General topic of this interview: Rose and Taylor Barber Shop was the first business to be redeveloped on North First Street. They have been called the “anchor” of the North First Street Redevelopment. This length and tone of this interview with Rose & Taylor is different from the ones previously taken and transcribed. The interviewees, Joe Taylor and Lum Rose have a wealth of wisdom, they are the ‘griots’ of African culture who store the history and memory of the people in the oral tradition. In more ways that one, Rose & Taylor has kept the memory of “black business” on North First Street alive. They have remained a visible icon on North First Street. Without this interview, the North First Street Oral History project would be incomplete.

NARRATOR: Lum Rose and Joe Taylor

INTERVIEWER: Annalise Fonza

DATE: April 19 and 21, 2002
PLACE: Rose and Taylor Barber Shop
124 North First Street
Champaign, IL 61820

PERSONAL DATA:

Narrator: Lum Rose
Birth date: September 1, 1932
Background: Lifetime barber and black entrepreneur
Current Occupation: co-owner, Rose & Taylor Barber Shop

Narrator: Joe Taylor
Birth date: 1944 or 1945
Background: Lifetime barber and black entrepreneur
Current Occupation: co-owner, Rose & Taylor Barber Shop

Length: approximately 80 minutes

BIOGRAPHY

Lum Rose and Joe Taylor have been cutting hair for well over twenty years in Champaign. Both migrated to Illinois from the South: one from Mississippi and the other from Kentucky. Both are ex-military men – Rose cut hair and Taylor drove trucks. These two men met in the 60s and
started cutting hair at Tommy’s Barber Shop at 204 North First Street, just a few doors down the
from where their newly developed business is currently located. When Tommy died, his
surviving wife, Jean Drish “inherited” the business and the building. In 1975, Rose & Taylor
purchased the business but not the building from Ms. Drish. On several occasions, Rose &
Taylor offered to buy the property, but Ms. Drish refused to sell. Ms. Drish continues to own the
property at 204 North First Street. Finally, when the City of Champaign made North First Street
a part of the TIF district, Rose & Taylor made application and received loan approval to
redevelop their business. Under the TIF, Rose & Taylor redeveloped and owned their own
business. The “new” Rose & Taylor, which sits at 124 North First Street opened for business in
July 2000.

INTERVIEWER’S COMMENTS

It was imperative that I take this interview. Rose & Taylor hold a wealth of information. They
remember North First Street when it was a vibrant commercial area with businesses owned by
blacks and whites. They know who moved in and who moved out, and most importantly they
know why. Some of that is discussed here. Because of their very busy schedule, this interview
took place over two separate days. They work standing on their feet, and the redevelopment of
Rose & Taylor will require even more years of hard work, and they are not getting any younger.
This is a longer, but necessary interview. Many issues were discussed, including their own
personal stories and memories. Rose and Taylor will not live to see the total repayment of their
loan. Maybe that is a bit presumptuous of me. Nevertheless, I truly hope their name and memory
will remain a part of North First Street for many decades to come.
Annalise: Some biographical information and which one wants to go first.
(laugh) Um, Mr....tell me your name and um...

Lum: My name is Lum...Curtis....Rhodes (chuckling and smiling).

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: Yeah and uh, what else did you say?

Annalise: And um, and if you want to give your age, if you want to give your age (laughing).

Lum: No, that's okay, yeah.

Annalise: Where were you born? Where were you born?

Lum: I was born in Sturgess, Kentucky.

Annalise: Sturgess.

Lum: Yes, Kentucky. Union County, in ah 1932.

Annalise: 1932.

Lum: Ninth month first day.

Annalise: Okay, the ninth month...that's uh...

Lum: September.

Annalise: September, right, I had to think about it (laughing)...

Lum: Yeah.

Annalise: Ok, so how did you end up here in Champaign?

Lum: Well, uh we use to come over back uh during the, well I'm just about hundred and eighty miles from here, my home is across the river.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: Uh, Shawneetown, Illinois, so uh we use to come over here and work during the summer at the University, before, uh well before we got out of high school. And ah it was several years ago and I actually had moved back here in 1961 and was going to work in Chanute Field but they was closing down.

Annalise: Oh, okay

Lum: So yeah, my job was just by uh coming down through First Street was a friend of mine and we had came up together a good years ago, and uh and I stopped in the barber shop, it was
Tommy’s Barber Shop down on 204 North First less than a block from where we are now, yeah so, I stayed there and got a job. I came in on a Monday and went to work on Friday down there because Chanute’s Field wasn’t ready for me, they told me I had to wait a few days, so.

Annalise: Why did they say you had to wait?

Lum: Well yeah, uh because you see it’s a concession work after the government gave it up, you know and they didn't have a chair, like a, a place for me right then. Hmm hmm, so I was down here and talked to Miss Drish...(reflecting), came in and said “well you’re a barber,” said, “I might have something for you, ya know, [in a] few days.” So naturally I didn’t have ah an Illinois barber license I had to go to a refresher, so that Friday he came up to where I was staying at and said, ‘come on down, you got the job man, that guy left, one of the barbers left, went to California.

Annalise: Oh, okay.

Lum: So I moved in his place.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: That was in September 3rd or 4th, something like that, right after Labor Day.

Annalise: So ah, so you were a barber already?

Lum: Yeah right.

Annalise: Were you cutting hair before you came up here? (Lum: That’s right.) And where was that in, Kentucky?

Lum: That was in Kentucky, yeah I worked for ah military installations, I worked for ah Fort Knox Kentucky and then I worked at Camp Breckenridge, it’s just down road and then Fort Campbell just for a little while, so I did uh, well nearly 10 years before I came.

Annalise: Okay, okay.

Lum: So then uh, so when I got here I stayed down there 39 years with Tommy, then he passed away and we took over the business, and then ah, me and Joe Taylor went in partnership, oh I guess twenty…three or four years ago…I don’t have the exact date down, it’s on the books somewhere but, and ah we stayed there together 20 years down at that place there then finally came up here, be two years in ah July. Uh huh. Yeah, so that about sizes it ah, sizes me up, I came you know, then we got, worked on this, ah Joe did most of the footwork on this getting the loan and the whole thing, which I said, he you know the grant from the bank really, and uh, well that was ah, just about sizes it up we worked on here since, we been here two be in ah July. Uh huh.

Annalise: So uh let me back up and kinda go through time. Um, once you got the job at Tommy’s right?

Lum: Uh Huh
Annalise: Then, how did it how did it come to be that you ah owned your own place, or went into business?

Lum: Well uh, Tommy passed away, see he uh passed away and so I ran it for his wife, she lived up stairs, and uh, she stays upstairs in the building down there, and so I used to operate it for her for about a year, year and a half and then Joe had a barbershop down, he had taken his barber shop down the street, him and another fella in a partnership, so we got together and kept talking and he was leaving him, so I told Joe come talk to me and then we could you know probably rent this together down there, so that’s what happened about a year later we rented that and stayed there all them years together, you know,. And uh...

Annalise: Now that’s not the building that you were in when I first came here (Lum: That’s right.), oh that’s the same place?

Lum: That building was a year old when I first came to work here.

Annalise: Oh.

Lum: So that will make it about 41 years old that building down there.

Annalise: And you said Tommy’s wife owned the building?

Lum: Yeah she still owns it.

Annalise: She still owns the building.

Lum: Yeah sure, uh huh. We made attempts to buy it one or two times but she didn’t..

Annalise: She didn’t wanna sell it?

Lum: Naw, uh huh.

Annalise: So you all were leasing that building?

Lum: Leasing uh huh, yeah. So uh, like I say, that’s about the extent of it, just everything looked like it was cut and dry for me ya know, I didn’t have no big hassle, to get you know I got the job done and just stayed on and raised a large family right here in....

Annalise: You did, (Lum: Oh yeah.) when you came here were you married?

Lum: Oh yeah, yeah, I’d been married 10 years, yeah everything, (Annalise: Before you came here?) that’s right, and ah we married early we got married about when we was about 18, right after high school and we went to trade school down there in Paducah Kentucky for, you know, to get my license. And ah, went to, well we were raised right across the block from each other (Annalise: Oh really [chuckling]), yeah, childhood sweethearts ya know, stayed together forty years, she passed away, 1990.

Annalise: Oh she did?
Lum: Uh huh.

