

California State College, Bakersfield

San Joaquin Valley Oral History Project, Bakersfield Sound

Recorded History

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INTERVIEWEE: Johnie Mae (Lothridge) Parker (JMP)

PLACE OF BIRTH: Texarkana, Arkansas, Texas

INTERVIEWER: Irma Weill and Orville P. Armstrong

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Johnie Mae Parker (JMP):

JMP:

There is some background for my family and why they moved to California.

I would like to say here I was born Johnie Mae Lockridge. And that my parents were Martin Lockridge and my mother was the late Mattie Carlton Lockridge.

We lived in Texarkana. There were six children in the family. And we grew up and went to an elementary school. My father did manual labor to support us. They tried to send us to school and we all had a fairly nice education. Most of us had graduated from high school and some of us had some college education.

Irma Weill:

That was all in Texas?

JMP:

Some of our college education was in Bakersfield. My high school education was in Bakersfield in the evening classes. And I attended Bakersfield College.

Irma Weill:

Were the grammar schools segregated there?

JMP:

Yes they were. Of course, it has been quite many years that I had attended elementary school and went to Dunbar High School.

Irma Weill:

Are they integrated now?

JMP:

Yes, they are integrated now. And they are having some trouble about integration.

Irma Weill:

Tell us, when you moved to Bakersfield, then you moved into an integrated school.

JMP:

Well, not thoroughly integrated, but we managed to, some of my family went to the Weedpatch School. They did very well, the younger children in the family.

Of course, I was grown when I went to Bakersfield High School. I took a refresher course and I studied local government under Mr. Colbert???. And I took some typing and then I went to Bakersfield College where I took Sociology, Social Science, American Problems, and I took some Government also at Bakersfield College.

Irma Weill:

What brought your family to Bakersfield?

JMP:

?? In fact, I was the first of my family to come to Bakersfield. I came to Bakersfield to visit relatives and never returned to Texas. And then, the next of my family to come to Bakersfield was when my married brothers lived there with their own families. And they came to Bakersfield. And the next of my family to come was my mother and my father because all of the children had left the South to come to Bakersfield and this led my parents to come 25 years ago. They came.

Irma Weill:

Did they have any problem making the change?

JMP:

No. In fact, my family never had any problems, any real problems, except during the Depression in Texas. So far as racial problems, we just never had any problems. We just had a hard time

making a living. And we made a fair living because my mother was an economic woman. She always cooked and she grew a garden and the main way was to feed us very well.

They always told us to behave ourselves. They told us to appreciate each life and to appreciate whatever we had. To appreciate others and divide what we had with others. We had a happy life.

Irma Weill:

And the change to a different state, everything was pretty different. Was it easy for you all to make?

JMP:

Yes, the change was not difficult when we came here and went to work immediately. We all purchased homes and today we all have our own homes and our parents had their home. And each of the children in the family have their homes and they educated their children here. All of the nieces and nephews had their elementary education and their high school and college education here in Bakersfield.

Irma Weill:

And you married in Bakersfield?

JMP:

Yes, I did.

Irma Weill:

And you never had any children?

JMP:

No, I am the only one in my family who did not have children.

Irma Weill:

Then, your nephews and nieces are lucky to have an aunt who is free to pay attention to them.

JMP:

Yes, I have always divided, helped out with the youngsters in the family. They have been very fortunate to have a family that was proud of them. Of course, my brothers wanted to give their children a fair education. And they never had any problem sharing in school. And we just often wonder why there are so many problems. If they came home and said something was wrong, the parents always went to the school to try to correct it. They told them to behave themselves or they advised them to behave themselves and to get an education and to never feel discouraged if the teacher said you were not good for this field. You just go ahead and try and

try and try because one of my nieces is a Registered Nurse. And she had quite a few problems because they told her she was not nurse material.

But her mother encouraged her, and today she is a Registered Nurse and they say she is one of the best in this town.

I have a nephew that is a Pharmacist also. He graduated from Bakersfield College and then he went to Corvallis, Oregon and he graduated from the University of Oregon and today he is in Medical Management.

The youngest of the grandchildren got married last August and she is in Corvallis, Oregon and she has a college education, also.

So, I am quite proud of my family background. It is one that I really am proud of.

Irma Weill:

What kind of work do you do then?

JMP:

When I first came to Bakersfield and I had an education, but I did domestic work because there wasn't anything else open for Negro people. And I picked some cotton. And all of my family have. We have done all kinds of work. We have done what our hands find to do and even since we have been to school, we will do any kind of work. It doesn't matter just as long as we are making an honest living.

