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A People's History of the Hilltop
Private lives made Public

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Abstract

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Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood has a history. A rich and colorful history made significant by the residents who have lived there and made vast contributions to that greater community. Yet of that documented past, the stories of Black Americans are missing. From the very beginning my thesis project has been investigating Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood and the history of its Black residents.

What my Master's Thesis accomplishes is adding *Private* lives of Black Americans to the *Public* history of the Hilltop. My research examines the Hilltop beginning post-World War II to the present, from the perspective of key informants in conjunction with archival material. This adds a new viewpoint concerning the history of the neighborhood, by including Black residents, along with their knowledge of the social, economic, and political events that have helped shape

the neighborhood. At the same time, I contribute to a deeper understanding of the Black experience in this historic neighborhood.

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Dedication

To my wife Jessica Jenkins, for always believing in me and pushing me to be successful. To my parents, Artis B. Jenkins and Brenda Joyce White, for impressing upon me that I could do or accomplish anything I set my mind to. To my grandparents, Harvey and Dorothy Knight, for showing me where I came from and what I was always capable of. To my grandmother Helen Tucker, for showing me that anything in life worth having requires hard work and dedication. To my God, for strength, wisdom, humility, and your son Jesus Christ.

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Chapter One: The Public History of the Hilltop

Tacoma's history can be tied to more than one individual, but one of the most influential individuals and founding father is one Job Carr. Carr, a member of the Union Army came to Tacoma after the Civil War in December of 1864: "On December 25, 1864, Job Carr arrives at the future site of Tacoma on Commencement Bay. He will file a 168-acre claim to land at a site the Nisqually and Puyallup Peoples call Shubahlup or sheltered place. (Williams, 2002 n.p.)

Founded in 1873, Tacoma had already been chosen by Northern Pacific Railroad as a major port. Northern Pacific Railroad acquired two miles of property along Ruston Way; some 2700 acres of land south of "Old Town" and the beginning of New Tacoma: "The selection of Tacoma as Puget Sound's first terminus (Seattle would eventually secure a railway terminus of its own in 1884) was monumental to the sawmill town who, for the remainder of the 20th century and well into the 21st, would vigorously strive to retain a competitive edge over her sister city and northern rival." (Williams, 2002 n.p) By 1884 Commencement Bay had become a thriving shipping port with canneries, wharves, ship yards, coal bunkers, saw mills and flour mills. Due to Hilltop's close proximity to the Downtown and Commencement Bay waterfront, it became the city's first neighborhood and the first immigrant neighborhood, thus making it the oldest neighborhood in the city. The Hilltop has always been racially diverse, made up of mostly working class citizens, and it derives its name from its location on a high bluff overlooking Commencement Bay and the Port of Tacoma.

While there were many different ethnic communities in Tacoma, there were several groups that were prominent in the area: Native Americans, Irish, Scandinavian, Italians, Chinese, and Prussians. These groups came for various reasons, from various backgrounds, and from

geographical locations across the globe. The Chinese had migrated to Seattle as early as the 1860's. Many came by way of California. Most had been working in the gold mines and came to mine coal in Seattle and Tacoma: "Many Chinese arrived in the Tacoma area in the 1870s to become the first non-Indian fishermen in Puget Sound and to build the Northern Pacific Railroad line from Kalama to Tacoma, which was a terminus for the China trade" (City of Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1997. pg.2) (There also was a substantial Irish population, many of whom were seeking a new beginning after The Great Potato Famine of 1845. "The Irish originally came to Tacoma in the 1870s through the 1890s as railroad workers on the Northern Pacific line. Irish laborers were the mainstay of the construction gangs that did this grueling task. By the early 1900s, the Irish had established churches and social organizations on the Hilltop that continue to serve the community today" (Ndebele Wallpainting in Tacoma, n.d. n.p). Tacoma has always had a culturally rich environment due to the fact it had many jobs in manufacturing, railroads, and shipping. These were a great lure to international immigrants and domestic migrants seeking better job opportunities.

As development continued to explode along the city's waterfront and downtown area, so did the development inside the Hilltop. Tacoma's early economic boom era from 1873 to 1890 attracted people from across the country and around the world. Land across the Hilltop was cleared, houses were made, and services were provided to keep up with the growing number of new residents moving into the area. Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood during its early years expanded very rapidly. As culturally rich as the neighborhood was, so too were the architectural structures. The Hilltop's architectural landscape featured a wide array of apartment complexes, Victorian built homes, American style Foursquares of the 1900's, Craftsmans of the 1910's, along with Bungalows of the 1920's. The Office of Historic Preservation for the City of Tacoma

states: “[Tacoma] has the greatest concentration of properties on the National and Tacoma registers of Historic Places in the Hilltop” (City of Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1997 pg.2). These factors help Tacoma’s oldest neighborhood define itself in history and also gives the Hilltop neighborhood a sense of historical value.

As the Hilltop began experiencing an influx of domestic migrants and international immigrants into the area, most would be directed to Tacoma’s Hilltop area because of its close proximity to Commencement Bay, shipping docks, manufacturing plants, and the Northern Pacific Railroad. Along with the influx of people came an influx of social, human, physical, and environmental forms of capital. Tacoma took steps to deploy this capital so as to deal with the concerns of a growing population within the Hilltop. Tacoma instituted a set of intricate services across the neighborhood that would be implemented in efforts to modernize that section of the city, keep up with the times, and address the growing population.

By the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, business slowed down the growth within the Hilltop. The huge influx of international immigrants and domestic migrants into the area seeking jobs and a place of residence led to a rapidly growing community, but would also lead to a period of economic instability. The Great Depression put a halt to expanding businesses, slowed down mill work, shipping ports, and residential living. New immigrants in the area found themselves in an economic predicament. As fast as the new residents were moving into the area the jobs were drying up. The United States involvement in World War II marked the beginning of the end of the depression and the beginning of America’s economic recovery. After World War II the U.S became an economic world leader. During this time many younger residents whose parents resided in the Hilltop were fleeing the urban environment for

the suburbs. In turn, this would change the landscape of the Hilltop, thus opening it to a new type of resident.

Chapter Two: The Lost, Forgotten, & Unmentionables

This thesis contributes to a discourse around the history of Black Americans in the Pacific Northwest. Blacks have a long history in Washington State. There have been documented accounts of Blacks in the Northwest since before the turn of the 19th century as fur trappers, homesteaders, and pioneers. Yet despite their extraordinary contributions to the landscape there is relatively little mention of their influence in history books. This omission or exclusion from the historical text perpetuates the façade that Blacks were not a part of the regional history and more importantly that they did not add substantially to the social fabric of the Northwest. While over the past 20 years there have been a few studies on the Black population of the Pacific Northwest, this research is minute compared to that on other groups, with even less documentation of Blacks' history, social impact, and cultural contributions within the Tacoma area, much less the Hilltop neighborhood. What we do find are a few sparse accounts.

The problematic aspect of my research is that most history related to Black Americans is tied the South, Civil Rights, or the Great Migration out of the South to Northern States. There is much less research about those Blacks who migrated west or who may have been here before the turn of the twentieth century. Yet there is reason to believe that there are important differences between the experience of Blacks in the South and those in the Pacific Northwest. My work brings to light a few of these differences.

Any history on the Hilltop must raise questions such as: Why was this neighborhood founded, who lived here, and how did it become associated with Black Americans? The challenge I faced as a researcher was to add the voice of Black Americans to that conversation without diminishing other cultures that also helped to shape the area. By studying Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, I add to Tacoma's local historical text and the greater Pacific Northwest history. This thesis engages in an examination of Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood beginning post-World War II to the present from the perspective of key informants. I add a new perspective concerning the history of the neighborhood and its inhabitants during those 60 years, including their perspectives on various social, economic, and political events that have helped shape the neighborhood. At the same time, I contribute to a deeper understanding of the Black experience in Tacoma's Hilltop Neighborhood.

Black Americans in Washington State can be documented as far back as the turn of the 19th century. One of the first Blacks documented to have settled in the region was George Washington Bush: "In November 1845, George W. and Isabella James Bush and their five sons settle near Tumwater on a fertile plain that comes to be known as Bush Prairie" (Oldham, 2004 n.p.). Interestingly, this is only one of the few recognized accounts of this family. I have to wonder what became of the other black-folks who were here and their family records. Nettie Asberry came from Leavenworth, Kansas to Tacoma, Washington in 1890. Asberry was a proponent for equal rights. She fought against racism and was a founding member of the NAACP of Tacoma: "A founding member of the Tacoma NAACP, a music teacher, a club woman, and in later years a volunteer social worker in the community, she was a Tacoma icon" (Henry, 2008 n.p.). My research uncovers evidence that Blacks have been a part of the social fabric in the Pacific Northwest, Washington State, and the Hilltop. Yet it takes an inordinate

amount of research to find any written history of their contributions to this region. These are the issues that I address in this thesis. My research examines where the Blacks of Hilltop came from, how they got here, and what brought them here. I review the time period from early 1950's until about 2010, giving me roughly 60 years to document in one form or another.

I. Background Information

Juan Williams (1987) outlined the plight of Black Americans and provided a detailed account of their experiences during the Civil Rights era in his *Eyes on the Prize* documentary and companion book. His work also documents Blacks' feelings about what life was like across the South and across the country during that era. *Eyes on the Prize* focuses on the Civil Rights Movement beginning with the 1954 decision of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The documentary chronicles 1954 to 1965 with stories of segregation, bus boycotts, church bombings, non-violent actions, and the murder of Emmet Till. Williams, states "Before Emmett Till's murder, I had known the fear of hunger, hell and the Devil. But now there was a new fear known to me--the fear of being killed because I was black" (Williams, 1987 p.37). Williams then documents power struggles within the Civil Rights Movement by comparing and contrasting the various ideologies at play during that era. When asked by his own son where the Militants were at during this time Williams responded, "They always insisted they would not take any insults that they would fight back. But when it came time for sit-ins or freedom rides, the militants would decline to join us, explaining that they did not espouse to nonviolence" (Williams, 1987 p.xiv).

Michael K. Honey (2007) outlined historically important legislative victories, racism, and the issues of poverty in his book *Going Down Jericho Road*. Honey follows Dr. Martin Luther King's Poor Peoples Campaign and the struggles of Black workers in the South. King said,

“Ultimately, you cannot save yourself without saving others. Other-preservation is the first law of life” (Honey, 2007 p. xvii). Some scholars have insisted racism and segregation was more repressive in the South, but many others have found that attitudes, feelings, and sentiments concerning Black Americans followed national trends. What is missing in this case is the specificity to the Hilltop. Some of my oral history narrators came from the South. Their experiences show that the Hilltop did show symptoms of racism and segregation, although these experiences were different from those of Blacks in the South and other parts of the Pacific Northwest.

George Junne (2000) examined the experience of Blacks in the American West, compiling a wealth of information on various subjects including cross-cultural interaction, health, art, and law. Junne’s book is a selective annotated bibliography entitled the *American West and Beyond--America, Canada, and Mexico*. He covered a wide array of research materials with respect to the North American West and documents the appearance of Blacks in the West 100 years prior to the Pilgrims. Junne examined how and when they appeared alongside the Spanish, and further analyzed the families, communities, and institutions that western Blacks left behind.

Quintard Taylor’s, (1979) *A history of blacks in the Pacific Northwest, 1788-1970*, documented the arrival of nearly ten thousand Black Americans of the estimated two million people who migrated to the Pacific Northwest during that time period. Taylor also noted that Black Americans who migrated during the Post-Civil War era were unlike other ethnic groups who settled in the area. By 1910, Black communities had emerged in most of the Pacific Northwest's major cities. According to Taylor, these communities created and supported institutions that connected Black Americans both within and beyond city boundaries. Given their

limited size and resources, they waged a surprisingly aggressive campaign to obtain or defend their civil rights. After this period some cities-notably Seattle and Portland--became much more significant as centers of Black life in the Pacific Northwest. Others--such as: Roslyn, Butte, and Helena--became secondary or declined to only nominal importance.

Quintard Taylor's (1994) *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District, from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* examined a century of life, substantial growth, and contributions of the early Black American community in Seattle Washington. Taylor comprehensively documents Blacks' early political structure, employment opportunities, housing, and educational advances. He also defined the instrumental role and functions that the Black Church played in early Black Seattleites' history. Taylor's conclusion is that Seattle, in some cases, did follow national trends. He also notes the vast differences Seattle Blacks faced in comparison with their Southern and Northern counterparts. Although my own project is more limited in scope than Taylor's, his work offers a detailed template for examining the Black community in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, and thus proved useful in conducting oral histories, putting statistics in context, and presenting my findings.

Lenwood Davis (1975) compiled an extensive bibliography of the history of Blacks in the Pacific Northwest. His bibliography *Blacks In the Pacific Northwest 1788-1974* enhanced the body of work concerning Blacks in the Pacific Northwest and was intended for use by future historians and Black studies enthusiasts. Davis noted that although the majority of Blacks lived in Washington and Oregon State, he chose to include other parts of the Pacific Northwest, including Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia, to give a broader contextual picture. Davis claimed, "There is no comprehensive and up-to-date work on Blacks in the Pacific Northwest even though there is obviously a need for one" (Davis, 1974 p.3). He continued on to provide a

brief synopsis of Blacks in Washington State and the contributions that Blacks made in the Pacific Northwest. “The need for all the people of Washington to understand and appreciate the contributions and impact that Blacks have made on helping build and develop the Evergreen State is essential” (Davis,1974 p. 9). Unfortunately, for someone interested in a particular area such as Tacoma’s Hilltop, Davis’s work did not focus on one specific area of Washington State, but instead covered the entire Pacific Northwest.

II. Tacoma

Autumn Darms examined the early history of Black Americans in the city of Tacoma. Darms’s book entitled *Tacoma’s African American Community: A History* (2010) was intended to analyze the Black community of Tacoma in order to fill a gap in the existing historical record. Darms states, “I believe the history of Tacoma’s African American community adds to the historical record a portrayal of African American history, because it is an important history in and of itself and as a portrait of the African American experience outside of the southern slavery and African American Civil rights history” (Darms, 2010 p.3). Darms narrowed her research to the Black community from the 1850’s until 1970’s using qualitative and quantitative data to document and describe a century of population growth, school enrollment, and employment status. Darms intention was: “... to provide my readers with the first comprehensive, chronological overview of African American history in Tacoma” (Darms, 2010 p.15). Darms explored over a century of Black growth and contribution, but stopped her research at the 1970’s.

Patricia George, writing for Tacoma History project in 2007, analyzed discrimination within the Local ILWU by interviewing Black American Longshoreman Roger Coleman. Coleman describes the working conditions for Black dock-workers during the 1960’s and 70’s.

He discusses racial attitudes and actions taken by his co-workers, but does not attribute those actions to the ILWU. Coleman notes that the Union was one of the few places during the early 60's that hired Blacks. This was a time when Central Tacoma Blacks were earning only 44% of what their White counterparts were earning. Coleman believes that continuing to illuminate the history of the longshoreman will assist others and shed light on the struggles of the past, further compelling ILWU members to continue the battle for the preservation of their benefits. George's interview outlines specific instances of how race did affect employment. There is a certain amount of quantitative data that is supplied to support her position and George goes on to document the time frame from 1940 to 1950 showing growth of Tacoma's African American population, which increased from 640 to 3,199 people. Many of these new African-American migrants began moving into the Hilltop and Eastside neighborhoods.

In May of 2007 Baboucarr Lowe, a former student of the University of Washington, interviewed Lyle Quasim as a part of the Tacoma Community History project for UWT. Quasim was not a native born Tacoma resident, but he soon became a leading protagonist for social justice in the Tacoma Washington region. Quasim's pursuit of social justice and civil rights for all was fostered during his early college years at the University of Illinois. He has been a part of numerous endeavors such as the Black Panther Party, Co-Organizer of Safe Streets, and held the office of Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services for Washington State. In all his endeavors Quasim has fought for social justice and the civil rights of others. What makes his story so fascinating is that to this day he has never given up on the fight. In addition, his arrival in Tacoma coincides with the time period of my research. Quasim's interview gives a first-hand account of how Black Americans lived, their treatment, and the struggles that they continued to

endure from his arrival during the late 60's until current times. His personal account of the time period is a narrative from someone who was actually there.

Alison Sonntag (1993) researched the life of Harold Moss, through an interview that covers 40 years of civil rights and social activism leading to Moss becoming the first Black Mayor of Tacoma. Like many other Blacks, Moss was not from the Pacific Northwest, but instead was a transplant from Detroit, Michigan. Moss has been a constant proponent for fair and equal treatment of all Americans. He has personally watched the city's shifting perspective from that of segregation to toleration and finally integration over the span of 40 plus years. Aside from being the city's first Black mayor, Moss held numerous offices, titles, and served his community well as a member of the NAACP, Tacoma Urban League, Black Business Men's Association and City Council. He also chaired the Employment Committee of Tacoma and helped to organize boycotts against department stores that refused to hire Black employees. Moss has a wealth of information on Tacoma history and the Black community and has been an active member in this community for half a century. This makes Harold Moss an important focus for my research, as he has specific knowledge as to how and why certain decisions were made affecting Blacks of the Hilltop, and to some degree he may have had an influence on the decision making process. However, my methodology in this thesis takes a more bottom-up approach. The bottom up approach that I speak of involves focusing on everyday members of the community. I specifically wanted to stay away from community leaders and city politicians, because I feel their story has been voiced. Missing are the stories spoken by the residents who lived in the neighborhood and focused on daily survival.

III. Hilltop Specific

Robin Eisenbacher interviewed Dr. Maxine Mimms for the University of Washington Tacoma Community History Project. Mimms was born on March 4, 1928, in Newport News, Virginia and accompanied her husband to Seattle, Washington in 1953. At Evergreen State College she developed educational programs that served working adult students. The overall focus was serving the educational needs of urban, African American adult students. In 1982 the Evergreen-Tacoma campus was placed under Mimms's leadership. As the Director, her mission was to increase the number of African Americans in Washington with degrees. Eisenbacher reports: "Dr. Mimms saw the barriers faced by black people in the Tacoma Hilltop community and saw an untapped potential. Many felt that putting a college campus in the middle of the Hilltop neighborhood in Tacoma was a risky choice considering the problems with crime and gang activity in that area." (Eisenbacher, 2014 p.8). She felt that education was an investment in the community and that, in effect, the venture would help to inspire and empower the people of the area, thus uplifting the neighborhood and the community. As of late, Mimms has founded the Maxine Mimms Academy, a non-profit organization in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood established to serve youth expelled or suspended from public schools.

The City of Tacoma produced a document for the Community and Economic Development Department Planning Division's Office of Historic Preservation in 1997. This document details not only the history of Tacoma, but of the Hilltop as well, which it names the city's "First Neighborhood". The document divides the city's growth into three phases: First Expansion, Branching Out, and Filling In. Further, the document explains how and why the Hilltop neighborhood came into existence, stating: "The Hilltop neighborhood developed quickly due to its proximity to the expanding downtown, waterfront mills and warehouses. Waves of ethnically diverse peoples from around the globe and throughout the Eastern States moved in and

established it as a predominantly working class community” (City of Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1997 p.2). Thus we begin to understand that the Hilltop from its conception was mainly a neighborhood for the working class. What is less widely recognized is that, according to this document, the Hilltop has the highest concentration of properties recognized as historically significant not only by the City of Tacoma, but by the National and Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

A City Of Tacoma document titled “The Hilltop Subarea Plan” (2015) argues that the city believes the Hilltop is poised for a bright new future. The goal of this plan, according to the document, “. . .is to help make that future a reality. Blessed with invaluable assets, Hilltop has unmatched potential to become part of a thriving urban center that brings opportunity to local residents and businesses while promoting a sustainable future for the City and region” (Hilltop Subarea Plan, 2015 p.3).

Michelle Treat’s (1991) Master’s thesis, *The Changing Peoples of Hilltop*, was based on Tacoma’s Hilltop community. Her project was put together for the UW Tacoma Campus as part of the Community History Project. She outlined the geographic boundaries and the early residents who lived on the Hilltop. Treat states: “The Hilltop Neighborhood, also called the Central Business District in early Tacoma's history, was one of the first areas to be developed when the Northern Pacific Railroad came to Tacoma in 1873” (Treat, 1991 p.1). Treat analyzed the Hilltop, in part, using a qualitative approach that involved interviewing Blacks of the community, thus adding voices, context, and the overall experience of Blacks on the Hilltop to the historical record. She noted, “Although about twenty-five Blacks first came to Tacoma in the late 1860’s it wasn't until after the installation of military bases in this area that the population of African Americans really grew. Many of the men enrolled in the army who came to Fort Lewis

for training decided to stay after World War I when they left the service” (Treat, 1991 p.4). Treat opened a dialogue concerning Black Americans, highlighted the importance of migration patterns, and indirectly answered the question of how and why there was such an influx of Black Americans in the Hilltop. Treat (1991) and Darms (2010) both specifically focused on the Tacoma area, while Treat (1991) went a step further and interviewed people in the Hilltop neighborhood. The information provided by Treat is a brief overview and examines Black Americans of the past, but does not look at their current experiences. This affords me the opportunity to continue in Treat’s footsteps using the personal narratives, especially “from below,” of long-term Hilltop residents.

There are several authors lodged within various disciplines who help to expound our knowledge of Tacoma and the Hilltop. Those scholars include Baboucarr Lowe, Autumn Darms, Patricia George, Preston Jones Jr., Alison Sonntag, and Michelle Treat. All examined the Black community on a more local basis within the city of Tacoma, Washington. They focused on issues ranging from societal early history, cultural contributions, migration, civil rights, racial tension, and how the overall experience may have differed from their Southern counterparts. These local scholars demonstrated that when studying this phenomenon at a smaller community level the data collected added a wealth of knowledge to the existing text. All chose a qualitative-methods approach of conducting personal interviews and exploring oral histories, seeking to add context to the dialogue. I situate myself and my research among these scholars, and add to their data to bring about a more complex and revealing story.

Chapter Three: Where Do We Go From Here?

In order for me to explain clearly my design and methods, I must first explain my project in terms of the *how*. I approach my work primarily from a qualitative perspective. My research contributes to the fields of Cultural and Ethnic Studies, but is not deep analytical. My goal is to provide a vessel for additional voices in the Hilltop to be heard and for those voices and perspectives they represent to become a part of the historical record. My research therefore adds to but does not tell the complete story of Black Americans who have come to reside in this area. It is a story of *some* Blacks who have lived there, particularly those who are not widely recognized beyond the neighborhood as “leaders”.

While wishing to minimize the impact of my own positionality and perspectives on how my narrators told their stories, I nonetheless need to acknowledge that positionality and perspective. As Howard S. Becker states, “...the way people write grows out of the social situations they write in” (Becker, 1986 p.xi). Being of Black American descent gives me a particular perspective on the various issues explored with my narrators, as well as particular insight into the plight and perspective of those more broadly whose voices are less likely to be heard. Ultimately there was, in this research, a delicate balance to be struck between retelling my narrators’ stories and interpreting them. I have attempted as much as possible to remain faithful to my narrators’ points of view, stand points, and the historical accounts that they find pertinent to their lives and cultures. I am looking for the story not being told instead of the story that is being sold.

Criteria for Selecting Oral Histories Participants

The most important piece of my research is oral history, because it includes lived experiences told through the perspectives of people narrating their own stories. These personal stories are not being told through media outlets, newspapers, or second hand accounts. They are the undocumented lives of Hilltop residents and business owners, some of whom still live there and are conducting business to this very day. As I determined who would be oral history narrator and why, there was a set of criteria that needed to be met. The first is the most obvious: participants needed to be Black Americans living on the Hilltop. I needed the story told and explained by those it pertains to most directly. Second, the oral history participants needed to have lived or worked in the area starting in the post WWII period. Since I am recording the history of Black Americans on the Hilltop post WWII, the people I interviewed need to have some knowledge or information that spans most or all of that era. Someone who has only lived on the Hilltop for the last 20 years would leave a gap in my research. Third, I wanted to find the grassroots story, not the politically correct or diplomatically sanitized history. Much of the information concerning the Hilltop and its Black residents has been told by those who were politically active or had an agenda. That is not to say that what they have to offer is not pertinent or valuable, but a person who lived their daily life on the Hilltop--whether buying groceries, mailing letters, or getting gas--may have a vastly different perspective than a person in a position of leadership in the community. These are the criteria I contemplated from the onset of this project.

Identifying Oral Histories Participants

After outlining the criteria of my oral history participants, I needed to define who met the criteria and how to find the persons fitting the criteria stated above. My life-long attendance at Shiloh Baptist Church, located in the Hilltop neighborhood, helped me to identify long term Hilltop residents who might be appropriate for my project. Betty Mewborn was a long-time family friend and fellow member of Shiloh Baptist Church. Mary Doss is another family friend and fellow- member of Shiloh Baptist Church. Sam Daniels operated Sam and Terry's Barber Shop on the Hilltop for 50 years and is a well-known and highly respected member of the community, but not a "leader" in the same sense as someone like Lyle Quasim or Harold Moss. Finally, Kitty Scott was referred to me by another family friend, Dr. Maxine Mimms. Kitty Scott is another long-time resident and owner of House of Scott Funeral and Cremation Services, founded in 1967.

These four oral history participants were provided the same eight questions, with the expectation that each question would elicit a different response because each person has a different life experience. There were a total of 14 questions, but 6 of these were asked randomly. Each narrator was scheduled for a 60 minute digitally recorded session, depending on how much the participant was willing to reveal, how much they were able to actually remember, and whether the questions were relevant to their own experiences. At the beginning of each recording session, the name of me as the person collecting the story and oral history narrator were stated for the record. The questions posed were as follows, though not necessarily in the same order each time:

*Where are you from?