Annalise: Okay, how’d she die?

Lum: She had a little accident on the job and then just kept going down down you know, one thing led to another and ah she just passed away, you know. No long-suffering ya know just uh... sick.

Annalise: Now where did she work?

Lum: Alloyd Casting, it’s straight out First Street, it’s ah a forging plant, she was ah...

Annalise: A what?

Lum: Forg—it’s ah, they make steel, they steel work out there, (Annalise: Okay. Okay.), yeah she was ah, what do ‘ya call it, a core-maker, you know test sand.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: Uh huh. (Annalise: So she worked on her feet?) So ah twenty, twenty seven years.

Annalise: She worked on her feet. All the time?

Lum: Yeah, that’s right. And she was out there 27 years. And we had, we’ve got 9 children.

Annalise: Do ya?

Lum: (chuckling)Yeah, they all, all here but one.

Annalise: All here but one?

Lum: That’s right, I got one girl in Chicago since uh since high school she went up there up to Chicago and she been there every since. Uh huh, so ah....

Annalise: So now how long have you been cutting hair then altogether?

Lum: All together about ah about 49, 48 years.

Annalise: 48 years cutting hair. (Lum: Yep.) Does that hurt your feet (chuckling)?

Lum: Oh my goodness yeah (chuckling)! Well this in the late years, it just happened uh maybe two years ago I had a problem with my right, left leg, so I wear a brace on that now.

Annalise: Oh on your brace, (Lum: On my leg.), on your leg when you stand up?

Lum: When standing yeah, uh huh.
Annalise: All day, and have to buy special shoes too?

Lum: Uh huh yeah, yeah. Uh huh.

Annalise: All the other barbers that have had ah, had (Lum: Troubles.) troubles too? Yeah, troubles there, in your back, legs...

Lum: Well, it’s mostly arms, elbows and ah get that uh tendonitis you know, yeah I’m lucky that I didn’t, well like I say, that many years you know, come out with just this (referring to his leg), well, I’m just working three days a week now so, I’ve got a lotta time to sit down, what and play Whist, whatever I wanna do you know...yeah.

Annalise: And since that has been your income your whole life outside the military right?

Lum: Well, I worked with the military, that’s where I worked on military installation, you see.

Annalise: And you were doing?

Lum: Barber.

Annalise: You were barber?

Lum: Yeah.

Annalise: Okay, so you’ve been cutting hair all the time, that’s been your occupation, all the time?

Lum: That’s right. (Annalise: All the time.) That’s all right.

Annalise: So nobody pays the insurance on that? How do you, how do you ah how do you pay for your own insurance on that? How do you take care of yourself since you’re self-employed?

Lum: Well they set aside everything, they got you know just like ah for estimated tax, insurance they’ll take care of....

Annalise: Oh, it’s quarterly, the quarterly payments?

Lum: That’s right, yeah that’s the way we pay the tax and then ah, well when we was working with somebody else I had to make the social security payments outta that you know, but see now, we ah, like ah independent contractors, you know (Annalise: Okay.) until you own, you know until you get to be self employed, and ah, that’s that’s the way that works, you know, take care of your own, everything.

Annalise: And you have the just have bank set that out, or how do you, how do you?

Lum: No, we have a bookkeeper, (Annalise: Oh you have a bookkeeper?) yeah sure, right uh huh, yeah we got an accountant you know, (Annalise: Okay.) so all that is taken care of like that (Annalise: Okay), uh huh, in taxes and everything, we keep the books, give it to him, ah onst a month for everything to be cleared into his big book you know, that the way that happens.
Annalise: Ok, Joe I'm gonna talk to you now. [Joe shaking his head no]. He's saying no way. Come on you can't leave me hanging like that (laughing). Come on, we're (inaudible) making oral history (laughing). Okay, so tell me, tell me where you from?

Joe: From Mississippi.

Annalise: Where in Mississippi?

Joe: Ah, Vance, Mississippi, I was born in a sharecrop, sharecropper plantation.

Annalise: Uh huh, and ah so Vance, Mississippi, and how did you get to Champaign-Urbana?

Joe: After my daddy died, ah my mother's sister ah sent for us, and came.

Annalise: She lived here?

Joe: Yes.

Annalise: And so how old were you at that time?

Joe: Oh, about 9 or 10.

Annalise: Uh huh, so, (noise in the background) No, that wasn't me, so you came up here about 9 or 10 and then what?

Joe: I went to school.

Annalise: Where did you go to school?

Annalise: Champai--, ah Unit 4 School District.

Annalise: Um, and (laughing, to Lum), he ain't giving me any more information (laughing), um you went to Champaign schools and did you ever leave Champaign?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: When did you leave?

Joe: I went to barber school in 19 ah 63 up in Chicago, and in ah in 1966 I went in the Army.

Annalise: Okay, so for 3 years you were in Chicago or you?

Joe: One year.

Annalise: Okay, school was just one year (Joe: Yeah.), and then came back here, or you stayed in Chicago?

Joe: I came back here and worked.
Annalise: As a barber? (Joe shakes head yes.)

Annalise: What made you want to be a barber?

Joe: Well, we was awful poor and ah, looked like that was going to be the best way to make some money right away than to wait for years, so I went to barber school.

Annalise: And when you went to barber school how old were you?

Joe: Ah, when I started I was 18.

Annalise: And that look like the best way to support yourself ah rather than say a nine to five job or...?

Joe: Yeah, I had a part-time job, (Annalise: (interrupting) Well, barbers cut hair from nine to five right?) I had a part time job before I worked.

Annalise: Oh you did?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Where did you work (inaudible)?

Joe: At a grocery store, (pause) I started there when I was a junior in high school.

Annalise: Working in a grocery store? And then you...You gotta go, you gotta go? (Joe and Lum needed to close shop so we scheduled another interview).

(2nd interview begins here)

Annalise: Okay, so let's just pick up, I think you left off talking about working in the grocery store, right?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: And ah, so, let's see I am trying to put that in time. What, after you worked in the grocery store you went, where did you go next?

Joe: I went to barber school.

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Right, and...um, what was that like? What's going to barber's school like? Help me understand.

Joe: Well, it was just like a college ah we had to take a series of classes everyday and then we'd have the rest of the day...same thing each day, taking class and then....
Annalise: Now was this a barber school ah for black men or black and white, or whatever...?

Joe: Now this is 1963-64 when I went and it was not, it wasn't integrated. Whites owned it but they had a school for blacks and a school for whites down the street, but it wasn't integrated. It was 809 south State Street in downtown Chicago (Annalise: In downtown Chicago, huh?) in 1963 and '64.

Annalise: Yeah, where did you live while you were there then?

Joe: Lived with my sister on the West Side.

Annalise: On the west side of Chicago?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: So did you have to, you had to travel then to get to ah school everyday?

Joe: Yeah, I took the El sometime and then sometime I took the bus.

Annalise: Uh huh, in the cold weather too, that I am sure that was no joke (laughing).

Joe: Yep.

Annalise: It gets cold up there. Okay, so you finished barber school and then and then, then where did you go after that?

Joe: I worked there for a month and I didn’t like it, worked too many hours, so I came back here and started working at Murrayfield's Barber Shop at ah 210 North First Street, then I went to the Army in 1966.

Annalise: Okay, and served in ah, did you ever have to go to war or did you just went to the Army for...?

Joe: I just went to the Army, couple of years.

Annalise: Where were you stationed?

Joe: Okinawa.

Annalise: Okinawa in Japan. Uh huh, I am a very illiterate when it comes to the Army, exactly what did you do in the Army?

Joe: I drove a staff car for a battalion commander, then I worked in the motor pool and work in the supply when I was a driver.

Annalise: Okay, my father was stationed in uh, he was in the National Guard, I wanna say the Air Force, I don’t know, but he was stationed in Alaska.

Joe: I spent some time in the National Guard too when I got out.
Annalise: Did you? Uh so you, you got out but you didn’t totally ah disconnect from...?

Joe: Oh yeah for a while, yeah.

Annalise: Maintained, ah how is that, you maintained a status with the Army were you own reserves, you weren’t full time, you weren’t full active duty?

Joe: Aw, no.

Annalise: Just reserves or?.

Joe: Well, you only have so many years of reserves and then you are through so then I joined the National Guard for a couple of years.