Irma Weill:

I have never heard of a family with so few problems!

JMP:

Well, maybe we might have had problems, but we didn't magnify them. Maybe we just accepted them. And we had problems, maybe, but I just really don't think problems are as great sometimes as we say they are. And I was born in poverty and maybe reared in poverty, but I have always had in mind that poverty was in the mind. I think it is not altogether in your pocket. I think sometimes it is in your mind.

Irma Weill:

Where did you get that belief?

JMP:

From my parents. Both of my parents were very well-raised. And my mother was able to teach us and read stories to us and my father is a well-read man at the age of 89. He reads beautifully. And they have always been active in civic affairs.

They went to school when they were adults and everything. It had a lot of impact on the family to have this type of parents.

Irma Weill:

Your father is still living?

JMP:

Yes he is. My father is still living. We went to church together this morning.

Irma Weill:

You keep house for him, do you?

JMP:

Yes, I do keep house for my father now.

Irma Weill:

You must like that. He must be a delightful old gentleman.

JMP:

The church that I belong to is St. John Missionary Baptist Church. And the Reverend Tyree Tolliver is my pastor. And then earlier, when I first came to Bakersfield, I was a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church when I lived on the west side of town. And I spent most of my years in The Ghetto and most of my work has been in that particular community.

I really love the Mayflower community. I have spent much of my time working in the church out there and organizations, The Sunset Mayflower Progressive Club.

I once was a member of the Women's Political Study Club.

I am also a member of the Community Flower Club of which I was at a meeting last night.

I am the Club Secretary within all of the churches that I have belonged to.

Irma Weill:

So you are a community work came about through your church association pretty largely?

JMP:

Well, not all together. It came about through my love for civic group because the Mayflower Community, about 25 years ago, it was very crude. It had outdoor privies. It had tents for houses and it had discarded street cars and box cars for houses. And there were no playgrounds and no public facilities for the people who were migrating from the South by the

thousands back in the 1940s and we organized a civic organization called the Sunset Mayflower Progressive Club to do something about what was needed for the community.

Irma Weill:

Who was the “we”?

JMP:

The founding President of this organization was Mr. Ben Fields. He lives over here on Chester Place now. And another one of the Presidents was a pioneer family, Mr. Russell Grimes, was one of the Presidents. And Mr. Charles F. Stevens is the present President. And the late Joe Mackian and the Reverend Charles James were also Presidents of the organization.

Don Blackwell and Willa Atkins and Archie Griffin, now these, are all of the men who have been President of the Sunset Mayflower Progressive Club. And under their administration, we brought city budgets to the community.

In 1945, we worked with the Nickleberry Company and got the first budget in the community. And we got the first lights out there and we established garbage routes when the streets and alleys and everything was cluttered with fields and there was no garbage pickup. Well, we worked with the Board of Supervisors and the Recreation Department and certainly all of the people who were in authority and brought all of these things to the community.

Irma Weill:

Is the Mayflower District within the city boundaries?

JMP:

Yes, we also sponsored the annexation of the Sunset Mayflower District into the city limits and it became officially annexed in 1951, I think it was. We had quite a hard time, because some of the people out there didn’t want to improve and they didn’t want it to go into the city. There was one or two business friends out there that didn’t want it to go into the city and we just had an awful time and it has meant a lot of the people who did live there, they moved out to Carvers Field and moved toward ???

We finally got officially annexed and we also got the first fire station that we had in the Mayflower District, and just all of the improvements that we had out there.

We worked with getting better housing because people lived in the tents and all of these shanties and such terrible, there was no modern conveniences and all out there. And then we worked to get the Alta Vista ?? housing project. We had to work with the City Council for more than a year before we could get them to see how badly we needed houses out there. And so they finally voted to accept Federal housing. And all of this has helped this community to be a community that is worthy of living in today.

The boundaries of the Sunset Mayflower area is bounded on the east by the Sunset Railroad tracks and it is bounded on the north by California Avenue. It is bounded on the south by East Brundage Lane and on the west by South King Street. That is the boundary lines in the particular ticklish spot where there was so much going on and so many people living in poverty that we just worked with it.

Now, it's livable.

Irma Weill:

So you have done that all yourselves. You didn't have much help from the city officials?

JMP:

Well, yes, if it had not been for the city officials, we couldn't have done so much because... We had to beg many, many times to get the majority of the votes on our side and that is the way we did it! Before we got into the city, we had been simple laws on our side.