*What brought you to Tacoma and how did you end up living on the Hilltop

*How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

- *What has your experience been like living there?
 - *If you had children, what was your experience been raising them in the neighborhood?
 - *During your time here has the Hilltop always been a predominately Black Neighborhood?
 - *What has changed in this locality over the course of you living here?
 - *Have you ever experienced racism, prejudice, and discrimination here, and how? What role has that played during the course of your life here?
 - *What would you like to see change in or about the neighborhood?
 - *What makes the Hilltop unique compared to other neighborhoods in Tacoma?
 - *What percentage of residents in the Hilltop do you know on a first name basis?
 - *What do you like best about the neighborhood? What do you like the least?
 - *Describe to me in detail 3 or 4 things about the Hilltop that other residents might not know?
 - *If you were writing a history book about the Hilltop, what 2 or 3 historical events would you include?
- While the questions presented to each contributor were the same across the board, follow-up questions were asked for reference or clarification.

Further Research Material

In order to fill gaps in the research I also extracted pertinent information from archival material. In particular Michelle Treat's research played an important role, Particularly Charles Walker's oral history. This lends another voice to the discussion and makes for a richer project.

Chapter Four: Not the Hilltop You Remembered

To document the story of the hilltop I chose to collect oral histories centering on residents' personal experiences. Given my theoretical and methodological commitments to

maintaining the original voice of my narrators, the full transcripts of these oral histories are included in Appendixes A-D. However in this chapter I give the reader a sense of the key themes and recurring topics that were common among my oral history participants. The four narrators had deep knowledge of the neighborhood and familiarity with its past, because of their long-term residency in the Hilltop. The common themes among their stories were that they came from the South, dealt with racism (in the forms of segregation and discrimination of various kinds), and gang violence in the community. Although the oral histories I collected constitute the bulk of my research, I also discuss Michelle Treat's research, as Treat is one of a very few scholars who has focused on the Hilltop specifically. Her inclusion of Charles Walker's oral history adds another voice and perspective to my thesis research. Using these five oral histories I am able to begin telling the untold stories of everyday life in/on the Hilltop.

As the 1950's and 60's approached, Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood became home to a new ethnic group: Black Americans. Many were seeking a new beginning by fleeing the oppressive South and its Jim Crow laws. This became possible as the result of the military providing many young African Americans the chance to leave the South and move to other parts of the country. Treat notes: "Blacks were coming to Tacoma from the Southern States and through the military, to escape the hardships and severe racism of the South" (Treat, 1991). Sam Daniels was one such person. Daniels was discharged from the United States Navy in 1946 and found himself in Tacoma.

My sister she stayed here she got married here my sister named Alice I didn't like here at all, because it rain so much, I didn't want no parts of this cus I got a discharge here in 1946. Yeah 1946 discharged and I wasn't coming back here cus too much rain. (Appendix C: p.1)

Unlike other Blacks, Daniels had options. He left Tacoma to return home to Henderson, Texas and did not return until 1950. Daniels had a thriving barber business in Houston Texas, and was not trying to escape economic hardship. Others, like Mary Doss, followed their families to Hilltop:

[MD] I was born in Mississippi, Brookville Mississippi. [Shawn Jenkins] How did you end up coming to Tacoma? [MD] Well my family was out here and 'bout a year later I came out here and we came out here in 69. 1969! [SJ] Did you come out here with family or by yourself? [MD] Two kids and myself the rest was already here. [SJ] Oh you had family here already! [MD] Um Hmm! [SJ] How many members? [MD] My mother, Mrs. Frazier, and my auntie's the Henley's. (Appendix B: p.1)

In fact, all of my narrators came from the South. Kitty Scott, for example, was born in Carbon Hill, Alabama and moved to the Hilltop at the request of her mother. Scott's mother moved to the Hilltop before her family to secure a home and then requested the rest of her children to come:

Well, my mother's family, she had a brother in-law that was in the military. And actually moved us from a small place to a lot larger place and everybody kinda of migrated to the State of Washington, Tacoma Fort Lewis. (Appendix D: p.1)

Two narrators had ties with the military, as did Treat's narrator Charles Walker. Walker's story differs, though, in that he was born in Lexington, South Carolina and shortly thereafter moved to Harlem, New York. After his twenty-four years of military service he ended up living on the Hilltop. After retiring from the military, he opened a small service station located on the corner of 15th and K Street. Walker explains to Michelle Treat during his discussion:

But the area I've seen change, oh, dramatically. When I opened the station in '61, let me back up, when I came to Tacoma in '50, my wife and I and one child and we lived

in the Hilltop area. We were living over on 12th and M, which is now the senior citizen building. We lived there for two years until I could buy a home, and then we lived at 12th and L. (Treat, 1991 pg.3)

There are two points to note within Charles Walker's response: One is the fact that he came to the area because of his military service and the other is that he obtained a house on the Hilltop. My question then becomes, why the Hilltop and were there other mitigating factors that might have lead him to only seek a home in this particular locality?

My narrators suggest that the answer has to do, in part, with the behavior of Whites. The influx of Black Americans into the Hilltop neighborhood is correlated with Whites moving out. According to Sam Daniels, one of the oldest of the four oral history presenters:

When I first came here only Blacks could buy a house from G Street back Downtown, that's the only place you could live. It wasn't too many Blacks up here at all it was a very few mostly Italians and whites. At that time Blacks would move in and White would move out pretty segregated it didn't show too much, but that's the way it was at that time. (Appendix C: p.3)

Betty Mewborn's narrative corroborates Daniels' accounts as well as the assertions of Michelle Treat. Many Black Americans were coming to Tacoma, and specifically the Hilltop, through the military. Betty Mewborn gives a personal account of growing up in Tacoma:

Well to be truthful when I lived down on Fawcett it was wonderful because we didn't know. All my friends the few that were people of color or Black they lived Market, Fawcett, and Tacoma Avenue and it was Japanese, Chinese and we all went to school together and we didn't pay it any attention, so it was fine living down there. Except it was a lot of military people lived down that area. (Appendix A: p.2)

Betty Mewborn makes an insightful statement and brings to light another question: Why did so many people of color live in between Market and Fawcett Street? Furthermore, could there be others like Betty who did not recognize their circumstances, because they only lived in segregated neighborhoods?

Chapter Five: Race Does Make a Difference

The arrival of Blacks in the Northwest, and specifically Tacoma, was followed by segregation and sentiments of racism. Many who sought to escape the repressive rule of South were still met with resistance and prejudice in Tacoma. As for the level of violence and discriminatory practices that Blacks faced in the Northwest compared to the South, attitudes and beliefs differ. While my research is not meant to compare and contrast how violence and racism differed in the South as compared to the Northwest, as a whole new Blacks still experienced inequality and prejudicial treatment. Betty Mewborn relives a past account of dealing with racism as a child:

When I was going to Central the girl next door and I were really good friends and so she asked her dad could I ride with them out to Fort Lewis one day. So we were all riding out fort Lewis and everything and then he got to pointing out this is where such and such a people live and he says then this is where the Niggers live. And I just kinda tighten up and I could feel her tighten up and he caught his self after he said that, you know. I never said anything I went and told my mom, which was the wrong person to tell. Appendix A: p.2)

Migrating Blacks in the North still faced some of the same hardships they had in the South. One of the prevalent signs was the open and public disdain for Blacks in the region. Daniels recalls his own encounter with racism at a neighborhood pub. Although the specific

incident Daniels speaks of did not happen in the Hilltop neighborhood, I argue that this was a precursor for what Blacks were encountering across the city:

Terry was headed home that's when we was living in Salishan the early part. And we went in the tavern sat down went in the tavern to get a beer. Friends right, just wanted a sip of beer. You what the guy told us? (SJ) What? I think you had one too many. In others words must have had too many, other words you wouldn't have come in here. (Laughing.) It's right there on 34th I think the tavern still open now. You know where you turn to go down to the Indian Reservation. (Appendix C: p.4)

What we take away from this narrative is that while Blacks lived in certain areas of the city, racism itself was widespread and experienced in all parts of life.

Through both covert and overt acts of racism, discriminatory practices and prejudicial attitudes towards Black Americans soon led to a boiling point. During the 1960's and 70's Blacks continued to migrate into the region and many found themselves living in the Hilltop. Nationally, this was a period of civil unrest and many different minorities were fighting for equal rights, equal pay, and equal treatment as American citizens. Blacks responded with sit-ins, bus boycotts, business boycotts, mass marches, and sometimes rioting. Some, like Martin Luther King, chose a non-violent approach, while others, such as Malcolm X, chose a more stand-your-ground stance, and still others, such as the Black Panthers, chose to band together in a military-type fashion. Juan Williams categorizes this period as "America's Civil Rights Years." In his work, Williams claims that:

The era from 1954 to 1965 stands in sharp contrast to the complexity of the years that followed. The movement's philosophy had been one of nonviolence and commitment to achieving change within the American system of law. After 1965, that vision became clouded. The post-1965, rage of black militants and the fires their anger left burning across America's cities sometimes obscured the glory of the movement's earlier years. (Williams, 1987 p. XIV)

This is the national backdrop against which the events of the Mother's Day Disturbance of 1969 played out locally:

The Hilltop continued to face the stresses of segregation, employment discrimination, and an over-policed neighborhood. Local scholar Barbra Johns, writing for blackpast.org, documents the Hilltop's economic and political stresses stating,

The Mother's Day disturbance in the Hilltop community, the black ghetto of Tacoma, bore the seeds of similar frustration—a black population concentrated by residential discrimination in a deteriorating inner city neighborhood, the lack of economic opportunity and political representation, and the gulf between the promise of equal rights and the daily reality of black life. (Johns, 1991 para. 1)

Despite the desegregation ruling of 1961, Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Voting Rights Act of 1965, issues of racism and inequality were still burning ones in 1969 on the Hilltop. Blacks still felt politically underrepresented, endured discriminatory practices, and had to cope with a lack of economic advancement. All of this led to the following event:

On Mother's Day, 1969, the fuse blew. An attempted arrest on the Hilltop led to a night of angry, youthful confrontation and property destruction, the shooting of a policeman, and charges of alleged police brutality. The riot started when Tacoma police officers, Herman Knaack and Arthur Jackson attempted to arrest a black felon. When he resisted, an African American woman from a nearby house began to scream "police brutality" and soon several other black residents gathered. Gunfire erupted and Officer Knaack was wounded trying to protect his partner. A riot ensued, lasting the rest of the night. (Johns, 1991 para. 3)

Of the four of my oral history contributors, Betty Mewborn was the only one to make reference to the public disturbance. But to Betty it was not known as the Mother's Day Disturbance:

I think that was right when they got to burnin up MLK that time and setting everything on fire. We went out there and saw Rev. Brazill was out there on his porch somebody else they was out there. [SJ] You touched on when they were burning down K Street, the Mother's Day Riot! [Betty Mewborn] Yeah! [SJ] Were you around for that did you see that? [BM] No! I just rolled down and we saw how they was talking about how it was burning and everything stuff like that. [SJ] You saw the results, but you didn't see the people out there rioting? [BM] No! Reverend Brazill told go on back home close your doors. [SJ] So he was one of the people out there trying to calm it down? [BM] I know Reverend. Brazill and even Harold Moss just a few of them was trying to calm it down, no you don't wanna do this. (Appendix A: p.15)

Betty was one of the few who expressed any knowledge of the event. Although, she did not participate in the riots, she did see the results and was still living in the neighborhood, giving her access to information others may have not known.

Not all Hilltop residents viewed the Mother's Day Disturbance in the same manner. Michelle Treat's oral history narrator had a different perspective on the Mother's Day Disturbance. Walker states: "We had a little so-called riot back then, 1968. They call it the "Mother's Day Riot", or something to that effect. But it really wasn't a riot. It was just a bunch of kids running up and down the street, breaking out a few windows, but that made us famous in Tacoma for a while" (Treat,1991 pg.8).

Chapter Six: Segregation & the Power of Prayer

From the research I collected and the stories recorded, my deduction is that realtors only showed Blacks houses in Hilltop, Salishan, Lincoln Heights, or the Hawthorn District. As the tide of Black Americans continued to migrate into Tacoma, many were diverted into these neighborhoods.

A brief narrative on these four localities is necessary for historical reference. Salishan's Housing Project was originally developed by the Federal Government, to house new residents moving into Tacoma. It is located on Portland Avenue between South 38th Street and South 54th Street.

The origin of Salishan is closely linked with the attack on Pearl Harbor. When that particular war began for the United States, the federal government quickly realized two things. First, a lot of people and their families were headed for the Northwest. They were coming to work in the factories and shipyards that built the planes and ships that won that war. Second, when they arrived they would greatly worsen a shortage of affordable housing (Tacoma Housing Authority, n.d., n.p).

The Salishan Housing projects were one of the first affordable housing units specifically built to house military personnel and war workers. Sam Daniels also made mention of living in Salishan upon his arrival in Tacoma:

They started moving in late or early 60's, somewhere in the 60's then the Blacks started coming in. See there wasn't a whole a lot Blacks here then. Those that was here living in Salishan, but after that then they started buying homes and movin' up in this area. But now Black people scattered all over Tacoma I don't think too many North end at all quit a few out there now. (Appendix C: p.6)

The Lincoln Heights Housing Project consisted of housing units originally created for the use of war-time workers in the same manner as Salishan: "Lincoln Heights was a 400 unit housing project built by the federal government during WWII to provide shelter for defense workers. It was located on 90 acres bordered by So. Pine & So. State St. & So. 35th & So. 38th" (Metro Parks Tacoma, n.d.). Lincoln Heights was specifically a housing project intended for war time workers coming to the Northwest, but would later be used to divert Blacks into segregated neighborhoods. From the beginning I was skeptical about the neighborhoods I was informed

were supposedly segregated, but my skepticism was soon put to rest. A book by Guzman, et. al. (1947) for the Tuskegee Institute specifically lists Lincoln Heights under the heading: Permanent Public Housing Projects Making Provisions for Negro Tenants (As of July 31 1945). This solidified the claims of my narrators that Blacks of Tacoma were being diverted into specific neighborhoods.¹

The Hawthorne District was located where the Tacoma Dome now rests, and the City of Tacoma forced numerous residents out of the area for the construction of the Tacoma Dome. According to my father, Artis B. Jenkins, my grandmother Helen L. Tucker owned a home in the Hawthorne District for 30 years. She and others were then forced to move by the City of Tacoma to make room for the Tacoma Dome. He also informed me that most of the residents of the Hawthorne District during his childhood were either of Black or Native ethnicity with several Italian families still living in the area. Kitty Scott also referred to the Hawthorne District as a segregated area:

Then later years where there was property at some people moved there home to a lot a people lived down by the dome and of course that property was bought and then torn down. This is the area people lived all in here. People didn't live in [SJ] North end! [KS] Oh no, you didn't live in North end! You lived more in the South end which was the "Hill" and you didn't live in... Some people lived in the area over by Costco, they lived over there. Then some people lived over where the old military housing was now that's all new. [SJ] Salishan! [KS] Salishan, they lived there. Those are the areas there that they showed you evidently. (Appendix D: p.10-11)

As a child growing up in Tacoma, I often heard stories about segregation, yet I have often wondered if the accounts given by older Black Tacoman's were factual. The lack of data on Blacks in the Northwest, specifically those on the Hilltop, meant most of my intimate knowledge

¹ My father told me similar stories as I was growing up.

came from my oral history narrators. I wanted to know why Blacks only lived in the Hilltop and the other localities noted. When I asked Kitty Scott why most of her family only lived on the Hilltop she stated:

Well let's say that my mother's sisters, well my mother's sisters they all lived over here at first. Cus one lived at 23rd & J Street, one lived at 17th & Cushman, and then my mother bought a home over on 17th & Ainsworth. So I guess this was the property that was up for sale that was probably being shown by the realtors that this would be a good area for you because they didn't show them like, they show them the Eastside. Everybody I can think of lived down here. (Appendix D: p.10)

She further stated:

Evidently that's where they were showing the people cus that's where they were all living. (Appendix D: p.11)

What these oral histories suggest is that Blacks were allowed to buy homes in Tacoma, but this was predicated on them living in prearranged locations, i.e. the Hilltop, Salishan, Lincoln heights, and the Hawthorne District. Sam Daniels discusses the beginning of Blacks coming to the Tacoma area and he outlines the locations with the heaviest concentration of Blacks.

When did it change, when did you begin to notice that there were... Because I know you said in the 50's there weren't a lot of Blacks up here?[SD] They Started moving in late or early 60's, somewhere in the 60's then the Blacks started coming in. See there wasn't a whole lotta Blacks here then. Those that was here living in Salishan, but after that then they started buying homes and movin' up in this area. But now Black people scattered all over Tacoma I don't think too many North end at all quit a few out there now. (Appendix C: p.6)

Following this line of questioning, I inquired why people of color didn't live in other places in Tacoma such as, the North End, Fircrest, or University Place. Kitty Scott exclaims:

I don't know of anybody that lived over there, I don't know anybody that I grew up with that lived in the North end. Only way I know anybody that lived in the North end was I went to school with you, but Blacks no we all lived over here. No matter what your father or mother did for a living. Whether your daddy was in the military and the military people lived over here too. (Appendix C: p.11)

For most of her adult life, Betty Mewborn has lived within the borders of the Hilltop. When asked about living in others areas, she explained:

[SJ] Did you ever consider buying a house in any other neighborhood like the Fircrest or the North end, University Place did you ever look at maybe buying a house when you were raising your own kids in those neighborhoods? [BM] I really didn't, I don't know why. I am really serious. I just liked the way the area was. The kids were being taught different things now and everything. [SJ] That makes sense. [BM] During that time it would have been hard to buy a house as we were. We had a group of people Bob Penton and they came up here with [thinking]. O God, I had all this stuff written down on a piece of paper. But I don't know what they did with it. They send you off to different places to train different people. It was Bob Penton and the other Bob and some more of them. We sent them out and some of the attorneys who belonged to the group. We sent them out with a Black person and a white guy or a white guy and a black person to see about renting, or it just be 2 Blacks. And we sent them out there. Go out there tell 'em you wanna rent the house and what your income is you all that. [Renter's response] Oh they all been rented already. Right behind them or the next day we have the white couple go out there. [Renter's response] Oh sure you wanna look at it right now, it was available. [SJ] So subconsciously when you were buying your home you kinda of knew this the? [BM] I did I did! (Appendix A: p.8)

All of my narrators have a sense of neighborhood pride, but I also believe that if presented with the option of living in an alternate locality, most would have chosen it. Instead, they made the best of a difficult situation and learned to live within their set confinement.

Influential Black Pastors and Churches

New Black residents found it hard to acquire gainful employment because of discrimination. Many were denied loans and experienced other unfair banking practices. The churches in the Hilltop community were a very instrumental part of the fight for equal rights, equal pay, and civil liberties for all Blacks. Reverend Boles was the Pastor of St. Johns Baptist Church and a constant proponent for civil rights. Elona Palms, writing for Tacoma Community History Project, reports:

Reverend Joseph A. Boles was the pastor of the St. John Baptist Church in Tacoma, Washington from 1952-2000 and a prominent civil rights advocate and community activist. Boles, who grew up in Tennessee, founded his Tacoma church in 1952 and became deeply involved with the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. (Palms, 1991 p.43)

Sam Daniels is a member of St John's Baptist Church and also marched and demonstrated to bring to light the issues of racial discrimination, segregation, and employee discrimination.

Daniels recalls:

We used to do a lot of marching I was a member of St. John's. (St. John's Baptist Church) The ministers Rev. Brazill and Rev. Bose and Rev. Montgomery and Bishop Westbrook they marched we was the one that got the first Black lady workin' in the store up here on MLK way. I forget her name now I am trying to think of the family but that was the first Black upon the Hilltop working at the grocery store. (Appendix C: p.5)

Another leader instrumental in the struggle for civil rights in Tacoma was Reverend Earnest Stonewall Brazill. He was born in 1910 and passed away in 2000. He moved to Tacoma in 1949 from Albany, Georgia, and became the first Pastor of Shiloh in 1955. As the pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church located on the Hilltop, he was a principal advocate for civil rights in Tacoma: "Brazill and other local African American ministers formed the Tacoma Ministers

Alliance, which, along with other community groups and activists, organized protests against discriminatory hiring practices and housing discrimination during the 1950s and 1960s. Brazill continued to work on civil rights issues throughout his lengthy career” (Tacoma Community History Project, 1991 n.p.).

The hard work of Boles and Brazill cannot be overemphasized. These church leaders were instrumental in the fight for civil rights, equality, and the fight to end segregation. Without their contributions, hard work, and dedication the Hilltop might look very different today:

In the 1950s and 1960s Black church leaders came to the forefront to combat prejudice in unemployment and housing. The Tacoma Ministers Alliance, led by Rev. E. S. Brazil, Rev. J. A. Boles and Rev. Wilson, confronted employers in the retail, supermarket and banking industries to generate employment opportunities for the black community. (Tacoma Community History Project, 1991 n.p.)

Betty Mewborn remembers how Rev. Brazill helped in the endeavors of local community activists by allowing them to use church facilities:

Then they had the Black Panthers over in Seattle and believe or not we had Harambee over here and Harold Moss was with us. He used to come over there to the meetings. Reverend Brazill even let us meet at Shiloh in the basement during that time. [Reverend E.S Brazill Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church] What they were doing was keeping people together. (Appendix A: p.15)

I was not able to obtain any information on what Harambee was or its function within the Hilltop’s Black community. According to Betty Mewborn, however, the organization served the community in a similar fashion to the Black Panther Party. She goes on further to define and outline the efforts and works of Harambee within the community:

Yea it was just like the Black Panthers they had in Seattle, but we weren't Black panthers. We went around speaking to different places we went to the YWCA and spoke down there and you could see some of the prejudice just boom out the people asking questions. Even though a lot of Blacks really didn't agree cus once a lot of times when you come up here from down South or somewhere and you think your living better sometimes you stop fighting for what you know that you need to. (Appendix A:p.16)

Not the Hilltop You Remembered

Shiloh Baptist and St. John's Baptist were but a few churches active in the Hilltop neighborhood. These churches were instrumental in fighting housing segregation and employment discrimination, and also advocated for fair and equal treatment of all people. The ability to find gainful employment was an issue with many new Black residents. As Sam Daniels put it:

When I first come here, there was two people when I came here, there wasn't too many Black peoples in the stores. Sears used to be down on one them streets down there I think its Market. There was two people there that was Mrs. McDaniel, Mrs. Capers and Mrs. Black that was all. When you come up here, there was a big store right down the street there it was on that corner right there right 'bout where we was working were the barber shop were and that big grocery store there. And Blacks was up here going in the store to buying groceries and wasn't no Blacks in [working] the store at all. (Appendix C: p.5)

Eventually the marching and demonstrating by members of the Hilltop's Black community yielded dividends in the form of jobs for Blacks of the Hilltop community. As Daniels explained, as least one neighborhood resident found employment on the Hilltop:

I forget her name now I am trying to think of the family, but that was the first Black upon the Hilltop working at the grocery store. (Inaudible). There used to be a little ole store right down there where Speedy Mart is you know down on 19th? (Appendix C: p.5)

The ability to financially support a family is an important part of survival, yet Black folks of the Hilltop were underrepresented in the work force in the same neighborhood where they lived and shopped for daily provisions. Sam Daniels' story includes the names of those employers who would hire Black Americans:

Mostly Blacks was working out to Fort Lewis and ... that's where the Blacks was working at or Atlas fonder. So Fort Lewis and ... Atlas Founders and the one right down on this hill right there the one on Wilkerson, Yeah that Atlas Foundation that where the majority Blacks worked. (Appendix C: p.5)

This was an extremely vital piece of information because throughout my research Daniels was the only person that had any knowledge of where Blacks worked and who they worked for. His oral history also highlights the type of employment opportunities that were afforded to Blacks of the region:

A lot of Blacks was working there. Then Griffin wheels, like I told you, right on 56th go down 56th Street heading West then you come back up about 4 or 5 blocks back up in there. It's not there no more it where they made train wheels. (Griffin Wheel 5202 South Proctor)[SJ] Griffin Wheels?[SD] Yea (Inaudible) and that butcher shop downtown. Used to be a big butcher shop downtown, I forget the name of it and out there on Ruston Way.[SJ] Your talking about Asarco the plant?[SD] Yeah the one that they tore down![SJ] Yeah Asarco![SD] That's where most of the Black people worked. But now got it pretty well, you know you go out to the Mall now wasn't no Mall then. (Appendix C: p.5)

I will not go so far as to say that most jobs available to these new Blacks were labor intensive. What I will say is that the jobs or employment opportunities that were available to them were limited. Those that were considered good or high-paying jobs were even less possible to obtain. Rebecca Crist, writing for Tacoma Community History Projects, explored long-shoring at the Port of Tacoma docks. Tacoma had an open policy of hiring all whom applied for

employment, but who and how many were hired was always left in the hands of union administrators. Crist's oral history narrator Wardell Canada Jr., speaking on behalf of his father, stated:

Tacoma had open hiring from the beginning. Other ports opened hiring in the early part of the century, but some, such as Portland held out and did not open up hiring to blacks until 1966. But his dad felt that although there was open hiring in Tacoma, the numbers of blacks were limited by the union only taking in two black members at a time. This diluted the black working population and was a form of control. When Wardell began long shoring there were some (and still are) black foremen and gang bosses, but the total number of blacks remains small. (Crist, 1995 p.5)

What I can conclude from the narrator's perspective is that while blacks did have job opportunities as Longshoremen, Blacks were underrepresented in this job relative to the percentage of Blacks in Tacoma at the time.

