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OSBORNE: This morning I have with me the Rev. Willie C. Teague
Pastor of the New Zion Baptist Church in Alliance. I've learn-
ed to know Rev. Teague through associations with the black
groups in Alliance. He is in the NAACP and much in-

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REMINISCENCES

OF

REVEREND WILLIE C. TEAGUE

I want to talk with you about his experiences
and his experiences
start now with him
to relate that

Teague, Willie C.

TEAGUE: My father
approximately 1911
foundries. He
name is Rilla. We
day. We stopped
then we went on up to
for us to live in, 744 E. Broadway.

Pastor
W.C. Teague
Osborne

Interview by
N. Yost Osborne
October 13, 1975

OSBORNE: Now you said that was the old Chase House where
you....

TEAGUE: Yes, that was the old Chase House.

OSBORNE: Now you were old enough to have a vivid recollection
it was raining.

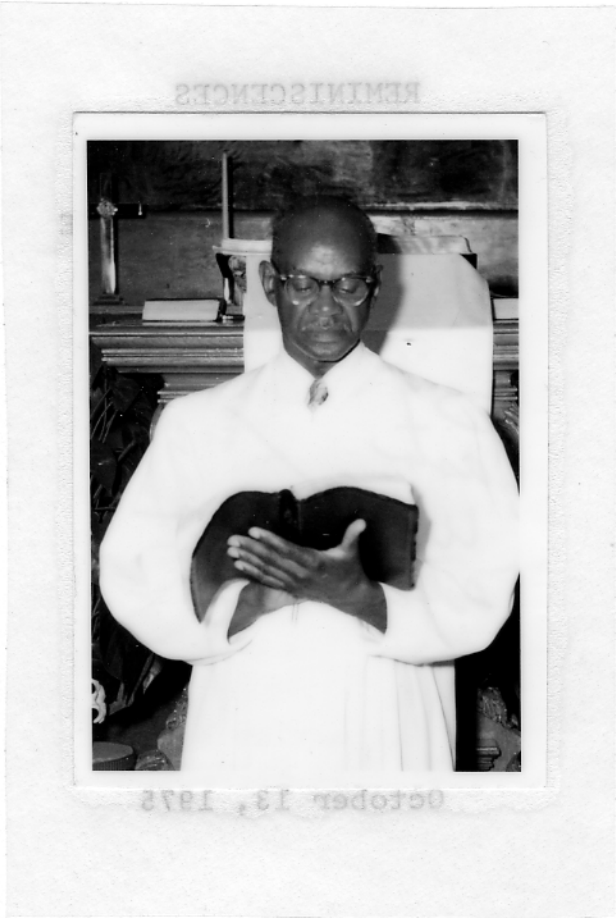
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TEAGUE: Yes. I was about 88 years old. Seven years old,

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had just started first grade down there when my parents moved here. After getting here I enrolled at Seneca Street School for about a couple weeks. My parents moved out on Union Avenue where the Lawson Store is now. There was home there for a short while. So I went to first grade at Seneca Street, I went to first grade at North Park. I went to first grade at North Lincoln. I went to first grade at North Franklin.

OSBORNE: Well, that's a record.

TEAGUE: We were moving quite rapidly.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: And of course the moving of, from Park to Lincoln was because it was over crowded. I mean the class was over-crowded so they transferred us over there. By that time my father had began to purchase a house over on Pike Street, where I grew up there.

OSBORNE: So you went through the Alliance School System then?

TEAGUE: Yes. From first grade from Franklin Street School on.

OSBORNE: When you were growing up in Alliance, you went to school. Did you work? Did you have any jobs of any sorts that you recall as when you got old enough to be employable?

TEAGUE: Well, the first job that I had, I think was about the best job I've had in a long time. I was in Franklin School and I was about 11 or 12, when a Mr. Weaver, the then president of the First Federal?

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: Mr. L. L. Weaver was president there. I had gone to the bank for some purpose, I don't know what the reason, and he asked whether I wanted to pass some hand bills for him. I said, sure, so, he gave me a job of passing bills. I did that quite well until I got too careless with the job. But anyways, I think one reason I got the job, schools were saving pennies, all the kids were bringing pennies to the school. And then these pennies had to be carried to the bank. And I was elected to represent North Franklin, Franklin, North Lincoln, North Park and all around and I took my bags of pennies to the First Federal Bank and I gave them to Mr. Weaver.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: And I think that's how he knew me. And I had quite an experience carrying the money and maybe that's why I became later on a pretty good track man.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: Kids were after me and I wouldn't let them catch me with the money.

OSBORNE: Is that right?

OSBORNE: That's interesting. world's high school 220 record

TEAGUE: Of course after school, after I grew older I was always called an industrious person because my father liked to sell. He would sell anything. Anything you wanted to buy he would sell, no matter what it was: if you wanted to buy it he'd sell it to you. And I learned those tricks from him and so as a result I began to sell products from house to house, newspapers.... I always had money in my pocket. Other kids would beg their parents for money. Well, I had mine to buy my clothes, to go to the movies, and things like that.

OSBORNE: Well then, you grew up in Alliance and graduated from Alliance High School. You said you were good in track, were you actually on the track team at Alliance High School?

TEAGUE: Yes, I went out for the track team my last year, my last qualifying year, and I ran the 100, 220, and 440. We only had one major track meet and that was the Salem Night Relays. Down at Salem Night Relays I had lost the 100, lost the broadjump, lost the quarter, had one race left and that was the 220. I figured I could run better than I was running so I guess I gave it everything I had and I broke a record then that had been standing for ten years down at Salem Night Relays. So that was what qualified me to go to Ohio State for the state meet. At the state meet I ran against Jessie Owens.

OSBORNE: Is that right?

TEAGUE: Jessie Owens set his world's high school 220 record there in Ohio State. And in the qualifying heat I was third. In the main race I was fifth, when Jessie Owens set his world 220 record.

