Biographical Investigation
Final Report

Presesented to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,
Historic Preservation Office
December 12, 2017

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PLEASE NOTE: This is a revised version of the Final Report initially submitted to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office on November 30, 2017. It incorporates the addition of a transcribed interview of Camden resident Ms. Thelma Lowery in Appendix D (appearing on pages 136-146), as well as analysis of the same in the report narrative.

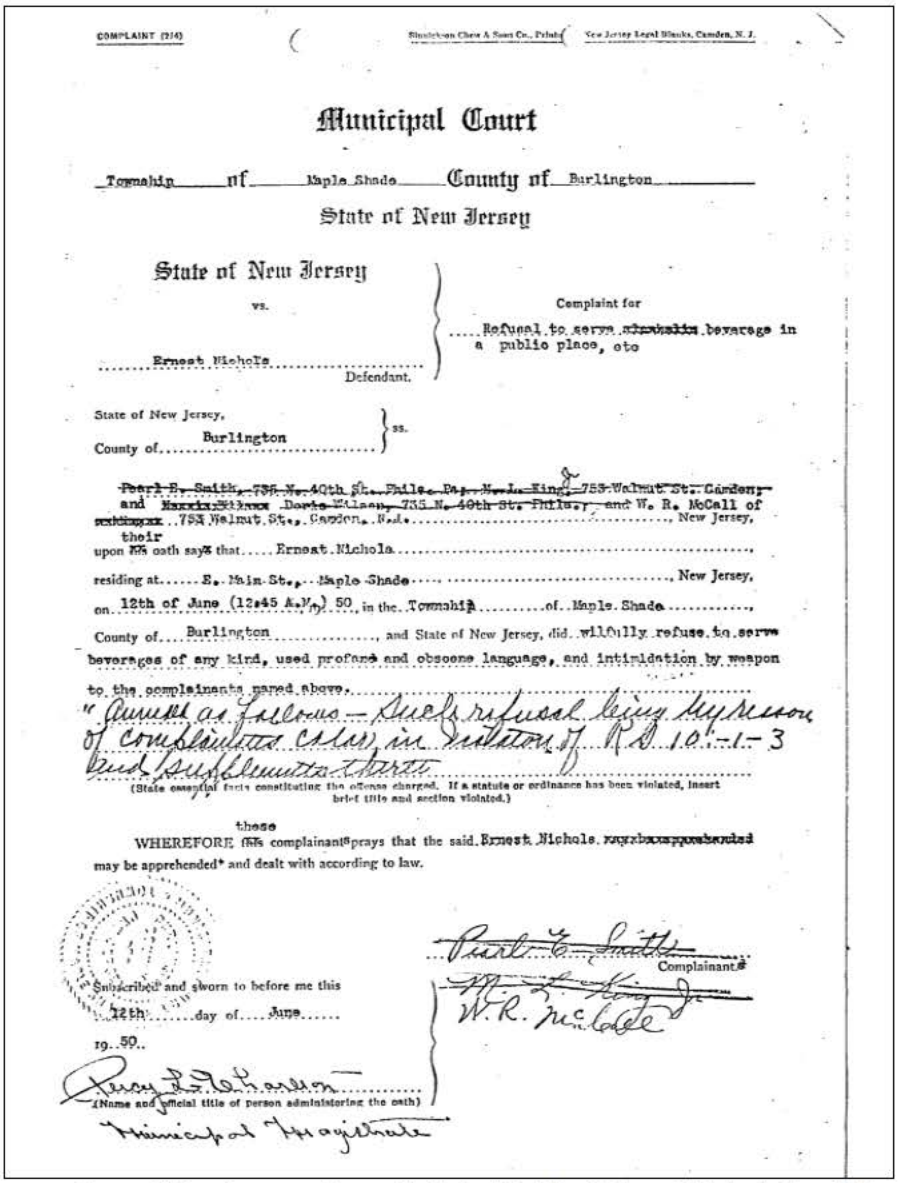
Background:

In November 2016, Stockton University responded to a Call for Proposals issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Historic Preservation Office (HPO). The final scope of work was completed in late January 2017 and a preliminary report submitted in August of the same year. The HPO sought a biographical investigation of Martin Luther King, Jr. and, more specifically, the potential significance of 753 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey, to his life, philosophy, and subsequent activism.

Stockton's research team, under the direction of Dr. John F. O'Hara, Associate Professor of General Studies, and Mr. Paul W. Schopp, Assistant Director for the university's South Jersey Culture and History Center (SJCHC), included Dr. Michelle McDonald, Associate Professor of History and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, as well as two graduate students in the Master of Arts in American Studies Program (MAAS), Brianna Cardinale and Kymberly Bylone. Additional consultation came from Dr. Thomas Kinsella, Professor of Literature and Director of the SJCHC, and Dr. Robert Gregg, Professor of History and Dean of the School of General Studies.

The research team's objective was to provide the HPO with an independent evaluation of evidence related to both the quantity and quality of time Martin Luther King, Jr. may have spent at 753 Walnut Street between 1948 and 1951, while he studied at Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland (Chester), Pennsylvania. In particular, the team sought any evidence of the impact King's potential time spent at this property may have had on his formative experiences before emerging as a prominent civil rights leader. This report summarizes this work in five sections:

The property at 753 Walnut Street has been a site of historical interest since early 2015, when Camden County resident Patrick Duff began investigating the location after learning of a criminal complaint that Walter R. McCall filed in the early hours of June 12, 1950 in the township of Maple Shade, Burlington County, New Jersey. The complaint alleges that the night before, a Sunday night, Ernest Nichols, the proprietor of Mary's Place Tavern, "did willfully refuse to serve beverages of any kind, used profane and obscene language, and intimidation by weapon to the complainants named above." A handwritten addendum alleges discriminatory intent, noting: "amended as follows—such refusal being by reason of complainants [sic] color in violation of R.S. 10:1-3 [e.g., exclusion based on race] and supplements thereto."



COMPLAINT (2/4) Stinson-Chew & Sons Co., Printers New Jersey Legal Blanks, Camden, N. J.

Municipal Court

Township of Maple Shade County of Burlington

State of New Jersey

State of New Jersey
vs.
Ernest Nichols
Defendant.

Complaint for
Refusal to serve ~~alcoholic~~ beverage in a public place, etc

State of New Jersey,
County of Burlington } ss.

~~Pearl E. Smith, 735 N. 40th St., Phila., Pa., M.L. King, 753 Walnut St., Camden, and Doris Wilson, 735 N. 40th St., Phila., and W. R. McCall of 753 Walnut St., Camden, N.J.~~, New Jersey,
upon ~~his~~ their oath says that Ernest Nichols,
residing at E. Main St., Maple Shade, New Jersey,
on 12th of June (12:45 A.M.) 50, in the Township of Maple Shade,
County of Burlington, and State of New Jersey, did wilfully refuse to serve beverages of any kind, used profane and obscene language, and intimidation by weapon to the complainants named above.
"Issued as follows — Such refusal being by reason of complainants color, in violation of R.S. 10:1-3 and Subsequents thereto"
(State essential facts constituting the offense charged. If a statute or ordinance has been violated, insert brief title and section violated.)

WHEREFORE ~~this~~ these complainants pray that the said Ernest Nichols ~~may be apprehended~~ and dealt with according to law.

Pearl E. Smith
Complainant
M.L. King Jr.
W.R. McCall

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of June, 19 50.

Percy L. Walton
(Name and official title of person administering the oath)
Municipal Magistrate

Source: Front page, *State of New Jersey v. Ernest Nichols*, Municipal Court Criminal Complaint, Township of Maple Shade, County of Burlington, New Jersey, June 12, 1950.

The complainants included "Pearl E. Smith, 735 N. 40th St., Phila, PA; M.L. King, 753 Walnut St., Camden; and Doris Wilson, 735 N. 40th St., Phila., and W.R. McCall, 753 Walnut St., Camden, N.J," and the document appears to be signed by "Pearl E. Smith, M.L. King, Jr., and W.R. McCall."[1] It was subsequently altered, however, and all complainant names and signatures struck out except that of McCall.

Duff, a self-avowed South Jersey activist, continues to explore a growing network of individuals connected to the incident, either directly or indirectly, and has been instrumental in local efforts

[1] *State of New Jersey v. Ernest Nichols*, Municipal Court Criminal Complaint, Township of Maple Shade, County of Burlington, New Jersey, June 12, 1950.

to preserve and commemorate the physical structure at 753 Walnut Street. He has also publicized his efforts, and created a coalition of residents, local officials and agencies advocating for preservation of the building for its historical association with King. These include the Camden County Branch of the NAACP, Father Michael Doyle of Sacred Heart Church, and Heart of Camden, an urban nonprofit development organization associated with Sacred Heart.[2]

In early 2015, the *Courier-Post* reported on Duff's efforts in relation to 753 Walnut and his "central thesis…that Camden, South Jersey, and the region, shaped King, turning him towards his life's work."[3] Newsworks and NBC-10 Philadelphia reported that same week on Duff's "fight to save" King's "former home in Camden."[4] In an interview, Duff discussed the importance of historic preservation, "to know the history that Martin Luther King actually lived here, studied here, and that one of the great civil rights leaders in the world was formulated partially in this house."[5] Duff subsequently appealed to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO), housed within the state's Department of Environmental Protection, to nominate the property for the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

Throughout 2016, efforts to preserve and restore the property expanded. In August 2016, Camden Mayor Dana Redd and U.S. Representative Donald Norcross wrote letters to the HPO supporting Duff's application. Mayor Reed's letter cited "abundant evidence that places Martin Luther King, Jr. living at this address, on and off, for a period of two years [and]…links the property and the City of Camden to Dr. King's very first civil rights action."[6] Congressman Norcross's letter asks the HPO to "consider designating [the property] a historically valuable landmark worthy of preserving."[7]

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[2] In 2011, the latter two also previously supported efforts to restore another property in Camden, 940 Newton Avenue, a residence that King also allegedly visited during his time in the region. See: Steve Wood, "Preserving a Dream," *Courier-Post* (January 11, 2011). See also: Jason Laday, "Camden House Where MLK Visited Now Occupied 'by drug dealers and prostitutes,'" *South Jersey Times* via Nj.com, September 19, 2014; efforts to investigate that property further have ceased: http://www nj.com/camden/index.ssf/2014/09/camden_house_where_martin_luther_king_visited_now_occupied_by_drug_users_and_prostitutes html .

[3] Kevin C. Shelley, "Details uncovered about MLK's former Camden home," *Courier-Post*, February 17, 2015, http://www.courierpostonline.com/story/news/local/south-jersey/2015/02/17/camden-home-part-history/23576021/

[4] Aaron Moselle, "Camden Man Fights to Save House Where Martin Luther King Stayed," Newsworks.org online, NBC-10, February 15, 2015, http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/NJ-Man-Fights-to-Save-House-Where-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Stayed-291502631 html

[5] Christina Lobrutto, "Camden House Where MLK Once Stayed Could Become Civil Rights Headquarters," PhillyVoice, February 15, 2015, http://www.phillyvoice.com/camden-house-mlk-civil-rights-headquarters/

[6] Quoted in Ryanne Persinger, "Support Continues for Preservation of MLK Camden Home," *The Philadelphia Tribune*, August 23, 2016, http://www.phillytrib.com/news/support-continues-for-preservation-of-mlk-camden-home/article_e593ffd6-5f90-5c8a-9f1f-f9d2936b8192 html

[7] Quoted in Phaedra Tretham, "Norcross Offers Support in Preserving Camden Site," *Courier Post*, August 12, 2016, http://www.phillytrib.com/news/support-continues-for-preservation-of-mlk-camden-home/article_e593ffd6-5f90-5c8a-9f1f-f9d2936b8192.html

In September 2016, Congressman Norcross hosted fellow Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis (D-GA) in Camden. At an event held outside the property, Congressman Lewis asserted that, "The history of the civil rights movement has roots right here in South Jersey." "This house [753 Walnut St.]," he continued, "stands as a link to Dr. King's life and legacy, and preserving it will affirm his rightful place in Camden's history, and our country's history…[and] can serve as a touchstone for generations to come as they learn about Dr. King and his deeds."[8]

New Jersey State Senator Tom Kean joined the calls for preservation, issuing a statement the following day: "It's been suggested that Dr. King's experiences while living in Camden led to his later involvement in the fight to end racial discrimination, segregation and poverty…Adding [753 Walnut] to the state's historic registry will prevent it from being demolished and make it eligible for grants to help with its long term preservation."[9] Senator Kean co-sponsored a bill, New Jersey Senate Concurrent Resolution 126, urging the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the HPO to place "the former Martin Luther King, Jr., residence…on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places." The resolution passed the Senate on November 14, and the Assembly on November 21, 2016, both unanimously.

In the time between the resolution's introduction and passage, the Camden City Historic Preservation Commission designated 753 Walnut Street a historic property on October 27, 2016, and the Cooper's Ferry Partnership, a city nonprofit, approached Ms. Jeanette Lily M. Hunt about the viability of their acquiring the property and acting as custodian, pending decisions about preservation and repair (final sale of the property to Cooper's Ferry Partnership, however, was never completed). The City of Camden offered to donate an adjacent lot. The Rutgers University-Camden Law School organized a nonprofit for the combined property, and the Camden County Branch of the NAACP expressed interest in developing a museum and office space at the location.

That same fall, the HPO contacted colleges and universities within the state higher education system to solicit proposals to independently review and evaluate existing documentation, expand research efforts, and assess the historical significance of 753 Walnut Street in relation to Criterion B of the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Service. Stockton University subsequently submitted its proposal.

Central Questions for Assessment of Criterion B:

Several considerations guide National Register eligibility determination for a property associated with an individual under Criterion B.:

[8] "Civil Rights Icon . . . Visits Camden for Important Community Events," Donald Norcross News and Media Center Press Release, September 19, 2016, https://norcross house.gov/media-center/press-releases/civil-rights-icon-congressman-john-lewis-visits-camden-important

[9] "Kean Urges Preservation of Camden House Where Dr. King Lived," SenateNJ.com, September 20, 2016, http://www.senatenj.com/index.php/tomkean/kean-urges-preservation-of-camden-home-where-martin-luther-king-jr-lived/29117

1. Consideration is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate (rather than commemorate) a person's important achievements.
2. Eligible properties are usually those associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. Properties that pre- or post-date an individual's significant accomplishments are usually not eligible.
3. The individual's association with the property must be documented by accepted methods of historical or archeological research, including written and oral history. Speculative associations are not acceptable.
4. The best representatives are usually properties associated with the person's adult or productive life. Properties associated with an individual's formative or later years may also qualify if it can be demonstrated that the person's activities during this period were historically significant or if no properties from the person's productive years survive. Length of association is an important factor when assessing several properties with similar associations.[10]

In order to meet the above guidelines, 753 Walnut Street must be deemed formative to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, either in terms of the development of his theology, philosophy, or leadership qualities, or to his subsequent civil rights activism. There must be also, however, first and foremost, a documented physical affiliation. Did King spend time at 753 Walnut Street as has been alleged? If so, for how long and can this time be documented? As potential residency is at the core of this study, this is where research for this report began.

[10] National Register Bulletin 15, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2002, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/

Section 1: Methodology

Phase 1-Literature Review:

Stockton's biographical investigation about King's residency patterns between 1948 and 1951, his years as a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, occurred in three phases. The first phase was a review of published autobiographical and biographical materials, including all primary materials already collected by the HPO, for information pertaining to any time Martin Luther King, Jr. may have spent in Camden, New Jersey. Although past researchers have mined these resources, it was the natural starting point for this project, as such work was necessary not only to establish the existence of any past references to the city, and to 753 Walnut Street specifically, but also to ascertain whether or not King spent substantial time elsewhere during the same years. In addition to published materials, Stockton graduate students were tasked with reviewing available theses and doctoral dissertations for information about the same details.

Hundreds of books, articles, theses, and dissertations have been written about the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. For the purposes of this analysis, only materials that specifically included information about his schooling, his early relationship to Walter McCall, and, ideally, time spent at Crozer Theological Seminary, were considered in depth. A list of sources consulted appears in the bibliography of this report, but to summarize the scope of research here, the list below aggregates the consulted published sources containing specific references to, or substantive treatment of, the years in question:

Books:	38
Newspaper Articles:	24
Scholarly Articles:	8
Theses and Dissertations:	8
Published Primary Sources/Collections:	7

Unfortunately, very few of these materials reference the incident in Maple Shade, New Jersey (less than fifteen percent of all published sources consulted). Searches of both Project Muse and JSTOR, the two largest digital databases for published periodicals, yielded even fewer results. Keyword searches associating "Martin Luther King" with "Maple Shade" resulted in 16 listings, but none were actually germane to the topic at hand; changing the latter keyword to "Camden" yielded many more possible citations, 382 in JSTOR and another 32 in Project Muse, but only one—Clayborne Carson's 1997 article "Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Crozer Seminary Years," published in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, proved relevant.

Many more published sources note King's close friendship with Walter McCall, but they do not associate that friendship with the Hunt family, the owners of 753 Walnut Street between 1948 and 1951, nor do they make specific allusion to Camden, New Jersey, including quality or quantity of time King might have spent in the region. No published books or scholarly articles specifically mention the address of 753 Walnut Street, or make reference to that property.

Phase 2—Local Archival Research:

The second phase of this project included a thorough review of records related to residency available in New Jersey repositories. These included the 1940 Federal Census, the most recent decennial census currently available. Information was cross-referenced with the *Polk's Camden City Directory* for 1940, 1943, and 1947, as well as tax assessor's property report cards (Treasury Department records are also available in Trenton). Property Report Cards for both 753 Walnut Street and 755 Walnut Street, as well as a reproduction of the 1950 Sanborn map of the 700 block of Walnut, are included in this report as **Appendix A**.[11] The goal was to reconstruct a street-level residency scheme of property owners and tenants.

The *Polk's Camden City Directory* for 1940 lists the occupant of 753 Walnut as William Riggs, an African-American cement finisher, but the 1940 federal census records Riggs as living at 707 Sycamore Street. Likewise, the same directory lists Benjamin Hunt, who owned 753 Walnut during King's purported stay in Camden, as a resident of 628 Cherry Street. The conflicting directory and census reports make it unclear who actually owned 753 Walnut Street in 1940, despite the listings by street in the back of the directory recording William Riggs as the occupant. What is much clearer, based on the 1940 federal census, is that the 700 block of Walnut Street was situated in what had already become a predominantly African-American neighborhood. Of the 319 addresses for which ethnicity of the occupants was listed in this neighborhood, 245 were African Americans, and only 74 were recorded as Caucasian.

Confusion over ownership of 753 Walnut Street persists in the 1943 edition of *Polk's Camden City Directory*. The main alphabetical portion of the volume records Benjamin Hunt residing at 918 S. 8th Street, but in the cross-reference street listing, Hunt is shown as the owner of 753 Walnut Street. This suggests that the directory publisher compiled the cross-referenced street listings at a point in time later than the main alphabetical listing, but no earlier than spring of 1945, as this is when the Camden County Deed Book records the sale of the property from Sarah A. McCollum to Benjamin Hunt.[12]

Hunt also appears as the owner of 753 Walnut Street in *Polk's 1947 Camden City Directory*, the last directory published for the city.[13] The appended table of the findings for the 700 block of

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[11] Admittedly, available Individual Property Records Cards date from 1958-59, or slightly later than the focus of this study. In 2007, Camden relocated the city engineer's office out of City Hall to the former armory, which also housed the offices of the Department of Public Works. The city engineer's records were put in storage within the former armory where they remain, although the administrative office has since been moved back to City Hall in 2010. The project team consulted with Dr. Edward Williams, director of city planning, who confirmed that these materials contained no pertinent information regarding the 700 block of Walnut Street.

[12] Sale of the property from Sarah A. McCollum to Benjamin Hunt is recorded in the Camden County Deed Book 1016:208, April 18, 1945.

[13] A review of 1958-59 Individual Property Record Cards in the City of Camden Tax Assessor's Office for the houses on both sides of the street, from no. 740 through no. 761, identified only a single property owner remaining in those houses when compared to the owners and occupants recorded in the 1940 federal census or in the 1947 *Polk's Camden City Directory* within the range of properties consulted. That person is Edgar Starling, who was 14 years of age in the 1940 federal census. It appears Mr. Starling, who would be 90 or 91 years of age in 2017, still resides in Camden, New Jersey, at 415 Carl Miller Boulevard. Based on property tax records, Marcella Starling

Walnut Street based on the 1940 federal decennial census, the 1947 *Polk's Camden City Directory*, and the 1958-59 individual property record cards provide a complete accounting of the research conducted. A residency profile for the block drawn from information in both the 1940 census with Polk's 1947 city directory is attached as **Appendix B.**

Researchers also examined available individual property record cards (IPRC) for more details about the structure in question and its potential occupants. Many IPRCs at the Camden Tax Assessor's Office from the 1958-59 photo reassessment effort, however, lacked owner's names as occupants were either not home or refused access to the assessor's surrogate (a contract employee). This appears to have been what happened at 753 Walnut Street, which includes the notation "no admittance" along the top of the entry; the adjacent property, 755 Walnut Street, is marked "NH" along with two days, presumably indicating that, on two separate occasions, no one was home. Consequently, this collection did not prove to be the rich source of information initially anticipated.[14]

Other work undertaken in this phase of the research included attempts to find tax ratable lists or tax ratable duplicates for the year 1950. Based on email communications with Ellen Callahan of the New Jersey State Archives, the Camden Tax Collector's Office is required to retain extended tax duplicates as permanent records, but personnel in that office stated that extant records do not go back that far in time. Likewise, tax lists are permanent records in the Camden County Board of Taxation, but again, personnel in that office indicated that their records do not extend back to 1950. Attempts to access the Camden Engineering Department records likewise proved fruitless; it was rumored that many records were discarded when the department moved from Camden City Hall to the Public Works Department building, formerly the Battery B National Guard Armory on Wright Avenue. In a subsequent discussion held with Dr. Edward Williams, Director of Planning and Development, concerning the holdings of the Camden Engineering Department, Dr. Williams stated that the department, which has now moved back to city hall, has retained most of their records, but he did not believe the engineering department files would yield any usable information for the research into the 700 block of Walnut Street.

This phase of the research process also included a search of digital newspaper repositories, including Newspapers.com, Genealogybank.com, Proquest, and Newsbank, in an effort to compile any references to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s activities during the years in question. The following sources, supplemented by events chronicles in Carson, et al.'s multi-volume edition of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, aided in the reconstruction of King's movements between 1948 and 1951:

- *Atlanta Journal Constitution*
- *Chester Times*
- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*
- *Pittsburgh Courier*
- *Courier-Post*

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owns the house at 415. The property at 747 Walnut remains in the family with a D. Starling and wife owning the house and living there.

[14] Individual Property Record Cards, 753 Walnut Street and 755 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey, Camden Tax Assessor's Office, 1958-59.

Notifications included announcements of King's sermons, public speaking events, and family celebrations, and demonstrate persuasively that King was engaged in a variety of activities in Chester, Pennsylvania during each Crozer school term, and working in the south during summer breaks. The appended fully cited chronology provides insights into King's activities during the targeted years of this documentation project (see **Appendix C**).

Finally, this phase also endeavored to locate any judicial records related to the June 12, 1950 incident of alleged discrimination prosecuted at the Burlington County Court House and among the New Jersey Superior Court holdings. Unfortunately, no extant files were located.

Phase 3—Oral History/Email Interviews:

In addition to the tax records reviewed above, this project endeavored to identify potential oral history subjects through a variety of methods; researchers also re-examined existing oral histories relevant to this project. The goals of this phase were to reach a definitive conclusion about the times, lengths, and purposes of King's potential time in Camden. Ideally, such witnesses would be able to corroborate recollections with additional documentation (such as personal letters, photographs, etc.). In some cases, where those living at the time were unavailable or no longer living, the team endeavored to locate descendants who might still retain memories of relevant documentation. Transcripts of all interviews appear in **Appendix D**.

Existing interviews used for this study included:

Donald "Ducky" Births Interview by Patrick Duff. Personal Interview conducted in Philadelphia, PA, June 16, 2016. Excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 22, 2017.

Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview conducted in Camden, NJ, January 2015. Excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 21, 2017.

Walter McCall Interview with Herbert Holmes. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center Oral History Project conducted in Atlanta, GA, 1970.

Additional interviews, or re-interviews, were conducted with:

James Beshai Email interview with John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 24, 2017.

Patrick Duff Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara, Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara, Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Thelma Lowery Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview conducted in Camden, NJ, December 1, 2017.

Phone Number Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

Janet (and Julius) Milton Email interview with John O'Hara, Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Finally, the research team endeavored to contact additional and institutions recommended by the HPO, but were unable to do so for the reasons summarized below:

Cavalry Baptist Church: cavalrybaptistchester.org: email bounced back as undeliverable – address from webpage no longer exists. The telephone number provided, 610-874-6717, led to a recorded message that the line is not in service. The church's webpage, includes the name of Richard Cotton, an associate pastor, and the phone number 856-781-2082. No one answered the line during repeated attempts; a detailed message was left on October 2, 2017, but the call was not returned.

Friendship Baptist Church: Phone number provided by the HPO was not in service. Friendship Baptist has a Facebook page, but no contact numbers or email addresses. Attempts to contact the church via their Facebook listing were not returned.

Reginald Hilton, Jr.: The research team was able to locate a telephone number associated with the 742 address [redacted], and called, leaving a message. Mr. Hilton returned the call the same day, but was not willing to be interviewed for the project, nor could he provide information about life in Camden between 1945-50 (he responded that he "lived in Maryland anyway" at that time in question).

Maurice C. Potter: Repeated calls to the phone number provided, and a detailed voice mail left on October 2, 2017, were not returned.

William Starling: contact information was not provided for this prospect, and both the first and last names are relatively common, with no indicative middle initial. The team was able to locate a William Starling related to the address 747 Walnut Street in Camden, but he was deceased (b. 20 Aug 1927, d. July 1979) according to the Social Security Death Index. An obituary was found on Newspapers.com.

Barbara Davis: A phone number for Barbara Elizabeth Davis associated with Hiram Davis was located on familytreenow.com [redacted], but this number was not in service. Further attempts to find information proved difficult because of the problem of disambiguating such a common name.

Finally, the research team reached out to Congressman John Lewis' office, as it had been suggested by the HPO that he might facilitate contact with Christine Farris King, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sister. A copy of that email also appears as part of **Appendix D.** While Lewis' Chief-of-Staff did respond to our request, he was reticent to provide the contact information requested, and emphasized that Ms. King was in her 90s and unlikely to recall specific details about the dates in question.

Section 2: The Context of Camden

> *MICHELLE MCDONALD: "I've got a few more questions…. you've described the house, could you describe the neighborhood [in Camden]? What was it like?"*
>
> *JEANETTE LILY M. HUNT: "It was very friendly, it was very open. You didn't have to lock your doors like you do now. I could put the baby in the baby carriage, go to the store; I didn't worry about locking no doors. And everybody knew everybody. And it was quiet. It was like a family, it was just nice."*[15]

Modern accounts of Camden, New Jersey, overwhelmingly focus on the city's contemporary problems. Indeed, for several years running, the city has held the dubious honor of being designated "the most dangerous place in New Jersey" because of its violent crime statistics, and citizens also struggle from homelessness, drug addiction, and dwindling resources.[16] But some of Camden's older residents can still recall a different time, when local industry boomed, ethnic neighborhoods flourished, and social and economic growth seemed to be the city's unassailable destiny.

It took some time for Camden to come into its own. Although incorporated in 1828, and named county seat in 1848, four years after Camden County separated from Gloucester County, the town across the Delaware River remained within the economic orbit of Philadelphia well into the nineteenth century. Soon after the Civil War, however, some important industrial ventures, most notably Campbell's Soup, the New York Ship Company, and the Victor Talking Machine Company (later becoming RCA Victor), as well as a host of small manufacturing businesses, offered employment opportunities that prompted migration to the region and swelled the city's population.[17]

By 1920, Camden's population had grown to more than 100,000, making it one of the sixty largest cities in the nation. Among the most visible emblems of this growth was the opening of a new bridge connecting Camden to Philadelphia in 1926. The $40 million dollar project, renamed the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in 1954, was the largest single-span bridge in the world at the time, and a fitting tribute to a city on the rise. "To Southern New Jersey, the bridge means much more in the way of development," touted one *New York Times* article. It was, in all senses—from height and width, to traffic-carrying potential and expense—a material marker of the

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[15] Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

[16] Nearly 1 out of every 50 residents has experienced a violent crime. See: "The Most Dangerous Places in New Jersey" (posted May 5, 2017, NJ.com):
http://photos nj.com/8001122/gallery/the_most_dangerous_places_in_nj/index html

[17] One 1917 report listed 365 industries that, cumulatively, employed 51,000 workers. *Camden Courier*, Greater Camden Special Collections, 1909, 1917 cited in Howard Gillette, *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal of a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2005), pp. 18-19.

Camden's coming of age. "A Camdenite who walks to work in Philadelphia, will be rewarded with a magnificent panorama of the two cities," the article continued, casting the city as a gateway between Pennsylvania and New Jersey. "Camdenites are not blind to the advantages that the new bridge will bring. 'Look at Brooklyn, they say, 'if you wish to forecast the future growth of our city."[18]

And several urban development projects did follow, including hotels, movie theatres, and department stores. Although progress slowed during the Great Depression of the 1930s, as it did across the nation, it returned—albeit more slowly in some sectors—during World War II. Evidence of the city's economic resilience, as historian Howard Gillette notes in his seminal study *Camden Before the Fall: Decline and Renewal of a Post-Industrial City*, can be charted through city directories, which chronicle that "in sixteen tumultuous years, encompassing not just a depression but a world war, more than half of the properties remained in the same hands."[19]

These property-holding hands were, however, far from homogenous. Camden's rise in the early twentieth century attracted a broad range of migrants, both from within the nation and from abroad. The result was a series of vibrant, and close-knit, ethnic communities. Homes and personal businesses often clustered near places of worship, notable local businesses, and other community centers, resulting in distinct neighborhood identities that were overwhelmingly Italian, Irish, Jewish, German, Puerto Rican or eastern European in their makeup, as well as the social and cultural institutions and traditions that governed daily life.[20]

The city's African American neighborhoods had formed even earlier, in the 1830s in the case of Fettersville, and the 1840s, for the Centerville section of town. Later still, the Bergen Square district, located north and west of Centerville—and the site of 753 Walnut Street, the building under consideration—created yet another nexus for the city's African American population.

While these residential patterns created a sense of belonging and networks of social stability that helped some residents navigate the economically tumultuous decades of the 1930s and 1940s, they also reinforced distinctions and divisions that contributed to a tenacious segregation of communities along racial and ethnic lines well north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Long-time Camden resident Ms. Jeanette Lily M. Hunt, interviewed for this project in October 2017, succinctly illustrates this impact when she recounted her walk to school in the morning:

> When I was a little girl, I had to walk past that school and go to Bergen School, that's another school that's built in a spot right there…there at 4th and Mt. Vernon. When I finished Bergen School I still had to walk, past Fetter[s] school,

[18] "Camden Bridge Ready for Work," *New York Times* (June 27, 1926). Less than a year later, the bridge had proven so popular, that some reports estimated that "the bridge would pay for itself in less than ten years," and that real estate values had already begun climbing. See, "Camden Bridge Traffic," *New York Times* (May 7, 1927).