And after we got into the city, well, we had pretty good City Councilmen. They didn't say "Yes" the first time we asked them for anything. But we had to go back and go back again and again and they finally.... We had to make them see the need! And thank God that they were very nice.

Irma Weill:

How did you make them see the need?

JMP:

Well, they were nice. They were pretty nice gentlemen. And the Mayor, Frank Sullivan, was a very nice person once you.... He never said yes the first time you'd go to him for something, but you could talk and talk and talk to him and you could finally win him over. And when you did win him over, you really had a friend worth having. And this is about the housing. He just was bitterly against Negro housing at first. But he finally seemed to make what the district needed housing.

Councilman Riskin, Emmanuel ?, and all of those people just came on over to our side and they responded beautifully.

Irma Weill:

Well, you have learned to work with the authorities in a wonderful way!

JMP:

Well, it can change over the years if they see the need.

Irma Weill:

You were self-starters. Nobody from the outside came in and showed you how to do it.

JMP:

No. This civic organization, really, is due the credit for the beginning of all of this.

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??? Mayflower ? of civilization in that community and it had worked and worked within it, well-recognized and well-known. And businesses cooperated.

Irma Weill:

How did it all get started?

JMP:

Well, as I say, a group of ambitious men and women who lived in the area, all of them demanded ?? because people like Reverend Green and lot of people who lived on the west side came out because there were a lot of other civic organizations around. And that is really what made an effect for me, but it was really talked about on the national scene because there were so many writers in the paper about it. And I remember the clippings from The Californian were twenty years older, pictures and all this type of thing. And how they described Monday as a fish on washing day and how the wash water was let to run down the streets and people worried because there were no sewers.

We helped to get sewer lines and helped to get all these things into the area and made it sanitary. And this group of men and women got together at ? View Church on February 22, 1946 it was. 1945, I'm sorry, it was. It was February 22, 1945 that they met at ?? View Church and organized this group of people known as the Sunset Mayflower Progressive Club and we are alive and active today.

Irma Weill:

Would you clarify for us the different names that are commonly known for that general area? Cottonwood Road and Carver's Belt and so on?

JMP:

Well, the Sunset Mayflower District is commonly referred to as The Cottonwood Area because of Cottonwood Road which is widely known for the taverns and for the people who hang out over there. And in recent years, it has been called Lakeview Avenue instead of Cottonwood Road. And it has been quite improved because they have paved the streets and have sidewalk curbs and gutters and quite a few of the people have painted their little dwellings and it looks better than it did 15 or 20 years ago.

Irma Weill:

Are they attracting a more peaceful people?

JMP:

Well, there is quite a bit going on over there yet, but it has sure improved. I would say the condition over there has improved some. But it has long been noted for people who just enjoy themselves. And that is where they hang out! And a lot of people refer to the entire community as the "Cottonwood Community." But nevertheless, there are many fine people who live directly on Cottonwood Road. There is nothing disgraceful about living on Cottonwood Road because there are many business outfits. Some of the people who have the best ?? in the community live on Cottonwood Road and I have always worked with those people and when I carry a petition in the community to be signed, they are always the first to sign it to improve the community in there.

Many Chinamans who own property out there and we sent petitions and the Chinamen sign them too, cooperation when the school is out and they did.

So, I mean, there is nothing, it really isn't like you hear about it altogether.

Isabel Weill:

It is hard to live down a name.

JMP:

Yes, it's the name more than anything, yes. It is the thing. But during the time the Mayflower Community as a whole, it is quite improved in the last few years. Like Carver's Field, it is just outside of the city limits. It is adjacent. Well, you would never look at a community when they are called "Little Oklahoma." There are quite a few Mexican-Americans living in there and we were having this little housing project but we also worked with the Board of Supervisors to get this luxury housing projects established. We helped them get rezoned for this housing project and then adjacent, there is quite a few brand new homes in there and quite a few nice people live between there and Carversville. And to furnish your house, there is a place where there's so much going on in Carversville to improve their community.

Is the place where so much going on in Carversville to improve their community and Charles Simpson is the head man at Frazier House right now.

Isabel Weill:

It's like a settlement house?

JMP:

Yes. It is really a busy thing, this start in the Carversville area.

Interviewer:

Go ahead and tell us what it is, Friendship House.