OSBORNE: That's real competition. You would have to pick a meet like that you see. The year before or the year after you might have done much better.

TEAGUE: But then, like today the high school kids have 14 or 15 or 20 meets. They have excellent opportunities to improve their starting or their methods. Whereas then we only had one or two meets the whole season. And I just run from natural ability.

OSBORNE: Yes, well I imagine it was doing your own thing pretty much at that time. Well then, you indicated that you cast around a bit for education and found the prices were high and instead of going west you went south. Do you want to relate that experience?

TEAGUE: Yes, the prices were too high for me in this area and I went to Atlanta. Having very little money in my pocket I didn't know what school to go to so I asked a cab to take me to the nearest school. So he took me straight on down Mitchell Street to Morris Brown College. I go into the college and I talk to the president, Mr. Fountain, the Bishop's son. And I told him my situation that I had some good letters

from the community and some letters from my church and he read those. He told me if I would be interested to write my father and find out what he could pay, and I did. All my father could pay was \$10.00 a month. So the President said, "well, you can stay if you work your way through." So he gave me a job working for his father. His father was a Bishop. So I worked in the Bishop's office, cleaning up his office in the morning and before I went to breakfast. And I found a job out in the city working in the Maxine Hat Shop. To help supplement to whatever I had there.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: I always wanted to be a doctor, unfortunately I didn't. And when my professors would talk to me about my classes in college, they suggested I take education. So if I don't finish my medical work I can always teach my science courses.

OSBORNE: You can fall back on that.

TEAGUE: I knew what I wanted. That's all I want is a doctor, I don't want anything else. So they set me up with all the science courses I possibly could take. And I went to school that whole year, came back and decided to work in the American Steel Foundries a year so that the burden wouldn't be so hard on my parents to work the following year in the American Steel

Founderies. And back to college the third year and stayed there a year, back out again and worked the American Steel Founderies another year. So the three years of college that I had took me five years to get. And in the field of medicine it was just getting rougher and rougher because I was forgetting more than I was learning and I was always back of the students. I just couldn't keep up because I had forgotten the fundamentals. So things got rather rough, I decided to quit. Well at the time I was meeting with several church meetings, with a girl who had invited me out to her house for dinner. And she was an excellent cook, and is an excellent cook, and still is.

OSBORNE: As they say, the way to a man's heart, you know.

TEAGUE: And I met my wife through school. And I met her parents and we married. We were happy with being with the college, I don't know whether you're familiar with, acquainted with Dr. Hill.

OSBORNE: No.

TEAGUE: Charles Hill. Used to be the president of Wilber-

force.

OSBORNE: I see. The name is all.

TEAGUE: I think he died about 12 or 15 years ago. And he

was supposed to perform the wedding ceremony in the chapel.

But that Sunday he had been preaching down in Athens, came

back, and had an automobile accident and couldn't get back to town. So we got married the following Wednesday by the dean of the Department of History. He was a minister. So we went over to his house, he and my friend and we got married. We left school that Friday, coming home. So I did graduate from college, but I just had three years of college.

OSBORNE: Yes. Well I suppose in a sense, you say you're not a doctor of the physical man but of the spiritual man. You have ministered to the soul and in a sense that's as rewarding and helpful a ministry.

TEAGUE: Of course always I knew that I should be a minister because all my feelings, my likings were towards the ministry. And I had an argument with the Lord. The Lord wanted me to preach and I said, no, Lord. Let me be the doctor, let me be the man to save his body and then you can get somebody else to save his soul. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why my doctor's work didn't work out.

OSBORNE: Well it's difficult when you get in that sort of an argument you know. Usually it works out that way.

TEAGUE: So my people say I've been running from the ministry ever since I was a little boy.

OSBORNE: I see. Well now when you came back here then did you start in the ministry right away? Did you have a church?

TEAGUE: No. I came home from school in 1941. I didn't go

in the ministry until 1959.

OSBORNE: Oh, I see.

TEAGUE: So I came, me and my wife, settled with my parent's people. I did various jobs around the community. From a little job up in Mansfield, we came back here to Alliance and I got involved in what I called a grocery project. I had been involved in the Future Outlook League. I don't know whether you're familiar with it or not.

OSBORNE: I heard that name, yes.

TEAGUE: Mr. Holly, John Holly of Cleveland, he'd died years ago, was president. We organized a branch here in Alliance. The Alliance Future Outlook League. And the purpose of that group was to find jobs for Blacks in the area. At the time on the corner of Patterson and Front there was a grocery store, Jessie, Jessie Iannotti. He had been there for years and years. And 95 or more percent were Black.

OSBORNE: And he was an Italian, right?

TEAGUE: He was an Italian. And we asked him to hire a Black clerk or a Black janitor or to put a girl in there for some purpose a boy for some purpose at all, and he refused. I think he definitely refused to do this at all. So we called the group together and we decided to picket. And we put a picket around his store for about a week. The Mayor came

down, tried to get us to stop. We wouldn't stop. The police came down and talked over our rights; we still picketed.

OSBORNE: Yes.
Jessie wouldn't hire. So we went up the street to another corner store, Patterson Street Market and we asked him if he want a Black clerk in here, so he saw us picketing the other store and he didn't want one; so he said, "sure." So Eugene Thurman (you might know Eugene) Eugene was our first clerk from our efforts. He worked at the Patterson Street Market. In the meantime some dissatisfaction came within the group and we stopped the picket and Jessie stayed in his place about six or eight months afterwards, then he moved. When he moved we received the idea, and I thought of the idea, why picket a White man's store. It's his. He worked for it, he and his children for years. He worked, he built it up. It's his. He should have the right to hire who he wants to hire. However, I felt otherwise.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: So I said to the group, let us build a store so we can hire who we want to hire. And if we don't want to hire the White men, well, we don't have to, because it's ours. So we tried to get a group together at \$10.00 a share. We couldn't get it to go. We had about seven people to bring ten bucks and that wasn't enough to start a store with.