[19] Howard Gillette, *Camden Before the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 23.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-30.

> and when you're young you don't pay that no mind. You know, all I just knew I had to go to where I was supposed to be. Then I had to go to Whittier School till 7th grade, and when I finished Whittier School, I had to walk past and go to Hatch, and then I left Hatch and went to Camden High.[21]

In 1941, Ulysses Wiggins, a Camden-based African-American doctor of notable local standing, founded the city's NAACP chapter, later reconstituted as the Camden County Branch.[22] Six years later, New Jersey enacted legislation to ban racial discrimination in the state's schools.[23] Such activities put the state in the vanguard of social change that the rest of the nation would only catch up to in the mid-1950s. Indeed, when other states began the difficult process of desegregation, the NAACP often pointed to New Jersey as a model.

This is the Camden that Walter McCall and Martin Luther King, Jr. would have experienced had they visited when they attended Crozier Theological Seminary in nearby Chester, Pennsylvania. King began his studies there at the age of 19 in the fall of 1948, and McCall joined him one semester later. The two young men already knew each other well, having first met four years prior when both were enrolled as freshman at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. McCall was five years older than the young King, whom he referred to as "Mike," and considered one of his closest friends. "We remained exceedingly close through college and seminary," he later recalled in an interview for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center in 1970, "of course, when he went to Boston, and I went to Fort Valley, our affairs began to widen. But we remained friends throughout."[24]

The friendship between these two students is central to understanding any potential connections between King and 753 Walnut Street. According to Jeanette Hunt, quoted above, King frequently visited the home owned by her father-in-law, Benjamin Hunt, with Walter McCall during their time in seminary. Born in 1931, Ms. Hunt was married to Benjamin Hunt's son, Jethroe, in 1948. Although she herself lived at the property for only two or three months after her marriage to Hunt's son, she recalled some aspects of King's purported visits there in an

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[21] Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview, October 26, 2017, p. 11.

[22] Gillette, *Camden Before the Fall*, pp. 29-33 and Kathleen O'Brian, "Black History Month: Integrating New Jersey's Schools," *Star Ledger* (February 1, 2008). Wiggins also later played a role Martin Luther King, Jr.'s arrest and discrimination suit in nearby Maple Shade, New Jersey, the event affiliated with the property whose significance is explored in this application. See also: "Ulysses Wiggins Eulogized," *The Crisis* 73:5 (May 1966): 260-63.

[23] Article 1.5 of the 1947 New Jersey state constitution specifically states: "No person shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil or military right, nor be discriminated against in the exercise of any civil or military right, nor be segregated in the militia or in the public schools, because of religious principles, race, color, ancestry or national origin. The full constitution can be found online at: http://www.njleg.state nj.us/lawsconstitution/constitution.asp.

[24] Walter McCall Interview with Herbert Holmes. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center Oral History Project, Atlanta, GA, 1970. The friendship between the two is well documented in several standard King biographies, including: David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: W. Morrow & Co., 1986), p. 36; Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Morehouse Years," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 15 (Spring 1997): 121-22. See also: chapter 2 in Clayborne Carson, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Warner Books, 1981).

interview with local Camden activist Patrick Duff in 2015, and again in interviews with Stockton's research team in 2017.

She also provided Duff, during her initial interview, with an article published in the *Courier-Post* newspaper on January 16, 1981 that profiled her father-in-law, and in which he referred to Walter McCall as his cousin and King as "like one of the family." The two of them, her father-in-law asserted, "lived in the back room upstairs off and on for two years when they were in school." Mr. Hunt also recalled elements of an event that happened in Maple Shade, New Jersey, in which McCall and King, along with others, were refused service as a restaurant. Hunt insinuated it was because of their race. "I don't know if this is so," he concluded, "but I always think that what happened that night may have started to change him into the leader he was."[25]

Jeannette Hunt's recollections are bolstered by those of her sister-in-law, Thelma Lowery, one of Benjamin Hunt's three daughters. Thelma Lowery believes that she was "in the 8th or 9th grade" when her family moved into 753 Walnut Street. She resided there until she was married.[26] Lowery primarily recalled seeing King at the property, rather than speaking with him directly. "It wasn't so much talking we could do," she suggested, "because it was an old time situation, you understand what I mean?" When asked to clarify, she added, "You just don't ask grown people's business. You understand what I'm saying?"

One of the central tasks of this report was to locate, if possible, evidence about King's whereabouts between 1948 and 1951 that would demonstrate whether he lived at 753 Walnut Street, as members of the Hunt family have suggested, or that he visited the residence extensively during these years. If verifiable, such information would complicate the standard narrative of King's Crozer Seminary years that appears in most published accounts, which focus on his time on campus. Instead, it might open up the possibility that King's interactions in the region went well beyond Chester, Pennsylvania, and that events experienced in New Jersey might have contributed to his ultimate trajectory in civic activism.

Documentation for these years is regrettably sparse, however. Few records remain from King's seminary years, and contemporary oral histories are, in some cases, more than five decades removed from the events in question, recount details learned second-hand, and even—at times—do not align with other available forms of evidence. What information is available about King's residency patterns is summarized in the following two sections of the report.

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[25] Eileen Stilwell, "City Man Housed Activist," *Courier-Post*, January 16, 1981, p. 1B, 3B. Jeanette Hunt made similar claims about the duration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s occupancy of 753 Walnut Street. In her 2015 interview with Patrick Duff, she indicated that King had lived at the property "the whole time he was at Crozer, that's when he was at 753 Walnut." In 2017, for this research project, she likewise stated that: "Seminary is the reason why he [Walter McCall] came north. And that's the reason why he wound up at daddy's house. Rather than staying on campus, they stayed at daddy's. Or, you know, some time they may have had…did you [speaking to Duff] search that they did have also have a room on campus?" In this instance, Patrick Duff corrected her, "Oh, they had a room on campus," and Ms. Hunt revised her statement to indicate that the students visited, rather than resided at, 753 Walnut Street. See: Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview with Patrick Duff, Camden, NJ, January 2015. Excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 21, 2017, p. 5, and Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017, p. 7.

[26] Thelma Lowery Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview conducted in Camden, NJ, December 1, 2017.

Section 3: Establishing Residency

Although the purpose of this study is to explore Martin Luther King, Jr.'s potential connections to Camden, New Jersey, documentation about his activities in that location is sparse. Potential visits were most likely informal opportunities to visit with friends on evenings or weekends; as a result, they were the kinds of interactions that are unlikely to leave definitive evidence. Instead, research initially focused on trying to establish King's residency and travel patterns between September 13, 1948, and May 8, 1951. If evidence could establish where King was, it could—by extension—establish where he was not.

King's Residency at Crozer Theological Seminary, 1948-51

King enrolled in nine trimester terms as a graduate student at Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland (Chester), Pennsylvania. He did not spend summers in the Delaware Valley, and even short breaks between terms typically found him in Atlanta, where he served as a salaried minister/assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church from 1948 to 1954. The following chronology demonstrates the pattern of King's consistent removal to Atlanta between semesters. Sources include King's multi-volume published papers, as well as newspaper advertisements of speaking events or public appearances published in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Chester Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and the *Courier-Post*:

1948

5 September	MLK preaches at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
11-12 September	MLK spends weekend visiting sister, Christine, in New York City
14 September	Crozer term 1 begins
24 November	Crozer term 1 ends
30 November	Crozer term 2 begins

1949

16 February	Crozer term 2 ends
20 February	MLK delivers annual youth day sermon at Ebenezer
22 February	Crozer term 3 begins
6-10 May	Crozer term 3 ends / Commencement ceremonies at Crozer
12 June	MLK preaches at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA (morning), and Ebenezer (evening)
13 September	Crozer term 4 begins
23 November	Crozer term 4 ends
29 November	Crozer term 5 begins
23 December	MLK returns to Atlanta, spends Christmas and New Year's Day holidays

1950

2 January	MLK returns to Crozer
15 February	Crozer term 5 ends
19 February	MLK preaches at Ebenezer morning service
21 February	Crozer term 6 begins
5-9 May	Crozer term 6 ends / Commencement ceremonies

10 May – 15 June	MLK moves out of dorm and finishes course audits at University of Pennsylvania [encompasses date of Mary's Place incident]
16 June	MLK departs for Atlanta
12 September	Crozer term 7 begins
22 November	Crozer term 7 ends
28 November	Crozer term 8 begins

1951

15 February	Crozer term 8 ends
18 February	MLK preaches "Nothing in Particular" at Ebenezer
20 February	Crozer term 9 begins
4-8 May	Crozer term 9 ends / Commencement ceremonies (MLK graduates)
12 May	MLK preaches "The World Crisis & A Mother's Responsibility" at Ebenezer[27]

The team also considered the possibility that King did not reside on campus as a student, and thus might have spent time at 753 Walnut Street during the semester itself. Crozer Theological Seminary merged with Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1969, however, and student occupancy records were not preserved. Team members corresponded with both Dr. Marvin McMickle, current President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS), and Thomas McDade Clay, Director of Institutional Advancement, who confirmed that no records exist in CRCDS's institutional archives pertaining to Crozer students' occupancy of dormitories, payment of room and board fees, or of dormitory policies and procedures of any kind—such as sign-in or sign-out forms—that might have helped pinpoint King's status as a resident student.[28]

That being said, the fragmentary documentation that does survive points strongly to the conclusion that, despite the Hunts' oral history to the contrary, King resided primary in Chester, Pennsylvania throughout his years at seminary. In response to a 1947 letter in which King inquired about the prospect of attending Crozer, for example, the seminary's Registrar, Charles E. Batten, noted that students should decide early about graduate school, in part to deal with "the problem of accommodations." And later, in the same letter, he characterized campus life as one of shared academic and communal living spaces: "All full time faculty members reside on

[27] Martin Luther King, Jr., Chronology, Summer 1948 through Summer 1951. Timeline constructed by Paul W. Schopp for this report. The full timeline appears as Appendix A. Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and his father, Martin Luther King, made a number of public appearances during the years in question. Speakers were not necessarily designated as Senior or Junior, however, in announcements of such talks, so other strategies were required. While not an exact science, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assumed if the speaker was identified as from Crozer or Chester. His father was, at times, identified as "of Atlanta." Again, this was not an absolute measure, but decisions were based on patterns and frequency of occurrence.

[28] Marvin McMickle and Thomas McDade Clay, email correspondence with John O'Hara, June 7, 2017. In sum, Thomas McDade Clay, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, informed the team that the institution retained no records of the types requested. Further, Clay indicated that no records existed documenting the retention processes of such records over the years. President Marvin McMickle followed up, on the same day that, to his "certain knowledge" no records existed related to Crozer Theological Seminary's dormitory residents, occupants, policies or practices. Copies of this correspondence appear in **Appendix D** of this report.

campus hence there is much opportunity for personal contact between students and professors."[29] The implication is that Crozer's campus culture encouraged faculty, like students, to live on site, creating opportunities for regular interactions both inside and outside the classroom.

Allusions to a campus address persist through King's later years in seminary. On a surviving fieldwork questionnaire, dated September 13, 1950 and now in the collection of Stanford University's MLK Research and Education Institute, for example, he wrote his address as "Dormitory Box 27" and also listed expenses, including $288.00 "Board" and $51.00 "Rent."[30] He again named Crozer as his mailing address when taking the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) in 1951 before enrolling at Boston University for his doctoral work in Systematic Theology.[31]

Additional references in published scholarship about King's life likewise support the position that he lived on campus as a student. In *Bearing the Cross*, for example, historian David J. Garrow notes King's "positive impression on a young instructor with whom he studied, Kenneth L. Smith, who lived on the same dorm floor as King."[32] And in his autobiography, King, in describing his efforts to combat what he called "the typical white stereotype of the Negro" among a mostly white population of one hundred students at Crozer, makes specific reference to his living quarters:

> [F]or a while I was terribly conscious of trying to avoid identification with it. If I were a minute late to class, I was almost morbidly conscious of it, and sure that everyone else noticed it. . . . I had a tendency to overdress, *to keep my room spotless*, my shoes perfectly shined and my clothes immaculately pressed.[33]

This reference to "my room" suggests that King thought fellow students would see and judge him by tidiness of his dormitory space at the seminary.

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[29] Charles E. Batten to Martin Luther King, Jr. [letter], October 29, 1947, in Clayborne Carson, Ralph Luker, and Penny A. Russel, eds., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Vol. 1: Called to Serve, 1929-51*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/charles-e-batten

[30] Field Work Questionnaire, Crozer Theological Seminary, completed by Martin Luther King, Jr., September 13, 1950, Stanford MLK Research and Education Institute online, http://okra.stanford.edu/en/permalink/document500913-000. Charles Batten was registrar at Crozer from 1938 to 1948, librarian from 1943 to 1948, and dean from 1948 to 1953. He subsequently served as minister of education at an Episcopal church in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1954, and as professor of Christian education at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge in 1956.

[31] Return Address Request, GRE Form [undated ephemera], The King Center Digital Archive, http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/return-address-request

[32] David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, NY: Harper Collins, 2004, p. 41.

[33] Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson, New York: IPM/Warner Books, 2001, ch. 3. https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218225829/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/publications/autobiography/ [emphasis added]

A May 20, 1951 letter housed at the King Institute at Stanford University from King's mother, Alberta Williams King, to Charles E. Batten, a dean at Crozer, reinforces this resident status. In it she writes Batten that, "M.L. wishes me to say to you that his address for the summer will be 193 Boulevard N.E. [Atlanta], and to have any mail he might receive, forwarded here."[34] The same letter also relays a request on behalf of her son for the permanent address of his classmate, Jesse Brown. Brown matriculated at Crozer in 1950, and later earned his Ph.D. at Duke University, and still later became a pastor at the First Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas. In 2002, he was the subject of a profile in the *Topeka Capitol Journal*, in which he reminisces about finding "no shortage of challenging conversations around his dormitory [at Crozer]," in part because of "a student who lived across the hall from him…Martin Luther King, Jr." Brown, a white Pennsylvanian, shares his memories of doing civil rights work in Harlem between 1945 and 1953, and notes King was impressed by the fact that "some white guy would spend his summers" in that fashion. Brown also exhibits familiarity with King's habits, noting that King would "read late into the night—sometimes all night."[35] Another classmate, Dupree Jordan, offered similar testimony in an interview with historian David Garrow. Jordan was "a white Georgian who roomed across the hall from King," according to Garrow, who described King as "very studious; he spent a lot more time on his lesson assignments than most of us did."[36] Thus, two classmates independently verify King's resident status during his time in seminary.

Garrow documents another anecdote from fellow students related to dormitory life that offers evidence of the racial tension and violence King experienced during these school years. Specifically, he described a confrontation between King and a fellow "southern white student, Lucius Z. Hall, Jr." Hall, Garrow recounts:

> …had been victimized in a dorm room prank, blamed King for the incident, and threatened him with a pistol. Hall and King had previously 'had some little clashes,' Marcus Wood, an older black student, later recalled, but on this occasion Hall *burst into King's room*, gun in hand. 'I was in the room,' Wood explained. 'I saw the gun,' and 'King was scared.' Wood intervened and tried to calm Hall down. 'I got him out of the room,' and back to his own. King declined to bring any charges, and no disciplinary action was taken against Hall, who left Crozer at the end of the academic year.[37]

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[34] Alberta Williams King to Charles E. Batten [Letter], May 10, 1951, in Carson et al., *ibid*. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/alberta-williams-king-charles-e-batten

[35] Phil Anderson, "Remembering the Dream: A Pastor Shares Memories of His Experiences with Martin Luther King, Jr.," *The Topeka Capitol Journal*, January 21, 2002, http://cjonline.com/stories/012102/com_mlk.shtml#.WUgd32jytPY

[36] Dupree Jordan Interview with David Garrow, January 14, 1984 (Atlanta, GA), qtd. in David Garrow, "The Intellectual Development of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Influences and Commentary," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 40 (January 1986): 5-20. http://www.davidgarrow.com/File/DJG%201986%20USQRMLK.pdf

[37] David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, p. 40. For other accounts of this incident, see Frederick L. Downing, *To See the Promised Land: The Faith Pilgrimage of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press 1986), pp. 152-54. See also, Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: New American Library, 1983), p. 30. Oates' account: "Hall was in a 'tirade, shouting at King, hurling maledictions at him,' accusing King of ransacking his room. Then Hall 'drew a pistol, and threatened to shoot King dead,' but King denied having anything to do with the room raid. Afterwards, King brought the matter before the student government, but, interestingly, he refused to press charges. Hall did publically [sic] admit that he was wrong, and apologized to King."

James Beshai, another Crozer student, whose course of study overlapped with King and McCall in their final year, also recounted the incident, although he preferred not to identify the student who incited the violence by name: "I remember the confrontation and the aftermath. I know the white southern student, but I do not want to say his name, since his name was not mentioned in what I read about it. But, it was not beyond the subtle discrimination that prevailed in those days. We all had dinner together, and spoke decently, but some may have harbored prejudicial remarks such as this student." [38]

This incident occurred in the spring of 1950. King noted his election as class president in May 1950 was helped by general sympathy for him on campus in the wake of the dormitory confrontation.[39] This event places King in a campus dorm residence in the time prior to the June event in Maple Shade, New Jersey, and also suggests that the Mary's Place incident was not the only, or first, violent racial conflict King experienced during his Crozer years. In fact, King experienced discrimination shortly after arriving at Crozer, when he was refused service in a Philadelphia restaurant called Stouffer's. After complaining, he and his companion, DuPree Jordan, were finally served their meals, only to find that sand had been mixed in with their food.[40] Such contemporary incidents of racial discrimination are important to the HPO's assessment of the singularity and importance of the Maple Shade incident in King's experience.

Additional available oral history testimony also places McCall and King on campus. In his 1970 interview, for example, McCall recounts late nights of discussions, cards, and billiards, noting that "in seminary we played pool sometimes until 3 o'clock in the morning."[41] Beshai offered more details about their campus life:

> We lived in the same Crozer Dormitory on the second floor. I had room 201 and I believe he [King] had room 203 or 211 I am not sure. I believe Walter McCall was on the same side, but MLK, Jr. was on the opposite side.
>
> Dormitory placements showed no discrimination by color or race. I was a foreign student along with one Chinese and one Japanese. There were more white than black students, but all of us enjoyed a very friendly atmosphere.[42]

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[38] James Beshai Email Interview with John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 24, 2017, p. 4. Of course, given the notations in footnote 36, the student involved in the altercation had already been publically named.

[39] Rebecca Karol, "Mary's Café, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Forgotten Beginnings of a Civil Rights Leader," unpublished student paper from Rowan University, n.d., 14.

[40] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, p. 40.

[41] Walter McCall interview, 1970.

[42] James Beshai Email Interview, October 24, 2017.

Published secondary source material buttresses the admittedly fragmentary primary evidence that survives. Editor Clayborne Carson, in the introduction to the published *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume 1*, suggests that "Nearly all students lived in private dormitory rooms on campus, situated on a bucolic hillside…[with] most of their daily needs…satisfied by the seminary's facilities, which included a library, dining rooms, tennis courts, and other amenities."[43]

In addition to his campus activities, several published sources describe King's social interactions in the seminary's surrounding community of Chester, Pennsylvania. Lewis Baldwin, author of *Behind the Public Veil: The Humanness of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, argues that King benefitted from an extensive support network within Chester's African-American community, one strong and deep enough to be considered an "extended family."

King himself alludes to time spent in Chester in a letter to his mother, written in 1948 during his first term: "I never go anywhere much but in these books," he wrote. He also notes "I eat dinner at the Barbours quite often," referring to J. Pius Barbour, a family friend and Morehouse graduate who became Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church. Barbour had been the first African American student to attend Crozer Theological Seminary, and, after graduation, continued to live in the area.[44] Kirk Byron Jones, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church subsequent to Barbour, prepared an article about Barbour that describes King's relationship to the family in even more intimate terms. His recollections appeared in the *Delaware County Daily Times* on January 16, 1989:

> When Martin Luther King Jr. arrived in Chester in the fall of 1948 to attend Crozer Seminary, one of his father's "preacher friends" was waiting for him. Barbour, at the request of Martin Luther King Sr., a fellow Morehouse College graduate, was to provide a home away from home, "watch-care," for the younger King. By all accounts, Barbour did just that. During his stellar three-year seminary career, King was a frequent guest in the Barbour home, and he actively participated in Calvary Baptist Church as a Sunday School teacher, preaching on occasion.
>
> …If the Barbour parsonage was King's home away from home, J. Pius Barbour was King's "father away from father."[45]

Similarly, for "Remembering a Legend: Chester Native Recalls Dinners with Martin Luther King, Jr.," John Lott interviewed resident Mercedes Walker Hutchins, who recalls King as a "frequent dinner guest" of her grandfather, Lewis M. Hunt, one of the first African Americans to

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[43] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Vol. 1*, p. 47.

[44] Martin Luther King to Alberta Williams King [letter], October, 1948, Stanford MLK Research and Education Institute online, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/alberta-williams-king-4

[45] Kirk Byron Jones, "King Had a Mentor in Chester," published in the 16 January 1989 edition of the *Delaware County Daily Times*. Article reproduced at http://www.oldchesterpa.com/famous_king_jr _martin_luther htm, accessed 22 March 2017.

serve on the Chester school board.[46] Resident Sara Richardson is likewise quoted as saying, "He was very fond of the Talley family…and called Esther Talley 'mother.'"[47] So many anecdotal references exist, that King's time spent in the Chester community has become a staple of biographical accounts of his seminary years, which are replete with stories of African-American classmates whose mothers cooked for King, frequent dinners and discussions with the Barbour family, time spent at the homes of Sara Richardson, Emma Anderson and "Mother" Esther Talley, and references to King's role teaching Sunday school and speaking in Chester.[48]

King's immersion into the Crozer community is also reflected in his campus achievements. He served as class president in his third year, earned Valedictorian status at graduation, and received the Pearl Ruth Plafker Award as outstanding member of the graduating class in 1951. Batten's evaluation of King calls him "one of the most brilliant students we have had a Crozer….While interested in social action, he has a fine theological and philosophical basis on which to promulgate his ideas and activities…He is a real leader as evidenced by the confidence his fellow students have in him by electing him president of the student body."[49] Such confidence would presumably be earned by a student who was active in campus life, rather than one who spent a great deal of time off campus, or who lived at an off-campus location.

The National Register of Historic Places has already recognized King's significance to the Crozer campus. The seminary's Central Building, commonly referred to as "Old Main," served as the student dormitory. It eventually became part of Crozer-Chester Medical Center after the Seminary merged with Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1969. In 1972, "Old Main" was designated as a site on the National Register after review of an application submitted by W. Clinton Powers, Director of Development at Crozer-Chester Medical Center. In the "Statement of Significance" section of the application, Powers cites the building's construction as a "normal school" in 1858, its use as a military hospital during the Civil War, and its use as the central building and dormitory for Crozer Theological Seminary. The Statement of Significance notes

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[46] John Lott, "Remembering a Legend: Chester Native Recalls Dinners with Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Delaware County Times*, January 16, 2011, http://www.delcotimes.com/article/DC/20110116/NEWS/301169999. Ms. Walker Hutchins, however, would have been a child at the time, so the question as to the accuracy of memories of childhood might lessen the impact of this testimony.

[47] Lewis Baldwin, *Behind the Public Veil: The Humanness of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA], 2016: 129. Available online at: https://books.google.com/books/about/Behind_the_Public_Veil.html?id=VwdKDAAAQBAJ

It is important to note that King's use of "mother" and allusions by authors to "father figures" in these examples are illustrations of what anthropologist Roger D. Abrahams describes as the "tremendous number of potentially meaningful relationships a person can have" within an African American community. For an overview about the ability of both extended family members, or even "neighbors and relations" to fill parental roles, see: Rodger D. Abrahams, *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1963, republished 1970), pp. 16-37.

[48] *Ibid*., p. 128.

[49] Crozer Theological Seminary Placement Committee, Confidential Evaluation of Martin Luther King, Jr., by Charles E. Batten, February 23, 1951, Stanford MLK Research and Education Center, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/crozer-theological-seminary-placement-committee-confidential-evaluation-mart-2

that in addition to its remarkable history, "Martin Luther King, Jr., class of 1951, lived while a student in room 52 of Old Main."[50]

In summation, despite the lack of institutional records from Crozer Theological Seminary, available documentary and testimonial evidence strongly support the assertion of that King was a resident student between 1948 and 1951, and that he was deeply invested in the surrounding African-American community of Chester, Pennsylvania. King's transcripts show him taking a full load of classes at the seminary each term, between 12 and 14 credits, including three courses for credit at the University of Pennsylvania: Philosophy of History with Professor Elizabeth Flower (1949-50); Immanuel Kant with Professor Paul Schrecker (1950-51); and Problems of Esthetics with Professor John A. Adams (1950-51).[51] He was active on campus and in the community. Had he lived in Camden, he would have faced a commute of an hour or more, as his time in southern New Jersey came before the construction of the Walt Whitman Bridge (which opened in 1957) and highways linking Camden to south Philadelphia and Chester. While not impossible, it is unlikely that he would have been as present and visible as he was at Crozer if he lived full- or part-time elsewhere while term was in session.

753 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey, 1948-51:

The central question of this report is how far King's social circle extended beyond Chester. Several sources document the close relationship between King and McCall, and while the latter lived on campus too, he also, according to Benjamin Hunt's 1981 newspaper account and Jeannette Hunt's oral history testimony, spent some time in Camden.[52]

In 1948, 753 Walnut Street was home to Benjamin Hunt, his wife Ella, and Sarah, one of his three daughters.[53] Hunt had purchased the home three years prior from Sarah A. McCollum, in

[50] National Register of Historic Places, #73001626 ["Old Main"], designated June 18, 1973, https://npgallery nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/73001626

[51] Wayne Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p. 22. For King's transcript, see "MLK's Transcript from Crozer Theological Seminary," December 6, 1950, The King Center online, http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/mlks-transcript-crozer-theological-seminary#

[52] Unfortunately, Walter McCall was not asked about either time spent in Camden, New Jersey or his relationship to the Hunt family in his 1970 interview for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center in Atlanta. See: Walter McCall Interview with Herbert Holmes. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center Oral History Project, Atlanta, GA, 1970, appended in its entirety as part of Appendix D.

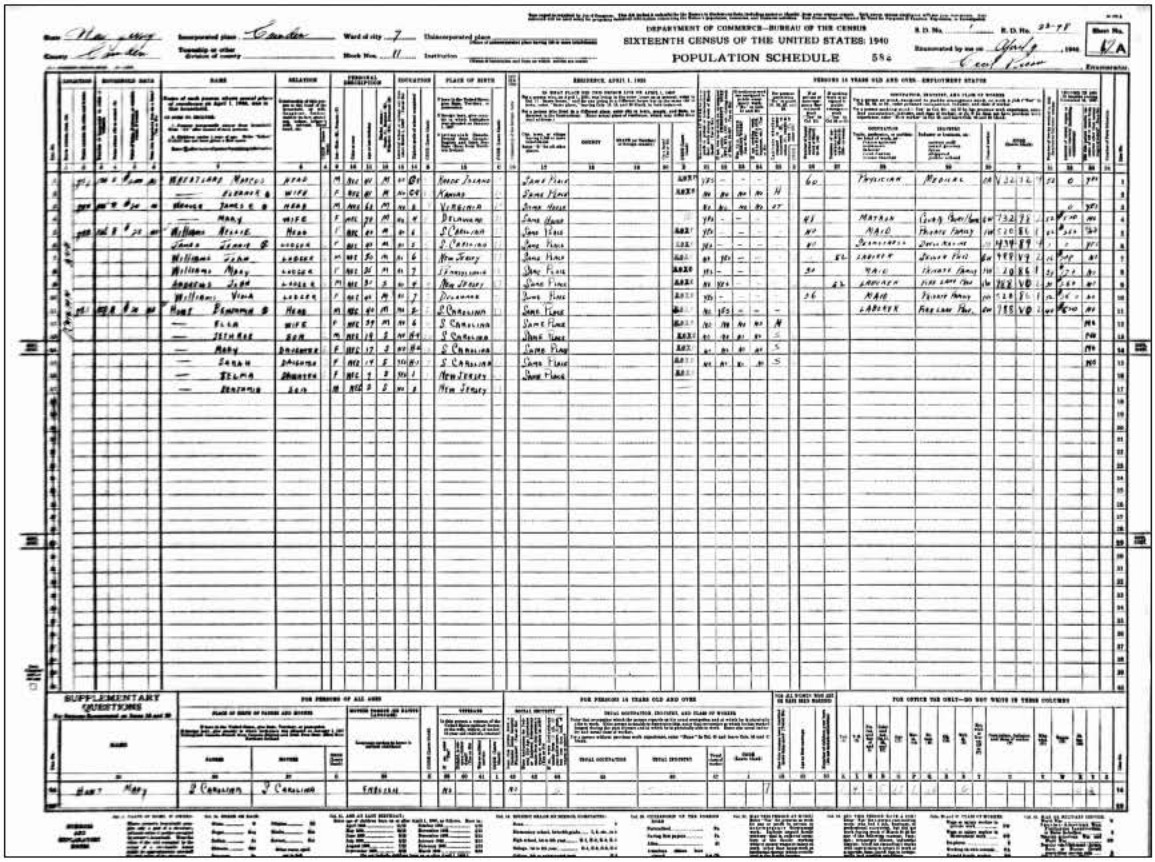
[53] Excerpt from Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview, October 26, 2017:

MCDONALD: So then it was Benjamin, his daughter, and his wife? Was she there as well?

HUNT: My father-in-law's wife? Yeah, it was…they were staying, like I said, you're going a ways back. They lived there, in the house, and I remember Sarah, she's staying in the house. My sister-in-law, they had another daughter, Mary, she got married, she moved away, but she was staying there a long time. But then she got married when she was up in age. And my sister-in-law, Thelma, she got married young, and she moved out.

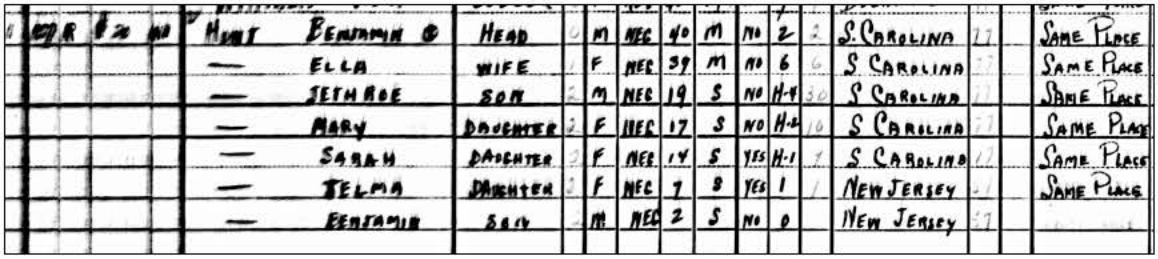
whose family the property had been for at least the last half century.[54] Jeannette Hunt provided the following description of her husband's family home:

> Well, 753 is a big house. Warm home, large rooms. And it was a Christian home, because my mother and father-in-law were very strict. No smoking in the house. No nothing in there, but, you know, just family gathering, family talk and that kind of thing. But it had a large…now the living room was almost this size. And then it was a dining room. And then the kitchen. And it had 1, 2, 3, 4 bedrooms, bath upstairs and a bath downstairs. Large yard you could drive in. The driveway is adjacent to the house.[55]



[54] Sale of the property from Sarah A. McCollum to Benjamin Hunt is recorded in the Camden County Deed Book 1016:208, April 18, 1945.