JMP:

Friendship House, well they have a community council. They call it Friendship House Community Council now and they have meetings quite often to improve the community and there is a plan for ???? A lot of planning is going on there. There is a day care center going on there. In fact, Bakersfield College has some things going on out there. But I am not referring to there as much as I am in Mayflower, because it is too different communities but we all do work together and so, when it is needed and when it is necessary because Carversville is a ? community also, and that is the area that is called Union Number Seven but if the city had tried to annex it to Bakersfield several times. In fact it joined ?? and they had owned several acres and they had tried to get into the city several times and the people failed to vote for annexation because they didn't feel that the city had grown enough in the last 20 years in the Mayflower District and I for one was interviewed by one of the editors of *The Californian* on why it didn't annex the area and I told them because the people out in Carversville didn't feel that they had seen enough improvement in the Sunset Mayflower Area for them to go onto annexation. And he felt that I should have told the people earlier and not let them fail, you know, to.... We should have told what was wrong instead of denigrating the freeholdings because the next, and I think the next time, they try to annex recently, you see, we have California Avenue paved and running vigilantes and they call and line you up in the community was really short on the marked improvement in recent years. And I really feel that if the Carversville officials ??? If they ever try to annex us into the city again, I wouldn't think that it will come in.

Isabel Weill:

I know that you were very active in all these things. Could you tell us a little more about your own activities?

JMP:

My own activities? Well, my activity, I have never been the President of anything. I have served as a Secretary to the big church, I was a Secretary at St. John's Church, I was the Secretary and worked on civic affairs because during elections I always had the candidates to come out to the church and I always was in civic affairs, the public relations of the churches, and invited the candidates to have a meeting with them and the public community. And then I really suppose I have been working in the polls in the Mayflower area for about 20 years, I would say.

And I am one of the oldest, Deputy Registrars in the area that really ?? has and took them to get people to register to vote under the ? Act. Some of them were in Buttonwillow. In fact, we conducted the registration of voters clinic.

I mean to tell you we went to the people who were out there. And they marked the ballot with a pencil. And some of them put their nose on it. And I know just how far the people have come because of this and, you know, it just really made me feel, it is real heartwarming to see how far the people have come, and to have worked with them. It just really made me love everyone maybe more than I did maybe anywhere else in Mayflower. It just helped to make a change.

And I had also worked with the NAACP. I served as a Secretary, Recording Secretary of the NAACP for many years. And I have attended many of their conventions, one in San Francisco and one in Cleveland, Ohio and regional meetings in Filmore and Sacramento and just all over the country. I have been with NAACP.

I have worked for them in many ways and we also worked with the local fair employment practices. We introduced that to the City Council.

And that is another thing that I must commend the Bakersfield City Council for because they just really didn't see why we wanted fair employment practices on us. In Bakersfield we introduced it. We worked for a year or two, but they finally passed on it. And then we worked for it on the state level and it became statewide. And on a countywide basis, we had a countywide FEP committee also.

And I also I had served eight years on Bakersfield City Charity Board. That is more of my work.

Isabel Weill:

May I ask a question?

JMP:

I would love to mention the first time that I was elected to the—I was not elected. Pardon me. I was appointed to the Bakersfield City Charity Board who hired the Bakersfield City Council first in 1963 to fulfill an unexpired term of Mr. Harry Meyers. And I completed that term and then, again, I was elected in 1966 for the second term. And I said some words of the Bakersfield Charity Board is to protect the community from unscrupulous peddlers who operate in the community from the instant when they start to get something to raise money for charitable purposes, they have to appear before the Charity Board and get a permit. And it is the duty of the Charity Board to determine whether they should have this permit and when they make a report back to the Charity Board, we decide whether they could raise enough money to deserve a letter when they have given enough to charity what they have raised enough. If not, we questioned them about it or called them in to discuss it because there is some 700 or 800 charitable organizations like the March of Dimes Telerama, that is one of the big things that we took care of. All the money that they raised, we figure if they really cleared enough to give to the real purpose before we gave them another permit to carry on such.

Isabel Weill:

How about the young people, the girls and boys? Are they interested in the goals you have been working for?

JMP:

Well, they are interested in their own ways. They seem to, as we say, be doing their own little thing. They have their own little organizations. They don't seem to go for the organizations with their time or other things. They have a group of young people in the NAACP, but they seem to

belong to the Black Student Union and the Black Student of Progress and they are doing quite a few things in the community. Again, I really think they, they are, and for Black History Week they really are going out for that. They began to have more pride than they used to have and they learned to be proud of themselves and they don't seem to be ashamed to be Black like they used to. They seem to begin to be proud. And I think this is improving, you see, when you begin to be proud of yourself.