OSBORNE: No. what kind of store was this?

TEAGUE: So a friend of mine said they won't give \$10.00

let's try \$100.00. Mr. Tom Simmons, remember that man?

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: Mr. Tom Simmons was suggestful, let's give \$100.00. And we passed a list out and got a group of 12 men who said they would give \$100.00 to start the group with. So Tom and I said, well if these men are interested let's tell them all to meet at the First National Bank on a certain date with their \$100.00. Those who want it are going to have this store. So out of the 12 people that were invited seven came with their \$100.00 and put it in the bank and planked down \$100.00 in savings account. Well, from then on, we got interested in stores. I took this idea of this \$10.00 thing because I felt it was good - the sum - and being in the church, deacon at that time, I went to our associations, our general conference. I talked the moderator in giving me a whole session to talk to the group about it and many of the men in the session signed up - the ministers to the laymen. So we called the meeting here in Alliance at the Y back in 1944 to organize what we called the Ohio Progressive Association. About fifty people came out; it organized; it grew. It grew until we got the store here in Alliance, had a store in Warren, had a store in Youngstown, had a store in Mansfield.

OSBORNE: Now what kind of store was this?

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: It's a grocery store.

OSBORNE: A grocery store.

TEAGUE: Grocery stores in these cities because it was Ohio Progressive Association Inc. with a license to have stores all over the state of Ohio. And we were getting along fairly well, but the trouble was inexperience in managing. I didn't have the experience actually operating a grocery store.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: My forte was books. I understood the books, the history of it and the background of it and motivation but the actual work I didn't have the experience. The clerks that were being hired by us didn't have the experience. We didn't have any good meat men, any good vegetable men, we just had an idea. And naturally there was much trouble mismanaging.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: So as a result it was not successful; so we started closing stores down. They closed down in about - I worked about 20 years in that grocery business.

OSBORNE: Is that right?

TEAGUE: So perhaps that's one reason I'm not as well off financially as my peers are.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: But it had been sacraficing with joy; but the project was a failure.

OSBORNE: Well it's like the saying, the operations a success, but the patient dies. The idea was a fine one but the success was not.

TEAGUE: We started like Kaiser with a small car. So years ago the small car was good but in proper time. Even if we had the same idea now, in groceries I think we could make success of it because we have so many area to get help. The government would help, help with finances, help with the book-keeping, help with the structure of the work. But then we had none.

OSBORNE: Nothing, yes.

TEAGUE: But I don't regret those years, although they've been rough years.

OSBORNE: Yes, they would be. Well then, this took you up to about what time? You say about 1959?

TEAGUE: Oh, yeah, about the late 50's. I got a job with the Cope Electric Company as a....

OSBORNE: When they were on the square down there?

TEAGUE: Next to the post office.

OSBORNE: Yes. Not the square, I meant at the corner of

Arch and Main there, yes.

TEAGUE: I got a job there as a clerk. I worked there until the manager died. And after he died I became the manager of the warehouse of Cope Electric. I worked there about ten or eleven years. They went out of business. When they went out of business I tried to get a job in that same field but I couldn't find one. So I was getting hit and miss till I finally found a job where I am now. And I been here for twelve years, at B & W Research.

OSBORNE: B & W Research. In the meantime then when did you pick up your position of leadership with the church? And how did this come about?

TEAGUE: Well, I was living in Youngstown at the time when I really got the call, the impelling call there was no rest and no peace at all nowhere, and everything I seemed to do was a failure. I just couldn't make any success out of my life and I had this urge to preach. I asked my minister about it and he said perhaps that does constitute a call. So I was ordained at the Holy Trinity Baptist Church at Youngstown, Ohio in 1959. But I've lived here; I've perhaps lived in Youngstown awhile and other cities awhile, but Alliance has been home.

OSBORNE: This is home, yes.

TEAGUE: This is home. So working at Cope Electric during 1990. Back in 1930 the Second Baptist Church merged with the

the time, living in Youngstown, I learned that the minister at the New Hope Baptist Church was ill. I went over and asked whether I could assist. I had permission to assist there. And the minister took a leave of absence to the south to recuperate. And when this year of leave was up, he decided not to return and the church elected me the pastor of the church in 1961. So I served as pastor of the church there until the merger of the two churches. The other church is Mount Zion Baptist Church. The one that you had mentioned a while ago. Mount Olive which Rev. Burruss was the pastor.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: Mount Zion Baptist and the New Hope Baptist Church came together in a merger in 1972.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: And in the mean time the former pastor resigned, which left Mount Zion without a pastor. I was the pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church. So in the merger they elected me as the pastor of the combined church.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: Now that's why we have the New Zion Baptist Church. And speaking of mergers. Historically you know, the New Zion Baptist Church is not the first Black church merger. The first merger of the Black church in Alliance was back in 1930. Back in 1930 the Second Baptist Church merged with the

Mount Olive Baptist Church. House used to be down on Jersey; Jersey and, down at the lower end of Jersey Street. The house is torn down now, but that was the first church back in 1930 of any Black church.

OSBORNE: Now just to digress a moment, how far back historically does your church go? Now there was a merger of the two churches but roughly they would have, do you know about the time they would have started here?

TEAGUE: Yes, I think I can tell you when these churches started. The Mount Olive Church was started in 1928 by the Rev. Jackson, Rev. Jackson in 1928. And during the 1930's it merged with the Second Baptist Church. Now the Second Baptist is the oldest of the Baptist Churches in Alliance. It was organized in 1916. Just prior to that, some months ago some six months prior to Second Baptist organizing, then the Saint Luke's Church was the first of the organized Black churches in Alliance; Saint Luke AME Church. It was a mission, it was a mission church from the United Methodist Church. The mission was established early in the 1900's. 1900 or 1903, it worked as a mission from the Methodist Mission to the Patterson Street AME Zion Church into the Saint Luke AME Church up to 1916 and so on. Those two years it was changing from one place to another. The Methodist had tried to get the AME Zion to sponsor it but they didn't have the money so they went to the African Methodist Episcopal Church for sponsorship.