[55] Excerpt from Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview, October 26, 2017; Mrs. Hunt thought that she might have a copy of the property deed, and indicated her belief that Hunt purchased the property in 1945, which is confirmed by the Camden County Deed Book entry. She also noted, however, that her husband had grown up at 753 Walnut Street. If the Hunt family purchased the home just after the 1940 census, it is possible that Jethroe Hunt spent his teenage years at 753 Walnut Street; it the home was purchased in 1945, however, as Ms. Hunt indicates, he would only have lived there for two years before they married. Jethroe and Jeanette lived with Benjamin and Ella Hunt just after their marriage, but only for two or three months before moving to 340 Pine Street, Camden, New Jersey.



			Hunt	Benjamin	Head		M	Mec	40	M	No	2		S. Carolina			Same Place		
			—	Ella	wife		F	Mec	39	M	No	6		S Carolina			Same Place		
			—	Jethroe	son		M	Mec	19	S	No	H-4		S Carolina			Same Place		
			—	Mary	daughter		F	Mec	17	S	No	H-2		S Carolina			Same Place		
			—	Sarah	daughter		F	Mec	14	S	Yes	H-1		S Carolina			Same Place		
			—	Thelma	daughter		F	Mec	7	S	Yes	1		New Jersey			Same Place		
			—	Benjamin	son		M	Mec	2	S	No	0		New Jersey					

Source: Page from the Sixteenth Decennial Federal Census showing the listing for Benjamin Hunt and his family. The final listing on the page is enlarged; Benjamin Hunt is listed as "head," followed by his wife Ella, son Jethroe, daughters Mary, Sarah, and T[h]elma, and son Benjamin.

Five pieces of evidence appear to confirm McCall's relationship with the Hunt family, and consequently a connection to their Camden residence. The first is email testimony provided by Janet Milton, Walter McCall's daughter. While she noted that her father "spent his days on campus," she added, "but I have heard him speak of being housed by friends and others while he was at Crozer."[56] Walter McCall, during his 1970 interview with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center, is a second source, as he also references living in the Philadelphia area briefly after high school in South Carolina and "until I went into the Army in 1943." After the war, he lived briefly in Detroit, Michigan, then "had my Freshman year at Morehouse." He continues, "I then went back to Philadelphia and there I remained through all my tenure as a student at Morehouse." Finally, McCall also noted that, in 1948, between graduating from Morehouse and entering Crozer, he "worked for three months in the public school system of Camden, New Jersey."[57] While this information does not specifically connect McCall to the Hunt residence at 753 Walnut Street, it does open the door to a Camden-based connection.[58]

Thelma Lowery is yet a third source. In an interview given on December 1, 2017, Lowery noted that her father's house frequently had a number of guests: "sometimes the church members would come over, and then my cousin and King would come through on weekends and what-not—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday."[59] When asked to expand on the identity of "cousin" and

[56] Janet (and Julius) Milton Email Interview with John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 26, 2017. Milton did not, however, recall the Hunt name specifically as the family associated with her father at the time – in fact, did not know "of any of his family members that lived or live now in the Camden area." She remembered only tentatively the name "Kirklands" as one potential off-campus residence, and confirmed what several published sources have already emphasized, both McCall and King's close association with J. Pius Barbour in Chester, Pennsylvania.

[57] Janet Milton calls into question her father's recollection of living in Philadelphia during his tenure at Morehouse in South Carolina; however, it is possible McCall did have a semi-permanent residence at this time in the area, even while records indicating such a stable or permanent address have not been located.

[58] The Stockton Research Team reached out to Morehouse College on November 27, 2017 by email to inquire about the possible existence of student records dating back to the early 1940s, when Walter McCall would have been an undergraduate student. While we did not hear back from the institution by the time this report was submitted (and the possibility that such records, now nearly seven decades old, might still exist is admittedly slight, we hoped to determine whether McCall used a Philadelphia or Camden-based address at any time while enrolled at school in Atlanta).

[59] Thelma Lowery Interview, December 1, 2017, p. 3.

"King," Lowery confirmed that she meant Walter McCall and Martin Luther King, Jr., and offered details about where they stayed in the house—on the second floor, the third bedroom from the front.

While richly detailed on some questions, other elements of Lowery's testimony are more difficult to align with other available forms of evidence. Lowery suggests that McCall and King lived at 753 Walnut Street for most of one semester, and possibly a second, although what documentary evidence exists for residency patterns at Crozer suggest otherwise, and the commuting distance between Camden, New Jersey and Chester, Pennsylvania would have been extensive. Lowery also intimates that McCall and King visited Camden nearly every weekend, but newspapers documenting speaking engagements and visits south offer compelling evidence otherwise.[60]

Jeannette Hunt is the fourth source. In both her 2015 and 2017 interviews, she clearly recalls Walter McCall, and details from his life. Most intriguing, in the latter account, she indicates that in 1976 she traveled to Atlanta to attend McCall's funeral, and offered specifics about that event:

> I knew Walter. I knew him because he was a family member. Like I said, I did go to his home. But the time I went to his home was during the time he died. I remember going to his home when he died, because daddy wanted all of us to go down there. Someone had sabotaged his sausage plant. He was getting ready to open up a business, with selling sausage. And that Sunday morning, someone had…he went there, he was on his way to church, and he noticed his place was sabotaged. They say he had a heart attack from that and he died. Because he had put a lot of money in there.[61]

And while McCall's daughter was unable to recall Jeannette Hunt, or any member of the Hunt family, she did confirm Hunt's recollections surrounding the circumstances of Walter McCall's death. When questioning Milton, the Stockton team was deliberately vague, noting only that he owned a business, "something involved in meat packing." Milton's response was intriguing, including a more detailed description of the enterprise, one that accorded with Jeanette Hunt's account:

> My dad did indeed have a sausage business at the time of his demise, and yes, his equipment for making the sausage was sabotaged a few days before the grand opening of his official business. We really think that this act had a great physical impact on his body, thus attributing to his ultimate fatal heart attack.[62]

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[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 3 and 6.

[61] Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview, October 26, 2017, p. 5. Thelma Lowery also notes that Walter McCall's business was damaged just before his death; she claims it was "bombed."

[62] Janet (and Julius) Milton Email Interview, October 26, 2017, p. 4.

The final piece of evidence connecting McCall to the Hunt family is also the only piece of contemporaneous documentary evidence that associates King with the same Camden residence, the criminal complaint filed in the Municipal Court of Maple Shade, New Jersey in June of 1950. This complaint was filed thirty-three days after Crozer's commencement on May 9, 1950, when both McCall and King would presumably have moved out of their campus dormitory, but before King left the region, as he was still auditing a graduate-level course at the University of Pennsylvania (Philosophy of History with Professor Elizabeth Flower). This course ran, according to Carson's timeline in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, from September 26, 1949 to June 10, 1950.[63] Where the two students lived after they left the Crozer campus on May 9, 1950 and as King completed this coursework by June 10 of the same year, however, is difficult to pinpoint precisely.

It is possible that King lived some portion, or even all, of this time at 753 Walnut Street. It is even more likely that he stayed there on the night of the Mary's Place incident. And there is no doubt that the criminal complaint is an authentic document. It has been corroborated by direct participants, and has long stood as an intriguing footnote in King's biography. It is also clear that King's address on this document is listed as 753 Walnut Street, the same address as his friend and student colleague, Walter McCall.

That being said, authenticity is not the same as validity. Validity refers to the question of whether or not the information contained in an authentic document is reliable and credible, and it is possible, obviously, for authentic documents to contain invalid, incorrect, or distorted information. In short, it is possible that King provided the 753 Walnut Street address for reasons of expediency, because he was temporarily itinerant, and just about to leave for home in Atlanta. This circumstance problematizes the validity of the information as referentially true of "his address," and King did leave the area soon after this complaint was filed, as documented by his speeding violation in Delaware on June 16, and his appearance in Atlanta as reported by the *Pittsburgh Courier* on June 17, 1950: "The Rev. M.L. King, Jr., is home for vacation after having a successful year at Crozier [sic] Theological Seminary at Chester, PA."[64] Moreover, a photograph from June 17 shows King with "Alfred Daniel King and Christine Barber King at their wedding, along with Christine King."[65] In other words, however long King may have stayed at 753 Walnut Street prior to June 12, at that or any other time during his studies at Crozer, in other words, he left the area shortly thereafter.

Additional elements of the criminal complaint raise other kinds of questions. Most notably, some time after the document was filed, it was amended in ink. These changes include the striking out of King's typewritten name and address, as well as the names and addresses of all other complainants except that of Walter McCall. King's signature on the document was also crossed out, along with that of Pearl E. Smith (Wilson's signature was never provided at all), leaving

[63] Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ibid. This timeline has not been independently verified. Carson's timeline of papers contains a date range of 9/26/1949-6/10/1950 for King's course notes and papers that term. As of June 19, 2017, a request has been made to University of Pennsylvania's Director of University Archives, Mark Frazier Lloyd for clarity.

[64] Carrie B. Harper, "Atlanta News," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 17, 1950, 18.

[65] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, p. 458.

McCall the sole signatory on the document as well. In this sense, King's address was provided, but then deleted.

These changes do not necessarily invalidate any association between King and the Walnut Street address, either for that night or the period between May 9 and June 16, 1950. And the number of oral history interviews that indicate King spent time in Camden, and specifically those of Jeannette Lily Hunt and Thelma Lowery, coupled with the 1981 newspaper interview of Benjamin Hunt, that more specifically identify King with 753 Walnut Street at other times during this student career at Crozer, make it more likely than not that King stayed at this address on the night in question. All names and addresses besides McCall's, even the Philadelphia addresses correctly listed for Smith and Wilson, were also stricken, suggesting that the change had less to do with correcting information than with reducing, for some reason, the number of complainants in the case to one.

Why McCall was selected is not known, though it may suggest his stronger association with the property, either as a longer-term or more frequent resident, or as a relative, as the the owner, Benjamin Hunt, and his daughter-in-law asserted. Accounts of this affiliation vary; in his 1981 newspaper interview, Hunt refers to McCall as his "cousin." In her subsequent interviews, his daughter-in-law Jeannette Hunt variously refers to McCall as a "cousin" or "nephew."[66] Thelma Lowery also vacillated in her memory about McCall. While initially unable to say for certain whether McCall was her father's nephew or cousin, by the end of the interview she appeared more certain: "No wait a minute, wait a minute, did he call him uncle or did he call him cousin? He called him Uncle Ben."[67]

The research team has attempted to access the case file from the *New Jersey v. Nichols* court action. Since the case, however, involved both criminal and civil actions, locating the case file proved difficult. During a visit to the New Jersey State Archives at the end of March 2017, access to Governor Alfred Driscoll's files failed to produce any information or documentation of the Maple Shade incident. A thorough review was conducted in the governor's files for the Division Against Discrimination and the Council on Civil Rights during the period 1947 to 1953 likewise turned up no additional evidence.[68]

The research team next explored the *representativeness* of the criminal complaint. Representativeness refers to whether or not evidence accords with other documented accounts, and helps further measure an artifact's reliability. In relation to other evidence of King's overall time spent in the Delaware Valley between 1948 and 1951, including documented evidence of

[66] Benjamin Hunt states: "my cousin, Walter, was King's friend." Jeannette Hunt, by comparison, notes: "Well, the thing about it is, the reason were there was because my father-in-law was, well, they were cousins, whatever, a cousin. Walter was his nephew. So that's how Walter got there, so that's how Dr. King got there, because of Walter." See: Stillwell, "City Man Housed Activist," p. 3B and Jeannette Lily M. Hunt Interview, October 26, 2017, p. 7.

[67] Thelma Lowery Interview, December 1, 2017, pp. 3-4.

[68] Governor Alfred C. Driscoll, Records (Series I), 1947-1953, manuscript (Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey State Archives).

his residency at Crozer and in Atlanta as cited above, the criminal complaint does not appear to be representative as an indicator of King's residency patterns between 1948 and 1951. The preponderance of his time, in other words, was not spent in New Jersey.

It is, of course, that King provided this address in the early morning hours of June 12 because it was, in fact, where he was staying at the time; that particular night came thirty-two days after the end of Crozer's term, two days after the end of University of Pennsylvania's term, and four days before his return trip to Atlanta. More than one contemporaneous news report, however, complicates this interpretation. On June 17, 1950, the *Philadelphia Tribune* provided precise street addresses for Pearl Smith and Doris Wilson as listed on the criminal complaint, but refers to the two men involved as "Michael King, Atlanta, Ga., and Walter McCall of South Carolina, students at Crozer Theological Seminary." On June 20, 1950, the same newspaper refers to King as "Michael King, [a] theological seminary student at Crozer seminary, Chester, Pa." (June 20).[69] It is not known why addresses for the women were given, while those for the two men in the complaint were not. Possibly reporters were aware that both students had left the region by the time these articles went to press, and so were technically no longer associated with 753 Walnut Street, or any other local address. Regardless of their motivations, what remains is that, in instances where residency patterns appear as part of the documentary record in contemporary coverage, they do not reinforce an association between King and 753 Walnut Street.

In sum, the criminal complaint denoting Martin Luther King's address as 753 Walnut Street does not, on its own, firmly establish the representative evidence of King "living" or "residing" in Camden on a frequent, regular, part-time or full-time basis between 1948 and 1951. It is possible to adduce from the complaint, however, the circumstances of King's "gap" between terms, and his close friendship with Walter McCall, with whom Benjamin Hunt, the owner of 753 Walnut Street, had a familiar relation, that King may have stayed in the residence for at least some of the time between May 9 and June 16, 1950, almost certainly the night of the Mary's Place incident, and likely from the night of the Mary's Place incident on June 11 to the time he departed for Atlanta on June 16.

The Advantages and Limitations of Oral History Testimony:

Like Walter McCall, the only available evidence beyond the criminal complaint that places King at 753 Walnut Street are based on individual's memories collected decades after the time in question. Oral histories are valuable research resources, particularly when used to reinforce other evidentiary forms. The four most salient interviews—those of Benjamin Hunt, owner of 753 Walnut Street between 1948 and 1951, Jeanette Lily Hunt, his daughter-in-law and a teenager during the time in question, Thelma Lowery, Hunt's daughter and a resident in the house between 1945 and 1951 or 1952, and Donald "Ducky" Birts, a civil rights activist—each have some limitations, however. Analyses of these interviews form this final section of the report.

[69] "NJ Innkeeper Held After Four Charge Refusal," *Philadelphia Tribune*, June 20, 1950.

1. Benjamin Hunt (1981)

As noted previously, the *Courier-Post* interviewed Benjamin Hunt for an article entitled "City Man Housed Activist" in 1981. Hunt was 81 at the time, recalling events that had occurred more than three decades earlier. Although he clearly stated that King resided at 753 Walnut Street during the Maple Shade incident, it is the first time since the 1950 complaint that such a connection is explicitly drawn.[70] While provocative, other elements of Hunt's recollection of events do not align with available evidence. In his description of the actual confrontation at Mary's Place, for example, Hunt held that after McCall and King were refused service, "there must have been a fight . . . and the boys ran away. But the cops caught them and locked them up. It was King's idea to call a doctor [Ulysses S. Wiggins] to get them out."[71] McCall and King were not pursued by the police or arrested, however, but voluntarily went to the Maple Shade police station to file a complaint. Wiggins did not need to secure a release, but was enlisted to help them file charges against Nichols.

Hunt's description of 753 Walnut Street also raises questions. He noted that:

> In those days, anybody was welcome in this house. It had what we called a swinging door. My cousin, Walter, was King's friend and the two of them lived in the back room upstairs on and off for two years when they were in school. He got along just fine with everybody and fit in like one of the family.[72]

The phrase "lived …on and off" offers a paradoxical accounting of time and duration, ultimately complicating rather than clarifying judgments about the strength of King's association with the property. The preponderance of evidence indicates, of course, that King did not live at 753 Walnut Street for two years while in seminary. Moreover, "the family," into which King is said to have fit, is also an imprecise category: does this term refer strictly to blood relatives or to "anybody" staying there at any time, having come through the "swinging door?"[73] And it is worth noting that Hunt's claim of familial closeness is not unique; that same language characterizes dozens of references to King's interactions with members of the Chester, PA community.

It is also important to remember that Eileen Stillwell, a reporter, conducted Hunt's 1981 interview, and was not necessarily held to the same professional standards of scholarly rigor that a historian might have been in collecting and interpreting her evidence. In the article's opening, for example, Stillwell offers a powerful allusion of familial bonds:

> Tucked away in every nook and cranny of the living room bookcases were photos of happy memories – three wives, seven children, a dozen grandchildren and a world famous civil rights leader who "fit in like one of the family."

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[70] Eileen Stillwell, "City Man Housed Activist, *Courier Post*, January 16, 1981, 1B, 3B.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *Ibid.*

> That's how Benjamin Hunt . . . described his feelings about his former live-in house-guest, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[74]

Read closely, however, the first paragraph does not claim that there are family photographs of King on Hunt's bookshelf (i.e., personal artifacts showing King with Hunt's family at 753 Walnut Street or elsewhere). The images described in 1981 might have as easily been popular or iconic images of King mixed among personal effects. If images of King with family were extant, they were not included in *Courier-Post* article, which seems a strange omission. They also did not appear in the course of Duff's subsequent investigation and interviews in 2015, nor those of the Stockton Research Team in 2017.

As a final note, the article concludes that, "King left the area [and] Hunt never heard from him again."[75] Had King's ties to the family been as strong as other portions of the article imply, the subsequent lack of communication seems out of place. King returned to Camden in 1952 to deliver a sermon after moving to Boston, and revisited the greater Delaware Valley on many more occasions throughout his life. He did not, however, apparently revisit Hunt or 753 Walnut Street.

2. Jeanette Lily M. Hunt (2015 and 2017)

The second oral history to suggest a connection between Martin Luther King, Jr. and 753 Walnut Street was of Jeanette Lily Hunt, Benjamin Hunt's daughter-in-law, taken in 2015. Ms. Hunt assumed ownership of the property in question when her husband, Jethroe Hunt, died in 2005. The structure on the property subsequently fell into disarray and ultimately decay when left vacant. Patrick Duff contacted Ms. Hunt in 2015 during his efforts to ascertain the significance of the property and preserve it as a historic site. According to a media account of their first meeting, Duff knocked on the door at her home on Pine Street, and asked the then 83-year old Hunt, "Did you know Martin Luther King?" In his words, she replied, "'Absolutely, he lived in my house.'"[76]

Over the next two years, and up to the present time, 753 Walnut Street's restoration and pending application for designation on the New Jersey Register of Historical Places has been reported variously in many local media outlets. Ms. Hunt, according to a February 9, 2015 report by Aaron Moselle of Newsworks and NBC Philadelphia, had been "giving her blessing to a man [Duff] on a mission," and "helping activists who are trying to have the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places."[77] She appeared at a major public relations event in September 2016 with Duff, Congressman Donald Norcross (D-NJ-01), Congressman John Lewis

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Aaron Moselle, "Camden Man Fights to Save House Where Martin Luther King Stayed," Newsworks.org online, NBC-10, February 15, 2015, http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/NJ-Man-Fights-to-Save-House-Where-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Stayed-291502631 html

[77] *Ibid.*

(D-GA-05), and others. Shortly afterward, she agreed to transfer ownership of the property to Cooper's Ferry Partnership, a local non-profit.

Duff provided the Stockton research team with an audio copy and transcript of the interview he conducted with Ms. Hunt in January 2015, which was analyzed alongside all extant media coverage of the event.

The January 2015 interview comprises the bulk of Ms. Hunt's testimony. Ms. Hunt is quoted only twice afterward, at a September 2016 event held in Camden, and in a January 2017 *New York Times* piece about efforts to preserve the house.[78] Present on the day of the January 2015 interview in her Pine Street home were Duff, Colandus "Kelly" Francis of the Camden County Branch of the NAACP, and Ed Colimore of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

During the course of the interview, Ms. Hunt's certainty about particulars vacillates at times, and relies on information provided to her—rather than experienced by her directly—at others. When asked about the Maple Shade incident, for example, Ms. Hunt offers an account proximate to that offered by her father-in-law, Benjamin Hunt, in his 1981 profile:

> Duff: And then what about when he [King] lived there at that house, do you remember when that happened in Maple Shade, when he got . . . ?
>
> Hunt: I wasn't there. From my understanding, my cousin called my father-in-law to come to Maple Shade because they were locked up, and he got them out.
>
> Duff: So *they* got locked up?
>
> Hunt: I think they were locked up. I think that's the way the story went. Because he went down to get them out. Now that's the best, that's all I know.[79]

When asked several minutes later why she kept information about King and her house to herself all these years, Ms. Hunt refers to the *Courier-Post* write-up, which apparently was not known to the interviewers prior to the time. She also admits, "I never really looked into it, to know all the who what when and wheres."[80] She also warns the interviewers, "Don't document anything I'm not sure of."[81]

The focus of the interview then shifts to the property itself, when Duff suggests that historic significance might help alleviate the interviewee's current financial difficulties. Ms. Hunt describes how the house passed from a renter, who "tore it up," to its then unoccupied status,

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[78] Ashley Ross, "A Camden Address with a Link to Martin Luther King, Jr.," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/15/nyregion/martin-luther-king-jr-camden-new-jersey html

[79] Jeanette Lily M. Hunt Interview by Patrick Duff et al., transcribed by John O'Hara, p. 1.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

drawing drug users and squatters who contributed to its further demise. The result had been personally taxing to Ms. Hunt: "I have been putting out money, money, money, money."

> Duff: What's going on with house now, 753 Walnut?
>
> Hunt: It's just there. I didn't have it demolished…
>
> Duff: Well, good.
>
> Hunt: I didn't have it demolished. I had called—what's that guy that does all the demolishing here?
>
> Duff: Hargrove.
>
> Hunt: Yeah, Hargrove, but he wanted $35,000. That was a few years ago. But the drug addicts keep breaking in, and . . . it's still a problem. I put out so much money trying to keep it, until I said, uh, I am tired of paying taxes on it.
>
> Duff: Well, I think with your statement, and with the information we have, that's going to be enough to make that a historical site.
>
> Hunt: I would love that![82]

This form of questioning, along with the introduction of financial considerations, complicates the value of Ms. Hunt's interview in some respects: first, by using language here and elsewhere in the interview that implies the interviewer's desire for a particular account of the property; and second, by effecting Ms. Hunt's conscious or subconscious understanding of the potential fiscal relief that could result, should the property be shown to have been King's one-time home.

Indeed, after the issue of tax relief is discussed, Ms. Hunt's responses become clearer. Duff and Colimore begin discussing the disputed property King allegedly occupied at 904 Newton Avenue:

> Duff: Well, the interesting thing is, I have reached out to him and I called him, and I said I found this information [about 753] that shows an address, and he wasn't very happy about it, actually. And I said to him, listen, my job, what I do, is I am a social activist, a civil rights activist, and it's not to worry about the temperament of somebody else, or if somebody's going to be upset, it's to find the truth, and then expose the truth. And, uh, like in Maple Shade—in Maple Shade, the incident that happened to him is told like it was folklore, like it never really happened.
>
> Hunt: Yes, it did happen, because my father-in-law . . . I remember my father-in-law went up there to get them out, whatever trouble they were in, so that they could come back. When they came back that night, they slept at 753 Walnut Street.[83]

[82] *Ibid.*, 5.

[83] *Ibid.*, 4.

Note that Ms. Hunt's testimony shifted from "I wasn't there," and "I think that's the way the story went," to the more definitive claim, "I remember..." This is a subtle distinction, but indicates her transformation from a second-hand recipient of the story earlier in the interview to a first-hand witness. The interview continues with Colimore, the *Inquirer* reporter, asking Ms. Hunt about the duration of King's alleged residence in Camden:

> EC: …How long was he in that house, at 753…?
>
> Hunt: I guess until he graduated.
>
> EC: Was that two years, or…?
>
> Hunt: If you could get a hold of the yearbook from Crozer, from the Seminary…
>
> EC: Did he stay there from the time he went to Crozer, so from 48-51?
>
> Hunt: I'm not sure, all I know is they say the time he went to the Seminary, that's where he graduated from, he stayed at 753, he never stayed no place else in Camden.
>
> EC: Ok, so he probably was 48-51, you think, huh?
>
> Hunt: Yeah, but the whole time he was at Crozer, that's when he was at 753 Walnut.
>
> Duff: I got goosebumps everywhere.[84]

The framing of the interview, once again, led the subject to a particular set of conclusions that, like those of Benjamin Hunt, contradict what the documentary record demonstrates. Whatever length of time King spent at 753 Walnut Street, it was not the duration of his time at seminary. The conclusion of the interview returns to the question of financial relief:

> Hunt: And I can almost visualize seeing him, even when we'd be outside on the sidewalk, him leaning up on the car, you know…but that's one of the reasons why I can't…I knew he stayed in that back room, and I didn't want to get rid of the house. Camden was killing me with the taxes, and nobody in it.
>
> Duff: Well, you know the house next to it, they are $47,000 in back taxes and $95,000 in interest and penalties, that's what they owe on it.
>
> Hunt: The house next door?
>
> Francis: 755.

[84] *Ibid.*, 4.

Duff: The house next door, 755, so…That might be something I can help them out with too, because…Didn't you guys own both houses, 755 and 753?[85]

Hunt: That house was my father-in-law's house.

Duff: …ok, because I saw that in the records.

Hunt: But presently his daughter's son…something, I don't go over there.

Duff: Jeanette, right?

Hunt: I'm Jeanette.

Duff: Ok, you're Jeanette. Who's Lily?

Hunt: Me!

Duff: Ok, so Jeanette Lily is the same person [affirmed, they discuss her name, origin, spelling, kidding around, phone rings, call taken by Ms. Hunt].

Duff: [to Francis and Colimore while Ms. Hunt talks on phone] I told you I was right. I knew it, I had a feeling.

Here, too, it is critical to note that Duff refers to the attached building's back taxes and penalties, and comments, "That might be something I can help them out with, too," before revealing that he believes they are relatives of Ms. Hunt. "Because," he continues, "didn't you guys own both houses, 755 and 753?" Ms. Hunt relates her estrangement from this relative, but this does not negate Duff's suggestion, which, however well-intentioned, may have led the interviewee through the apparent suggestion that there would be further personal and familial relief or gain resulting from additional positive evidence about King's association with 753 Walnut.

Duff finally reveals his own conscious or unconscious predisposition to elicit positive and confirming results coming into the interview. His final comment ("I knew it, I had a feeling") suggests that he had already formed a strong opinion during the collection of this information, rather than approaching the question from the outset with a neutral perspective.

3. Interview with Thelma Lowery (2017)

The Stockton Research Team endeavored to contact Thelma Lowery to interview her for this project. While they were unsuccessful in doing so, Patrick Duff conducted a telephone interview one day after the original final report was submitted to the HPO. While team members would have preferred to complete the interview themselves to preserve the research process, it was

[85] 755 Walnut Street was owned first by Louis L. Dorflinger, until he sold it to his brother, John Dorflinger, in 1929. John Dorflinger, in turn, owned the property until 1963, when he sold it to Benjamin and Ella Hunt (see Camden County Deed Book 2657:345, September 11, 1963).

decided to include both a transcript of the conversation in the report appendices, as well as a discussion of the potential significance of the interview in the report narrative.

According to Ms. Lowery's recollections, she lived at 753 Walnut Street between 1945, when she was in 8th or 9th grade, until she married. She could not recall her wedding date with certainty, but believed it to be 1951 or the following year: "Well, I got to look it up, the first time I got married. I think the first time I got married was in, wait a minute, '51 or '52."[86] This would mean that she resided at 753 Walnut Street from the time she was 13 or 14 until she was between 19 and 22, depending on the year of her marriage.

Lowery's description of the house at 753 Walnut Street is more circumscribed than that provided by her sister-in-law, but it is consistent—a four-bedroom home that hosted a lot of company. Of particular note, she insisted that McCall and King used the third bedroom on the second floor, not the back bedroom as has been asserted in earlier newspaper accounts:

> LOWERY: They lived in the ….it was a four-bedroom house. They lived in the third bedroom.
>
> DUFF: And where was that located in the house?
>
> LOWERY: Upstairs.
>
> DUFF: Upstairs in the middle or the back…
>
> LOWERY: Second floor.
>
> DUFF: Middle, front or back second floor?
>
> LOWERY: Okay, you have the front bedroom, second bedroom, third bedroom, the bathroom, and another bedroom.
>
> DUFF: Okay, so they had the third bedroom.
>
> LOWERY: Yes.
>
> DUFF: Okay, I'm just trying…because when I go into the house I was trying to get the layout of it.
>
> LOWERY: You'll see it.
>
> DUFF: Yeah, I saw it, and then there's like a back bedroom.
>
> LOWERY: Yes.

[86] Thelma Lowery Interview, December 1, 2017, pp. 2-3. Lowery's account conflicts with that offered by Jeannette Lily Hunt who held that a different daughter—Sarah—was in residence during the time of King's prospective visits.

DUFF: So it wasn't the back bedroom, it was the third bedroom?

LOWERY: No, it was the third bedroom.

DUFF: [laughs] This whole time I thought it was the back bedroom.[87]

Her characterization of the family's relationship to Walter McCall also corresponds to that of Ms. Hunt, an acknowledgement that there was a familial bond, but an uncertainty about the specific nature of the relationship:

DUFF: When you say, your cousin, so Walter McCall was he your cousin, or was he Benjamin Hunt's cousin? Your dad.

LOWERY: He was my cousin.

DUFF: And he was your dad's nephew,

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: Aha…

LOWERY: Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, I got to double-check that one. I'll double-check it with my cousin in the south. Because I know he was my cousin.

Ms. Lowery named her southern cousin as Sylvia Hunt, who she described as "a younger one, the one who knows everything," although later in the same interview, she acknowledges that "she only knows what her momma told her."[88] It should be noted that two of the newspaper advertisements that mention a presentation by Martin Luther King also mention Walter McCall (see Appendix C). They do not, however, shed light on either 753 Walnut Street or the Hunt family directly, and Ms. Lowery denied knowledge of any special affiliation between McCall and local Camden churches when asked.[89]

4. Interview with Donald "Ducky" Birts (2016)

The fourth interview linking Martin Luther King, Jr. with 753 Walnut Street was that of Donald "Ducky" Birts, a prominent Camden native, businessman, philanthropist, and civil rights activist who worked in the early 1960s with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and met Martin Luther King, Jr. on more than one occasion.[90] This oral history, collected by Patrick Duff in June of 2016, contains

[87] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[88] *Ibid*., p. 4.

[89] *Ibid*., p. 6. Duff asked Ms. Lowery: "And were they associated with any local churches in Camden? That you know of?" And she responded: "No, no…not on the weekends.

