

FB 34A

Subject: James R. Ford

Interviewer: "Button Project"

Place: Tallahassee

7/25/75

SJ

I: We get our tapes from the Oral History Project, at the University of Florida, and what they'll do is, they'll type up a transcript of this interview, and they'll send it to you, and if you wish to make this part of the Oral History Project, you can edit the transcript, sign a release form, and send it back, and then they'll put it on the shelves for future use, but that's only with your written approval, that they'll do that.

F: Okay.

I: Okay, the first section of questions are trying to determine how well the voting rights ^{Act} ~~happened~~ in 1965, ~~That's how~~ blacks take part in ^{Florida} politics. What was the first year that you registered to vote?

F: I really don't remember, but I have registered to vote long, long before the voting act, the voting rights ^{Act,} ~~passed~~ ^{it was inacted.} ~~it was inactive.~~

I: Would, did you register to vote when you were first eligible, or...

F: Basically, the opportunity to register to vote in Leon County ^{has} ~~had~~ never ^{really} been an issue, so I can't, in responding to that aspect, of the voting rights act, ^{why it is} ~~is~~ probably, is ~~the~~ momentum ~~of~~ other places, and the attention being called to it, through the media, and through many other things, certainly, and of course voter registration drives that have been put on here by the Tallahassee Voter's League, has helped tremendously in getting more blacks

there would,
 registered to vote. Certainly, I would assume that there was a certain degree of timidity on the part of blacks in the earliest part of it, because, first of all, it was a new experience, it hadn't been proven to them that they had any successes, or that it made a heck of a lot of difference in elections, so, many of them, and we still have some blacks now, who ^{are running,} ~~aren't~~ very intelligent on my part, still communities _____, and not get elected to exercise the right to do so, though it's.....

I: So, you were never personally turned ^{down} ~~out~~?

F: No, I, I'm not knowledgeable that that has occurred.

I: The, you mentioned what the Tallahassee League of Voters, of the registration ^{drive} ~~act~~, was there any other registration ^{drives} ~~act~~ that took place?

F: Not by the supervisor of elections. They just ~~stayed~~ stayed at city hall, or at the courthouse, but no one ever contributed anyone from registering.

I: When did this registration drive take place, how many months ago? ~~did it...?~~

F: Most of ~~it was~~ ^{those} I would assume, ^{have} ~~taken~~ ~~the~~ place, there's been more active involvement in the past five or six years.

I; And they've been fairly successful?

F: ~~They've been very~~ ^{Fairly} successful. ^{We've,} ~~what~~ what has happened ^{there is the} ~~is~~ ~~that~~ books; registration books have been taken out into the various communities so that they're more convenient to the people, and they didn't have to come down to City Hall, or to the Leon County Courthouse. We feel that ^{anytime} ~~once~~ you vote, once you register, you are a registrant, for either the city or the county, and you _____ a registration.

I: Are there any things that have prevented blacks from registering to vote in this district, either now, or in the past?

F: I'm not certain, but I know that there are none now, I could not

respond to the past accurately. I would assume perhaps that the biggest thing in the past may have been fear of what would occur, but then, I know of no overt act that prohibited it. There may have been fears because they worked, just like in ^{Gadsden} ~~Gaston~~ County.

There really isn't anything that I know that, just overtly, prevents blacks from registering over there, but the fear of losing their jobs ^{or various} ~~or~~ other things from their employers, it's an indirect kind of thing rather than what happens at the City Hall, County Courthouse.

I: Some of these things ^{are going to} appear repetitious to you, I'm sure. Did you look over that list and check the appropriate columns as far as what you think are important, ^{in preventing} ~~and many~~ blacks ^{to} register ~~in~~ to vote, and what you percieve, what people in this area perceive as being important, and could you comment on each one?

F: Well, the first one, I think, is very important, that's economic dependence on whites. Fear of physical violence from whites, I don't think is important, I believe it carries a zero. Complicated registration forms, I don't think that that is one, ~~z~~ either. Poor registration hours, I don't think is important, you can register any hour of the day. It's normal business, and I think that, maybe, I'm not a good example of it, but I think that there's just some things that, if they mean anything to you, you're supposed to put something in the kitty, ^{and if the} hours are from eight to five, or whatever they are, and other citizens will be here, I don't think the black citizens should be given any preferential treatment. So, I would have to ^{regist--} ~~recognize~~, also respond to that. Registration is not held often enough; registration is a continuous process, ^{it's} any day that you go in there, so that's not a, you can register any day, except

the days it's closed prior to the election, obviously. So, indifference of blacks to voting in ^{Leon} Lee County, we don't have any problems, so I would have to, here again, consider it not important. Now that's the way I view all those questions. The first one I think is ~~not~~ important.

I: How about, are there any problems here of re-registration procedures? some places, if you haven't voted in a two year time period, they drop you from the roll. Has that been a problem, as far as registration?

F: No, as far as I can determine, no, but the registration rolls are purged periodically, and they should be because in our city, in order to have any semblance of validity to the voter registration rolls, we are governmentally and educationally ^{-oriented} city totally, and we have a lot of people who come in, a lot of people who leave. So names, addresses of people on the rolls, that should be purged periodically, and an individual who doesn't exercise his vote in one or two year's period, in my opinion, doesn't want to vote. I mean, there's no point in pussyfooting around with an issue, either you want to be a citizen or you don't.

I: Has there been any problem with the drawing of district lines, uh gerrymandering?

F: Initially, way back from looking at some lines, and I've since learned that that really wasn't the motive, the motive was another motive, but it did, it did in effect, do the same thing, an individual was protecting, was protecting for tax purposes something, and had zero to do with voting. See, because some of the land was owned by some influential landlords and some various other things, and it, when we really got down to the nitty-gritty part

of it, they weren't gerrymandering out as much as they were gerrymandering some ^{the} economic aspect of it.

I: I'd like to ask you some questions about your election campaigns.

F: Sure.

I: ~~Now~~ ^{Uh, were} are you able to campaign freely? Threatened in any way ⁱⁿ your campaign?

F: Never.

I: Were you handicapped by a lack of money, ^{let me} campaign money, in either of your elections?

F: Not really. The first one, ^{let me} ~~preliminary~~ ^{respond to it this way.} response, ^{the first time} I felt so, because I had no idea of what, what it should be, ^{or} ~~and~~ what it should not be. We found, I found that, ^{well} looking at it by virtue of the fact that I won with little funds, we've indicated that more funds, perhaps, wouldn't have done much better, you know? I can't equate it in that respect, but, when I won the primary, going into the run-off, we were broke, and (chuckle) obviously now is the time when we needed the funds more than we needed them in the primary. So, from my campaign treasurer, ^{and the people} ~~and~~ ^{who} he worked real hard with me, we just worked ^{harder} ~~hard~~ physically. But it was at stark determination, I think then, and the, not depending on the media to tell the story as much as getting out ^{there} ~~and~~ physically, everywhere, I think that's the difference, frankly, and I think it was a good thing. I think on the other hand, had I had more money, I could have lost the election by depending on television or some other media to do some things that I would not have ^{normally done} ~~known what they were doing~~, by virtue of the fact that I couldn't afford to do them any other way. And these were alternatives. It meant, see, we campaigned here in December and January, it's

the coldest time of the year, and when ^{you've got} ~~you have~~ to go out and physically walk the street and meet everybody _____ election, and everybody, all the employees going into the _____ House, and ~~the~~ ^{and} sanitation workers, ~~to~~ you've got to be out there seven, six-thirty, seven o'clock, and you've got to try to meet two or three of those things, it makes a difference, but it makes a difference to the individual too if they see you out there in the cold, they say at least he's concerned, you know, so it's different kinds of philosophy behind it.

