

**Oral History Interview of
Ruben Caro**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sánchez
June 26, 2018
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*African American Interview Series***

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Interview Series Background:

The African-American Oral History Collection documents the diverse perspectives of the African-American people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, segregation, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11th 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Ruben Caro as he discusses his life living in Lubbock. In this interview, Ruben describes how Lubbock had changed over the years, what it is like to live as a black man in America, and how the Civil Rights movement affected Lubbock.

Length of Interview: 01:27:30

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Family Life and Background, agriculture, music, faith, segregation, Civil Rights

Daniel Sanchez (DS):

And every once in a while I'll look down here to make sure it's working, but that's just to make sure it's working, all right? My name is Daniel Urbina Sanchez. Today's date is June 26, 2018. I'm in the home of Ruben Caro here in Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Caro, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections oral history initiative. Thank you so much.

Ruben Caro (RC):

My name is Ruben Caro. I'm ready to be interviewed. I remember a time back in the day that I was—I was born outside of Kaufman, Texas, but in Kaufman County. It was on the farm. I learned to do a lot of things. We had chores to do. We had to gather eggs and milk the cows. I learned to milk before I was school-age. I thank the Lord for the time I lived, because it seemed like I lived at the end of the horse and buggy days and at the beginning of the space age. I used to plow the mules and horses. The first thing I learned to do on the farm was have a walking her a [??, 00:02:01], drag it behind the mules. I learned to plow the George's top [??, 0:02:11]. I got up to a turning plow. I never did learn to run the middle buster, but I did learn to walk behind the plow, if the mule's on the turning plow. Now, from the horse and buggy days to the space age and the computer times. Thank the Lord. We moved to West Texas in 1942. I was ten years old when we moved to West Texas. We was on the farm down around Ralls, Texas. We lived on the farm out by Cone, Texas. Then I learned to drive a tractor. [Phone rings] [Pause in recording]

DS:

Okay. You were talking about the move. You were in—

RC:

We moved to West Texas, outside of Cone, Texas. Cone is between Floydada and Ralls. We got taught—[woman talking in background] And I learned to drive a tractor. The snow came in the winter and went over the maize, and the maize was a bit over where the combine couldn't cut it. So we had to cut with a knife. So we had a tractor and a trailer, and everybody was cutting the maize and throwing the heads in the trailer. That's my first experience of driving a tractor, driving a tractor down the rows where the other people was cutting the maize heads off because the combine couldn't cut it because the heads was too low. Then I learned to drive a tractor in rows, roll up—beds. The farmer didn't want the rows to be crooked. But I was driving the tractor. Sometimes I'd get overwhelmed. It made the rows a little bit—he throws the kinks out of it. But went on and we owned—move to Ralls, Texas in 1945. Then I got acquainted with the church, at the church in Ralls, Texas. My first pastor was Ellar Stuart. Ellar Stuart, Ellar Carrington. Ellar Carrington was from Lubbock. Sister Moore was a guitar player and a missionary. We lived in Ralls, Texas for just a short time. Then our house burnt down in the early part of 1946. When our house burnt down, I had a sister that was living in Lubbock, Texas. We moved to Lubbock in 1946 with my sister. We lived with my sister till our father could find a