[90] For a full biography of Donald Birts, see http://duckybirtsfoundation.com/donaldbirts1.html

reminiscences by Birts about his time in Philadelphia and Camden in the early 1960s, as well as the conditions for African Americans both regionally and nationally.[91]

At the time of his interview, Birts had already read in the newspapers about Duff's efforts to preserve the Walnut Street property, which he confirms near the end of their discussion:

> Duff: Do you think that house on Walnut Street that King stayed in, do you think that should be preserved?
>
> Birts: Should be *preserved*. You're on the right track. I mean, you called me, I knew who you was. I knew about you. I knew [indecipherable] about that in the paper, had a section of the *Inquirer*, over here Jersey section, had about that, I said, "That's a good thing, man." You know, I never knew that you were doing this in Camden, till you called me. I didn't turn you down, no, I'd never turn you down.[92]

That Birts had pre-existing knowledge of the effort to investigate and preserve 753 Walnut *before* being asked to attest to his own knowledge of King's presence in Camden unfortunately calls into some question the reliability of the information he provides *about* 753 Walnut Street.

Such problems generally fall under the category of confirmation biases and constitute potential errors in information processing and analysis.[93] Confirmation biases may have occurred initially on the part of the researcher, Duff, as he searched for information sources likely to confirm his belief or hypothesis. In this case, Duff contacted Birts with the objective of gathering information about King's time in Camden, rather than with the broader goal of ascertaining *whether* King spent significant time in the city, and at this residence in particular. The distinction is an important one, as it indicates that the goal was to bolster a pre-ordained conclusion, rather than weigh available evidence.

Birts initially establishes that he is more familiar with King's time in Philadelphia, than in Camden:

> Duff: When did you meet Dr. King?
>
> Birts: I met Dr. King, 19—hmm—60, I think it was, 1960.
>
> Duff: Ok. And then did Dr. King tell you that he used to live in Camden?

---

[91] Correspondence, email from Patrick Duff to John O'Hara, June 27, 2017. From the outset, it is clear that the interview was conducted with a specific agenda in mind. Mr. Duff relayed the circumstances under which he communicated with Donald Birts: "A woman named Helene Pierson was handed a note at a meeting where she was talking about King in Camden and the person said that she should get into contact with Ducky. She then forwarded me the note and I found him via Congressperson Bob Brady's office, where he works as a community liaison."

[92] Donald "Ducky" Birts Interview by Patrick Duff, excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 16, 2016, p. 4.

[93] For a thorough account of various forms of confirmation bias, see Raymond S. Nickerson, "Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises," *Review of General Psychology* 2.2, 1998, 175-220, http://pages.ucsd.edu/~mckenzie/nickersonConfirmationBias.pdf

> Birts: Yeah, he told me, yeah, he told me. But I met him stronger coming to Philly with Jesse [Jackson], not in Camden, but coming to Philly, and then the meetings in Philly with Georgie Wood, Murray Mason, you know those people back in the day . . .[94]

A couple minutes later, the interviewer steers the reminiscence back to the key question of residency:

> Duff: . . . The conversation you had with Dr. King, did he specify how long he lived in Camden?
>
> Birts: No, he didn't.
>
> Duff: Ok.
>
> Birts: No, he didn't specify. During those days, coming from the south, they got a lot of relatives. And they stayed with each other, because they didn't have the money to go in a hotel. And they wouldn't accept us in the triple-A hotels, Holidays Inns, and the hotels now. Hilton and all those people. They didn't accept us, to stay there, number one. People do that talking now, everything's open, but back then, brother, you sat in the back of the bus. On the train, you sat in the back of the train. And you head in to town, you snuck into town, you snuck out of town. You didn't have that openness. They had that hook up. [FBI Director J. Edgar] Hoover back in them days was tracking King everywhere he went as a communist. He was considered as a normal being. He didn't have that royalty until late in his years, late in his years.
>
> Duff: Did Dr. King tell you where he lived in Camden?
>
> Birts: Yeah, Walnut Street, he told me Walnut Street, yeah. Walnut Street, yeah.
>
> Duff: Do you remember where you were when you had that conversation?
>
> Birts: Oh, man, I was a young whippersnapper, man, I don't know, might have been at the park, [indecipherable], or Dr. Wiggins' office. We only had a few landmarks. We weren't renegades everywhere.

In this exchange, Birts remembers a detail about Walnut Street but is unable to recall basic information as to the time and place of the conversation in which he acquired the information. And Birts was already familiar with the Walnut Street preservation effort before Duff requested the interview, and throughout the exchange, Duff offers confirmatory feedback to Birts, which could have caused his to have more confidence in his memory, than he might have otherwise.[95]

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[94] Donald "Ducky" Birts Interview, June 16, 2016, 1.

[95] Maria S. Zaragoza, Kristie E. Payment, et al., "Interviewing Witnesses: Forced Confabulation and Confirmatory Feedback Strengthens False Memories," *Psychological Science* 12.6 (2001): 473-477.

All other remaining evidence about King's time in New Jersey focuses on the Mary's Place incident and its potential impact on King's life and experience. It less often, however, directly extends to the question of King's association with 753 Walnut Street.

The only reference to events in Maple Shade, New Jersey in King's own words appeared in an article by Charles Layne for the *Philadelphia Tribune* published on October 28, 1961.[96] Layne was reporting on a speech by King at the end of a four-day visit to Philadelphia, "his former home city," as he "lived in this area ten years ago":

> …told reporters of his own local experience with segregation when, in 1951, while driving two friends from Philadelphia to Merchantville, NJ, the group stopped for some food. 'They refused to serve us,' King said. 'It was a painful experience because we decided to sit in.' He said the owner of the establishment thereupon produced a pistol saying, 'I'll kill for less than that.'
>
> King and his companions got the police and came back. He says the grand jury didn't indict because two white customers present at the time refused to testify. Dr. King's two companions on the adventure were Walter McCall and Rev. Ray Ware.[97]

Some details of this brief account accord with other descriptions of events that transpired in Maple Shade, NJ—the statement attributed to Nichols, and the reference to the two white customers who refused testify. Other elements, however, differ from what the documentary record supports, such as the misstated year, the account of "driving from Philadelphia" to a destination in Merchantville, New Jersey, and the reference to the Rev. Ware. While this statement constitutes perhaps the strongest evidence of the role of the Mary's Place incident on King's earliest civil rights activities, it does not provide evidence of his association with 753 Walnut Street, apart from mentioning Walter McCall, whose reputed family owned the building.

Walter McCall's own interview, collected by Herbert Holmes in 1970, also recalls the 1950 incident:

> McCall: The first civil rights struggle that King had ever been in was with me. It was in Maple Shade, New Jersey in 1950, I think. We went into a restaurant one night and to my amazement it was a discriminating type of place and the man refused to serve us. The man shoved a 45 pistol in my face while King and our guests were seated at the table. As a result of what took place, I brought a suit against the man. King and I served as our own defense. It was the first time that we had ever been in any kind of civil rights struggle. The attorney General for that section of New Jersey, Johnson, was a dear friend of mine. He provided counsel for us and we won our case in the preliminaries. Then it was taken to a grand jury. We couldn't be our plaintiff and defendant at the same time. It just happened that the young white boys who were there and were to testify against the owner discovered that their parents had brought pressure against them and they couldn't

[96] Charles Layne, "Rev. King Lauds on Strides to Integration," *The Philadelphia Tribune,* October 28, 1961, 1.

[97] *Ibid.*

> appear. As a result, we just dropped the thing. I'm sure that Ernie, who ran this place, was very happy as well.[98]

But, once again, while his recollections help establish a link between the Mary's Place incident and King's experience with discrimination as a young adult, McCall unfortunately does not mention Camden, the Hunt family, or 753 Walnut Street.

Finally, in January 1976, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* ran an extended obituary piece about Ernest Nichols, Proprietor of Mary's Place and his involvement in the Maple Shade incident. "Dr. King," the obituary reports, "according to a spokesman for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, often recounted the incident as one example of what stirred his interest in the civil rights movement." Thomas McGann, by that time a Burlington County Superior Court Judge, also reflected on the 1950 incident for the obituary:

> "No one gave much thought to it at all until 1968," [McGann said]. "At that time, some senator had asked Dr. King what inspired his interest in civil rights and he recounted what had happened to him in what he called a suburb of New Jersey."[99]

Several years later, McGann wrote a piece for the New Jersey Bar Association's bimonthly journal, *New Jersey Lawyer*, a version of which was also published in the *Courier-Post* on February 4, 1996. In this article, McGann offered additional details:

> As I listened to radio reporter Fulton Lewis, Jr. in the early 1960s, he was commenting on the national news of the day and touching on a significant report of a U.S. Senate committee dealing with civil rights and the committee's principal witness, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. According to Lewis, Dr. King, when questioned, explained why he had taken such an unusual interest in civil rights.
>
> Dr. King pointed to an incident that occurred when he was a seminarian and was staying with a friend in Camden. They and others one evening went out and stopped at a place in a "suburb of Camden" where they sought to buy "refreshments" but were rudely refused and threatened by the proprietor. [100]

It is worth noting that McGann does not directly claim that he knew that King was "staying with a friend in Camden." He instead attributes that claim to Lewis' paraphrase of King's explanation to a U.S. senator. Time is also a mitigating factor; McGann's source for Lewis' statement was a radio program broadcast two decades earlier. McGann then paraphrases Lewis as quoting King: "Dr. King pointed to an incident…one evening… in a 'suburb of Camden,' where they sought to buy 'refreshments.'"[101]

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[98] Walter McCall Interview by Herbert Holmes, March 31, 1970, 16-17.

[99] George Anastasia, "Ernest Nichols, 80, Bartender Recalled for King Incident," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 17, 1976, 11.

[100] W. Thomas McGann, "King's Camden Dispute Was Crucial," *New Jersey Lawyer* (January 16, 1996): 6.

[101] *Ibid.*

Complicating this further still, McGann's earlier 1976 account in Nichols' obituary held that King's account was made directly to a senator in 1968: "King recounted what happened to him in what he called 'a suburb of New Jersey.'"[102] This attributes words to King at a time later than "the early 1960s," and leaves Fulton Lewis, Jr. out altogether. McGann's still later account in the 1996 *Courier-Post* revision of the *New Jersey Lawyer* essay repeats the claim about hearing this information through Fulton Lewis, more specifically through a broadcast in which Lewis said King answered a senator's question about his interests in civil rights by saying he was trying to purchase "'refreshments'… 'in a suburb of Camden.'"[103]

King's only appearance as a principal witness before a U.S. Senate committee, however, was his December 15, 1966 testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Operations on the subject of the Federal Role in Urban Affairs. His testimony contains no reference to Camden, the Mary's Place incident, or matters relevant to this report.[104] Moreover, this testimony was given approximately four months after Lewis' death, challenging the accuracy of McGann's memory.

McGann's accounts both in *New Jersey Lawyer* and the *Courier-Post* introduce yet another uncertainty about the legal aftermath of the Mary's Place incident. In both publications, McGann writes that, after some preliminaries in the 1950 case, including transfer to Burlington County because of the seriousness of the accusation, "nothing ever came of the charges because the complaining witnesses never appeared before the grand jury."[105] In legal terminology, a "complaining witness" refers to the alleged victim of a crime. King and McCall, by contrast, both reported that the case was dropped when two white witnesses failed to testify. McGann's account says that King and McCall did not show up. It is possible they somehow learned that the "two white witnesses" were not going to show up, and so chose to absent themselves as well, rationalizing their subsequent claims, or that King simply had to arrive at his brother's wedding by June 17, and decided that letting go of this legal entanglement in New Jersey was easier and more prudent. Or, it is possible that King and McCall's account is true and the "two white witnesses" did not show up.

In the end, McGann's testimony is difficult to substantiate. It might well support the ideas that King stayed in Camden the night of June 12, but other discrepancies make it difficult to parse what definitively occurred.

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[102] Anastasia, "Ernest Nichols," p. 11.

[103] W. Thomas McGann, "The South Jersey Tavern Dispute Which Inspired Martin Luther King," *New Jersey Lawyer* (February 4, 1996): 24. Lewis died August 20, 1966, and his final news broadcasts occurred in August that year. Recordings of all of Lewis' broadcasts through 1966 are held by a repository at Syracuse University.

[104] Testimony of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization of the Committee on Government Operations, United States Senate, Eighty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, December 14 and 15, 1966, Part 14*. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1967. 2967-2982, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/king_justice_1966.htm

[105] McGann, "King's Camden Dispute," p. 6.

Section 4: Conclusions

Difficulty characterizing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s time in Camden is apparent in the media coverage related to the property between 2015 and 2017. Some journalists enthusiastically refer to 753 Walnut Street as King's one-time "home," and others more judiciously referring to the property as a place he "stayed," "may have stayed," or "visited." The Stockton Research Team concludes that King may reasonably be said to have "stayed" or "visited" 753 Walnut Street at certain points in time, but at no time could be said to have "lived" there according to usual standards for establishing residency, i.e., tax records, voting records, census records, a property lease, a permanent mailing address.

The paucity of concrete information about King's potential Camden movements means that it ultimately comes down to speculation about whether he stayed a night, a week, a month, or on some regular or inconsistent basis at 753 Walnut Street during his Crozer years, and whether he studied there, had any more significant relationships there, or simply visited or slept there on recreational visits in Camden or Philadelphia. Clayborne Carson, one of King's chief biographers, when asked about the Camden connection, offered the tantalizing theory that perhaps King "had a pad . . . a place outside of the campus dormitory where if you wanted to take a trip to Philadelphia, you had a place to stay."[106] In this imagining, King may have enjoyed select evenings or weekends in a diverse city away from Crozer's almost all-white student population, free of any *in loco parentis*-type strictures that may have existed on campus, and beyond the scope of a small-town population where he had a reputation as a serious student and community leader.

However, such propositions largely remain conjecture. While many contemporary scholars hold that King's life has too often been treated as strictly serious and cerebral, and that his experiences as an embodied mid-century, African-American may also be important to understanding his formation and development, the lack of evidence about King's time at 753 Walnut Street makes it difficult to determine whether the city was a sanctuary or study, a base for weekend recreation or a convenient place to stay in between some combination of these activities.

Our belief that King spent some time between 1948 and 1951 at 753 Walnut Street rests largely on extrapolations of evidence fragments and old memories, at times confusing or even contradictory. Taken together, however, such documentation points to the more than likely assumption of King's sometime presence at 753 Walnut Street, at least during the May and June of 1950. King's friendship with Walter McCall, McCall's familial relationship with Benjamin Hunt, the likelihood that McCall periodically stayed at his relative's residence, as well as the probability that King may have joined him on occasion, are not a preponderance of proof or a definitive conclusion. They do create, however, a plausible scenario, the most likely situation available evidence suggests.

[106] Ross, "A Camden Address,"

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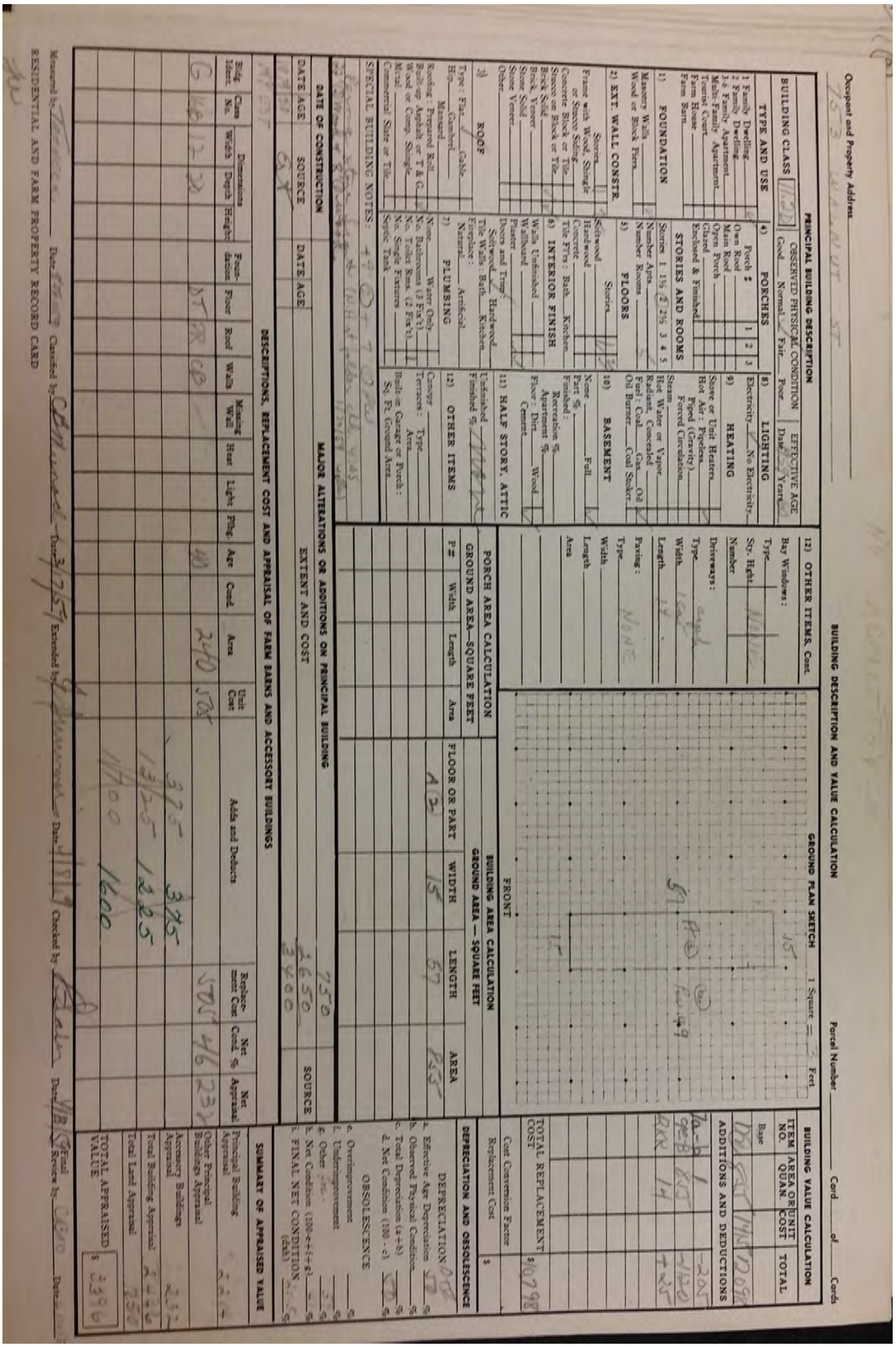
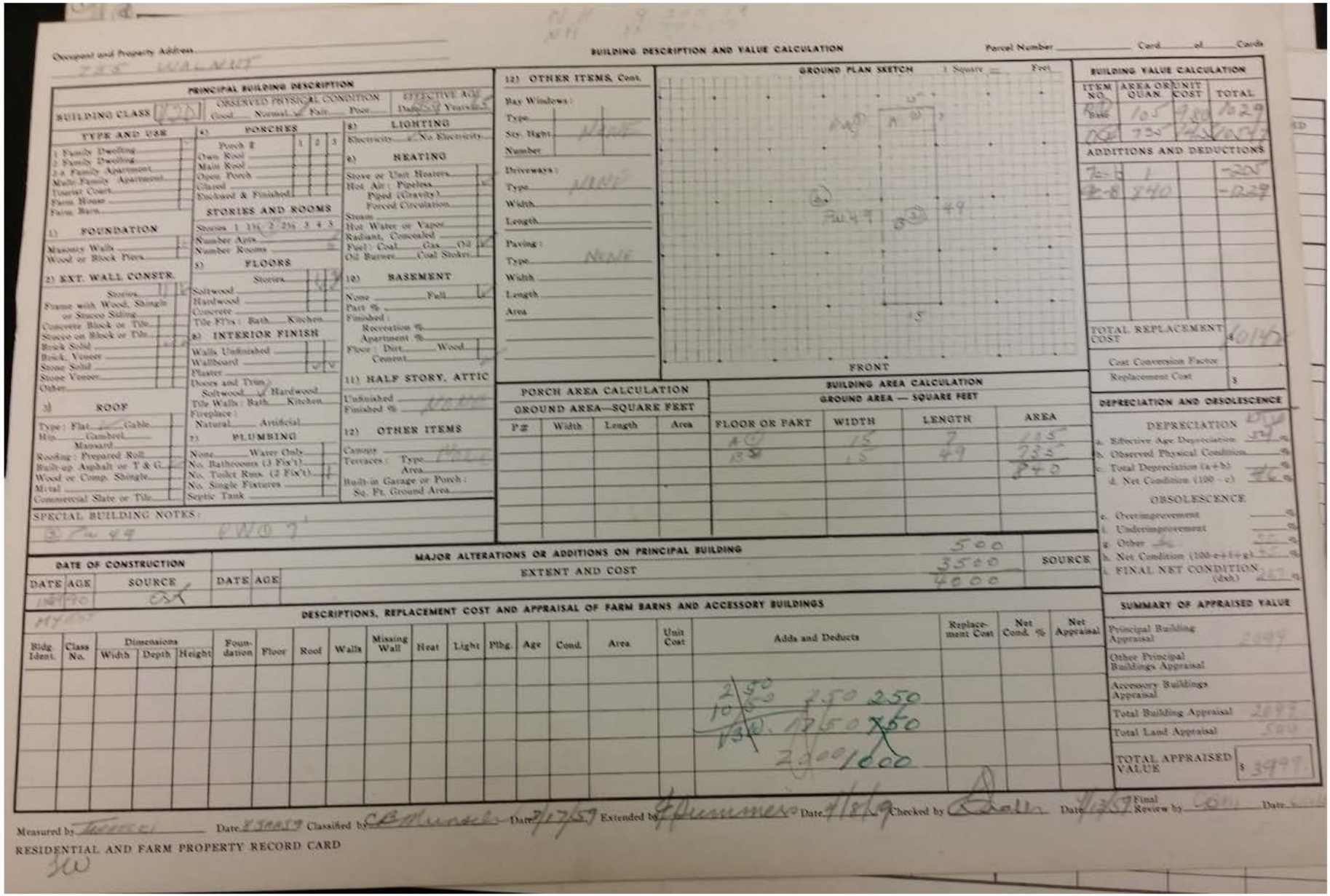
Appendix A:

Property Report Cards: 753-755 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey (1958-9)
Sanborn Map of the 700 Block of Walnut Street (1950)





Occupant and Property Address 225 WALNUT

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND VALUE CALCULATION

Parcel Number _____ Card ____ of ____ Cards

PRINCIPAL BUILDING DESCRIPTION

BUILDING CLASS 100 | OBSERVED PHYSICAL CONDITION: Good ___ Normal ✓ Fair ___ Poor ___ | EFFECTIVE AGE: Date 59 Years 5

TYPE AND USE: 1 Family Dwelling; 2 Family Dwelling; 2-4 Family Apartment; Multi-Family Apartment; Tourist Court; Farm House; Farm Barn

1) FOUNDATION: Masonry Walls; Wood or Block Piers

2) EXT. WALL CONSTR.: Stories 1½; Frame with Wood, Shingle or Stucco Siding; Concrete Block or Tile; Stucco on Block or Tile; Brick Solid; Brick, Veneer; Stone Solid; Stone Veneer; Other

3) ROOF: Type: Flat ___ Gable ___ Hip ___ Gambrel ___ Mansard ___; Roofing: Prepared Roll ___ Built-up Asphalt or T & G ___ Wood or Comp. Shingle ___ Metal ___ Commercial Slate or Tile ___

4) PORCHES: Porch # | 1 | 2 | 3; Own Roof; Main Roof; Open Porch; Glazed; Enclosed & Finished

STORIES AND ROOMS: Stories 1 1½ 2 2½ 3 4 5; Number Apts; Number Rooms

5) FLOORS: Stories; Softwood; Hardwood; Concrete; Tile FTrs: Bath ___ Kitchen ___

6) INTERIOR FINISH: Walls Unfinished; Wallboard; Plaster; Doors and Trim: Softwood ✓ Hardwood; Tile Walls: Bath ___ Kitchen ___; Fireplace: Natural ___ Artificial

7) PLUMBING: None ___ Water Only ___; No. Bathrooms (3 Fix't); No. Toilet Rms. (2 Fix't); No. Single Fixtures; Septic Tank

8) LIGHTING: Electricity ✓ No Electricity ___

9) HEATING: Stove or Unit Heaters; Hot Air: Pipeless ___ Piped (Gravity) ___ Forced Circulation ___; Steam ___; Hot Water or Vapor ___; Radiant, Concealed ___; Fuel: Coal ___ Gas ___ Oil ___; Oil Burner ___ Coal Stoker ___

10) BASEMENT: None ___ Full ___; Part %; Finished: Recreation %; Apartment %; Floor: Dirt ___ Wood ___ Cement ___

11) HALF STORY, ATTIC: Unfinished; Finished %

12) OTHER ITEMS: Canopy; Terraces: Type ___ Area ___; Built-in Garage or Porch: Sq. Ft. Ground Area ___

SPECIAL BUILDING NOTES: 2 FW 49 FWD 7

12) OTHER ITEMS, Cont.

Bay Windows: Type; Sty. High; Number

Driveways: Type NONE; Width; Length

Paving: Type NONE; Width; Length; Area

GROUND PLAN SKETCH 1 Square = ___ Feet

BUILDING VALUE CALCULATION

ITEM NO.	AREA OR QUAN	UNIT COST	TOTAL
Bldg	105	9.80	1029
OP	735	1.25	919

ADDITIONS AND DEDUCTIONS

Fe-1	1		-20
Fe-8	540		-027

TOTAL REPLACEMENT COST $ 6140

Cost Conversion Factor

Replacement Cost $

PORCH AREA CALCULATION

GROUND AREA—SQUARE FEET

P#	Width	Length	Area

BUILDING AREA CALCULATION

GROUND AREA — SQUARE FEET

FLOOR OR PART	WIDTH	LENGTH	AREA
A①	15	7	105
B②	15	49	735
			840

DEPRECIATION AND OBSOLESCENCE

DEPRECIATION

a. Effective Age Depreciation 32 %
b. Observed Physical Condition ___ %
c. Total Depreciation (a+b) ___ %
d. Net Condition (100 – c) 75 %

OBSOLESCENCE

e. Overimprovement ___ %
f. Underimprovement ___ %
g. Other 25 %
h. Net Condition (100-e+f+g) 75 %
i. FINAL NET CONDITION (d×h) 25 %

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

DATE	AGE	SOURCE
1900	59	CSF

MAJOR ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS ON PRINCIPAL BUILDING

DATE	AGE	EXTENT AND COST	SOURCE
		500	
		3500	
		4000	

DESCRIPTIONS, REPLACEMENT COST AND APPRAISAL OF FARM BARNS AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

Bldg. Ident.	Class No.	Dimensions: Width	Depth	Height	Foundation	Floor	Roof	Walls	Missing Wall	Heat	Light	Plbg.	Age	Cond.	Area	Unit Cost	Adds and Deducts	Replacement Cost	Net Cond. %	Net Appraisal
																	2 50 250			
																	10 50 500			
																	30 12 50 750			
																	2 000 1000			

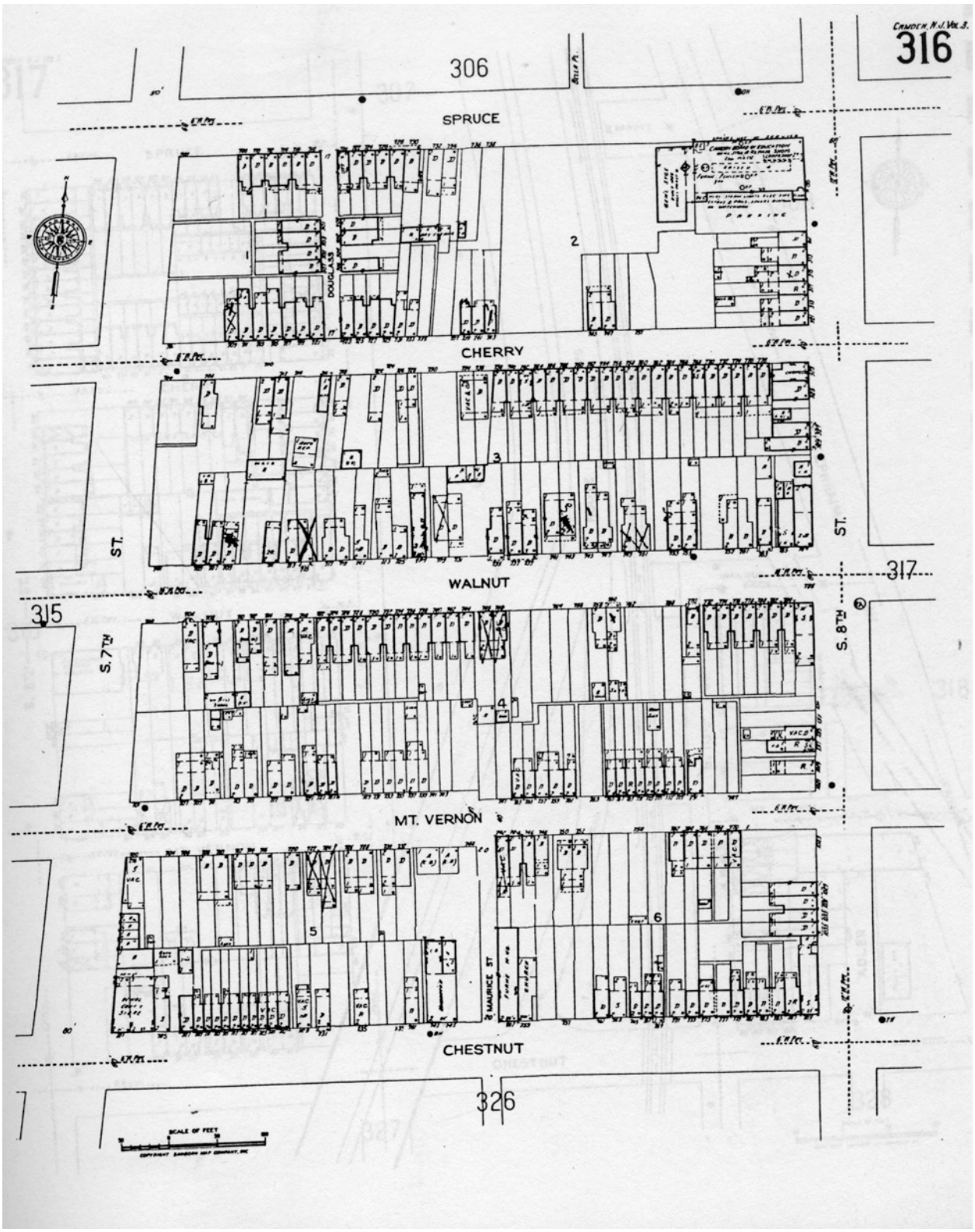
SUMMARY OF APPRAISED VALUE

Principal Building Appraisal	2099
Other Principal Buildings Appraisal	
Accessory Buildings Appraisal	
Total Building Appraisal	2099
Total Land Appraisal	500
TOTAL APPRAISED VALUE	$ 3999