I: I keep interrupting, every time you take.....

F: No, go right ahead, I can adjust to that.

I: Okay, why did you decide to run for office?

F: That's a long story. I had, I had... I never had any political ambitions, once upon a time, I thought about the ministry, but I never had any use nor any ambitions to get into politics. I was invited to Father Brook's church, that's St. Michael, my old Angelus church over here, ~~The~~ below A&M UNiversity, and at that time there was a group of FSU students, and a couple of interested whites who were forming a coalition between the blacks and whites as related to putting two of the present, two of the commissioners, at that time on the commission, to get rid of them. And I was invited to the meeting, and I had been approached by an individual who later became, not an opponent, but a person who was in the opposition to ~~be~~ ^{me} on some philosophical issues today. Anyway, this lady had invited me to come, cause she felt ^{that I ought} to come. Not to be a candidate, not anything, but they were trying to get people in there to listen to the cause. At that particular time, I carried with me the person who ended up being my campaign manager, because he

is very influential deacon in one of the churches across town, and a very good friend, and a coworker with me in the school system. He was an administrator, and so was I, on the school administration for twenty-three years. So no, I've been in education twenty-three years, ^{School} ~~been an~~ administrator ten of those years. I want to correct that, because I taught vocational and other courses. We went to the meeting and I'm sure you know Reverend Gooden, or you've heard of Reverend Gooden, Reverend Gooden ^{who's} is an individual here, ^{been} very vocal in the militant side of equal rights, and so ^{forth and so on.} ~~that~~ that particular time, Reverend Gooden ^{authority} took the and liberty of saying that he represented in the, in assessing the strengths, he pointed out to the whites, when they were talking about the candidates, that the blacks already had their candidate, and they were all ready to go. And nobody would name who their candidates were, and nobody would do anything, purely at the meeting, as I sat there, but it was until that occurred that I didn't respond. I sat through the whole thing and they were pointing out, and the whites themselves were, we need to be together, because we have got a month now to do this thing, and you know, they'll go over ⁱⁿ to south city, ^{they'll} ~~you all~~ just take care of that south city. We're going to have to go over there in a month, and re-educate these people to do this and to do that, and if you all will commit ^{then} to one of our candidates, ^{we're} going to see if we can't get these two candidates elected. Well, now, I sat, and I listened to that whole bunch of strategy, qualifying time hasn't even, it's just begun, and I didn't want to put a pin in their balloons, but I, at that particular time, when I made the statements that I made to them, I had zero intention ^{of} ~~in~~ becoming involved politically, one way or ^{the} ~~another~~, they drove me into it,

and I'll tell you why, how it happened. They really triggered it. I got up, and said, "I'm James R. Ford, I reside at 2029 North Meridian Road, and as most of you can see by looking at me, I'm black. No one, no place, anytime since I've lived in this city has ever asked my opinion of who represented me, nor do anyone represent me that I don't choose to. So I, cannot understand how the good Reverend, at this particular time, can attest to the fact that a candidate that represents black has been chosen. I'm not knowledgable of that. But I do, I would like to bring to your information, ^{and} for your information, several factors that I listened ^{to} as an outsider and disinterested party, to your, to the techniques that you're talking about. Now I said, let's recap one or two things. I've lived in Tallahassee, I'm a native Tallahassee. And my great-great-grandfather used to be constable ^{of} in Lee County. So I do know a little bit about the folkways and ^{mores in} ~~mores of~~ this ^{of the} county. Now, you have openly said at this meeting tonight the following: that the blacks don't stand a snowball's chance in hell of getting any votes out of south city, ~~Nor~~ should they go over there. That's, those are your statements, not mine. How in the heck do you think in four weeks you're going to change what's been embedded for generations, if you can't go over there to solicit their votes now, how do you propose that they're going to vote when they go to the polls? So any blacks ^{who} ~~that~~ fall for that's ~~are~~ stupid. Number two; you have also assumed that the two black, that the black and the white candidate, that there's no coalition. ^{Let's} ~~has~~ put together, is the only people who is going to be in the race to split up all the votes over there that you're talking about. You don't have the slightest idea right now whether somebody ^{else} ~~is~~, other than you,

sitting in this meeting who plans to run for this ^{the} job. And I said, "I would suggest ^{to you that you think about} very seriously ~~that you think~~ what you're embarking on, because the plans, as I see them, are doomed to fail." So obviously, you ~~could~~ ^{dropping} hear a pin ^{at} this point. Because I don't think it dammed thought ^{about the fact that} this little group here now is not the only people who are going to qualify. And we might have five blacks in there, not me, and if he's got one there, I might not choose that individual. you see? So now, you've got it split up.

That was the first meeting, they scheduled another one, I still had made no committments ^{my} one way or another, but when I got ready to leave, everybody wanted to know, was I a candidate. And my wife had got an invitation, and she was there too, ^{and uh, at the meeting.} And Herman ~~was~~ ^{sitting} back had never, now this had started his wheels to turn. What am I pulling off? so when we got ready to leave, everybody asked me ^{as a candidate,} ~~again~~ or if I were a candidate, I said, "Possibly." And I really did it to heckle. I did it for the hell of it. And I had zero intention, one way or another, I hadn't even given it any concern. but as I walked from the church to the car to come back across town, my wife stopped me and asked me, "what was I inferring?" and Herman asked me, "what's going on, ~~why~~ didn't you tell me you were going, you were a candidate?" Well, ^{now} now, I hadn't given it any thought of becobming a candidate, one way or ^{the} ~~another~~, ^{Herman at that point,} so I said to ~~her~~ I said, "If I ~~was~~ ^{were} a big enough damn fool to run, would you be my campaign manager?" He said, "If you're a big enough damn fool to run, yes." He said, "I'll tell you what, why don't we go down to the bus station and have a sandwich, I'm hungry." It's eleven o'clock at night, and let's just talk about the possibilities, you know, kick it around. I said, "yeah." so my wife said, ^{"Well, I'm} ~~I'm~~ going on home. I ^{aint} ~~am~~ going ^{where you're going.} ~~with you~~"

and with Herman, "ya know.
 So I said, "You take the car, I'll catch a ride home. So that's, that's
 really how it started. No, no plans, no nothing. we went down
 there and we talked about all the good people we thought we could
 push in to run. I still hadn't made any committments, ^{ya know, this} ~~it~~ was all
 in jest. In fact, it stayed three days in jest. ^(chuckle) But everybody went
 I went back to the ~~no~~, in the meantime, I decided that I would
 run. I didn't know that there were no qualifications, or no
 qualifying fees and all this, and I ~~didn't~~ ^{had} think other public offices,
 that ten percent of the salary was what the qualifying fee was, so
 the salaries commission was three thousand dollars, I went to the
 credit union, and withdrew my three hundred dollars, and I went down
 to city hall ^{to} and qualify ~~ed~~. I qualified, the man, ^{collect me and} ~~never~~ asked me for
 three hundred dollars, I never gave it to him. ^(chuckle) I kept standing
 there like an ignoramus waiting for him to ask for it. But he
 didn't, and I didn't. so, they gave me a copy of the codes and
 everything, they were very, very nice, I think. There was nothing
 that I could request, ^{that the} information or data, that they didn't ^{gladly} ~~grab~~
~~it first~~ ^{furnish.} In fact, I had ~~not~~ experienced no real negative problems
 in my, as it relates to anything, for the political ^{part of it.} ~~part~~. Except,
 and this was on a bribe basis, that when we qualified, when everybody
 got qualified in it, and ~~when~~ we went back to the meeting, there was
 and elderly man named Darcy, who decided that I should pull out
 because I didn't have a chance of winning, and he had a chance of
 winning, and ^{he} we could get rid of these two SOB's on the commission.
 That was the objective to be done. Well, my second meeting down
 there with them, I decided to tell them full point blank, I said,