house for us to live in. Then he found that house was down on Avenue B. At that time, the Lubbock streets, in east Lubbock, was East Avenue B. When B—the first—on the Avenue B, on the west side of Avenue A, it was on—just A, and B, and C. On the east side, it was A and B—East Avenue B and East Avenue C. Later on, they called—the names changed. It turned to Ash Street. Avenue A was Ash Street and Avenue B was Birch Street, and on and on. Avenue C was Cedar. On, on, and on. We lived on Avenue B—which later on was Birch Street—living in the house of Reverend Carrington. Reverend Carrington was a preacher of the Lord and he—my father rented a house from Ellar—Reverend Carrington. While we were there, Ellar—Reverend Carrington taught me how to play the guitar. Then I learned to play the guitar in the church. The church was on Avenue A, or Ash Street. Then we had a good time at the church. A preacher that was introduced to the Church of God and Christ, I was told it was Ellar—I can't think of his name. But he introduced the Church of God and Christ to Lubbock, Texas. After a little while, a lady taught me how—some chords on the piano. The first chord I learned was D-sharp—D-flat. I learned how to play those chords. I finally learned how to play a song. From time to time, I just learned by ear to play the songs. I learned—found out when you was playing chords on a song—the way we sang, it was—we learned—I learned to—I learned to know that some of those chords on the left side of the—could be a first chord in another song in another key. So, from that, I came to learn to play the piano and the organ. So we had a good time in church. At that time, a lot of people on the east side—and the black people—had to ride a bus because there was very few automobiles in east Lubbock. We all had to ride the bus to get to work and where we was going. At that time, we had what we called a city bus station. On the east side, we'd get a—pay our fare and we could get a transfer on the west side to where we was going to work. Then, at that time, Indiana was the—I guess it was the end of the city limit because my brother-in-law had a truck. We used to haul trash on the outside of Indiana. So, I think it must've been the end of the city limit. The bus would turn around on Indiana. We'd go down 21st Street and go back to the station on 22nd Street. We would go wherever we needed to go on the bus because we didn't have vehicles. At that time, 19th Street didn't go all the way across town, 19th Street ended at Avenue B before you crossed the railroad track, it'd cul-de-sac right there. We had to go to Littlefield—go down 16th Street because 4th Street would end and go around down to 4th Street at—on Avenue A. You would turn on a curve and go down 4th Street because Avenue A ended at 4th Street. There was a church right there at the bend of 4th Street and Avenue A. Eventually, the church was torn down. Excuse me. Erskine and 34th Street was considered out of town because Lubbock was—didn't—as I would think, it wouldn't be that—business across Erskine Street and 34th Street. I remember where the auction is now, it was a large house. It was off 34th Street. Because I remember I learned to—trying to build a fence. The man had me start—set the posts and showed me how to look on the side of the post to try to keep fence straight. But when he came back and he checked me out, the fence was going all across—over yonder. But he didn't have—he didn't [refute] me, but he showed me how to look over the top of the post and keep the posts straight. So I'd take those posts up and we started over again to try to keep the fence straight. I'd done a pretty good job that time.

DS:

How old were you when you were doing that?

RC:

I must've been around fifteen or sixteen years old. Uh-huh. Yes. At Ralls, Texas, we'd go to school but sometimes after the fog passed over, the men would go out to the field and see the fog is gone. The dew was off the bowls and we'd go to school till the sunshine out enough to where we could go to the cotton fields. We'd go to the cotton fields and pull cotton in those days. That was before the government wouldn't be involved. So we'd go to school a half a day, then we'd go to the cotton fields the rest of the day because in the morning, the fog is too heavy. We'd go to school then we go up to the cotton field the rest of the day. We made it on our finances and made it on our education. I remember I worked at the Compress in Ralls, Texas when I was fourteen years old. Then when I'd come to Lubbock, I learned to work at the oil mill when I was about fourteen years old. It was a long time before the men would hire me. But finally I learned to—he hired me. The first job I had at the oil mill was setting sacks. I realized—he realized that I was a good worker, be a good sack setter. Where the spout comes down from the belt. I would try to guess how much pounds are in that sack. But had a man that sold us—I'd set the sacks on the scales then the man would weigh the sacks, then sew the sack up. But sometimes I would set those sacks on there and he'd have to take out a bit or put in a little bit. Sometimes it would be right on the money, a hundred pounds. They were making cow cakes and sometimes there'd be meal in the sacks. Whatever they needed, it'd come down the spout in the sacks. But sometimes it'd be right on the money of a hundred pounds. I learned from—we just worked at the oil mill because at that time, the oil mill would not run year-round because they run until they get out all of the seeds from the seed house. At that time, it wasn't like it is now. Had enough cotton seeds to last a year-round. So, I would be working at the oil mill until the seeds run out. But I learned from being a sack setter and working on the seed dump, unloading seeds. Then later on I learned to work all over the oil mill. At that year, I had to set sacks and the next year, when the oil mill started up, I was changing stalls. At that time, there was no motor on every side. Wasn't no motor on—I don't know if I can tell you. But we had an engine room. All the things that'd run, it'd run off the engine room. There was one rod and a bit on that rod. It'd make everything run off of that rod that comes from the engine room. So we had—we go to change our saws, we had to throw the belt to make the machine stop. One day we had twelve hours. Then we had to work twelve hours a shift. Didn't have three shifts, just had two shifts, two twelve-hour shifts. I guess we got a sleepy one night, and we forgot to throw the belt. We raised up the breasts [?, 0:28:09] and there was the saw. I had a bad habit of laying my hand on the saw. That day, I was wearing cloth gloves. I would rub my hand down the edges of the saw and there'd always be some seeds left on it. So when I—that night when I started to rub on the sawblade, it was—the belt was not thrown. But thank the Lord. Hoowee. Thank the Lord that I wasn't sucked into that saw. When I touched the sawblade, that cloth glove touched the sawblade. I realized that we didn't throw the belt. I just barely touched the sawblade and I throw—move back, yank my hand till we went and

threw the belt off. Thank the Lord I wasn't cut up in that sawblade. So, we went on and made it. We'd have to change two or three saws then we had to rest and wait for the men to file them. They called them—he was a saw filer. And while he was changing that saw—had to file that saw—we had a few minutes—ten—no, we'd have from twenty to thirty minutes to wait till he finished filing the saws. While I was waiting for the men to finish filing the saws, I'd go into the bathing room—the bathing room was next to the cleaning room. So I learned how to run the bathing room while I was on duty to change saws. Eventually I—the next season, they needed somebody to run the bathing room and I had learned how—my previous experience in the bathing room while I was a saw changer. So, the man put me in the bathing room. I was bathing the cotton. And on and on. I don't know how many years—how many seasons I was bathing cotton, but later on I learned to work in what they called the cleaning room. That's where the seeds come from all the—what did I first say, where I was? Changing saws. They cut all the seeds off the cotton, then that's where they would go, to the cleaning room. They'd have a crusher and the seeds was—all the cotton off the seeds. That cottonseed is just a real brown, black seed, but they'd crush them up. Then they'd go to the cleaning room and from the cleaning room, that's where they'd crush that seed, the hull off of that seed. That cleaning room was the place where they get the whole seed and not the hull; separate the hull from the seed. Then they make that seed soft and that's where they get the oil out of that seed. That seed would go into the press and get oil out of that seed. Had two places they'd get that oil. In the expeller room, they get oil. Then they go on to that—I forgot the name of that place where they get the last oil out of that seed. And had to wash that oil out of that seed. I went on to work out there. To get that last of the oil out of that seed, they had to—I can't think of what name of that. They would wash it out with hexane. Hexane is a gas. Hexane is a more explosive gas than gasoline. That's where they had a basket and the expeller room—expeller would go round and round and wash that oil out of that seed. So we had—when that oil is all washed out of that seed, that had to go through where—the condenser. The oil and the—they'd have to—the oil is too heavy that the hexane goes up into the condenser and the oil stays at the bottom. So there had to be a separation from the oil and the meal—the meal, the oil, and the hexane. The hexane goes to the top of the condenser and the oil and the meal separates from the bottom. That's why sometimes you'd pass by an oil mill and you smell something—smells like peanuts, but it's just that dry oil that's separated—I mean, the meal is dry meal separated from the oil. Can we stop that a while?

DS:

Huh?

RC:

Stop that a while.