Measured by TWH Date 2 JAN 59 Classified by CB Munsch Date 2/17/59 Extended by J Summers Date 4/8/59 Checked by [illegible] Date 4/13/59 Final Review by [illegible] Date [illegible]

RESIDENTIAL AND FARM PROPERTY RECORD CARD

SW


316
306
SPRUCE
CHERRY
WALNUT
MT. VERNON
CHESTNUT
326
315
317
S. 7TH
S. 8TH
ST.
ST.
DOUGLASS ST
MAURICE ST
1
2
3
4
5
6

Appendix B:

700 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey City Block Reconstruction

700 Block of Walnut Street, Camden, NJ, Odd Side of the Street

	1947 Polk Directory		1940 Federal Decennial Census				1958/59
No.	**Occupants**	**Ownership**	**Name**	**Relation**	**Race**	**Age**	
701	Herman's Second Hand Furniture	Renter	Edward Beamon	Head	N	52	
	Joseph L. Fletcher	Renter	Ralph F. Thompson	Head	N	35	
	Mrs. Rose Langford	Renter	William S. Robinson	Head	N	69	
	Ernest D. Chaney	Renter	Ida Robinson	Wife	N	49	
		Renter	Willie Jones	Head	N	44	
		Renter	Leatha R. Jones	Wife	N	30	
	Johnson: 206 Walnut?	Renter	Herbert Johnson	Head	N	23	
		Renter	Luther Langford	Head	N	36	
			Rose Langford	Wife	N	29	
703	Mrs. Sallie B. Steele	Owner					
		Renter	Lillian Robinson	Head	N	54	
			Marie Williams	Daughter	N	35	
			Florence Short	Daughter	N	34	
			Alice Hartnell	Lodger	N	16	
			Alice Williams	Granddaughter	N	13	
	Adams: no listing		Thomas Adams	Lodger	N	12	
	Do		Matthew Adams	Lodger	N	6	
			Loreace Hammond	Lodger	N	6	
			Russell Wright	Lodger	N	53	
			Clarence Short	S-I-L	N	32	
			Alfred O. Hartnell	Lodger	N	3/12	
705	Mrs. Mildred A. Taylor	Renter	Mildred Taylor	Head	N	42	
			Mildred Taylor	Daughter	N	21	
			John E. Taylor	Son	N	19	
			Edward Taylor	Son	N	18	
			Bertha Holland	Mother	N	68	
707	William A. Thompson						
		Renter	Charles Schultz	Head	W	57	
			Adeline Shultz	Wife	W	55	
			Catherine Shultz	Daughter	W	28	
			George Schultz	Son	W	30	
709	Olie Houston	Owner	Ephraim Wallen	Head	W	70	
	Sidney Evans		Anna W. Zihn	Sister	W	77	
	Mrs. Alma Harris		Anna S. Solley	Housekeeper	W	64	
711	Nathan W. Reed	Renter	Nathan Reed	Head	N	43	

	Reed's Beauty Shop		Naomi Reed	Wife	N	34
			Charles Newton	Lodger	N	57
			Mary Lee	M-I-L	N	56
713	Christian Baumann, cement contractor	Owner	Christian Bauman	Head	W	71
			Mary Bauman	Wife	W	70
715	Harry Albert	Owner	Harry P. Albert	Head	W	45
			Fannie Albert	Wife	W	40
			Samuel Albert	Son	W	14
			Bernard Albert	Son	W	13
			Alexander Friday	Lodger	W	33
717	Howard W. Ways	Owner				
	Patterson: 623 Elm	Renter	Calvin Patterson	Head	W	39
	Do		Viola M. Patterson	Wife	W	38
	Do		Calvin J. Patterson	Son	W	17
	Do		Ruth Patterson	Daughter	W	14
	Do		Viola D. Patterson	Daughter	W	13
	Do		Elizabeth Patterson	Daughter	W	10
	Do		Warren Patterson	Son	W	5
719	Alf B. Long	Owner	Alfred Long	Head	W	59
			Laura Long	Wife	W	52
			Erma Long	Daughter	W	16
721	Virgil Harrison	Owner	Virgil Harrison		N	26
	Mrs. Madge Calloway	Owner	Matthew Whalen	Head	W	39
	Whalen: 2836 Idaho		Johanna Whalen	Wife	W	48
	Do		Lois Whalen	Daughter	W	7
	Do		James Whalen	Son	W	2
			John Dotter	B-I-L	W	45
			William Dotter	B-I-L	W	39
723	Firpo's Cleaners	Owner	Harry Godfrey	Head	W	63
	Moses Lee		Dara Godfrey	Wife	W	57
			Morris Godfrey	Son	W	37
			Albert Godfrey	Son	W	33
725	William Holmes	Renter	Charlie Mims	Head	N	39
	Mims: 724 Walnut		Lillie Mims	Wife	N	29
			Willie Stone	Head	N	32
727	Dr. Merton B. Anderson					
	Mrs. Bessie A. Branch	Owner	Bessie A. Branch	Head	N	61
			Mamie A. Harrison	Sister	N	56
	Godfrey: no listing		Margaret Godfrey	Lodger	N	26
	Carter: 636 Royden		Margaret Carter	Lodger	N	22
	Porter: no listing		Clementh Porter	Lodger	N	25
729	Earl J. Matthews	Owner	Earl Matthews	Head	N	27

			Frances Matthews	Wife	N	21	
			Earl Matthews Jr.	Son	N	2	
731	Edward L. Ashley	Owner					
		Owner	Anara Loricy	Head	W	70	
			Norman Loricy	Son	W	58	
			Katherine Loricy	Daughter	W	35	
733							
735	Constance Chase	Owner					
	Bumbrey: no listing		Charlotte Bumbrey	Head	N	28	
			Robert Bumbrey	Son	N	6/12	
737	Edward W. Graham	Owner					
739	Rev. Joseph L. Russ	Owner					
	Graham: 737 Walnut	Renter	Edward Graham	Head	N	56	
			Elizabeth Graham	Wife	N	48	
	Do		John Graham	Son	N	28	
			Esther Graham	Daughter	N	10	
	Graham: 629 Randolph		Walter Graham	Son	N	8	
741	Charles C. Showell	Owner	Charles Showell	Head	N	51	same
			Virginia Showell	Wife	N	50	
			Ron P. Wilson	Lodger	N	56	
743	David Tailor, hat cleaner	Owner					
		Renter	Emma Watson	Head	N	41	
	Watson: 524 Cedar		Laura Watson	Daughter	N	18	
	Watson: no listing		Martin Watson	Son	N	17	
	Do		John Watson	Son	N	16	
	Do		Katherine Watson	Daughter	N	13	
	Do		Muriel Watson	Daughter	N	11	
	Boss: no listing		Edward Boss	S-I-L	N	22	
	Do		Gertrude Boss	Daughter	N	21	
			Edward Boss Jr.	Grandson	N	5/12	
745	Howard Smith	Renter	David Sterling	Head	N	58	
			Mabel Sterling	Wife	N	50	
	Sterling: no listing		Walter Sterling	Son	N	30	
	Do		Jesse Sterling	Son	N	27	
	Do		Adonis Sterling	Son	N	19	
	Do		Sara Sterling	Daughter	N	17	
	Do		Edgar Sterling	Son	N	14	
	Do		Mabel Sterling	Daughter	N	13	
	Do		William Sterling	Son	N	10	
	Do		John Sterling	Son	N	8	
			Mary Thompson	Aunt	N	78	
747	Davis Starling	Owner					Edgar Starling
		Renter	C. John Simmons	Head	N	63	
	Simmons: 730 Chestnut		Violetta Simmons	Daughter	N	32	
	Simmons: no listing		John B. Simmons	Son	N	30	

	Do		Mary Simmons	Daughter	N	28	
	Do		Leon Simmons	Son	N	20	
	Do		Clement Simmons	Son	N	17	
	Do		Ernest Simmons	Son	N	14	
	Collins: 730 Chestnut		Charles Collins	Son	N	17	
749	Alf A. Jackson	Owner	Alfred Jackson	Head	N	59	
			Pricilla Jackson	Wife	N	59	same
	Holland: no listing		George Holland	S-I-L	N	28	
	Do		Nancy Holland	Daughter	N	29	
	Do		Richard Holland	Grandson	N	8	
	Do		George Holland	Grandson	N	6	
	Do		Irwin Holland	Grandson	N	2	
	Do		Nancy Holland	Granddaughter	N	3/12	
	Do		Henry Holland	S-I-L's Brother	N	21	
			Sara Anne Handy	M-I-L	N	76	
751	Mrs. Lucinda A. Reddick	Renter	Eddie Blair	Head	N	46	same
			Emma Blair	Wife	N	35	
	Blair: no listing		Eddie Blair	Son	N	12	
			Maranda Young	Lodger	N	53	
753	Benjamin Hunt	Owner					No surname
	Laws: 647 Walnut	Renter	Antonio Laws	Head	N	55	
	Do		Estella Laws	Wife	N	45	
	Do		Charles Brooks	Son	N	14	
	Do		Arona Laws	Daughter	N	9	
	Do		Leroy Laws	Son	N	5	
	Do		Shirley Laws	Daughter	N	1	
			King Comfort	Lodger	N	80	
			Anna Comfort	Lodger	N	69	
755	Earl H. Bundy	Renter	Rebecca Somerville	Head	N	33	No surname
	Harry W. Ford		Jodie Fletcher	Lodger	N	35	
	Wise: 707 Central		Elizabeth Wise	Lodger	N	23	
	Somerville: no listing		Zeldia Somerville	Daughter	N	13	
	McCain: 1024 S. 8th		Booker McCain	Lodger	N	26	
757							vacant
759	Henry E. Snead	Owner	Franklin P. Roth	Head	W	85	Ernest Calloway
			Cecilia E. Roth	Sister	W	76	
761	Oriental Lounge						Ernest Calloway
763	Daniel B. Reigel	Renter	Viola Blevins	Head	W	45	
	Mrs. Elizabeth Wood		Elizabeth Wood	Sister	W	42	
			Boyd Reigel	Lodger	W	50	
	Wood?: not here		John Wood	Nephew	W	27	
765	Tony's Market Percell K. Clary						
767	Carter & Holland, Real Estate	Owner	Elsie Simpson	Head	W		

	Merrill V. Holland	Owner	Eleanor Simpson	Daughter	W	
	Charles W. Carter		Wilhelmina Simpson	Daughter	W	
			Christine Silver	Daughter	W	
787		Renter	Morris O. Lee	Head	N	57
			Madge Lee	Wife	N	48
	Fortune: no listing		Evelyn Fortune	Lodger	N	25

700 Block of Walnut Street, Camden, NJ, Even Side of the Street

	1947 Polk Directory		**1940 Federal Decennial Census**				**1958/59**
No.	**Occupants**	**Ownership**	**Name**	**Relation**	**Race**	**Age**	
700	Henry Jackson Jackson's Luncheonette						
			Joseph Szymanski	Head	W	53	
	Szymanski: no listing		Francis Szymanski	Son	W	23	
702	Henry P. Coleman	Renter	Annie Brown	Head	N	53	
	Murray: 1157 Baring		George Murray	S-I-L	M	27	
			Viola Murray	Daughter	M	26	
			Marion Brown	Granddaughter	N	12	
704	Edward Fussell	Owner					
		Renter	John Battles	Head	N	48	
			Irene Battles	Wife	W	52	
	Norris: no listing		Louella Norris	Daughter	N	22	
	Do		Theodore Norris	S-I-L			
706		Owner	Joseph F. Reinhart	Head	W	57	
			Emma B. Reinhart	Wife	W	48	
708	Joseph F. Reinhart	Owner	Joseph F. Reinhart	Head	W	57	
			Emma B. Reinhart	Wife	W	48	
710	Mrs. Anna Alber	Renter	William J. Alber	Head	W	61	
			Anna E. Alber	Wife	W	56	
712	William Tyler	Owner					
		Renter	William Tyler	Head	W	33	
	Tyler: no listing		Elnora Tyler	Wife	W	25	
714	Mrs. Clara Morris Millard Wallace						
		Renter	Alice Thompson	Head	N	31	
	Jones: no listing	Renter	Elizabeth Jones	Head	N	20	
	Keyes: no listing	Renter	Roosevelt Keyes	Head	N	31	
	Do		Maxwell Keyes	Brother	N	26	
		Renter	Norman Brown	Head	N	45	

			Ethel Brown	Wife	N	40
	Harris: 1149 Baring or 702 Chestnut	Renter	Minnie Harris	Head	N	29
		Renter	Aldophus McSaity	Head	N	40
716	Isaac Kader, shoe repairs	Owner	Isaac Kader	Head	W	60
		Renter	Irene Johnson	Head	N	19
	Johnson: 729 Cherry	Renter	Carlton Johnson	Head	N	27
			Anna Johnson	Wife	N	25
		Renter	Eva C. Hawkins	Head	N	50
			Odessa Hawkins	S-I-L	N	30
	Sadler:726-728 Cherry		Luther Sadler	Nephew	N	28
	Johnson: no listing	Renter	Esther Johnson	Head	N	25
	Johnson: 921 Chestnut	Renter	Hazel Johnson	Head	N	19
		Renter	Marian Simpson	Head	N	41
	Simpson: no listing		Albine Simpson	Son	N	4
			Elba Simpson	Daughter	N	1
		Renter	Jesse Bratman	Head	N	35
		Renter	Rex Warthy	Head	N	37
			Katie Warthy	Wife	N	30
718	Leonard Larton	Owner	Melvin Oglesby	Head	N	38
			Jessie Oglesby	Wife	N	37
	Oglesby: same address		David Oglesby	Son	N	16
	Cores: no listing		Peter Cores	Lodger	N	15
	Reader: no listing		Victor Reader	Lodger	N	13
	West: no listing		Edward West	Lodger	N	6
720						
722	John W. Ways	Owner				
724	Charles Mims	Owner				
		Renter	Bessie Turner	Head	N	44
			Katherine Turner	Daughter	N	21
	Turner: 1119 Marion		Lillian Turner	Daughter	N	20
			Daniel Cooper	Lodger	N	60
726	Mrs. Willie M. Harris	Owner				
		Renter	Thomas Sinclair	Head	N	41
			Gertrude Sinclair	Sister	N	40
728	Richard Edmonds					
		Owner	Philip P. Fletcher	Head	W	60
			Ada Fletcher	Wife	W	59
			Emma Paterson	Lodger	W	64
730	Franklin Brown	Owner				
		Renter	Frances Casselle	Head	N	46
	Casselle: no listing		Wadsworth	Son	N	22

			Casselle				
	Do		??? Casselle	Son	N	22	
	Do		Theresa Casselle	D-I-L	N	21	
	Hemmons: no listing		Francis Hemmons	Daughter	N	21	
	Do		John Hemmons	Grandson	N	2	
			Byron Davis	Lodger	N	41	
732	Mrs. Kath Turner	Owner					
	Morton:	Renter	Madison Morton	Head	N	52	
	734 Chestnut						
			Caroline Morton	Daughter	N	20	
			Madison Morton Jr.	Son	N	13	
			Jackeline Morton	Daughter	N	11	
			Naomi Morton	Daughter	N	8	
			Ernest Morton	Son	N	3	
			Anna B. Morton	Mother	N	63	
734	Michael Albert	Owner					
		Owner	Anna Albert	Head	W	75	
			Alexander G. Albert	Son	W	37	
			Michael Albert	Son	W	35	
736	Mrs. Evelyn Allen	Owner					
		Owner	Isaac Merritt	Head	N	47	
			Beulla Merritt	Wife	N	39	
	Merritt: 2026 S. 7th		Dozer Merritt	Son	N	21	
	Johnson: no listing		Nathaniel Johnson	Nephew	N	10	
			Mary Merritt	Mother	N	67	
738	Powder Puff Beauty Shop						
	Mrs. Naomi Jones						
		Renter	Edward Ashley	Head	N	37	
			Estella Ashley	Wife	N	35	
	Ashley: 731 Walnut		Edward Ashley	Son	N	15	
	Do		Charles Ashley	Son	N	14	
740	Paul McNair						
	Merritt: no listing	Renter	Samuel Merritt	Head	N	24	
	Do		Laubernia Merritt	Wife	N	23	
	Do		Earl Merritt	Son	N	7	
	Lewis: 833 Chestnut		Jessie Lewis	Lodger	N	25	
742	Reginald D. Hilton	Owner					Jordan
		Renter	Helen Anderson	Head	N	33	
	Anderson: 504 Penn		Thomas Anderson	Son	N	21	
	Anderson: 842 S. 8th		Hazel Anderson	Son	N	20	
			Sadie Jones	Mother	N	65	
744	Wilton H. Billups	Owner					
		Renter	H. Wilton	Head	N	37	

			Billups				
			Marion Billups	Wife	N	32	
	McCurley: no listing		Lawrence McCurley	Son	N	13	
746	Ezekiel T. Warren						
	Huggins: no listing	Renter	Thomas Huggins	Head	N	26	
	Do		E. Frances Huggins	Wife	N	19	
	Thomas: no listing?		Robert Thomas	B-I-L	N	17	
			Joseph Davis	Lodger	N	30	
			Vivian Davis	Lodger's wife	N	27	
748	Mrs. Helen T. Demby						Laramore
		Renter	Herbert Tufts	Head	N	40	
			Sudella Tufts	Wife	N	44	
	Gray: no listing		Eulalia Gray	Daughter	N	16	
750		Renter	Bertha Allen	Head	N	47	vacant
			Clennell Richards	S-I-L	N	36	
			Fannie Richards	Daughter	N	32	
	Richards: no listing		Desmond Richards	Grandson	N	16	
	Allen: no listing		Betty Allen	Daughter	N	15	
	Richards: no listing		Theresa Richards	Granddaughter	N	15	
	Richards: no listing		Ruth Richards	Granddaughter	N	12	
			Edward Dorothy	Cousin	N	51	
752	William Copeland						vacant
754	Mrs. Florence Hoffman	Owner	Florence Hoffman	Head	W	65	Mrs. McChanney
			Jessie Hoffman	Daughter	W	30	
			Ruth Hoffman	Daughter	W	30	
			Russel Sweeten	Lodger	W	50	
			Shirley Hoffman	Grandchild	W	7	
756	Lawrence O'Bryant						same
		Renter	James Mitchell	Head	N	33	
			Blanche Faicon	Lodger	N	47	
758	Mrs. Augustina Bock	Owner	Augustina Bock	Head	W	59	same
			Michael Brzezenski	Lodger	W	48	
760	Reuben J. Potter	Owner	Reuben Potter	Head	N	42	
762	Hermann Somerville		Azalea Potter	Wife	N	41	
		Renter	Lydia Mopp	Head	N	52	
	Mopp: no listing		James Mopp	Son	N	15	
	Do		Cara Mopp	Daughter	N	18	
	Do		Laura Mopp	Daughter	N	17	
	Do		Edith Mopp	Daughter	N	12	
			Lulu Potter	Daughter	N	23	
			Constance D.	Granddaughter	N	5	

			Potter			
			Maurice Potter	Grandson	N	9/12
764						
766						
768	Mrs. Pearl Edmonds	Owner				
		Renter	John Dobson	Head	N	57
770	Mrs. Madeline Stevenson	Owner	Mary Stevenson	Head	N	70
			Mamie Davis	Daughter	N	42
			Rena Carter	Daughter	N	55
			Stella Stevenson	Daughter	N	30
	Davis: same address		Hiram Davis	S-I-L	N	34
			Hiram Davis	Grandson	N	9
			Barbara Stevenson	Daughter	N	2
	Mrs. Mamie Davis					
772	Frank E. Anderson					
774	Nelson J. Boyd	Owner	Nelson J. Boyd	Head	N	43
			Bertha Boyd	Wife	N	39
			Hattie Boyd	Daughter	N	25
	Boyd: same address		William Boyd	Son	N	24
	Boyd: 767 Chestnut		Jerome Boyd	Son	N	21
			Sadie Boyd	Daughter	N	20
	Boyd: same address		Nelson Boyd Jr.	Son	N	13
			Elaine Boyd	Daughter	N	4
	McCall: no listing		Moses McCall	B-I-L	N	27
	Do		Frank McCall	B-I-L	N	32
776	Philip Johnson	Renter	Ida Williams	Head	N	29
	Williams: no listing		Robert L. Williams	Son	N	8
	Do		Vivian F. Williams	Daughter	N	5
	Do		Elizabeth Williams	Daughter	N	2
	Jones: 397 Morse		Norma Jones	Lodger	N	28
778	Mrs. Fannie E. Barber	Owner				
		Renter	Garrison Wise	Head	N	45
			Rosa Wise	Wife	N	33
	Wise: no listing		James Wise	Son	N	16
	Hack: no listing		Lillian Hack	Niece	N	14
780	Mrs. Cath G. Keaton					
		Renter	Ruth Carter	Head	N	43
	Carter: no listing		Bernice Carter	Daughter	N	18
782	Charles A. Roberts	Owner				
		Owner	Edward Kemble	Head	W	55
			Clara Kemble	Wife	W	53
784	Carl B. Weaver	Renter	Carl Weaver	Head	N	37
			Helen Weaver	Wife	N	37
			Barbara Weaver	Daughter	N	9
786	American Stores					

Co., grocers					
Marks: 1058 Louis	Renter	Wesley Marks	Head	N	37
		Anna Marks	Wife	N	21
		Bernice Marks	Daughter	N	8
		Estellla Sudge	Lodger	N	34

NOTE: Compiled from *Polk's Camden City Directory* for 1947, along with the 1940 federal decennial census, and the individual property record cards from 1958-59.

Appendix C:

Timeline of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Activity (June 1948-May 1951)

The principal source for the following timeline is Clayborne Carson, et al.'s *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume I: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951*, specifically pages 87 through 90.[107] This information as supplemented by information derived from a variety of digitized newspaper databases.

The source for an entry below should be assumed to be the Carson volume unless a different source is footnoted and cited.

1948

Summer	Martin L. King Jr. (MLK Jr.) serves as associate pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church (Atlanta).[108]
June/July	MLK Jr., along with June Dobbs, youngest daughter of the Rev. John Wesley Dobbs, work for Dr. Ira DeA. Reid interviewing southern black Baptist ministers in and around Atlanta. The project included an initial two-week training session at Haverford College (Reid's new employer as of 1946) along with 25 other young people, primarily seminarians.[109] Apparently the survey and interview work continued at least two years, for in the chronology entry (below) from 23 July 1950, *The Pittsburgh Courier* reported on the survey work two years after when June Dobbs Butts noted it began. Reid published the results of the survey in 1951, titled, *The Negro Baptist Ministry: An Analysis of Its Profession, Preparation and Practices.*[110]
1 August	MLK Jr. delivers sermon at Ebenezer's evening service.
8 August	Walter R. McCall delivers sermon at Ebenezer's morning service and MLK Jr. preaches in the evening.
22 August	MLK Jr. preaches at Ebenezer's morning service.
5 September	MLK Jr. preaches at Ebenezer.
11-12 September	MLK Jr. spends the weekend in New York City with his sister, Christine, a first-year graduate student at Columbia University.

[107] Clayborne Carson, et al. (eds), *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume I: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Ca.: University of California Press, 1992).

[108] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Vol. 1*, pp. 87-90.

[109] June Dobbs Butts, "The Little-Known Story of MLK's 'Drum Major for Justice,'" *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, October 16, 2011, online edition.

[110] Clayborne Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume IV: Symbol of the Movement, January 1957-December 1958.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Ca.: University of California Press, 2000), p. 116n.

14 September	MLK Jr. begins classes at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. Courses taken include Public Speaking, Preaching Ministry of the Church, Introduction to the Old Testament, Orientation for Juniors, Choir, and Church Music.
24 November	Crozer term ends.
30 November	Crozer new term begins; MLK Jr. takes Great Theologians, the History and Literature of the New Testament, Preparation of the Sermon, and Public Speaking.

1949

16 February	Crozer term ends.
20 February	MLK Jr. delivers the annual youth day sermon at Ebenezer.
22 February	Crozer new term begins; MLK Jr. enrolls in Christian Mysticism, Practice Preaching, and Public Speaking.
23 February	"The fourth meeting of the Saturday Night Frolic Club's Teen Talk program will be addressed by L.M. King [sic], student at Crozer Theological Seminary. The meeting will be held this evening at the West Branch YMCA [Chester]."[111]
5 March	The *Chester Times* announced that "Walter R. McCall, student at Crozer Theological Seminary, and graduate of Morehouse College, Atlanta, Ga., will be the speaker on the West Branch YMCA's program, Sunday Meditations, over station WPWA at 9:30 a.m. Sunday."[112] This newspaper notice confirms that McCall had joined MLK Jr. and entered Crozer as a student, where he also served as the resident dormitory barber.
9 March	"The Missionary Society of Calvary Baptist Church, Second and Baker sts. [Chester] is observing its 40th anniversary with special services each night this week at the church, in honor of the memory of Mrs. Rosella Wood. The society bears the name of this pioneer woman of Calvary. Missionary Group No. 3, Mrs. Elsie Pierce, leader, is sponsor of the service this evening, with Rev. Martin L. King, of Crozer Theological Seminary, as the speaker."[113]
20 March	"Next Sunday will be young people's day at Spruce Street Baptist church [Nashville] during the 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. services. The guest speaker will be the Rev. M. L. King of Chester, Pa."[114]

[111] "Frolic Club to Hear Crozer Student," 23 February 1949 edition, *Chester Times*, p. 4.

[112] "Crozer Student on Sunday Meditations," 5 March 1949 edition, *Chester Times*, p. 8.

[113] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," 9 March 1949 edition, *Chester Times*, p. 16.

[114] W.H. Shackleford, "Happenings Among Colored People," *The Tennessean* (Nashville), March 20, 1949 p. 59.

12 April	"The Holy Week emphasis is being fostered at the West Branch YMCA [Chester] this week with a series of services, featuring speakers and Easter music, each evening at 7:30. [April 13]Wednesday—"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:46. Rev. M. L. King, student at Crozer Seminary."[115]
6 May	Crozer term ends.
10 May	Crozer Commencement.[116]
Summer	MLK Jr. serves as assistant pastor of Ebenezer.
12 June	MLK Jr. preaches in the morning at Atlanta's Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church and in the evening at Ebenezer.
2 July	"MEMPHIS, Tenn.—The forty-fourth annual session of the Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Congress presented a far-reaching program which included a school of methods for Christian leadership in a world of democracy.…The inspirational addresses were delivered by a group of well-trained ministers embracing several styles and by some of the denomination's strongest pastors. Particularly significant were the contents or seulements in the addresses, the youthful M.L. King of Atlanta, a student from Crozier [*sic*] Seminary, Chester, Pa., and the Rev. R. L. Taylor, pastor of Second Baptist Church, South Richmond, Va."[117]
3 July	MLK Jr. delivers a sermon on "The Voice of Hope" at Ebenezer.
31 July	MLK Jr. preaches "The Two Challenging Questions" at Ebenezer.
14 August	MLK Jr. is the youth day speaker at Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta.
4 September	MLK Jr. preaches "The Great Paradox" in the morning and "The Significance of the Cross" in the evening at Ebenezer.
13 September	Classes begin at Crozer; MLK Jr. enrolls in Public Worship, Greek Religion, and Christian Theology for Today. Later that year he is named chairman of the student body's devotional committee.
26 September	MLK Jr. begins auditing a course, the Philosophy of History, at the University of Pennsylvania.

[115] "Holy Week Rites Being Held at West Branch 'Y'," *Chester Times*, April 12, 1949, p. 5.

[116] "Crozer Seminary Baccalaureate Sermon Sunday," *Chester Times*, May 7, 1949, p. 3.

[117] B.H. Logan, Courier Religious Editor, "'Christian Democracy' Goal Set by Baptists," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 2, 1949, p. 2.

8 November	MLK Jr. hears A.J. Muste defend pacifism in a lecture at Crozer.[118]
23 November	Crozer term ends.
29 November	Crozer new term begins; MLK Jr. enrolls in Preaching Problems, Pastoral Counseling, Conduct of Church Services, the Development of Christian Ideas I, and Christian Theology for Today.
23 December	MLK Jr. returns to Atlanta to spend the Christmas and New Year's Day holiday with his family. According to his later published account, MLK Jr. spends Christmas vacation reading Karl Marx, and he "carefully scrutinizes" *Das Kapital* and *The Communist* Manifesto.

1950

2 January	MLK Jr. returns to Crozer.
7 January	"The Rev. M. L. King Jr., son of the Rev. and Mrs. M. L. King, spent the Christmas holidays here with his parents. He is attending Crozer Seminary in Chester, Pa., and also taking classes at the University of Pennsylvania. His sister, Miss Christine King, who is taking business administration at Columbia University, is also here for the holidays."[119]
11 January	"Group No. 4 of the Rosella Wood Missionary Society, of Calvary Baptist Church [Chester], held its holiday banquet and exchange of secret pals at the West Branch YMCA, 7th and Flower sts. [Chester] … Guests included: … Rev. Martin Luther King, … students at Crozer Theological Seminary; …."[120]
14 January	"Grace Methodist: Annual young people's day will be observed Sunday at Grace Methodist Church, Central av. above Concord rd. [Chester]. Class meeting will be conducted at 10.15 a. m. Worship at 11 a. m. will be in charge of the pastor, Rev. B.A. Arnold, with music by the junior choir. Church school will meet at 12:45 p. m. At 2.45 p. m., Rev. Martin L. King Jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will deliver the sermon to the young people. Fairview Baptist junior choir will sing."[121]
15 February	Crozer term ends.
19 February	MLK Jr. preaches "Walking with the Lord" at Ebenezer's morning service.
21 February	Crozer term begins; MLK Jr. enrolls History of Living Religions and the History of Christianity.

[118] Carson, et. al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Vol. 1*, pp. 87-90 and "Informal Lecture at Crozer Thursday," *Chester Times*, November 8, 1949, p. 4.

[119] Carrie B. Harper, "Atlanta News," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 7, 1950, p. 11.

[120] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, January 11, 1950, p. 13.

[121] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, January 14, 1950, p. 11.

4 March	"Fifth Presbyterian: Sunday school at Fifth Presbyterian Church, 3d and Norris sts. [Chester], will meet at 10 a. m. Communion will be observed at the 11 a. m. worship service when the pastor, Rev. LeRoy Patrick, will take as his theme, "The Peace of God." Intermediate Westminster Fellowship will meet at 5 p. m. At 8 p. m. Rev. Martin Luther King jr. of Crozer Theological Seminary, will be the speaker for a special service sponsored by Dr. F.L. Brodie for the benefit of Men's Day."[122]
7 March	"Calvary Baptist Church, 2d and Baker sts. [Chester], is observing the 41st anniversary of the Rosella Woods Missionary Society with special services at the church each night this week. Rev. Martin Luther King jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will be the speaker for Wednesday evening. Group No. 3 will be in charge of the service."[123]
21 April	"Members of the Baptist Fellowship held a box luncheon and meeting in the First Baptist Church, 7th and Fulton sts. [Chester], on Wednesday in celebration of the seventh anniversary of their organization. Rev. Martin Luther King was the guest speaker and he chose as his topic, 'Communism and Christianity.'"[124]
24 April	"Election of officers took place at Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland last week, as the student body moved closer to commencement, and members of the faculty faced a heavy late spring schedule on speaking and preaching assignments. Martin Luther King, a second year student from Atlanta, Ga., was named president. He is a graduate of Morehouse College."[125]
spring	MLK Jr. hears Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, preach at Philadelphia's Fellowship House on Mohandas K. Gandhi's *satyagraha* as a method of social change. No newspaper notice of Dr. Johnson's appearance can be found, however, during the spring of 1950, as Carson, et al. states. A notice of Johnson's appearance at Fellowship House at First Unitarian Church, Chestnut St. west of 21st [Philadelphia], is found in November 1950.[126]
3 May	"Martin L. King, a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, on Friday will contrast popular misconceptions regarding goals of Negroes with what he

[122] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, March 4, 1950, p. 11.