Isabel Weill:

And in fact, do they work with the older generation?

JMP:

Not too much. They go to church, but they have their own little social groups and their own little city?? even. But they have their ideas and we have our own ones and I think this is the difference. But they continue to do much more than they have done.

Isabel Weill:

Are there leaders developing?

JMP:

Slowly. We still need to have to go along to the same leaders, real leaders, and really sincerely get them moved to do something in the community. We have a lot of people to start, but they soon stop. But we seem to have just a few that will really stick with an organization or a group.

Now, we have the NAACP President. But they are meeting right at this particular hour. And we have Mr. Stevens as the President of the Sunset Mayflower Club and Mr. Moseley is the President of the NAACP and he is trying hard to get it on a good footing here and there are several other community councils around that are in the anti-poverty program.

But, I mean, my mind is on volunteer work, not those that are being paid to do something in the community because I feel that if you haven't been active before you have been paid to do anything, that you don't have any interest in humanity. This is the way I really feel about it. And I really couldn't ....

(Transcribers note: Recording 000625\_0011 Johnny May Parker ends here.)

call a leader that had to be paid to come into the community to do something because I feel that people who volunteer and give their time and their talent like Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stevens and like all of the Presidents of the Mayflower Club and of the NAACP that I have named who have worked for nothing and Mr. Mac ??, he is a pioneer who has given a lot of his time and people like that that have given of their time and their service and have not been paid to work in the community.

They have done quite a job.

Isabel Weill:

That is a valid thing to consider.

I wanted to ask you, too, we know there is a great deal of talent among the neighborhood people in art and music and that and so on. Have you any details as to who has been successful in the various arts? Or what is being done to encourage the young people?

JMP:

I don't know too much about art. I am not an artist. But I do know that there is a lot of talent in the community, and there is a lot of hidden talent. And if we got a lot of the people who know how to do things to really appreciate what they know and just come on out and do things. I really think it would be wonderful because they know how to do quite a few things.

Isabel Weill:

At the schools?

JMP:

Well, I don't visit. In recent years I haven't visited Fremont Atomic? School. I belonged to the P.T.A.s, but not having children, I am not in the schools anymore. I worked on the educational committees for the NAACP and I visited the schools on several occasions with children who had talent and all, but I do know of several children who had done quite a bit of work at the schools.

Isabel Weill:

Pardon me. You said musically?

JMP:

Well there were a few children who were inclined to play music at the schools and all. But they do quite a bit with art work. I know because there was a little boy who went to school on Terrace Way. What is the name of the school on Terrace Way and Peach Street?

Anyway, he came and asked me if I would ????. He came by and asked me if I would come see his art work because his mother had never met his teacher. I went over to see his work and he had done some beautiful work.

And there was another young boy who did come over from Lincoln School and I went and told his mother that he was at the house over there and I went and I told her what her young son had done and she didn't know anything about it at all! And she was really proud.

So I am really to have anything to do with that about showing some interest in what the youngsters have done. They would do a lot better.

I would like to make mention that a lot has been said about the black ghettos of the nation and this is one of the things that I am profoundly interested in is watching who had lived in the Ghetto and what type of people it had produced. And I often tell many people that there was nowhere for a black boy or girl to come from 20 years ago.

And I tell them in many meetings that even the tellers in the banks came from the Mayflower District! They were living next door to me.

And Miss Ruth Love, who was Dr. Rafferty's assistant, she picked cotton and she picked up potatoes.

And Sister Ida is a teacher. In fact, she was the Vice Principal of Fremont School in Los Angeles. And she went and picked cotton and picked up potatoes.

And their home is right next door to mine now. But their mother bought a home over behind The Bakersfield Inn where the Ghetto has produced some great boys and girls! And this is one thing that made me proud of the community because these people did not live on the west side of town, they lived in the place that's currently referred to as the Cottonwood District. And this is one of the things that we should be proud of and can have good to say about the Black community.

And the people in the community are fortunate enough for the last three years for teacher ??. Education came with the good California education project. And in memory of the people who came to the class, some of them could not read and write. And then some of them could. It was a basic education class. And many of these people we would ask why didn't they like to go to meetings and all, and they made excuses. And many of them were ashamed of where they lived and they were ashamed of their house and they thought many of the people who lived up on the hill didn't want to come out in the Mayflower District and I told them for how many years that I had been working with Caucasian people and how many Caucasian people had kept there while they were in the bed sleeping. They tried and we would go to the City Council and ask for things in the community many times. And a lot of times, I told them while you were in your bed sleeping, our Caucasian friends were down there to help us out about things.