Annalise: Okay, so you came back here about what time?

Joe: 1968.

Annalise: ’68?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Um, that was a very interesting year (chuckling), and uh then what happened in terms of work?

Joe: I started back cutting hair (Annalise: Cutting hair again?), I worked part time for Jewel.

Annalise: Grocery store?

Joe: Uh huh.

Annalise: So cutting hair wasn’t your only ah means of earning income at that time?

Joe: Oh no.

Annalise: Could it have supported you?

Joe: Well, at that time they were wearing that afro. (Annalise: Okay.) It was a little rough (chuckling) it could have though, but....

Annalise: So people would let it grow out longer and wouldn’t come in as often?

Joe: Yeah

Annalise: Okay.

Joe: But I enjoyed working you know at the grocery store too, meeting different people.
Annalise: Uh huh, uh huh, what did you do primarily there?

Joe: Produce.

Annalise: Produce?

Joe: Yeah, I kept the produce racks filled and on Sunday morning I had to set the rack up.
(Annalise: Uh huh.) (pause, reflecting) Lot of fun.
Annalise: That was a lot of fun?

Joe: Oh yeah.

Annalise: Uh hum. So, what changed that for you, what made you start cutting hair all the time, leaving the Jewel job behind?

Joe: After I started ah, Lum and I got together, I drove a school bus for a while in the morning time, and ah then started Rose and Taylor later on and I stuck with that.

Annalise: So Rose and Taylor started at what time?


Annalise: 1975, and you started ah leasing the building, ah what was the address again?

Lum: 204 North First Street.

Annalise: 204 North First Street, you started leasing the building from ah I can’t remember her name.

Lum: Jean Drish.

Annalise: Drewry?

Lum: Drish, D-R-I-S-H.

Annalise: D-R-I-S-H.

Joe: She sold her business to us.

Annalise: Okay, and her business before was what?

Joe: Tommy’s Barber Shop.

Annalise: Tommy’s Barber Shop. Did she sell the building to you or she sold the, (Joe: The business.) she sold the business. So what, how did she do that, what happened that she sold the business to you? I mean what’s the financial transaction like when someone sells the business to you, I don’t know...(chuckling)?

Joe: She set a price and and we agreed on it.
Annalise: Okay.

Lum: Well, we bought, see it was her equipment too, see, (Annalise: Okay.) see, we bought the equipment and you know, the name just (inaudible) had to be changed. Yeah, we bought the equipment.

Annalise: Okay. Uh huh, now how much did she sell it for?

Joe: We don’t know.

Annalise: Can’t remember? I mean did you have a savings, did you start talking about going in together on the business?

Lum: After the first year we started a savings ya’ know.

Annalise: Okay, so you started talking about cutting hair together, just the two of you?

Lum: Well we, yeah, when we got started, when I first came up we were still leasing from her, the building, the business (Annalise: Okay.), then we worked under that for for maybe a year, and then ah, she decided that she would sell us the equipment and the business you know (inaudible) but not the building, you know and we did that and changed the name to Rose and Taylor.

Annalise: Uh huh. (pause) Okay.

Lum: Yeah, we just went on from there and we just got good business and got two more barbers beside, like I said there were just four chairs down there (Annalise: Okay.) at that time, well all the time we were there, (Annalise: Uh huh.) and ah well all the time it took us to get another shop (inaudible) in 1961, and ah the building was still new, it was just not quite a year old when I started that building, the newest building on the block for all these many years you know.

Annalise: Okay, how did now, how, how did she, was she, she wasn’t, she was black, or..?

Lum: She was black, sure and her husband was black, her husband, well the business, when he passed on well the building went to her you see, you know she became the sole owner.

Annalise: Because that’s so unusual I guess at 19, what’d you say? (Lum: ’61.) ’61 that uh a black man or a black woman would own property on this block.

Lum: Well see, (pointing to the windows) all this was black most of it, (Joe in the background...inaudible) yeah, and across on Main Street see where Main starts with the viaduct (Annalise: Yes.), okay well that used be through, you could drive all the way through there, see this was ah (pointing) all this black business was all down this little section of Main Street to the railroad, almost to the railroad.

Annalise: Okay, and what were these businesses?
Lum: Ah there was a hotel on the corner and a poolroom, barbershop, uh shoeshine (Joe: Restaurant, restaurant.) restaurant and a shoeshine stand, course you always have to have snake pit you know.

Annalise: What’s a snake pit (Lum laughs)? I don’t even know what that is.

Lum: That’s just where guys go and you know shoot a little poker and (Annalise: Oh, okay. Uh huh.) but they had a big, they had a pool room (Annalise coughing).

Joe: They had a, a hickory pit was right out there.

Annalise: I’m sorry a what?

Joe: Barbecue, hickory pit (Annalise: All black-owned.), and ah Holt Café was right down the street.

Annalise: Wow, I wish I could have seen this!

Lum: Had a tavern, it was down there, where the they got the new building going up for the Masonics, (Annalise: Uh huh.) see that was a barbershop where Joe worked and right there was ah...

Joe: The cleaners.

Lum: The cleaners and then it finally became it was a tavern, the Blue Island Tavern, not the Blue Island...

Joe: The chicken shack.

Annalise: So Main Street, ah over on the other side of the tracks here, (Lum and Joe: On this side) on this side, but it came all the way through?

Lum: Yeah it did yeah.

Annalise: So Main Street is actually this, probably this area right in here (pointing directly out the window.)?

Lum: Right where you see that, yeah right (pointing) there where the...

Annalise: Where the police station?

Lum: Where the walk through, yeah, where that was a bank where the police station is (Annalise: Okay.), see First Street divided right, ah right about ‘bout that corner (Annalise: Uh huh.) out there ran into a “Y” like this (splitting hands), one kept straight down Main Street and the other one, (to Joe) what’s that Taylor?

Joe: Water Street.
Lum: Water Street turned off and went down, you go down Main or if you go on over to University.

Annalise: So First Street divided into two different streets?

Lum: Well it went up, it was a street just butted into like (motioning) you know Y, you could turn down Water this way straight around...

Annalise: That way?

Lum: Yeah, ah everything going south (Annalise: That would be to the west. Okay.) Southwest, yeah.

Annalise: Uh huh, that was Water Street?

Lum: Yeah and then Main, ah First Street kept down to the south,

Annalise: Where it is, where it's going now?

Lum: All the way to the University.

Annalise: Uh huh. So there's been a lot of changes on this street?

Lum: Yes, Lord (Annalise chuckling), well we had the ah, a lotta businesses come down through here this was ah, it was black lady had a, on the very corner here, kinda like a hobby shop, sold clothes and well kinda like beginner's ah, (inaudible)...places that sell ah second hand place, Second Hand Rose is like that you know.

Annalise: Yeah, uh huh.

Joe: And Mack had a grocery store on this side over here (pointing).

Annalise: On the ah, on the east side right here?

Joe: Yeah right in this area.

Annalise: Right in this area where you all are, right now?

Joe: A grocery store.

Annalise: A grocery store?

Joe: Barbershop, grocery store.

Annalise: Next to Buddies?

Joe: Yeah, about where Buddies was.

Annalise: Buddies was ah not a grocery store?
Joe: It was a grocery store.

Annalise: Oh it was a grocery store.

Joe: Yeah, Mack’s.

Annalise: Mack’s. Okay.

Lum: Oh yeah man, ah right above that they had a restaurant.

Annalise: Is that right?

Lum: (to Joe) And ah, what was before that (inaudible)?

Annalise: Above the grocery store?

Lum: No, no no, right next door.

Annalise: Oh, bef-- next door, actually where the Jackson’s, well where 118 is, (Lum: Yeah.) where there is an empty lot?

Lum: Empty lot.

Joe: See what happened, you don’t have no young black folks to take over their family business, that’s what happened to all them businesses, cause they had garbage route, they had three garbage routes (inaudible)...

Annalise: Three garbage ah routes, or three black-owned garbage companies?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Three black-owned garbage companies.

Joe: Yeah, they didn’t have nobody to take ‘em over.

Annalise: And then when the owners died..., their children, what’d their children do, they know they had children, what’d their children do?

Joe: Yeah, they didn’t wanna take ‘em.

Annalise: They didn’t want ta take the business?