[123] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, March 7, 1950, p. 4.

[124] "Baptist Fellowship Marks Anniversary," *Chester Times*, April 21, 1950, p. 11.

[125] "Martin King Heads Crozer Student Body," *Chester Times*, April 24, 1950, p. 10.

[126] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Vol. 1*, pp. 87-90 and "Fellowship Service," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 18, 1950, p. 9.

	considers the real objectives at a meeting of the Newark, Del., chapter of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People."[127]
5 May	Crozer term ends.
9 May	Crozer Commencement.[128]
?? May	MLK Jr. moves out of dormitory room on Crozer campus.
10 June	MLK Jr. completes his audit of the University of Pennsylvania class.
12 June	MLK Jr., Walter R. McCall, Pearl E. Smith, and Doris Wilson are refused service by Ernest Nichols at Mary's Café in Maple Shade, New Jersey. Nichols fires a gun in the air when they persist in their request for service. He [Nichols] is arrested and charged, but later, when witnesses fail to testify, the case is dropped. The four victims—MLK Jr., McCall, Smith, and Wilson—file a Bill of Complaint against Nichols before municipal magistrate Percy L. Charleston on 12 June, although Smith, MLK Jr. and McCall are the only signatories to the filing. After signing the Bill, but presumably before submitting it to the municipal court, the name and address of Smith, MLK Jr., and Wilson are crossed out and the Smith and MLK Jr. signatures were similarly struck out with a pen, leaving Walter McCall, the only local resident, to pursue the case against Nichols. Eventually McCall drops the case when the witnesses present in the bar failed to appear in court.[129]
16 June	MLK Jr. is arrested for speeding in Claymont, Delaware, on his way to Atlanta (presumably MLK Jr. departed for home on this day).
17 June	"The Rev. M.L. King Jr. is home for vacation after having a successful year at Crozier [sic] Theological Seminary at Chester, Pa. His sister, Christine, is here also spending her vacation."[130]
17 June	A.D. King and Naomi Barber are married at Ebenezer.
18 June	MLK Jr. preaches "The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth" at Ebenezer.
Summer	MLK Jr. serves as assistant pastor at Ebenezer.
15 July	"Miss June Dobbs and the Rev. M. L. King Jr., who are working on the survey of the Negro Baptists of America, under Ira DeA. Reid, are in

[127] "Crozer Student To Address Del. NAACP," *Chester Times*, May 3, 1950, p. 17.

[128] "Dr. Harkness Retires from Crozer Post," *Chester Times*, May 9, 1950, p. 1.

[129] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol. 1, p. 329.

[130] Carrie B. Harper, "Atlanta News," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 17, 1950, p. 18.

	attendance at the Baptist Institute which is in session at Morehouse College."[131]
30 July	MLK Jr. is youth day speaker at Liberty Baptist Church (Atlanta).
12 September	Crozer term begins; MLK Jr. begins his senior year, taking courses on American Christianity—Colonial Period, Ministers Use of the Radio, and Religious Development of Personality. He serves as student pastor at the First Baptist Church of East Elmhurst, Queens, New York.[132]
13 September	In preparation for his work in East Elmhurst, Queens, New York, MLK Jr. completes a Crozer Theological Seminary Field Work Questionnaire. On the form, he lists his full name and home address in Atlanta. For the Crozer address, he lists "Dormitory Box 27." He indicates that for the last three summers, he served as the assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta at a salary of $200 per month. His list of expenses include: Board $288.00; Rent $51.00; Laundry $75.00; and extra spending money $150.00.[133]
20 September	MLK Jr. audits courses on the Problem of Esthetics and on Immanuel Kant at the University of Pennsylvania.
11 November	"Fifth Presbyterian: Harvest Home Rally will be observed Sunday at Fifth Presbyterian Church, 3d and Norris sts. [Chester]. Rev. LeRoy Patrick will take as his theme for the 11 a. m. service of worship, "The Shaken World." Sunday school will meet at 10 a. m. At 3:30 p. m., Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will deliver the sermon."[134]
22 November	Crozer term ends.
28 November	Crozer term begins, MLK Jr. registers for Philosophy of Religion and Theological Integration.[1]

1951

11 January	MLK Jr. is admitted to Boston University School of Theology.
13 January	A listing for Zion Baptist Church, Camden, New Jersey, mentions "M.L. King of Atlanta, Ga." would deliver the sermon the next day during Sunday services.[135] This was probably Martin Luther King, Sr., since a listing for Jr. usually included a mention of Crozer.

[131] Carrie B. Harper, "Atlanta News," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 15, 1950, p. 10.

[132] Carson, et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Vol. 1*, p. 330.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 330-331.

[134] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, November 11, 1950, p. 9.

[135] "Sunday Services in South Jersey Churches," *Courier-Post*, January 13, 1951, p. 14.

27 January	"Temple Baptist: Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will be the speaker Sunday at 3:30 p. m. for the special service at Temple Baptist Church, 6th and Parker sts. [Chester]."[136]
3 February	End of semester at University of Pennsylvania.
3 February	MLK Jr. takes the Graduate Record Examination.
15 February	Crozer term ends.
18 February	MLK Jr. preaches "Nothing in Particular" at Ebenezer.
20 February	Crozer term begins; MLK Jr. enrolls in Advanced Philosophy of Religion, Christian Social Philosophy, and Christianity and Society.
24 February	"Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will be the speaker for the 11 a. m. Sunday service of worship at Fifth Presbyterian Church, 3d and Norris streets [Chester]."[137]
6 March	"The Rosella Wood Missionary Society, of Calvary Baptist Church, 2d and Baker streets [Chester], is observing its 42d anniversary with special services each evening this week.…The anniversary will be climaxed on Sunday with a special program at 3:30 p. m. Rev. Martin Luther King, of Crozer Theological Seminary, will deliver the sermon."[138]
14 April	"Annual Young People's Day will be observed Sunday at St. Daniel's Methodist Church, 4th and Edwards streets [Chester]. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., of Crozer Theological Seminary, will be the speaker for the 8 p. m."[139]
4 May	Crozer term ends.
8 May	"Martin Luther King of Atlanta, Ga., won the Pearl Ruth Plafker award of $50 as the outstanding member of the graduating class at Crozer Theological Seminary's commencement exercises this morning. The award is made annually by Dr. Nathan V. Plafker, Chester dentist, in memory of his wife. … The J. Lewis Crozer Postgraduate Fellowship for study in the field of religious education and psychology of religion went to Martin Luther King, a member of the senior class."[140]

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[136] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports, " *Chester Times*, January 27, 1951, p. 7.

[137] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, February 24, 1951, p. 7.

[138] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports," *Chester Times*, March 6, 1951, p. 4.

[139] Helen Hunt, "Helen Hunt Reports." *Chester Times*, April 14, 1951, p. 7.

[140] "At Seminary Exercises," *Chester Times*, May 8, 1951, p. 4.

	MLK Jr. leaves campus after graduation for Atlanta.
12 May	MLK Jr. preaches “The World Crisis & A Mother’s Responsibility” at Ebenezer.
Summer	MLK Jr. serves as pastor in charge at Ebenezer.

Appendix D:

Oral History/Email Interview Transcripts

Beshai, James. Email interview with John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 24, 2017.

Birts, Donald "Ducky." Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview. Conducted in Philadelphia, PA, June 16, 2016. Excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 22, 2017.

Collins, Michael, Office of Congressman John Lewis. Email correspondence with John O'Hara, Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 19, 2017.

Duff, Patrick. Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Hunt, Jeannette Lily M. Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview. Conducted in Camden, NJ, January 19, 2015. Excerpted and transcribed by John O'Hara, June 21, 2017.

Hunt, Jeannette Lily M. Interview with Michelle Craig McDonald and John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted in Camden, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Lowery, Thelma. Interview with Patrick Duff. Personal Interview. Conducted in Camden, NJ, December 1, 2017. Transcribed by Michelle Craig McDonald, December 9, 2017.

McCall, Walter. Interview with Herbert Holmes. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center Oral History Project. Conducted in Atlanta, GA, 1970.

McMickle, Marvin and Thomas McDade Clay, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Email correspondence with John O'Hara. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, June 7, 2017.

Milton, Janet (and Julius). Email interview with John O'Hara. Stockton Biographical Investigation Project, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Conducted from Galloway, New Jersey, October 26, 2017.

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

Email and Telephone Interview:

James Beshai [redacted])
Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Conducted by:

John O'Hara, Associate Professor of Critical Thinking, Stockton University

The email exchanges below with James Beshai, a student whose time at Crozier Theological Seminary overlapped with that of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Walter McCall, took place following a telephone conversation on Monday, October 23, 2017, between John O'Hara and James Beshai, in which Beshai agreed to participate in Stockton's biographical investigation on behalf of the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, but requested to do so by email and in writing.

All original phrasing and spelling has been retained.

[Follow thread top to bottom – i.e. the original correspondence appears first]

On Tue, Oct 24, 2017 at **11:10 AM**, O'Hara, John <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx> wrote:

Dear James,

Thank you again very much for your time today, and especially for sending a copy of your forthcoming article in _Humanist Psychology_. We are very interested in reading your observations about Dr. King's philosophical and theological development.

In part, our research team at Stockton is trying also to understand King's developing political consciousness, but we are attempting to understand how his experiences as a young person contributed to his intellectual development. Ours is a biographical project in some ways, which is why we wanted to ask you some questions about King's experiences at Crozer.

We appreciate your time considering the questions below, especially your willingness to provide written responses. If you would rather schedule a telephone interview, we would be happy to do that, too.

General Crozer Questions:

1 During what years did you attend Crozer?

2 Where did you live as a student?

3 Can you describe dormitory life on campus? (how many per room, any special rules or regulations, were meals included, what kinds of social activities, etc.).

4 Did all students live on campus? Did student stay on campus during breaks or over the summer? If not, where did students live/go during dormitory closures?

5. Do you remember any of your roommates in particular? If so, what do you recall?

6. Do you have any documents, photographs or other materials showing student life on campus that you would be willing to provide to us?

Questions about Martin Luther King, Jr., in particular:

6. What do you remember about MLK as a student and person?

7. Do you remember his time on campus? Any of the activities in which he was involved?

8. One of his biographies mentions a violent confrontation with another student in the campus dormitory? Do you remember the incident, and, if so, can you describe it in your own words?

9. Do you remember if MLK mentioned interactions with families in Chester, PA?

10. Do you remember if King ever mentioned classmate Walter McCall or visiting Camden, NJ, with McCall? Do you remember your classmate Walter McCall at all, or his connections to Camden? If so, can you tell anything about him?

11. Did you ever hear about an incident in Camden/Maple Shade, NJ where King and others were denied service in a restaurant? If so, do you remember anything about the consequences or outcomes of this experience on King's political thinking?

12. Do you know anything of King's typical off-campus activities? Do you remember any of his activities outside of Chester, or do you have a sense of whether or not he spent any or significant time in Camden, NJ, during his time at Crozer?

13. Do you know of any other personal experiences on or off campus that may have impacted King's political or philosophical perspectives?

14. Are you aware of <u>any</u> travels whatsoever King made to Camden, NJ?

Ultimately, we are trying to establish whether Dr. King may have a.) visited Camden regularly; b.) had friends there or stayed there occasionally; or c.) spoken about Camden, any friends he may have had there, or any experiences there. If you can think of any details related to potential connections King may have had to Camden, this would be helpful. If you recall King mentioning Camden even once, occasionally, or frequently, it would help us better chart his potential connections to the city.

With much appreciation,

John O'Hara, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

Stockton University
Galloway, NJ 08205
xxxx.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx
609-652-4249 / office
484-432-6873 / mobile (preferred)

On Tue, Oct 24, 2017 at **12:58 PM**, James/Jimmy Beshai [redacted] wrote:

Dear John,

Thank you very much for sending me this list of questions. Since it carries your email as well I shall be able to send the article as attachment. But, I am not too savvy about using the computer to send attachments. If I do not succeed I shall get some help from a neighbor and try again. I printed the list of questions and will give it more thought than this casual reply.

1.We shared the school-year 9/50-6/51 at Crozer Seminary, Chester, Pa. We took some courses together with Dr. George Dqvis, Dr. Kenneth Smith, and Dr. M.S. Enslin. We lived in the Dormitary which was also the Old Main of Crozer where all classes were held. We spent time together during lunch hours at the Seminary basement which served also as a social room with billiard tables.

2. We lived in the same Crozer Dormitory on the second floor. I had room 201 and I believe he had room 203 or 211 I am not sure. I believe Walter Mcall was on the same side, but MLK, Jr. was on the opposite side.

Dormitory placements showed no discrimination by color or race. I was a foreign student along with one Chinese and one Japanese. There were more white than black students, but all of us enjoyed a very friendly atmosphere.

3. September 1950-Sept. 1952. I spent two years on a joint scholarship to study Psychology at Penn and Religion at Crozer. Martin spent one year with with me before moving to Boston for his Ph.D.

4. A majority of the students lived on campus: bachelors in the Dormitory, and married students in another Building on campus, and I forget the name of it.

5. I remember in addition to Martin among the black students: Walter MacCall, Whitaker Chambers, and the son of Pius Barbour. I remember En Chin Lyn from China, and Makutu Sakurabayashy from Japan.

I made friends awith several Crozer classmates, and one one or two at Penn which I used to cummute to by suburban train from Chester to 30th Street Station. Martin and I maintained contact by mail after our graduation. I was appointed Asst Prof. of Psychology at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. Martin corresponded with me and informed me of a visit he was able to make in 1959. He spent a day with me with his wife Coretta scott King. We visited the

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

Pyramids and the American University and I introduced Martin and Cortta to Dean Allan Horton at AUC.

6.

From: James/Jimmy Beshai [redacted]]
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 **1:24 PM**
To: O'Hara, John <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Subject: Re: MLK and Camden questions

It looks like the message has been sent to you already. So, I will add the rest of the responses here:

6. I have copies of his letters to me. Is ent the originals to Crozer Colgate Rochester Seminary when they invited me to deposit these documents in the MLK, Jr. Museum at the Seminary.

7. I remember him as an upright and articulate speaker and scholar. I got to meet his parents during their visit to the Campus. I also got to meet and correspond with Coretta a few times.

8. I remember the confrontation and the aftermath. I know the white southern student, but I do not want to say his name, since his name was not mentioned in what I read about it. But, it was not beyond the subtle discrimination that prevailed in those days. We all had dinner together, and spoke decently, but some may have harbored prejudicial remarks such as this student. He is a friend of mine, and we call each other from time to time. We do not mention any opinion on the reputation of Martin Luther King, Jr. I sent him copies of what I wrote in the papers about MLK, Jr. I have half a dozen articles which I will try to send you as attachments once I know how to do that.

9. Martin introduced to the home of his father's friend in Chester: Pius Barbour who invited me to dinner one Sunday. Martin and Walter McCall were very hospitable to me when they introduced me to one black family in Chester who invited me to dinner a couple of times. The Dormitory had no food on Sundays, and both Martin and Walter were very hospitable to me.

10.I head of the restaurant incident in Camden, N.J. Both of them talked about it during our dinner table discussions.

11.I witnessed incidents of discrimination on bus and restaurant, but .I tended to ignore them or say to myself; This happens at times, but the majority are OK.It will gradually go away.

12.I think that I avoided dealing with the issue, and felt that I was just a visiting student, and that this sort of thing happens in every society. I was a Coptic Christian in a Moslem Egypt, and to some extent I was considered a second class citizen in my own country because I was Christian in a country that had become Moslem since the Arab invasion of Egypt in the 7th. century. Egypt became Christian by St. Mark who came to Alexandria iaround 30 B.C. When Islamic invasion came the Christians were given a choice to convert to Islam or pay "Gizya" or a high tax. I belonged to a family that must have afforded to stay Christian, but many converted to Islam.

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

13I will more on this later. Some of it was in my writing. I have written several articles on this which I shall sent as attachments when I know how to do it.

From: O'Hara, John <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 **8:42 AM**
To: James/Jimmy Beshai [mailto[redacted]
Subject: Re: MLK and Camden questions

Dear James,

Thank you very much for responding so quickly to our questions. Thanks also for sending along your articles. I had a chance to glance at them, and look forward to reading them in whole. You and so many of your classmates went on to have such illustrious careers – what a remarkable group of young men in Old Main!

If there is anything more you remember about the comings and goings of MLK and Walter McCall, we would appreciate it. We have been researching both men for the past eight months, and we did not know that Mr. McCall lived in the dormitory. Colgate Crozer in Rochester does not have dormitory records.

One of our central questions has to do with when or how often either or both MLK or McCall left campus to stay in Camden at one of McCall's relative's house. This is apparently where he and McCall were staying on the night of the incident of discrimination MLK experienced in New Jersey, June 10-11, 1950 – well after the end of term at Crozer but just a week after the close of term at Penn where MLK was taking a course. We are trying to ascertain a couple things:

--whether or not, and if so how often did King and/or McCall visit a certain Camden residence during the school term. Was it a place they perhaps visited once or twice, or did they "hang out" there more often, or even frequently?

--did McCall and/or King stayed at the Camden residence during one, any, some or many "breaks" from school, or was it more common to remain in the dorms or travel elsewhere during Crozer "breaks."

--was it a seldom, sometime or common practice for King or any students to "go out" in Camden – for leisure, fun, dates, etc. – on weekends or breaks?

--did MLK stay in the Camden residence in May-June 1950 after Crozer's term ended but before Univ. of Penn's term ended?

--what was the "impact" of the experience of discrimination in New Jersey on King? Do you think it affected substantially his growth or development in terms of his political consciousness or his future strategies of passive resistance? Can you recall any of the substance of King and McCall's discussions of the incident in New Jersey (re: question 10).

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

James, your input is invaluable to our work – as historians, we really want to get this right. There are elements to the question of "King in Camden" that people really want to believe badly enough that they sometimes fill in details that may not be correct. Our job is not to build a case but to get all the records and testimonies we can. We thank you very, very much for helping.

Sincerely,

John

From: James/Jimmy Beshai [mailto[redacted]
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2017 10:59 AM
To: O'Hara, John <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Subject: Re: MLK and Camden questions

Dear John.
Thank your for your comments. I do not consider my scholarly contribution to be anywhere near Martin Luther King, Jr. He was recognized by two mentors at Crozer as the top of a class which is predominantly white. I was just a foreign student who wanted to be like Carl Rogers, combining psychology with religion. I was also deeply interested in Paul Tillich who gave a mini course at Crozer which I attended. I consider myself very fortunate to have had an American education, and I am deeply indebted to the generosity of American people following my graduate education and residence in the United States. I did not experience any prejudicial treatment on account of my being from Egypt. Perhaps the fact that my wife is an American from Pennsylvania helped in this regard.

I rely on my memory in responding to your questions on the visits of MLK, Jr. and Walter McCall. I heard about the refusal to offer them restaurant service on account of their race. Martin talked about it at dinner table with other residents of the dormintory, and with Kenneth Smith who was a faculty member but also resided in the Dormitroy.

Kenneth Smith was a former Crozer graduate who had his Ph.D. at Duke, and was very close to the students. He wrote about the Camden incident in his book with Zapp (1974).

I do not recall that Martin was emotional tin talking about it. He talked about it with J. Pius Barbour who invited me to dinner with Martin and the incident was brought in our discussion. It was always discussed in a rational manner. I was asked if I was discriminated against in a similar manner because I was a Copt. I said that I personally did not experience any discrimination in Egypt on account of my being a Coptic Christian in a predominantly Moslem country. But, there were fellow Copts who complained of discrimination in obtaining scholarships on account of their religion. But no restaurant in Egypt would know the difference between a Copt and a Moslem.

Martin and I had read Gordon Allport's book on varieties of Prejudice, and our discussions were always in the light of how it was viewed by Psychologists like Allport. McCall's connections with off-campus visits was not known to me except through dinner discussions. I do not think

that Martin's visits to Camden was as frequent as his visit with J. Pius Barbnour who was Pastor of a Black Church in Camden, and whose son hecame a Crozer student after Martin left to Boston. I was on Campus for two years, but only the first year 1950-51 was the year that I shared dormitory and classes with Martin Luther King, Jr.

I will keep you posted if I have any other relevant comments.

INTERVIEW WITH DONALD "DUCKY" BIRTS, June 2, 2015

[transcribed partially by John O'Hara on June 22, 2017 from .mp4 audio file provided by Patrick Duff]

Duff: It's June 2, 2015. I am here with Donald "Ducky" Birts, and this is Patrick Duff, and we are going to do a quick interview about what he knows about Dr. King living in Camden.

[0:00-5:00, Birts discusses involvement in civil rights movement, meeting King in Philadelphia, working with Jesse Jackson, various efforts of SCLC and the founding of Jackson's movement, PUSH]

Duff: When did you meet Dr. King?

Birts: I met Dr. King, 19—hmm—60, I think it was, 1960.

Duff: Ok. And then did Dr. King tell you that he used to live in Camden?

Birts: Yeah, he told me, yeah, he told me. But I met him stronger coming to Philly with Jesse [Jackson], not in Camden, but coming to Philly, and then the meetings in Philly with Georgie Wood, Murray Mason, you know those people back in the day . . . [5:00-7:00 approximately]

[7:25-10:10]

Duff: When you met Dr. King, did he tell you he once worked with Dr. Wiggins?

Birts: Well, he worked with everybody . . .

Duff: Well, specifically, there was an incident in Maple Shade that happened to him, where Dr. Wiggins, from a Tribune article in 1950, says that Dr. Wiggins was working with Dr. King before he was a doctor, when he was a 21-year-old kid. The conversation you had with Dr. King, did he specify how long he lived in Camden?

Birts: No, he didn't.

Duff: Ok.

Birts: No, he didn't specify. During those days, coming from the south, they got a lot of relatives. And they stayed with each other, because they didn't have the money to go in a hotel. And they wouldn't accept us in the triple-A hotels, Holidays Inns, and the hotels now. Hilton and all those people. They didn't accept us, to stay there, number one. People do that talking now, everything's open, but back then brother you sat in the back of the bus. On the train, you sat in the back of the train. And you head in to town, you snuck into town, you snuck out of town. You didn't have that openness. They had that hook up. [FBI Director J. Edgar] Hoover back in them days was tracking King everywhere he went as a communist. He was considered as a normal being. He didn't have that royalty until late in his years, late in his years.

Duff: Did Dr. King tell you where he lived in Camden?

Births: Yeah, Walnut Street, he told me Walnut Street, yeah. Walnut Street, yeah.

Duff: Do you remember where you were when you had that conversation?

Births: Oh, man, I was a young whippersnapper, man, I don't know, might have been at the park, [indecipherable], or Ddr. Wiggins office. We only had a few landmarks. We weren't renegades everywhere.

Duff: And Dr. Wiggins office has burned down since.

Births: Yeah, [indecipherable] Dr. Wiggins was a strong man. In fact, he's the reason I am in civil rights today . . .

Duff: Did you know the prosecutor Johnson?

Births: Yeah, oh yeah [indecipherable] Johnson

Duff: Did you know he was King's lawyer?

Births: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, Johnson's my man. He was a Republican, too. Johnson was not a Democrat. He was Republican. I remember. Dr. Wiggins was a Republican.

[10:12-13:55] Births discusses local politics, NAACP, local figures, Camden's prosperity at the time, Camden today, its school system, its potential for rebuilding given location, proximity to Philadelphia, New York, various highways. Duff and Births discuss the Camden 23, Father Michael Doyle.]

Duff: Did you know Jethroe Hunt?

Births: Oh, yeah. Did you go to the Church?

Duff: Which church?

Births: Nazarene.

Duff: No, where's that?

Births: That's his family, 8th and Atlantic.

Duff: ok, now . . .

Births: Hunt's a deacon there. He's a deacon boy. His father was a foreman. Hunt was a policeman, he went to school with me.

Duff: That's who King lived with.

Births: Yeah.

Duff: He lived with the Hunt family.

Births: Yeah, that whole family.

Duff: Now, Lily Hunt, or Jeanette Hunt, is the one that I knocked on her door, and she said yeah he used to live here. And she knew you very well. And her son, Jay, is a deacon also.

Birts: Yeah, they got a good family.

Duff: Yeah, very good family. If you can imagine, she's 83 years old, but when I knocked on her door, she was doing graduate program, or graduate class, writing a paper on pastoral counseling, you know she's getting a degree . . . and here I am, 39 years old, and I never went to college, and it was so inspirational to me.

Birts: Yeah, well, Camden got a lot of history

[third, unknown voice chimes in, nostalgia praise for generation.]

[15:28-18:05]

Duff: So, if um, just to sum up, because, in a sense, the Historic Preservation Office, I'm trying to . . . I'm just making sure I've got . . . Jeanette Hunt, she said that King lived with her at that house. Her father, Benjamin Hunt, did you know Benjamin Hunt, her father? ["Yeah"] They're both stand up people, right?

Birts: Oh, yeah, [indecipherable] Baptists . . .

Duff: And there's a street named Jethroe Hunt in Camden . . .

Birts: Yeah, 3rd Ward . . .

Duff: . . . And you're the third person who said King lived in Camden, and King told you himself, correct?

Birts: Oh, yeah, yeah. Correct. In fact, when I came to Philly to help SCLC, Dr. King said, bring him in, bring him in. Bring the gentleman in, he got a lot offer, bring him in. Me and Jesse come in, sit down and talk. He was very humble, he never tuned anybody away. Very humble, never turned anybody away. Anybody got something to offer, we'd take it. It was free! We weren't getting paid. Nobody got paid in the movement. That was your time. You put money into the movement, you didn't take nothing out of it. [indecipherable] . . . Toward the whole, you had to give up yourself, your money and your time. That movement. The kids that benefit now, they have no idea!

Duff: When you told King you lived in Camden, I'm sure that's . . .

Birts . . . Ooh, that's [indecipherable] . . . "bring him in here, bring him in"

Duff: Did you know Walter McCall?

Birts: Walter McCall? Walter McCall? Doesn't ring a bell.

Duff: Well, Walter McCall . . .

Birts: . . . Might have had [no meat?] on him . . .

Duff: Well, Walter McCall is the Hunts cousin, first cousin, and that was King's best friend in Morehouse and at Crozer.

Birts: Oh, at college, yeah . . .

Duff: Yeah, and that's the connection King had to the Hunts, was Walter McCall.

Birts: Probably [no meat?], you know . . . I was doing everything in Camden, man, I did everything in Camden. Camden gave me my base. When I came to Philadelphia . . . I had my apprenticeship already. I had my apprenticeship in politics, I had my apprenticeship in business, I had my apprenticeship in civil rights. So I didn't bother nobody—It was just a bigger town, same problem.

[18:05-23:30: discussion of Reverend Sullivan, other leaders such as Malcolm X, Abernathy, King's oratory, his courage in passive resistance, Gandhi, nonviolence, other figures, Birts' Foundation, economic principles in relation to politics.]

[23:30-]

Duff: Do you think that house on Walnut Street that King stayed in, do you think that should be preserved?

Birts: Should be *preserved*. You're on the right track. I mean, you called me, I knew who you was. I knew about you. I knew [indecipherable] about that in the paper, had a section of the *Inquirier*, over here Jersey section, had about that, I said, "That's a good thing, man." You know, I never knew that you were doing this in Camden, till you called me. I didn't turn you down, no, I'd never turn you down. And you got my man with you, Francis is a good guy, we're about the same age . . .

O'Hara, John
Thu 10/19/2017 12:27 PM
To: xxxxxxx.xxxxxxx@xxxx.xxxxx.xxx;
Cc: McDonald, Michelle;
You replied on 10/19/2017 6:51 PM.

Dear Mr. Collins:

Good afternoon. I am writing with the hope that Congressman Lewis can assist my team of researchers at Stockton University in our efforts to investigate the historical significance of a Camden, NJ, property associated with Martin Luther King, Jr., during his time in the greater Delaware Valley, 1948-52. Mr. Lewis is familiar with the site, currently under consideration as a New Jersey historic landmark by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Historic Preservation (NJDEP-OHP). Stockton University has been contracted by NJDEP to perform an independent investigation of Dr. King's relation to the property.

NJDEP suggested that Congressman Lewis might be able to put us in contact with Dr. King's surviving relatives, including Christine King Farris, as we explore evidence and testimony about his activities in and around Camden, NJ, between 1948-52. We would especially welcome the opportunity to ask Ms. King Farris what she recalls about this period in her brother's life. We could submit our questions in any way Ms. King Farris finds convenient, including via email, telephone or video conference.

We would very much appreciate the Congressman's assistance in helping us complete this important historical research.

Sincerely,

John F. O'Hara, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Stockton University
Galloway, NJ 08205
609-652-4249/office
484-432-6873/mobile

Cc:
Michelle Craig McDonald, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Stockton University
609-652-4514/office

Oral History Interview:
Patrick Duff
524 Station Ave., Haddon Heights, New Jersey
Thursday, October 26, 2017, 1:30pm

Conducted by:

John O'Hara, Associate Professor of Critical Thinking, Stockton University
Michelle Craig McDonald, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Stockton University

DUFF: "We can't move forward," they said, "unless we have state designation." At the same time they're getting a quarter million dollars in grants, for a property that we signed an original sale agreement on, that they never closed on. They walked away from the closing table, so they breached that contract, and they also—what happened—was when we sat down with them, the mayor's office, the congress people's office, a whole table of people, everyone agreed "we're 100% on board" so long as we've got Camden DUFF:....City to designate it as historic. They said this is great, this is wonderful, we're so glad, we're happy but nothing happened literally. So, around February after it didn't close, their story changed. And they said, well, we need state designation as well as we need you (me) to contact the King Center and get licensing rights for his name. Now that was interesting because they didn't get licensing rights to get the grant in his name.

O'HARA: And what was the grant intended for?

DUFF: The grant was intended for the restoration of the home, specifically, and for curation and for lighting and for museum exhibits.

MCDONALD: Do you know who the funder was?

DUFF: CDBG grant, so it was a community development block grant, through the City of Camden.

MCDONALD: So, it was the City of Camden.

DUFF: Right, so it's not like the City of Camden didn't know either, they knew as well. So me and property owner have been in the dark, and she's…she's not happy. I mean, why would you do that? We were supposed to set a steering committee up, and it was never set up because they changed the rules.

O'HARA: Why would the Coopers Ferry Partnership not be able to go ahead with the restoration of the property?

DUFF: I didn't say they wouldn't, but its a little odd that you don't tell people that they're getting a grant for the property that you can't move forward on unless you have a state designation, right? So, if it based on a state designation somehow then maybe the grant money is, who knows?

O'HARA: So the community development grant came from Camden, why are they requiring state designation?