For instance, we would take the Fair Employment Practices Act when they weren't there to speak up about it. And we had many friends like Rabbi Coleridge and many people who cleaned our teeth for us and we shouldn't feel that these people didn't care for us because they always came to our rescue when we needed them and we should never be ashamed of where we live, because many times I have talked to people about Dr. Martin Luther King and where he lived and where he died and everything. He just wasn't striving for a fine home to show the people. He was trying for community advancement and for the advancement of his people.

And many of them got to the place that they decided to do better and go out to meetings. And another thing they felt like, they felt like they couldn't meet people and they couldn't get up before people. And this is one of the things that we do in the class is to have them conduct a meeting and have the student to be the audience and let them get up there and call the meeting

to order and call on somebody. And in this way, many of them got to the place that they really could meet people. And this is some of the ways that we are improving as a community.

Isabel Weill:

I have often wondered whether the two groups that have so much in common in so many ways, well, if they do get along? And if not, why not? That is the Mexican-American and the Black groups.

JMP:

Well, there is prejudice on both sides. There is prejudice in some of the Negroes and there is prejudice among some of the Mexicans. But I have many friends in the C.S.O. and, in fact, I won't say "I." I don't like to use that word. But I will use Sunset Mayflower Club has worked in conjunction with the C.S.O. in many things, like the Fair Employment Practices Act. The C.S.O. and the Mayflower Club worked together in the work-release things. And they work in the projects right now. And at one time, we had a Mexican man to run for the City Council, Mr. Henry Martinez, who is President Emeritus of the C.S.O. and he was a very fine Mexican fellow and a lot of the Negro people in the Mayflower Community took his signs down because they didn't want to elect a Mexican.

Well, many of the colored people, like myself, and a few other people who belonged to the community clubs, we supported Mr. Martinez. And we felt that we should put a Mexican in there and we told him we had a good chance to integrate the City Council at this point.

In fact, Reverend Byron Reese was the Pastor of King Church at that time and he came out there and he bawled me out for supporting a Mexican! And his Councilman was Ted Crow at that time and he lived on the west side of town. And he was in Ward 7. And when he came to me and Reverend Tolliver and William Patterson, the three ministers called on me and bawled me about supporting a Mexican!

And I said, "Well, Reverend Byron Reese?, who is your Councilman?

He said, "I don't know, Sister Parker."

I said, "Well, Ted Crow is your Councilman and you go right over there and tell him what we want and tend to your business." I said, "You have Joe Campbell, you have Craig Johnson and you have Floyd Daniel and you have Dr. ?? . You have many distinguished Negroes over there. And we don't have anybody out here in the Mayflower District. I said, "If you would use the right mind, we could go to every City Council. You could run a Negro. You could run a Mexican out here."

And he came to his senses. He was very shrewd, but it was too late for him.

So, we had very good relationships among some of them. And some we don't. Some still have to learn. But we are learning.

Isabel Weill:

You are working at it.

JMP:

(Laughs.) Yes. I would like to say that within the last quarter century, I can see that the total Mayflower Community has shown a marked improvement in every respect. We have better houses, we have--most of the community now has sidewalks, curbs and gutters. We have sewers throughout the community and we have had two Black Councilmen in the last two decades. We have seen two Black Councilmen in action.

I really think this has encouraged a lot of little Black boys and girls. I think they really feel inspired. And Councilman Rucker has really improved since he sees that the people are behind him. We have encouraged people to go down to the Council and not just the day after to Mr. Rucker for voting the way they think he should have voted, but they are not there to support him. We should be there at all times, some Black faces should be at the City Council, and let him see that he does have some support. He would begin to speak out for the community.

We all think that he has done quite well as a Councilman and I want to thank him again. This is the second time we have had a Black Councilman. Some person might learn because Mr. Rucker is really an outstanding mortician and he has his business down South and he has his business here in Bakersfield. And I think that it will take all of his time and I don't really think he will really have the time to run again, but as a whole, I think he has done quite well recently. We have had new lights on California Avenue and he has done quite a few things in the community for us. And we are proud of him.

Narrator:

This has been an interview. Miss Irma Weill has been interviewing Mrs. Johnie Mae Parker, March 28, 1971.