon Lucas was with me and we were sort of locked arm in arm. I can remember getting home that night and breathing a sigh of relief having survived that kind of experience.

We had signs, I did not personally have one. There was the traditional song "We shall overcome". That was a terrible sound to the ears of some of the folks who lined Michigan Avenue that day. It helped to keep us in line and gave us strength to endure that. My personal attitude was to strike out and hit someone and really get into an altercation, really a street fight. That was not our purpose. That was not the issue that day.

(MARKS) The significance of the period of marches was that a certain balance of power in the country was shifting. It was very clear that there was common cause in the civil rights struggle. You had all the religious denominations, that up to that point had never really joined the battle. They joined with King. You had major Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, the union movement just involved up to its ears with

money and personnel. It was a fantastic period because it represented a time when something changed in the country. All these battles that we were having individually with this restaurant and that restaurant, can we cross Woodward Avenue for housing and that sort of thing. As the population changed when we finally began to get national legislation. Some forces in the country just realized that you cannot have a national transportation system and exclude some people. You just can't do that. You can't have a Black child wanting a Coke and hamburger and he can't get it and his father can't get it. You can't have that kind of conflict going on all over the nation.

(Carter) That's a good point. You have a place like Joe Muir's right here in the city of Detroit. My father could not go in. I remember one day he went over to Joe Muir's. the only way he could get fish, they would wrap it up in a newspaper and serve it out the back door. Every time I go into Joe Muir's today for a business meeting, that memory sticks vividly in my mind. I told one of his sisters, you know there was a time your family would not serve my family unless it was wrapped up in newspaper.

You know the marches in the 60's and that whole era was in part, I believe, precipitated by some other events. Just as we see a resurgence in freedom around the world today with Nelson Mandela being released from the Union of South Africa. the Eastern countries at that time were in the height of their

slavery. The African countries were actually being liberated. Ghana gained it's freedom in the late 50's and one African country after another became free of colonial rule. I believe that was a source, not the only source but certainly one source of inspiration to people here in this country where we had our own form of Apartheid, not in the South, but also right here in Detroit. That's a point that could be lost to history, that we were every bit as segregated in the 40's and early 50's and of course, going beyond that, as many of the African's are in Capetown and some of the other cities in the Union of South Africa today in 1990. Detroit was certainly not an arsenal of democracy as it was touted to be, at least from a social standpoint it wasn't.