DUFF: I asked for a copy of the grant, you know, I asked for all of the things you would think they would be able to provide and I've been stonewalled. So I've talked to a friend who is an attorney, and he said, "Listen, Pat, what they do is fraud, it's clear and convincing, I mean, if they sent you an email saying they're not going to continue with the project, then they apply for grants and tell you that you have to get licensing for something that they apply for licensing, or for grants on the same name...they didn't apply for the Hunt home, they applied for the MLK house. So, you know, it's just so upsetting because you work so hard.

MCDONALD: And we know definitely that the grant has been awarded?

DUFF: I've got, I can show you, I've got a *Courier Post* it was 7, July 7, $229,035 was awarded.

O'HARA: And dispersed to?

DUFF: I don't know.

MCDONALD: That was my next question.

DUFF: That's the question. You know, and they won't tell us. Phaedra Trethan, who's a *Courier Post* reporter said "Pat, I'm getting stonewalled. I've never got stonewalled by these people," she said. I said, "Okay," but that's way later in the story. So if you want, we could, I should tell you kind of how I first got involved. What it is, is I'm a community activist, organizer, whatever you want to say, but when I see something, I say something, and I try to do something. You know, if there was a car accident, I'll stop my car and I'll help the person, and there was a woman who was actually hurt in the car one day, and there was gas on the thing, and I'm thinking, "You have two choices," I told her, I said, "I get you out and carry you down away from this car, or the car can catch on fire.

She says, "Get me the hell out of the car." So, I picked her up and took her out of the car.

Smyrna, Delaware had no crosswalks in the town. My wife calls me one day, “I can't get to the store,” I'm like "why," she says, "I can't cross the street. So I go to the council, I get crosswalks. I'm fighting City Council in Philadelphia to try and get open public comment in City Council.

So I've been an activist. I've been a big-time activist, against the war on drugs, against the war in Iraq, and so I've always thought Dr. King's messages were really, you know, sound. The non-violence thing, you know, you show up and somebody curses you out, and you say, "you know what, thank you." Guess what, you win. So I've always looked at him kind of like a hero.

So if you can imagine, one day, this story came across national media about these two students in Maple Shade, they were from Rwanda, okay, and the students that were in Maple Shade, that were from Rwanda, the school nurse took it upon herself to send out a memo to everyone that she was going to take these kids out of class three times a day and test them for Ebola. Now,

Rwanda is 3,000 miles away from the Ebola zone so either she doesn't know geography or she just doesn't care, and just figures these kids are from Africa, I'm testing them for Ebola, when, geographically its' actually the kids in Maple Shade had a higher percentage chance of having Ebola since somebody from Texas got Ebola and somebody in New York got Ebola. And it was like the town embraced it. Like in the media, people were like, "she was just standing up for the kids, "and I'm thinking, "wait, that's…there's something wrong, because if that happened in my town, at least in Haddon Heights, there would be people at the school board meeting saying, "listen come on, she can't do this to the kids, she's going to lose her job."

Well, she kept her job, didn't get reprimanded, so I decided I wanted to look into what creates that culture. Is there something there, more than this incident, or is there other things there? And when I started looking into the town I was just absolutely shocked. It was, there was a cross burned, the last crossed burned above the Mason Dixon line was in Maple Shade in the '20s, a black family in Maple Shade was living there on a farm, and the Klu Klux Clan held a rally downtown, and somebody said "hey, there's a house down the street that a black family lives in, so they said "oh, let's bring the rally there." They went to the house, they burned the cross on the lawn, the people left. Sitting on that land now, is the Southern Cross Apartments. No joke, and I got that from the historian from Maple Shade, I guess his name is Dennis Hester, or something like that. He has his own, I think it's called like Den's Maple Shade website, something like that, so you can fine out a little about Maple Shade. So I found out that there was a, you know, a white supremacist music label operating out of Maple Shade for years and they have a PO Box there, and they have a guy who's freely doing it, nobody's got a problem with it. And in the early 2000s there was a guy, they used to cause him David "14-words" Lane, I believe his name was. He was a white supremacist. His wife, when he went to jail, and, by the way, those 14 words are being used today by all the new neo-Nazi groups, and they're all clamping on these 14 words, which are something like we have to protect the white race from, you know, you know, whatever it may be. But it's 14 words, and that was his legacy, his kind of his M.O. His wife picks the family up and decides to move to Maple Shade, so it makes the newspapers because she's coming towards Steve Wineguard, who is the owner of this mice trap distribution, and nobody is up in arms.

So then I find another article where a guy's trying to make a movie called "White Knights," or something like that, guy named Charles Kristophe, and he wanted to make a movie about the casino that was in Maple Shade, about all these other things that were Maple Shade, and also, Dr. King being in Maple Shade, and I'm like "wait, Dr. King in Maple Shade? What are you talking about?" So I did another search on the internet and I found an article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* called "A Bar that Began a Crusade," that was by, I forget his name, but, um, Michael Caputo, I believe, he's a very, very good writer. He's got tons of books now. And that article really explained it pretty clearly, that what happened there was significant, you know.

And I said, because I'd just listened to a TED talk, and I can't believe I can't find it, and the guy said, he was from India, you guys may know the fellow, and he basically was so angry because there were so many hungry people, and he couldn't figure out how to cure hunger, and he sort of thought about it, and he said I'm so angry maybe I could put my anger into some kind of drive and figure out some program for kids to start eating. And it went from kids to teenagers, to adults, and now the poor people have, at least, food. And he's done this himself, and I'm thinking to myself, "I'm surely angry, you know what I mean. These kids got ostracized, I was ostracized

at school, so I always look at schools like they should be safe havens for kids, you know, so when I see something happen I want to be able to try to fix it. So I thought, look, what if I approached the town, and had them put in a plaque or a memorial to this event that happened in their town. It would almost, it would almost, you know, like covering up the black eye, you know, how it's been, it's been a myth in town, it would kind of take that off. And that's what I think a big problem in our country is.

MCDONALD: Do you know what year this was? I don't want to interrupt.

DUFF: This was 2015. November of 2015 when I came up with this plan. But I knew I didn't have a lot of evidence except for a newspaper article, and a couple of other things at this time. So I started researching in biographies. I started grabbing every biography I could. My wife thought I was crazy. Because I had stacks of these things.

MCDONALD: Oh there's tons of them.

DUFF: Yeah, stacks and stacks. Now if you read them, 50% of them don't include anything about Maple Shade. Now, you have to look at the dates of those. These are post a certain date where it seems like, by the way post his death especially, so somebody didn't want that story to get out there. The Maple Shade story was hidden for a reason, and we're going to get into that, because I'm sure you've read my timeline. But, so what happened then, was I had this information, I had these biographies, I had all the other things, so I thought it was enough information to go on. In December, I sent an email to City Council in Maple Shade, in December of 2015, and I said "Hey, I'd like to discuss with you an idea I have for your town. I think it would be a really good idea, you know you just had bad media, this would be good media, you know, kind of trying to sell them. Listen, this is something that every June 12th you could have a ceremony in your town where people come and celebrate this. I mean they just had 40,000 people in Selma because, after that movie everyone was like "hey, I want to go to Selma." Well, if this thing becomes a movie, guess what, people will come to Maple Shade; they'll want to see where the revolution began, where his civil rights began. So I sold them a bit, and they kind of, and they brought me in and we had a meeting. So me, the city attorney, and the town manager, a guy named Jack Lane, had a meeting. We sat down and he said "Listen, this is a myth to us. We don't care about these folks, basically, this is...newspaper articles...they can just be written, but we need primary source evidence to show it happened, and that it happened in Maple Shade. Because we don't know they could think it was Mary's Cafe and it was a place in Berlin." So they're sticking me to the wall.

So this is in December, and I'm like, "oh my God, what do I do? I've looked everywhere, I've read every biography," so I started going outside the box, and, um, that's when I started going to archives, and like trying to research archives. And I was doing it for over, probably for almost like a month, when I was researching. And on January 16, January 16th, on his birthday of 2016, I was reading the volume one of the King papers by Clayborne Carson, you know it's 300-something, 600 pages, the first volume, so I'm just flipping through this thing, and all of a sudden, on one of the pages, there's this little, tiny picture of a police complaint. And I look at this thing, and I...wait, this is it. That's the police complaint, because it's chronologically and then there's the statement of Ernst Nichols, and I'm like, "here it is." But that police complaint was real small, you couldn't read it. So I contacted him immediately, and I said, "look, here's

who I am, this is what I'm doing, please do me a big favor, if you could, you know, send me this complaint, it would be a big help. And literally, the next day, he sent me the complaint along with a couple other things that he had. So now I have the complaint in hand, and I'm going, "wow, alright, I have a primary piece of evidence to go to Maple Shade and tell them, you know, here it is." But as you're sitting there looking at it, I'm just looking and looking, and I read every biography that I could get my hands, and I see the Camden address. Something, something strange there. And since I read all these articles, Thomas McGann, in one of his articles, had said that when he heard King talk at the Senate hearing, King said that while he was staying with a friend in Camden, you know, he was refused service at this restaurant, and that's what got him involved in civil rights. And that quote stuck in my head, and I'm like, "wait, he's staying in Camden," and now a Camden address, so maybe he was in Camden.

So I call Maple Shade, I say, listen, "I've got the primary source, but even better I've got this address," you know, and they don't care about it. I send a fax to 'em.

MCDONALD: Can I ask one other question? So the iteration that we normally see is one where the address is crossed out. Is that the version that you also saw?

DUFF: Yes, absolutely, because that's the version that they had. And you know what else is crossed out on the document. Look at the document, the top right portion where it says, "serving alcoholic beverages," alcohol is crossed out, because alcoholic that wasn't a part of the statute. You can't add a word to the statute and create your own statute, you know. And I was just at a court hearing yesterday, and watching that, and that's what they were doing there. They were trying, on the actual police complaint, to incriminate, and also intimidate people to not want to make the complaint. So the complaint was not legal in that sense, so that's why the judge redacted that. At least any attorney I talked to says, on a complaint, the only one that can redact anything is a judge.

O'HARA: If I remember, the alcoholic redaction was done on a typewriter, like a typewriter was used to X out the word alcoholic.

DUFF: The original one I have is a double-line through it.

O'HARA: I have it, actually.

DUFF: Yeah, it looks like a double line.

O'HARA: We can look at it.

DUFF: But even if...

O'HARA: I was wondering if there were two...

DUFF: So here's my theory...

O'HARA: ...two incidents of redaction at two different points.

DUFF: And there may have been, and you know when the first one might have been is when Ulysses Wiggins shows up at the Maple Shade police department that night. Because Benjamin Hunt says very clearly in the '81 article that they were arrested that night, and that they had to call some doctor to come get them out of trouble. Now, he's the only person that knew what happened that night outside of King, McCall, Pearl Smith, you know. So, he'd be a good person to be able to listen to, so say they went to the police station and said "hey, we want to press charges," by the way, I've been in trouble in Maple Shade before when I was a kid, and they literally tell you "get out of town, don't come back," and it was the Maple Shade kids that attacked us. They refused, I mean, so it's a very tight town.

So what I think happened is when Wiggins shows up at this police station, because they call 'em because, either they won't charge 'em, or they're not charging them properly, or they're threatening them, Wiggins comes in and says "listen, listen the 1947 law that you guys are drafting, I helped that, I actually put that on the books with the New Jersey legislature, you know, do you understand that the crime was committed here, you need to go arrest this guy." That's why it's an hour and 15 minutes from when they walked in at 11:30pm to when an actual complaint was filed. So my theory is, plus it takes 20 minutes to drive from Wiggins' house to Maple Shade. So, they get down to the police station, what, 11:45pm, you saw my timeline, kind of how it is. So I think happened that night is a lot more than especially what Pearl Smith says in her interview. You know, because she's really vague in her interview. And the only thing she really does in that interview is she incriminates, she incriminates McCall. You know it's clear, I mean she's a police officer at the time. The interview is two-and-a-half months later...

MCDONALD: This is the published piece? You mean the *Inquirer*?

DUFF: No, so Pearl Smith gave an interview to Clifford B. King two and a half months after the incident. Why would she give an interview two and a half months after the incident to a detective when she knows she's incriminating someone in the interview? And, if you look at the interview, the interview doesn't incriminate the bartender hardly, doesn't say what he said, doesn't say where he pointed the gun, doesn't, you know, go into any of that. But he's very clear to say what night it is, it's a Sunday, cause she says a Saturday, and he says, "no, you're sure it was a Sunday, right...oh right, it was Sunday." And then the time, "what time did you walk in…11:30pm," when then you're after 10pm. What did you ask to buy, "1 or 2 quarts of beer." What are 1 or 2 quarts of beer considered--packaged goods. So, the reason why I believe it was thrown out at the grand jury, and Thomas McGann says it too, is that King and McCall didn't show up.

MCDONALD: Right, that's what he suggests, right.

DUFF: And McGann, if you can ever get a hold of this girl, her name is Rebecca...she's the one that wrote the Mary's Cafe piece...

MCDONALD: A Rutgers student, she was an undergraduate student.

DUFF: Yes, so she has a 30-minute taped interview with McGann, she was going to turn it over to me. She never did. She like, I don't know what happened. I have no idea what

happened. She just completely lost communication with me. I emailed her, I said "please, you don't understand what this means," and she said McGann very clearly said he stopped giving interviews with any historian because the King Center went along with the story of these three white witnesses not showing up, and he said "that's the very opposite of what happened, and the very opposite of what's going to really create racial unity." You know, you're going from saying "hey, we didn't show up to saying these three white people didn't show up, and that hurts it even more," and McGann was bitter, very bitter about that, that's what Rebecca Carole said. And he refused, every time called him up to give an interview, but she was friends with one of his daughters, or somehow got a family allowed him to interview him. So, I think that's important, I think that's really important, because, you know, why was it hidden, was the question.

MCDONALD: Well, let's go back. You'd actually started down one track, which was Pearl Smith's interview. But you didn't quite finish the thought. So why do you think she did the interview two and a half months later?

DUFF: I think she did the interview because she was trying to get back at McCall. And I think McCall, I've several different sources, one being Jimmy Beshai, who was his roommate at Crozier, said that McCall's senior year he had a bastardy charge against him. That, a woman, and he said Pearl sounds like it could be the name, he didn't confirm it, but a woman charged him with bastardy. That a Crozier professor testified on his behalf at trial and said it's impossible for him to be the father because, if he was he would take responsibility because he was such a good, upstanding young man, you know, and he's a seminarian student. So the professor went and testified on behalf of him. This is, by the way, in Taylor Branch's book, *Parting the Waters*, it's not just be quoting this. But what only I have, that Taylor Branch doesn't have, is, and Clayborne Carson gave this to me, is the letter from McCall to King in 1954, and he says "I gave Pearl $50 with the hope of her leaving me alone and taking the baby to California and never talking to me, but only gave her the hopes of wanting to marry me." So he's very clearly admitting to this baby being his, now she's, I found her, you know, almost a year after the incident in Maple Shade being arrested for, you know, disorderly persons because someone, she thought someone stole $20 from her. So they suspended her for three months from the police force. You know, wo maybe she was a difficult person to deal with, who knows, but McCall didn't want nothing to do with her, and she had his baby. And I think that what she did was, when he walked away from her, she said "oh yeah," and she walked in and gave an interview with Clifford Gain, who is the Burlington County detective, and it took that case, which they were probably, I mean, imagine you're young seminarians and you're, this is your first civil rights incident and, you know, you have the upper hand. It's the first time you ever had the law on your side.

McDONALD: Why do you think they were with her that evening to begin with?

DUFF: I think McCall was her date. She was, by the way, the second African American Philadelphia police woman. So it's not like, she's...

MCDONALD: I know, I'm a little surprised that she spent the evening with two seminarians.

DUFF: Yeah, but they were well-known to be lady grabbers. I mean they were very prolific, I mean if you read Branch's book, you'll see that they would go downtown and they liked mostly light-skinned women or white women. He was dating a woman named Betty Motes in school,

you know, and he wanted to marry her. And everyone said, "you can't marry this woman." So, I think a culmination of things that happened to King while he was at Crozier created what he was. I mean, you fall in love, you can't marry a woman, you go to restaurant, you're tossed out—with a gun. You try to take it to the jury, and you can't even get that done, you know what I mean. So, I mean think about this, that frustrates somebody. And I think that King's later statements show, or at least the statement to Benjamin Hunt where he said they were out with a group of boys that night, that's showing that there's a cover up about who they were with, and a statement in the *Philadelphia Tribune* article from 1961 very clearly says that he was with Reverend Ray McCall and Reverend Ray Ware. Now Reverend Ray Ware was never mentioned anywhere near the incident. You can't find it in any history books. You can't find…you do a search of Reverend Ware and he's almost non-existent, you know. So, even 11 years later he's purposefully covering up what happened, and I think that's to protect his friend.

MCDONALD: McCall?

DUFF: McCall. And I think that's why he would only talk about the Maple Sade incident very rarely, but if you look at…did you see the 1976 article by George Anastasia, and in it the SCLC, you know, president but I think he wouldn't talk about it in public as often, because he was trying to protect McCall. It's his best friend.

O'HARA: And the letter you have from McCall to King stating that Pearl went to California and had the baby and then returned, I assume.

DUFF: No, he gave her $50 for the hope she'd never return.

O'HARA: But then you said she was arrested a year later for disorderly conduct.

DUFF: That was in 1954 that the letter from McCall was sent to King. In 1951 was when she, end of 1950, was when she was arrested, it was December of 1950. It was actually December 31, it was New Year's Eve, she got arrested in 1950, so it was the same year, was what 8 months, 9 months later.

O'HARA: Then four years later, McCall writes to King about Pearl Smith.

DUFF: About Pearl Smith. And by the way, Pearl Smith was a, what do they call them, ex-WAC, what is that a woman…

O'HARA: Auxiliary Core.

DUFF: Auxiliary Core. And McCall was in the military. Now they both came up from Atlanta at almost the same time. So you almost think maybe there was a relationship there prior. Now she also is listed as Mrs. Pearl Smith. You know, who is she married to, I don't know, you know what I mean? I did find a…

O'HARA: Why would McCall wait that long to inform King about her earlier pregnancy?

DUFF: I don't think he's waiting that long, I think he's just telling him the update. Just giving him an update, "Listen I gave her $50 in hopes she'd go away, and I'm thinking…"

O'HARA: Is he referring to giving her $50 in 1951?

DUFF: 1954.

O'HARA: Oh, so he continued to see her after the fact.

DUFF: Do you want me to pull it up?

O'HARA: That would be great, and sending it to me would be great too. So he informed King, so he continued to see Pearl Smith, in your estimation, after 1951, even thought she sold him out in the interview.

DUFF: I think so, yeah, I think they had some kind of continued relationship, especially based on the fact that she probably had his baby. Once somebody's got your baby, and you're looking at your baby, you probably, it probably hurts you a little bit, maybe, I have no idea.

O'HARA: But when would the baby have been born?

DUFF: The baby would have probably been born some time in 1950, during the year 1950 is what I'm guessing.

O'HARA: But he doesn't give her the $50 to hope she gets lost until three years later…

DUFF: Because my only thought is why does she go and give that interview, you know. So the only thing I'm doing is complete speculation, but the speculation is that if she was pregnant at that time, and he did exactly what he does later in '54, and he was doing that in 1950, she was pissed. And if you read the arrest article, she went off on these people, thinking they stole $20 from her, you know, she let them have it. So, you know, I mean, a woman scorned. It's just an interesting, it's an interesting layer to the story, because there was something there. I knew something was there, because it's such an important incident in his life. I mean he talked about it, later, in that article, I mean imagine someone says, "who are your inspirations," Jesus, Ghandi, and, actually, I experienced my own, you know, racial discrimination right over across the bridge here. I mean, it flows from Jesus, to Ghandi, to that incident. I mean, so if that's incident's not significant to him, why is he talkin g about it 11 years later, you know? Why does he, what about the first sit in comment, I mean that…he says, he says clearly it was a very painful experience because we decided to sit in, I mean, you can't misconstrue that comment. That's exactly what they did, I mean he told them to leave, they refused to get up. Pearl Smith says that, basically when they refused to get up is when he got pissed, you know, so…

But as to where I got most of the information, or where I researched, I've dug everywhere. I've gone to prosecutor's offices in Burlington County, because that's the county it was in, I've gone down to down to Delaware to where he could have got a ticket. You want to hear something crazy? So he has this ticket he could have had in Delaware, I go all the way down there, the tickets not there and I'm just pissed, you know, so upset, and as I'm pulling out, I see the place is

on Martin Luther King Drive. Alright. And I keep going, keep moving. Because the state was telling me, if I can get that ticket, which that was the interesting thing, was the state's argument. They wanted to see how long he lived there; with a ticket, it was literally four days after the incident. So, what am I proving he lived there four days, with the ticket? When I was driving down I thought, Jesus Christ, why am I doing driving for this ticket, but if I got the ticket that would be cool.

So I've gone from, I've paid people to go to the archives in Boston, I've paid for researchers to go up there and get research from me, you know, any article, anything that was from Ulysses Wiggins to King, I've got all those transcribed, which none of those mention the incident. But there's something up there. I'm going to Boston, actually, next month. And I'm going to spending, I'm going to spend, three or four hours in that archive, and I bet you I find something.

MCDONALD: Let me ask you a question, so putting aside the oral histories for just a moment, because we're going to come to those later this afternoon, putting those aside, besides the court complaint, is there any other documentary evidence that affiliates King with 753 Walnut?

DUFF: No, just the two documents from the complaint. That's it. Because, at this point, what would connect them? He was staying there free, he wasn't paying rent, it was a free room for them to stay in whenever they wanted. His home address from Crozier is listed as Atlanta. You know, but, I mean, think about it, you're in 1950 and you're a young black man, and you're at the police and you're not going to give them a fake address. You know what I mean? What's also important about what happened is that, in the newspaper articles about the event, he changed his name.

MCDONALD: Yeah, and they list the address for the other two women, but they don't list the address for the two men.

DUFF: No, but when he changes his name, understand that I've got 20 articles from the same period of time where it says Martin Luther King, Jr. or Martin K., Jr., whatever it is, you know, it was very specific Martin. Same exact time, same period of time, but in these two *Philadelphia Tribune* articles he's Michael, and then in the Baltimore Afro-American article which, at that time, and still is, was a national African-American paper where anybody who was big in the African-American community, which his father was, would have picked that paper up, he was completely left out of the paper. Look his name is not even in it. McCall's name is there, Pearl Smith's named there, Doris Wilson, but he's mysteriously left out. So maybe when he was talking to the reporters, he's like "listen do me a favor, ixna on the name-a, you know what I mean," because he's not in there.

MCDONALD: Why would he have been able to convince them to do that, do you think?

DUFF: I don't know. Who knows? Or maybe he wasn't there at that hearing, when the *Baltimore Afro-American* came. Because remember there was a couple of different hearings. So, and maybe the *Baltimore Afro-American* approached Ulysses Wiggins, remember King was during the summer of 1950, a lot of it he was in Atlanta preaching. So, if this case is going on, McCall's the one taking this case on, at that point. So a reporter calls Ulysses Wiggins and says ,"hey, you know, who was there that night, you know." McCall knowing that King's dad would freak out,

says, “listen, it was me and a girl named Pearl Smith and Doris Wilson.” What does a reporter know? Reporter only knows what they report.

MCDONALD: Why do you think that some of the articles changed the name?

DUFF: I think he gave them that name. I think he specifically gave them the name.

MCODNLAD: Michael?

DUFF: Yeah, absolutely.

MCDONALD: Wouldn’t his father have known from his affiliation with Walter McCall who it really was?

DUFF: *Philadelphia Tribune* wasn’t a national paper. At that time, at least. Still not a national paper for the African-American community So, I mean, that’s just a theory, but I just know that if his dad knew he was out…actually, his dad knew he was doing things, by the way. When his dad came up for, if you read Garrow’s book, it was…or it was Grantz’s book, there was a pool hall below Crozier, and he was down there playing pool and smoking cigarettes in front of his dad, and his brother is like “yo, dad. How are you letting this happen?” And his dad is, like, furious, but he can’t do anything. He’s trying to give his son the independence he needs…

MCDONALD: He was young.

O’HARA: Have you ever tried to find the senate testimony that Thomas McGann was referring to?

DUFF: Oh yes, oh yes.

O’HARA: And how did that go?

DUFF: I’ve contacted them, I’ve now contacted people in the Senate, what do you call that, the archives. I’ve contacted so many people. I’ve contacted the people who have the Lewis, what’s the name of the radio host again.

O’HARA: Fulton Lewis.

DUFF: Fulton Lewis, Jr. The archives in Syracuse. So I’ve contacted them and tried to see if they could find it. They didn’t have any luck. I was going to go there, but then I saw the, I mean, oh my God, you want to talk about a voluminous, lengthy…it was literally years of radio shows. So how are you going to sit there and listen to years of radio shows to be able to find it.

O’HARA: Again, the problem is to find something that might not be there at all, which is kind of the whole problem with this research project, is seeking something we don’t know if it’s there. You’re sorting through things looking for, really, a needle in a haystack.

DUFF: So McGann's comments, and Robert Burke Johnson's comments are also very similar. So Robert Burke Johnson sends you a wild goose chase. Did you see his comments?

MCDONALD: I don't think I have.

O'HARA: We do have him, but refresh me and I'll remember.

DUFF: In the book, he was reading one of Martin Luther King's books, and he read about the incident, and he's like, "Oh my God," he put two and two together. Well, I've read that whole book, and it's not in that book.

O'HARA: That created a stumbling block for me at one point too as I searched for that.

DUFF: So something happened, you've got McGann, you've got, what do you call it, Burke Johnson, they see him on TV and they're like, "oh my god, is that that guy?" You know, they had to put two and two together somehow. And both of them have a different story about how they heard about it, and neither story seems to add up. It's crazy right? I'm telling you, it's like, I'm telling you, it's such a wild goose chase. It's been so much fun, it really has.

O'HARA: But then you said after his death people started writing about it, would that be a result of…

DUFF: No, after his death, people stopped writing about it mostly. And only a certain amount of books have been released, and most of the books without the family's permission, have been released with the Maple Shade incident. Look at the King archives in Atlanta, there's not one piece of Maple Shade in there.

O'HARA: I'm thinking of the Zapp book mentions it. 1974…is that the earliest one?

DUFF: I'm not sure, I don't know which book that is. But I can say, you know, that books have mentioned what you're talking about--short, tiny paragraphs about it, and…

MCDONALD: Right, even in earlier treatments it's not really, quite frankly, given fulsome treatment.

DUFF: Well, the best detailed account in any book is by, I can't believe I can't remember his name, it was called *A Man, A Myth*, let me see…and that book very specifically kind of spells out what happened. That King was driving, they were in the car, McCall says "I'm getting hungry," you know, so they find a restaurant, they pull in. So I mean, you know, it's funny because when you first start looking at this you're thinking about what happened, now you've got all the information and you can kind of make up what happened. You can kind of with three or four different stories of how it happened.

MCDONALD: What, just to back up for a second, so in that rendition, because there is some discussion about whether or not this was an event that happened to him, and may have galvanized his future intellectual development, or was an activity that this group met and strategically planned. The account that you're reading seems to imply the former, not the latter.

DUFF: But that, I will be honest with you, Thelma, who—she's not going to go on tape—she's not going to talk to anybody, but she's talked to me. She is the sister-in-law of Jeannette Hunt, of the person we're going to go see after this, Mrs. Hunt. She said "Daddy told him, don't go to Maple Shade. He told him many of times, they're racist and they won't serve you." Now, he is an antagonist, I mean that's what he's done later in his career, I mean. So, 1947 law is on his side, he finds out this restaurant, or this town, is racist, decides maybe, you know what, I got a police officer with me, I got a social worker, you know, maybe they all talked about it together, said "let's go down there and see what happens."

MCDONALD: But we don't have anything that actually demonstrates that.

DUFF: We have Thelma, who said her father, you know, and I'm sure if you talk to her nicely, I'd give you her phone number, she'd probably do an interview. I'm sure she would, you know. If you just give her a call. And it's funny, because when I first started doing this, and I went to Frank, I mean I've been to every city person you can believe, all the congress people, senators, who sat down and talked and had bit meetings. And when I first started doing this I sat with Frank Moran, who's the city council president, and he's going to be the mayor, because that's just how it works there, there's no real election, Frank Moran said what he would consider doing taking the taxes that are owed on the property next to it and alleviating her of all the taxes, so that she just gives the house up, so we can restore both houses at one time. So that's when I first contacted her and she's like "yes, absolutely, I'd really, you know, that's something I'd consider." Now her son's living in there right now. The home is $153,000 in back taxes and penalties.

MCDONALD: Thelma's home?

DUFF: Thelma's. The tax was on 755 Walnut, and they're attached to each other. And at the time King stayed there, Hunt owned both homes. And it was kind of like an in-and-out kind of place, so he was in both residences. But…

MCDONALD: Can we pause here for a moment? Because that's one of the most difficult things to grapple with. So there's a supposition that because he's friends with McCall, he's utilizing these spaces, and there's that one police, or the court complaint, that has that address listed. But is there anything else that puts him in that location?

DUFF: There's Mrs. Hunt.

MCDONALD: Beyond the oral history.

DUFF: Yeah, the 1981 article.

MCDONALD: Again, oral history. Do we have any documentary evidence?

DUFF: No. No.

MCDONALD: That's what we're struggling with.

DUFF: We have two primary sources pieces of evidence. We have two pieces of police complaints. That's it.

MCDONALD: Let me just pause it for a moment, since we're talking about suppositions.

DUFF: But, by the way, just so you understand, that police complaint was not available to the public until after 1988. The article from 1981 was Mr. Hunt. How could he have known about anything in it?

MCDONALD: No, I think, I…I can't go to far into what I'm saying. But during the time of that particular incident, right, the Maple Shade incident that night and maybe for the days on either side, I think there's a strong supposition maybe that could be made for him being in that location. I'm asking is there anything else, besides Hunt's interview that puts him in 753.

DUFF: No. Just another person's interview, Donald "Ducky" Birts, who, when he met King he said "where are you from," and he said, "I'm from Camden," and King said "well, I used to live in Camden, right on Walnut Street between 7th and 8th." And Ducky never forgot that, so I interviewed Ducky and I put that on tape and you probably already have that.

MCDONALD: Yeah, we have that.

DUFF: But that's it. There's McGann saying "while staying with friends in Camden," so, but I think the key to that….

MCDONALD: "While staying with friends in Camden," is that really affiliated with the time period of that' really related to the Maple Shade incident that's still a relatively narrow chronological time period that we're considering.

DUFF: You're correct, you're correct. But how narrow?

O'HARA: And it's McGann saying that he heard a radio host who heard King say…

DUFF: You're correct

O'HARA: …to a senator that he was staying with riends in Camden. We can't find that Senate testimony where King even says that in his own words, right?

DUFF: That's why I think it would be great to get McGann's tape, that tpae from McGann to hear exactly what he says. Because that's what a reporter reported. And another reporter heard it differently than that.

O'HARA: Do you have any sense of why Rebecca Carole has withheld the tape from attempts to get it?