"Obviously I cannot count on anyone in this coalition to support my campaign, but I have announced that I am going to run, and I have no intentions of compromising, nor do I have any intentions of withdrawing. So if you all want to run your two candidates, there you are, it's open season." So he did run, And I think he got something like two hundred votes. I beat my opponent in the primary, but I did not have a _____ of votes. So now, I've got to go and try to pick up all those other votes. Because you have to have a _____ of votes to win. And I think we had something like six or eight people in the primary that I was in. But, needless to say, I won it, and I won it by a good margin. *The people were very kind to me, three times.* And I've tried to do my best to show my appreciation by being concerned about their welfare.

I: Which political organization, which party do you belong to?

F: Democrat. But we are non-partisan.

I: Did, so you didn't receive....

F: And we are at large.

I: And you didn't receive, ^{so} you don't receive any assistance from....

F: Hm hm.

I: ~~ok. What~~ ^{What} were the two or three most important issues on which you campaigned?

F: I really didn't campaign ~~on~~ ^{on} issues. I campaigned on the fact that I had better ideas and could do it better. That was all.

I: And your second campaign?

F: Second campaign, I didn't have to run. But I was on the polls until three minutes of, the registration qualifying ^{date,} rather. Three minutes before qualifying date, same person who talked me into going to church had another candidate there to run against me because she was opposed to anybody running ^{unopposed} ~~on the polls~~, which is fine.

philosophically, it ^{made} ~~makes~~ no difference. But, eight o'clock the next morning, for some strange reason, he withdrew, so I was ~~on the polls,~~ ^{unopposed.}

I: What were the, what do feel are the main issues facing blacks in the community?

F: Right now? Housing, job opportunities, employment, you know. I guess we just sing that same song and dance ^{to just} about anything, ^{because} ~~but~~ that's what it is. I mean, if you ~~they~~ got a good job, and they got a good house, there isn't ^{nothing} ~~anything~~ else I can think about, ^{in the} ~~the~~ ^{community} ~~that, no~~ big thing, you know.

I: On this next section, I'm going to ask you questions about, ^{to determine} ~~some~~ ^{enable} some of the factors ~~that~~ and conditions that blacks that win office. ^{you're elected} ~~and you lost it~~ at large, you say. What percentage of blacks of voting age, in your history, or at the, at large history, are registered to vote?

F: I would assume perhaps seventy percent.

I: Is that comparable to the white eligible population that's registered?

F: That would be difficult for me to say, but perhaps not.

I: Would it be higher or lower?

F: Perhaps lower.

I: About what percentage of blacks who are registered to vote, do you estimate, actually voted when you ran?

F: Forty or fifty percent.

I: In both elections? Do you feel you got any white votes ^{votes} ~~from~~ white voters?

F: Do I feel ^{that?} ~~the~~ majority of my votes in office is, have been white. I would say that sixty five or seventy percent of my votes have been white.

I: In ^{your, in} that first election ~~that~~ you had, how many white ^{and how many} ~~opponents~~ black opponents did you have? Do you remember?

F: I didn't have a black ^{there} opponent in my group, he was in another group. And I think ~~it~~ ^{it} was six, six of us in it, I think. ~~but~~ I would have to really look at that. Kind of vague to me now, but there were at least that many.

I: And what percentage of the vote did you get, do you remember? In the primary, and then in general?

F: In the primary, I think in the primary, it was something like forty-two percent, or something. Between thirty and forty-two percent, something like that. But see, it was,....

I: You were the largest vote getter then?

F: Yes.

I: In the run-off election?

F: In the run-off election, I won.

I: By, what was your.....

F: I think it was differential and possibly ~~probably~~ it was something like eighteen or nineteen hundred votes.

I: Percentage wise, uh? ^{total}

F: Well, you mean of total potential votes?

I: No, the percentage that you got in the general election.

F: In the general? Oh, I think it was ^{fifty-three percent.} fifty-three or ~~something like~~ that.

I: In this next section, we're going to ask you questions to try to determine how well black officials in ^{Florida have been able to} ~~supported~~, ~~are they of any~~ benefit ~~to~~ those people they represent. In what ways do you think that you helped blacks in your district by holding office?

F: Well, let me address myself to that question typically. One, two

three. I never campaigned, nor do I subscribe to the premise of helping any specific group. That's not the, that's not the duty of a public official, I wouldn't give a rap who he is. And I think any public official who subscribes to that premise, ^{be} he, black or white, is a disgrace to the office. So, that is a very personal opinion, and I think that, I would like to feel that when I elect anybody, that he is concerned about the total welfare of the people that he serves. Now, I want to address that question from that position. That, obviously, there were some situations that should have been rectified, that should have been corrected, that should have been brought to the attention of the city commission and ~~the~~ council, and something positive and ^{tangibly} ~~was~~ done about it. Those situations, many of those situations have been rectified, like sewer, like street lights, like sidewalks, like paved streets, like running water, like parks and recreation, and like being on boards, advisory boards, and examining those as they relate to the city, and hospital boards, ^{and} many of the decision making, or the ^{influencing} ~~enforcing~~ bodies of the city. And there is another way of making a contribution. There is a certain degree of things that prevent things from happening to a group of people by virtue that you are there. That they aren't going to happen, that could happen if you were not knowledgeable of the plans for them to occur. So that would probably be indirect.

I: Can you give some examples of some of those indirect things?

F: Well, if we were contemplating, I'll give you an example of one that I killed. There was a ten percent tax, if you want to call it, or whatever, to be on, across the board, all kinds of oil, presently, you know. ^{well} About two or three years ago, ^{hell} if

if you're going to do that to kerosene, and various other things, those affect more definitely blacks, who heat with it. You know, they don't have electric heat, they don't have things, and they presently, the laws ^{does} ~~do~~ not cover some of these kinds of fuels.

So obviously, that could ^{occur.} ~~be~~ the same thing ^{we've} ~~be~~ done, ^{when we're talking about} ~~and talk about~~ taps, sewer taps and ^{various things and that's stuck in the air now.} ~~various things~~ because basically, the people who

are hurt by that are basically going to be blacks who couldn't afford to do it, the sewer wasn't there those years, when the city did everything for free. All you had to do was live in the city, the line went down ^{there and the} ~~the~~ taps were made, you just paid

twenty five dollars. Now, we run the sewer in the black neighborhoods, you're supposed to put ^{up} a two hundred fifty dollars for ^{uh, uh two hundred fifty} ~~a systems~~

^{dollars} ~~a~~ ^{for a systems} charge, plus a hundred and twenty five dollars ^{tapping} fee, ^{and} you can see who's being, how it is. ^{And these} ~~Most~~ people yet paid

city taxes, ^{paid} ~~pay~~ everything else, to pay for the others that are there, so obviously, that's an issue and it's been an ^{issue,} ~~an~~ and

of course, I'm going ^{to win} ~~to~~ that issue. In fact, I had stalled it for four and a half years, so...