OSBORNE: I see. Blacks in the community. There were not

TEAGUE: And it started in 1916. Of course they date theirs from 1907 because they take in all the other chains, from all the other churches. So from 1907 through 1916 they dated theirs. They found the church.

OSBORNE: Well now, to go back even farther than that, I came across records in the 1870's when there was an African Methodist here and then there was a Zion....

TEAGUE: How about the Lexington Grove Baptist Church, the Holiness Church. Lexington Grove Baptist Church. The one that they talk in the paper about their shouting and the loudness.

OSBORNE: Yes, yes. Oh that was with the settlement, what was known as New Guinea. That was even earlier, that was earlier, this group that came up, yes. But an organized, what you would call an organized church, there's evidence in 1870's. And they dedicated a church building here in 1872 or 73 would be on, down about where Jay's is, somewhere in that area down there. That was the outskirts of Alliance at that time. I've written to AME to try to get some church records but evidently they don't have it. I get no reply. But then apparently it dropped out of existence and an organized church doesn't come up until you indicate there about 1907. Well, then these churches, I suppose, reflected the development,

the influx of Blacks in the community. There were not enough to support and sometime after the turn of the century and World War I there became enough Blacks here. As your family came up toward the end of the, what around 1919 of you say. And I suppose many of the Black churches were, churches became established from that time on. larger of all of them;

TEAGUE: Yes, the, I had the Second Baptist in 1916, the Baptist Church and the Saint Luke AME Church. Our Church Mount Olive Baptist in 1928. A change of name from the Mount Olive Baptist to the Union Baptist Church in 1930 which finally merged again with the Second Baptist Church in 1935.

The most of the Baptist Churches in Alliance are results of splits. They're splits. For example, Second Baptist being the oldest of the Baptist Church split into the Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1934. Then they in turn split into the Tabernacle Baptist Church. Tabernacle Baptist Church in turn split into New Hope Baptist Church in 1946. The New Hope Baptist Church and the Mount Zion Baptist merges in 1972. But most of these are results of splits. Splits came about because of differences, ideology, principals....

OSBORNE: Yes. But this has been the nature of the Protestant tradition, the splits like that. As a layman I was a

TEAGUE: Of course we have eleven Black churches in Alliance now, with the population, the total population of 3,000.

OSBORNE: Oh, I didn't realize that. work; we had about 10

TEAGUE: Which makes it difficult for church growth.

OSBORNE: Yes, that's right.

TEAGUE: Eleven Black churches with a Black population of the 3,000 including men, women and children. And of these churches Second Baptist would be considered the larger of all of them; Second Baptist and the Church of God in Christ and Tabernacle Baptist Church and the Saint Luke AME Church. Our Church falls about fourth or fifth in there.

OSBORNE: Your membership would be roughly what?

TEAGUE: We have 185 on roll, we have an average attendance of about 90 people in church.

OSBORNE: And so you have been the pastor of that church since....

TEAGUE: 1972.

OSBORNE: 1972. But your association with the church dates from 1959, is that right? Church work?

TEAGUE: No, I wouldn't say. As I said, always I have been interested in church work as a layman. As a layman I was a member of the Second Baptist Church. I grew up in Second Baptist Church, I was it's clerk: General Church Clerk when I was 15. I became president of the district work when I was about 16. District Young Peoples work; we had about 10

churches under our jurisdiction. Leaving there, I was elected, after I came back from, after graduation from high school, I was elected president of Baptist Training Union Work, on a convention level. We had about 50 churches there. I was the president over the whole. And from there we would set up the area that had no training department at all in the churches. Well then we were interested in getting these training departments set up; which gave me a good background, all this as a layman. Then the height of my layman's work, I guess, was the organizing of the Sunday School and the Baptist Training Union Congress for our convention. And after that then I go to the ministry.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: This brings up my religious my coat. And my dad comes back with a long switch. With three of them wrapped around.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: Always I was interested in religion and the works of the church. Even when I was little, the other kids out playing ball while I'm at choir rehearsal and meeting here and meeting there. And my parents didn't have to force me to go to church, I just loved the church. Sunday morning, afternoon and night I could just stay in the church. I would have one incident I might tell about.

OSBORNE: All right.

TEAGUE: I was always a hustler, I said, always could find

jobs. So the evenings I would get out of school and I would take my father's lawn mower and go all over town with the lawn mower and clippers, see some grass that need to be cut, go to the door, may I cut your grass and invariably I would get the job. So one day my father wanted to cut his grass and the lawn mower was dull so he said you take the lawn mower to the sharpener, the man who sharpens it, and get it sharpened cause I want to cut the grass tomorrow. I said okay. So the next day instead of taking it to the lawn mower sharpener, I found a job. I did the job and came back that evening, my dad said, "did you get the lawn mower sharpened?" I said, "no sir." He said, "Didn't I tell you to get the lawn mower sharpened?" I said, "yes sir." He said, "Okay, you go in the bathroom and take off your clothes." So I goes in the bathroom and takes off my shoes and takes off my coat. And my dad comes back with a long switch. With three of them wrapped around. I said, "Are you going to whip me with that?" I knew I deserved a whipping and I was going to take it but he was gonna whip me with those three. So I had a little dog, the dog followed me to the bathroom. My dad picked him up and carried him out; wham, and I shot out. I went to this Mount Olive Baptist Church here. I was a janitor at this church. Goes in and hides in the church, it was about 12:00. And I figured my dads gonna be hiding. He's a good runner too, he ought to be hiding someplace. I didn't want to stay there. I said I'll go up to the Second Baptist Church, I was the janitor there

too. So I goes to the Second Baptist Church, unlocked the door, goes up in the coal bin and goes to sleep. The part I wanted to say, to show you how well acquainted I was with the church, in the old Second Baptist there were two posts on either side of the rostrum. Nobody knew this but me: and these posts were hollow. I could lift the lid off and they were hollow. Well I was stealing my mother's peaches and canned goods and putting them down the hollow here. So every-time I got hungry and didn't want to go home I would go to the church. So I stayed all night in the church and the next morning I got my peaches out of there and ate my peaches. That evening I go home my dad was waiting and said, "You decided to come home." I said, "Yes sir." That's all he said.