DS:

Yes, sir. We can stop it. [Pause in recording]

RC:

All the time I was working, I was working different jobs. I worked at the oil mill and I started pastoring—I started preaching during the time of the—1970s. [Coughs] Bishop Alexander was my pastor down on—at Fort Mill [?, 0:39:08] Church. All the time I was working, I was the musician for the church. At that time, I was playing the piano and organ. At first, I learned to play the piano by what we called by ear. Once in a while I would get some music lessons. And my wife, we got married in 1952. When I started getting music lessons, my wife did not mind for me to take music from a young lady that taught me how to read music. Well, I wasn't very good at reading music, but I did—I learned some things. I learned my skills, my flats and sharps, from that music lessons. Then I went on to how to play the organ and piano. Originally I was the president of the choir—directed the choir—down at Fort New Hope [?, 0:41:08] Church. And later on I started to preaching. Bishop and the superintendent appointed me to be a pastor in Sudan, Texas. Had a small congregation over there in Sudan, Texas. My wife and I would drive from Lubbock to Sudan every Sunday. Later on, the pastor would lead it in Littlefield so I pastored at Sudan and Littlefield. Would go down there every Sunday. Sometimes we would go to church on Sunday morning for Sunday school and we'd stay there for morning service, and sometimes we'd have an afternoon service. We'd go to church all day and went back to church. When church was over, I would still have to go back to work at eleven o'clock at the oil mill. Even when we didn't have no afternoon service, I'd have just enough to have the church come in in the afternoon and go—so I could go to bed. But I would be up all night Saturday night and go to church Sunday, and Sunday afternoon. When I got back to work at eleven o'clock at the oil mill, I'll be so sleepy. I had to hold my left up—my right hand up in the car and drive the car with my left hand to stay awake. When I drive—stop at the light, my hand would be held up in the top of the car. When my hand would fall down, it'd wake me up so I could keep on driving home. So I'd make it home. I would—just like—I guess like a dead man when I get my shower and go to bed. But we always made it. From time to time, finally I gave up the church in Sudan and I had just the church in Littlefield. There was some few people who would drive from Littlefield—from Lubbock to Littlefield. We'd all have church together. Then, later on, I'd just have the church in Littlefield because we thought that gas was getting too high to drive from Littlefield to Lubbock. The gas was getting up to about seventy, and eighty, and ninety cents a gallon. We thought that was high so we thought going to Littlefield—because I organized the church in Lubbock. So, we found a place. The members agreed on buying that place where we are now, at the old Dimeson [?, 0:45:53] place. We bought the two houses. We bought them two houses and we put them two houses together, and made the church and cafeteria of those two houses. We thank the Lord. We are still in the process of finishing those houses even now. But we thank the Lord for what we had and what we have now. We can stop now.

DS:

Yes, sir. [Pause in recording]

RC:

[clears throat] In the church, we were very active at that time. At that time, I was with the Minister's Alliance. Reverend Lane and Patrick was busy with the Minister's Alliance. So, I tried to do my part in the church and in the city. We would be active in the Minister's Alliance. We had—when we had the Martin Luther King Day, we'd go to the Civic Center and have a service there on the Martin Luther King celebration. When the young man got drowned there around Bastrop [?, 0:47:50] somewhere, we went to that rally trying to be on the Civil Rights Movement because there was—had some injustice there. So, we thank the Lord we tried to do what we could do on that Civil Rights Movement. We had a rally down there. We didn't have a successful rally, but we did what we could down there around Bastrop [?] somewhere. Mexia. That was around Mexia. Yes. So, we did what we could do. But thank the Lord for my family. I had a good wife, Doris Caro, and our daughter, Caroline. She had a—we had a good relationship. We loved our daughter Caroline. Our daughter, she finished school in 1966, and went on to learn and got some time in college. Finally she got married and went to California. She lost—had—she had her children there in California. She had a son and a daughter, and her husband was in the military service. From there they went to Dallas. She is now in Dallas, Texas. Her son is there in Dallas, Texas. Her daughter is here with me. I lost my wife in 2016. We had a good relationship. I lost my wife in 2016. Thank the Lord for her. She was a good wife and we loved each other. Thank the Lord. Thank the Lord. You can stop now.

