

March 11, 2012

Nadirah O'Conner (interviewer)

Wendell Reed (narrator)

Location: LaSalle University Connelly Library Room 106

0.0

Laughter in the background.

Nadirah: Do I have permission to record?

Wendell: As a re, re, re record yes you do. Take three. (clapped)

Nadirah: Where were you born?

Wendell: Oh my god! In a little chalet north of the Rhine River. No. (laughter) I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In a hospital, the naval hospital¹, which was the navy, which was the hospital that the spouses of military persons went, located in South Philly in the navy yard².

Nadirah: What were your parent's names?

Wendell: Joan Vernell and Reginald Sterling?

Nadirah: And were your parents born and raised in Philadelphia?

Wendell: No my mother was born and raised, my mother was born and raised until about seven or eight in Connecticut. And my father was born and raised until about seven or eight in North Carolina. Then they both migrated to Philadelphia.

Nadirah: What were your parents like?

Wendell: Pause (laughter) My mother was, is a person who is very emotionless. She is very staunch in her beliefs and feelings. My father was more of a . . . a kind of say a disciplinarian because of his background of being in the military so long. Things had to be orderly and neat.

Nadirah: Do you remember your grandparents?

Wendell: I do. I remember my grandmother very well; she lived to be 105, on my mother's side. I don't remember my grandmother on my father's side she passed before I was born. I remember my grandfather, my biological grandfather, briefly. He passed when I was about three or four. And my

actual grandmother on my father's side before she passed remarried and I remember my step grandfather.

2:26

Nadirah: And what was your mother's, your grandmother's name on your mother's side?

Wendell: On my mother's side her name was Mabel Cyprus.

Nadirah: And your grandfather on your mother's side?

Wendell: Wallace Cyprus. I did not know him; he had passed before I was born.

Nadirah: Okay. And do you remember parents, your grandparent's name on your dad's side?

Wendell: My grandmother's name was Corra Beck Reed. My grandfather, my biological grandfather on my father's side his name was Cossie. He was a Caucasian male. Cossie Reed thus the Irish name. Reed R-E-E-D.

Nadirah: How do you spell Cossie?

Wendell: C-O-S-S-I-E.

Nadirah: Okay.

Wendell: And my grandfather, step-grandfather on my father's side (paused) I don't actually remember his name. I see it but I don't remember it. It will probably come to me later.

Nadirah: Okay. And how large was your family?

Wendell: Biologically I have an older sister Kathy. However, my mother took in, through friends that she had grown up with had passed for various reasons, took in some other children. She took in three other girls at different times. Claudette, Cloria were sisters. My mother and their mother grew up from teenage hood from when they were in Philadelphia together. And she passed from alcoholism. So my mother kind of helped their father raise them as like a surrogate mother. My mother also helped raise another young lady, who was friends of the family who was murdered by her boyfriend. So she helped raise her daughter. Her name was Jamilla. So the dynamic was I had two sister's older than me, and two sisters younger than me, so that left me in the middle. My biological sister Kathy is eight years older than me. Claudette is two years older than me

but she's passed since from sickle cell. Cloria is two years younger than me and Jamilla is ten years younger than me.

4.47

Nadirah: And did they stay around in Philadelphia?

Wendell: They stayed, everybody's still in Philadelphia, yes.

Nadirah: And what are their occupations?

Wendell: My oldest sister Kathy, my biological sister, is a . . . she is in the medical profession. She helps billing, helps get people who doesn't have insurance, who have hospital stays or visits help them get insurance. My step-sister Cloria is in the medical profession. She's aspiring to be a licensed practical nurse. I think, she's going towards her RN, now. And my youngest step-sister, Jamilla, is a secretary.

Nadirah: And what was a typical day like in your house?

Wendell: A typical day, everyone was around, having fun, arguing of different things, like siblings do. Me being the only boy, they would beat me up because it was fun for them to do that when they knew that my mother, one of her rules you can't hit women or girls. So, they would just have fun watching me struggling, you know scream for help, and my mom says you know, "Cut it out" and they don't listen. So, we had a lot of fun growing up. It was fun.

Nadirah: Okay. Was there a particular moral or principle that you learned in your family?

Wendell: Just in generalities. We were a religious people so the Bible was at the focal point, the center of that. There was no kind of "Secret Life of Bees" type of situation, which is there is one particular thing that's handed down from parent to child, parent to child. Everything was general, which was known by all. You know, do good and it will come back to you. We were again Christians, so the Bible was the focal point and the center of our movements and what goes around comes around and things of that nature so, you know there was no specific little thing that you had to pass down that identified you as be a member of that particular set or sect or clan or family. No, we didn't have anything like that.

Nadirah: Okay. Can you describe a particular memory you have of your parents when you were growing up?

7.10

Wendell: My father coming home. One time he was supposed to come home and then I was told he wasn't going to be able to make it and then he actually came home. That was very heartfelt for me because I hadn't seen him in, he went away in the military. He did several tours, he did quite a few tours in Vietnam. So, he was over there quite a lot. So, I may have, in one years time I may have seen him twice in a year. And they were for very fleeting moments, meaning two, three days at a time, when he came home and couldn't stay. And my mom (brief pause) uh, shhh. So many to name. I think one of the most (paused) that I can ever remember is watching me, watching my wife have our first child together and my mom in the room holding my child.

Nadirah: Oh, that's sweet. So . . . that's really sweet. Ohhh! Do you have any memories of your grandparents?

Wendell: Vague memories. My grandmother on my mother's side lived to be 105. We, her and I were very close. My grandfather on my mother's side, I didn't know him, he was gone before I, he passed before I was born. My grandmother on my father's side passed before I was born. I remember my grandfather, my biological grandfather on my father's side. He passed when I was about three or four. But, it, before that happened before my grandmother on my father's side passed she had remarried. And (paused) I knew him for several years til he passed when I was about ten or eleven. His last name was Marshall, I don't remember his first name but it will kind of come to me sometime soon.

Nadirah: Okay, okay. As a young person did you get into trouble a lot?

Wendell: Nope.

Nadirah: No, you were . . .

Wendell: I didn't get into trouble a lot because I was scared of my mom.

Nadirah: Okay (laugh)

Wendell: Because my father wasn't around my momma had to play two roles. She had to be a sweet, loving, kind, understanding mother but then she had to be the hard, no non-sense disciplinary father. And logically, I never seen a reason for getting into trouble because if you did whatever you wanted or did what you were supposed to do, you can get whatever you want. So, why do things to, you know, to get yourself in trouble. Now did I get in trouble sometimes, like all kids yes I did. But I never made it a habit to get in trouble, there's no reason to, not logically.

Nadirah: Okay. That makes sense. And you mentioned that you're married.

9.52

Wendell: Yes.

Nadirah: What's your wife's name?

Wendell: Gennifer with a G. G-E-N-N-I-F-E-R.

Nadirah: Okay. And if you don't mind and if she wouldn't mind how old is she?