I have discussed elements of employment discrimination and the lack of employment opportunities for Blacks in the Hilltop community. But as Daniels reference to Black-owned businesses indicates, another avenue was open to them. Out of four narrators, two owned their own businesses, so we must consider that there were a few Blacks who created their own economic stability, by starting and controlling their own businesses. Sam Daniels ran and operated a barber shop along with lifelong friend Terry Norris. Daniels informs me that he was still working at McNeil Penitentiary as a maintenance foreman while he and Terry were running their barber shop at night:

I worked there for 6 years and I retired from that. I worked there and then I barber at night. A few of them probably remember Terry and I used to work Asians and we had other guys working in the barber shop it was Nash and one is Virgil Holyfield and Mr. Jones. They run the shop in the daytime and I worked at night. When I retired then we worked in the daytime that when we started working till 6. We was working till

midnight the shop was open till midnight then. [SJ] In the 70's it was open till midnight? [SD] Yeah up until 73 till midnight! (Appendix C: p.2)

Indeed, both Daniels and Terry were working full time jobs during the day and by night running Sam & Terry's barber shop until midnight. Kitty Scott, a long-time Hilltop resident, was another small business owner who operated in the neighborhood. The House of Scott Funeral Home, originally founded by Kitty Scotts' husband L'Ray Scott, has been at 1215 Martin Luther King Jr. Way for 48 years and is one of the last old businesses left in the area along-side Sam & Terry's Barber shop.

Chapter Seven: Hilltop Community Life

While Blacks faced many challenges on the Hilltop, there was much that made life enjoyable as well. Many of my narrators told me of the places where Blacks would go to shop, eat, and recreate. Their stories suggest that there were not many places for Blacks to go and socialize. Betty Mewborn painted a vivid description of what Black-folks did do for fun and entertainment in the area:

Mostly like I said during that time it was like on Broadway they called it during that time. That was where African Americans/ Blacks they hung out with their taverns and their restaurants and things like that. [SJ] On Broadway? [BM] Umm Hmm! They had a record shop down there and cleaner's cus my uncle Bill they had a restaurant that was right on the corner of 17th and Broadway and fu rther down they had a casino, tavern, and the [Inaudible] was cross the street from [Thinking] what did they call it, the other one that they had down there. I can't even think of it. It was where they had a lot of entertainment. So Broadway was the majority of Black owned. [SJ] Businesses! [BM] Businesses! [SJ] Wow! I never knew that. [BM] Oh really! Yea! And the different down there was like Rice Bowl Chinese restaurant it was on the corner of like 15th, I think 15th and Broadway Chinese restaurant. It was all up and down on Broadway just for a 2 to 3 blocks and then right in the back it was a Congo place. [Inaudible] was a restaurant and you would see everyone come up in there and eat the Congo was right across the street.

The Congo was where they used to have entertainment and bands and everything you know and go down there. And right below there it was a place on Market and Pacific Avenue now I can't really remember that name right now, but it was like the ones that were up on the hill up on Broadway cus it was going right down the hill. (Appendix A: p.6)

Kitty Scott, having been in the community for many years, knew of the local establishments and restaurants that Black Hilltop residents were known to frequent:

Well if you talking 'bout the places when I was a little girl. Now they had something called the Rice Bowl and they had some juke joints as they would say in the South, they had some juke joints in the South, but it wasn't nothing that I attended. Now somebody that's in their 70's or 80's would know more 'bout those cus, I was a little girl. But they had some places one was the Rice Bowl and there's some other things, but I can't remember all of those names. But they were Downtown Tacoma that's 'bout all I can remember then, cus I never attended any of that. (Appendix D: p.10)

Kitty Scott also recalls how Blacks from around Tacoma and the country would go to Ruston Way waterfront once a year for an annual event. Scott tells me:

There was a place down on the water on Ruston Way Called the Top of the Ocean. And the Top of the Ocean was a place every February that they would have a special banquet and Blacks would come from far I mean just a lot of Blacks and there would be a fashion show, a banquet and a fashion show. (Appendix D: p.10)

Entertainment and night life were not the only pastimes and out-of-home enjoyments for Blacks of the area. The Peoples Community Center and Al Davis Boys & Girls Club provided public meeting spaces for the youth and adults of the Hilltop. The construction of the People's Center came about because of endeavors of a strong community. Constructed in the 1960s, its original name was the Malcom X Center. By the 1970s, growing concerns over inadequate

facilities forced the City of Tacoma to pursue federal assistance for a more up to date center. The community had grown and so too had the needs of the neighborhood. Therefore the Malcolm X center was moved to a larger facility. At this time the name was also changed.² According to Metro Parks Tacoma, “People's Center has served as a cornerstone of the community for meeting and social functions.” (Metro Parks, 2015 n.p.)The original Tacoma Boys Club was located at 711 South 25th Street. The intent of its founder, Judge Fred Remann, was to fulfill the communal desires of youths from the ages of 6-16, providing a place that kept them occupied and off the streets. Peoples Community Center and the Al Davis Boys & Girls Club both emerged in my narrators’ oral histories as intricate parts of the neighborhood. For example, Mary Doss, mother of eight children and a long-term resident of the Hilltop, allowed her own children to frequent both neighborhood facilities:

[SJ] Did your kids go to the neighborhood community centers like did they go to People’s Center or the Boy’s Club? [MD] Both Boy’s Club and People’s Center. [SJ] Did you like either of them better? [MD] I think they were ok in all of them. Cus they would go mama I am going to go play basketball, I would let ’em go play. [SJ] You let them walk up that way? [MD] Um hmm! They walk up that way, two of them walk together. They had little friends they can walk with, but not everybody you can’t be with everybody.

Chapter Eight: The Notorious Hilltop

My narrators suggest that the Hilltop’s Black population was diverted into segregated neighborhoods by active forms of residential discrimination and that the result was living in a declining inner city neighborhood, lacking economic stability, and with poor political

² While none of my oral history narrators addressed this issue, it is well known in the neighborhood that the name was changed for political reason. I strongly suspect, as do many in the neighborhood, that that City leaders believed their application for federal funds would be more successful if the name were less controversial.

representation until relatively late in the neighborhood's history (see discussion in Chapter Six: Segregation & the Power of Prayer). Each of the aforementioned difficulties was problematic on its own, but in combination they represented a generally disheartening experience of being Black within the Hilltop. As more Blacks continued to be diverted into the neighborhood, the circumstances only became worse. Michelle Treat's states: "substandard housing, drug problems and crime continued to increase. Racial tensions increased as racism continued to plague residents already overwhelmed by the system, Hilltop was on its way down" (Treat, 1991 pg.5). Treat is essentially arguing that if a population lacks the ability to earn a decent living wage, find safe affordable housing, and be treated equally, a stigmatized and dysfunctional inner city neighborhood is inevitable.

Crime and Grime

Eventually, disinvestment, abandonment, and dilapidated housing left much of the area vulnerable to gangs and the crack cocaine epidemic. Charles Walker, Treat's oral history narrator, states: "...the Blacks started moving in much heavier. The area became predominant black. From '58 to the mid 60's, it got real bad, real bad. Robberies, we didn't have drug problems, but we did have a lot of robberies, stealing and what not, and killings" (Treat, 1991 pg.4). With the continued economic instability in the Hilltop, gangs became a dangerous presence in the area. Indeed, Tacoma's Hilltop community became home to some of the most notorious gangs of the 1980's -- the Hilltop Crips and the Hilltop Bloods -- as well as a site for the mass production and sale of crack cocaine. Along with the gangs came violence in the form of shootings, assaults, and homicides. Some residents even expressed the fear of leaving their own homes. Mary Doss expressed her concerns during that time this way:

When I First moved here, my sister and I used to just get out and walk and was ok. As we had been here for maybe 'bout 20 years or so, then it start changing. [SJ] Changing how? [MD] It's changing cus you know when you can't walk the street. We would sit out in the yard right here, they had a club down there, so you would have to run around the house when they start to shooting cus the bullets come this way. [SJ] Do you remember around what time you started noticing the change in the neighborhood? [MD] I would say (She counts the years) somewhere in the 80's. [SJ] Somewhere in the 80's! [MD] Yea 80's! That's when it really started changing for the worst. (Appendix B: p.2)

Abandoned homes became drug houses for the sale of crack cocaine and gang members meeting grounds. A publication written for the Hilltop Action Coalition states:

The Crips formed the Hilltop Crips while the Bloods settled on the east side of Tacoma. The two gangs visited each other's turf for drive-by shootings. Crack cocaine, says Hopkins, was fuel for the fire. With the onset of crack cocaine, it just went crazy—a lot of shootings, aggravated assaults, and the homicide rate went way up. The police department wasn't prepared to deal with it. (Hilltop Action Coalition 2010, p.5)

Sam Daniels had a different take on the gang members of the neighborhood:

Oh yea! Well that was later in you know the later years 70 or 80's when all the gangs come up from California it was pretty rough, but I wasn't hard on me. We had no trouble with 'em a lot people that it was real bad but it wasn't as bad as people said it were as far as the gangs concerned. They would come out in front of my shop course all the kids at that time especially the guys that grew up here knew Terry and I. they come there and stand around the shop I walk up and tell 'em, hey you guys y'all want the barber shop closed? They say no no no we don't want the barber shop closed. You know if they close the barber shop you won't have a place up here to get a haircut, they say ok Mr. Sam ok Sam. Some of them say, is ok if we go on that corner right there, I said I tell y'all, you doing your thing I'm doin' my thing here, I would rather for you not to be on that corner you know ok ok we give you some space. I got a lot of respect from them guys they just move on move away, but it was a lot of shooting, boy. (Appendix C: p.3)

Kitty Scott experienced first-hand the dangers of gang violence when her business was personally threatened during a funeral service:

And then mortuary-wise the time since my husband's been gone I'll just talk about that since he's been gone and having gangs services. And folks wanting to call me and tell me they gonna shoot the service up. [SJ] you had somebody call you and tell you they were going to shoot your service up? [KS] Oh yeah! [SJ] Why? [KS] It's crazy I had to have the police at the door. Ok you know how it is to come right up to the door? He had to park his car right up by my door. [SJ] Wow! [KS] To keep them from just taking over! Right here then walk down the street and then their family saying yeah there they are right there. They'd get so bold they'd walk right here right by you know so. I mean people were just nuts. So what we did if we got in a situation like that we'd close the visitation down. That's what I did personally I don't have to put up with this crap. (Appendix D: p.12)

During the rough and extremely dangerous times of the late 80's through the late 90's, the Hilltop gang population and culture grew substantially, as did seemingly random acts of violence. Mary Doss articulates the story of how she and her family were positioned in a dangerous situation with her children in the home:

I don't know what I would change. But thing about it is when I call the police it took 'em too long to get here. When the guy was breaking in the house, I want you to come right then, but somebody gave them the wrong address. [SJ] They showed up at the wrong place? [MD] they showed up at the wrong place! And the man out there (Gestures the man hitting her glass door with a rock) with this rock and they told me not to touch the rock cus they wanted to get something off it or something [SJ] Oh, they wanted to get finger prints off it! [MD] But I was so afraid kids I said nope. I put everybody in that back room cus I was down in there on my knees with the gun. I didn't wanna shoot the kid and when the police they came they said I thought I heard a shot, I was afraid to tell the police I shot. [SJ] Did you eventually tell them? [MD] Um hmm! You know they can smell it anyways, there's a shot out there and they came running. (Appendix B: pg.8)

Similarly, Sam Daniels describes an occasion where a shop patron was targeted by gang members and his barber shop was hit by gunfire:

One time we had a guy in the shop he was a gang member friend of mine forget his name now. He was laying there to get a haircut and a shave and man they drive by came by. They looked in the window seen him laying in the chair. I said carl guys is looking in he raised up oh they looking for me. Then he got up went to the door (Boom

boom boom) and they shot at him right by me guy right next to me feel on the floor. Then they went back in the back BJ everybody knows BJ and Mr. Jones (Inaudible) they jammed each other to get in that bathroom trying to get out the way. (Laughing) The guy left and ran out (Inaudible) but he came back to see how we was doin' and everything makin' sure that nobody got shot. That's the only thing we had done far as any danger, but it was pretty rough at that time you know guys out there drive by shooting. (Inaudible) change a whole lot you still probably have a few gangs around here they not like they were at that time pretty dangerous. Looking for a young guy like you to get involved in that stuff they kill ya blow you up, they didn't care nothing 'bout each other Black on Black crime pretty rough it was dangerous. (Appendix C: p.4)

It is worth noting that my narrators were all grandparents and great grandparents, so their perception of the gangs could have differed from that of their children and grandchildren. Kitty Scott describes an instance where her children were influenced by gang life:

Well how it affected my children was, my husband know he needed to keep them at home in the yard (Laughing). Oh it kinda of way out there! We were at the stop light on 19th and Sprague at one time we could hit the freeway from Sprague they kinda of messed it up a little bit when they didn't do that turn right. But anyway, I guess I was driving and my husband maybe he was riding and we know they was looking at us kinda hard the gang folks were. And I told my husband look over there and then once when my son was in the car my oldest son. He was goin to throw a C for Crip and I said if you do I will break your arm. But they would, oh they would get real crazy, my children would get real crazy. That real tall boy that's here right now they'd be somewhere and folks was throwing gang signs oh I jacked, oh my God (Inaudible). I am glad that they understood that they did and I would hurt' em, because they just get all riled up and wanna fight folks. (Appendix D: p.11)

The allure of gang life and the culture that surrounded it may have proved too much for many young people to resist, but that was not the case in Betty Mewborn's home:

I had couple foster children I remember one afternoon I'm hearing all this, what is all that? KoShawn was in there and I guess Shane and couple more had said I had Shane but I don't know if you know Shane. Shane for a foster child and somebody else they said Koshawn was in there and he wasn't any bigger and they could have jumped on him and beat him or anything Shane and Cliff. He said there will be no gangs in my grandmother's house you take this out and they could have just jumped Koshawn but they

respected him and everybody up around here. I have had mothers call me and ask me could their son go to church with us; could they come over and spend the weekend and go to Church with us? I said sure! A lot of them used to come over and know and spend the night and they would go to Church. It's how your raising them, I think and also you have to let them know their just as good as everybody else and they don't have to fight and do all. Cus in the long run they don't own anything they don't even own themselves. You know! Definitely don't own the penitentiary cus that's where they headed to. (Appendix A: p.11)

Similarly, Mary Doss's approach to dealing with the gangs and their possible influence on her children was to be an active participant in their lives and keep them grounded in the church:

[SJ] how did you keep your kids away from that? You had 9 kids 10 kids? [MD] 8! [SJ] 8kids! How were you able as a mother to keep all your kids away from that life, because I mean it was literally surrounding them? [MD] Every time I get out here and go to church they coming to and they going in and going to school. What time school out I go back and walk 'em home till they grow up. Get me and my dog and go walk 'em. Bring 'em home and thank God they paid attention. (Mary Doss told her kids) Don't do that just because this kid did, mama you what he did, don't you do it. Don't take anything from anybody, cus they can give you something and you standing there holding it when the police come. Then they gone and you be there holding the bag, so forget. They let people hold something they see the police, hold that. Police come up there you standing there holding the bag, I got from who, what's his name. Who gonna believe that? [SJ] Nobody! [MD] Um Um! I said come on. That's why I kept in BTU, I kept 'em in church all the time and when they come home, I let 'em be kids they gotta be kids, but don't come in here with all that grumbling aint goin to be no drankin and aint goin be no fighting you know kids get in arguments we did too! But I tried my best to keep 'em straighten out teach 'em how to read the Bible teach 'em how to pray. Then tell 'em there is a heaven and a hell. Which one you wanna go? Then we take 'em to movies all of them get in movie and go somewhere together. (Appendix B: pg.13)

The common thread that tied some of my narrators together, regarding gangs and gang violence, was that they chose to be active parents and did not allow the outside influence of gangs to penetrate their home life. They knew where their children were at all the times and they kept them out of environments where they could be harmed. One of the most important actions

taken by each parent was teaching their kids right from wrong and making sure they understood the dangers that were around them. Lastly, they were all self-described God fearing parents who made sure religion and spirituality were the very essence of their beings.

From the late 1970's until the late 1990's the Hilltop was engulfed with gangs, drugs, and violence. Some neighbors chose to fight back and to take matters into their own hands. One particular event that made the national news in 1989 was a Gun battle between the Hilltop Crips and a group of United States Army Rangers. The New York Time reports,

A dozen off-duty soldiers from Fort Lewis engaged in a 30-minute gun battle last weekend against a group of alleged drug dealers. Hundreds of rounds from handguns, shotguns and semiautomatic weapons were fired, witnesses said, but no one was hurt. When the police arrived in the drug-ridden neighborhood, they arrested two young men suspected of being crack dealers and took the soldiers' weapons, which were privately owned. The gunfight involved members of the Army Rangers, an elite force of light infantry, and it happened Saturday night outside the home of one of them, Sgt. Bill Foulk. (New York Times, 1989 n.p.)

It is important to note that one of the Rangers was a resident of the neighborhood.

Chapter Nine: The Return of the Hilltop

The Hilltop experienced a resurgence of economic stability starting with groups like the Hilltop Action Coalition:

Over the past 21 years, Hilltop Action Coalition (HAC) and its partners in the Tacoma Police Department have written the hand book on successful community policing. HAC shares its knowledge with other Tacoma neighborhoods and cities across the country while continuing to build on its efforts to secure the 100-block neighborhood known as the Hilltop as a dynamic, welcoming and safe place to live. (Hilltop Action Coalition, 2010 pg.3)

Involving the community in all endeavors to make their neighborhood safe and crime free is the main focus of HAC. In addition, the reinvestment of financial capital has brought business and

vitality back to the area in a much needed way. Revitalization has come in the form of sponsoring business improvement projects, art museums, and home improvement loans.

The economic resurgence of the Hilltop was a collective effort and was sponsored by city officials, private businesses, investment groups, and concerned citizens. Along with the revitalization of the area some long-time residents and business owners were asked to move by the city citing eminent domain precedents. Sam Daniels a long-time businessman was asked to move from his original location, where he had been a fixture in the community for over 50 years:

[SJ] Why did they make you move from the shop that was on K Street? [SD] They put that parking lot! [SJ] So did the city forced you? [SD] Yeah, yeah yeah that parking lot! See that parking lot right there. You know where we were right there across the street from that Boy's Club (Peoples Community Center). They sold that to St Joseph's Hospital that's a parking lot. [SJ] Who sold it to them? [SD] The guy who owned it we didn't own it. You see it a big ole building I worked for a guy named (Inaudible). I was renting from (inaudible) and he died and his wife sold that building. I tried to buy it, me and a group of people. We wanted to buy that building, but couldn't get enough folks to do it. So they sold that lot to St. Joseph's. St. Joe's bought 'em out! All that stuff they bought 'em out cus they wanna improve and they wanted a parking lot. That's the reason we moved out, because if you look at it now it's a parking lot there. In fact all the stuff right there used to be houses on this side of 17th. 1600 Block they bought all that stuff out cus they wanted. (Appendix C: p.9)

Although many Hilltop residents were pleased with the efforts to reinvest capital and revitalize their community, others, such as Sam Daniels, were adversely affected by the growth and development which was pushed by the city.

But how do residents of the Hilltop feel about their neighborhood today? All of my oral history narrators have hope for the present and future of Hilltop. Mary Doss attributes the changes in the neighborhood to the city use of a curfew put in place in 1995: "Since January 1995, the City of Tacoma has had a juvenile curfew law that prohibits youth under the age of 18

from being out in public between the hours of midnight and 6 AM. Both youth and their parents may be cited for violating this ordinance” (City of Tacoma, 2007 n.p.). Mary Doss was pleased with the ordinance and argues:

[SJ] Would you recommend this neighborhood to anybody else if they were moving if they wanted a place to live?[MD] Yeah I would! [SJ] Why?[MD] Cus I like the people are nice and I know everybody's now. I don't know everybody name down street, but I guess because we get along and kids can walk down the street. One, (Inaudible) while they couldn't walk down the street. You probably heard about two they shot. They was out in the yard they just drove by and shot 'em for nothing little kids. I always tell my kids y'all come back in on this side no y'all stay over here. [SJ] What changed? [MD] I don't know what changed. Oh I know why! Because the police had started this curfew thang. They had a certain time peoples had to be off the street down here and if they wasn't they come down here with this speaker said, time to go be off the street everybody off the street. And I liked that! And they came down here one time when Reverend Brazill and them, he was alive. He said they had was it 30 some people they picked up in one night they was still trying to be tough and they picked 'em off the street and took 'em to jail, you ain't off the street pick you up take you on down. (Appendix B: p.17)

Kitty Scott felt that education and the church were the most important aspects of the Hilltop:

Well number 1 is that I'd talk about Evergreen State College that would be 1 and the different founders of course everybody knows it was founded at Dr. Mimms' kitchen table. That's real important to me the educational portion of it. And tell the story of how she was able to educate even the drug people even when they were on drugs and how she was able to bring the best in people out. Number 2, well you know there was a St. John Baptist church and Pastor J. Ables and I don't know if you know him personally but I actually knew him personally and he actually baptized me. So the Christian perspective should be there you know so those are the two things that I would think the educational and the Christian perspective.(Appendix D: p.16)

Betty Mewborn also feels the bad rap that the Hilltop has received of the last 20 years is now gone. Furthermore, she believes that other neighborhoods, such as the East side, Lakewood, and Fircrest, are seeing a rise crime and violence:

It's a better thing now, I don't think at first a long time ago when I moved here it was a good thing cus they weren't very nice they were very rude. I think cus they think they had a pupose you know the crips and the bloods and all the different fights and people. [SJ] Their better now? [BM] I think their better now. [SJ] Would you say a lot of the gangs and the criminal element that was so overpublicized in the neighborhood would you say a lot of that is gone now? [BM] Yea, (inaudible). Matter of fact Fircrest, Lakewood and all of it, I think it's worse than it is in this area. But hilltop was the area that they to me they kinda picked on, and on the east side it's a lot of it over there. [SJ] If you had to do it all over again would you stay in the neighborhood? [BM] I think I would, cus right now Koshawn always tells me grandma I want first choice at this house, they want to be back here.(Appendix A: p.18)

Sam Daniels has mixed feelings about the direction city officials are heading concerning today's Hilltop Community. On the one hand the reinvestment into this historic neighborhood is a good thing, but at what expense will all the change come? Daniels states:

Sound Transit they supposed to come up here. That's goin mess up that street! If they mess up that street where the parking goin be? [SJ] No Parking! You'll have no parking! [SD] If you gonna put that down the center of the street you gonna mess this street up. They talking 'bout that and their trying to beautify. Last year they came up and said some things what they was gonna do. They was beautify the street put trees I don't like tree no way. I don't care about trees. I mean they look good in the summer time, but you got all them leaves to deal with in the fall of the year. Man it's a lota work to keep that stuff clean! I think its ok. [SJ] Can you tell me something about this neighborhood that most people might not know? [SD] Something 'bout this place people might not know![SJ] Not to say you haven't told me already a lot that most people don't know.[SD] People might not know really that it's a good place to live the Hilltop. Especially people that never lived there, peoples hearing about up here in the Hilltop might not know it's a nice place to live. (Appendix C: p.10)

Chapter Ten: Summary and Conclusion

These are some stories of the Hilltop as told by those who live there. Betty Mewborn, Mary Doss, Sam Daniels and Kitty Scott have given their historical accounts of what it was to be

Black living on the Hilltop in the post-World War II era. Their stories add significantly to the historical record.

The goal of this thesis was to fill a gap in knowledge about Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. I have provided a brief history of the Hilltop for context. But primarily I wanted to create a space for everyday people who lived in the Hilltop to tell their stories, including their understandings of how this particular neighborhood became predominantly Black, and how they understand its more recent history. Along the way I struggled with the challenge of adding the voice of Black Americans to the discussion. I wanted to contribute to the conversation without diminishing the work of others. Another trial I faced was how to tell the story of Blacks on the Hilltop with little-to-no data on the subject. That is another reason for telling the story through the voices of ordinary residents of the neighborhood. Doing so adds grassroots data to Tacoma's local historical text and to the greater history of the Pacific Northwest. I collected oral histories from four ordinary, long-term residents with the goal of allowing each of them to share *their* stories of life in the Hilltop. The goal was only to tell *these* stories, not *the* Blacks in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood.

For most of my life I have been connected to Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, whether as a member of the Al Davis Boys and Girls club during my youth, or the Peoples Community Center as an adult. I am well acquainted with this neighborhood. Growing up, especially during my high school years, most of my friends lived in this area. So when it was time to research a community, I chose the one that I felt I was most connected to and possessed a bit of knowledge about. But once I began to research and examine this neighborhood, the Hilltop took on a whole new meaning to me. I had always assumed it to be a historically or predominately Black neighborhood, which was not entirely accurate.

What I learned is that some Blacks didn't come to the Hilltop willingly. They were diverted there by realtors and banks. According to three of my oral history narrators they knew and understood that the "Hill" was where most Blacks lived, and were found in very few places outside of that, because localities like the North End, Ruston Way, and Fircrest were off limits. I deduce from the information obtained through my oral history narrators that Blacks were almost certainly diverted into, or at least perceived themselves to have been presented only with the option of living in the Hilltop, Salishan, Lincoln Heights, or Hawthorne District (Appendix D: p.10-11) (Appendix C: p.6). In other words, my narrators experienced Tacoma as a segregated city, regardless of what the processes were that created that experience. Similarly, the oral histories and archival investigation undertaken for this thesis suggest that Blacks often did face discrimination in housing and employment.

My narrators helped fill gaps in the historical record regarding the Hilltop in a number of respects. Sam Daniels, Betty Mewborn, Mary Doss, and Kitty Scott told stories that I had never heard. They told stories of where black-folks lived, where they shopped, where they ate dinner, and what they did for entertainment (Appendix A: p.6) (Appendix C: p.5) (Appendix D: p.10). I was impressed with each person's ability to recall people, places, and personal experiences. It wasn't until I matured as an adult that I began to understand why so many Black Americans were concentrated in this area.

The goal that I set out to accomplish was to add stories of the private lives of Blacks to the public discussion of the history of the Hilltop. What I have learned is that Blacks coming to the Northwest experienced struggles similar to their southern counterparts. But what I truly walked away with is the knowledge Blacks did add to the social fabric of Tacoma, and more specifically the Hilltop. Finally this thesis is just a small piece of a much larger puzzle. When we

discuss people of color in the Northwest there needs to be much more research for the entire story to be uncovered.

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Appendix A: Betty Mewborn Oral History of the Hilltop

Narrator: Betty Mewborn, born in Huston Texas, moved to Tacoma at the age of nine. She has been living in the Hilltop for over 40 years. Mewborn is a founder and active participant in a cancer advocacy program for African Americans and people of color located on the Hilltop.