DS:

Yes, sir. [Pause in recording] You know, early on you were talking about how small Lubbock was and how it changed. Right now we just—briefly during the break—chatted about how 19th street has changed over here on the east side of town, and with the lake project and all of that. Can you talk about some of the growth that's happened?

RC:

A whole lot. I remember when I was—first got my driver's license. The place where we'd go to get your driver's license was on the hill up there by—I can't tell you the name. Up there by the golf course where you went to get your driver's license. When I'd go to take my test, it was right there on the Amarillo Highway. There was a school right up there on the hill. You go down the street by the school and turn around. They would test you on how you'd drive to turn around. You're not supposed to try to make no U-turn, but you go and drive to the edge of the street on the left side, then back up and go to the edge of the street on the right corner, then turn around. I passed my test. The first time I got my driver's license, I was going back to the Amarillo Highway and I got my driver's license when I was eighteen years old. Since then, a lot of things has happened. During the time of the tornado, I was working at the oil mill. Before that time, I had worked at the Frito Lay, cooking Fritos. I had worked at Texas Tech as a custodian. I worked at Texas Tech as a cook. Between that time, I was working at the oil mill during the tornado. But the tornado was not here at the canyon. We didn't realize that we had had a tornado

in Lubbock because I slept close to eleven o'clock. When we had—sitting here at the house, there was only one hailstone that hit the top of the house and had fell through to the ceiling. The other part of Lubbock had seen the tornado. A good friend of mine had been in the tornado down there on Erskine Street. Her car had been turned around and she had been shook up by the tornado. Many things happened on the other side of Lubbock. I went onto work at eleven o'clock, but the lights was out. Many people in our shift didn't go to work because they were affected by the tornado. But I went on back to work and we picked up some pieces—tin—and had the battery lights on to get around and see what we needed to do, trying to pick up the pieces from the tornado. It took a while to get the electricity back on. I was working at the oil mill on Avenue A and 17th Street. At that time, they called all the oil mills—that I worked at, it was called a big oil mill. But the oil mill on Avenue A and 34th Street, they called it the little mil. But later on, a co-op oil mill outlasted the oil mill that I was working at. So, you can turn it off.
[Pause in recording]

DS:

We were talking earlier about how your life has changed. One way it's changed—when you were born back in the thirties, '32, segregation was the norm about through your middle-aged years. We finally got integrated in the sixties, and seventies, locally, the school systems. In fact, it's gone all the way to where we even had Obama elected President in 2008, elected again in 2012. Let's talk about that life as a black man in America, how it's been for when you were a young man, middle-aged. What it meant to you when you saw Obama get elected.

RC:

I can remember back in the day, before we came to west Texas, I remember some guys, white guys—we had—in the rural area. We didn't have no phone. For a long time we didn't even have a radio. But I remember some guys come to our house on horseback. They had a thing around—ride their horses and everything. They would say, "Whoo-whee. Piggy boy, piggy boy," and make people scared. Down the road a ways, they'd come by—that person's house hiding all that. "Piggy boy. Piggy boy," and run the horses down the side of the streets. They'd leave the house and ride out in the cornfield and hide. When they'd come to our house, just doing that same way saying, "Whoo-whee. Piggy boy, piggy boy." My mother had that shotgun. My father was not at home. But my mother had that shotgun and she told them, "You better get away from here before I shoot." And they got away and stopped bothering us on their horses. But even from day to day, we were still bothered with segregation. I can remember my—when I'd walk down the streets, the white boys would stick their head out of the window of the car and make fun and call names. That's when we were able to park on the street down Broadway in Lubbock on a forty-five degree angles and not parallel. Park at a forty-five degree angle and they would call me names when I'd be walking down the streets. But all in all, things changed somewhat, thank the Lord. I can remember that we had presidents. I remember my father would go to vote and he would—because he believed the political system would help. He paid his poll tax. When I got old