OSBORNE: Is that right.

TEAGUE: But I've always loved the church, always worked in the church. So my church _____ did not come exactly in 1959. I just dedicated myself.

OSBORNE: Yes, just sort of gradual.

TEAGUE: For a larger service.

OSBORNE: Yes. But as a minister it would be 1959. Well

now another aspect of the, of your growing up here. You talked about a store that was run by an Italian, a grocery

store. Would you want to comment, and you indicated about your experience with Blacks because they had not had experience when they did have the opportunity this made difficulty. Do you want to talk or comment something about Black businesses as you think back when you were growing up.

TEAGUE: There has always been a very, very few Black businesses in Alliance. We say there are perhaps 52 people in business at present time in Alliance. But the older of these would be like Sibley's Funeral Home, Coleman's Service Station, or George's Service Station and one or two of the barber shops. These are the older of the businesses. The Blacks in Alliance have never gone for any large types of business. Always, the early of our businesses were fish markets: Gonner's Fish Market, Mosby's Fish Market. Back at the turn of the century those were the only type businesses. Maybe a confectionary, small confectionary store. For example the house next to Beauchamp's now was Jessie's house. That house was down on Franklin and Reed Street. That's where it was, it was moved. But before it was moved there was a little building a little larger than this room here, was one of the first confectionary stores that the Blacks had. They've had a dry cleaning shop on occasion. The beauticians have been rather consistent in their work but as far as big businesses are concerned....

OSBORNE: Yes. As always. Now what about, of course the expression today I guess is soul food, but I mean Blacks have always had their

type of food and their recipes. Was there anyplace you could go, were there any small restaurants or cafes, anything like this? Or was that part of a club or lodge where you had this or maybe a church supper.

TEAGUE: Mostly church suppers and back in the early history back in the 30's, 40's and 50's there has been no restaurant. Now on occasion they have tried to start restaurants; even I tried to start a restaurant myself. But the type of people we must cater to were not those who went to restaurants. They were those who carried their lunches in a lunch bucket. And they went home for supper. I've tried to influence some Blacks to put a restaurant, not for Blacks, but a restaurant in a neighborhood or in a place where there were great conflux of people where they could go. I think a Black restaurant on Union Ave. or in the shopping plaza or on Main Street and cater to good solid food, I think would work. But that takes money.

OSBORNE: Yes. As always.

TEAGUE: And there are few entrepreneurs in our groups.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: There are few that have any kind of money that they could develop like that. Until recently, just for the last, say, ten years has the Negro's earning power increased enough so that he might now have a little bit more that he could in-

vest in something like this. But prior to the 60's there was no way for him to do this.

TEAGUE: It has always been there. For example, when I grad-

OSBORNE: Of course, I suppose if there were a larger Black community here this would be more opportunity too. There

was an Alliance Business College. I was gonna take some

TEAGUE: Yes, like Pittsburgh, Cleveland....

business courses so that perhaps if I wanted to go into

OSBORNE: What do you estimate is the Black community, population wise? About 3,000? take any Blacks here."

TEAGUE: About 3,000 men, women and children. 40's? 30's?

OSBORNE: And this would be, do you know roughly, say, when you came here, say 1920, for example. There would be approximately how many, 1,000?

TEAGUE: I graduated from school in 1933.

TEAGUE: Yes, maybe 1,000. When I went to Franklin School

and to many other classes. I was the only Black because

the whole Franklin School was 99% white. When my dad moved

TEAGUE: So then they wouldn't take anybody in Alliance Black,

over on Pike Street there were only two other families in the

in Alliance Business College here. I tried to get a job with

whole area on Pike Street when I moved in.

the Singer Sewing Machine, they had an ad in the paper a

OSBORNE: Now when you came, this matter of discrimination which is grown up in recent years. Someone told me they didn't notice it in earlier years, say at the turn of the century or World War I, there was not this feeling that there has lately been. Can you comment on that? manager says yes, we have a

job and we'll send a representative down to yourhouse and talk
TEAGUE: Now it's been polarized but it's always been there.
with you. But when he saw me his face turned just as red.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: It has always been there. For example, when I graduated from high school I wasn't even sure about whether I could go away to college. I couldn't come to Mount. There was an Alliance Business College. I was gonna take some business courses so that perhaps if I wanted to go into business I would know something about it. I go to the administrator, "Sorry we don't take any Blacks here."

OSBORNE: Is that right. This would be in the 40's? 30's?

TEAGUE: 30's.

OSBORNE: 30's.

TEAGUE: I graduated from school in 1935.

OSBORNE: 1935.

TEAGUE: So then they wouldn't take anybody in Alliance Black, in Alliance Business College here. I tried to get a job with the Singer Sewing Machine, they had an ad in the paper a manager wanted; sales manager wanted. Well, with my sales background I figured I could sell some sewing machines. I wrote them a letter, then I talked with them on the phone. Talking with me on the phone you couldn't hardly tell whether I'm Black or not, see. So the manager says, yes, we have a job and we'll send a representative down to yourhouse and talk with you. But when he saw me his face turned just as red.

OSBORNE: Is that right?