Date: February 10, 2015 2:10pm

Collected by: Shawn Jenkins

Place: Home Tacoma, WA

[Shawn Jenkins] Good afternoon this is Shawn Jenkins; I am interviewing Betty Mewborn on February 10th, 2015 at 2:10 in the afternoon.

[SJ] Good afternoon Mrs. Mewborn

[Betty Mewborn] Good afternoon sir!

[SJ] Where are you from?

[BM] I was born in Houston Texas.

[SJ] How did you end up living in Tacoma Washington?

[BM] Family was already up here. Bill York the York's were up here and the York's were related to my grandmother and my grandfather and they had been up here for a while. Very few people of color were up here at that time. We kind of came up here in little groups my mother, my dad, my brothers and we all came up. Like I said the whole family eventually all ended up here.

[SJ] How long have you been in Tacoma Washington now?

[BM] I've been in Tacoma probably for about 68 years.

[SJ] Ok. How long have you been living in the Hilltop area?

[BM] Probably for the last 35/40 years, because during that time they didn't call on Fawcett Street Hilltop and that's where we all lived when we had came here on Fawcett Ave. Fawcett Avenue!

[SJ] Did you go to school in the area?

[BM]Umm Hmm. I went to Central Elementary School and that's between 6th and 5th and Tacoma Avenue. It's an administrative school now, a lot of people didn't know that that was an elementary school, but I went to elementary school there from the 4th grade to the 6th.

[SJ] When did they shut that down?

[BM] I really don't know!

[SJ] But it's been sometime?

[BM] It's been a while. Yeah it's been a while since it's been an administrative school.

[SJ] So what's your experience been like living on the hill? I say Hilltop, we say hill for short, but you've been here for some time so you've seen a lot, you've watched the neighborhood change. What has that experience been like?

[BM] Well To be truthful when I lived down on Fawcett it was wonderful because we didn't know. All my friends the few that were people of color or Black they lived Market, Fawcett, and Tacoma Avenue and it was Japanese, Chinese and we all went to school together and we didn't pay it any attention, so it was fine living down there. Except it was a lot of military people lived down that area. And I had one experience that would bring a person back to reality. When I was going to Central the girl next door and I were really good friends and so she asked her dad could I ride with them out to Fort Lewis one day. So we were all riding out to fort Lewis and everything and then he got to pointing out this is where such and such a people live and he says then this is where the Niggers live. And I just kinda tighten up and I could feel her tighten up and he caught his self after he said that, you know. I never said anything I went and told my mom, which was the wrong person to tell. [Laughing] No, it was the right person to tell because she doesn't take anything. So she really really lit into him and he was in the military stationed at Fort Lewis. That was really my first experience of seeing the prejudice and knowing there was some anyway can't put on blinders or anything, but you know there is some.

[SJ] So you were fairly young when you left Houston?

[BM] Oh Yes! Yes!

[SJ] You never got a chance to see what it was like in the South as supposed to what it was like here in the Northwest?

[BM] No not really! You know you hear about it, but your living in the South and your living in a neighborhood where it's all people of color you know all Black and the school was all Black and the high school was the one that my mom had went too you know that was all Black. Like I said I was born in Houston Texas in 5th ward.

[SJ] Wow! How old were you when you left ward, 5th ward?

[BM Oh, God Shawn!

[SJ] Laughing.

[BM] Right now I turned 76 and it's hard for me to believe that, but I am 76 years old. So it was like, I been up here. What I tell you? I was in the 4th grade and actually I was in the 5th grade, but they don't believe in skipping you in school up here and I really belonged in the 4th grade, but I had got skipped a couple of grades when I was in Houston and so they put me back to the grade that matched my age.

[SJ] So 4th grade you were roughly I would say about 9 or 10?

[BM] Oh yea, I was between 8 or 9 years old yeah. About 9 years old.

[SJ] Have you lived anywhere else on the Hilltop?

[BM] Other than on Fawcett, we lived on G Street for a while later on when we all branched off from that house out there. That wasn't really bad, because most of my experience of the little prejudice showed when I was in central. When there was a girl outside playing on the swings one day and the 3 or 4 of us Jessie Green and Luther Car and some of us we were out there. So we were playing and the girl said, "Everywhere I go I don't see nothing, but niggers". That word I hate you know and that's what she said. I will never forget her name Marie Marbella. I don't think she ever said that word again.

[SJ] Umm. Laughter!

[BM] I be truthful and I am not a one that fight, but I tried my best to beat her up. I did beat her. Cus I went to Stadium where she was Marie was the sweetest thing you know. Then I had an experience in the school when the teacher what was reading Huckleberry Fin or Tom Sawyer the one where they had nigger in there quite a bit.

[SJ] Right! Right!

[BM] I was the only Black in there, and the teacher read and she read and they would just bust out laughing and everything. So I went home and told my mom as usual, and mother came back with me to school with me the next day on the bus and she asked the teacher, Why are you reading this and kids bust out laughing and all that? So she made the excuse of, she says, well I really didn't mean to do anything like that, but I really like Black people better than I do. There's no way in the world! My mother lit into her, but she was nice about it you know your gonna tell me your (In audible). Because I'm the only child there was only one person of color in that room. So that's where my most experience came from in school. I am probably wondering off Shawn.

[SJ] No you're alright. So you lived on G Street did you live anywhere else on the hill?

[BM] No! When we left from G Street we moved on E Street. East E.

[SJ] East E! From East E how did you end up here?

[BM] How'd I end up here? My mother when they built the Dome (Tacoma Dome) was still living on East E. When I got married and then I moved away from home and everything, then I moved up on the hill.

[SJ] And that's when you went to G street?

[BM] No! I went to G Street before, we went to G Street when we were over there. Cus I caught the bus from Eastside to Stadium, I went to Stadium High School.

[SJ] Ok! So you left E and moved back to this side of town. Where did you end up when you moved back out of your mother's house to here?

[BM] I moved on Fawcett, that was my first experience really away from home.

[SJ] Would this be still considered L Street?

[BM] This is L Street. See that's the front is right there, you just drive up through the alley.

[SJ] How long have you been here on 25th and L?

[BM] Probably about 25 years; because before then I lived on L Street. When I moved away from home I moved on Fawcett, and then from Fawcett got a little bigger place moved on L Street 2111 L I think. From L Street, I purchased a house on Ferry Street and from Ferry Street I wanted a little larger place they had a really larger place and that's when I move at 1402 South Grant Street. I stayed on Grant Street until moving here.

[SJ] So you've basically been around or on the Hill for 30 some years

[BM] Or more yeah, long time.

[SJ] What was it like for you as a mother raising your children in this area?

[BM] Experienced a lot sometime especially with them in school. Then it was teachers from PLU (Pacific Lutheran University). Some lawyers we had a seminar it was like they got a group of people together and had sessions, it was like for two weeks. You really found out a lot how people think what they weren't thinking themselves made a lot of friends one is Dr. O'Conner. That was when Lou Bazzar's brother was the only Black police officer around here, he was in the seminar. We were divided off in the rooms and he found out how they really felt about him. My instructor that was in my class, they asked a question and I was getting ready to answer it. [Instructor] He told me no no you can't you don't need to answer you can't answer it because you don't know the difference.[BM] I said beg your pardon what do you mean? He said, because of you color you don't know the difference of how they treat White and Black. Immediately when I left from that program from that day I went and got my hair cut in an afro that was

probably 'bout that long [Hand Gesture]. And Brenda my oldest daughter I don't think they spoke to me for about a month I'll say. Why did you go get you hair cut? I guess I was proving something to him but I was proving something to myself too you know. How you gonna tell me how I feel, what I am, and you don't even know me. You're looking at a color and you're looking at a color because it's different people in the group, but I bet if you saw me in any other place or something, you wouldn't have said what you just said.

[SJ] Do you think the shade of your skin has something to do with it not being Black?

[BM] I was a light skin, fair skin Black, so I wouldn't know they say.

[SJ] Because you were fair skin?

[BM] Uh huh. I just Whoa.

[SJ] Well let me touch on that then. Being considered fair skin did you maybe experience different treatment being fair skin as to say someone darker skin?

[BM] Probably so Shawn, at times not all the time, at times.

[SJ] How many children do you have?

[BM] I birthed 9. I have 7 girls and 2 boys. I had two sets of twins.

[SJ] Two sets of twins! They were always raised in the Hilltop area.

[BM] Yes!

[SJ] What was their schooling like, how was it at the schools for me because Blacks were still a fairly new community?

[BM] They got to know me!

[SJ] Laughing!

[BM] When something would happen I taught them right from wrong and I taught them about the "N" word cus like I told em it's just like a curse word we just don't use that word. If something would happen they'd come back and let me know. What was that Mason Middle School? I think it was Mason that over there by the... I went there a few times.

[SJ] Mason on the North end north 27th / 28th.

[BM] At Mason they got to know me so we all got to be really good friends?

[SJ] What were some of the reasons why you would have to go to Mason and talk to them?

[BM] My kids were quite vocal like Connie and Candy. Some of the things how they would say things like you people or your people or different little things. That's mostly and then they were quite academic in their classes and they played a lot of sports and things like that. They experienced a lot more than what I did when I was going to school.

[SJ] Why would you say that?

[BM] Well it was more of them in school at that time there were more Blacks in school. There were more people with military coming up here from the South or just living here period. Coming up here and they been up here for a while they were so used to being vocal and saying what was on their mind.

[SJ] You got a chance to see what they would be part of the Great migration where a lot of African a lot of Black Americans left the South and specifically came to the Northwest. So, you were somewhat part of that, but then you got a chance to see especially after what I guess would be Vietnam you got to see a lot of Blacks so what was?

[BM] Well I was up here even before Vietnam you know and everything. I was at Central before then. Mostly like I said during that time it was like on Broadway they called it during that time. That was where African Americans/ Blacks they hung out with their taverns and their restaurants and things like that.

[SJ] On Broadway?

[BM] Umm Hmm! They had a record shop down there and cleaner's cus my uncle Bill they had a restaurant that was right on the corner of 17th and Broadway and further down they had a casino, tavern, and the [Inaudible] was across the street from [Thinking] what did they call it, the other one that they had down there. I can't even think of it. It was where they had a lot of entertainment. So Broadway was the majority of Black owned.

[SJ] Businesses!

[BM] Businesses!

[SJ] Wow! I never knew that.

[BM] Oh really! Yea! And the only thing different that was down there like on the corner was Rice Bowl the Chinese restaurant it was on the corner of like 15th I think, 15th and Broadway, Chinese restaurant. It was all up and down on Broadway just for a couple 2 to 3 blocks and then right in the back it was a Congo place. [Inaudible] was like a restaurant and you would see everyone come up there and eat, the Congo was right across the street. The Congo was where they used to have entertainment and bands and everything you know and go down there. And right below there the Hill there was a place on Market and Pacific Avenue, now I really can't

remember that name right now, but it was like the ones that were up on the hill up on Broadway cus it was going right down the hill.

[SJ] So you had 9 children?

[BM] I have 9, I birthed 9. But I helped my mother when I was in the 12th grade, started another set of kids. She has Debra, Darrell, and Terri three more kids and Debbie was born when I was in the 12th grade. So I kind of raised them Debbie, Darrell, and terry.

[SJ] At that time you been here for a while, your raising your kids they were going through the public school system. How would you rate the public school system academically as a Black parent?

[BM] I think it was pretty good; matter fact I would say that to me it was academically it was a lot better than it is now. What you learned and what you know and wasn't a lot of playing around in school. You had your lessons you had things to take home. I just think that academically you did more you know. When going to central they had I think it was like every Thursday or something they had square dancing. Can see me square dancing? I was on the square dancing team. We had a square dancing team. I used to run the movie machine. I think we just did more. That's my personal feelings of it.

[SJ] Your youngest children did you see a difference academically between how the oldest were being taught in the Public School System as supposed to your youngest, was there a difference?

[BM] No! They just really really worked hard. Now I know I had a girlfriend out at Stadium her dad owned a restaurant one downtown. Now they have the Turkey Day games is just between whichever schools win, but before the turkey day games was between Stadium and Lincoln. That was our favorite thing you know going down to Lincoln High School to the turkey day game because during that time stadiums bowl still was messed up and wasn't in shape. I know that she could come over to my house at any time, but you couldn't really go to here house. Never really was spoken about.

[SJ] I take it she wasn't Black?

[BM] No! I am sorry. When I said her dad owned a restaurant it wasn't one of the restaurant's I was talking about [Referring to restaurant's on Broadway]. A lot of my friends in high school were White. It was a mixture of different races and everything. There's this one girl and a lady and I think she's probably my age now I think her husband passed last year. She was telling me that this other lady was telling me she says Betty she says, "June or Judy says she really likes you says she will never forget you". I said what do you mean? "When you were going to Stadium the rest of the girls nobody really said that much to her, but you would always sit by her and talk to her" and she said "you would tell her how instead of using a straw she would just open the milk". She came up here from the South opening milk from the top and just turning the

carton up. She says I told her no don't do that cus they'll laugh at you. She says she has not forgotten about that and were grown and everything, but says she has never forgotten about that. She says I spend time with her. To me it was nothing I was brought up like that though you know. That's how my people were.

[SJ] Would you say there was a small Black population?

[BM] Yea, small Black population. Nothing like it is now. No nothing. Majority of them in Middle School or Jr High School would be McCarver, and Jason Lee, and McIlvaigh we had games and everything and that's who we would be playing against and they had the others but we didn't go to Mason and the rest of the schools, some of them went to Jason Lee.

[SJ] Did you ever consider buying a house in any other neighborhoods like the Fircrest or the North end, University Place did you ever look at maybe buying a house when you were raising your own children in those neighborhoods?

[BM] I really didn't, I don't know why. I am really serious. I really didn't, I just liked the way the area was. The kids were being taught different things now and everything.

[SJ] That makes sense.

[BM] During that time it would be probably it would have been hard to buy a house as we were. We had a group of people Bob Penton and they came up here with [thinking] oh God, I had all this stuff written down on a piece of paper. but I don't know what they did with it. They send you off to different places to train different people. It was Bob Penton and the other Bob and some more of them. We sent them out and some of the attorneys who belonged to the group. We sent them out with a Black person and a White guy or a White guy and a Black person to see about renting or it'd be just two Blacks. And we sent them out there, go out there tell them you wanna rent the house and what your income is you know. [Renter's response] Oh I'm sorry but they all been rented already. Right behind them or the next day we have the White couple go out there. [Renter's response] Oh sure you wanna look at it right now, it was available.

[SJ] So subconsciously when you were buying your homes you kinda of knew this then.

[BM] I did, I did! I was living on Ferry when we were doing that yep. Matter fact it's kinda of funny because Robert Penton he's a preacher now, but his brother is a Minister of Roosevelt Height. When Robert and Darnell had came up here, they had gotten a place for them to stay with one of the people. It was funny they said because when they were sitting up there having fun and I think having a drink of wine or something and Bob accidently wasted his wine a little bit on the floor. And he said the guy ran over there and got to wiping it up. He said, got to be a game then, so he just kept on dropping it and wasting it on the floor. Cus we always talked about some of those experiences and things like that. So it was fun you know. You find out so much.

[SJ] What has changed over the course of your childhood to say looking at your current children's childhood here in this locality on the Hilltop?

[BM] You know Shawn, I don't really know if it's just on the hilltop or just period. The discipline the parents of the kids, their not to me disciplined like they should be or a lot of them they to me their longing for love, their longing to be wanted and they are wanted but they are not getting it. Really from the parents cus when my momma says you do this or you don't come in the house with the hat on or you don't come in whistling or something you didn't do it. And now they do it and it's really nothing you know and you can tell the difference between the age group and everything cus Maurice my grandson he talks about it all the time too about the difference in how they act cus he's one of the coaches for a football team, how it's like the kids run the parents life instead of the parents running the kids and telling them what to do. So it's really different and I think when you see them like that and your talking to them and their explaining what's going on that they get really uptight and feel like they can say what they want to or call you what they want to.

[SJ] So then maybe how you were raised, how you raised your kids, how your kids raised their kids, what did you see basically in the Black community at times that might have changed that parental discipline?

[BM] It's maybe the parents saying something or single parent and during that time there was a lot of single parents, because I was a single parent after I married and everything and divorced I raised my kids. I didn't get married again until my kids were grown but it's something that's brought up in you of how you raise them and the discipline and just some of the parents even take off for the kids when their grown. They'll get out there and want to fight for them and want to fight their battles and it's not a battle it's a matter of having them to be disciplined and to say you do this you know and you're not to disrespect Mr. Shawn your to give him respect just like you do anybody else.

[SJ] Would you say a lot of Black fathers were missing in the area?

[BM] Mmm hmm

[SJ] If you had to speculate or hypothesize why would you think so many Black males were missing in their children's lives in this area?

[BM] Maybe it's probably not just in this area it's the whole Black area period. And maybe it's because the military, so many men, military men and so many women that without someone. That's the way I see it and they just kinda you know do what they wanna do the men do or they expect the women to do the same thing. And I'm not really sure Shawn but I have seen a lot of that you know where the women are raising the kids mostly by themselves and when the man complain to wanna really get in there and tell them what to do, well they haven't been there all the time or they haven't been there to try and help raise them. And I think that the parents the

mothers and everything are more strict about get your work done, your school work done and we want you to have an education, you can be, not you can be but you are as just as good as anyone else.

[SJ] Was your father around?

[BM] Yea my stepfather raised us.

[SJ] Ok so you had a father figure.

[BM] I had a father figure and then that left.

[SJ] And then he left.

[BM] Mmm hmm

[SJ] So then you got a chance to kinda watch father figures around the board begin to disappear.

[BM] Mmm hmm

[SJ] Which some would say would have been a nationwide trend for whatever reason.

[BM] Right, a lot of respect had left. Didn't see as much respect being given and I guess because they let it happen.

[SJ] When was it in your lifetime or in your life that you began to see the Hill begin to become a lot more dominant with Black Americans, and was there ever a time where you looked up and said wow.

[BM] Where did all these come from.

[SJ] Yea where did all these Black people come from?

[BM] Probably I know I did and I think it's probably when I started going to McCarver it was a lot like half and half but at McCarver that's when I start to see that's when I first went to junior high and you know I start seeing more of it. More in the area.

[SJ] Was McCarver a junior high?

[BM] Mmm hmm yea McCarver used to be a junior high.

[SJ] And then from McCarver you went to Stadium?

[BM] Mmm hmm, yea I went to Central, McCarver, and Stadium, and the kids went to church more. I think you know part of that but I used to tell myself, I told them when I got 18 years old I wasn't going to take a risk cus I was at church 3 times a day on Sunday and once every night. One time like if there was anything going on and they used to laugh at me cus I used to play for

the Sunday school and the BTU or BYPU whichever one they wanna put it. And I was you know you see me wear hats all the, I grew up wearing hats and they would laugh and everything but that was my upbringing cus my uncle was reverend Brazil and we used to travel with him in Texas to go to different cities like he went to reverend (Bates) church where reverend Bates was being brought up, little country town in Texas and everything so that's the way we were all brought up.

[SJ] Within the church.

[BM] Within the church, yup and I said once I get 18, and no that didn't happen.

[SJ] I want to touch on a topic. You said the fathers left. When did you begin to notice that the Hilltop maybe started to make a 360 and it wasn't such a great neighborhood or wasn't such a multicultural neighborhood it became a Black neighborhood and it began to be I guess criminalized as a bad neighborhood?

[BM] Well I think but I couldn't be sure it's because it was more people coming to the area, less discipline, less fathers or men I'll say fathers around and there might be men around but it wasn't their fathers, maybe less respect. And then it was like that when I think people start using the word the N word, not us but the other people because all around the other side of the street around this area was all White. I've met of few of the ones who said they were brought up you know here matter of fact when I had my floor put down the guy was telling me that he was raised right up around here and everything and wasn't that many. When I was going to McCarver, across from McCarver all those it was all predominately White. So you see you start seeing a change in the discipline with the kids like at the games and football games and at Gault [Gault Middle School] and I said McIlvaigh but that was Gault. McIlvaigh wasn't there during that time. It would be McCarver against Gault you know and these other schools. And that was the thing they had the sports they were always out there playing sports and school against school and that was our thing.

[SJ] Did the gangs have an effect on you because I believe the gangs started around the 80's?

[BM] The gangs didn't really have an effect until, [Thinking] what is it the Crips and the Blood's something like that later on I had moved here and most of the kids the boys and everything, even though I only had I only birthed 2 boys. I had more Jerry on the corner they grew up around here I raised Koshawn my grandson and then that's when you saw them talk about the gangs start coming from California. And to them, I think it meant this is something new and they come from California and I guess they figured they was gonna run everything. I had a couple foster children and I remember one afternoon I'm hearing all this, what is all that? KoShawn was in there and I guess Shane and a couple more had said I had Shane but I don't know if you know Shane. Shane for a foster child and somebody else they said Koshawn was in there and he wasn't any bigger and they could have jumped on him and beat him or anything Shane and Cliff. He said there will be no gangs in my grandma's house you take this out and they could have just jumped Koshawn

but they respected him and everybody up around here. I have had mothers call me and ask me could their son go to church with us; could they come over and spend the weekend and go to church with us? I said sure! A lot of them used to come over and know and spend the night and they would go to church. It's how your raising them I think and also you have to let them know their just as good as everybody else and they don't have to fight and do all this cus in the long run they don't own anything they don't even own themselves. You know! Definitely don't own the penitentiary cus that's where they headed to.

[SJ] Being here between 23rd and 25th most people would say this is the central of when the gangs took off. Were there any common denominators you noticed among the young men that were all involved in those gangs? Something you noticed that maybe all of them had in common or maybe they didn't notice it?

[BM] I think a lot of them just wanted to belong to something. I don't understand till today but I think it was showing they could do these things or they could get out and fight or they could go rob something, I think showing ownership. Shawn I'm not really sure.

[SJ] Did that change the way you viewed the neighborhood during that time?

[BM] No because it wasn't that many Blacks in this Neighborhood, it was myself, kitty had moved over there only about 3 to 4 of us in this neighborhood and Jerry and his mother and the rest of them started on back to 23rd.

[SJ] So this pocket was a little different right here this alley way?

[BM] But they would come up this way and say things or they might stop and KoShawn would stop them and different things like that. But mainly he had a lot of respect and if I went to church to a revival or something during the week he would be right with me, matter of fact that's when he joined church during the middle of the week with me. He was very protective.

[SJ] Like a neighborhood usher?

[BM] Umm hmm! Yea! And like I said very protective but he had a lot of respect from the parents. A lot of respect from peoples parents. That's reason right now with him working with the kids with the football and everything is that he'll be driving around see some kids that he has seen couple days maybe wondering the streets. He'll stop em and ask them if they wanna play football and ask them where they live. And go and talk to their parents.

[SJ] Did you teach him that?

[BM] I think he saw it, cus he got the love with things like that. When he got ready to go off to college he went to Ohio. Grandma sent him to college in Ohio and I got 'em a car when he graduated, wasn't a new car or nothing you know. But he was just such a good kid and right now, he'll come over middle of the night a couple 2 or 3 times of the week, grandma just coming

to check on you cus he has a key and Jamal has a key too and Jeffrey had locked my screen door the other night he said “grandma I tried to come in the screen door was locked”, I said why you should telephone and call me and say grandma I’m out here, stuff like that but he would he would come over and say comin to check on you and Jamal would do the same thing.

[SJ] If you had the power what would you like to see change in this neighborhood?

[BM] What I would like to see really change the neighborhood and the whole area is get down back to business, get the kids in school, give them the wishing that they would go on and graduate, go on and go to college and see that there is things out there for them, cus to me and the last 3 years or 4 years or so things have went down and back. It’s gone back real far back with the kids with the education it’s like they really don’t care. Well with the Black people it’s like your back down to almost slavery you know you watch it and you say it I mean and it doesn’t have to be that way and it should be that you’re just as equal. Because for example this guy walking down the street with a cane with a golf club he’s been using that golf club for a cane for 15 or 20 years and she tells him that put the golf club down and all this and big confrontation he said “what do you mean” he said “this is what I walk with” like this is my cane cus he uses a golf club for a cane and matter fact I don’t think she knew but I think he was retired officer a retired policeman from a while back and she took it and put him in jail.

[SJ] Where was this at?

[BM] In Seattle, oh I watch the news I’m up on it oh god and then end up I’m not sure if they fired her I know they were talking about firing her cus they were sayin she had checkin her records in the past back for 4 years or so. She had been stopped a few times for being intoxicated while driving. So to me the equality of things people being equal you know I don’t know if we’ll ever get equal equal but it’s just gone down some, what do you think? It’s gone back some.

[SJ] Yea I would say, I mean I wasn’t around when you guys were I can only say.

[BM] But from your living going to school and everything.

[SJ] I would say I don’t believe its moved since my parents era, I believed it stayed the same which is what makes this generation more stagnant meaning and maybe even a little more vocal and frustrated because there is very little they probably can see from now as supposed to the 60s, there is very little that has changed you know as far as being able to get jobs as far as being able to equal schooling as far as being able to move through the country and not be considered so much a Black American as supposed to be just American. So I’d say that, but I don’t want to interview me.

Here’s a question for you, what makes the Hilltop neighborhood unique to you?

[BM] There's more togetherness, I think I see some more togetherness out of em. I like to see the churches they're a little more together and it's just kinda the friendliness the uniqueness of it you know you just gotta.

[SJ] Would you say you know a large percentage of the people in your neighborhood on a first name basis?

[BM] Some of them I used to know more but some of them have moved out and I don't like the idea that they put a sexual what's it name there next door, for sexual predators and I didn't ever saw a piece of paper go around signing that or anything and that's dangerous. I don't know any of them. Now Jack was supposed to have found out something about it but I don't know during that time last year he was running for some office so maybe he stopped and to find out what are they doing there without asking. Cus it was a lot of kids, my granddaughter, Jolynn, the little girl Erica next door to them and a German kids across the ally from them. So it was you know it's a lot of kids and I just think anytime if they do that, that they need to ask and I think Jacky said she had asked one of the guys parole officer or probation officer who was over there and he was saying that even the police really don't know when their putting them over there cus they didn't tell them so.