enough, I started paying my poll tax. All along, we thought we was Democrats. When I'd vote, I would vote Democrat. But when Kennedy was voted in to be the President, I voted against Kennedy and I voted for Eisenhower because I was afraid of Johnson. If anything happened to Kennedy—which it did—Johnson would be a President, and I didn't—I was afraid of Texas—have a Texan to be President because I felt like he wouldn't be a good president. But I made a mistake because I voted for Eisenhower and not Kennedy, but when the things happened to Kennedy, I think Johnson made a good president. We thank the Lord for that. But I didn't vote for Kennedy because I was afraid if something happened to Kennedy, Johnson would not be a good president. But I'll tell you I was wrong about that. All in all, we tried to do what's right and do what we—the best we thought. And when brother Obama won the presidency, it was amazing because I was able to see a black president. And he was a good president and he won his second term in office. I thought because he was doing what was right and trying to do his best to solve the nation's problems as best as a man could solve them. The thing about our president now, he doesn't seem as interested in nobody's problems. He's just trying to do what's right for him and him alone. So, we're praying to the Lord to help us and help us to do the right thing, help us to be alert and on guard with what come—what may. The Lord is—he is still our helper, and the Lord is still on our side. No matter what our president says or what our president do, the Lord is still our helper, and he is still the one that we look to. [Pause in recording] I might need to think for a while.

DS:

Yeah. It helps.

RC:

[pause] You think I've said anything interesting?

DS:

I think you've said a lot of things that are interesting. Let me just ask you a couple things. You mentioned the different places that—like 19th [Street], Broadway, where things have changed. What do you think about the growth that's gone on here in Lubbock? I mean, we're out to about 135th Street and we're on the other side of Wolfforth, basically.

RC:

Ok I see—how—what I said?

DS:

Also we're talking about all that growth, and yet here where you live at, there's plenty of area to build out here. It's empty. Some of the nicest areas, too, around the Brazos River.

RC:

Maybe I'll start on Broadway. I think you can go ahead and turn it off. [Pause in recording] I believe—I remember there was a street they called Quirt. Finally they worked and worked. They got the street—changed its name to MLK. Quirt ended on 34th Street would not go down the hill to 19th Street. We had to go over to Avenue A—Broadway—to get across town. I remember when I went down Broadway going west, there was a grocery store on the south side. It was back in the forties. The grocery store was there. We would go on down the street, Broadway. We'd go on down to Texas Tech. But then it was different. Now the streets have changed, the streets on down to Erskine on the Amarillo Highway. The courthouse was in the middle of the street going on Avenue H. One side of the street, you go north of the courthouse—you go south of the courthouse going south and then it would come together and go down under the underpass at 4th Street. We had an icehouse there; 4th Street and Avenue H. But it's changed tremendously. It's different now. What did you ask me? We'd go different directions. I remember when we had the—Spanish people would come to Lubbock on—back in the day for the cotton pick. Many black people came from south Texas, and some would stay in Lubbock and the surrounding areas at that time. But Lubbock started changing. Everywhere the black people would meet in the area and have a—rent a house, the white people would move. We noticed how Lubbock changed. Lubbock started building and they went south and west. They were moving away from the black people. It seemed like everywhere the white people would move, a black person would get a house close to them. But now, if our city leaders had have been smart, they would've let the city limit go all around Lubbock and not just one direction. We noticed we killed downtown area because the people all was going south and west. If we had had our city leaders have been smart, they would've built Lubbock all around itself and go to the north and the east side, that way Lubbock would be in a better shape. But now downtown is dead. Downtown has trouble trying to build back itself because the city leaders let Lubbock go one direction, that's south and west. If Lubbock had been smart, they would've let Lubbock grow north, south, east, and west. We never had downtown presence. It's so sad to see Lubbock, in its later days, become—be like this and have a crisis downtown where we have built up all around town. I can remember from the east side to the west side, we had to go down 16th street to go to College Avenue to get to Littlefield. We didn't know—had no way to go unless we go down Broadway—16th Street and we go down that way to go to Littlefield. Even though now we can go different directions from east side to the west side. But we have not always had that privilege. I can remember when Methodist Hospital was downtown, downtown by Broadway and Avenue N—M somewhere, right there. But they moved the hospital and put the church there. Thank the Lord for Methodist Hospital. Yes. Yes. But we had some mistakes that made from our city leaders, that they would have the—Lubbock would grow in one direction.