TEAGUE: He couldn't hire me because they weren't hiring Blacks then. And in the stores, in your grocery stores, all around there were no Blacks. In all of the stores. Until through the picket we were able to get Eugene Thurman at the Patterson Street Market. We were able to get Aurelia Cobbs, she is a Cobbs now, she was Aurelia Ruffin; Mrs. Cobbs was our first girl to work on Main Street. She worked at, is it McCrory's?

OSBORNE: Yes, it's a five and ten, was that it?

TEAGUE: It was at the five and ten. What's there now? That's Grants there now isn't it? What's there now?

OSBORNE: Oh no, I forget what it is, there's just one there now.

TEAGUE: There was a five and ten before this one.

OSBORNE: Yes. I don't recall that....

TEAGUE: It was at the five and ten, now she was the first to be hired on Main Street. Of course, my uncle was, I don't know whether you know him, worked on Main Street. Before, he, was one of the first that came up, Rev. Hosea Teague. Shee, he came up in 1918. And he would wash windows and clean for Klein and Roderick and the people up there.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: This was way back then. would come, they just took

OSBORNE: Oh, I have just another digression, how did he
came lived in shanties that Morgan Engineering had built and,
happen to come to Alliance? You came through a relative, now
after the war years were over, these shanties were destroyed.
what brought him here?

TEAGUE: Some of his friends. ies. And in the pottery and out-
lying situations. That's how the bulk of the Blacks came back
OSBORNE: Some of his friends.

TEAGUE: Cause he was a minister at the time. He was a minis-
ter and he had an opportunity to preach in Kent, Ohio. situation.

OSBORNE: Oh yes. that period.

TEAGUE: And through that he came to Alliance, and became
pastor there in Kent and lived here in Alliance.

OSBORNE: So the opportunities were mainly at American Steel,
or Morgan's or a plant like this. But other jobs or opportun-
ities were pretty much of a closed proposition.

TEAGUE: The first Blacks were brought in numbers by Morgan
Engineering Company back during the first war. They would
send their representatives to the South and those who wanted
to come; one of our member brought in the report the other
night that along with this, the Morgan Engineering Company
would give the men a dollar for spending money and they would
promise to have a house for them and food for them until they
got situated. And it said many of them who had received a

who arrived say from Alabama, Gilbertown had quite a few from

dollar would get off the train, would come, they just took the dollar and went some place else. But anyway, many who came lived in shanties that Morgan Engineering had built and, after the war years were over, these shanties were destroyed. The men would not be hired and many of them found jobs then at the American Steel Foundries. And in the pottery and out-lying situations. That's how the bulk of the Blacks came back in the early, the turn of the century and after the First War, 17's and 18's. Maybe that could have been one of the reasons why my uncle came. His friend came up during that situation.

OSBORNE: During that period.

TEAGUE: It could have been.

OSBORNE: And then I suppose there was what, was there another wave or group that came in around Depression time? Do you think there was another group?

TEAGUE: Yes, most of these in the 30's came from the Pittsburgh area and the Virginia area.

OSBORNE: I see. I never did, just read, that's all about

TEAGUE: From that section down through Irondale and the places south of Irondale from that section to this way. Where as the early years, 1917 and 18 we practically came from Alabama and Mississippi. Because it was quite a trip. Perhaps the Kirksey family had a good idea, example of those who arrived say from Alabama, Gilberttown had quite a few from

Gilberttown, Alabama, the Mississippi way who came up in the early years. Then they began to gradually travel in the east direction, then back down.

OSBORNE: So that they, now this is interesting, the first group came more from the South and the others came from an area closer here. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make. How did you get identified with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People? When did this relationship start for example?

TEAGUE: Well, I've been a card carrying member for a great number of years in the NAACP.

OSBORNE: That's the kind of card carrying member to be, you see.

TEAGUE: And I learned to love the NAACP from DuBois.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: Have you met him, did you know him?

OSBORNE: No, no I never did, just read, that's all about him.

TEAGUE: I went to school at Morris Brown College and formerly it was all Morehouse College and the Atlanta University system. Well Dr. DuBois taught at Atlanta University and from our school, when the school grew he went directly to Atlanta U. But he had

a habit, coming from Atlanta University, up Mitchell, up our steps, walking down our sidewalks to the other part of the city there.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: And seeing Dr. DuBois coming down the street there we decided we better speak to him, but I didn't have the nerve, but my friend said, "Well, I'll speak to him." So he went down to talk to him. Well, having known Dr. DuBois and his work with the NAACP and in his stand for Black advancement I learned to love him. And that's how I got first involved in the NAACP. We didn't have one here. So shortly after school we organized an NAACP branch here, in Alliance, we got our charter.

OSBORNE: This would be the late 30's?

TEAGUE: Late 30's or 40's, yeah, we organized it here then. And then I got involved in the grocery business and that's why I couldn't carry it on. So they got another president and they worked through them. This had been up and down it hadn't been going; just like the last few years we still have it in existence but it isn't functioning as it ought to. We do have an active branch now, right now, a Mr. Harold Graves is president. And I'm on the Historical Advisory committee. But we've always had an NAACP and it has had opportunities to settle quite a few problems, although it hasn't

come out in the papers that the NAACP has been involved. But remember back, when the library windows were being broken out and the trouble here in Alliance, all over the country then was that kind of trouble. It did a Herculean work in those days. We had conference after conference in high schools, the principals offices and in other schools, talking to the teachers, the principals day in and day out. And we get the kids on the other end in the New Hope Baptist Church and we would talk, we talk and we plead and we counseled, keep the things down so fortunatly we were able to do that. It did get out of hand one or two incidents but not....

OSBORNE: Like it might have been.

TEAGUE: Like it was in Watts or Hough.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: Cause the kids here they were angry.

OSBORNE: Oh you bet.

TEAGUE: They were angry, they were angry. And there were many things, you know, kids couldn't be involved in, the troubles in the high school, the troubles in the local schools, trouble finding jobs. But the NAACP has had a good involvement in keeping this kind of thing.