I: What, if anything, has prevented you from doing a better job? ^{benefitting} Especially in regard to ~~a~~ blacks?

F: Lack of communication, and I want to put some of the burden back where it belongs, lack of communication of black leadership.

Bringing up positive approaches of used sort, solving a problem.

Making one aware of a problem in a positive manner rather than in a negative, demanding, and ^{derogatory} ~~derogative~~ manner, which, there's such a thing as tuning somebody out, and some of them have succeeded in tuning me out on some issues. Lack of recognizing that you've got to put something in if you want something back. For an instance,

the reason we have some streets in black communities not being paved, they want to move a damn ~~house~~^{ounce,} one inch for property for the sidewalk and the street to be widened, and it's substandard. Do you follow what I'm saying? Or you get four people on it who don't want to do nothing, and won't. So, the street doesn't get paved. Two blocks of it you got paved, up to two blocks, and you end up here with a dead street. Now, you don't expect to watch downtown, to go down there, and they're all going to say, we're going to condemn it and spend taxpayer's money to pave two blocks of ~~the~~^{the} black neighborhood that they don't have any, the people ~~are~~^{are} hardly going to go down there and vote for them in the first place, you know? I mean, you've got to look at your situation ^{very} positive and realistically. One thing that, we can't look at every issue that affects a group or ~~it~~ affects people based on it's racial, what happens racially in it, you've got to look at it, there are many, many other factors that lead to decisions that are made, that no one ever thought about, whether it had, whether it hurt a handful of blacks, or whether it hurt a handful of whites, for that matter.

But ~~The~~ point probably, ~~where~~ the problem has come up whether it ~~was~~^{was} politically practical, whether it's economically the thing you had to do, many decisions that we make now, that we know that we don't have any choices. They are economic decisions that are brought about because of the environmental things ^{that} we have to do, and many other things that the only damn place that you can dig this ditch might happen to have to go through a black neighborhood. The hills, and everything goes there, that's the property they end up buying. now where the hell are you going to run it? You say it's a racial issue; it isn't, ~~It's~~ a topographical issue. It says now, that, look, you've got a problem,

you've got to solve it, these people are affected. How do you want to compensate them ^{adequately?} What are you going to do, it's going to be misunderstood. And ~~you~~ ^{you} gets to be things that that issue had nothing to do with it. The same issue would have been true if it had been whites living there, but the probability of whites having ~~been~~ living there in the first place ~~because~~ because they have enough money to make sure ~~and~~ and they have enough knowledge ^{not} to buy a durn piece of property and build on it. They're subject to flooding, or they're subject to any area ^{that,} whose best use might end up being for a drain. So, you get back into an economic _____.

I: So, to ~~be~~ ^{follow} it up, has criticism or lack of support from the black community hindered you in, in and your holding office, _____?

F: Ask that question again.

I: Okay. Has criticism or lack of support from the black community hindered you in holding office?

F: No, no. I can appreciate having ^{more, having} a greater degree of input from the community than I get, and here again, it's, every issue has two sides, I have an obligation to keep them better informed than perhaps I do, because the newspaper and the media, first of all, cannot and then afterwards, do not cater to much of the positive things that, and not just ^{our} ~~commision~~ do, but most governmental bodies, they tend to play up very heavily ^{as a, that} the things that you ~~become~~ become controversial in nature. Because they say on newspapers, and we recognize that, no criticism of them, but I guess you've got, you've got to keep it, just like the kid who makes A's in school is never going to get in the newspaper. ^{But} ~~like~~ the guy who can run, and I'm not criticizing that, I think it's good. He might not could

make two X's on a piece of paper, but he can run down a field and score for the team, he's going to make the press. ~~I think~~ it's good. I thing that both parts need to be there, but you have to recognize the fact that they are all contributing factors to improve the general lifestyle. Second thing, the second part of it, ^{it's--} unless a politician, or a commissioner has got some staffed personnel to do some of it, he simply can't do it. It's really an impossible job, because somebody has to put it together and disseminate it. And at the local level, there's no such agency, and yet at the local level, that is the point where the John Q. Public experiences the greatest impact of his, ^{nearness} of his to government. If Washington do something, it's the commission who catches hell about it. ^{When} ~~with~~ the prices that he's going to put on fuel oil, the commission's going to catch hell about ^{the utility} ~~it until it~~ bill, it's the commission going to catch hell about the environmental irregulations, it's going to be the commission who's going to catch hell about everything that comes down, ~~to the~~ lack of money, the lack of funding. You name it, and it's going to be on our backs. Why can't you fund this, why can't you do what you did last year? And all of this must be done, and give a five percent across the board and escalation on every item that you buy from Gem clips, to supplies, and equipment, and generators for the power system, power plant. And we never know, right now the worst thing in the world, ~~We're~~ probably the poorest oriented business, and if business had to operate like we are operating now, they'd probably go bankrupt, and if a bank were to do it, they'd be closed. But every time we sign a contract on a bid, we ~~sign money~~ ^{assign monies that,} and ~~now~~ ^{not} just this city, every city in the state is signing open-end contracts to vendors

because they are subject to escalation clauses at the time delivered, but which we do not know what to encumber. And we do not know, nor does the auditor, can he tell you specifically what the hell you have. You, you follow what I'm saying? So it's a, at best, it is a very, very time consuming kind of thing now, and ever after. There was a time when it was a very simple thing to do, when the towns were smaller, when there were fewer regulations, ~~and~~ nobody was thinking about the environment, nobody was thinking about all the other things, it was very easy to set up and make some decisions, all you had to do was tell the police chief, if anybody comes and breaks a law, put them in jail. Pave a few streets, and one or two other things, and you were a good man. That ain't the game any more. The game is trying to figure how you can get your share of the monies that are allocated to match all the other things you've got to do. And in order to do that, you've got to spend ninety percent of your time qualifying and getting consultants to give you the information that you already know better than the consultants do. But, what it ~~is~~^{is}. But you've got to pay him because the government in Washington, and ~~the~~ HUD, and everybody else ain't going to take your word, they've got to get the word from R.W. Beck and (Co.) that you've got to pay half of the grant, ~~to~~ tell you. So ^{you know,} sometimes I look at the whole mess, and I see, I understand why John Q. Public, the taxpayer, gets mad as ^{me,} hell, because I do.

I: This is similar to that other...

(BREAK IN TAPE)

(END OF SIDE ONE)

(SIDE TWO)

F: ...have not experience the myriad of problems, ^{what I mean,} as it related to these two factors, as the key, would perhaps, as many other cities. We, until Commonwealth foldèd up, we didn't have a high degree of unemployment, and a lot of the problems that are there, that now that would be basic problems, were in some degree, not really important issues, you know, not the major ones. Are you running that?

I: Yeah, we've got it going.