[SJ] You think they would do that on the North End?

[BM] No

[SJ] Fircrest?

[BM] No

[SJ] University Place?

[BM] No

[SJ] So why would they do that to this neighborhood?

[BM] That's not even a question. Who lives in this neighborhood, your minorities are in the neighborhood more so than anything else and the people next door who purchased kitties house I don't even know why they purchased that house because from the time that now their better from the time that she and her husband had moved up there and I think that she is Samoan or something and he's Caucasian he's White. That's the reason they put the fence up there if you walk right by it, oh he had just a whole lot of problems with them and one night the police came knocked on the door and wanting to know what was wrong and we asked what was the matter? And they got called from her, and see I don't think she knew Jack was Black when she first moved over there, moved over here and I know the house was selling cheaper a lot cheaper so it was a Black police officer and a White one so they wanted to go talk to Jack and Jack came out I walked over there, so he said oh a neighbor complained, because Momo had a dog out there.

Dog'bout that big, never hardly barked at all or anything and they were complaining about the dog barking and every little thing after you got to talking to Jack they went over there. and they talked to her and everything, he said you probably won't have that much problem outta her no more and its true he was right but see I had Momo give his dog away. And I really regret it afterwards because after that you could hear dogs barking everywhere around here. It was anything if you walked on the grass or walked on the sidewalk over there.

[SJ] This is right next door?

[BM] Mmm hmm on this house over here!

[SJ] Do you believe it had a lot to do with the color of your skin?

[BM] Oh Yes! Where they were moving to they could have went somewhere else, but they never scared me. If she had something to say to me I had something to say back. Like I told her you could have moved anywhere you want, but you ain't gonna move me outta here. I know it really made him mad cus it was a Black Police officer that went over there and talked to them. He was serious though he said this is ridicules to call them. Wasn't nobody doing nothing but watching T.V.

[SJ] So he wasted their time?

[BM] Yep! I don't know if I am answering all these questions right for you and anything.

[SJ] You're answering them perfect!

[BM] Then they had the Black Panthers over in Seattle and believe it or not we had Harambee over here, Harambee was just like the Black Panthers. And what's his name, he was a mayor [Moss] Moss, Harold Moss was with us. He used to come over there to the meetings. Reverend Brazil even let us meet at Shiloh in the basement during that time. [Reverend E.S Brazill Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church] What they were doing was keeping people together. I think that's even almost right after they got to burnin up MLK that time and setting everything on fire. We went out there rode out there and saw Rev. Brazill he was out there on his porch and somebody else they were out there. And we were up on Ferry Street and Jeffery then we start cleaning up from 23rd street all the way down to 9th street. We start cleaning up the Hilltop area. We would get a garbage truck from the city. One we gotta dump everything over in there and quite a few young kids Jeffery used to be in there all the time he was about that high, they had him in the paper a couple times. We'd be cleaning up K Street showing them that we don't need to do this you know.

[SJ] Let me back you up. Things I have read I never read this about. Harold Moss used to come participate in the Black Panther Party?

[BM] No to the Harambee!

[SJ] Oh Harambee!

[BM] That's what we called it. The Harambee.

[SJ] Now do you know what that was? I'm not sure I have ever heard of that before.

[BM] Yea it was just like the Black Panthers they had in Seattle, but we weren't Black panthers. We went around speaking to different places we went to the YWCA and spoke down there and you could see some of the prejudice just boom out the people asking questions. Even though a lot of Blacks really didn't agree cus once a lot of times when you come up here from down South or somewhere and you think your living better sometimes you stop fighting for what you know that you need to.

[SJ] You touched on when they were burning down K Street, the Mother's Day Riot!

[BM] Yeah!

[SJ] Were you around for that? Did you see that?

[BM] No! I just rolled down and we just saw how they were talking about how it was burning and everything stuff like that.

[SJ] You didn't get a chance to physically see. You saw the results but you didn't get a chance to see the people out there rioting?

[BM] No! Rev. Brazill go on back home and close your doors.

[SJ] So he was one of the people out there trying to calm it down?

[BM] I know Rev Brazill and even Harold Moss, just a few of them were trying to calm it down, you know, you don't wanna do this.

[SJ] Describe 3 or 4 things about the hilltop that people may not know.

[BM] A lot of educated people live in the Hilltop and everybody in the Hilltop definitely is not bad, they want things better too. They want the children educated they wanna try to help them. But they want some help from parents; they want some help from the people with the city.

[SJ] What kind of help would you say they want?

[BM] They want to be treated equally or be treated with respect like you do see it from some of them now. I used to laugh at this but Barbara and Ms. Mclarence son Michael and some more they used to come over to the house and sing and dance and everything and somebody had went to jail and they were up at St. Josephs, not St. Josephs they took them from jail from St. Josephs. I guess somebody had got hurt so we all went down to the jail to find out what was wrong. We went down there I guess it just was a lot of them because other people we really didn't know

some of them and then they were saying take them and take them and you know explaining everything was alright but just take them, they were very very rude. They said well its time that you guys can go the show is over with or something like that, and so I turned around to go on out the door and he turned around and he pushed me, and I said "you don't have to push me" he said "take her too", I said "oh lord" and so I went to jail. Your aunt Betty went to jail. That was like later that night and at morning I called uncle Earnest and so he came and he asked what happened. We just told him nothing I hadn't done anything oh and then matter of fact up in the jail he got ready to push me or something again and I kicked him. I'm being truthful, I don't have a record or nothing and so got ready to leave and everything they gave us all a court date and the whole court county city building was full of people and I'm trying to remember who all was in that, it was about 4 or 5 might have been more than that and they call me up there and they ask questions and I told them I said "well he pushed me and really for nothing at all" and then they said take her too and I hadn't done nothing. Anyway I got acquitted but it's just little things like that and I think that we probably had been home from church or practicing you know or something like that and here this grown woman and Michael Mcclareen not Michael but yea Michael and what's her name were saying, him and I think Linda was there, Linda Mcclareen and some more but it was really for nothing. It's just like showing your seniority what you can do matter of fact we were looking up on the wall at the pictures, they had just started hiring Black officers Black policemen. And we were looking at that. You had to wait and get in a line, not get in a line but you walked in a line so you're not really walking fast and he pushed me I said "you don't have to push me I'm going on out" I guess I should have kept my mouth closed. I'm telling you a thing I haven't even told nobody most people. It was Rev. he said no, he was down there and he came and got me he said no this is wrong.

[SJ] If a historian approached you about writing a book about the Hilltop would there maybe be some historical facts you would want to include that people may not know?

[BM] Probably a lot of them, because even though you're a young Black man a lot of these things you didn't know. And then when I was growing up I was going to Bethliham cus it wasn't anything but Bethliham on the church on 25th street. And Bethliham was right across the street from St. Joseph right on the corner.

[SJ] So Shiloh didn't exist?

[BM] No, Well I'm not sure who had Shiloh, the Hankerson who was in the air force who then got the church over there. He was in the air force and uncle Earnest he hadn't been up her in a real long time cus we came up quite a while before he did and then he went they called him to Bremerton to St. Claire. St. Claire Baptist Church and then from St. Claire that's when Hankerson and his wife, he had asked him would he come up to Bethliham to Shiloh I mean. Cus he was leaving, he was gonna be going overseas or somewhere. So reverend still got Shiloh then.

[SJ] Was Shiloh a Black church at that point?

[BM] Some of Bethliham's members had left and started Shiloh and Shiloh was right where Mt. Cavery is now. That's old Shiloh. Right where Mt. Cavery Baptist Church is the next block. That was Shiloh and then Shiloh moved down to where the White church is. Where we are now. And the Reverend Brazil and some more of them, uncle Jones they painted the church they'd be out there working just like everybody else and matter of fact for a few months or so I guess it was for a while he didn't even get paid. Because they really didn't have any money. And then they kept enlarging it and everything but that's were Ms. Wesley left from Bethliham and Ms. Wesley you know who I'm talking about Ms. Wesley?

[SJ] Mother Wesley.

[BM] Yea mother Wesley, well she and a few more had left Bethlehem, I've got pictures of them at Bethlehem, and they left Bethlehem and then that's when they went down and started Shiloh.

[SJ] Hmm, did not know that. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this neighborhood? What you think about it, how you feel about it?

[BM] Actually I have been here such a long time I like it I'm glad that they finally even were able to pay for it, they finally decided to pave the road, the alley you know and all the rocks and everything from out of there and have a better relationship with the people, with the city now and everything.

[SJ] Would you say the Black community here does have a better relationship?

[BM] I think we do, or I don't know about the other people on the rest of the block up the street but I think that we do. I know if I called and asked about something cus once she was the girl the woman who moved next door, she and her husband and I guess the city had come out and they were thinking it was my yard that the grass had gone up to that high but it was their yard. So I called her and she came out and she apologized, which I wouldn't have gotten before, but its an apology saying I'm really sorry anything I can do to make up for it and everything let me know, so I just feel like the relationship is a little better than it was before. And especially after that little girl, the guy that caught the little girl and killed her you know raped her or something across the street. It's gotten better.

[SJ] That happened across the street here? How long ago?

[BM] Oh god about 6 or 7 years ago. Someone was riding up in the alley and they got the little girl from outta there. Lived in a white house I think right across the street over there.

[SJ] Was that the Caucasian girl who they caught in the alley on the 4th of July?

[BM] Yea I think so.

[SJ] Ok I know what you're talking about. Has the police presence in this neighborhood, has it been a good thing or has it been a bad thing you think for Black folks?

[BM] It's a better thing now, I don't think at first like a long time ago when I moved here it was a good thing cus they weren't very nice they were very rude. I think cus they think they had a purpose you know the Crips and the Bloods and all the different fights and people.

[SJ] But better now?

[BM] I think their better now.

[SJ] Would you say a lot of the gangs and the criminal element that was so over publicized in the neighborhood would you say a lot of that is gone now?

[BM] Yea, prevalent uh huh. Matter of fact I think Fircrest, Lakewood and all of it; I think it's worse than it is up in this area. But Hilltop was the area that they to me they kinda picked on, and on the East side it's a lot of it over there.

[SJ] If you had it to do all over again would you stay in the neighborhood?

[BM] I think I would. Cus right now Koshawn always tells me, I've got the Will and all that wrote out, but if you leave grandma I want first choice at this house, they want to be back here.

[SJ] Wow, I thank you for your time, I thank you for this interview, and I have learned a lot.

Appendix B: Mary Doss Oral History of the Hilltop

Narrator: Mary Doss, born in Brookville, Mississippi, originally came to Tacoma in 1969 and has been an active member of Shiloh Baptist Church, mother of eight children, and resident of the Hilltop for over 40 years.

Date: February 13, 2015

Collected by: Shawn Jenkins

Place: Home Tacoma, WA

[Shawn Jenkins] February 13th 2015 it's 11:54 am and I am interviewing Mary Doss. How you doing?

[Mary Doss] I'm doing fine!

[SJ] Where were you born Ms. Doss?

[MD] I was born in Mississippi, Brookville Mississippi.

[SJ] How did you end up coming to Tacoma?

[MD] Well my family was out here and later on 'bout a year later I moved out here and we came out here in 69. 1969!

[SJ] Did you come out here with family or by yourself?

[MD] Two kids and myself, the rest was already here.

[SJ] Oh you had family here already!

[MD] Um Hmm!

[SJ] How many members?

[MD] My mother, Mrs. Frazier, and my auntie's the Henley's.

[SJ] Now Mrs. Frazier is your sister.

[MD] She is my sister!

[SJ] How long have you been a resident on the Hilltop?

[MD] I have been here since 1971.

[SJ] So you have seen a lot here?

[MD] Um Hmm! I moved in this house in 1971, but I was here in 1970 I lived in another house, but I was still in the Hilltop.

[SJ] Where was the other house at?

[MD] 19th and M!

[SJ] So almost like 35 years or something like that.

[MD] Yea! Better help me with this math.

[SJ] (Laughing) My math ain't to great rite now! (Laughing) Yea that's, no that's 45 years.

[MD] Is it really, 45 years I been here all my life most of it or half of it.

[SJ] How many children do you have?

[MD] 8!

[SJ] Grandchildren?

[MD] Grandchildren!

[SJ] Maybe that's too much of a number.

[MD] (Counting) ok grandchildren I got 9 of em!

[SJ] And you have great grand babies too?

[MD] Um hmm! And Great grand's, you don't want me to name those do ya?

[SJ] No no you're ok!

[MD] I'll be counting here for the next hour.

[SJ] What was the neighborhood like when you first moved here?

[MD] When I First moved here, my sister and I used to just get out and walk and was ok. As we had been here for maybe'bout 20 years or so, then it start changing.

[SJ] Changing how?

[MD] It's changing cus you know when you can't walk the street. We would sit out in the yard right here; they had a club down there, so you would have to run around the house when they start to shooting cus the bullets come this way.

[SJ] Wow, do you remember around what time you started noticing the change in the neighborhood?

[MD] I would say (She counts the years) somewhere in the 80's.

[SJ] Somewhere in the 80's.

[MD] Yea 80's! That's when it really started changing for the worst.

[SJ] Did that have an impact on your children?

[MD] Well not really! Because when they went to McCarver School here, I walked them there, then I walk them back home. Until they grew up and they can walk by themselves but I still wait on them. Sometime kids down here fighting and I am going nope I know that's not my kids now. And it was bad and kids would come, see that house right there?

[SJ]Um hmm!

[MD] There wasn't a house there. Now, people would go over there and shoot dice and whatever they doing right here. You know like they say she afraid ain't nobody there, but her. See them chairs there sit right there.

[SJ] Like walk up here and sit on your front porch?

[MD] On the porch! I didn't have a fence so I went and bought a fence and put it around the house, had them people to put it around the house. Over in this yard I am calling the Police and I'm saying all that fighting over there somebody gonna shoot, bullet can come through this little wall and kids y'all stay over here. And it got to a point they broke in that door had a glass door back there and I seen the guy coming in through the glass took a rock knocked the glass out stuck his hand through there and unlatched the door but I had my gun ready and I shot out the door. Shot out the door and the police came.

[SJ] I bet you he didn't do that again?

[MD] Umm Umm! He didn't come back!

[SJ] (Laughing)

[MD] I seen a whole lot, they would fight and they would do that I was afraid for the kids now when y'all come home come straight home I don't want you going any other place and they did that. They came on home and it start to get a lil better and lil better and look at it now.

[SJ] Would you say now is like it was when you first moved in?

[MD] No! No way! You couldn't sit on the porch cus you didn't know if they was gonna shoot up here or not cus the club was right there on the corner.

[SJ] Now this was even in the 70's?

[MD] You know where them houses right there, them apartment houses.

[SJ] Yes!

[MD] Well you was probably too young to no anything 'bout it, but that used to be club a club down there. And when they get to fighting and you know when you hear them loud voices?

[SJ] Um hmm!

[MD] You go inside cus the bullet will come through.

[SJ] If you said your kids went to McCarver School, would you say their education was good?

[MD] Oh yeah!

[SJ] You did agree with the education?

[MD] Education was good!

[SJ] You feel all you kids got a good education there?

[MD] A good education and the teachers were nice. So I met the teachers and we talk with the teachers they were nice.

[SJ] They helped make sure that your kids attained or learned what they were supposed do?

[MD] Um hmm!

[SJ] Never had any problems with them?

[MD] Never had any problems with them!

[SJ] As long as you had been here when you said you came in 71, would you say in the 70's it was a predominately Black Neighborhood?

[MD] Well Yes in the 70's it was Black.

[SJ] So it was a lot of Blacks around?

[MD] In this neighborhood here it was Black, but you know. But everybody we knew each other all down the block.

[SJ] So you knew your neighbors better back then?

[MD] Back then Um hmm! We would walk down the street and we would introduce. When a new person move in we would introduce ourselves to that person we go meet the person you know. Or either they would come ask what kind of neighborhood is this?

[SJ] Do you know your neighbors now?

[MD] Yeah they are nice people, but I don't know all of em names I can't call all of em names, but we met. We have block parties every year and everybody come together in that neighborhood have a block meet all the families come together and meet each other.

[SJ] They still do that?

[MD] Um Hmm!

[SJ] That's not bad!

[MD] So, everybody bring a little something out there and we sit and talk and if I don't see my neighbors then I go knock on they door now. I jus wanna know you guys still live here. So we just laugh and talk. On down here these people here moved cus the guy that used to live there he was in the service he left and these people moved in. And now its mixed. This is White those whatever down there is Black and it's just mixed up

[SJ] So it's calmed down a lot since the 80's?

[MD] Um hmm!

[SJ] Did you ever consider moving when it got really bad?

[MD] I did, I put the house up for sale and I guess people said I'm not moving down there. Umm Umm! (Laughing) I put it up for sale and people came looked at it, but that's it. But I am here and I like it I am enjoying it now.

[SJ] Oh Yeah! That's makes sense.

[MD] Cus I met these neighbors and they invite me over you know to go to each other's house have tea or whatever cus I drink coffee I have tea like that. But when I leave going on vacation, like I leave and go to Mississippi them neighbors watch my house and when they gone we all watch each others houses. See if there is anything different going on over there.

[SJ] Tacoma a lot different from Mississippi?

[MD] From Mississippi, well yeah it different from Mississippi, but Mississippi not bad to me. You ever been there?

[SJ] Not since I was a youngster I was real young last time I went to Mississippi.

[MD] I go every year, I know your grandma been talking 'bout it.

[SJ] Yeah she is from Moss Point.

[MD] That's where I go Moss Point. See I go to Pascagoula and my daughters' church she goes is in Moss Point. So we came from right in the same place.

[SJ] Have you always been at Shiloh Baptist Church?

[MD] Ever since I been here.

[SJ] And you came here in 68?

[MD] 69! December 69, but I didn't join Shiloh until sometime in 70. I joined in 70. I been at that church ever since I been in Tacoma.

[SJ] So has that church always been a staple in the Black community.

[MD] You know Pastor Brazill don't you?

[SJ] Yes!

[MD] When I came here that same church was right here and I always liked that church so I went there and I used to go to different churches. I still do visit, but that's my home church.

[SJ] Do you think Shiloh was a good place for the Black community? Because I know there's a lot of churches around. In your opinion what makes Shiloh a better place than the other ones.

[MD] Well I wouldn't say better than the others cus I don't like to put the other church down. But they get a group and they used to go out Shiloh and witness to people. You know like the Jehovah Witness does? Go around and do that. And People sick or we take food or we go pray for them go to their house and sing and all that, mission and we go around and help people like that. If they need help, help em.

[SJ] So active in the community!

[MD] Um Hmm!

[SJ] Living in this neighborhood would you say you have experienced some prejudice, discrimination, work or school?

[MD] No I haven't! Cus we all went to school we all was Black, now when the white came in they all friends. They go out and play basketball the kids or whatever games they playing outside and they just got along. It used to be that house over there that was some Asian people I don't

know 'bout 10 or 12 or 15 of 'em look like in one house. But we all got along together, they did to they would come down here and visit the children, the Samoans all the mixed.

[SJ] So you basically have had a pretty decent experience living in this area?

[MD] Umm hmm! And then I invite them to church and he goes to church and they goes to church and they goes to church and we just go out and visit it each other and talk with each other. Try to meet our neighbors and see what we can do to help each other. So the White guy down here, two of them came down here and fixed that hill for me fixed my yard, they really nice people so we get along together nicely.

[SJ] During the 80's you said it got pretty bad, what did you notice in the 80's that was different maybe now than in the 70's?

[MD] Now or then? See back in the 70's when we moved here, now when it start changing. See like people go out and walk in the evening when it got bad we couldn't walk in the evening cus they start shooting, fighting, and the kids delivering papers and stuff and they take the money from the kids or take the papers and throw 'em. I stop my children from delivering papers, naw this is a job you don't need cus somebody come up hurt missing or something.

[SJ] So they was robbing the paper guy.

[MD] Yeah! And they would do all that and they would even come up to people's house and take the mail out the box. And I sure wanted to move back to Mississippi or somewhere! But then it started getting better and better people going talking sit down and talk. I thinks it's better when you get to meet your neighbor and get to know them and it's best that way cus we sit down and talk and she'll come over or he'll come and say I am leaving I am going on vacation keep a eye out on my house for me, we do that.

[SJ] Did the gangs affect your house in the neighborhood?

[MD] Well they would come down through here and I noticed when my kids they get out they cars and they would say this is our neighborhood. This is our neighborhood and you know be saying all kind of words and stuff like that. We gonna get our neighborhood [Inaudible] take it back somebody moving in we taking it back out neighborhood all kinds of stuff. Come on in I say, don't say anything back you know I say just come on in the house.

[SJ] Would you say there were a lot of kids missing dads in this neighborhood? Within the Black community would you say that might have been one of the factors that led so many young men...

[MD] Because they father not in the home?

[SJ] Being led to gangs!

[MD] Well that could be some of the reason, but not here. Cus most of the time what I tell them to do they just do it. Sometimes that had a lot to do with some families I know. Cus a lot of kids haven't not know their parents or they fathers and mom always raised them but I don't know. It's different now than when I came up now they got this law you cannot touch your kids (Hand gesture) stop it. They were say you abusing the child, but then the police gonna hit 'em harder than that. The boy that broke in down the street and the police beat him, but he had no business in the women house really! You know what I am saying? Jumped out the window and the police caught him so just whooped 'em took him on to jail. But I don't know. I said I don't care if they Black or White whoever they is they break in here y'all take 'em get 'em out I don't care who they is.

[SJ] How were your kids with the police did the police harass your kids or did you have any problems with the police in this neighborhood?

[MD] I aint had no trouble with the police. No I haven't!

[SJ] They did really harass you kids at all?

[MD] Umm Umm!

[SJ] What's something that changed in the neighborhood that maybe you wish would come back or you could improve if you could? Or what would you change?

[MD] Well right now, I don't know what I would change. But thing about it is when I call the police it took 'em too long to get here. When the guy was breaking in the house, I want you to come right then, but somebody gave them the wrong address.

[SJ] They showed up at the wrong place?

[MD] They showed up at the wrong place! And the man out there (Gestures the man hitting her glass door with a rock) with this rock and they told me not to touch the rock cus they wanted to get something off it or something

[SJ] Oh, they wanted to get finger prints off it!

[MD] But I was so afraid I had the kids I said nope. I put everybody in that back room cus I was down in there on my knees with the gun. I didn't wanna shoot the kid, and the police when I shot they came they said I thought I heard a shot, I was afraid to tell the police I shot.

[SJ] Did you eventually tell them?

[MD] Umm hmm! You know they can smell it anyways, there's a shot out there and they came running.

[SJ] Can you tell me something about the neighborhood that people may not know?

[MD] In this neighborhood right here now they got a progress house over there. And you can see polices and polices and polices now 'bout the second house third house down there it's a progress house and got all kinds of people fighting out in the yard sometimes.

[SJ] So like a half way home?

[MD] That's what it is, I wonder why they put that up in the neighborhood like this. That's what they do.

[SJ] Let me ask you, why do you think they would put that in there?

[MD] I don't know right up in here kids, you don't know what's over there.

[SJ] Is it for people fresh out of prison do you know or is it for people, is it children, or is it adults over there?

[MD] No it's not children, and the house right here not yet the other day had about 10 cop cars going up and down there. All over there all up in the house walking around through here walking I said "somebody must have took off or did something" But I really don't like that.

[SJ] It's a halfway home huh?

[MD] Mmm Hmm that's what it is.

[SJ] Something else you might want to tell me about the neighborhood?

[MD] I thought when they have a half way home, do they have it mixed male and female?

[SJ] You know I'm not sure.

[MD] cus male and females be going over there down there from this and that or sometimes there in the yard and they fight.

[SJ] Really?

[MD] Mmm Hmm, and the police came and one boy ran. See what's going on you know how nosey we get and we want to see. And I went down on the hill the boy was hiding behind a little brush on the hill, he said like he didn't do nothing today , I didn't do nothing I'm just hiding from the police.

[SJ] Just sitting there hiding from the police.

[MD] Hiding from the police.

[SJ] What high school did your kids go to?

[MD] McCarver, they started at McCarver. They went to Foss, my older daughter graduated from Foss. Did you know her? No you didn't you were too little

[SJ] Who is your oldest daughter?

[MD] Mary, Jenny from Wilson and Rick what he do, Wilson. And who else I got? Jerry all of them went to Wilson, and Steve I thought he was... What's the name of the school the North End School?

[SJ] Stadium

[MD] He went to a different school, where'd Steven went? Jackie went to Lincoln and Mt Tahoma.

[SJ] Hmm who went to Mt Tahoma?

[MD] Well see Jackie was there the old one, Jackie and that's about it.

[SJ] Who's your youngest?

[MD] Priscilla

[SJ] Priscilla's the youngest?

[MD] Priscilla, mmm hmm.

[SJ] She went to Lincoln too?

[MD] And you know Stacy too though, you know Stacy?

[SJ] Mmm Hmm, So where there any high schools that you liked better than the other ones?

[MD] I liked Truman and I liked Stadium too I mean not Stadium, Foss.

[SJ] You like Foss better than Lincoln?

[MD] No, I liked Wilson.

[SJ] You like Wilson the best?

[MD] Mmm Hmm

[SJ] Why Wilson?

[MD] It looked like the kids and the teachers were nice. I just liked it, friendly.

[SJ] Would you say kids got a good education at Wilson?

[MD] Yea they did, but all of them got an education. But Wilson, I guess when Jenny played a lot of sports and stuff like that.

[SJ] Mmm Hmm

[MD] And I liked the sports and that was real good and I just liked the teachers there. Most of them graduated from Wilson.

[SJ] And you never had any issues with the teachers or at any of those high schools?