Wendell: She is 43. She'll be 44 this year.

Nadirah: Oh, okay. Is she from Philadelphia?

Wendell: Yes, she is.

Nadirah: How did you meet?

Wendell: In a mall.

Nadirah: In a mall here?

Wendell: In a mall, in Cheltenham Mall³.

Nadirah: Oh, okay.

Wendell: She was walking [with] her daughter, which was about two-ish, late two or three at the time. I worked in, as an assistant manger, as a manager actually in a retail store. I seen her walking through the mall and I asked one of my associates could he go out and ask her could I have then there was a little keyosk in the mall where you could take pictures. And I asked my associate could he go out and ask if I could have a picture. And she said "Sure". And actually she took two pictures. And she came over and we started talking and she actually gave me a picture of her and her daughter.

Nadirah: Oh, okay. Well, that was nice. So, she must off took to you right off the bat, huh?

Wendell: I don't know. I don't even think she did. I think at that time she, as we talked about it years later, she had just come out of a crazy relationship, so she wasn't looking for anybody. She, she quick to tell you that. But it's just we started talking and we exchanged phone numbers and started talking on the phone. And we found out we had a lot of common interests and likes and things like that. And as progression does it just kept on going.

Nadirah: And you said you have a child. Do you only have one child?

11.39

Wendell: No, I actually have (laughed) three biological children with my wife and my step-daughter, which is her child.

Nadirah: And what are their names?

Wendell: The oldest step-daughter, her name is Devon. D-E-V-O-N.

Nadirah: Um huh.

Wendell: Our first child together, was our son Matthew, two t's. Nia is our youngest daughter, N-I-A. And Solomon is our youngest son.

Nadirah: Okay. And what kinds of things do you instill in your children?

Wendell: Actually just repetition. The same things I was instilled, the Bible is the focal point of our family, religion. Do unto others as you want to be done. Tell me the whole story, whatever, good or bad or ugly. So, I love you no less and I'll defend you no more. But, if you, you I need to know the whole story of whatever happens. We try and be, (pause) I don't want to say their friend but friend like or friendly. Where they are comfortable enough to tell me or tell my wife anything. Is nothing like having a child that can't tell, no matter what goes on, to their parent because that's not a good thing. So, we instill that in them and values like we've had. I went to Catholic school, my wife went to Catholic school, they're in Catholic school. Things of that nature, so, and just try to let you know nothing is ever as bad as it possible seems, is always everyday you close your eyes and look up, is a new day. It starts all over, it's some different things.

Nadirah: And what are their ages?

Wendell: Devon is nineteen, she'll be twenty in a couple of months. Matthew is fifteen, he'll be sixteen several months. Nia just turned thirteen, thirteen, fourteen, egad. (laugh) And Solomon just turned (brief pause) eight.

Nadirah: All he's a little guy.

Wendell: Yes!

Nadirah: Okay. (laugh) That must be fun.

Wendell: Interesting.

Nadirah: Is Devon still at home?

14.8

Wendell: Devon just came home. She's in college, she's in West Chester University⁴. Is spring break so, she came home.

Nadirah: I went there.

Wendell: Matthew is his first year in high school; he's in Roman Catholic⁵. Nia graduates eighth grade this year. She just got accepted to Bishop McDevitt⁶ and Solomon is in the same Catholic elementary school up the street Vincent De Paul⁷, which used to be St. Martin de Porres⁸.

Nadirah: Okay. (Pause) I was going to ask if they were a part of the public school system but they're not. So . . . (Interrupted)

Wendell: No, no, no.

Nadirah: (laugh) Can I ask you why?

Wendell: No! Hell no! Did I say no. (Interrupted)

Nadirah: And okay. (laughing)

Wendell: No they're not. Nein, nyet . . . Naw, un un, um, nope, ain't that kind of party. What was your question, dear?

Nadirah: (laugh) Is that solely based on the religious part or is it because also, does it have to do with the public school system?

Wendell: It's a lot of paradigms connected to that. One, because being a past employee of the public school system I actually had a bird's eye view of how the public school system is and I think that with all the things that the school system is going through, the public school system that is, um, my kids wouldn't flourish as well as they could if they weren't in a smaller school setting which is what the Catholic school system usually offers and can give. Secondly, every parent knows their child, strengths and weaknesses, good and bads. And I know, I know my children. (Pause) They would do well in a public school system but I would spend every waking moment trying to balance the scales of justice to see which way they would do well in; do well doing bad or do well doing good. For example, my oldest daughter Devon, is like her mother, she's not a fighter, she's not a arguer, she's not a person that does things like that, so, for her to go to a public school system and she's a halfway decent young lady so, the first time the girls' had jealousies, issues or problems; she would probably get beat up everyday.

16.22

Nadirah: Uh huh.

Wendell: Matthew is a natural leader. (Pause) To harness that much energy to go either good or bad. I've seen him harness energies and, and follow crowds to victory and I've seen him harness energies and follow crowds to defeat and that was on something as simple as a basketball game or football game. So, to put him in a situation where there's no rules no boundaries laid. And he's intelligent as well, that would be wasted effort and I could see him just, the old adage "idol hands is the devils workshop, idol minds is the devils workshop". I could see that happening with him because school work would be easy for him so that wouldn't be a challenge so he wouldn't even concentrate on that and he would focus his attentions to other things of interest which could be again good or bad. My youngest daughter Nia has already developed to be boy crazy. So, she needs to be in a structured disciplined environment where at least there's rules and boundaries set.

Nadirah: Uh huh.

Wendell: Again, being in the public school system, I've seen some (pause) interesting things occur. (pause) And I wouldn't want to subjugate her to that or put her in a situation where, until she levels out with being boy crazy. (Pause) Um (pause) work, to be able to just work that out so, to her advantage.

Nadirah: Okay.

Wendell: And Solomon, the youngest one, is the most energetic and rambunctious one of all. And to put him in a situation where there's already anarchy and chaos would not be good for him. So, he needs to be in a structured, disciplined, ordered environment. All of them very intelligent, all of them would do well in public school academically um (paused) but once you get passed that stage there's other things that (long pause) kind of (long pause) works and you have to work with and work by to survive in the real world. So, these lessons and disciplines and disciplines and lessons will work well for them down the road later on in life, I feel. So, that's why they're in Catholic school.

Nadirah: Okay. And you said Nia is boy crazy. How do you handle that, as a dad?