OSBORNE: In a, what you would call a low key approach to it.

Of course, when you do that you can't stand up and take the credit like you.... This is an interesting facet to know about.

TEAGUE: So in some of your bigger cities see you could be made an issue and they could stand for it whether you're right or wrong you got an issue going for it. The idea is the publicity but we didn't feel that we should do it that way.

OSBORNE: Yes.

TEAGUE: This is our town and we love our town and we want a peaceful town so the NAACP has done a good job of keeping the peace. Now they still have many problems that exist.

OSBORNE: Now this seems to be characteristic of the world today, though. They're just increasing in number. Let me ask another question and then if you want to make some comments I want you to do that too, some observations. What about recreation? You talked about, earlier, about food and said this might be through church dinners but what would there be recreation-wise? You were growing up, you were interested in church work, you said other boys and girls were playing ball or doing sports, something else. But what would there be for the Black community recreation-wise? Was this through your lodges, clubs, and church?

TEAGUE: Yes, that's where the bulk of the adults got their social activities. The churches back in those days were very

well attended. It's hard now to have a night service no matter what you do. But when I was coming up here night services were perhaps, was the best service there was because the people were there.

OSBORNE: This would be in the 1920's now or the 30's?

TEAGUE: Yes, 20's, 30's up to the 40's; all during the depression years. The church was the gathering place and it still is in the Black community today. It is the gathering place where Blacks come together and talk about all of their problems. But we do have now, we do have an active lodge, we have maybe two or three active lodges in the town. But as far as club wise is concerned there aren't any. As far as a recreational program for the people today there aren't any as there weren't then. The adults got their joys out of going to church and in their lodges. The young people got theirs wherever they could find a ball game here or a soft ball here, rollerskating someplace here. That's the way they got their enjoyment. No facilities, there have never been any facilities here for Blacks entertainment. Of course to say the Whites have the Youth Center but then it's way out; but then your membership fees are prohibiting to the poor family. A few Blacks can afford it and a few do have their memberships out there. But by and large we need something on the square down there sponsored by the city where the prices are nominal toward everybody then you might have something. Well, they could go down to Stanley Park to swim, but see it was seg-

regated. You could swim in the front half but you couldn't swim in the back half. See there was a big rope down the middle: Blacks on this side of the rope, Whites on that side of the rope, see. As far as the restaurants concerned that were here you couldn't go. They wouldn't tell you no, but you could tell the attitude of some of the people. As a result they didn't go to any of the White restaurants. They get more patrons now than they ever got simply because these barriers are being broken down all over the world now. But back in those days they didn't go in to the restaurants.

OSBORNE: I remember when I was a student, I was a student here in the 30's; I think about in 35, one of your friends, you probably knew Dr. Cunningham. He came here as a student from Canton.

TEAGUE: Went on to be president of Morris Brown.

OSBORNE: That's right, he went on to be president there. When he came over I think we had one or two Blacks. I'm not sure we had any in it at that particular time. I was in the YM, heading up the YMCA here. I remember president McMaster called me in and said some parents have written letters and there may be discrimination, and he said, "Now, I want you to do something." And as you said with the NAACP sort of a low key. We decided that we would meet him, we'd walk to chapel with him, we'd walk back from chapel with him; not the same fellow each time but we had a schedule; but I don't think he

ever realized this; but we tried to do this so that he wasn't an outcast and of course he had, he was a very fine person. After a while a great many of the student body accepted him and there wasn't a problem. But at first I recall that experience doing that.

TEAGUE: Yes, we didn't have the access to the things as we have today back in those days.

OSBORNE: Is there any other item you'd like to point out? You've been identified and a student of the Black community. Is there anything that you'd like to, that we haven't covered briefly here? Anything that pertains to your church work or something about the community; or you tell some interesting stories, maybe another experience or story that you'd like to share.

TEAGUE: Of course you know that our first doctor was Dr. K.T. Thompson; Dr. Kadias Dallius Thompson. And his first patient is still living; Mrs. Rucks, Ruby Rucks was his first patient.

OSBORNE: Oh, is that right?

TEAGUE: And his office, his first office was down on Patterson Street; you remember Eagle Bakery?

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: And the big long building next to Eagle Bakery: well,

right next to Eagle Bakery was Dr. Thompson's office. That's where his office was then.

OSBORNE: Now what induced him to come, do you know? To settle, to do practice here?

TEAGUE: I forget now, I got a conference with Mrs. Thompson to bring me up to date on this. But I think some of his people, some relatives, some acquaintance of his lived here and he came, and wanted to practice because some places he had been and they didn't want an African doctor. See he's native African.

OSBORNE: Oh, I see. Yes.

TEAGUE: He's native African. Capetown Southwest Africa. South Africa, he's from South Africa. And I didn't know his story how he got from Africa but I do know he worked his way through Meharry as a janitor there. Slept in the furnace room.

OSBORNE: I see.

TEAGUE: Because he didn't have the money to pay board. And he came to Alliance, I believe because of some relatives of his or personal friends here, he came and settled. And of course I think he, the thing that got him started was red light houses on all of Franklin St., Jersey., Front. Nearly all of those houses were red light houses during the first war, clear up in to the 30's up in to, those houses were pre-

valent up to 1939 those houses were prevalent. And they had, the occupants there had to have their medical examinations and they didn't want to go to a White doctor so this gave him a pretty good send off cause he's here in the community. They could come right from their house right on down there to him and he could treat them. So they got him a good start.

OSBORNE: Well, he performed a very real service to the community.

TEAGUE: Oh yes, yes he did. Everyone loved him. We are thinking about having a Bicentennial reunion. One of the clubs that were organized in, during 1932. Called the Booker T. Washington Club. The old Y, before they got this new building, the little building. I forget the secretary there....

OSBORNE: Was it Rearmore?

TEAGUE: I think so, that's sounds right. Yeah.