[MD] No, no except one time the teacher called me about Jimmy. They told me Jimmy never missed school and he's not in school. And I didn't have a car so I had to get on a bus and go to Wilson. And I looked in the door, the glass door and I see Jimmy sitting in the back of the room and she said "I don't know why he didn't come". She came at the door she said "I don't know that's the first time" I said "I see him sitting back there, that Jimmy over there" She said "oh I didn't see him". And I'm going oh man I got strung around here trying to get money to get on the bus to get out there. She's like "I didn't see him I'm sorry I'm marked him absent so I'll go back in here and fix it". And I called Jimmy and I talked to him "Momma I aint missed no school" I said I didn't think so I thought something had happened. But other than that we had no problem. A lot of kids in one school.

[SJ] Do you remember when they had a riot?

[MD] Umm umm, I wasn't here then.

[SJ] Were there any events in the neighborhood that you were here during?

[MD] What did we have in this area? No, nothing that I can remember.

[SJ] I remember growing up they had the shoot up up there or actually over here.

[MD] Over here.

[SJ] Yea over here a few blocks up they had a shoot-out over there on 25th with the rangers.

[MD] Used to be a lot of shooting at the store right here.

[SJ] Shybees

[MD] No I wonder what that store called used to be a different name around the corner here.

[SJ] This one right here?

[MD] Yea, Debauch or something and they had a security guard down there I remember that too. They took the sticks from the man and beat the man so they couldn't get anybody to work over there. And they would go down there and shoot and I remember coming up to the house my

daughter and I, bullets come around and we had to go on the side of the house we couldn't go in the house. We had to go on the side right on the very end and come around here and sit till it stopped. The shooting there. And that used to be a bad place cus they would have the kids go in buy all that beer and all that stuff and drink and then a man was standing there with a chain on we was going by the bar, took the chain off the man neck, knocked him in the head, took the chain. I said "now they didn't have to hurt that man they'd took the chain of his neck and go on with it".

[SJ] So there was a lot of violence over here for a while?

[MD] Ooh my goodness I would have moved anywhere I tried to put the house up I put it up for sale. No no no. But its quieter cus it used to be a lot of boom boom boom I don't like all that boom box you know what I mean all that music.

[SJ] Your talking about the car stereos.

[MD] In the house.

[SJ] Oh in the house.

[MD] In peoples house, it's like that one right there now sometime he turn his music up and open all the windows and the doors. And talk to him oh no, and that's his car right there. I said now I know y'all can turn that thing down. Yes mam, but you can talk to 'em now. but the police told me that if somebody doing anything make sure you don't go over there and talk to them you call us first. Cusyou can go to somebody house you see and they can shoot you.

[SJ] Yea they can, yea they can! So this Street 23rd , no is this 23rd right here?

[MD] Um hmm! But wait now I am getting mixed up here, 23rd right here.

[SJ] This right behind us?

[MD] That's 21st over there.

[SJ] Was that a bad street for a while?

[MD] Well that's where the store was on that street there 23rd, and that's where the tavern was right here.

[SJ] The reason why I say that is because I know growing up a lot of those kids that were gang members in the neighborhood they claim that street. They used to call themselves 23rd Street Crips.

[MD] Well they used to say this is my territory or whatever they call it and they used to walk up and down here and there was a boy in a wheel chair, but they say he in the wheelchair but they was giving him something he was taking I don't know whatever they was doing.

[SJ] They said he was holding on to something in the wheelchair?

[MD] They said now you see that boy in the wheelchair he said, ain't nothing wrong with him he just on that stuff. (Referring to Drugs) He just go up and down there I guess selling whatever he got whatever he doing.

[SJ] Out of the wheelchair?

[MD] Out of the wheelchair! Then after while he put it down they say if you watch him he going put it down in a minute and go on 'bout his business. He's selling.

[SJ] So, they were selling drugs around here a lot?

[MD] Um hmm! Used to be a woman with a baby stroller, they say you see her see when she walk up to people and she give them this and they give her something back and she keep going. Well that's just a sham so they can say she not doing anything. I said well, long as they don't bother me, I'm just gonna stay in this house.

[SJ] how did you keep your kids away from that? You had 9 kids, 10 kids?

[MD] 8!

[SJ] 8 kids! How were you able as a mother to keep all your kids away from that life, because I mean it was literally surrounding them?

[MD] Every time I get out here and go to church they coming to and they going in and going to school. What time school out I go back sometime and walk 'em home till they grew up. Get me and my dog and go walk 'em. Bring 'em home and thank God they paid attention. (Mary Doss told her kids) Don't do that just because this kid did, mama you what he did, don't you do it. Don't take anything from anybody, cus they can give you something and you standing there holding it when the police come. Then they gone and you be there holding the bag, so forget it. They let people hold something they see the police, hold that. Police come up there you standing there holding the bag, I got it from who, what's his name? I don't know. Who gonna believe that?

[SJ] Nobody!

[MD] Umm Umm! I said come on. That's why I kept in BTU, I kept 'em in church all the time and when they come home, I let 'em be kids you know they gotta be kids, but don't come in here with all that grumbling, aint goin to be no drinkin and aint goin be fighting I know kids get in arguments we did too! A lot of times. But I tried my best to keep 'em straighten out teach em how to read the Bible teach em how to pray. The tell 'em there is a heaven and a hell. Which one you wanna go? Then we take 'em to movies all of us get in movie and go somewhere together.

[SJ] You had a sister that stayed on the hill with you?

[MD] I got a sister round there on M street.

[SJ] Which sister is that?

[MD] My baby sister Lisa! You don't know her do you?

[SJ] Not sure, maybe!

[MD] She go to St. Paul.

[SJ] And I know that.

[MD] Mrs. Frazier.

[SJ] Mrs. Frazier was right off of 25th. Do you know at all was it bad over there for her at all? Did she have problems over there?

[MD] Well growing up I guess everything was pretty smooth for a while round here. She used to live down here, right off of 15th street right by that church. That's where she used to live, when I came here she lived over there.

[SJ] Did your kids go to the neighborhood community centers like did they go to People's Center or did they go to the Boy's Club?

[MD] Both, Boy's Club and People's Center.

[SJ] Did you like either of them better?

[MD] I think they were ok in all of them. Cus they would go mama I am going to go play basketball, I would let 'em go play.

[SJ] You let them walk up that way?

[MD] Umm hmm! They walk up there, they walked two of them go together. They had little friends they can walk with, but not everybody you can't be with everybody.

[SJ] Why not?

[MD] Cus into different things and saying all kind of words and stuff like that. Naw that kid ain't got no training. Cus if you gonna walk up to a grown person and cussin 'em out and do that and all. That one ain't right. I am kinda of old school and everything you don't go up to that lady and call her by her (implying first name), you call her Mrs. don't call her Mary or Anne, cuss her out and stuff don't do that.

[SJ] You made sure that you kept your kids busy?

[MD] Keep 'em busy! Cus, I didn't like a kid to come in the house and just sit down and watch TV. You know! You got to come in the house and do some homework. Get your homework out, eat your dinner, do some homework and then watch some TV. But don't just come in and put your book down. Sometimes they be slick. I ain't got no homework. Bring your book here, bring that backpack, what's this, oh I forgot that. Yeah umm hmm!

[SJ] So the whole time you were living here were you working?

[MD]Umm hmm!

[SJ] Where were you working?

[MD] At the State Hospital, Western State.

[SJ] Western State!

[MD] First I was working at Madigan. I worked at the Madigan, and then after I left there I went to Western State for 20 some years and that's where I retired from.

[SJ] You retired from Western State?

[MD] Umm hmm!

[SJ] What did you do at Western State?

[MD] I was a supervisor 1 for food service then I went to 2 and then I went to 3.

[SJ] And what does that mean?

[MD] That means you supervisor 1 then you move on up a step then you move too supervisor 2 and supervisor 3. It's just another arrangement you get more money and more responsibility.

[SJ] Did you like Madigan better or Western State?

[MD] Well Western State had the best benefits; I need some insurance for all these kids and stuff. You Know! So I went there and I kinda liked it. The benefits was nice and I could take care of all the children I had to pay for day care for one of em. That was alright sometimes it was kinda rough cus I had to let one kid stay home this day couldn't pay for that day daycare. I had to do what I had to do! But I made it from there I put in 26 years over there and couple years over there at Madigan.

[SJ] How long were you at Madigan?

[MD] 2 years and something!

[SJ] Just a couple years?

[MD] Yeah and I just heard about that lady told me about it and I went out there and checked it out and they called me and I went there and I liked that and they paid real well more than Madigan. The insurance was good.

[SJ] So if you don't mind me asking where is Mr. Doss?

[MD] Back down there where he is supposed? Oh! (Laughing)

[SJ] (Laughing!)

[MD] Down in Mississippi!

[SJ] Ok, so he stayed there?

[MD] Umm hmm! That's why I came on out here.

[SJ] And you had two when you came out here already?

[MD] Umm Hmm! Well I had all the kids (Inaudible). Two of my kids born out here.

[SJ] Stacy and Persilla?

[MD] Umm hmm! Born out here, but the others were born back South and they still don't know nothing 'bout it. But they born back there Mississippi.

[SJ] And your mama was from Mississippi too?

[MD] Yes! Mr. Henley was her brother. So she came out and after that, I stayed back there for a while and then I came out here. I came out in 69 of December.

[SJ] Was it a hard journey here?

[MD]Umm Umm! I took the bus all the way from there here.

[SJ] Who did you stay with once you got here?

[MD] My mother, so it wasn't bad.

[SJ] She stayed the rest of her life here though right?

[MD] Yes she did!

[SJ] Was your mother a member of the church too?

[MD] Mmm hmm! That's why when I went there Mrs. Frazier and my mom was at Shiloh, so I joined the Church and I been there ever since. Still there!

[SJ] So you like the neighborhood still?

[MD] Yea I kinda of like it.

[SJ] Would you move if you could?

[MD] I think if I move, I'd probably move on out of the state. (Laughing)

[SJ] Where would you go?

[MD] Back home!

[SJ] Mississippi!

[MD] Or Memphis!

[SJ] In what ways would you say Tacoma is better than Mississippi and what ways would you say it's worse?

[MD] I don't know, probably the prejudice I guess. But back there now it's different. Well you got that everywhere it's here and it's there too. But we had more in the South then we did here I believe. If you go back there now we all friends my kids friends all mixed and so is my family.

[SJ] Your family is mixed?

[MD] White in there my daddy's sisters some is Black and White. And that's my daddy's brother over there (Pointing to a picture) he died last year.

[SJ] In Mississippi?

[MD] In New Jersey!

[SJ] In New Jersey.

[MD] Mmm hmm.

[SJ] Would you say most of your family is here in Washington?

[MD] Not most of 'em cus I got family in Chicago and Detroit and Mississippi Tennessee.

[SJ] You got a big family!

[MD] Umm hmm! (Inaudible)

[SJ] You're a single mom for a while, so what was it like being a single mom in this area.

[MD] You Know it didn't really bother me too much cus when I came out here it was pretty nice. We was going everywhere out and everywhere else. And I told my brother, I said you know I ain't going anywhere else till it stop raining. He said, well you not gonna go anywhere casue it

not gonna stop till June or July. I didn't like the rain that's one thing I didn't like when I came here. So I went back to Mississippi.

[SJ] Oh you did!

[MD] I went back and came back.

[SJ] So when did you go back?

[MD] I came out her in 69 and went back in 70 and I went back and it looked like things changed oh naw I'm going back. Came back here; stayed here, still here.

[SJ] Wow, I didn't know you moved and came back.

[MD] Now I just like to travel I like my Christian life. Maybe thought I was shy so shy, I never did mind singin, but when I get up and read like or something I be shaking like this. They'd go what's wrong with you. They used to call me a cry baby my family.

[SJ] Oh really!

[MD] Well cry, cry! Thank God for now.

[SJ] Would you recommend this neighborhood to anybody else if they were moving if they wanted a place to live?

[MD] Yeah I would!

[SJ] Why?

[MD] Cus I like the people are nice and I know everbodys now. I don't know everybody name down the street, but I guess because we get along and kids can walk down the street. One while they couldn't walk down the street. You probably heard about two kids they shot. They was out in the yard they just drove by and shot 'em for nothing little kids. I always tell my kids y'all come back in on this side no y'all stay over here.

[SJ] What changed?

[MD] I don't know when it started changing is said umm umm. Oh I know why! Because the police had started this curfew thing. They had a certain time peoples had to be off the street down here and if they wasn't they come down here with this speaker and said, time to go be off the street everybody off the street. And I liked that! And they came down here one time when Reverend Brazill and them, he was alive. He said they had was it 30 some people they picked up in one night they was still trying to be tough and they picked 'em off the street and took 'em to jail, you aint off the street pick you up take you on down.

[SJ] What time was the curfew do you remember?

[MD] I think it was, I don't know it was 10 or 11 o'clock or something like that, but they had to be off the streets and I didn't mind it. I said thank you. I would hear 'em goin down through here, off the streets.

[SJ] Do you remember roughly around what year that might have been?

[MD] I don't know what year that was. I don't know what year that was, that was probably back in the, it wasn't in the 90's that was probably back in the 70's maybe.

[SJ](Phone ringing) I can pause it for a second.

[MD] Yeah, that's when it started changing, that was back in the 80's I believe. I don't know what year. But that sure did help when they had to be off the street at a certain time. You can go out there ain't nobody on the street.

[SJ] They started clearing all this out?

[MD] And they cleaned it out! That sure was I remember. Reverend Brazill said it was 'bout 30 some people they picked up down through there.

[SJ] Wow.

[MD] Mmm hmm.

[SJ] This went on for a while?

[MD] Went on down not just on this block, they went on down pick 'em up, put 'em in that paddy wagon whatever and take 'em on. Should've been in the house.

[SJ] This went on for a long time?

[MD] It went on for quite a while till they got it kinda cleaned up, cleaned it up then they stopped.

[SJ] Would you say a lot of the gang members don't live in the neighborhood anymore?

[MD] Well, what my friend told me, she said I'm moving out to Spanaway where there's no gang members. I guess at the time there wasn't. Then she come back later on and said, you know what there more crime out there then it is down here. You guys living good (inaudible) they all moved out to Spanaway. They moved somewhere I don't know where they went. The gang member went out somewhere.

[SJ] But they pushed them out of this area?

[MD] Mmm Hmm.

[SJ] Basically sent them somewhere else.

[MD] Sent them somewhere, they went somewhere else. You know how they going do can't go over there I'm goin over here. I know some of 'em they didn't get all out you know some still here. Cus a guy said last year. Who was getting out the car, one of my kids oh Caleb was getting out the car and a guy came by and said something to him about this is our street. I told him come on in the house. (Inaudible) That's ok come in. He just drunk or something he don't know what he talking about.

[SJ] This was recently?

[MD] That was last year I think he might have been drunk or something. Cus when one of them boy's was dropping Caleb off he said something. This is our street!

[SJ] So there was a lot of crime and drugs around here for a while?

[MD] It was it was! I was getting worried myself I'm glad when they build them two houses.

[SJ] Why?

[MD] Cus everyday around the same time they come out there a gang of people in that lot there shooting dice and doing this, plus fighting and whatever. I said umm umm! After while they started shooting them bullets goin come through.

[SJ] So basically they were just using that vacant lot?

[MD] They were using that lot and then when the police came and got 'em out of that lot somehow. Then they put a garden over there. Then I had me a garden over there till people stole everything over there.

[SJ] They robbed your vegetable garden?

[MD] You know like you buy corn and stuff you plant out there? They wouldn't go take it off the stalk they just pulled the whole thing up and take the whole thing with 'em. I said shoot, Don't come up in here just stay out there. But that was good thing!

[SJ] If you had it to do all over again would you have moved in this area or would you have chose another place?

[MD] The reason I moved out here in this area, I was new here I didn't know anything about Tacoma. I would have easily went somewhere else.

[SJ] How did you find out about this place?

[MD] I moved in here! The people that built the house, you know they have the house up for sale? We was driving by, I said look at this house and had the guy showing us Mr. Simms. He went around showing us houses they built all around here. Then I said well I can't move to far from my sister cus I didn't know any place. Then she went over there I'm a buy this house here

and I came over here. If I had have known about this, I wouldn't have never moved down in this place. I would have went out somewhere, not here.

[SJ] Not here?

[MD] Not right here? I never would have moved down here on L Street, but I didn't know about it till all the crime and stuff. I never knew until I moved here and try to sell the house and wouldn't nobody buy this.

[SJ] If you sold it now you think they'd buy it?

[MD] They might would now! They bought a house down there, it don't look like that much but now they put things on the door we interested in buying your house.

[SJ] Oh really! They wasn't doing that in the 80's huh?

[MD] Umm umm! They was running from the house. (Laughing) Umm umm! No no!

[SJ] But all in all your kids have always been safe here?

[MD] Yeah, they all been safe. (Inaudible) When you see kids out there getting in trouble I said stay away from those kids. Come on home.

[SJ] Anything else you like to tell me Mrs. Doss about your experience living here on the Hilltop?

[MD] But right now, I kinda like it in here. See it used to be a store, know that church there used to be a store a drugstore used to be there, when I came in. And sometime my children would stop cus they knew the lady she would stop and feed 'em before she get home cus she had a lil restaurant over there and she would feed 'em. And I would go looking, what you guys doing here, he said they was talking to me I just brought 'em in here and just feed 'em give 'em stuff and after while later on they turned it into church. Well I kinda like the people that's what I do like the people we just gets along. Always 25th down there we have block meetings go to that party have a party right down there go down to that block they got a party. The polices and the fire trucks and things will be there. So, they let kids go up on the trucks and show 'em different things. So we just trying to come together and I just pray a whole lot that it keep on getting better. But now look like it kinda come back a little bit. Kids grown now gone.

[SJ] Better than it was?

[MD] Mmm hmm! Come out there in the backyard we have little cook outs and invite the neighbors kids. Come on, everybody come down little kids go out and set up them little plastic things they play. So it's nice, not bad.

[SJ] I appreciate you letting me interview you today.

[MD] So, keep it like this it will be alright. I guess. So anything else you need?

[SJ] No mam, I appreciate you letting me interview you.

[MD] You should have brought your ma so she can sit and talk with me. (Laughing)

[SJ] Thank you very much.

Appendix C: Sam Daniels Oral History of the Hilltop

Narrator: Sam Daniels, born in Henderson Texas, came to Tacoma in 1950 with his wife and two children. He is a half owner of Sam & Terry's Barber Shop, considered a staple in the Black community for over 50years.

Date: February 23, 2015

Collected by: Shawn Jenkins

Place: Sam & Terry's Barber Shop, WA

[Shawn Jenkins] This is Shawn Jenkins, I am interviewing Sam Daniels of Sam & Terry's Barber Shop on February 23rd 2015. How you doing today Sam?

[Sam Daniels] Alright!

[SJ] Sam where are you from?

[SD]Texas! A little place called Henderson Texas.

[SJ] Henderson Texas.

[SD] Yea.

[SJ] How long have you been here?

[SD] Oh I came here in 1950 just the day after Thanksgiving 1950.

[SJ] What brought you out here?

[SD] Well my dad worked here in the war and he worked in defense in World War II. He worked here until the war ended in 1944 and then they went back to Texas. My sister she stayed here she got married here my sister named Alice got married here. I didn't like here at all, because it rain so much I didn't want no parts of this cus I got discharged here in 1946. Yeah 1946 discharged and I wasn't coming back here cus too much rain. After years my mother kept running back and fourth up here. She stay here come up and visit my sister then she have to go back home and visit my dad. Then my dad said I gotta get outta here cus your mother is spending up all the money

coming back and forth on the railroad. Spending all the money on the railroad coming so I come back up here and he decided to come up here in 1947. (Inaudible) my other brothers came here 2 other brothers who has passed now. They came out and that left nobody down there but me and I was doing real well I was going to school vocational school and barbering. I finally told him, well dad I'll come up if you get me a job, he said ok I guess I'll find you a job. So he found me a job barbering down on Broadway with a guy named Jordan.

[SJ] Jordan?

[SD] Yeah! And he told me, I got you a job. So I said ok dad I'll be up, so I took my kids I had two kids Jamie and Shirley and my wife and got on a train and come. So I say I come and I say I will stay a couple of years. That's the reason why I'm here because of them they beggin me to come out. After that I went to work as a barber and the barber wasn't that good take it trying to build up a trade while Downtown. Good on the end of the month but just one day cus all them soldiers come in. So said I'm get a lil job so I went to work for the railroad company. Griffin Wheels it was out there on 56th I worked there about 3 months. Fact the job was my brother's job cus he had got sick so I take the job, that part that I was doing was temporary. I was doing pretty good at that job we was helping a guy refinish the (Inaudible) the thing the melt all the (Inaudible) and stuff in. That job at night we work at night and we had the we could sleep a lil bit on the job because we could work fast when we go done with what will do we go to sleep to next morning and I go to work at the barber shop in the daytime. But when my brother got well and told me he came back to the job and they made me one of those guy what you call "Hey You". Do anything, you know. And that was ok.

One time the train come in there with all this heavy stuff and then you have to take a sledge hammer bust it up. I worked that then I tell my dad I'm going back to Texas, cus I had a home in Texas I had built a home. I had everything a wanted out there work was good. I guy told me who I was working with back there cutting hair he told me I was crazy for leaving there. Cus I was young I had a big clientele of people. I said I am going back to Texas I ain't goin bust no rock like that. So he said I take you out to fort Lewis (His Father). So he take me out to Fort Lewis which is the logistics and (Inaudible) so he said I get you a job out there. I went out there and I went to work and I got to kinda like it thinking'bout what it was lotta benefits and I remained there until they closed it down and went to Utah.(Inaudible) depot was where I was working at, so they closed it down. Me and my partner went down Mr. Terry went down and took a look at it. I said, I don't wanna go down there I know I wouldn't like it down here. So I applied for a job

at Fort Lewis and I worked there until I retired, not until I retired I worked there until 1973. Then I went to work at McNeil Island.

[SJ] McNeil Island wow!

[SD] McNeil Penitentiary Construction maintenance foremen, I worked there for 6 years and I retired from that. I worked there and then I barber at night. A few of them probably remember Terry and I used to work Asians and we had other guys working in the barber shop it was Nash and one is Virgil Holyfield and Mr. Jones. They run the shop in the daytime for us and I worked at night. When I retired then we worked in the daytime that's when we started working till 6. We was working till midnight the shop was open till midnight then.

[SJ] In the 70's it was open till midnight?

[SD] Yeah up until 73 till midnight!

[SJ] The shop was over there off of...

[SD] Yeah on 17th!

[SJ] What was the address?

[SD] 1705 at that time it was South K.

[SJ] 1705 South K Street?

[SD] Which is now Martian Luther King.

[SJ] Which is now Martin Luther King.

[SD] We was working till midnight then Terry and I started closing at 6 in the afternoon. We didn't take anybody after 6. Yeah there because we was working full-time the other guys they work in the morning. Business was pretty good, you know that was enough for us cus it was a little extra money. Well we did that until in fact until we moved. The barber shop continued then you know we took that till St. Joseph came and bought that place out, then we moved up there to Mr. Mac. Right there on 11th Street.

[SJ] Right there on the corner, so you moved to Mr. Mac's that's 11th and...

[SD] That's 11th and Martin Luther King Way. Then we stayed there for about 5 years and then Mr. Mac sold that place to the hospital you know that medical center right there. We had to move out of there again that's the reason we here. I didn't wanna come here I liked South K Street cus we been on K Street so long.

[SJ] And everybody knew where you were at.

[SD] I loved K Street. So that's 'bout the time (Inaudible). I was living out in Salinshan, I lived there I think in about 1960 'bout 1958 or something like that and then I bought a house on 19th on 2345 South Ainsworth. I stayed there till 1963 no I stay out there by Wapato Lake 6043 South K Street that's where I live now. I seen a lot of change I seen a lot of things especially 1950 (Inaudible). It was different there. When I bought that house there on 2345 there was only 2 Blacks up there. I asked the guy when I was over to the railroad station cus when I first came here only Blacks could by a house from G Street back Downtown, that's the only place you could live. It wasn't too many Blacks up here at all it was a very very few mostly Italians and whites. At that time Blacks would move in and White would move out pretty segregated it didn't show too much but that's the way it was at that time. What other question you got to ask me.

[SJ] No you was on point. How did it change, you came in the 1950's you had Sam & Terry's that building on K for at least 30 some odd years. What was it like when you and Sam were there in the 70's cus you saw a lot of prejudice you saw the Civil Rights Era you saw the gangs come in?

[SD] Oh yea! Well that was later in you know the later years 70 or 80's when all the gangs come up from California and hang out it was pretty rough, but it wasn't hard on me. Terry and I we had no trouble with 'em a lot people thought it was real bad but it wasn't as bad as people said it were as far as the gangs concerned. They would come out in front of my shop; course all the kids at that time especially the guys that grew up here know Terry and I. They come out there and stand around the shop I walk up and tell 'em hey you guys y'all want the barber shop closed? They say no no no we don't want the barber shop closed. You know if they close the barber shop you won't have a place to get a haircut up here, they say ok Mr. Sam ok Sam. Some of them say, is ok if we go on that corner right there, I said I tell ya, you doing your thing I'm doin' my thing here I would rather for you not to be on that corner you know ok ok we give you some space. I got a lot of respect from them guys they just move on move away but it was a lot of shooting boy. One time we had a guy in the shop he was a gang member friend of mine forget his name now. He was laying there to get a haircut and a shave and man they drive by came by. They looked in the window seen him laying in the chair. I said Carl guys is looking in he raised up oh they looking for me. Then he got up went to the door (Boom boom boom) and they shot at him I mean right by me guy right next to me fell on the floor. Then they went back in the back BJ everybody knows BJ and Mr. Jones (Inaudible) they jammed each other to get in that bathroom trying to get out the way. (Laughing) The guy left and ran out (Inaudible) but he came back to see how we was doin' and everything makin' sure that nobody got shot. That's the only thing we had done far as any danger, but it was pretty rough at that time you know guys out there drive by shooting. (Inaudible) change a whole lot you still probably have a few gangs around here they not like they were back at that time pretty dangerous. Looking for a young guy like you to get involved in that stuff they kill ya blow you up, they didn't care nothing 'bout each other Black on Black crime pretty rough it was dangerous. But it eventually cleared up, cleared up quite a bit, right now it's pretty good you know. Notice this neighborhood now last 15/20 years the White

and everybody else started moving back in this area you know because this is a pretty valued area. So next door to everybody else, but back in that time early years it was rough. You just move in and they just move out. I never had too much trouble with race up here in Tacoma but we know it's here. I went to the tavern one time me and Terry was headed home that's when we was living in Salinshan the early part. And we went in the tavern sat down went in the tavern to get a beer friends right just wanted a sip of beer. Asked for beer, you know what the guy told us?