Wendell: Boy crazy meaning she's just reaching that, that level of, (brief pause) of estrogen rise, where boys last year, two years ago were yucky ill yucky now they're like hey he's cute, hey he's cute. Is she a stalker boy crazy? No, she's not but still you, you keep a reign on [it]. How do I handle that, I

talk to her all the time, we talk all the time. Her brother, both of them, will not they also right there at her side when it comes to boys, especially the, my son Matthew, who thinks he's the regulator of his sisters. And then her oldest sister, Devon, they're, they're at one time, neither one of them could stand each other because Devon was older and she was younger. But now they're starting to develop that type of relationship that comes through age and maturity where now they talk about different things. So, it's so much interaction going on. There is an outlet for her to talk to her about her feelings and things of that nature. And she talks to my mother, my wife about anything, and she talks to me about anything. When it comes to me it's more of a logistical conversation, there's no emotion can be served in it, no you know feelings, because like magnets to mold you try and repel the stronger something will attract so, you have to give them logical reasons. So, the processes the mental processes that they have can take a hold and say okay that makes sense, I understand, that's logical as opposed to having emotion feed or fuel it and then have a mess. A lot of times I've seen that occur and as hard as people try to force their kids not to be with somebody they wind up being with somebody and then next thing you know somebody's pregnant or somebody's something's happened or something so, you have to keep all those little, little side footnotes in mind when you deal with that type of stuff because, and it can happen, it still could happen. There's no guarantee, there's no mathematical formula that you can use to make sure that it doesn't happen. But deterrents often work and that's what you have to do different deterrents. So.

Nadirah: Okay. What neighborhood did you grow up in?

Wendell: I grew up in North Philly, 25th and Ridge. The 1800 block of 25th and Ridge, in the projects, Johnson Homes⁹.

Nadirah: What was your neighborhood like?

Wendell: I think I grew up on the last of the neighborhoods that believed everyone involved raised children. I had more neighbors and friend's of neighbors and things, that watched me, monitored me; in addition to my mom doing the same with their child. So we grew up in a tight neighborhood, everybody knew everybody. And everybody knew whose child was who's and everybody know, knew everything. One of the advantages of growing up in the projects and one of the disadvantages of growing up in the projects, everybody knew everybody that was an advantage and everybody knew everybody that was a disadvantage. So, it wasn't too much you could do wrong because somebody knew your parent.

22.6

Nadirah: Uhm hum.

Wendell: Or knew your parents or knew your, you would hear people say they knew your peoples. So, there was not too much to do so and it was fun, again, good or bad, it was times when you could say I knew my child did this or didn't do that cause you knew the child. And people, yeah well I know this child wouldn't do that because that's not him, his mom don't raise him like that but that child would cause his momma do, you know. So, it was kind of close knit, it was close knit, everybody watched out for everybody, old and young, older people, young people everybody watched out for everybody so.

Nadirah: When you live in row homes you had like a block captain. Did you guys have something like that?

Wendell: We didn't have that. Johnson Homes, was one of, back when I was growing up, was one of the very few projects, Philadelphia Housing Authority developments that were row homes before they were town homes. Before the whole town home explosion came you either had row homes or high rises. And Johnson Homes in comparison to the other Housing Authority locations in the immediate area of North Philadelphia Johnson Homes were the only row homes that were there. So, that gave a different spin on how people treated things also because they looked just like normal homes opposed to high-rise apartment tenements. (Paused) So, we didn't really have block captains there was always, everyone in the community there were people with strengths, I should say, you had people that were partiers and their kids fending on their own, you had older people who had a wild life and decided that now as in the golden years try and devote it to humanitarian efforts (slight laugh), you had people that were professionals, you had people that were habitual drunkards, yeah, I mean you had people that did cut corners to survive, you had people went out there and worked nine to five. I mean it was a whole hog pog of everyone involved. So, there was no such thing as a block captain but there may have been, if you wanted to organize a party for the neighborhood, you knew you went to such and such because that's all they did was party. If you knew wanted somebody to [get] information on something you went to such and such because you know that she was the or they, he was the area nerd that could get information, because they worked for such and such they could get information. If you want somebody who was the busy body to tell you who, what was going on in the neighborhood you went to the local Rona Barrett¹⁰ or the local Ann Landers¹¹ because they would be able to tell you every little jot and tittle of what was going on. So, there no really a block captain it was just that everybody played to their strengths

of what they were specialized in and passed on information and what have you.

25.7

Nadirah: So, as Johnson Homes being a community did they ever put on anything or have activities? The thing I remember, when I was coming up we had bizarres or sometimes the block did a trip or something like that.

Wendell: Johnson Homes had a community center and they would have different things going on at the community center where everyone was invited, different parties or different things of that nature. There were different trips that may have occurred in terms of the church across the street, which was a big church, and it's still there. Morris Brown¹² would give different trips to like Clementon Park¹³ or somewhere. And then because I was a member at the time, my family was members, you know, hey look we would go as our friends from the projects "could you go" or "ask your mom could you go", you know because they knew our parents. I mean our parents talked to each other. You know so, like okay fine "we'll let them go" so I don't have to worry about taking them nowhere because they can go to this trip or that trip, or things like that happened. So that was pretty much it, I mean, but as for independent, you know and cook outs. If it was Fourth of July everybody cooked out and the kids we always, the kids made the circuit. I went to your house to eat first at one o'clock, then we went to your house to eat is two o'clock, then we went to your house to eat is three o'clock. I mean because everybody cooked out and everybody knew everybody and things of that nature so and everybody was definitely in close proximity. I mean you could look up the street and see this one cooking out, down the street and that one cooking out, look in your backyard and look over on the other side because the way the houses were one side was houses but the back was a whole complete area which were houses. So, your backyard actually looked out onto someone else's front and they were cooking over there and - So everybody knew everybody. It was, it was so you know "I'm going to Mrs. Cynthia, Mrs. Jones house to eat" and "I'm going over Mrs. you know Mrs. Janette's house" or "I'm going to Montez house" [] or "I'm going to such and such house", I mean and that's how it was. And again all the adults knew each other and interacted well with each other. So there were times when they would all chip in and buy a bushel of crabs or something for the summer and all the kids we would sit down on the steps and eat crabs and things like that. Christmas time came around and we would visit each other house for toys, Thanks Giving cooking Easter came around and everybody would get dressed up and hang out, you know. People who normally didn't go to church that was when they went to church, Easter and Mother's Day, the only two holidays they know. (slight laugh) And we would all come back [from church] and we would all go to the movies together or something like that

or something. So, I mean it was close enough where everybody knew everybody and interacted well with everybody so –

27.50

Nadirah: It sounds like it was a, a close knit community

Wendell: (interrupted) Yes

Nadirah: Would you say that? Did you ever find that if somebody was in need that the community would come together and help them?