DS:

You mentioned Methodist Hospital. That reminded me of Chatman. Did y'all go to the Chatman Hospital? When was that open?

RC:

Yes. My mother would go to Chatman Hospital. Many black people would go to Chatman Hospital. Yes. Chatman Hospital was a popular place because there was—we didn't have really no other place to go and be respected other than the Chatman Hospital. I remember the day when we was in Cone, Texas, and my mother needed to see a doctor. My father would go to the door of the doctor's office and he would get the nurses' attention to know—asked her when the doctor would see my mother. We had to wait in the car. We didn't go to the waiting room. We had to wait in the car. When the doctor got finished with all the white people, then the nurses would come to the door and signal to my daddy and my mother could come in. Yes sir. And even here in Lubbock, Texas. In Lubbock, Texas, we used to have to have a health card to work in a public place like a restaurant; cook, dishwasher, or something. We had to have a health card. We had to go here on Main Street here in Lubbock, Texas, and we'd have—had a doctor, Dr. Rollo. We had to go to Dr. Rollo's office to get a blood test. See, we had to send the blood test to Austin, Texas. We had to wait two weeks for the blood test to come back. If the blood test comes back that it's all right for you to work at that restaurant, you could get your health card and you had to show that health card to the [employer]. And I was underage. I got the test, but my mother would have to go—Dr. Rollo wouldn't give me my health card even though I had passed the test. He said, "That boy needs to be in school." Well, he was right about that. Because I was young and I wanted to work. Of course, I had been working and I was used to having my own money. So, he said—and when my mother went to talk to him to get him to give me my health card, he talked to my mother and told her how I needed to be in school. But later on he went on a gave him her my health card so that I could show it to my employer. But all the black people—all the black people had to be lining up in the hall until Dr. Rollo got finished waiting on the white people. We couldn't go in the waiting room and sit down. We had to wait in the hall until all of—he finished waiting on all the white people. So, I was the next in line, so he waited a good while. I was looking in the door, but I couldn't go in. So I'd seen a white girl went and check on the door, so the nurse came to the door and gave her the request that she was asking for. So I thought about—I'd been waiting so long, I said, "I want to do that." So, when I went to the door and shook on the door, the door was locked. So, when Dr. Rollo came to the door, he had seen that it was a little black boy shaking on the door. He said, "Can't you see that door is locked?" So, "Yeah.", "What do you want?", "I want to get my health card." So, he finally let me in and said—I was young—"You're too young to have a health card. Let your"—whoever I could bring to show that I wanted to work. So I went back to my mother and my mother came on and talked to him. Finally he gave me my health card and I went to work at a restaurant, first job I had at a restaurant washing dishes. So, a lot of changes have been made so we can go into the doctor's office and sit down now. In those days, we had to wait in the hall or outside until the doctor got finished waiting on all the white people, then he would start on the black people. It's been changed. Thank the Lord for the change. You can get that off. [Pause in recording]

DS:

Do you want to take a break for today?

RC:

Maybe so.

DS:

Okay. We're going to stop it there for today and I'll just—

End of Recording



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