Joe: Naw, they didn’t want to take ‘em, they’d sell it.

Annalise: They wanted the money.

Joe: Yeah, that’s what happened to all them other buildings, they didn’t have anybody to take ‘em over.
Annalise: Okay, so they were left vacant for a while, ah right?

Joe: When they died, they just say oh well.

Annalise: They had to close?

Lum: Somebody’d come in and buy it.

Annalise: So what happened, yeah, somebody bought them, or what happened to those buildings?

Lum: The buildings, (Annalise: Yeah.) they tore it, over here (pointing out the window)?

Annalise: Yeah.

Lum: Oh they, all that one guy owned most of all of that, one black man.

Annalise: One black guy?

Lum: One black man

Annalise: Who?

Lum: His name... Wardell Jackson.

Annalise: Wardell Jackson.

Joe: He use to own two or three baseball teams here too.

Annalise: Is that right?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Wow, ah Negro leagues or...?

Joe: Yeah, in the EI League.

Annalise: What's the EI League?


Annalise: Eastern and Illinois baseball league.

Lum: [to Joe] Did you play for them?

Joe: No I didn’t.

Annalise: [to Joe] Did you play ball?
Joe: Little bit.

Annalise: Baseball?

Joe: (Nodding yes.)

Annalise: Ah, professionally or?

Joe: I went out but they argued too much for me (everybody laughing).

Annalise: Baseball or softball?

Joe: Baseball.

Annalise: Baseball.

Joe: They argued too much for me. (laughing)

Annalise: So one guy owned, you say most of this property (Lum: Yeah right.). And uh so what happened was a lot of the owners who were in those buildings were leasing from him?

Annalise: From him. Sure.

Annalise: Wardell Jackson? (Lum: Uh huh.) And, uh and then ah, what happened once those buildings were vacant, he sold to the City or?

Lum: Well, ah the City bought the ah, the for ah, just like they’re doing up here on First Street, you know revamping, rehabbing and all that, so ah the buildings had to go down cuz everything’s coming, you know change ya know. They say of you don’t change you don’t go no place, so that’s what’s happening you know, (Annalise: ‘Bout what time?) and I was here, that was in ’63 or 4.

Annalise: ‘Bout ’63?

Lum: Uh huh.

Annalise: So those buildings came down in ‘63 or were they were left vacant in ‘63?

Lum: No they didn’t leave ‘em vacant, when they when they moved out they was ready to start evaluating and ah....

Annalise: Oh so there was a change in those, the actual land structure at that time?

Lum: Sure, sure that’s right.

Joe: No, there’s was another thang, oh...(laughing and pointing to the tape recorder).

Annalise: Go ‘head, go ‘head, ya’ll all right. (Lum: explaining in the background) Oh all right.
Lum: No, you gotta be in something, we don’t wanta, no.

Annalise: Oh okay, he had some problems.

Lum: Yeah, well you know there’s some things you say and then...

Annalise: Sure...sure, (Lum: Sure.) well we can stop the tape and ya’ll can tell me....

(tape stops)

Joe: I’ll get somebody to tell you more about it.
Annalise: But he died... Clarence Davidson would know a little more about it, but ah so he died, he got shot (laughing)....? Okay, so there was some cloudy stuff going on with Wardell, that’s about where we could leave it with him.

Joe: (inaudible, explaining)

Annalise: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean that’s is the story of so many black business owners. And, most of the black people did, where did they live in Champaign-Urbana? Over here on the North End?

Lum: That’s right. That was the ghetto, Poplar Street.

Annalise: That was the ghetto, Poplar...?.

Lum: Yeah, by Columbia and Vine, and all that way back up to ah Bradley.

Joe: Back then it was nice though. It wasn’t...

Lum: Yeah, well I say but that’s where black people, that’s was our...?

Annalise: Were all concentrated, everybody was all concentrated in that one area, it wasn’t like ah, the projects ah now, but it was a community.

Lum: Yeah.

Annalise: A neighborhood.

Joe: Yeah, it was a little mixed too, and they started moving out.

Annalise: The whites started moving out? Because they were left over here from ah, after the after World War II and came back and bought up bought this land?

Lum: Yeah.

A: That’s what ah, the article I’ve been reading talks about how this was called Germantown.

Lum: That’s right.
Annalise: And, um, then of course ah as more blacks started migrating here or you know settling (excuse me—belching) settling in Champaign then whites started moving out.

Lum: They started moving out yeah.

Annalise: Was this the only place that blacks could get housing in Champaign?

Lum: Yeah, yeah it was ah rough to get housing, renting or anything else you know.

Joe: We lived on Walnut over there.

Annalise: You lived or live there now?

Joe: We lived on Walnut.

Annalise: You used to live on Walnut?

Joe: Uh huh.

Lum: They was scattered cross sections you know. Ah, but it was big changes made, they had ah, well like I say, you had to go through ah a hassle just to get, you couldn’t rent no, like these students now, they had regular houses for ‘em, black students (Annalise: Okay.), yeah you couldn’t just go in like the bank users, people like that we used to have, in the sixties we had ah ah oh ah it was marches.

Joe: (inaudible)

(moving tape)

Annalise: Go ahead. Okay, um you said housing it was difficult to get housing here?

Lum: Oh yeah, all of these apartments and ah, you see up now, well blacks didn’t get in there cuz we had ta go through some marches and everything else (Annalise: Protests,) protesting, to get those ah, the job done. Downtown, was the same way, you couldn’t ah, well it’s a few people worked down there but not many you know, maybe at the counter, food counters or then they didn’t want you to come in there to eat even, walk-in, couldn’t sit down you could get yourself, you know.

Annalise: You’d get it to go?

Lum: They had a stand-up counter too you know.

Annalise: You could eat it, but stand up and eat?

Lum: Yeah, one or two of the places.

Annalise: I don’t think I could make it (laughing).
Lum: Yeah, you would’ve made it, cuz see, if you don’t know the taste of sugar then you don’t know what’s sweet, you know, so that’s the way it was you know. All these years ah...see our people taught us, back in Kentucky you know that you had a certain place to be, and that....

Annalise: They taught you how to survive.

Lum: Exactly, that’s what I say, we got our heritage you know, sure they like ‘well no, see I couldn’t have stood this,’ well you probably wouldn’t cuz you don’t know about it you know.

Annalise: Yeah, that’s true.

Lum: The ones who came through that time that’s the way it was, you know, see.

Annalise: Uh huh, uh huh.

Lum: And ah, like I say, well I say, ‘the Indians they fought and died, but the black men laughed and survived,’ see, that was it, ‘Oh yes sir,’ I knew we were gonna be after while, the (inaudible).

Annalise: Right.

Lum: But the change is coming, you know things is a lot a lot different.

Annalise: But there are a lot of people who ah made change possible.

Lum: Certainly. See after King well that was really, you know changed things around, after that. After they killed the King well they just kinda dying down, but really that was a big change right there.

Annalise: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Lum: Military was segregated.

Annalise: Right.

Annalise: And it sound like many black men went to the military, they went not as officers or, um ranking, high ranking folk, they went in and did jobs pretty much that white people didn’t want to do, is that right?

Lum: Yeah, that’s history.

Annalise: Yeah.

Lum: But you know, that’s just the way it was.

Annalise: Uh huh.

Lum: So ah when I was 30, it started out it was the civil service and then it changed over to the sectionaires came in and brought the shops in like the laundries, ah mess halls, the barber shops,
oh places like that they was just closed out...you know, they integrated in the ‘50...late 50s when the Army integrated, and then see we cut black soldiers’ hair, the white barbers cut the whites hair and then it finally got to where we could cut anybody’s hair, the black barbers, the white guys ah barbers didn’t want to do this you see (Annalise: Uh huh.), so we doubled up on the business.

Annalise: So they didn’t want to cut black people hair?

Lum: No, no, no.

Annalise: So you doubled up on business when you were in the military?

Lum: Sure, that’s right you had the blacks and the whites you know.

Annalise: Did you get paid? How did you get paid, from the military, monthly?

Lum: No, not after we got, see, we worked ah for ah on commission.

Annalise: You worked on commission?

Lum: Sure.

Annalise: So they paid you ah by the number of heads?

Lum: The amount of work that I did.

Annalise: Yeah, the amount of work that you did.