F: Okay. So ^{to respond} ~~the response~~ to your questions here...thank you. I would have to say, to number one, not, office has no real authority, and I would have to get a clarification from you ~~z~~ because, we are a policy-making body in the city of Tallahassee, we have a manage of commission ^{form of} ~~of formal~~ government, and the charter expressly prohibits the commission from becoming involved directly into the affairs as relates to giving orders to ^{an} ~~employee~~s of the city. That is expressly prohibited. So in that respect, you probably could say that there is a lack of authority. But there is not a lack of authority from the standpoint that you do tell the manager or the auditor in _____ whatever you want done, and of course, we haven't had any problems with them not trying to comply with the instructions given them. So, it would be a matter of interpretation, ~~or~~ a matter of how you want to equate what authority means.

I: Some people feel encumbered by the ^{regulations} ~~straight faces~~ placed on them by the state, ~~That's~~ such that _____.

F: As it relates to helping blacks per se ^{or any,} in that regard, I would, I don't see any regulations there that do, I see--the kinds of things that I see that come up that prohibits us from doing some things,

or the kinds ^{of} things, the laws that the state from time to time pass. Which affects ^{cities} ~~city~~ or the federal government, which affects cities without taking into account how the city is doing financially, live up to this obligation to implement this thing. Okay, ^{you} say we're going to give, let's assume that they're going to do all this for the, for the ^{like CETA} ~~the~~ funds. But that's not a good example, because you don't ^{match it} ~~imagine that~~ totally, in this regard other than any kind. But forms that you've got to get that you've got to have a match. That's fine to give me (75¢), but if I don't have the quarter, I can't very well get the (75¢), and when I put up ^{the} ~~this~~ quarter to get your (75¢) over here, I have taken that quarter from something else that that quarter should have been doing for somebody else that was already earmarked basin. But because I'm going to get (75¢) from you, I'm not going to do the other thing now, I'm going to postpone it, and hope, through some act of Providence that I can do it otherwise. And that's what cities have been jockeying and doing to the point for the federal dollar and for the state dollar, to the point that they have allowed themselves to get into a dependency bag, I guess I could call it, where you aren't in a position now to do the things you needed to, that you were doing on your own, because you have committed the three to five years and most things that ^{you're talking} ~~you talk~~ about now are not short-term commitments, ^{ya know.} So you've got the money tied up, and if your budgets are like Tallahassee's, we operate on an anticipated budget because we have not collected the money from the utility bills, and if we have a good summer, good ^{and} hot, ^{and need to} we use the air conditioning, And all this, ^{it's} ~~is~~ good. But then the energy of ^{it's} ~~the~~ so-called, quote, energy conservation thing that I preached heavily against, and the

conservation, and a lot of people would like to hang me for it, but I've never ~~an~~ an organization the size of the city of Tallahassee, depends upon it's utility system to supply streets, recreation, salaries, and everything else, cannot go outside and tell the people to not use the one thing that produces the revenue and at the same time have escalation and pay high salaries to ~~the~~ ^{your} employees, and keep the economy of the community going. It's a damn impossible thing, and anybody who thinks that that can be done is wrong. I preached it to them, when it started at Christmas, and Christmas before last, we talked about "Don't burn the lights, don't do this, and do it." What good has it done, and ~~we~~ ^{have} we really proved that we have an energy shortage? No. Two days after the whole thing went out ^{of effect} you could buy all the fuel you wanted, ^{the} gas stations could get all the gas at the price that you wanted, ^{uh there has,} you can buy it all now, if you can afford to pay ^{the} ~~these~~ high prices. So it was a matter of a, as far as I ^{can} ~~could~~ see at that time, it has cost the city, in that people now have been conditioned to do something, to cut back, to conserve, beyond the point that they need to do simply because they were going to do this anyway, because they don't have the money to buy at the escalated price. So what did it do? It drove the actual prices of a commodity higher, and it's going to drive it higher this summer. Because we're going to have to raise the rates to cover up the lack of use. Are you following what I'm saying? ^{I: Yeah} So, who benefited? Who was the loser? Everybody. It doesn't make sense. ^{Now} ~~That~~ I would admit, perhaps, in some areas, that this may have been a legitimate thing. But to us, the net result had not been a positive one. And it's going to be a spell before we dig out from under the effects of it.

I: On these others...

F: Oh, the other questions there, I'm sorry, I guess I talk too long on some things. Outvoted by white officials. Well, now, that's an interesting one, because that's not any, not really been true. I have been the person, basically, who perhaps has been the deciding factor on votes, and I have not, on things that have affected blacks, and per se, they, my colleagues have not been negative, so I cannot say that that has been an issue. Unfair with administrative duties. What do you have reference to there?

I: I assume the question refers to....

F: Elected ~~mayor~~ mayor?

I: Right, that you.....

F: Well, that would not be applicable to us, I don't think. Lack of cooperation from whites. I've had excellent cooperation, so I can't, that would be of no consequence. Lack of cooperation from blacks. Basically, they have been cooperative. Cooperative as it relates to, if I request from them, and go out and make a request that I want some names for appointments that you would like, ^{or} ~~and~~ various other things ^{then} they would do it, and of course, when I go out and solicit something, they are cooperative, but I'm, ^{they} in my first statements, I was talking about the personal pride and ingenuity of a group of people to a prize, or to ^{rate} ~~read~~ or to write at the call on, or to keep me informed on what it is that they feel, ^{or} ~~or~~ what they want. I don't always have that, that information. Lack of cooperation from state officials. We're right here where the capital is, and I have to admit that any information or anything that we really want, we can get ^{from them} with no problem. The only lack of cooperation might be if you were over ^{there} ~~at~~ lobbying for some, for

how they feel,

the league of cities, ^(chuckle) And they ~~-----~~. But, here again, I don't know whether ~~if~~ you can consider that cooperation, they're trying to do their job, just like we are. So, if I'm interpreting cooperation as meaning a sincere desire to respond to something, a difference of opinion in cooperation, is two different things. I mean, I might not agree with you, I might not agree with anything you stand for here this evening with this, but I'm cooperating to give it. So, you see. So I'm trying to figure what the definition is implying.

I: And how about black cooperation with federal officials?

F: We don't, ^{no, we don't} have too much problem ^{there} with that. They're ^{slower than} ~~slow as~~ hell. And ^{if you're} ~~we're~~ going to consider delaying as non-cooperation, then I'd say yeah. But if we, but not knowing why, and this is important, too. The blacks could say, well, say some various other things about why I haven't done something in X number of times, ^{amount} ~~I'm out~~ of time. You see, the first thing to learn in any situation is when to do what. Any good kid knows when to ask his mother or his father something he wants to do when he knows the answer's going to be yes, and when he knows the answer's going to be no. That's a mark of intelligence, and the same mark of intelligence needs to prevail in any administrative positions; ^{to} ~~and~~ know when to make a request for funds, and when not to make a request for funds. That's if you want the funds. You see. And I always have this fear after, that you never want an agency or anything to ever have to say no. And maybe I've got a hang-up about it. ^{Maybe that's} They would ask why now I've got a hundred percent batting average in five years. But the point is, you've got to use the opportune moment to do some things. They might be ever so good, but if you're going to fail in the