Wendell: Yeah, for different reasons. It that was ever a need, it would occur, close knit, because everybody knew everybody's business, uh huh, that's all the more reason why. Plenty of times I remember my mom, somebody passing in Johnson Homes or something and they didn't quite have enough finances to bury the person, you know, people give up collections. They had enough money to bury the person but not enough to provide food for the family, after for the repast. (pause) They would all cook, food. Things like that happened on weddings, people get married they would go to the weddings and give gifts. I remember plenty of times my mom would give more cards with money in it to this one that one the other one, than the law allowed. I remember more graduations occurred and, and she was invited to graduations or proms and she would go down to see em, send em off on proms, you know, and because they had that older mentality of different things, you know, well, you know, hey look "you know I, I you like my child, you know, I've watched you grow up, you know I don't know this nigga from a can of paint, this guy, but you know, what have you, you got any money in case of emergency, you need to catch a cab home" or you know. And they would all do that, they would all "oh well my mom couldn't didn't have enough money for that" "well you know well here's a couple of dollars for". And not just my mother did that but other parents you know so, the person wind up walking away with you know like, \$75-\$80 in they pocket cause everybody gave them money in case this guy would turned out to be a bum. And the guy was like "I like the girl what the hell". And with the guys in case you have to walk away from the girl and leave her where she at "got any money to catch a cab home or bus fare home or something?" "Well no cause I," "Well here's some money". You know never leave her stranded, let her take the car, the limo but you make sure you come home safe and then you know. Weddings again the same way. Everybody was invited to weddings and you, you revealed in the joy of all and you, you were reserved in the sadness of funerals, I mean and things of that nature and everything happens in the [] so. It was, it was, it was again the last of the closenesses that I've observed in, in a fam, in a community setting

30.18

Nadirah: Okay. And can you describe the type of people that lived in your neighborhood meaning like whether is the social economic status racial status whatever?

Wendell: We had all types of people that lived in our neighborhood. We had, I'll be politically correct, Caucasians, we had Latinos, we had Asians, we had of course African Americans; we had different ethnic and social ethnic groups as well as different economic groups. I mean we had some people that had real good jobs that lived in public housing because to live in there it went by your income. And then we had some that were on public assistance that again went by your income. So, Johnson Homes which initially which I might want to add, before it became public housing was where the spouses of military person's lived. That's how my mom actually got in there. And then over the years it changed over to being public housing. So, initially when it was the spouses that lived in there everybody had to have a job your spouse had to be in the military somewhere, army, navy, air force, marines, coast guard; that's how it started off. And then over time it evolved into public housing where they let other people of lesser economic standings in. But no one cared about whether you made \$50,000 a year or you made poverty level, \$19,000 a year or you made you know, no body cared about that. So, you know it was one of those things. Nope, you know, we just know that, that person was fun or that person had a cute daughter or that person had a cute son, or that person, you know, oh my gosh she got pregnant again or oh my God that one going to this school or that one likes to fight or that one likes to – So that I mean, it was more labeled, everyone was more labeled then anything else. And labeled because of again because of what they like to do their strengths and weaknesses more than you know. That one ran a speak easy, that one did this, you know, that one did that and the other so –

Nadirah: You said that your neighborhood was racially mixed was there ever any problems with that?

Wendell: No, no.

Nadirah: And now as far as, I know you don't live there now but do you know anything, like how Johnson Homes is now?

Wendell: My mother still lives in Johnson Homes.

Nadirah: Oh okay.

Wendell: And it's, with the exception of let, according to her they let more riff raff in now. Where at one time they were very selective, now they're just you know putting people in. It's like anything else and all over the world it's become a little more dangerous you know because of the type of people you let in but there are still no race issues down there, to my knowledge from what she's ever told me; where there's race problems or people fighting because of Muslims against the Christians against the Jehovah's Witness against the atheist against the Catholic, is nothing like that going on so, you know. And as for closeness, is not as much closeness as it is because the turnover now of people coming and going is so frequent you don't get to make that long lasting relationship as when I was growing up, when people were there for years and years and years and you watched them grown up, so (pause) that changed the dynamic quite a bit I'm quite sure.

Nadirah: Um huh. Does that affect your mom at all since she still live there?

Wendell: No because there's still a, a core group of people in Johnson Homes and people that come and go like anything else you get to know your surroundings you get to know your neighbors. And, you know, my mom's been there for so long now (pause) she's just known, like, Mrs. Jones is just known. She lives in the green, because the houses are colored that was, they were colored red, blue, yellow, green, were the four colors of different houses. And [they] know Mrs. Jones lives in the green house cause the [front door] was colored, so you know what I mean. So if you ever have a question you ask Mrs. Jones, you know she'll give, tell you the truth or you know if you need help she'll help you if she can and you know that's just the way it is.

Nadirah: Okay. Is there one person or a group of people that you remember for any particular reason from your neighborhood growing up?

Wendell: (long pause) Just, I would have to say, just the neighbors. I mean you never forget your grew up with, I grew up with. Some good friends from the neighborhood, I remember their mom's and dad's and you know and there, there were some older women who were pains in the butt. I remember some older women who [I] loved to death cause they were just so nice. And I mean you just, you just remember people period. I don't think there's no, if the question gears towards, is there something that someone did that was just so outstanding or that I would never forget them. I can't say that one person did because growing up all of them did something that either affected me or made me the person I am. So, all of them; I just remember them all, and remember them for different reasons. Mrs. Helen lived next door to my mom, me and my mom and my sister, she

35.52

had two daughters so I of course I remember her she had two daughters. Mrs. Pearl she ran a little ice cream, water ice and pretzel shop every summer and things like that. So you know we was getting pretzels and ice cream from her you know. Mrs, Mrs. Linn who was, who was a older woman and church member who used to give every birthday year, she gave me, whatever you turned that's how much money she gave you. So if you turned seven she gave you seven dollars, if you turned eight she gave you eight dollars. Mrs. Marshall, older woman who's very, very nose-y but sometimes nosiness is a good thing because she would be the first one to tell "Un unh I seen such and such do this, I was looking at such and such do that, and he didn't do this, he was there, he wasn't there" so, you know that, that saved you a few times. Mr. Ravnell, he was a person who had dogs and he would let you play with his dogs. And "mom can I have a dog?" "You ain't getting no damn dog, get outta here boy." (laugh) You know, but he let you play with his dogs, I mean and he was a next-door neighbor. So I mean there's a whole plethora of, of people that you remember throughout the course of being there that, you know you member; the rabble rousers, the, the, the, the fighters, the ya na mean you member them all. And they shape you growing up so there's no one person I can hold above all. I couldn't do that

Nadirah: Okay. Now you mentioned that the houses had different colors and that the back of a house would look into the front yard of another house. Can you describe anymore about how it actually looked there?