Lum: (inaudible –motioning for him to come closer to the recorder.) Yeah, you could ah, see ah, back when I was...

Annalise: Yeah, I am sorry, I know it’s hard, but I don’t wanna have to come back for ‘ya (referring to the taping).

Lum: No, it ain’t a hard thing, I just kinda set back and relax, I’m kinda laid back...but no, we’d ah, but see when I first started as a barber is in Camp Breckenridge, see that’s this overhang from World War II they opened it and made it a camp and they used it, the 101st Airborne, used that between Campbell, Fort Campbell and Fort Knox.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: So I started in there.

Annalise: In Kentucky?

Lum: Yeah, in Kentucky, finally they moved to, I mean they ah shut that part of it down and I went to Fort Knox

Annalise: Uh huh.
Lum: And uh, I worked in reception center, that’s when you first come in you get that flying 20 and all that stuff, the first stop is the barbershop EX on down.

Annalise: OOOOOOH.

Lum: And you just rip and run all day see they bring in, just raw recruits in there.

Annalise: I see.

Lum: They want to keep their hair, some of ‘em, we got it all, they drop it right on their lap you know (chuckling) cuz you get it all off just about.

Annalise: So you take it down all the way down to a crew cut?

Lum: Uh huh.

Annalise: Closer than that sometimes?

Lum: That’s right. Uh huh. So, ah that went on that way, well you, you couldn’t it wadn’t paying but I think ah, ah we mighta been getting 75 cents for a haircut.

Annalise: 75 cents?

Lum: 75 to 90 yeah, it was back in the 50s.

Annalise: And how much did you make a week?

Lum: Oh I don’t know, see I say, as long as you, you could make just about what you know it wadn’t no, you couldn’t get rich off of it cuz it just you had to do so many to get a certain amount but things wadn’t up high like they are now or you know, it was still...went right along, you could make a decent living.

Annalise: But you could make a decent living cutting hair?

Lum: Well, you could work as long as you wanted to you know, long as you had the hours to work all right, but they’d just march ‘em in, you know like ah I guess ah not a whole company but they’d march in a bunch ah maybe ah, what is the next thing down..

Annalise: A brigade, (laughing) I don’t know.

Lum: But anyway, they’d march ‘em in like this you know, and they only had 9 chairs in the shop you know just like (inaudible)...so to tell a little joke they wanted me to go to the officer’s quarters to where the officers got there hair cut you know.

Annalise: Uh huh.
Lum: So I’m been used to this rippin and running, you have a bird cut, big guard, my blades are about this wide on an animal clipper, and so I went to the officer’s mess or what ever they call it, and ah cutting a head a light colonel.

Annalise: A light colonel?

Lum: Yeah, well you see you have a full bird colonel and then you have one with a silver leaf, that’s ah, they call him light.

Annalise: A civil (Lum: A Lieutenant Colonel) relief you said, a ci--?

Lum: Ah clover leaf.


Lum: Yes a cloverleaf. Well that’s what he was you know, the next step up and you get the bird.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: So yeah, so ah, I was cutting his hair, he was talking so and so and in this rush wasn’t keyed up for that you know, in this rush and that bird guard came off made a streak right down that (chuckling) (Annalise: Oh no!) yeah, ah man I tried to cut that out...he said, ‘let me have the mirror,’ and ah, I said just a minute, I did kinda work it out you know, only thing to do now is give him a bald head you know (Annalise: Yeah.) and straighten that out, and we could still see a streak in that where that clipper went through, so I gave it to him, then he set there and turned red and his gills on the side of his jaws (Joe laughing), he said ah, he asked the manager every shop had a manager to it, he said, ‘whose the manager,’ and then so ah the guy named Newsome said, ‘yeah I am,’ he said, ‘where’d you get this barber?’ he said, ‘well he’s been down in the recruiting station,’ I mean, ‘the reception center and so and so,’ and I wasn’t saying nothing you know. He said, ‘well I tell you what you do, get him outta here and don’t never bring him back over to this officer’s club...(chuckling).

Annalise: Oh no!

Lum: Oh yeah he did so I had to leave out.

Annalise: Oh no. So you never cut hair again in the officer’s (Lum: Oh yeah, no no, not over there) club?

Lum: No, no I went to the main post after you know away from that because they had, oh I think about 90 barbers at the big Fort Knox.

Annalise: Uh huh. Did any other black barbers go over there to the officer’s quarters and cut hair (Lum: Oh yeah, yeah.) but they just like banned you or something?

Lum: Oh yeah well I messed the guy up, see had he been a little ole lieutenant or something like that it would not have been to bad, this guy was next to the, the wheels you know (Joe laughing).

Annalise: Right.
Lum: And I was a young man you know, with not much experience, the only thing was cutting it off you know, that's all. (Annalise: Right.) I had a lot of experience in different things you know like that, but that was the worst one my cutting you know, cuz I kept on trying to straighten it up you know, been better off if I just left it alone and went on and told him you know so I could cut it all off, but I was trying to hide it you know.

Annalise: Right. So let's come back to this area and the building that went down in what about, you say 1963, or 64?

Lum: Uh huh.

Annalise: Ah, they went down and then what went up in their place, or did anything go up in their place?

Joe: Well, city bought 'em, you're looking at it now (pointing to the police station across the street).

Annalise: But the city didn't put that up until the '80s.

Joe: I'm talking about the parking lot.

Annalise: Right.

Joe: Didn't nothing go up.

Annalise: Nothing went up at all?

Joe: (Shaking his head no.)

Annalise: Stayed vacant?

Joe: (Shaking his head yes.)

Annalise: So they just leveled the property, leveled the land and left it vacant (Joe nodding yes.). So, like when I got here in 1999 (chuckling) and rode down the street there was your shop and those bunch of buildings that were in there, there was a, there was a shop down on the corner where the lodge was before.

Joe: That's is where I started at in 1964.

Annalise: That is where you started at in 1964, and what was the name of it?

Joe: It was Murrayfield's Barbershop.

Annalise: You mentioned that earlier.

Joe: Then they had a cleaner's next door, Tinsley Cleaners.
Annalise: Tinsley, ok, so, but that was still there, that that stayed up a long time, how come that stayed up so long?

Joe: That building (Annalise: Uh huh.), ah the Masonic Lodge owned that building.

Annalise: Oh, so they maintained the building (Joe: Yeah.). Do you know if they used ah that history and record to help them get that building, ah did that help them as they tried to get their new building too?

Joe: They had their meetings upstairs over the barbershop and the cleaners.

Annalise: Okay, okay, all right, I understand now it makes sense, but then on the 3rd block there's Hambrick's, and there was another building.

Joe: Yeah it used to be a liquor store next to Hambrick's, (Annalise: Oh.) Eastside Liquor Store.

Annalise: Eastside Liquor Store, was it pretty busy?

Joe: Oh yeah a lot of guys used to get their checks cashed there on the weekend.

Annalise: So did that mean many didn't bank at the local banks or?

Joe: Uh I don't know, but a lot of construction workers used to stop down there and get their checks cashed.

Annalise: I guess that would be my assumption if they were cashing their checks at a store, you know a liquor store...

Joe: Well, I don't guess they dealt with the bank too much back then.

Annalise: Uh huh.

Joe: I'm not sure.

Annalise: Yeah, they kinda signed their checks over to the bank, or the liquor store and would give 'em money, right?

Joe: That the way it appeared to me, I am not sure.

Annalise: Oh you're not, (chuckling), you kept your money in the back or what?

Joe: (pause) Yeah, the little that I had.

Annalise: The little you had, yeah, okay. So that's that's the barbershop that you started off [at], and you and Lum talked about ah going in on ah a business together, you bought the business from, what's her name again?

Joe: Jean Drish.
Annalise: Jean Drish, and ah then you what after you bought the building?

Joe: The business.

Annalise: Yeah, I’m sorry, then what after you bought the business.

Joe: We started out in a partnership.

Annalise: Uh huh.

Joe: We’ve been there ever since up till now.

Annalise: And what year was that again?

Joe: I think it was around 1975.

Annalise: ‘75, and you both were doing that fulltime, both of you, or you were doing other things too?

Joe: I drove school bus part-time, (Annalise: Oh that’s right.) yeah just in the morning ‘fore I got to work (Annalise: Very early.), yeah then I went back and picked the kids up at three o’clock, drop ’em off, took about 45 minutes.