attempt to ^{doing} ~~do~~ it, it's a waste of your time, and everybody else's time. And you've got to assess the possibilities, and when you throw all that data together and you come up with "~~no~~"^{nos}, then it better damn well be ~~no~~^{nos}. Because if it comes up a second time, it's going to fail. There is something that, to look at that, to look at our basic commission, we don't tend, if we have rejected something, the probability of bringing it back is not going to make it's chances of passage any better, because there's always going to be a commissioner who's ahold of us, ^{say "Well hell,} ~~we~~ we handled that last year. I don't plan to do anything differently," and if he gets an opportunity to say that first, he's going to ^{color} ~~cover~~ the whole spectrum of the commission, it's going to be hard to get him on a positive note. But see, if you've got a new, fresh approach to the situation, they've not been exposed to too many things, and we have a record of not turning down ^{many things.} ~~anything~~. And it's probably one of our bad points, I'd say, because some things we should have not done. But people have come to us, social agents and everything

with good causes. And we've done them. To give you an example of one, I'll

give you ^{an example of} something, you take the ~~Lake of Naples~~ ^{Lincoln Neighborhood Center} Center that is now, ^{that} ~~was~~ the old black ^{high school, Lincoln School} hospital, I think it's still over ^{on} Wall Street, I don't know ^{whether you're familiar with} ~~if they moved~~ that center or not. It's been renovated now, and it's very nice, and it's beautiful, and it serves a beautiful purpose, ^{percent,} but you know, that's 100% ^{plus} the federal funds we got, city funds. When it started off, the city was supposed to only have invested in it, only have served as the grantor, I reckon. For the grant. And it was Reverend ^{Steel} ~~Stellie~~ and Father Brooks, who's gonna the Brooks Center that they were going to, the school board was

going to let them use it, and give it to them, _____ federal funds, and all we had to do, was, they had to have an agency through which these funds could be dispersed, and the city was chosen, and we accepted that. But that's not the bag we got in. ^{When} Then the school board turned and said it couldn't do it, ^{that they} ~~it~~ had to do the land and the school board couldn't get rid of land, so they swapped the land out ^{with} ~~in~~ the city. So what we did, is swap the equivalent land in front of ^{Leon} ~~Lynn~~ High School for that land, which was, in a sense, could ~~to~~ be considered wrong. After getting into that bag, ^{we've} ~~we~~ spent about, ^{oh,} eight or nine thousand ~~800,000 or 900,000~~ dollars in addition to federal funds, one way or another. ^{ya know,} ~~A~~ ^{they} painting, where it left off, ~~there~~ wasn't ^{gonna} ~~any~~ paint ^{it} and so, we said, ^{"Well hell, you're gonna paint it."} ~~don't have any gold painters,~~ then the landscaping, you've got to do that. ^{and} then the engineer, ~~they~~ left half of his stuff out, ^{that} ~~it~~ had not been done, and the money has been _____, ^{and} we've gotten ourselves in a crack now that we've spent all this money, ^{and you've} ~~we've~~ got to go through with it. Plus the cost of the property. I don't need to tell you what five acres of property along ^g Tennessee Street, ^{and} between the Capital City Bank and the bottom of the hill, is worth, ^{that} on today's market. But those are situations where, ^{the} I do point out that the commission has been considerate of most ^{facets,} ^{For instance, we are} ~~at least it's~~ funded 100% ^{percent.} ~~The~~ bar on neighborhood recreation centers, which at this particular time, could have been a real politically ^{and} unpopular position to take, and an austere thing, ^{but} we spent \$600,000 ~~and~~ and we took ~~it~~ ^{the} into it, ^{so} we decided to go all the way, pool, ~~and~~ kit and kaboodle. There was a backing, and he wanted to cut it, and we decided that, no, we weren't going to cut it, we made promises and we're going to do it.

And that's totally black.

I: ~~Um~~ Do you feel that white officials treat you differently than they do other officials that they deal with? Do you feel like they treat you as merely a spokesman for black causes, and ~~you're~~ not....

F: I don't run into that because my, because ^{uh,} my dealings, and the positions that I have taken on the committee, on the commission, have not placed me in the militant or the partial category. None of the votes, nor anything ^{that} I have done on the commission can be attributed to have racial tones. ^{it,} they have ~~it~~ as a basis, that I'm concerned about what's good for the city of Tallahassee, and what has to be done to maintain that. The things that I think the government's basic responsibility is to maintain a healthful, clean environment, and one that, with a high degree of tranquility, at least where the law enforcement, ^{the} health and safety, is preserved. Now all, many of these other things, I do not feel is ^{the} responsibility of the city government. There's ^{other things} a ~~phase~~ in me perhaps that I get involved in, ^{into} some social service aspects, I do not feel is directly my responsibility. I feel that we have an obligation to facilitate, or to aid and assist, but they are not our, not my direct to do these responsibilities.

I: What services have you provided for blacks in your district that they did not have before you took office?

F: That probably, needs further clarification. When you say services they did not have, are you talking about, we have to relate this to the masses, or ~~we~~ ^{wed} have to relate this to ^{there are} certain areas, like I talked about initially, sewers, street lights, sidewalks, some other things of this nature. Now ^{certainly,} I like the neighborhood center, the barn, recreation center that's coming off the board now, ^{are} ~~are~~ things that

they did not have. But to relate them directly, to attribute them 100% ^{percent} to my being on the commission might not be exactly fair, I'm only one vote on the commission, like everything else, and this is something that, in most, in many of the questions, ^{when} it would come up and any, with any black elected official, you've got to realize that you're talking about either one or two votes, and it is never, unless it's an unusual city, where that is the _____ of votes. So you, to take credit for the improvements solely to a community, or to an area, may not necessarily be true, because you've got to give it, you've got to also take into account that, or at least feel that the people that you're working for have a high degree, ^{of} sense of morality, ^{and} sense of his duties and responsibilities and obligations to those people that he made campaign promises to. Therefore, for me to assume that I moved things forward ^{and} made all these improvements for you, is not true. Any more than it's true that the mayor did them. So, I would perhaps find it difficult to say anything other than the fact that these things came about during the time that I served, and I made sure that the other commissioners, I explained it in such a manner the other commissioners could better understand what the needs were.

I: Yeah, that's mainly what we're after in this type of situation. Things that may not have come to the attention of the commissioners...

F: Right, now, this, you see, the white commissioners are not going to go out and try to dig up and find out what the situation is, for an instance, I got a letter from the city manager today that was telling me ^{what} the status of the street that was supposed to have been, that should be paved, ^{and} the status of some homes out, they're very nice homes, where the commonwealth went bankrupt and some of the

people just left ^{them} ~~it~~ there and let the weeds grow up around ^{em} ~~it~~, but
 the people who bought houses in between these lots, and those lots
 weren't being cut. Well, it just so happened that a, one lady who
 knows me very well, is black, and this is an integrated neighborhood,
 I mean, but, it wasn't done for blacks, it was done in fact, I had
 them go out in all the neighborhoods and look around and see ^{that} the
 houses that ~~were~~ ^{was} left that way, and see if ^{they were} ~~it was~~ cut. And of
 course, the bills would have to be sent ^{either} to the commonwealth, or
 whoever the builder, ^{or} the developer is for it. We can't have people
 living here, two house here, they've got nice lawns, and the
 rattlesnakes, and moccasins are infecting the rest of the ~~course~~ ^{parts} or
~~uninhabited~~ ^{with} places ^{Ya know,} kids wandering around no matter whose
 neighborhood it's in. ^{It's} just hazardous. So, I would take credit
 for, since I've been there, to better articulate what the needs
 are to the other members of the commission. And of course, based
 on their own sense of morality, they have always been, always seen
 things the way I saw them. So, I can't say that I have run into
 that, I haven't had the typical kind of redneck situation that
 prevails in some areas. For an instance, I was helping ^{working} ~~work~~ with,
 in fact, that's where we met, is this thing from a Quincy that, the
 president of that organization wanted me to find somebody in
 District 9 over here, a black to serve on the Board of Directors.
 And he also informed me at the same time that half the whites on
 there said that they would resign if they got a black on it. Well,
 I told him, "Now, you know, that's unfortunate. I admire your
 courage for coming over here asking me to find you, but ^{at the token,} ~~same~~ ~~to me,~~
 you are asking me to ask a friend, to go over and serve where he knows
 before he gets there that nobody wants him." But, I helped him ^{and} I