Wendell: Johnson Homes was, was more of a terms, how can I, Johnson Homes had thee geographical (pause) consistency of a labyrinth. If you look down on a labyrinth, a maze, you can see the way certain shapes make certain ways. Johnson Homes was kind of made the same. It was, Johnson Homes was four blocks long, it went from 25th street to 29th and went from Ridge Avenue to Diamond Street. Ridge Avenue actually to, yeah Diamond Street. Na, na, na not to Diamond street, a little below Diamond street. But there were houses in there and Johnson Homes were comprised of houses that either were apartments meaning one bedroom up to five bedrooms, depending on, and the way they were shaped and constructed you would never really know what, it was almost like a, a Christmas present, ya never really know what you got until you open the wrapping because you can live in one house and could like, I grew up in a two bedroom but then you can go three doors down and that house had a five bedroom. But it looked no, shape wise it looked no different on the outside exterior then the next house that has two bedrooms. It was just the weirdest thing the way they made it. I don't know, someone was definitely doing drugs when they did it (I laughed) but it, if you went into, you came into thee walk way of Johnson Homes off of 25th and Ridge that was the 1800 block on thee one side going west, west. It was 1800 A, 1800 B, C, D, E, F and so on. Directly

across was the walkway and in between 1800 was and, and where I grew up 1810, which the front of my house faced the front of 1800's houses. I was 1810 B. So in between that was a walkway, there was a big open space, there was laundry lines, the wo, the wrought iron line you could hang string on to hang your laundry on. There were a couple of benches, some trees and things of that nature so and that went along. And you would walk in my house, which as soon as you walked in the house there were steps leading to the second floor. There was a living room toward, off towards the left, which was open space. Then from the living room went into the kitchen, directly into the kitchen and from the kitchen you went out the back door. Well, we had a yard. And my yard faced the next set of numbers, which was 1820, 1820A, 1820B, C, D and so on. And in that area was big open space, it was a big ol', in my day we had a huge, huge playground area. It was jungle gyms and cones and sliding boards and things of that nature. And that's how it was and geometrically you would go up a certain way and after you expire all of 1800A-Z and you expired all of 1810A-Z and 1820A-Z and 1830A-Z you know, went into, went through 1840, 50, 60, 1890s. Then it went to 1900A-Z, 1910A-Z, Ridge Drive cut through and, and things of that nature. And Berks drive, cause Berks Street turned into a drive cause it intersected the projects. So, I mean for something five blocks long and three blocks wide, I mean, there's a lot of lot of houses in that area. Now how many I couldn't dare mention, I don't know but there was a lot of people that lived within. And also in there you also had thee rental office, which was the management office and you also had the recreation center where, well a full fledge recreation center that was able to house they had day care there one time, they had parties there, they had annual events. Every year is a main thing now where they honor all of the residents of, of Johnson Homes for how many years they've lived there. So every year is a big ol' (pause) project party, which they, that's the main hub and they party all through the projects and they honor the people that have been there longest and things of that nature and, and stuff and - So it's, it's definitely, you know geographically, geometrically, it's a nightmare. It used to be fun watching cops chase people through it because the cops would chase some bad guys through it and you know the cops didn't know where they were going but the bad guys did, so they would really loop around one little part of the block and cop would get lost. And all they would go just around back and come back double back around front and run the other direction. So, that was kind of, you know [I] often times remember pointing to the cop going "he went that a way" and the cop would go "no I just came from that way" and then the cop run up front and be like "oh, Jesus I didn't know this was a, a outlet here too" "yeah it is, told you he went that a way". You know, it, it, you know fun stuff like that and when the cops chased it was dumb stuff, where talking somebody steal, nothing major there were no drugs in my area, it was no shooting, it was no, nothing somebody stole something

42.51

from the corner store, a loaf of bread or something or something. Somebody stole something else or took a hoagie without paying for it or something. So, it was always something silly, it was grandiose back then but in retrospect now it's something insignificant that they did something dumb or the cop wanted to ask him a question about something that happened in school, skipping school and of and running they would go and the cops would chase them. I don't know, it was just the funniest thing to me. But, you know, at no time no body was ever hurt or in the position to get hurt. It was more sport than anything else you know. Cop come back mumbling and you know kids be asking "you catch em" "no" "okay, better luck next time, ha ha" you know, a kid the cop would knock on the door like you know "is this your son" "yeah" "he's being disrespectful" then we get in trouble and we like "ah, man that's messed up don't get mad at us if ain't catch the cop, if you ain't catch em". You know but it was fun, it was nothing, even that was fun-ny-ish, kind-a-sort-a growing up seeing, and it didn't happen too often but when it did you know it was you know. You know I grew up in the tail end of gang warring. I was born in the 70s so the end of that was pretty much another reason why the cops were chasing people. Maybe the, the people from this part of Johnson Homes didn't get along with the other people who lived in the Diamond Street projects four blocks up and you know they would meet and have a little war fight, cops would come and everybody would scramble and they decided to catch people, stuff like that. Nothing major, nothing (pause) you know, shooting and stuff like that.

Nadirah: Okay. You mentioned that you had a playground near your home. Now was it like every so many homes there would be a playground?

Wendell: They put the, the, the housing development itself, Johnson Homes, had multiple playgrounds throughout all of the complex, the projects, only because that way the children on one side wouldn't have to travel all the way to the other side to go play out of being fair. So, I just happened to be on the side where we had a huge playground, there was another huge playground here and one over there. Now if we wanted to go play basketball we had to go travel over to the basketball court side. I mean, it just happened that way. That's just the way it was it was a whole lot of space they had to do something with it they was able to put in a huge, huge play area.

Nadirah: Um hum.

Wendell: It had a congo, it was made out of steel but it was like a congo net where you climbed up the one side and looped over and came down the other side. It was a huge sliding board, you either could walk up the ladder off the side or you could walk up the chain link, chain link ladder up the back

45.31

and you slide down the front. There was domes we could sit in, like little, look like little hamster balls almost, um, you sit in and you climb on the outside, and climb in from the inside and pretend you were Spiderman and hang upside down because there were big holes you could put your hands and feet in, other little slide poles and stuff and stuff. It was great. And they had concrete hobbyhorses we could sit in and they had like these different sets of bongos, which we made em bongo drums, they were actually like you could sit in em but you could also bang on the bongos. It was almost like oxcegon geometric shapes, some were short, tall medium size and they were different lengths connected. So you could climb up or sit on one and bango. And because they were different heights and widths they made different sounds. So we had the original Fat Albert Cosby Kids and the Junk Yard Band¹⁴ sometime. I mean, you know, much to our dismay banging on those things on a nice summer day eight [or] nine o'clock the grown, the older people who trying to go to sleep and get up five or six in the morning didn't like us but you know, until we got to "stop it" we kept it moving. But we had fun, it was it was a lot of fun. It was a hub for everybody to play and have fun and you know, and over time, you know through degradation and, and just some bad behind kids coming and just tear stuff up, the generation after us; they eventually got torn down and withered away and they were never replaced or anything. So, now it's just an open, up to the last ten years it was just open space but now, they now put in some little make shift little play area but it's not, it wasn't, it's not as extravagant and huge as the one I grew up with. So -

Nadirah: So, in comparison to today's youth, would you consider yourself more active when you were coming up like being outside a lot?

Wendell: Yes. Yes. We didn't have all of the things, and speaking because I have juveniles and I force them to go outside. We didn't have, it was no, TV was TV. Nobody in the projects had cable, let's establish that. Everybody had a family relative who struck it rich and lived on the outside of the world and had HBO. But in the projects you had just simple channels, and channels that don't even exist anymore, and that was it. And you went outside and you had fun with your friends and you played and hoped you wasn't the first name called so you don't get laughed at, to come in the house. I myself was often number three so I was in the safe zone. Couple times I was number one but for the most part I was number three.