Annalise: Uh huh, and you had the flexibility to do that because you owned your own place.

Joe: Yes. I did it for 5 years.

Annalise: Now what made you want to, I mean was there anything else that really made you want to start your own shop as opposed to say, you know working for other people. What really was it that made you?

Joe: The opportunity presented itself.

Annalise: Uh huh.

Joe: Wadn’t nothing else to do but to go into business together.

Annalise: But you could have had that same opportunity---, I mean you could have worked for somebody right? Ah, at what’s the name Murra--?

Joe: At the time I moved down to Tommy’s Barbershop.

Annalise: Okay.

Joe: Working for Mrs. Drish at the time, we all were working there, and she decided she wanted to sell it.

Annalise: Okay, so that’s what made the motivation and it prompted it.
Joe: If we didn't buy it someone else was gonna buy it.

Annalise: Uh huh, so you figured you might as well buy it?

Joe: Yeah, since I was working there already.

Annalise: Uh huh. Okay. [to Lum] Was there anything else for you, the reason that you wanted to go in on it, or was that the main reason?

Lum: No no, well yes, another reason is ah, look, I created the business, you know, see, and when I came in there, most all, like these kids now, I cut there and their daddy's hair back then see. So ah, naw that was just ah, I, I ran it for Tommy before he passed away, see he was just, he's there had a record shop next door and a few other things going, so I felt that I you know, needed to stay there, felt like home, I stayed down there 39 years.

Annalise: Uh.

Lum: See, and ah we just been in here, it'll be two years in July.

Annalise: Right.

Lum: See, so all that other time was spent right down there you know, and ah so, it's just like when we got the business, ah me and Joe talked about it and said let's just go in together, we didn't know each other that well.

Annalise: You just cut hair together?

Lum: Well, I mean before that I knew him, but he was always on the other corner and you know, and up there with older guys, I was a young man, see, I started out at 29, everybody was older than me I was the new boy in town you know and so I just blended right in. I never did anything else but barber, I never had another job down, since I've been in Champaign. So I spent all my time right here, from 29 to 69 (chuckling).

Annalise: So it just made yeah, it just made sense to take over the business.

Lum: Cuz it was, sure, ah we tried to buy the building twice, ah maybe three times, but twice for sure, we had everything appraised and borrowed and bank approval and then she backed out.

Annalise: So you actually got a loan from the bank?

Lum: We would have.

Annalise: You would have?

Lum: Yeah, we was approved.

Joe: He came down and went through the building.

Annalise: Whose that?
Joe: The banker.

Annalise: The banker came down and went through the building. So, (Clearing throat.) so you stayed together ah since ‘bout 1975 cutting hair (Lum: All those years.) all those years.

Lum: Uh huh, and we never had no big blow out battles (chuckling).

Annalise: Really, you never had any big blowouts (chuckling).

Lum: See, he’s grown now, see I used to could tell him everything to do you know (chuckling), now, if you stay around long enough, see I done trained him now, whatever come...say, 'hey Joe, so and so,' and when I look back and turn the page back I look, 'yeah that’s the way he started, now it’s my time.'

(tapes ends) Next side of the tape.

Lum: New building...he’d carry one of these [referring to a tape recorder] to the meeting with 'em, get everything and bring it back you know.

Annalise: That’s good. That’s good.

Lum: Uh huh.

Annalise: Did you ever have any trouble when ah you carried a tape recorder to the meetings or, this is with the city right? When they started talking about redevelopment on First Street? (Joe nods his head no) What meeting was it?

Joe: When we first started. Ah, let’s see, we started down here with Clarence Davidson and um Cleveland Jefferson first, then, before John Lee got involved.

Annalise: Oh, you mean you started meeting, (Joe: Yeah.) down there at Buddies? (Joe: Yeah.) Ooooh, oh oh oh I hear what you’re saying, you started meeting with Clarence Davidson?

Joe: And, and ah Cleveland Jefferson, (Annalise: And Cleveland Jefferson.) and the other businesses yeah.

Annalise: I gotcha, I understand, I know a little bit of that history, not a whole lot.

Joe: And since they, we wasn’t’ getting nowhere, so I went and got with John Lee (chuckling).

Annalise: Okay, how did you first ah hear about the redevelopment opportunity that was coming on First Street?

Joe: Looked like it something that we ah just started doing you know. It was, information wasn’t, we didn’t get too much information.

Annalise: You never got anything in the mail or?
Joe: Naw, not...

Annalise: Or, newspapers, on the news?

Joe: (thinking) Not really, I, I, don’t know to tell you the truth.

Annalise: (chuckling) But you just found out about it somehow?

Joe: It looked we just developing, you know...

Annalise: Oh, you just started asking the questions yourselves?

Joe: Yeah looked like we developed...ourselves...from the North First ah eastside First Street, (Annalise: Uh huh.), yeah they was getting help in that area,

Annalise: Okay, so this...

Joe: And and for a long time they’d been talking about doing something down on First Street, but they never did do nothing so.

Annalise: Okay, so this group that was meeting with Clarence Davidson and Cleveland Jefferson, ah that’s what you mean when you said we just started meeting and talking about it or, (pause) so then what happened to actually get you involved with the program that the City was offering?

Joe: Well, I, I decided to go and talk to John Lee and get him so he brought in more information and we just started meeting with him.

Annalise: Okay, was that helpful, what was that process like?

Joe: Oh, it was very helpful to me.

Annalise: Uh huh, and I know when I came in, you know just volunteering at first uh, you were actually having, well meetings here, but before that where did you meet?

Joe: Ah, we one time over in the City building, and then ah down to the Urban League.

Annalise: Urban League which was?

Joe: Yeah, the Urban League down on Taylor Street by the bank (Annalise: It was down on Taylor Street?) yeah, by the First National Bank. But John Lee was talking about more like being in partnership with the City and it made more sense to me you know and work together you know.

Annalise: But as far as anything, you never were approached by the City, you didn’t get any paperwork or see anything on the news, I mean, what, so you’re saying it was something that you developed by yourselves, it was something that you sought out to do is to redevelop?

Joe: Naw, they had been talking about doing this for along time on First Street.
Annalise: The city had been, talking about it?

Joe: I heard it, you know I’m not sure if it was or not, (Annalise: Okay, that makes sense.) you know from different people (Annalise: Uh huh.), said they were gonna redevelop First Street.

Annalise: Uh huh, so once you got ah you got ah with John Lee and in those meetings then things started moving?

Joe: Yeah, he got all the information we needed, you know went through the right channels.

Annalise: Did you have certain applications to fill out, or what did you have to do to express your interest?

Joe: Well, he did most of the work for us.

Annalise: Did he really?

Joe: Yeah, got the job done.

Annalise: He did? Okay. [to Lum] Now, so you were at those meeting, too?

Lum: Some of 'em (Annalise: Some of 'em?), most of the time I go to the meetings down at the City building, used to have 'em down there, when you’re making up your proposals and ah you know, the plans to do and your grants and your loans and things like that, so ah this was ah, like say First Street development’s been going on for about seven years, longer probably. See, talking about, you know at one time they were talking about making a boulevard through here, coming off of ah Market Street, make a circle and straight out to University, see that was the big plan you know to get the ah the traffic ah directed into the University (Annalise: I see.), for the big games and things they have, so that’s the way, that’s the way we got started just like that and then I say, John Lee he’s a good watchdog, he he’s he’s right in with the City and you know whatever is going on, and he brings it back, Joe at the different meetings and things like that, but then proposals gotta be made up, you had a lot ah people that got acquainted with Joe and then you know pushed it right on along, and then got it accepted and everything. And then we had to have, we had some obligations we had to meet too, you know.

Annalise: Like what?

Lum: Finance. So it wasn’t just say, a lotta people come in here, ‘yeah that City gave,’ no, please (chuckling) we gotta grant, we gotta grant, sure.

Annalise: You gotta grant. Did you ever have to put any money in it?

Lum: Oh yes, that’s what I’m saying financial obligations, we had to come up with.

Annalise: You had to come up with some money?

Lum: Oh yeah sure.
Annalise: Hmm. So you had to come with some money, some of what they call cash injection?

Lum: Cash injection or earnest money, you know, they got all kind of names for it (chuckling).