OSBORNE: Rev. Rearmore.

TEAGUE: He got a group together; we organized a Booker T. Washington Club, on they had high ideas you know. And we would play ball, play ball together, a lot of softball games. And we met there, I guess about a year. We had a basketball team that we beat everybody in the area. You're familiar with Harry Hamlin.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

TEAGUE: Harry Hamlin was the coach.

OSBORNE: Oh, is that right?

TEAGUE: Of our basketball team back in the 30's and he was a hustler too, I don't know where he got his money. Yes, I do, he told me recently where he got his money I won't say it on the tape.

OSBORNE: All right.

TEAGUE: And he would buy us uniforms. I didn't play basketball you see but the other kids did. He bought the kids uniforms. And the parents got to complaining about Harry taking the basketball team to Canton, to Pittsburgh, all around you see. And Harry footing the bill: people was wondering about all of this; so they began to object to it; and Harry decides, well, if they're going to object to my sponsoring this basketball team I'm going to take my suits. So he took his suits and left. That broke up the basketball team. John Snodgrass and Robert Patterson were talking about it four or five months ago and said so let's call a reunion of the Bicentennial. And so we been trying to locate boys and ask if they would come back to the Y. We would have this reunion in the YMCA as a part of the Bicentennial.

OSBORNE: That's interesting.

TEAGUE: So we're working on that.

OSBORNE: Can you think of some individuals in the Black community who might not be living now; but you talked about Dr. Thompson and his personality: can you think of others who, of course Harry Hamlin is quite an individualist in his own right.

TEAGUE: I've been trying to get him to give me his life story but he won't talk. He won't talk with me. He says he has a whole lot of pictures and things in his suitcase.

OSBORNE: He's painted, that's right. He's a primitive artist and really they should be preserved. And I guess he's so fearful that someone is going to take advantage of him.

TEAGUE: He says he's got a couple of suitcases full of information. But he won't do it. He comes past our house nearly every day. We have a word or so to say.

OSBORNE: Can you think of any women who were leaders or outstanding or any other men that you would like to mention?

TEAGUE: Well there's Mrs. Terrell who has been a great influence in our community.

OSBORNE: That's Vanetta?

TEAGUE: All the Terrell's they've been very good. The Terrells and the Jackson's, Kirksey's; all of the Kirksey's have made a fine contribution to Alliance. Well Mr. Jackson

is related to the Terrell's was our first mayor, I mean our first councilman, our first Black councilman; W. D. Jackson back in the 30's or 32 he was our first Black councilman. And was followed by Mr. Lymas Starks, he was the second, and Curvis is the third. Mr. Rhyne is third.

OSBORNE: Curvis has been more persistant.

TEAGUE: He's been quite persistant.

OSBORNE: Lasted longer.

TEAGUE: And I think Curvis has made me....

NOTE: The interview was interrupted at this time and was not continued.

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.....	Teague 16
ALLIANCE AREA YOUTH CENTER.....	Teague 34
ALLIANCE BUSINESS COLLEGE.....	Teague 26
ALLIANCE HIGH SCHOOL.....	Teague 4
AMERICAN STEEL FOUNDRIES.....	Teague 1, Teague 28
ATLANTA, GEORGIA.....	Teague 5
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY.....	Teague 30
BABCOCK & WILCOX RESEARCH.....	Teague 14
BEAUCHAMP, JESSIE.....	Teague 23
BLACK COUNCILMEN.....	Teague 41
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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON CLUB.....	Teague 38
BURRUSS, REVEREND.....	Teague 15
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CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST.....	Teague 19
COBBS, AURELIA.....	Teague 27
COLEMAN'S SERVICE STATION.....	Teague 23
CONFECTIONARY (BLACK).....	Teague 23
COPE ELECTRIC COMPANY.....	Teague 13
CUNNINGHAM, DR.....	Teague 35
DUBOIS, DR.....	Teague 30
EAGLE BAKERY.....	Teague 36
FIRST FEDERAL.....	Teague 3
FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK.....	Teague 11
FOUNTAIN, MR.....	Teague 5
FRANKLIN SCHOOL.....	Teague 2, Teague 25
FUTURE OUTLOOK LEAGUE.....	Teague 9
GEORGE'S SERVICE STATION.....	Teague 23
GONNER'S FISH MARKET.....	Teague 23
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HOLY TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 14
IANNOTTI, JESSIE.....	Teague 9
IANNOTTI GROCERY.....	Teague 9
JACKSON, W. D.....	Teague 41
JACKSONS.....	Teague 40
JAY'S.....	Teague 17
KIRKSEY FAMILY.....	Teague 29
KIRKSEYS.....	Teague 40
KLEIN AND RODERICK.....	Teague 27
LAWSON STORE.....	Teague 2
LEXINGTON GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 17
MAXINE HAT SHOP.....	Teague 6
MCCRORY'S.....	Teague 27
MCMASTER, DR. WILLIAM H.....	Teague 35
MOREHOUSE COLLEGE.....	Teague 30
MORGAN ENGINEERING COMPANY.....	Teague 28
MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE.....	Teague 5, Teague 30, Teague 35
MOSBY'S FISH MARKET.....	Teague 23
MOUNT OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 16, Teague 18
MOUNT UNION COLLEGE.....	Teague 26
MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 15, Teague 18
NAACP.....	Teague 1, Teague 30

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE.

See NAACP

NEW GUINEA SETTLEMENT.....	Teague 17
NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 15, Teague 18, Teague 32
NEW ZION BAPTIST CHURCH.....	Teague 15
NORTH FRANKLIN SCHOOL.....	Teague 2
NORTH LINCOLN SCHOOL.....	Teague 2
NORTH PARK SCHOOL.....	Teague 2
OHIO PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION.....	Teague 11
OWENS, JESSIE.....	Teague 4
PATTERSON, ROBERT.....	Teague 39
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