Nadirah: Okay.

Wendell: And we had a lot more going on outside. Even our toys were, were (pause) outdoor driven. I love racing trucks, I love racing cars. The days of the Star Wars era when we was all running around like with swords and you know, things of are, Heman swords and Captain America shields and skate

boards and bikes; I mean we did more things outside as a unit, as, as friends, you know, then we ever, then kids ever do now with it. You know we have adults now that are house bound and house ridden playing video games. So what do you actually, how can you actually have the kid go out if your sitting there playing with the kid four, five, nine hours, you know, Jordan or 2K or Major League Baseball 2013, or whatever, wrestling RAW, RAW vs. war. These are things that have replaced I would say, for whatever reason, replaced it to provide levels of safety and security so the kid ain't out there and get hit by a stray bullet. Or, or replaced because they are getting no direction from a parental unit, because the parental unit is out there hustling or working or doing whatever so you slap em in front of a something to entertain em that way they're mesmerized so they're there for several hours (laughs). It's a lot of reasons why or, or just because it's "hey look I know where my kid is, he's in the house. (pause) Couldn't, couldn't of robbed the store or stole the pocketbook. He's in the house playing video games" you know. Whatever the reason (pause) ours was, our, my generation was geared more towards, we, outside; even our toys we had out, even when we played football we had a, I'll never forget I still have it, a huge magnetic, electric football field and it had little men that had a base and you put it on there and you turn it on and it made the most horrible noise "urrrrrr" but it kind of made the men run across the field in different directions, you had to turn the little base til they go, but even at that I remember having my mom put it on my step and she would run an extension cord from her house out the door through the mailbox and I would connect it and we would be outside having football tournaments. Snow was on the ground, we freezing our tails off, you know we gotta get cushions to sit on the ground so we don't get pileups and you know, you now hemorrhoids but and, and we be out there. You know snow, rain we riding our bikes, we played, we you know. One fond memory was it was a channel on TV, channel 48¹⁵, which is gone of course, but channel 48 had Black Belt Theater¹⁶. (pause) And from 12-2 you watched Black Belt Theatre and then you come outside, and everybody come kicking the doors open and kicking the doors and flying outside from the house. And whatever you, whatever TV show ol 1970 Run Run Shaw¹⁷, Black Belt Theatre karate movie was on, Kung Fu movie was on you came out, we claimed that character and that's what we did for the next six hours. We played that cart, Kung Fu character, you know and went in the backyard, played in each other's backyard, hopping from fence to fence cause the house was connected so, so were the fences. We played in the playground and you know we flew through the air and we karate chopped and kicked and flew and jumped and flip kicked and got hurt and hurt people and hurt each other and we hurt ourselves I mean it was just great it was the best. You know stole a broomstick, your mom go, go sweep and the broom is gone cause you done took the broom and swirled it around, now that's you little long sword and. We, we had fun, that's how we

52.8

entertained ourselves and it was okay because we was out getting air, we were getting exercise, we were getting, you know, the things that people growing should get and need to develop properly. There was no, you know, we had Atari¹⁸. That, I mean, yeah you had Atari ooh wow but Pong didn't, I mean that was like oh my God are you serious. I was fortunate, I, I got a Colecovision¹⁹, which graphics were better but you only had one game on Colecovision, that was Donkey Kong. Well, guess what, you master Donkey Kong there is no other game. (Laugh) So, so I was like okay what da you do go back out and play Kung Fu Theatre again. You know, that's you know we called it TV Fu. We went out and we TV, we learned on TV and we go out and Kung Fu. It was fun. And like I said bikes and we had our bikes. And we put (pause) somebody would have to suck up and get a quarter and you know we all had to go get a quarter and get a hug. And then we drink the hug and then put the plastic in the back tires so when you, tire hit the hug it "blurrrrr" you know make it sound like a motorcycle. Or popsicle sticks, they kind of broke often so we had to get a lot of them but you know we did stuff like that to make sounds. Skate boards, you know, skating around on skate boards and things, so we did it all. But it's not geared like that anymore – unfortunately.

Nadirah: Okay. You said a lot. And I remember Atari and I didn't remember that it was called Colecovision but we definitely had Donkey Kong in my house. I wanted to ask you, you mentioned a while back about corner stores. Were there a lot in your neighborhood?

Wendell: It actually was. Um (pause) (clicking of teeth) We had right across from my house we had a place called Barney's, Barney's Supermarket²⁰, owned by a Jewish guy, Barney. Hood go figure. Barney's was good he hired neighborhood youth, as they got older, to bag and be cashiers and stuff like that. Then directly across from him was a store called Maze, M-A-Z-E, he was owned by a black guy. And he did the same thing, hired the youth, local youth as you got older, stuff like that. Then as you went down Ridge Avenue towards from 25th to 26th on Ridge Avenue²¹ (pause) you had (Pause) a family owned business, a seafood family owned business. I forgot the name of it but he had all his kids working there all the time so they never, they really was miserable cause they never had time to play. He sold crabs and fresh fish and sold fried foods and things like that. Next to him was a guy named Mr. Charles, he sold candy and comic books and ice cream and stuff like that, that's all he sold. Next to Mr. Charles was Ms. Mary Leon, she was the local laundromat, she had a washers dryers laundromat. Down Ridge Avenue towards 24th Street you had couple different barber shops and stores like down there. And the biggest hub you had was at 23rd Street and that was a, at the time, a Churches Chicken. That was like a big, big ta do. It was a shoe store down there called Claire's at 23rd and Ridge. Claire's was there for a long time. He sold orthopedic