have given ~~gave~~ him some names and everything ^{and} I hope that they can become educated. I have yet to look at a city that elected black officials to it, in most cases, where the black official was not more sensitive to the needs of the whole community, including whites, and in most cases, less biased. They tend to be the less biased members on the commission. Inherently, because there are some reasons for that, obviously, some of them, is that they understand the needs of people a hell of a lot better because they've been the recipients of some of the kinds of things the government has done, so they have a better knowledge, a first hand knowledge of first of all, what needs rectifying, second of all, how it can be subtly done.

I: In these specific areas, could you ^{comment} ~~kind~~ or rate how effective you have been, particularly in, as they would affect blacks?

F: Now, we went to ^{the} police, we had the man from the International Association of Chiefs of Police to come down ^{and} do a study, and implement a whole program, so our program of promotion, and program of ^{all this} other stuff, ^{is} now, ^{and} one of these, high level kinds of operations, ^{that} some of them liked ^{and} some of them disliked, obviously, ^{and} you're going to have that any time you change some things. but promotion policy and various ^{now, are} other things done on a highly competitive and professional plane, and ^{have} ~~has~~ nothing to with race as it relates in it now. And, the chief can't put in any of his pets ^{or} ~~for~~ favorites ⁱⁿ ~~for~~ some things anymore. You know, all these kinds of things, that's been rectified. Streets and roads, housing, as I mentioned earlier, housing is a problem. We do have a Tallahassee Housing Authority ^{that} we operate, ^{but} ~~where~~ it is inadequate in that there are many, many people that we can't do our code enforcing, because we don't have ^{anywhere to put the} ~~any way of putting~~ people

when we raise out, raise the houses. You know, you can't just go down and take the bulldozers and push them out and say now, "Where you going to go?" when you haven't provided anything else. Welfare, we're not really involved in that. Employment, we haven't laid, the city so far hasn't laid off anybody, but it ~~isn't~~ ^{aint} in ~~any~~ ^{no} position to hire ~~anybody~~ ^{nobody} either. But Tallahassee, because of the kind of economy it has, it's rate of employment, unemployment would be less than many places. However, we do have unemployment, a higher degree than we had because the building trades are no longer what they used to be, you know. They used to be, in Tallahassee, ^{it} was building everywhere. In fact, ~~they were~~ ^{it was} building with so much there, ~~that~~ ^{where} you couldn't buy cement, if you wanted some, you couldn't buy it. Lumber, ~~nobody~~ wanted to sell you anything, now they do. It's gotten to the point now, ~~that~~ ^{you as} even the citizens can buy ^{a board of} wood, and you can get at some nails if you want. But roofing material, or plywood, or concrete, they just weren't interested in selling it to you. (chuckle) Well now, it can obviously do.

I: Parks and recreation, have there been any positive changes that you can think ~~of~~ In any of these areas, is there anything that you can point that perhaps you had an influence on?

F: Yeah, In our recreation department, in all these areas that we have been in, we have no, we have a total open-door policy. In all sense, in all parks, in all everything, and in all the ~~routines~~ ^{league teams} and everything else, we don't have any problems ~~there~~ ^{in keeping--} over there they play. And ^{you can} just take a tour in any of the parks, and you'll see what ~~I~~ ^I mean. Swimming pools is the same way, the only problem is, we don't have many swimming pools, we only got three, but we'll have four next year. Water, sewage, and garbage, that's routine.

Heath and Hospital, we run Tallahassee more or less with no problem there. Education, we really, depending on what you're saying, whether you're talking about public information, which would be the same, because, if we, if ^{there's} anything we are going to do, ^{you'd come, it'd} ~~would~~ come in the utility bill, or it would be in a legal notice or something like that, so we're not really in education to that ^{extent.} Fire protection is ^{excellent.} ~~extra~~ I think ^{we've got, we've} ~~that~~ perhaps ~~have~~ got one of the finest fire departments in the country, so... In fact, we go, we go up in Georgia, and we go everywhere.

I: The local fire department?

F: Uh huh. They send for us. In fact, we were down there in Walker County yesterday. Yesterday evening. One of their sawmills and things caught on fire down there, and the whole fire, the whole fire protection they had was our fire department. We respond to Panama City, we respond in Perry.

I: Kind of a long way.

F: Well, we've got a chief who is very dedicated, and we've got, I ^{don't} think that there ^{are} ~~are~~ four cities in the country ^{who've} ~~who's~~ got the same rating we've got. So we're, we try not to get eroded, but if we'd had _____ like we done, we would ^{be,} ~~have~~ lost ^{our} ~~the~~ rating, because there is no way we can ^{build} ~~deal~~ another two more fire stations ^{and} the equipment. But right now for the area that we cover with what we've got, we're in excellent shape. In fact, it's perhaps the fastest responding agency we've got. If I were to pick up this phone now, there would be a fire truck here in less than three minutes, and I would bet you. Just about ^{anywhere} ~~in~~ the city in five minutes from the time of the call, there would be, the vehicle would be there. That's how well they respond. Now, they are a group that we have never had one single

criticism of by anybody at any time. It's the only agency we've got in the city that we can say that about. ^(chuckle) That may be bad, but it's the truth. There's always complaints about the police. ^{And of} course that's normal, I guess, in that area. So, that pretty well covers either... You asked me to rate how effective I think I have been in this. I think, very effective in all these agencies, education, you know, we haven't done anything in that area as such, but, all these other areas, basically, have been something that I have been very actively [Ⓟ] involved in.

I: Have you gotten federal funds for this, have you been influential in obtaining ~~about taking~~ federal funds?

F: Yes, the Tom Smith Water Treatment Facility, the newest addition of some several million dollars. I was mayor at the time ^{and of} course I had to deal with HUD in Atlanta for weeks and weeks, and in Jacksonville, as it relates to funding for it, and the funding for the Lincoln Neighborhood Center, I was mayor too, at the time. All the groundwork for that facility was during that period of time, and the initial funding for the new generating plant, and the final funding, final construction for the new police headquarters, so, there are a lot of things that were involved in here that you can't just directly take credit for, and as I said before, I think, and I tend to look at their ^{achievements and their} is accomplishment in the city of Tallahassee ^{is} based on a genuine interest on the part of the commission, commissioners, to do what they think, in their opinion, is best for the city of Tallahassee, and so far, we have had good commissions, basically. We've had some that thought quite differently from me, and I recognize this as a right, and that we weren't elected to be rubber stamps to each other. We were elected to express opinions,

ideas, and the desires of the people that we served. And that does not mean special interest, it means, it means a sensitivity to the needs of the public.