Annalise: Right. Right. Do you mind saying how much you had to come up with?

Lum: I don’t think that, well I don’t know, I don’t what percent it was now, was it 10% on the loan part of it (Joe nodding) ah we had to…and ah yeah, but it was higher than that and they talked to, well John Lee said, they ain’t used to these jobs like that, you know everybody else is getting this ah….

Annalise: So you had to come up with some money and put some money down (Lum: Yeah.) in addition to the grant?

Lum: Yeah, sure the grant, the grant is just half of the deal ya know?

Annalise: Which bank financed you?

Lum: Champaign National.

Annalise: Champaign National?

Lum: Uh huh, over here at ah Champaign ah… City…

Annalise: Was it the CDC?

Lum: Ah, right over here, what this bank’s name now?

Joe: Ah, well, the Bank of Illinois, Bank of Illinois, uh through them, but the money came from Champaign Community Development Corporation.

Annalise: Right. So the CDC facilitated your loan but your loan is actually with which bank?

Joe: The money came directly from Champaign County.

Annalise: Champaign County…the hundred fifty thousand dollar grant?

Joe: Huh?

Lum: The grant part of it.

Annalise: The hundred fifty thousand dollar grant, but the loan portion of it from the bank came from…

Joe: We didn’t get no money we didn’t get no money from the bank.

Annalise: You got no money from the bank?

Joe: No money from the bank.
Annalise: So you all just used the hundred fifty thousand dollars from the City to redevelop this business?

Lum: No, we had to get a loan.

Annalise: Yeah, that’s what I’m saying, where’d you get the loan from?

Joe: The CDC.

Annalise: Oh, the CDC (Joe nodding), so how much money was that?

Joe: I don’t know exactly, we got it written down.

Annalise: Like couple thousand, couple hundred thousand? (pause) Just a guess.

Lum: That’d be the price of the building.

Annalise: That’d be the price of the building.

Joe: I am not sure.

Annalise: So the whole redevelopment cost was probably close to what?

Joe: I’d have to look at the papers.

Annalise: Ok you can let me know, yeah, let me know. It would just be interesting to compare the different amounts uh with say the Jackson’s or what have you.

Lum: And like you say, they didn’t have to put no money down did they?

Annalise: Oh yeah they did.

Lum: Did they?

Annalise: Ah, eventually, they were denied four times through the CDC, were you all ever denied from the CDC?

Lum: No.

Annalise: Okay, but they were denied four times and ah then it led to you know, back and forth and the City made a proposal and finally they came up with their own proposal so to speak, so and then they came up with some cash injection (chuckling). Yeah, well what’s interesting is they, the Jackson’s have the assumption that you all did not put any money into this. So I mean, that’s good [that they put in cash injection] and that’s why I say, that it is important to tell stories and hear stories that you all actually did put money down.

Joe: All they had to do was ask, all they had to do was ask.
Annalise: But you all did have to put money down ah...

Joe: Definitely we had to put money down...everybody else supposed to put money down.

Annalise: Right.

Lum: 20 percent.

Annalise: 20, but you said 10 percent right?

Lum: Ten? No, it....

Joe: I'll have to look at the paper....(inaudible).

Annalise: Okay, okay, so um you all put the money in ah and then once all that was finalized how long did it take you to ah, you know once the loan was approved from CDC, how long did it take for your building to go up, and what happened? You know one thing I want to ask you is what persons from the City Planning Department were actively involved in the whole redevelopment process that you were going through? Was there one particular planner, I've heard of someone named Ivy Lewis, a black woman.

Lum: Yeah we know her too.

Joe: She left before everything got started though.

Annalise: She left...?

Joe: You know, she got everything in motion but our loan hadn't went through when she left.

Annalise: Ohhhh.

Lum: Yeah, she basically (inaudible), she used to chair the meetings that we, that they showed us different movies and things like that, and suggestions I guess.

Annalise: Movies like?

Lum: Well, just showing the outlaying of the of the land, outlay like this here, there was ah ah one building on here on in this corner [referring to the space they now occupy] that I think was already, that was empty you know. (Annalise: Uh huh.) And this one little building, I think it was back here, and ah so all that you know you had to buy that land from the City, yeah and then ah, you ah start your groundwork you know they come to the ground and do everything then, I don't think we was too ac..., everyone got the, all the ball rollin' you know, I don't think we was too long getting 'things done, getting' the groundwork you know and then....

Annalise: Once you got approved?

Lum: When we got approved and everything, we went on....
Annalise: So it went, it just kinda went through smoothly. What kinds of paper work did you have to submit? You know I am sure there was paperwork that you had to submit before, I mean like with John Severns, the architect, the meetings with him and anybody else for that matter?

Lum: Yeah, Chicago Title people and ah, well we had writer's cramps ya know.

Annalise: (chuckling) You had writer's cramp?

Lum: Yeah you would signing your name (chuckling) you know and all of this, but yeah it's a lot of paper work, but you know, like I say, ah a lot of things I didn’t have to go because Joe was Joe was ah the man in the field, but ah all and all it did not seem like it was a real hassle once we got this thing going.

Annalise: But before that it seemed a little bit difficult?

Lum: After we got what, ah the amount of finance we had you know just sit down, paperwork (inaudible) went along pretty smoothly just you know, sign on the line.

Annalise: So what was this financing process like then, I mean?

Lum: Well for us, well we had a ah you know a figure, they just say well you gonna have to have ah a higher amount than we did have to do.

Annalise: For your cash injection?

Lum: For cash injection yeah. Uh huh.

Annalise: So you had to come up with a little bit more than you initially had to…?

Lum: Yeah uh huh, and then we had to yeah, see the only thing we was kinda of turned around about, you had to make for equipment and we had to get another thing for that too see, see the equipment didn’t go along with the building.

Annalise: So you had to get an equipment inventory?

Joe: Two loans.

Lum: Two loans.

Annalise: You had to get two loans, one for the equipment and one…?

Joe: For the building.

Annalise: Oh, okay, so that all came through CDC but you still had to get two loans for that?

Joe: Yeah. All of it came through them. (Annalise: Everything came through…) We were working with Wes Curtis at Bank Illinois and he took it to the CDC.

Annalise: Okay, okay so you did work with ah Allan Penwell, Busey Bank or anything like that?
Joe: No, no, we worked with Wes Curtis at ah…

Annalise: At Bank of Illinois. So, okay.

Joe: Yeah.

Lum: They was Champaign National, that’s what it was for years.

Annalise: Oh, it was Champaign National before then.

Lum: Yeah way back then.

Annalise: Okay, so um I guess I kinda wanna just talk a little bit about this, what kind of ah help you had when you were going through the financial portions of it?

Joe: We had plenty help, we had Ed Adrain outta Danville, ah business, Small Business Administration, he did the business plan. It wadin’t that, it wadin’t too hard, cuz we was already in business you know, we had everything written down so, we had history, so it wasn’t no problem for us.

Lum: Thing about it too we had injection money see.

Annalise: Right.

Lum: We had money already….

Annalise: Did you save that money just for this?

Lum: No, well over the years you know, like I say when we first started we did start up ah a savings (inaudible) for the business and us you know so it’s lucky enough we had, well we been together for what almost 20 years ya know (Annalise: Uh huh.), yeah and I told ‘em, ah so we had that you know, we didn’t have to go and get ah extra deal (Annalise: A loan.) or yeah or nothing like that, so that so that part of it ya know, and thank God for that you know.

Annalise: Because if you had to do that then what?

Lum: Well I don’t know, how what process we’d ah went through, I don’t know what we’d have to do you know, cuz ah when they this ah kinda money they want you to kinda be kinda clear, don’t you know be making another loan to get it, ya know. (Annalise: Uh huh.) But uh ah we were lucky so we didn’t need to go through them changes you know.

Annalise: So Ed Adrain helped you and ah John Lee was in on the process…?

Joe: John Severns did a lot for us…

Annalise: John Severns did?
Joe: Oh yeah, he did a lot, Karen Stonehouse from the City, she helped. (Annalise: Uh huh.) And John did a, John and Ed Adrain did a whole lot for me.

Annalise: Yeah, like how did they help?

Joe: Ah, did all the paper work you know, just about anything we needed as far as paperwork.