shoes and like specialty shoes and things like that. Because Ridge Avenue at one time use to be the Mecca, it was from my understanding before the riots²² Ridge Avenue was the, the downtown of North Philadelphia. You didn't have to go past 19th Street because you had the Pearl Theater at 19th Street, 19th and Ridge. You had all of the latest fashion stores. You had fur stores down there, which is one still down there at 19th and Girard called Rutberg's Furs. So it was a big hub to be in North Philly in that whole strip from about 19th and Ridge all the way up. Then you had Strawberry mansion, which is at 32nd but that was well developed with a, a ice cream store called Pfaumer's ice cream, which is real, real famous. P-F-A-U-M-E-R if you do some research and get the name correctly, it was a big that was like a well known, that was Pat's Steaks or somebody's steaks was down there also before they moved to South Philly; Pat's Steaks, Geno's or somebody was down there. So that was developed down that way coming east. From 32nd you had Strawberry Mansion High School, you had stores up and down there from, you know, all up and down there til you got to 27th, 26th, and 25th and 24th. So that whole from 19th to 32nd was well developed, super developed. From what my mom say you never had to go downtown cause you had every store you could imagine, whatever you needed was there. That was, downtown was Ridge Avenue. And then the riots happened and they you know broke everything up and never recovered. But that's how it was. So, we had a lot of stores you could, whatever you could get or whatever you wanted, even a toy store. I mean (pause) I remember Maze, I remember many times fleecing my mom and my grandmother out of money for toys because the store Maze had a whole section, a whole wall of nothing but toys. Now they were probably cheap toys but (pause) they for a little kid they're toys, I mean horses and GI Joe men you know different other men and knock off men and, and cap guns and holsters and handcuffs. Oh, ropes and jaxs you know day glow, nightglow, somebody glow stuff and stuff. So, I mean, like that, that was the mighty Mecca you go get a toy, go get a toy there. You can go to Mr. Charles and get all the penny candy or cookies or comic books he sold. And, you know, or if summertime come, seafood get some crabs some shrimp and you know fried stuff. We had a Chinese store there. That was kind of popular back then to get some, get some Chinese food right there on the spot. Like, that was amazing back then. You know so and cheese steaks of course, stuff like that and stuff. There was actually a store that had, it was like a baby arcade. It had eight or nine video games in it. That was at 22nd, 23rd and Ridge, which was like yo you don't have to go downtown he has the latest video games in the store you know. Um (pause) which, I defer back to being one of the times I got in trouble. Just one, so I got out of school at 11:30 and 3:30 my mom was looking for me and I'm in there playing the video games, you know, til she, you know, found me and that was the last I played the video's til that late. So, we, but

59.11

we had a ball, it was a lot going on. It was a lot to entertain and reasons for you to go out and have fun

Nadirah: That's awesome. Some of the, when you started talking about the toys and I remember as a kid we would, it was like a big thing to go to Kay-Bee Toy Store, Kay-Bee Hobby

Wendell: I remember before Kay-Bee Hobby it was Kiddie City.

Nadirah: Kiddie City.

Wendell: Kiddie City was long before Kay-Bee Toys.

Nadirah: Um huh.

Wendell: And Kiddie City was right down there on Market Street. Big old Kiddie City, between 10th and 11th. And it was two floors. You go upstairs, you walk in was upstairs and you go downstairs to the basement, which there was more toys down there, Kiddie City.

Nadirah: I remember that.

Wendell: Yup.

Nadirah: That's bring back memories for me. (laugh) So, when we talked earlier you said you don't live in the same neighborhood. Where do you live now?

Wendell: I live in Germantown.

Nadirah: Can you describe your current neighborhood for me?

Wendell: Smaller block, two rows of houses. It's a quiet block, people been on the block for years. I have a block captain. (pause) Um, it's up, not too far from here, from LaSalle. It's very central located, centrally located. By that I mean you can get on the expressway when you need to with a hop skip and a jump, you can get to North Philly if you need to, you can get down Center City if you need to, you can get to the Northeast if you need to cause is near the expressway, Roosevelt Boulevard. So, it's in a very central location where you can get to anywhere you need to get to in a short amount of time. It's very inundated with Septa. We have the 23 Trolley, you have, you walk up the street and get the, the, thee, um (pause) Olney Terminal, which is a hub for all of the buses in the area. The subway system is right there. The regional rail lines are a couple of them in close distance to where I live. So, it's very centrally located for a lot of different things. Supermarkets, we have a couple of em in the immediate area. We

1.1.21

have a Pathmarket, Germantown and Cheltenham, Wayne and Cheltenham. We have a Fresh Foods up here on LaSalle's campus, not too far away from Cheltenham Mall, which has another supermarket, Shoprite. Or get on the expressway, go up the expressway to Adams Avenue, you have those stores up there. So, it's a very right where it needs to be; close to Broad Street. Go down Broad Street to Glenwood, which is a Pathmark. So, is a lot going on

Nadirah: Is your neighborhood mixed like it was when you were, well like the neighborhood was when you were growing up?

Wendell: No. No is all African American. I haven't seen any other race

Nadirah: Are there any schools near by?

Wendell: Uh

Nadirah: Other than LaSalle.

Wendell: Germantown High School's close by. A couple of the other elementary schools, Pastorius. Um (pause) um, um Penal. (pause) □ Catholic School Vincent DePaul, where my, where my children attend. And some other daycares and things like that are, are in close proximity all over.

Nadirah: Are there a lot of kids in your neighborhood?

Wendell: Half and half. I'll say about, yeah not, not, is not over run with children but I would say is maybe twenty, thirty.

Nadirah: And is it like a mixed social economic status too (interrupted)

Wendell: I'm quite sure it is.

Nadirah: where you live?

Wendell: I haven't taken a survey to ask em, you know. But, I'm quite sure it is. That is it is socially mixed.

Nadirah: Are there any problems or difficulties in your area? Is it quiet?

Wendell: Quiet for the most part. Like any place else you have moments of, of, of insanity but for the most part we have a quiet neighborhood. We don't have too many issues at all because everybody knows everybody. We have a couple of other police officers that live in the area; people know so that often helps because you know, the police going help their own. They

1.3.25

going help the public but they going help their own because they're police. It's a brotherhood a fraternity there. So, if something goes wrong of course they going to make sure, they're going to come in full force to make sure one of their own isn't hurt or upset or, or something going on. So, people know when the police are in their neighborhood so they don't tend to go crazy knowing that the response will be a lot faster, well the response will be (pause) I don't want to say a lot faster cause that gives the connotation that they would go faster for cops and not everybody else. The criminal element tends not to want to push the issue knowing that there will be a response, knowing that the police officers or law enforcement officers live in the area. We have one who's a corrections officer, one who's a school police officer, a few that's a Philadelphia police officer; I'm a police officer in another county. So, people know, people talk, and why would you want to incur that much heat on you to do something in the neighborhood where (pause) prompt and swift justice could occur. So, keeps it pretty safe.

Nadirah: Do you feel like where you live at, I know you said when you were growing up there was a community environment and you haven't really experienced that since do feel like there's maybe something similar to it where you live now?

Wendell: We know each other but everyone is doing their own thing so it's not really a community. I haven't seen where it would be such a close tight knit like it was when we [were] growing up. Not because people don't want it as much as it would be because people just don't have time anymore for it. Growing up the men worked the women stayed home. The women worked but they didn't have to work umpteen hours. So, they was able to be home to fill that roll. Now society dictates and demands you need to work period. You need to do what you gotta do period. You need to put in seventeen, eighteen hours to make ends meat and you can't be in two places at once. Without that core of people to be the foundation for this often doesn't happen too well. So -

Nadirah: Given the time, I'm going to ask this one last question and then we'll close out for right now if you're comfortable with that.

Wendell: Okay.

Nadirah: Alright, do you feel like the population in Philadelphia has decreased or increased since you were young?