[SJ] What?

[SD] I think you had one to many in others words must have had too many other words you wouldn't have come in here. (Laughing) It's right there on 34th I think the tavern still open now. You know where you turn to go down to the Indian Reservation.

[SJ] You talking about McKinley?

[SD] The East side Portland Avenue.

[SJ] Yeah your right 34th & Portland Avenue!

[SD] Yeah 34th & Portland Avenue that lil tavern right there.

[SJ] It's still 34th street Pub.

[SD] Yeah that's where they told us must have had one too many. (laugh) We just left there went 'bout our business. Jobs?

[SJ] Yeah what were jobs like here?

[SD] When I first come here, there was two people when I came here, there wasn't too many Black peoples in the stores. Sears used to be down on one them streets down there I think its Market. There was two people there that was Mrs. McDaniel, Mrs. Capers and Mrs. Black that was all. When you come up here there was a big store right down the street there it was on that corner right there right 'bout where we was working were the barber shop were and that big grocery store there. And Blacks was up here going in the store buying groceries and wasn't no Blacks in the store at all. We used to do a lot marching I was a member of St. John's. (St. John's Baptist Church) The ministers Rev. Brazill and Rev. Bose and Rev. Montgomery and Bishop Westbrook they marched we was the one that got the first Black lady workin' in the store up here on MLK way. I forget her name now I am trying to think of the family but that was the first Black up on the Hilltop working at the grocery store. (Inaudible). There used to be a little ole store right down there where Speedy Mart you know down on 19th?

[SJ] Mmm Hmm!

[SD] Used to be a big grocery store there where that things at. I forget the name of it. You could go and buy groceries there a lot people bought 'em on credit they give you credit buy peoples

word. Mostly Blacks was working out to Fort Lewis and (Inaudible) that's where the Blacks was working at or Atlas foundry. So Fort Lewis and (Inaudible) Atlas Foundry and the one right down on this hill right there the one on Wilkerson, Yeah that Atlas Foundation that were the majority of Blacks worked.

[SJ] So it called Alice?

[SD] Atlas Foundry still there today!

[SJ] Alice Founders?

[SD] Right down on just before you get to Center Street, go down Wilkerson.

[SJ] Oh Atlas! I know what you're talking about. Ok I got you.

[SD] A lot of Blacks was working there. Then Griffin wheels, like I told you, right on 56th go down 56th Street heading West then you come back up about 4 or 5 blocks back up in there. It's not there no more it where they made train wheels. (Griffin Wheel 5202 South Proctor)

[SJ] Griffin Wheels?

[SD] Yea (Inaudible) and that butcher shop downtown. Used to be a big butcher shop downtown I forget the name of it and out there on Ruston Way.

[SJ] You're talking about Asarco the plant?

[SD] Yeah the one that they tore down!

[SJ] Yeah Asarco!

[SD] That's where most of the Black people worked. But now it got it pretty well, you know you go out to the Mall now wasn't no Mall then.

[SJ] No Mall?

[SD] Yeah all the business was downtown it's still not really like it should you'll have 1 or 2, 2 or 3 people working, maybe 3 or 4 working a lot different now.

[SJ] When did it change, when did you begin to notice that there were... Because I know you said in the 50's there weren't a lot of Blacks up here?

[SD] They Started moving in late or early 60's, somewhere in the 60's then the Blacks started coming in. See there wasn't a whole a lot Blacks here then. Those that was here living in Salishan, but after that then they started buying homes and movin' up in this area. But now Black people scattered all over Tacoma I don't think too many North end at all quite a few out there now.

[SJ] What happen to Terry?

[SD] Terry! He come down with Leukemia and he passed 'bout 21/22 years ago. Me and Terry just like that (Hand Gesture) we both in the same town.

[SJ] Henderson?

[SD] Henderson Texas! Fact of the matter I caused Terry being here that's the reason he here cus I'm here. We all went to school together went to barber school together in Tyler, in Tyler Texas. Both went to vocation school in Henderson after we got out of high school cus on a G.I Bill both of us in the Navy. I put in 2 years and 7 months in the Navy Terry put in approximately that time. At that time we was all Mess Lieutenant that's all you could be in the Navy cooks you know work in the kitchen. Of course it pretty good duty might have been segregated, but we didn't have to get on the side of them ships and scrub no paint (Laughing). World War II in battle stations you didn't have to man the gun, but we did. If you ask for the gun then they put you on the gun. I was on the Essex Aircraft carrier.

[SJ] Essex?

[SD] U.S.S. Essex that was a carrier! Fact about it I took my training in Bainbridge, Maryland left there and went to Shoemaker, California and left there and went to Hawaii, Honolulu then I got on a ship in Hawaii and stayed on that thing till the war ended. I seen a lot of things! I seen a lot of bombs fall!

[SJ] So you were in Hawaii, Honolulu you were in Honolulu?

[SD] Yeah I went to Hawaii that's where I got on the Essex. I was in the Epic battle for Marshall Island to Tokyo. I was right out there in Kyushu when they dropped that bomb (Atom Bomb). You know we was about 4/500 miles back, but that's where I were when they dropped that bomb, course I was kinda glad to get away from there cus they was tuff. I seen a lot of planes go down. Cus we used to go up on the hanger deck and watch, of course they didn't have no (Inaudible) on the gun. And we go up there and look and watch and see them planes come in suicide plane drove in. We had a suicide crash that night in 44. Cus we ask to get on there, we asked to get on that. We got over there and that plane come right into that battery all our friends we lost about 2/3 guys missing and we had 7 guys who got burned by the plane. I just ask to get on that gun and you know where I were in that ammunition room at that time. That's down at the bottom of the ship and I was kinda glad I was down there then cus my buddy Frank Raglan, I never forget him haven't seen him from that day since. He was one missing in action they never did find him.

[SJ] They ran a plan into you're..?

[SD] Ran a plane right into that battery!

[SD] But you'll see how it is now. It's been this way for about 25 maybe 30 years.

[SJ] What would you say makes the Hilltop a unique neighborhood?

[SD] I don't know it seems like everybody mind they own business. (Inaudible) I never had no problem up here it's a good neighborhood far as I'm concerned. People used to say its real rough. You probably remember that what they said. Don't go to the Hilltop! It wasn't that bad then, it was bad but wasn't as bad as folks said it were. I like it of course I don't live right up in here now. Pretty quiet up here in Hilltop now; right now you don't hear too much complaints about Hilltop now. I don't have a lota of guys that I know that live up here. A lota people live up in the Hilltop Black and White next door neighbors and you don't here too much about what's goin on. It's not bad I don't think!

(Interrupted)

[SJ] Did you raise your kids on the Hilltop?

[SD] I raise my kids here. My daughter was only a year old, see I came in here in 50 (1950). My daughter was a year old my son was a year older than she. So they grew up here. As I said they grew up Salishan to Ainsworth that's where they grew up at. They started out at McCaver.

[SJ] They went to McCaver?

[SD] That other school over there! Other little Jr. High over there off of 19th

[SJ] Yeah McCaver, used to then it used to be!

[SD] No wasn't McCaver no they went to Caver then they went out to.

[SJ] Is it Foss?

[SD] What's that school down on 17th? You know on 17th about Ainsworth.

[SJ] Stanley!

[SD] Stanley!

[SD] Yeah! When we moved out they went to Mt. Tahoma. It was new then cus when I first came here wasn't no Mt. Tahoma. Mt. Tahoma wasn't there. Two of the biggest schools that I knew of was Lincoln and Stadium at that time. They used to have big bands there huge bands. Man they Black guys would march. I know a guy who used to be the head of that. Yea the head of that drum section. That's all I know far as I'm concerned not that bad. We don't get a lota White, but we do get some. I been trying to hire a white barber, I want a white barber in here and I want a Oriental. But now I turned it over to my boy, shop over to the boy this year. I haven't cut no hair in a year. I turned this business over to him, so right now we just here. Not making any money just here.

[SJ] It's not making good money?

[SD] Nothing, we in the hole. I can't get the barbers to work. I got 4 barbers do you see any of them here. All of them had some kind of business today see that don't make sense. But that's what it is! That's the reasons I give my key up to somebody else. It used to be we had our chairs full. Now we in the whole! (Inaudible). Lease was up here last May.

[SJ] The least was up last May?

[SD] Last May the lease was up, 'bout 2 ½ years here. My boy want to keep the shop going, but business fell off barbers work you know. But he wanted to keep the barbers going and I am not able to do any work now cus I'm 90. Your great grandfather I know him well we used to ride together. (Sam is talking about my uncle Jim's Father). Mr. Womack we used to ride back and forth to work together. He used to be a big fisherman and if I am thinking of the person. I know I am talking about the same people. Then they moved and went out of Salishan and moved on A Street off of Pacific. Is that the same person?

[SJ] He might have. I know that his mother ended up over on East 66th when I was growing up.

[SD] East 66th off of Pacific?

[SJ] Up further, but more off of McKinley. I can ask him and find out?

[SD] If I am thinking the way I am thinking. I was thinking your family was, I didn't know, but 2 Womack families. Womack's lived right behind the Boy's Club. And then the Womack's I am talking about we all lived together in Salishan and he moved. I left Salishan and came up here on Ainsworth. They moved and he passed quite a few years ago. He passed and his wife lived out on A Street I think A off of Pacific Eastside. His kids one of them now live right off of Portland Avenue.

[SJ] That's him! That's the oldest that's Jim.

[SD] Right next to Mr. Jones. Jones passed that's the one that moved the building out of Salishan and refinished it.

[SJ] Yeah that's my uncle. My mother's sisters husband they have a house on the Eastside.

[SD] As I was telling you that was back years ago, I know when they moved the house. That big long house they got it. Right down there Mr. Jones he died quite a few years ago had Alzheimer's.

[SJ] If you could have changed anything about the neighborhood, what would you have changed?

[SD] I don't know, I don't know what I would change. I know what they talking about changing. They put this thing out here in the middle of the block (referring to a Greenbelt in the of 11th Street). I don't why they did it you know.

[SJ] That street median?

[SD] I don't know that what I am saying. I know what change they is making. Places that I would like to have stayed as far as business was concerned, is where I were. Down on 17th I lost a lot of business because so many guys I know don't know where we were at. We advertise, but we didn't advertise big enough and right now right here were hidden. Nobody know where 3 years at a spot and this spot about 3 ½ this block. I know that effect that's been a whole lot. Other than that I don't know! Everything looks pretty good to me. I'm not up here; I go to church up here.

[SJ] Why did they make you move from the shop that was on K Street?

[SD] They put that parking lot!

[SJ] So did the city force you?

[SD] Yeah, yeah yeah that parking lot! See that parking lot right there. You know where we were right there across the street from that Boy's Club (Peoples Community Center). They sold that to St Joseph's Hospital that's a parking lot.

[SJ] Who sold it to them?

[SD] The guy who owned it we didn't own it. You see it a big ole building I worked for a guy named (Inaudible). I was renting from (inaudible) and he died and his wife sold that building. I tried to buy it me and a group of people. We wanted to buy that building, but couldn't get enough folks to do it. So they sold that lot to St. Joseph's. St. Joe's bought 'em out! All that stuff they bought 'em out cus they wanna improve and they wanted a parking lot. That's the reason we moved out, because if you look at it now it's a parking lot there. In fact all the stuff right there used to be houses on this side of 17th. 1600 Block they bought all that stuff out cus they wanted. You can't stop that growth, that's the reason we had to get outta there. Just like right down there where we were on 11th it wasn't bad there (Mr. Mac's 1210 Martin Luther King Jr Way). I liked it down there right across from that funeral home right there (Scott's Funeral Home). But the hospital bought it all cus there was a big building there on this side was a medical building. Then they wanted Mr. Mac's he had 2 lots there and they wanted that (The City). That's the reason we had to get outta there, cus he sold it to them.

But I think it's pretty good up here, I think so. I don't know what kinda of improvements they could have. They trying to rebuild it now, if you notice (inaudible) avenue signs. You see signs posted now the Hilltop some signs they putting up. They trying to bring things up, think a few years from now it will be a lot better. Now this building here they talking about enlarging this

building. You know where Brown's all that? They talking about people live upstairs and businesses downstairs this whole block. It's really not too bad, I can't talk too much against it because it's not really that bad. You know I am glad they did the change they did there. This used to be a 2 way like it is now probably time you was born it was a 1 way (Speaking of 11th Street).

[SJ] Right!

[SD] You remember the 1way? This street one way south and the other street going north (12th Street). Now they talking about changing the railroad system I mean that car downtown.

[SJ] Sound Transit!

[SD] Sound Transit they supposed to come up here. That's goin mess up that street! If they mess up that street where the parking goin be?

[SJ] No Parking! You'll have no parking!

[SD] If you gonna put that down the center of the street you gonna mess this street up. They talking'bout that and there trying to beautify. Last year they came up and said some things what they was gonna do. They gonna beautify the street put trees I don't like tree no way. I don't care about trees. I mean they look good in the summer time, but you got all them leaves to deal with in the fall of the year. Man it's a lota work to keep that stuff clean! I think its ok.

[SJ] Can you tell me something about this neighborhood that most people might not know?

[SD] Something'bout this place people might not know!

[SJ] Not to say you haven't told me already a lot that most people don't know.

[SD] People might not know really that it's a good place to live, the Hilltop. Especially people that never lived there, peoples hearing about up here in the Hilltop might not know it's a nice place to live. It is a nice place not bad at all. It's really not. My boy live right here in the neighborhood whole life.

Appendix D: Kitty Scott Oral History of the Hilltop

Narrator: Kitty Scott, born in Carbon Hill, Alabama, is the widow of L'Ray Scott, original founder of House of Scott Funeral home. The House of Scott Funeral Home has been in the area for 48 years and is one of the last old businesses left on the Hilltop.

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Date: March 3, 2015

Collected by: Shawn Jenkins

Place: House of Scott Funeral Home, Tacoma WA

[Shawn Jenkins] I am interviewing Kitty Scott of Scott's Funeral Home on March 3rd 2015. Good afternoon Mrs. Scott.

[Kitty Scott] Good afternoon and how are you this day?

[SJ] I'm doing wonderful!

[KS] On this sun shiny day! In the grand old State of Washington

[SJ] Yes it is! Mrs. Scott where are you from?

[KS] I am from a small place called Carbon Hill, Alabama. I came to Tacoma when I was about 7 years old.

[SJ] And what brought you here?

[KS] Well, my mother's family, she had a brother in-law that was in the military. And actually moved us from a small place to a lot larger place and everybody kinda of migrated to the State of Washington, Tacoma, Fort Lewis.

[SJ] Fort Lewis?

[KS] Fort Lewis!

[SJ] How many family members came?

[KS] Well let's see, we didn't all come together. My mother was here waiting for us, she had came earlier maybe a month or maybe even a couple years before, I can't quite remember it's been a long time. But anyway, she came and she got a resident and got everything set up for the

children to come. My grandmother was taking care of us there in Alabama. So we came here and I was in the second grade, I attended Stanley Elementary School and I went there up until the 6th grade and then transferred over to McCarver (McCarver Jr. High) and graduated from Stadium High School in 1970.

[SJ] What was your schooling like?

[KS] If I wanted to talk to you about schooling every year was different ok. But let's just say that when I was in the 3rd grade that was a very exciting year for me. We learned how to write we learned or multiplication and that was a really good year and the teacher her name was Mrs. Martin, as a matter fact she contacted us a couple years ago I believe she's in her 70's or 80's now. But anyway so she really made you want to learn. Now when I got to the 4th grade, the year wasn't really that great I didn't really like. The teacher what she did for us is she tell you to stop writing and if you didn't write then she'd break your pencils, so that's been in my mind all of these many years. 5th grade was a good year and that teacher was a music teacher and his name was Mr. Mosio, as a matter fact he's a singer and Reno Mosio his name is and so that was a good year the 5th grade. 6th grade I didn't really like 6th grade too much that wasn't the greatest. I was hit by a car when I was in the 6th grade, so it was the year that President Kennedy was assassinated, as a matter fact I was sitting at home Nov 22nd 1963. I was sitting at home watching the TV when it actually flashed the news and the Presidents been murdered and that was there in Dallas Texas. So anyways I returned to school after so many weeks of being out of school. And well you say how did you get hit by a car? Well my step father had the car parked and I guess he had left the ignition on all night and so the car was parked and I guess a man and his wife were going down the street and got to fighting and they hit our parked car. Well I was standing by our parked car. So anyway so I was at St. Joe's (St. Joseph Hospital) for a few days where they casted my and it was my right leg right below my knee. So 7th grade I went to McCarver and McCarver it was ok back in the day, but you know you pretty much went to a all-Black school, but the year that really blossomed for me was the 8th grade. In the 8th grade I made the honor roll and things just really went well for me at McCarver. Got into a lot of different classes and different things and the United States History there was a teacher by the name of Mr. Smickey and he had the top 10 in the class. Every time there was grade time to get our report cards I was in the top 10 and one time I made number 1 in the classes and I believe the were 2 or 3 different classes and it was called United States History. That was a very good year made the honor roll felt like life was good and we were really going good. Then that was the 8th grade, 9th grade was a good year, but you know sometimes we as a people, they wanna fight, they wanna fight you and so there was a lot of fighting going on. So my mother decided to take us out of McCarver and sent us to Hunt Jr. High School.

[SJ] If you don't mind me interrupting, who wanted to fight you?

[KS] The children in the School!

[SJ] Being that it was an all-Black school?

[KS] Being an all-Black School! And I am not going to say they wanted to fight because they were Black, I just think they wanted to fight because they didn't know anything else better to do. And we were not taught to go around and pick fights and do things like that with individuals. So, my mother decided after, you really can't get anywhere you're not going anywhere somebody's really gonna get hurt, so she decided she'd take us out and send us to Hunt Jr. High School. Well that wasn't a good choice, all White school. But one thing about Whites they might call you out of your race, but they're not gonna put their hands on you, they're not gonna fight you ok. I was there for a few quarters and then of course it was time to make a choice of a high school. I made a choice to go to Stadium High School. I went to Stadium and of course I was in the choir and that was under Paul Margelli. Well for my senior year we had just went from the 11th grade so I tried out for the Madrigals and it was an a cappella group of 20 people and I was the first soprano you would never believe I was a first soprano as husky as my voice is. I made the group, so he put the list on the door of the ones that made it. My name was number 1 on it. So 12th grade was a wonderful year and I made the honor roll of the 11th and the 12th grade. Another time I learned how to drive that summer, summer school I learned how to drive and do some different things. I decided what am I gonna do far as, I'm gonna graduate, what you gonna do. So I went to Bates, I went to practical nursing. I graduated from practical nursing must have been July of 1971. Then St. Joe's (St. Joseph) offered everybody in our class that wanted a job got a job. They hired me August 9th 1971, so I start working for St. Joe's, I worked there for 29 years. Then I messed around and got my back hurt lifting heavy patients so then they said what else do you wanna do. I said, I think I'll be a secretary I'll do some clerical work, which was reading the doctors' orders and all of those kinds of things. So that set me up. Then when I was about in my 27th year I went to teach at Clover Park Technical College. I taught the Health Unit Coordinator program as a substitute and I substituted for a while and then they offered me a position a few years later and I taught the evening program. I went to college back at TCC (Tacoma Community College) and took different classes' different periods of times in my life. But I lived on the Hill (Hilltop) ok. I mean I had my apartment; my apartment was down on 15th and Ridgewood. I had my first apartment there. I can't think of the name of it now. But anyways so I always lived on the Hill, so I grew up at 1730 South Ainsworth, we really didn't realize that the gang people had come at first, people were starting to call this the Hill. And they said what do you know about the Hill and I said "well you know nothing seems to have changed that we know of", and then all of a sudden we started to have a lot of murders and things like that. So we did a lot of gang services and then always we didn't do them all but we did some of them and sometimes they were very dangerous you know being around gangs, but those are the things I can remember from high school and going to Bates and going to TCC. But I guess my life really made a transition when I went to the bridge program which was through the Evergreen state college and at that particular time Dr. Joy Hartiman was our Dean and I went to school in the evening cus I worked during the day. And you know she cheered us on at the graduation so I got in the bridge, done with the bridge got my 90 credits transferred to the Evergreen state college which was across the street

from where this mortuary is, where community health is. I would just park the car out there and just walk across the street. That was wonderful that was a wonderful change, being down here on the Hill finally getting to go to a college or a university and met some wonderful people. I'm there, Dr. Memes came to see us and would tell us all about the wonderful stories about Maya Angelo and Oprah Winfree, she'd be on cruises with them and so she'd come back bringing all these pictures and get us all excited. So we did that and there was another person by the name of Ophelia Taylor Walker that was very instrumental in my life and of course I kinda start being friends with all of them and on Friday nights we'd go to pray. You know I like to pray. Anyway we would go to Ophelia's house and there was a church down in Olympia and Dr. Memes was friends with the pastor, her name is Pastor Bealor and her last name might be something else now so we would go there on Friday nights sometimes before class we'd go in and we'd pray about whatever was going on. But anyways, great years at the Evergreen State College. And I wrote a story "From the South land to the North land" and it was all about me growing up and coming from Alabama when I was 7 years old to Tacoma Washington. It was great memoirs. Dr. Parson was one of the Doctors there in the class that I took and he really pulled that story out of me and because I'd have to be in a real quiet place you know to be able to think and just to remember. I married Mr. Scott when I was probably about 24 years old. Miles was about 12 years older than me.

[SJ] Leray Scott

[KS] Uh huh yea and then we married and then we started having some children and I am the mother of 5 children. All the children are grown; my baby daughter today is 28 years old today. That's kinda my childhood and my going to college I graduated from Evergreen State it was June of 2001. My husband was killed in a car accident May 14 2001. So it was about 1 month and a few days before graduation. But I gotta say that the people at the Evergreen State College helped me to get through that real difficult time. I didn't think I'd be able to finish my work but I only had 1 class and so I was able to get done.

[SJ] So from the age of 7 to current times you've either lived or owned a business right here on the Hilltop.

[KS] Yes

[SJ] What was the neighborhood like when you first got here? Was it largely black was it still a lot of whites in the neighborhood?

[KS] It was still quite a few whites in the neighborhood. Now I tell you where the last place that my mother and father bought, our home was on 17th and Ainsworth and I know you probably know the name Beverly Johnson which she's Beverly Grant now, she was the judge. We all lived in the same neighborhood. We all walked to school together, we'd walk to the bus stop and then we'd get on the bus and then of course they'd take us to Stadium. But when we went to McCarver we'd walk from Ainsworth to McCarver. But it was still predominately white when

we were children and then of course as the years pass a lot of blacks came in and started buying up property.

[SJ] A lot of whites started moving out?

[KS] Whites moved out. Now it's come back again, whites are coming back now. Times have changed.

[SJ] Blacks moving out.

[KS] Yea blacks are moving out, they don't want to be here anymore.

[SJ] Would you say during your early years would you say you experienced any type of discrimination, prejudice, racism? Did your parents shield you from that?

[KS] No they were not able to shield us from that, we did experience that. When I think about Stanley school I can't remember so much racism there when I was going to school. If it was there I probably didn't know it. But by the time we got to McCarver, no I didn't have a problem there with the teachers. If you did what you were supposed to they wanted you to come there learn what you needed to learn and be quiet. And once you figured out what you're supposed to do because based on your behavior that's how they graded you. So no, and then when I got to Stadium did I have any problems with racism, not so much from instructors no. Maybe students calling out your name and same way with at Hunt Junior High. Teachers really didn't treat you any different if you understood what you were doing, but the students, there was a lot of racial because they were not used to blacks and blacks were not used to them. Because I mean they lived in a total different world than we did. But they couldn't shield us from racism though.

[SJ] How did that affect you, did that bother you?

[KS] Well let me just say that when I got to, I believe I must have been a sophomore maybe I was a junior at Evergreen, you know how you're just doing your research and everything and I don't know what you know about Oklahoma City and the Wall Street.

[SJ] Black Wall Street.

[KS] Right right you know how the government came in and bombed them from the air. Well that really affected me really really bad. When I did get all that information you gotta understand that we only knew so much about black history because if you didn't take the classes in school because you didn't have to take African American history so you only knew about what you saw on TV and what people talked about. But when I really started digging for myself, which I was in my 40s, oh it was horrible. I mean I just wanted to get through with school because I knew that if I could get through with school it would make a difference. But all the bombing from the air, and then I kinda always wondered why we do not have what they have in the Asian community especially in the Vietnamese community over on 38th street. Why didn't we have a community

like that but then when I realized we did have all of that in Oklahoma City, we had schools, we had attorneys, we had banks, we had everything but the government didn't want us to have it anymore so from 1920 to 1929 somewhere in that period of time that's when the government came in and bombed them from the air and killed so many blacks, very angry because of those situations.

[SJ] So you're a mother of five, did your kids go to school on the Hill?

[KS] Did they go to school?

[SJ] Here in the hill top area.