I: Have you been able to bring in any industry or retail stores?

F: I'm also a member of the Tallahassee Representative, and serve on the board of the Tallahassee Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce is involved in trying to get industry into Tallahassee as well as doctors, and of course, we go on a blitz to recruit doctors every year through the Chamber. ~~WE~~ go on another blitz, for instance, it was in Atlanta, I believe, or New Orleans this year. We spend two or three days in some major city talking about how great Tallahassee is. In other words, know your city, know your capital, we do that ^{in the} state. So, like Miami, Tampa, ^{or} St. Petersburg, ^{ya} know the larger places where people might not really know what we're all about, and this is ^a promotional campaign, not to get people to live here, but just to, for people to know more about Tallahassee.

Brainpower, we thought one time we were going to get Sony, but ^{or some other--} Montgomery [^] I think it was Montgomery, Alabama, gave them electrical rates, they were preferential, and of course by bond ^{covenants,} ~~covenances,~~ we couldn't do it, ~~We~~ couldn't compete. ^{Ya know, they--} ~~with that~~ Plus the fact, I think they gave them property and tax reductions ^{that} ~~they weren't~~ wasn't ^{gonna} ~~going~~ to charge them for ^{and hell, I mean,} ~~being~~ ⁻⁻⁻ ~~---~~ We couldn't do that. So, and besides, Tallahassee is a kind of peaceful, tranquil city that's steeped in tradition that ^{don't} ~~doesn't~~ want, in a large measure, certain kinds of industry, and many people would not like to have any at all. So, putting this all together, you have an unusual situation.

I: Have you been able to see that blacks are hired fairly in most

in local government? Have you had influence _____?

F: That is a questionable thing. I could not positively say that there is none. I could say that every precaution has been made including hiring. An equal opportunity person that gets \$16,000 is black, ~~to~~ make sure that that is _____. He's presently hired, ~~plus~~, we have personnel directors, and ^{the} whole personnel system ^{that} has been instituted, ~~which~~ ^{that} I was instrumental in doing, that's what I probably could take a lot more credit for. But... ~~imagine~~

I: What was that one?

F: Personnel department. The city ~~didn't have one when I dealt with,~~ ^{won} ~~not~~ ^{mayor} ~~department,~~ it was ^{independent} ~~intended~~ that ^{reviewed} ~~was viewed~~ the motions of hiring, you know, all those things. The records, files, all ~~them~~ ^{the employees.}

These are ~~man~~ things, _____.

I: And now they have one that operates on a professional basis? Has federal revenue sharing helped your district? Helped _____?

F: Certainly. Oh, yes, that's why we're going to be able to ~~don't~~ build bonds, Youth Center, why we're going to pave so ^{more} ~~many~~ streets, why we're going to try to improve some substandard housing, and why we're going to be able to get rid of some of the blighted ones that nobody's living in. Get the move to pay for code enforcement to get somebody to have that, ya know.

I: Have there been any black protests, sit-ins, boycotts, drives in your city in the last few years?

F: Oh, yes. The last ten years. Sure.

I: What were the issues?

F: In the last ten years....

I: Specificly black protests.

F: Well, they weren't against the city.

I: What were the issues?

F: Well, I'll have to try to think what the issues were. ^{There} ~~They~~ were issues and ~~they'd do it~~ ^{they're during the} at time of legislature. There were issues against the Sheriff's Department, the last one, I think, was because, was the trial for the five Quincy fellows who allegedly killed a deputy in Luke's, at Luke's ^{groceries out here} ~~grocery, near~~ somewhere, and there have been that kind of thing, there have not been issues that they would protest against City Hall ~~per se~~, ^{personally or anything like that.}

I: And have these, what were the effects of these demonstrations, and so forth? Did they effect you?

F: I don't think they've, uh, here again this is purely conjecture. Possibly, but it would be difficult to measure it. I think they had some positive effects, in some regards, and I think they had some very definite negative ones ~~than~~ ⁱⁿ some others. It would all depend on the point of view of the individuals ~~affected~~ ^{affected} would use. The amount of pressure to achieve the given goal is what could make it a positive thing, but too much pressure in an area, or too often, can negate it's effectiveness, and that's why I'm, that's why I'm responding to what you're saying, there was a point in time, where every week or so there were threats of protests, either ~~from~~ ^{by} the school boards, ~~about~~ ^{not} hiring somebody or a policy or bussing, or, I'm just using ~~these~~ as examples, ~~or~~ ^{or} unfair treatment, they felt that somebody was getting in the courts. In that regard, if all those things came about, or every week or so that you had one of these kinds of things, their effectiveness is minimized. Unless you have to use any kind of persuasion that deals with one's sense of morality, the less it's attacked, ~~the~~ ^{less} frequent ~~it's~~ ^{is} attacked, the more positive the reaction to it's going to be. You know, if

and if they came--
 somebody came over here ^{and} habitually, aggravated me, ^{if they came--} for instance,
 we had two people who used to come the commission all the time, ^{and}
 would have great ideas, ^{when} ~~so~~ we'd see them walk in the doors, ~~and we'd~~
 say, "There she is again." And she may have had the damn best
 idea in the world, but nobody listened to her. They sat there,
 but they didn't listen. Never get the illusion that somebody's
 listening ^{simply} ~~to you~~ because they're looking at you. So, that's the
 point ^{I'm--} when you asked me the effectiveness of it, I questioned
 part of it. ^{There's} ~~was~~ a high degree of it turned me off. It turned
 a lot of other people off. You know, ^{they were} in the streets, it was even
 traffic, the point had been made, it was on television, it was
 on all of the newspapers, what were you going to gain? The point
 is, the whole point is that it is the freedom to express dissent
 publicly.

I: ^{I'd} ~~Would~~ like to ask you a couple of questions about assessment of
 black politics in Florida in general. What's your opinion of the
 governor?

F: My opinion of the governor? He's about the nicest governor we ever
 had... I: In relation to his position in office. F.O.K. He's about the nicest
 governor that we have ever had. He hasn't disrupted nothing, he
 hasn't changed basically, nothing, he hasn't done basically nothing.
 So nobody can say nothing really bad about the man, he don't drink,
 he don't smoke, and his children are adopted. So, ~~he's~~ he's a
 highly religious and moral individual, and I have a lot of respect
 for the governor, but he hasn't shown me such a high degree of
 positive leadership. I know he did a lot in the corporate income,
~~the~~ corporate tax situation, but what happened to it, the taxes
 end ~~up~~ up coming back to the consumer, like I knew it was going to

happen. He taxed the corporation, they simply ran the price on to the people ^{who use the} ~~in the~~ product.

I: How about in regards to ~~add~~ ^{attitude} or policy towards ~~the~~ ^{blacks?} ~~black?~~

F: The governor? Well, now, I don't know whether you can give him a whole lot, ^{any more credit than,} ~~and go crazy and~~ you can give more credit. It's difficult to assess that kind of leadership, and then when you look at the total thing, you've got to look at which blacks, ~~What~~ caliber of black. Did they echo the basic philosophy of blacks in the state, or the district or the area that they came from? What are their duties and responsibilities? And do those duties and responsibilities...

(END OF TAPE) END OF INTERVIEW