Wendell: I really can't answer that question because I'm not in a position to actually see. Where ever I've lived (pause) it's always been people. I can't say that I've ever lived on a block where there were abandoned houses. Or I lived

1.6.27

on a block or location where I watched people move and nobody replace the people that moved. So, I can't really honestly answer that question (pause) you know, though I'm intelligent I can't answer that question intelligently cause I'm not in that position to see it and I haven't seen it so, I can't answer that question.

Nadirah: I asked because people have said there's been this migration out of Philadelphia and then maybe a migration back in, but especially once a lot of the factories and things shut down that there was this move out of Philadelphia. I myself didn't feel like I noticed that but maybe you did so I was just -

Wendell: If any kind of movement I've ever witnessed or noticed growing up I can honestly say that it was people (pause) augmenting themselves to their beliefs or the implied belief that to move out of the projects you're doing better. For example, I have relatives that grew up in the projects and first chance they got they moved to West Oak Lane "pummm" (pause) and they would often ask, talk to my mom, "hey why don't you move, why don't you do this" and she said, "well let me understand this, you want me to move from a place where I'm only paying rent, you moved out of a place paying rent to move up to now paying rent, which is your mortgage, gas, electric, phone, heat, utilities, mortgage tax and everything else and you're struggling up there but all for the sake of saying you moved into West Oak Lane. Okay well if that's you do you, you like it, I love it." So I have seen that in that stand point, people move but then I've seen them go "wow" (pause) "I think I need to be about moving back". (Excitedly) So, I've actually seen people try and move back into public housing where they only now just have to pay rent, phone, cable, you know. In law enforcement I've seen (pause) I've come across people who've live out in the county, Delaware County (pause) because the stigmatism of living in a county was better than living in a city. For example again, (pause) "where do you live?" "I live in Philadelphia" "Okay where do you live?" "Well, I live in Upper Darby" "Well I live in Folcroft" or "I live in Darby Township" or "I live in Wrigley Park" "Well, okay. Why did you move from Philadelphia?" "Well, I moved because I wanted to go somewhere quieter or somewhere with more peace and more this and that" Okay, well have you ever explored the places in Philadelphia that are like that are the same. You can move up Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia and experience just as much peace and quiet. You can move in East Oak Lane experience just as much peace and quiet. And the amount of money you paying for your house out there in the county you would pay in Chestnut Hill, East Oak Lane, upper far Northeast, whatever I mean even where ever you go. But I think that if we're looking at people moving out and moving in it's more of a stigmatism or more of a mind game of that's how they push people to believe so people respond in how they believe. If you tell somebody is

raining in spite the sun being out long enough they going to start saying “I think I felt a rain drop”. So if you start implanting that, that you need to move out the city for affluent reasons or, or keeping up with the Jones or doing something to make yourself look better than the next person then that’s what they do. And what you do is you move out there a long with the other ninety-nine people that have the same mindset. So, all you really did was transplant a part of where you’re coming from (pause) to where you’re going. Now, again working out in the county, Delaware County, those same people aren’t so thrilled and quick to say they live in Upper Darby because the same crimes and issues they have in Philadelphia they having in Upper Darby. Darby Townships and Folcroft, Yagens, Landsdowns and things like that and they’re not financially in a position to move way up further to the Brookhavens, you know the Astons, the Eddie Stones, the borderlines of Delaware, the state of Delaware itself. So, my question to them is now, now where we going with this? And their response is well for all of this I might as well move back to Philadelphia. Go figure. (laugh) I mean, it’s just one of those things. So, to answer, going around the bin which, not to be redundant to answer your question, no I haven’t been in a situation where I’ve seen people move out and loss of population in my residential life. But as for my occupational life I have seen that and it’s just one of those things that, like anything else go around in circles. It has to be a full rotation of people try it like it, people try it don’t like it, people like it then don’t like it no more and come back cause that’s usually what happens.

Nadirah: Okay. Well thank you very much for your time today.

Wendell: You’re welcome very much.

¹ The Philadelphia Naval Hospital was opened in 1935. It was the first high-rise building constructed by the United States Navy.

² The Philadelphia Naval Shipyard (which included the Naval Base) is currently known as The Philadelphia Naval Business Center. It was founded in 1776 and became the official United States Navy site in 1801.

³ Cheltenham Square Mall located in Montgomery County right on the border where Cheltenham Township and Philadelphia meet. It has serviced both communities for over 30 years.

⁴ West Chester University is the fourth largest university in the Philadelphia region, founded in 1871.

⁵ Roman Catholic High School was founded in 1890 and is located in center city Philadelphia.

⁶ Bishop McDevitt High School is a Catholic high school established in 1958 and is locate in Wyncote, Pennsylvania.

⁷ The current site of DePaul Catholic School was originally St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, built in 1966.

⁸ In 1986, due to a declining Catholic population in the Germantown area, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia combined St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Madeline Sophie Schools to form St. Martin de Porres Interparochial School. In the spring of 2009, the Pastors and Administration

were granted permission from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to change the name of the school to The DePaul Catholic School.

⁹ James Weldon Johnson Homes were built 1939-1940 was originally known as Glenwood Housing was one of the earliest projects of the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)

¹⁰ Rona Barrett is an American gossip columnist who was very popular in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹¹ Was a pen name for an advice columnist Ruth Crowley in 1943 and was taken over by Eppie Lederer in 1955. The advice column *Ask Ann Landers* was published in many newspapers in North America.

¹² Morris Brown A.M.E. Church is one of the oldest churches in the A.M.E. connection. It is located at 1756 N. 25th Street in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

¹³ Clementon Park is an amusement park in Clementon, New Jersey.

¹⁴ Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids was a cartoon that began in 1972 and ended in 1985. It was created and hosted by Bill Cosby. (wikipedia.org)

¹⁵ WKBS-TV Channel 48 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Burlington, New Jersey came on air in 1965 and went black in 1983. It was owned by Kaiser Broadcasting and was owned by Henry J. Kaiser an aluminum manufacturer. (<http://www.broadcastpioneers.com/wkbssignoff.html>)

¹⁶ Black Belt Theatre was a segment of broadcasting that showcased Asian theatre. Most films show were produced by the Shaw brothers. (<http://www.blackbelttheater.com/>)

¹⁷ Run Run Shaw was a producer of Kung Fu movies. (<http://www.imdb.com>)

¹⁸ Atari was the leader in video games in the 70s and 80s in video arcades and later the home game. (<http://www.atarimuseum.com/>).

¹⁹ Colecovision was a home video gaming system released in 1982 by Coleco. (<http://www.colecovisionzone.com/>)

²⁰ Barney's Supermarket is located at 2339 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

²¹ Ridge Avenue, also known as Ridge Road, is one of the oldest roads leading from Philadelphia out into the inland and continues into eastern Pennsylvania.

(http://www.ushistory.org/philadelphia/street_ridge.htm)

²² The riots on Ridge Avenue occurred in 1964 and lasted for three days. It began with a domestic dispute that drew a crowd and erupted into a riot. (<http://northerncity.library.temple.edu>)