Annalise: Uh huh. Uh huh. So it wasn’t as bad on your end you know in terms of, you didn’t have a whole lot of paperwork to spend you know late nights trying to figure this stuff all out by yourselves (Joe: Aw no, nothing like that.) you had some help.

Joe: We just gave them the information and they put it together.

Annalise: Okay.

Lum: (inaudible)....we needed at that time, and then the lawyer.

Annalise: Who was your lawyer?

Lum: Oh what’s his name Joe?

Joe: (shaking his head, can’t remember)

Lum: He’s down in, ah....

Annalise: Who, you got a different one by now?

Joe: Will.

Annalise: You will have one? But who was the one that was with you?

Joe: I think....(inaudible)

Annalise: Hatch?

Lum: A younger lawyer, but he’s ah...

Joe: One that John Lee.

Lum: Anyway, but we used him for that (inaudible).

Annalise: Okay, so how did you feel when you knew you were gonna get a new building?

Lum: (holding hand about twelve inches over the table) Walked ‘bout that far off the ground.

Annalise: (laughing) You walked ‘bout that far off the ground. It was nice feeling huh?

Lum: Yeah (chuckling) (Annalise: It was a nice feeling.) it was a nice feeling yeah.
Annalise: It was a nice feeling because you own this building?

Joe: Financial-wise, we were better off where we were.

Annalise: You were?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Oh you, so financially you’re better off where you were before?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: How so?

Joe: We didn’t have no overhead, big overhead that we got now.

Annalise: In terms of the loan?

Joe: Yeah you know.

Annalise: And having to repay the loan.

Joe: Yeah you know, what I was looking at you know for somebody younger to take over, it’d be nice for them, but we coulda stayed there and had a bird nest on the ground.

Annalise: Because you money, I mean you were making a profit from (Joe: Yeah.) that and not having to pay your overhead you see.

Joe: Yeah a big overhead, a loan, two loans, (Annalise: Yeah.) insurance…(Annalise: Interesting.) yeah a lotta lotta that stuff.

Annalise: So have you ever had second thoughts (chuckling)?

Joe: I use to have it.

Annalise: At first?

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: But now what?

Lum: Well I was looking at that I could retire in about 4or 5 years had I stayed there, now I gotta work a little longer. (Annalise: Yeah.) But I was just you know thinking about somebody else, other people what they could have, you know nice place for the customer, this would be the only time to get a nice barbershop for you know people to come in and some young people that could come and take it over you know (Annalise: Yeah.) you know, in four or five years.

Annalise: Do you mind me asking how old you are so that, I mean when you’re talking about retiring?
Joe: I'm 58.

Annalise: So when do you thinking about retiring realistically at this point?

Joe: Ah, about fo'.

Annalise: About four years?

Joe: You know, I might work a couple days.

Annalise: [to Lum] So what, what and you work part time right?

Lum: Yeah...I feel kinda shamed to be out with these young guys (chuckling).

Annalise: But you've been at it a long time.

Lum: A long time, yeah.

Annalise: You've been doing this a long time.

Lum: Yeah, at one time I think I knew just about every black person you know in the ah area, and a lot of then come back now and you know we have a good time together, like all these basketball players and football players. We used to have, when they had pictures taken out there out there for the you know spor---, we had all the pictures across the wall up there and all from years back yeah uh huh.

Annalise: Oh really, now were you the only barbershop in town for a little while?

Lum: No, no, no.

Annalise: What other barbershops?

Lum: Well there was one on the corner almost down where the (Annalise: That's right.) Glover's) and uh, well they had some black shops downtown that just cut, this is when I first came, just catered to whites and blacks could go in there after hours and get their hair cut (Annalise: Uhn.), uh huh. Had one on this street here right up, (inaudible)...a barbershop...(inaudible)... his clientele was white...like that.

Annalise: But blacks couldn't be in there at the same time?

Lum: No. (pause) So ah, the lady down there, her dad was a barber, Miss Drish, and ah Tommy had married her, Tommy, that's how he got going in the barber business, he worked down there with him for a little while in ah, Coon's basement, I think it's one of those basements...a shop in there.

Annalise: Downtown?
Lum: Downtown, uh huh. He worked (inaudible) and then he finally got his GI loan and everything going so he built that building down there. Now, he brought a lot of white customer's with him though you know over there, but it wasn't no segregated thing, the other place was a black man's barbershop, and you know I came, the building was just, like I say, about a year old, it was new wadn't even finished, so that made me go into two new barbershops in my time.

Annalise: Right. Yeah that's true.

Lum: But ah, that's just the way it was, ya know.

Annalise: So now that you have overhead, what's kind of the vision for Rose and Taylor for awhile, I mean are you training up somebody to take over (chuckling)?

Joe: It's just gonna make me work a little longer that's all.

Annalise: It's gonna make you work a little longer?

Joe: Yep. (Annalise: Uh huh. Uh huh.) Hopefully we can find somebody's gonna wanna buy or run it or lease it to 'em or whatever.

Annalise: Yeah, but the plan is to keep it here you know, keep it in ah, keep it doing what it has been doing for so long.

Lum: What turn it around? No we plan on turning it around, I won't be working too much longer, but ah like I say we got these young customers, young barbers coming, I mean you know it takes time to get them into that mode of saving you know where they can, will be able to do that when time comes.

Annalise: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Joe: Hope nothing happen like Main Street did, didn't have nobody to take over when they got old.

Annalise: Right.

Lum: You mean like them (inaudible) did?

Joe: Yeah and they didn't have nobody to take over.

Lum: Oh, we don't have to do that no more, time is up for that, that segregation stuff they was pulling you know.

Annalise: Uh huh.

Joe: I was talking about the (inaudible) business, you know like, (Annalise: Oh yeah.) you know like the business you know where the kids wouldn't take over, like some of the garbage routes?

Lum: Oh yeah, I know the cleaners, yeah they had a black cleaners downtown too, the Cooks...and Tinsley yeah...that last one was out there on ah Bradley, they wouldn't take that
over either you ‘member you used to talk to one of his grandson’s or somebody about taking it…but ah, some black guy got it though.

(pause)

Annalise: Well, so what’s your final words, what do you hope for, hope for First Street or for yourselves as you, you know, been in this one?

Lum: I hope it keeps on developin’ and ah it getting these ah black people, young guys or whatever get back into this First Street and see it developed, that’s what I’d like to see it do, just keep on going, moving on and Rose and Taylor will stand for a long time you know, got hope for that. (Annalise: Uh huh.) Course ah, after you push it up the ladder so far and then you know, look back and try to reach and grab somebody else you know, because you know you good and well you ain’t gonna be able to stand there and hold that that long, longer rather. So that would be my hope that it, you know, (inaudible).

Annalise: You have enjoyed being in business?

Lum: Oh yeah. I would do it right back over again…same way.

Annalise: You’d do it over again?

Lum: Yeah, I sure would. I had such good times since I got to Champaign you know working and knowing everybody.

Annalise: Did you ever think about doing anything else?

Lum: No, no I did some other things you know between times things like worked at a VX and ah coal mine, worked in a coal mine for a little while when I was a young boy, you know, and ah things like that I know that wasn’t for me of I could do anything else you know without having my gift you know, so I (inaudible)…so, that’s big part of my happiness you know, yeah and then as you get old enough you can look back and (Annalise: Say you left something.) all of this starts coming, yeah coming up under you and everybody you know and everybody comes in gotta work, I mean I gotta work for them, so there it is you know, I just enjoyed it.

Annalise: [to Joe] What do you think?

Joe: I just wish all the businesses success, but it’s gonna be hard, gotta work real hard at it, got to realize that you got to pay them bills cuz they gonna be there every month.

Annalise: Right, and these were bills you really did not have before you?

Joe: Yeah, but they all right now.

Annalise: Owned your own business, I mean before you owned the building?

Joe: We had we had bills, but not as not as big as they are now.

Annalise: Yeah, but this has been uh more than a notion kinda.
JOE: Yeah, but we’re handlin’ it. But I’m just talking about new business, you know, other people going into business on First Street, I hope they have a lot of success and realize they gotta work hard because you know.

Lum: It’s gonna be a little rough you know…(inaudible).

Joe: Hopefully they can get enough money to hold them at least a year.

Annalise: Right.

Joe: Yeah.

Annalise: Okay, well I thank you both for your time.

(tape ends)