[KS] My children, let's just say my oldest child which is 38 he went to Holy Rosary and he went to New Jerusalem and then my husband decided he was gonna home school them. So I mean he was trying to shield them from a lot of things. But sometimes when I think back to that, that wasn't a very good solution but anyway it was his solution. So you know sometimes you can't always fight your husband because I knew I wasn't going to win. So my children have let's just say that my children even being homeschooled my daughter Caretta she's probably about 36 years old. She's a funeral director; she got her degree a BA from the Evergreen State College. I got another son that's here today that has the Evergreen empowerment group, they expunge, in the community peoples records that have like felons and all those kinds of things, things that can be expunged. So he's in law school now but he got his degree from Evergreen State College. Then I have another daughter that turned 28 today, she has a Masters in Health Care Administration. She's taken her prerequisites to go to med school, so she's in to chemistry and all that kind of stuff trying to get through that. And the other son he's in the military Washington National Guard. Then I have the other son that's 29 we couldn't get him to go nowhere. But the rest of the children, 3 of the children did follow my footsteps cus I have a Masters in education and you know what the good thing about this is I received all my education on the Hill. Cus I got my BA from on the Hill, I got my Masters from on the Hill. I would turn my van around, Dr. Memes brought the Master's program to the Hill. Did she tell you about the

[SL] No but I read it.

[KS] Oh you read it, so she brought it and it hadn't been here long and I had someone call me and say Kitty you want to get your Masters, and I received my Masters in June of 2004 in education.

[SJ] Being here as long as you have what are some of the biggest changes in the community or neighborhood that you've seen that strike you? When you look out today what do you notice that wasn't like that before?

[KS] Well the participation of African American people in the community here. I attended a banquet about 2 or 3 weeks ago and there was not even 10 blacks there.

[SJ] Banquet for what?

[KS] Banquet for the upper Tacoma, this area.

[SJ] Central Business District?

[KS] The business district, the participation was not good at all. They even had somebody to do the food from I guess it was supposed to be Cajun food, it wasn't good at all. It was horrible and I'm not a real real picky person when it comes to food but I think that we could have done a lot better you know what I'm saying. But anyway when I look out there and I don't see people look like me and it seems like it has really went down, now we almost lost this post office over here but the people really fought to keep the post office and so when I had the office downstairs on the first floor I used to see different people. Like I was outside walking around today just looking talking about how beautiful it was and everything that's where I get all the folks that wave at me "Hi miss Kitty how you doing today?". But we don't have what we had back in the day. We had a place called, where that new Covenant Pentecostal Church is, there was Risers drug store and in Risers drug store you had the pharmacy and you had hair products for our hair and one of the products I can think of is Posner. Posner it was a hair grease for our hair and that was a really really nice place. But it was right there on that church. Then next door to it there was a bakery, and my mother would go there at holiday time and she'd buy our fancy cookies and things like that. And then there was a beauty shop over there and the lady her name was Josey and that was her beauty shop and she looked like a white woman but she was actually a black woman with blond hair. And she also attended the St. John Baptist Church back in the day she probably expired by now but a lot of people have gone on. But it's different down here now. When we had the police presence, African American police they would come by and they'd wave at you. Now you got police that come up down the street. You know how you get to know people?

[SJ] Yes

[KS] And business owners, so you get the police down here now they come by and they act like they never seen you before and you know when you been in a building, we've been in this particular building since 1996 that's a long enough time to know somebody.

[SJ] Mmm hmm

[KS] And I miss the black police presence here. We don't have to have all the black but at least have some presence of people that look like us but we don't have any presence. Now on this particular side of the street, right here, there used to be a bakery over here and there used to be a Food King now the Evergreen State was in the old Food King. So we did a lot of things you know we bought groceries there and all those kind of wonderful things, then the bakery. Then there was Hammers Uniforms a store where we bought uniforms it's of course moved down the street. Mr. Makins always had a presence but it wasn't in this area always it was maybe over on 11th street he had a presence. Before that he was downtown somewhere it was called Makter

knife (28:00). Then there was a variety store that actually burned down, you know where the fence is over by the old Brown Star Grill?

[SJ] Right here.

[KS] Uh huh yea Brown Star Grill is over here.

[SJ] Yea yea that way.

[KS] Where that fence is the variety store actually burned down. You could buy material you could buy Christmas trees you could buy anything you needed because remember we didn't have the mall. The mall hadn't been built yet so all our shopping was either downtown Tacoma, cus we had Sears, we had Peoples, we had Oaks then of course we had Payless, and Woolworth and places like that, and Peoples and those are the ones I can think of right now. So we had to walk up and down the hill to go shopping and then all of a sudden you know it came the day they had bought the property out there by where the mall is and then of course they start to put the mall in. Seems like Sears was the last people to go but maybe not but people kind of went they didn't all leave at the same time to take places out there, but we could always go to Sears. Back in the day my mother would go to Sears and she's go buy our Easter clothes right, but Sears always sold popcorn too. But nobody sells popcorn like that, but I can remember her coming home and she's like I got you guys Easter clothes and I brought you guys some popcorn and those are some of the wonderful times I can remember. Then there was another place called Harold Myers and that was another place where people bought there medicine and other things like that and it was a really really nice store you could buy a whole lot of different things there. But either if you're on or between 23rd and 11th street you could do quite a bit of shopping. And of course there's been the Safeway all the time they finally did something about the Safeway up here. They did a remodel which is a good thing, and let's see they had a few restaurants but Brown Star Grill was always there and the reason the Brown Star Grill, there was a lot of murder going on you know how if we go anywhere when people get into it they don't know how to just fight with their hands they gotta shoot and kill. So it took a while to get it out, it was one of the last one places to go, the Shub Dub the Shub Dub was right here in this building right here. That was a Shub Dub. The Rhinelander was on that other block and there was one other one in the 1300 block. So Rhinelander was on 11th, 1200 was a Shub Dub and then there was on the 1300 block there was another tavern. But those Shub Dub and this other were the Black taverns.

[SJ] Like the Blue Bird!

[KS] And that was the Blue Bird right there.

[SJ] Allen A.M.E!

[KS] Yeah yeah yeah! I was losing thought of what everything was. You how you gotta think about it. But that was the Shub Dub, Blue Bird and then down on 23rd Street there was the

Office Tavern. Pastor Travis and them stayed down there until they prayed that place outta of there. (Laughing) Then of course they built nice should I say condos or whatever they wanna call it, but nice homes. So that was that area so they prayed all that up and outta there. But when I look around sometimes you kinda go in and out of here. Cus like Sunday I needed to pay a bill over on 6th Ave. So I came down MLK I always look to make sure everything going good at the House of Scott. Well you didn't see anybody, if you don't come during church time then you're not gonna see anybody. It was just real nice and dead down here. So those are some of those things that we had here.

[SJ] Was Sam's one of the first barber shops that you remember?

[KS] Well let me just tell you that yes. Mr. Sam and LK Terry which LK Terry and I have an uncle by the name of Norris Terry, they were brothers. But Mr. Sam and LK went in business together and they used to be on ok (Thinking). You know where the Masonic Hall is?

[SJ] 17th!

[KS] Yeah right there. It was an old raggedy building right in there, they used to be on that side and then one day I noticed they had moved over on the other side. But yes, that's the only one I can remember right up when I was a little girl. But Mr. Sam's been cutting peoples hair for many many years. He was right over here and he was renting a space from Mr. Mac (Clothing Store on the corner of 11th and MLK) cus Mr. Mac had bought that property across the street of course he sold it so see he is actually renting from the city now. But in the new building where Alberta Canada is Mr. Sam is right down below that. That's probably going to be a site that will live for a long time, because he didn't have to worry about nobody coming and buying it. You know what I am saying! It's already been bought and then he came in and put in his barber shop there. Mr. Sam is from Texas and my uncles Norris and LK, which was Larry they're all from Texas.

[SJ] Henderson!

[KS] Henderson Texas! Right! And there was Norris, there was Jessie Ray and LK was one of their older brothers, but those are the brothers that lived here is this city. And Norris and LK and them all had Barber shops. His barber shop was on the Eastside of Tacoma, but he should be 83, his birthday coming up here. But he has some dementia so he's not able to work cus they have to kinda watch him and keep him from getting out there and wondering off. Mr. Sam's seems like he's been down and he's been out, but he's never, I buried quite a few people in his family. Quite a few people, but he's been around and seems like he ain't going to come back, but he always comes back.

[SJ] First of all, when you were younger what was Black night life like? Where did Blacks go to hangout in the evening besides this area was there any other places around?

[KS] Besides the Cabaleers?

[SJ] Forgot about that, Caballeros!

[KS] Ok when I was a teenager, the building called the Mandahall they had a downstairs and we used to have dances down there. Then there was another place, it was called C Street, the building is still there it's kinda old it's down the hill, go down 25th and it's a C Street somewhere there. That was another place that teenagers had parties. I only remember having one street dance here and it was on the 11th Street where they closed the street off. But because after the gangs got bad and things like that people would tear up things, then we didn't have no more street dances. Then the Cabaleers has always been there for the people that partied and things and then they had some other places that got burned down. I don't know if you know this name or not but it's the Carbon's anyway a lot of racketeering going on.

[SJ] Carbon's?

[KS] The Carbon's

[SJ] Where was that at?

[KS] The Carbone's is the name of the family that there was a lot of racketeering going through. There was a place down on the water on Ruston Way called the Top of the Ocean. And the Top of the Ocean was a place every February that they would have a special banquet and Blacks would come from far I mean just a lot of Blacks and there would be a fashion show, a banquet and a fashion show. It was right there built over the water so of course it got burned down too. Then like on the University Place side there were some more places that were on that side that got burned down too and it probably had something to do with the racketeering. Now I don't know what you about Janovich the Sherriff. Have you ever heard anything about Janovich the Sherriff?

[SJ] I have not!

[KS] Ok, well anyway there was some racketeering with him and he was in the grocery store shopping and they took him to jail, yea Janovich. Once you get into research and if you're looking for that story you'll be able to find what happen. But the Carbone's and them were all part of that. All those places now they may have went to the Eagle's and some other places, but I actually didn't go to any those places after I was in my earl 20's cus I got married when I was in my 24. No, I didn't actually go anywhere else, now there might have been other places people were going, but I don't know of those places

[SJ] No places Downtown that you know of?

[KS] Well if you talking'bout the places before, when I was a little girl. Now they had something called the Rice Bowl and they had some juke joints as they would say in the South, they had some juke joints in the South but it wasn't nothing that I attended. Now somebody that's in their 70's or 80's would know more about those cus I was a little girl. But they had some places one

was the Rice Bowl and there's some other things, but I can't remember all of those names. But they were Downtown Tacoma that's about all I can remember then cus I never attended any of that.

[SJ] Your father or you mother came out here?

[KS] Yeah, my mother came out here!

[SJ] Do you know why they particularly chose the Hilltop out of all the neighborhoods around why they chose this neighborhood?

[KS] Well let's say that my mother's sisters, well my mother's sisters they all lived over here at first. Because one lived at 23rd & J Street, one lived at 17th & Cushman, and then my mother bought a home over on 17th & Ainsworth. So I guess this was the property that was up for sale and that was probably being shown by the realtors that this would be a good area for you because they didn't show them like they show on the Eastside. Everybody I can think of lived down here. Then later years where there was property at some people moved their home to lot of people lived down by the dome and of course that property was bought and then torn down. This is the area that people lived all in here. People didn't live in...

[SJ] North end!

[KS] Oh no, you didn't live in North end! You lived more in the South end which was the Hill and you didn't live in... Some people lived in the area over by Costco, they lived over there. Then some people lived over where the old military housing was now all that's new.

[SJ] Salishan!

[KS] Salishan, they lived there. Those are the areas that they showed you evidently.

[SJ] Oh so the realtors back then...

[KS] Evidently that's where they were showing the people cus that's all where they were living at.

[SJ] Black people?

[KS] Black people! Yea Black people. Not White folk. Black people.

[SJ] So it was unheard of for a Black to live in the North end or Fircrest back then?

[KS] I don't know of anybody that lived over there. I don't know anybody that I grew up with that lived in the North end. Only way I know anybody that lived in the North end was I went to school with you. But Blacks, no, we all lived over here. No matter what your father or mother did for a living. Whether your daddy was in the military and the military people lived over here too.

[SJ] At what point, cus you were older raising kids. At what point did you really begin to notice gang activity and how did that affect your business and your family?

[KS] Well how it affected my children was, my husband you know he needed to keep them at home in the yard (Laughing). Oh it kinda of way out there! We were at the stop light on 19th and Sprague at one time we could hit the freeway from Sprague they kinda of messed it up a little bit when they didn't do that turn right. But anyway, I guess I was driving and my husband maybe he was riding and we know that they were looking at us kinda hard the gang folks were. And I told my husband look over there and then once when my son was in the car my oldest son, he was goin to throw a C for Crip and I said if you do I will break your arm. But they would, oh they would just get real crazy, my children would get real crazy. That real tall boy that's here right now they'd be somewhere and the folks were throwing gang signs, oh I jacked, oh my God. I am glad that they understood that their dad and I would hurt 'em, because they just get all riled up and wanna fight the folks.

[SJ] Fight the gang members?

[KS] Whoever was throwing the signs (Inaudible). You'd be going down the street on Portland Avenue and maybe that had to do with the Cambodians and they were gangs too.

[SJ] Yes they were!

[KS] Because my children were Black I know going down Portland Avenue it could be real crazy and they just get all specially that real big boy of mine. I don't know why he would get so wild. I said you better go somewhere, you'd better go sit your butt down, I said before I get a hold to you. We really had to keep them low key. And then mortuary wise the time since my husband's been gone I'll just talk about that since he's been gone and having gangs services. And folks wanting to call me and tell me they gonna shoot the service up.

[SJ] You had somebody call you and tell you they were going to shoot your service up?

[KS] Oh yeah!

[SJ] Why?

[KS] It's crazy I had to have the police at the door. Ok you know how it is to come right up to the door? He had to park his car right up by my door.

[SJ] Wow!

[KS] To keep them from just taking over! Right here, walk down the street and then their family was saying yeah there they are right there. They'd get so bold they'd walk right out here, right by you, you know so. I mean people were just nuts they were just nuts. So what we did if we got in a situation like that we'd close the visitation down. That's what I did personally I don't have to put up with this crap.

[SJ] What do you think led to that level of violence that level of gang activity? What would you speculate would make a neighborhood just completely change like that?

[KS] For one thing some of the young folks wanting to be in the in crowd, I guess they didn't feel no love that's the way I understood. The love that they received from the gang folks, they were not getting at home. Now that's the way I understood it. Now one day I was at St Joe's and I was getting off work and all the gang folks oh they was riding and they was a bumping and jumpin and going on. And so my husband had come with all of our 5 children in the car and so everybody was afraid. So the security guard saw that I was coming outside so he made sure nobody bothered me and so I just said you guys just be quiet we goin be alright, we goin be alright. But I guess the stories that I know about the gang people that actually joined the gang and they met up down here on the hill specially the Crips. The gangs gave them something that nobody else gave them and I guess that was love. My boy's they couldn't tell that lie, but they didn't get in there that I know of. But one of my boys did get jumped on. Somebody called us. And so me and my husband went down there and somebody said it was an initiation, but sometimes you know how kids don't tell the truth.

[SJ] He got courted in is what they saying (Gang lingo for gang initiation)?

[KS] Ah huh!

[SJ] Well that leads me back. The next question would be could you speculate from your side was there not a lot of parental activity in these kids' lives during that time?

[KS] You Know when you look at, remember I told you about McCarver?

[SJ] Right!

[KS] There was not a lot of parental activity in the school system at McCarver. Parents didn't come to school to see about what was going on. So evidently you didn't come you don't care or you're working or something. For most folks that had a mother and a father presence, I think that those children were pretty much ok, but it's the children that grew up without a father or a mother and the mother might would be gone to work and who really tells you what to do besides you don't need to do this. Then if the mother was having a hard time and you need to feel like you need to go out there and help make some money and the only money you know how to make is fast money, which is that dope money. I got a call today from a cousin and my son has a son, I don't think ever worked anywhere in life. It's almost kinda of a sad situation, I guess he's been growing weed and people have been going to his home over the years. Well we got one that's a little mental in the family, which is my first cousins child. Well, we don't know where he is right now. But we know you can't be legal and sell Marijuana unless you do it the way the Government says you can do it. So there was a message sent to one of my other cousins and so she told them to get in touch with the other cousin well they both live down south but this boy lives in Tacoma, but I have not seen him in about a month so I don't know where he is. I don't

know if this boy would get him hurt, or hurt him, they come up dead. Well the mother is pretty upset right now so we talked about it, we prayed about it but I notice he hadn't come around today. He usually comes down here and he calls me aunty I'm not his aunt but he calls me aunty. He knows I'll give him some food to eat and I'll make sure he can get a bath then I always tell him to call his mother. But I aint heard from him. And then of course my brother he uses that stuff, but he usually comes around the first part of the month down in here. Well I aint seen him you know. I mean and I'm just being honest I'm not trying to say that I want to tell all my family's business cus I didn't have trouble with my children with that.

[SJ] Right, but why didn't you have trouble (53:25)?

[KS] Cus they probably had a mother and a father at home.

[SJ] So when you grew up here on the Hill would you say as you grew up was there an absence of male presence in most of these kids life?

[KS] Mostly.

[SJ] Would you say that, cus you were probably the last generation that saw a father and a mother in a household [Mmm Hmm] so as you begin to hit your late teens and your early twenties would you look back and say that that next generation, did you notice the missing father and did you see the difference and what was that difference like?

[KS] Ok I did notice there was a difference and I noticed that the children that did not have a mother and a father were pretty much outa control and they kinda ran the streets and they were out and about and sitting in these parks because that's where they meet at. I don't know if you know where the park is but it's down on the corner of 25th and Cushman. You know where I'm talking about?

[SJ] Cushman Park

[KS] Ok you know that park. That's where they hung out at.

[SJ] I know it very well.

[KS] Oh ok, so I think there was such a presence and then people having to go to work leaving their children. Like I could think of one person right off hand, she grew up with a mother and a father but when she had her children when she first started having children she had a husband. And then of course they didn't get along so guess what the marriage was over. Then the children end up having to stay at night by themselves you know just not a good situation. And one of the girls, I didn't know the girl was, she liked woman. This is a child and she was always so precious and sweet and I just hugged on her and loved on her but you know you never know what's happening to these children when this missing link is there. And nobody could tell, I can't teach you to be no man because I'm not a man. I can't teach, I can only teach a daughter to be a wife

or a mother. And sometimes I know that parents, some parents or some that we won't call them parents but just like I had a lady that came in and she was hard. She was a hard woman. She wanted to be hard like a man. She was trying like to prove something to the world. So she called me yesterday and she said "Kevin so and so said", I said "who is Kevin" I don't even know who you're talking about. Well the man's name that she was talking about was Dr. Kiesel, well number one is he went to school he earned that title so unless I tell you, she wasn't from here, to call me by my first name or vice versa then that would be the only way that you would be calling people by their first name. Number one because I don't call the man by his first name I didn't know him like that. But I did know him better than she did. So some people play to many games, some women want to be men, you don't have to be hard to be no man but you gotta be a man. A woman needs to be a woman. Everybody needs to have a place. Not to the part where she was, she goin well somebody did something to my dad, her dad was there and he died in a motel and she wanted to believe that somebody did something to him. Now when the toxicology comes back that will tell us if anything really really happened. But from what we could see the police could see there's nothing. But you know 5,000 dollars later I mean I guess you're trying to prove something to the world.

[SJ] What do you like least about the Hill Top neighborhood?

[KS] Well let's just say this, there's some things I like about the Hill and some things I don't like but maybe it's just not about the Hill. Maybe it's just different parts of, for instance I don't like old houses, I grew up in a old house. And you're probably saying what are you talking about? You know the houses that have basements in them [mm hmm] and when it rains hard it gets water in your basement but I notice even on the side of town where I live at there's old houses too, I just don't happen to live in one of them. Cus I made a choice, no I don't like old houses cus it gets wet down there. Usually I have to come back over here to go to church so there's a lot of good things still happening over here. I don't really have really any dislikes. I mean it's something that's, its ok with me here I mean it's familiar. And as long as we don't ever have gangs coming back I think we'll be ok.

[SJ] How many people in the neighborhood do you know in a first name basis?

[KS] In this neighborhood?

[SJ] Yes, right here in this neighborhood.

[KS] Right here in this neighborhood, in this neighborhood I don't know anybody by the first name. Now the pastor next door which was my neighbor, before he went to California, Los Angeles and we were very good neighbors. The new pastor, I don't know him at all. And you said well have you tried to reach out to know him, yes, I said the funeral director there because I thought man to man and first we talked about, I was doing a lot of rental for funerals that people come in and say they don't have a church of choice so I called Pastor Barrett on the phone. I didn't call him by his first name but I knew what his first name was. His name was Spencer. But

I always called him Pastor Barrett, I say oh this is Mother Scott form House of Scott you know whatever. So nobody on that side right there. On this side over here, the people at the clubhouse I don't even really know what's going on over there now that's owned by the church. The last lady that was in charge of it, one day I got a call that she had died. So (Inaudible) is gone so I don't know. The new people where the bike shop is that's pretty much Caucasian I don't know anybody they don't bother me I don't bother them. But if I was gonna need a bike shop and need something fixed I would go over there and if they treat me nice then I do business with them. Now on the other side of the street, now those folks that are in the municipal building I actually aired on TV with them but I don't know them by their first name. Then of course the post office, that's the post office that's crazy over there and they say that man is nuts (Laughing) but I hardly ever go over there but we do use their services. And the doctor that's over this building over here at the Community Health Care, I was in class with him at Covenant Celebration. I haven't actually seen him for a couple years but I think his name is Jeff. But I wouldn't go walk up to him in his business and call him by his first name. I would call him whatever his title is because I just feel like that's respect.

[SJ] Ok that makes sense. Can you tell me some things about the Hilltop that when this is all said and done people won't know unless you were the one to tell them?

[KS] No I don't believe the people will know unless there's somebody here to tell the story. Because the way that they have it going right now how they have cleaned it up people won't know the Whites are in charge of just about everything down here when it comes to the upper Tacoma. I don't have a problem with that. Because they meet at 8 o'clock in the morning, I'm not an 8 o'clock person. So if you called it later in the day I might could get to the meeting but I'm not a real 8 o'clock person I just have to be honest. They asked me to be a part and I have been a part before, but it goes back to waking up at 8 o'clock. When it's cold outside and its Winter I don't wanna get up and get out in the weather no sooner than I have to. Now if it's summer, different story. When the sun comes out I'm alive and well.

[SJ] So you'd say in the community then African Americans/ Black Americans don't have a lot of say so in this community, would you say that?

[KS] No, they don't have no say so! I don't believe they do! I'm not gonna say it's anybody's fault. Well I would say it is somebody's fault its African American peoples fault, they don't have no more voice in the community than they had, than they should, because they don't come out. They talk a good game but don't' really do nothing. Ok.

[SJ] If you were writing a history book about the Hilltop what 2 or 3 historical events would you want to include in that?

[KS] Well number 1 is that I'd talk about Evergreen State College that would be 1 and the different founders of course everybody knows it was founded at Dr. Memses kitchen table. That's real important to me the educational portion of it. And tell the story of how she was able

to educate even the drug people even when they were on drugs and how she was able to bring the best in people out. Number 2, well you know there was a St. John Baptist church and Pastor J. Ables and I don't know if you know him personally but I actually knew him personally and he actually baptized me. So the Christian perspective should be there, you know so those are the two things that I would think the educational and the Christian perspective.

[SJ] Is there anything else you would like to add to this?

[KS] Let's just say the day that we cut the ribbon to go into the new Evergreen State and I called it a great day on the Hill and I'm so thankful for the education that I've receive here on the Hill. That was a good experience in my life and I'm real happy about that. You know that brings a lot of happiness to me. The experience of the journey that I've had and I'm not going to tell you that it's been easy trying to run the house of Scott down here, because we don't always do what we need to do to support our home but let me just know that it's been god has been my guide every step of the way when I faltered and didn't know if I could get up I prayed till I got up. And I didn't go tell a whole bunch of folks that I'm praying to get up but I prayed till I did get up and able to experience, this has been a great experience. And I'm 63 years old now and so I'm real happy about the experience that I share here. Now when we have graduation and of course you know there's a graduation in Olympia as well as in Tacoma and I'm on the Alumni so were there we put the breakfast together and get all that stuff together. Then were there actually on the graduation, sitting bringing in new people for the Alumni. I don't think I coulda did any better anywhere else for education. It's been a great experience for me. One thing that happened to me at Evergreen is I would go to class I'd be so (1:07:52) I wouldn't know what to do, got work, go to school. But everybody was there looking out for the different ones in the class. Sometimes I'd come in there, there might be a hamburger on my desk where I sit and maybe a soda. So the experience of people being together as a family that was a real family. I don't know what they do down there now but for me it was a great experience. And I would not would have wanted to go anywhere else but there.

[SJ] Ms. Scott I thank you for your time.

[KS] Ok I hope I wasn't rattling to crazy on you.

[SJ] All I wanted you to do was tell your story.

[KS] Ok alright ok

[SJ] I thank you very much for telling your story.

[KS] Alright thank you so much and god bless you as you travel your journey.

[SJ] I hope he will.

[KS] You know I know you're going to be blessed

[SJ] Yes I am.

[KS] You just keep on doing the right thing you will be blessed no doubt about it and to see and African American man going forth I mean that does my heart so good because a lot of our young girls they get to do what they need to do but for our black men I was listening of the story of down in Missouri about Ferguson and how they pick on the black men, well I got 3 sons too. I know how they do; they don't always treat you nice. And because of the grace of god that covers us I aint talking about the blue eyed my husband always called him the blue eyed white devil (laughter), what the word says over in revelation it gives a description of what Jesus what he looked like and he wasn't blue eyed was he?

[SJ] Was not.

[KS] Not at all and his color was not white.

[SJ] Copper like skin.

[KS] Yea you know the description so when we can do that based on what we know. Its documented then we can go forth that's the way I believe. And I know it's done me good all these years and I'm thankful for the journey.

[SJ] So am I.

[KS] Ok Alright.

[SJ] Thank you.

[KS] Alright you be blessed, would you like any water?