DUFF: I do now know. She is definitely an interesting person to say the least. I mean I've talked to somebody else that knew her and they said it's going to be kind of weird dealing with her. I mean, the night I first talked to her, she was gung-ho, we were going to sit down, put the box on

the table and go at it, you know. And then the next day I contacted her and it was devoid of any contact. That tape is uh…that's the tape. If we get that tape it would tell us so much. I mean, she thinks it doesn't tell us anything. I mean, I told her, "you have no idea, it's a very valuable historic evidence you have there."

O'HARA: Where is McGann now?

DUFF: He's dead. Yeah, he's been long dead. Died in, I think, 2002? Or something like that. And I got a lot of stuff from his family members; his daughter's name Joan McGoff now, and she sent me a whole bunch of stuff that you guys definitely already have. But no, there's nothing else to connect him to the Camden property.

MCDONALD: Okay.

DUFF: Did you find anything? (laughter) Come on, tell me!

MCDONALD: That's been the biggest challenge, any discussion about that property is always done in a really…if there's any suggestion of affiliation it's all very informal. You know, it's hard to pin down. How often do we pin down when we go to visit a friend's house? What evidence is there of that, unless he described it in a letter or…

DUFF: When I was 21 years old I was staying in Philadelphia. I had a house there and my friend, it was his house, I stayed with him and rented a room, you know what I mean, nobody would have any record of me living at that house. But I lived there for two years of my life, you know what I mean? So there is a lot of people, especially when they're younger in life that there's no need to keep records. What would the records be needed for? The other thing , the thing about this, why wouldn't the Burlington County NAACP handle it if Maple Shade's in Burlington County? Why is the Camden NAACP handling this? Where does Wiggins live, do you know where he lived? He lived at 4th and, I can't remember the street, but it's four blocks from the Walnut Street house. The Newton Street house, do you know what the Newton Street house is? So in the Newton Street house, there was somebody that thought he lived there before.

MCDONALD: Oh yes, the prior case…

DUFF: Well, the resident who lived there, never said he lived there. Only said he visited there. So the Newton Street house is a block from the Walnut Street house. Now where there's smoke, there's fire. I mean you've got several different things that show that the police report…the church, in Camden. Why is he preaching at a church in Camden in 1951?

O'HARA: Wasn't Barber a pastor at a Camden church at one time?

MCDONALD: Yeah, he was.

DUFF: The pastor at this church was actually a fellow Crozier seminarian student. He's the one…his name was Lloyd Burrs, which, you know what's crazy, I found in 1950 Lloyd Burrs was also hit with a bastardy suit. He was also sued for bastardy. But Burrs became the pastor at that church in 1950…the year of 1950. Lloyd A. Burrs was his name. So that church, he not

only preached there in 1951, he came back there and visited in 1952, or at least that ‘s what the newspaper article states, right.

O’HARA: Another thing, was he close to the Hunts? King himself, to Benjamin Hunt? Or to the Hunt family.

DUFF: Uh-uh.

O’HARA: So no, and the relationship between the Hunts and McCall is…

DUFF: Well, he died in 1976, so…I mean, kind of non-existent.

O’HARA: Was it a family relationship?

DUFF: Yes, cousins, first cousins.

O’HARA: Has that ever been, like, documented in any way like a family tree kind of thing?

DUFF: No, how would you document it?

O’HARA: Ancestry records, birth records, those kinds of things would be my guess.

DUFF: Maybe she has that, we could ask her today. You know you’re going to go to the source. Now, I think the most interesting thing, and this is where I see this, it’s the time of that police complaint. So, if the police complaint were out in the early ’70s, whatever it may be, and it was public knowledge the, Hunt’s story could be coerced by the police complaint, seeing his address on there, knowing its there, but you can’t find, I can’t find it, there’s nobody that can find anything before this time. You look at the chain of custody on the police complaint. Very specifically says 1988 that it was entered into the Stanford Archives. It was only entered into the Stanford Archives because Clayborne Carson read that article, “The Bar that Began the Crusade,” and he said “whoa, whoa, whoa, what is that?” So Clayborne Carson sought that out, that wasn’t something that was like given freely, and he called Thomas McGann, because he saw McGann’s name in the article and said “listen, I’m a historian, I’d love to work with you,” And during that time is when McGann started getting his story. Clayborne Carson knows that McGann’s story is different, plenty of historians know that McGann’s story is different from what they told because they interviewed him, and that’s when he said, “you know what, I’m done. You’re not telling the truth.” So I think that if you add everything up, you know…

MCDONALD: McGann said to Carson, “I’d done”?

DUFF: I’m done. He said to all reporters and historians, he didn’t want to talk about it anymore and he started writing his own articles. Look at how many articles. He wrote 14 articles? I mean that’s a lot. I guarantee he’s got stuff out there that we can’t find, because the internet doesn’t show all of New Jersey lawyer magazines, things like that. There’s stuff out there that he wrote. She actually, is coming back from vacation, Joan Lagath, and she was going to let me tear into his files.

O'HARA: What's her name again?

DUFF: Joan Lagath.

O'HARA: Can you spell the last name?

DUFF: LAGATH

O'HARA: Thank you.

DUFF: Oh, I hunted her too, because I found her in an article, in a lawyer magazine (phone rings…it's okay, it goes downstairs), a portrait of a judge, and there was a mystery of who this judge was. This person was driving by a trash heap and saw this big, beautiful portrait of a judge, and they grabbed the portrait of the judge and they brought it to their law office. And the person was who was like the head of the office was like "That's Judge McGann." So now this guy's got the portrait, he calls, her name is like Caitlin something, I forget her name, calls her, so now I've got the names, you know what I mean. So I contact her law office and was "hey, your grandfather was involved in a really interesting incident, I would like to know more about it." "Listen, I don't know nothing about it, but my mom does." So she sent me to her mom, Joan Lagath, and she was like "what do you need?" I said, "send me everything you got." And literally, in minutes, she sent it right over. So, it's funny because each kind of road I find sometimes just a complete dead end. And sometimes it's, you know, a wealth of information, you know. I mean nobody knew, really, that, nobody figured out, I don't think, except for Branch, that something was going on in Maple Shade. Like there's something, some reason, and that's like he alludes to it in his book. Read his book, he says that McCall all but admits to getting the girl pregnant but he doesn't put two and two together with Maple Shade. So I think it's all coming together now as to why. And Clayborne Carson agrees, Jimmy Beshai agrees, who was his roommate. I sent him the timeline, and he says, "Patrick, I can't disagree with this." And you knew him, you know what I mean? And he was off campus a lot.

MCDONALD: Who was?

DUFF: Jimmy Beshai said that King and McCall were off campus…he said that they were absolutely inseparable. Where McCall went, King went. Now I have a theory behind that. McCall was poor, by the way, the reason why he…oh…by the way, something else does put them in Camden. McCall's interview with Herbert Holmes. Very specifically, he says that during the summer months of 1950, I'm sorry 1948, he worked in the Camden school district.

MCDONALD: Right…

DUFF: So, where is he staying? Well guess who his good friend was? Robert Burke Johnson, he was a member of the school board. So it makes sense, so he knew Johnson already, got him a job at the school board. All of a sudden he gets in Maple Shade and, guess what, he goes back to Johnson, "hey, I got some trouble," you know….

O'HARA: In that same interview, McCall says he, let me try to remember how this went, McCall says that he lived in Philadelphia before he went into the army, is that correct?

DUFF: Uh huh.

O'HARA: And then after he came back form the army he went to Morehouse his freshman year. But after his freshman year, he says, and I think I'm quoting, he says "I spent the rest of my time at Morehouse living in Philadelphia….the rest of my tenure at Morehouse while living in Philadelphia."

DUFF: Well, I didn't, I don't think I read into that part.

O'HARA: So, I was thinking, I'm assuming that he stayed at Morehouse, but he has a residence somewhere in this area.

DUFF: Maybe.

O'HARA: So do you have any sense of his residency between up until he entered the war and '44, I think, and then after he came back and went to Morehouse?

DUFF: Maybe Pearl. I didn't look as much, I mean I looked at lot at McCall don't get me wrong, trying to find stuff on McCall, but I've been looking for Pearl. I mean, that's why when I found that interview…

O'HARA: Tough name to track down.

DUFF: Really tough name. She got married in 1953 and changed her name to Pearl Reed, I found that.

O'HARA: REED?

DUFF: REID.

MCDONALD: So she gets married in 1953, and in 1954 is when she might presumably still be contact with McCall? Okay.

DUFF: It's odd, yes. But remember she's Mrs. Pearl Smith and she's out on a date. So who knows what's happening? You know, what's in her head or whose head, or who knows if that's the same Pearl too? You now what I mean. It's pure speculation, but my thing is why does she go to the police and give an interview. By the way, Clifford Kane at the same time was facing an indictment. Clifford Kane was the guy interviewing her, for covering up the casino down the street. You know, so it's like, you know the guy who doesn't care about the casino down the street was getting an interview and was trying to incriminate some guy for buying alcohol on a Sunday. Think about that! Right now there's a guy, they call him New Jersey weed man. He's on trial for witness intimidation. That's where I was yesterday, I was witnessing the trial so I could see what the crime was. Well, they went through their whole opening, and they drew their whole first witness, which was the detective, and they never stated the crime. Everything he did was absolutely protected by the first amendment. He is in jail for a complete narrative that makes a crime, not a crime within a narrative. You understand? They are trying to make an overall, he served a guy with a lawsuit. Now is that a part of the crime, when you have to serve

someone a lawsuit? You can't find them, you serve them somewhere else. He was served at his dad's house. That's not a crime. And they're acting like it's a crime, and I'm going "where do we live, you know." So, you never know what really happens in any court case. Truth is not a part of court, by the way. It's actually not even allowed in court. Think about it. I'm being honest with you. Have you ever been through a court case? In a trial, a criminal trial?

MCDONALD: I was a jury foreman last year.

O'HARA: Figures.

DUFF: Okay, you're a jury foreman. You don't get to see what happens in court. It's what happens is when you guys get taken out of court is when the real court happens. And you can't talk about that. You can't talk about this. Well, that's a part of the story. Well, that's prejudicial. To who? To, me, court is something that is manipulated from front to back. That's why what I think happened, the reason why I mentioned this, is that you have two young black men, going to a grand jury, where somebody just gave a witness statement incriminating one of them. Now you've got Robert Burke Johnson, who's a very well-trained lawyer, wound up being the first African American in the New Jersey Supreme Court, so he's definitely not a dummy, he's an intelligent person, who sees this document and says "yo, you got a problem here. If we walk into this grand jury, this all white grand jury, we don't have a civil rights act, we don't have anything to protect us here, you're going to get convicted of buying alcohol on a Sunday. You're going to be indicted. They're going to indict him too, for not serving you, but it's going to be a he-said-she-said, what do you want to do?" What would you do?

O'HARA: I don't know. Could one speculate that the civil rights implications of King's effort, if indeed he tried to bring a civil rights case, and saw it as a civil rights case, or conceived of it as a sit-in, or did it deliberately for any reason to bring a civil rights case to the forefront, that this wouldn't intimidate him very much, the threat of being charged with buying alcohol on a Sunday?

DUFF: No, no, and I'm going to tell you why. Think about what he does later. He has to make sure that the person that they pick as the person, and one person you pick, Rosa Parks, was the perfect person. They passed on several people in Montgomery to use as the proper defendant. They had to find the perfect defendant. He learned from that case that, number one, four defendants is messy. You can't have four people going and trying to fight something that you could have differences amongst them, right?

O'HARA: In other words, if he were indicted for buying alcohol on a Sunday, that in and of itself would be another moment where he could exploit the publicity for a civil rights gain.

DUFF: It could be but he's a seminary student at this time. He's indicted for buying alcohol on a Sunday and gets convicted, he's going to get tossed out of school. He's ruining his life.

O'HARA: But his status as a seminarian didn't prevent him, or preclude him , from bringing the whole, a deliberate case against Nichols…

DUFF: Well, remember that a deliberate case was brought, there was a case brought by the NAACP. So, you know, and I think, sometimes I think the case was brought by the NAACP to create some leverage after they got that statement. Because nobody knows when the lawsuit was filed. They just say a lawsuit by the NAACP. And also, if you look at the *Baltimore Afro-American* article, and this is the most important thing about the Maple Shade incident, it's really just not significant to King. It's a very significant incident to south Jersey. Ulysses Wiggins, who goes on later to desegregate restaurants, movie theatres, and many places of public accommodation in south Jersey, says in the *Baltimore Afro-American* that this case, and I wish I could think…is going to basically, they're going to launch a drive to desegregate places of public accommodation. So the incident in Maple Shade's not just the fact that you have the first African American supreme court justice as the attorney, the fact that Ulysses Wiggins is one of the most prolific African American civil rights leaders that's been really unsung, you know, is the attorney, or is the NAACP leader, the second African-American police woman. Here's all these people culminating to this one event, in this little town of Maple Shade….it changed history. It did, and what it did is planted a seed in him to, number one, it was the first time he had the law on his side, but it was a state law, right? So what happens with a state law, it gets superseded by federal law. So what does he have to do? He can't just fight the state, he's got to go to the federal government and get their assistance. You have to have them help you beat the states, because states have racist governments and system, and he knew that. And this is one example of it, you know. So it's the culmination of what happened to him in this area created an experience of "you know what, that line, the Mason Dixon line, doesn't mean crap."

O'HARA: Were there other efforts at desegregation as part of that campaign to desegregate…the drive to desegregate n this area? Were there any other examples?

DUFF: I don't know, I just know that that's the quote that he says, and that's in 1950, and most of the desegregation that he did was later, in like '57, '58. There are pictures of him in front of Woolworth's, protesting in front of Woolworth's. You know what, his life would be such a really good movie. I don't know if you've really looked into Ulysses Wiggins much. But I've read so much about him. Like, there was 200 employees employed in the trades in Camden in 1944. But 1946, there was more than 2,000. The NAACP, he restarted it in 1944, in Camden. By 1948, they had over 1,600 members, you know. They had the largest membership base of any NAACP in New Jersey. He would send in wealthy African Americans into sections of Camden and fill out applications for houses to get refused so he could file lawsuits against them. He desegregated Camden. The school system in Camden, by the way, was desegregated in 1947, not 1954 with Brown v. Board of Education. And if we really look into this, that's what is the beginning of the disruption of Camden. Because the white flight went, the freeholders controlled the money, no road projects get funded, and no parks get funded, no blight gets funded, and Camden goes to hell because the progression and the '40s was so progressive, so fast, it caused such a fast, you know, outburst of the white people. And that's where redlining came from in real estate, here we're in a real estate office, all that was invented during that time because people were like "whoa, you can destroy a neighborhood." And Camden, there's your perfect example, 60 years later. What do we have, you know? And that's why it's so frustrating to know that this CDC gets a $229, 000 grant and doesn't tell the property owner or myself anything about it. It's the story of Camden.

MCDONALD: Well, but do recognize that, for a fair amount of your conversation, it's really the story of Maple Shade.

DUFF: It is, you're correct, you're correct. But the home, the building's no longer there, so in any historic property, right, let's say George Washington had a, or let's just say the White House. The first White House, or the Liberty Bell, wherever that is, I mean not everything was exactly as it was. Walt Whitman's house, in Camden. Do you know that the original Walt Whitman house burned down? To the ground. It wasn't even the house that they have as the Walt Whitman house is the house that he died in. He didn't write any of his works in there. Didn't do any of the important stuff of Walt Whitman, right? But that's the building the represents Walt Whitman at this point because it's the only one left. The restaurant is gone, right, have you been to Crozier, to visit the seminary. Did you get into the room?

MCDONALD: There's nothing…I know…no, I know.

DUFF: So let's think about this. So what memories, what do we have to preserve his memories in this area. Do you have anything? I don't, except for the house, you know. And somebody already has $240,000 on the line to fix it. So that's the only thing that connects Camden…

MCDONALD: Well, he part of a, national, I mean, Crozier does actually have national register status for part of their building.

DUFF: The building.

MCDONALD: And there is an affiliation with Martin Luther King, in their…

DUFF: But if you read the application, it's not for attachment to a significant person. He's just a part of the application.

MCODNAD: No, I know, I understand that.

DUFF: And for the state to claim that that's an attachment to him, that's bogus. That's actually, that's actually it's incorrect.

MCDONALD: Well, let me ask you a question. How many days do you think he spent at that property versus 753?

DUFF: Oh, many more, sure, sure. But where was he on the night that the incident happened in Maple Shade? Since we're all pointing to this incident, where was he? He couldn't have been at Crozier. It was closed. They went home for the summer. It was closed for over a month on June 12th. So where was he, you know? He listed his own address as 753 Walnut Street, you know. If you, if you…

MCDONALD: And again, for that moment, for those days, I think that's…

DUFF: Or for that month.

MCDONALD: It's hard to say, isn't it?

DUFF: Sure, except, and here's what I like to say to people…

MCDONALD: Because he did have, if you look at his documentary record, and I know I'm being bad here so give me 30 seconds and then pull me back if I don't stop talking, but if you look at what has been published—what he published himself, and what has written by other historians who tracked his life—there are ample options where he did stay when he wasn't in seminary, right? Other families that he got to know, other people that he spent time with in Chester, Pennsylvania. Why are we assuming that 753 is where he would have spent that month?

DUFF: Why are you assuming anything other?

MCDONALD: I'm not, I'm just saying you have prove it one way or the other, and if there are other options it becomes harder to demonstrate that this is the only place he could have been.

DUFF: I can tell you that if you're going to the bar, you're doing, taking women out at night, you're not going to be staying with Pastor Barbour. Absolutely not. I don't know if you know anything about the relationship between him and King, but he was a father figure to him. He's not going to be coming home at 1 o'clock in the morning, you know. What Jimmy Beshai said, and I apologize, but Jimmy Beshai, this woman Theresa Pernot, who's the head of park service, said she had a conversation with one of her employees, and I said "Please, can you get me in contact with her," I said King would use this as his flop house, it was like his home away from home to get things done, and enjoy time away from school. But that being said, also, Pennsylvania had no laws against segregation. When he went out in Chester, he couldn't pick the restaurant he wanted to go to, he had to go to the black only restaurant. The white only restaurant around the corner was different. He tried to go to a Stouffer's restaurant there and they put sand in his food, in Philadelphia, right. So where would you want to stay? Would you want to stay somewhere where you weren't wanted? Or would you want to stay in Camden, the most progressive city at that time. They even had a café called "Everybody's Café," where it was a completely biracial café, or a multi-racial café, people could come in and eat, very progressive. You have the NAACP there, you know, that he was a part of in Morehouse. There's no record of him working with the NAACP in Pennsylvania. There's a record of him speaking to the NAACP in Delaware. So, the only other place he preaches at, except for places around Crozier, is Camden. And that was in 1951 and 1952, right? So, where else would he have been, is the question, you know, and also not just that. The widow of this soldier than just died, right that conversation with Donald Trump, you know where now Trump's saying what he said, and she's saying, no listen, he said what I said. Mrs. Hunt has said very clearly that he lived there on and off for two years. Does she know exactly how long he was there, no, but he was there very often, in and out of the house. Her sister-in-law said it, so, in a sense, and this is what I said to a radio host the other night, one of the conservative radio hosts, I said, "are you calling the widow a liar, or are you calling Mrs. Hunt a liar? Because that's the only way to say it other than saying, you know, that she doesn't count. I mean, you know, she has to count. She owns the actual home that's on the police complaint that her father-in-law gifted to her, and she was alive during that period of time. So, if it wasn't for her, I would have done nothing with this, you know. Without a living witness, I mean, what do you really have? You have a piece of paper. But you

have a piece of paper and an 80-something year old woman. Well, how long did he live there? On and off about two years. What did it say in the '80, '81 article, on and off about two years. Thelma, by the way, says he stayed there on and off for a period of time, and then a full semester at the end of his thing, like he was there more during the last semester. And you know why, and this is the theory that I have, Betty Motes. Once he stopped dating Betty Motes, she worked on campus, and his father wanted him as far away from her, and all of his friends as far away from her as possible. And if you were him, think about that. The girl you love, you want to marry, is working in the cafeteria, and you gotta go to school, you know. So, Thelma says that he stayed at the home that period of time basically that whole time, which was the last semester of 1951.

O'HARA: Where did she say that?

DUFF: Interview I had with her, when I spoke with her on the phone.

O'HARA: But you don't have that recorded or anything, no?

DUFF: No, but I asked her to speak with a reporter, and I asked her to speak with you guys, and she said "Honey, I don't want to be involved, I don't want my name out there." And I said "well, you don't have to be out there." So I'm going to explain to her that something this will be concise and it's not, there's no…nobody's looking to sell any columns here. You know, but if you're asking me if he stayed over in Crozier. Sure, he stayed in Crozier, that's obvious. Did he stay at the Barbour's house some time? Sure, absolutely, he stayed there.

MCDONALD: I guess what I'm suggesting is, part of what we've been tasked with, if we could find concrete evidence of one scenario that's great. If we can't, barring that, can we eliminate other possibilities; if we can't eliminate all other possibilities, it becomes harder to then say that this is was must have happened. We can talk about what might have happened, or what is likely to have happened, but we cannot definitely say…

DUFF: I don't think anyone can say "must have" but I don't think that you can do that with any incidents of anybody's life.

MCDONALD: But for historical registry purposes, you do need to be fairly confidence.

DUFF: Well, you have a living witness, you have a primary source document listing that address, you have a dead witness that that primary source was not available before his testimony. I mean if we're in a court of law, I could slam dunk this with a court, I mean, just think about that. Right now it's circumstantial evidence, but you can convict somebody on a mass amount of circumstantial evidence as long as they all add up.

And that was what the DEP atfirst, when I found the '81 article, that was their question, "well, did he know about the police report?" Okay, that's a good question, alright, so know I found chain of command on the police report; the only one that had it was McGann, so we can't talk to him now, found out if he gave a police report to Mr. Hunt, but that seems highly unlikely. Why would Mr. Hunt have a police report of something they wouldn't even tell him about for a couple of years? You know, they kept it secret from him, and then told him they were out with a group of boys. You know, so, it's definitely a lot of circumstantial evidence, except for the police

report. And the second page of the police report, and the fact that, you don't have Crozier open at that point. So I mean there's a lot of circumstantial evidence but primary source evidence is those police reports.

And that's the frustrating part, is that that's when I knew something was holding back the information. That's why I searched into finding why would this be a secret. Because it's a secret, man. The King Center, when they don't have it on their archives at all, that's lying by omission, that's what I would call it. I mean, you're not putting it on there for a purpose. The Stanford Archives has it very clearly, but the King Archives don't. The Stanford Archives are funded by Ronnie Lott, you know. I don't know if you know who that it, old football player, he funded all the Stanford Archives for King, he's put millions of dollars into it. So they actually have more money than the King Center; the King Center is going broke. I don't think they're open any more right now. The actual tourist destination, I think, is closed. The home of King for renovations, and they don't know when it's going to reopen. So, I mean, you know what, it's funny cause Clayborne Carson said to me he went down to and he traveled through the south and he saw all these monuments and he thought "man, I can't believe this is not preserved, I cannot be believe this is not preserved." So yeah, there's questions about what you preserve, why you preserve it, you know, just think about it. There's no other connection to the Maple Shade incident except for that home. That's it. That home goes, it's gone, you have no other connection to it. Let's say five years down the road, six years down the road, all of a sudden something comes up, there's a tape that comes up, and its King talking about this.

There's more out there, the census records will come out in 2022. What happens in 2022, the census records come out and he's listed as an inhabitant, that location, and we're like "I didn't know King lived in Camden." And all of a sudden they go back in history and some guy found it, but everyone looked away from it. Said the hell with it. Well, that's a different criteria, by the way. So you have the criteria of the historical significant character lived there, an event happened, and that there's a future evidence that may come in the future that could substantiate or build a new narrative. That's three different criteria that that house touches. Some places touch one very lightly; that house that just was knocked down on, in Bellmawr, did you hear about that. Historical home called the Hugg-Harrison house. Overnight, the New Jersey Department of Transportation knocked it down without any permission. The next day there was an injunction in court tot= save the house. Well the DOT said "we're not going to wait for the injunction," they just destroyed the house, they just creamed the house, they just crushed it. It was built in 1770, had a big thing on the side of it, beautiful. They crushed it, like a bug, right, so it's gone. Now that house somehow received preliminary status through the DEP in months. This is not an application to the national registry; this is not even an application to the state. This is a preliminary application to see if the house even qualifies at all. Now how did that one go so quickly? And then they tear the house down. I mean, think about that, that's a crime…that's a crime.

But nobody's going to go to jail for it because it's an organization and, you know, nobody really….so I don't, I think the same thing is going to happen to that house, to be honest with you. I think it's going to get ripped down, that quarter million dollars is going to get siphoned into something else. And that's why we were never told about it. That's why they're not calling me back or sending emails back. Why wouldn't you pick up the phone; Vince Besara, the mayor's guy, "I just read that article, I'm sorry man." Something, os that's just…do I want to save the

home, yes. Do I think it's historically significant, absolutely. I think that everybody, if they looked at the culmination of the facts is when you see the significance. That's where he was during that incident. Sure, Crozier is significant, but how are you going to save that building? It's owned now by a private hospital, they don't even want to think about doing it. I've talked to them. Listen, I've gone to all these places and I've talked to administrators, talked to all the politicians. I've been offered so much help and been given none. That's why I'm so glad you guys are doing what you're doing. It's great. You know, it's funny because the one newspaper said I'm insulted. I'm not insulted by you guys doing it, I'm insulted that the process was changed for me. It was changed for me.

MCDONALD: How do you mean?

DUFF: When I called them originally, they said it was a three-month process for the preliminary application, you give us the information you have, we'll make a decision, it's done. Well, in three months I asked "hey, what's the decision?" "Oh, well, we don't really know yet." For months, I said "well, tell me what you're basing a decision on?" "Well, we're basing it on X, Y, and Z." Okay, I can find more. So every time they tell me no, for months in a row, and they wouldn't say no, they would say there's not enough yet, I would find more, I would fine more, and more, and bringing them more. Here I found an article with him talking about him, this is two years after the fact, right? But everything I brought them still wasn't enough, you know. And then, just so you know, looked at the preliminary applications for many other places, and they're not even close to what I brought them. They don't substantiate it nearly. They're not nearly as significant as a person, surely, not nearly as significant an event, surely. But the train station, let's say, or the train house got historic status because it's on what, it's on a railroad track? This house is where Dr. King lived. There's only one other holiday for one person.

MCDONALD: This house is where Dr. King may have stayed.

DUFF: No, I hate to tell you, he lived there.

MCDONALD: But Patrick, we don't have the evidence for that, do we?

DUFF: Let's go meet her.

MCDONALD: Okay, alright.

DUFF: You tell me if she's credible or not. She's paid the taxes on the property, by the way, and nobody pays the taxes on the property on that street. Her neighbors are a good example. I'm just being honest. So every dollar she pays. She buys the properties around her that are blighted to un-blight them. Cuts the lots around the corner because it looks like crap. Her husband, when they cut all the rec sports programs for the kids, he financed them. He's got a street named after him. They live on Jethro Hunt Street. So this is a family that is the son's a Willingboro detective, all the daughters are teachers. I mean, she was the president of the PTA for Camden for many years, you know. This is not a person that is to be, you know, questioned in the sense of what she thinks and remembers. When I first came to her she was matter of fact. I said, "Maam, I have a very silly question." And she said, "what's that?" I said did you know Martin Mother King, And she said, "well he used to live in my house." And I was like, okay, is this

something you've been keeping secret here? "No, my daddy told the newspapers." When? She brings down this crumpled piece of paper and it's from 1981, and I'm like "okay." Has he told them lately? Because he's got to. So, let's go meet her.

O'HARA: Okay. Let me end the recording here.

MCDONALD: Save it.

INTERVIEW WITH JEANETTE LILY HUNT AT HER HOME, JANUARY 19, 2015.

[Transcribed by John O'Hara from audio .mp4 file provided by Patrick Duff. Includes voices of Jeanette Lily Hunt; Patrick Duff; Colandus Francis, former Camden NAACP leader; and Ed Colimore, reporter, Philadelphia Inquirer.]

RECORDING STARTS:

[Indecipherable]

Hunt: . . . big house . . . [indecipherable] . . . it's a little bigger than this one . . . in here, because this is the front room/dining room, and the front room there [753 Walnut] is almost the size of this and then the dining room.

Duff: Did, did, uh, your husband Jethroe, were they friends with him, or . . .

Hunt: Oh, they were close . . .

Duff: Oh, yeah?

Hunt: They were close.

Duff: . . . because Jethroe was very religious, too, right?

Hunt: Yes, he's the foreman [?].

CF: Yeah, the apartment's right across the street.

Hunt: Over there.

Duff: And then what about when he lived there at that house, do you remember when that happened in Maple Shade, when he got . . . ?

Hunt: I wasn't there. From my understanding, my cousin called my father in law to come to Maple Shade because they were locked up, and he got them out.

Duff: So *they* got locked up?

Hunt: I think they were locked up. I think that's the way the story went. Because he went down to get them out. Now that's the best, that's all I know.

CF: They probably at the police station filed a complaint.

Duff: That's what they were . . . They were filing a complaint because they charged him . . . and the police actually arrested the bartender . . .

Hunt: I never really looked really into it, to know all the who what when and wheres . . .

CF: But that complaint there is against the owner of the bar, the bar owner – that complaint is against the bar owner.

EC: There was no complaint against Martin Luther King, right?

CF: Well, we haven't seen . . . we haven't seen anything . . . I don't know if it exists . . .

Hunt: I really don't . . . . Don't document anything I'm not sure of . . .

CF: But that complaint is against the bar owner. [hands her paper]

Hunt: Wait a minute, I just glanced at this, I really didn't read it.

CF: Yeah. No, no, that's not against Dr. King and McCall, that's against the bar owner.

Duff: But I can tell you guys, I know from my own experience in police, that there's two people and one person saying this guy did that, this guy did that . . . Let's say he said "I thought these guys were going to rob me," you never know . . .

Hunt: But this is true, I heard them say they didn't want to serve them, that's what [indecipherable] about the disturbance . . .

CF: Yeah, absolutely, and [inidecipherable]

Duff: Do you remember, were they mad about it, upset . . . do you remember anything about that ?

Hunt: They didn't have that kind of [indecipherable]. No, their personality wasn't like that. I never heard any negative comments or anything from them or my father in law. It was just a . . . it happened, you know and they did what they had to do. . .

CF: But you got to understand Dr. King had been exposed to that all his life in the south, in Georgia, so it was nothing new to him to be discriminated against . . .

Duff: What's going on with house now, 753 Walnut?

Hunt: It's just there. I didn't have it demolished . . .

Duff: Well, good.

Hunt: I didn't have it demolished. I had called—what's that guy that does all the demolishing here?

Duff: Hargrove.

[overlapping]

Hunt: Yeah, Hargrove, but he wanted 35,000. That was a few years ago. But the drug addicts keep breaking in, and . . . it's still a problem. I put out so much money trying to keep it, until I said, uh, I am tired of paying taxes on it.

Duff: Well, I think with your statement, and with the information we have, that's going to be enough to make that a historical site.

Hunt: I would love that!

CF: I'll tell you . . . I know she would be . . .

Hunt: I would love that because I had a man come and close up the back because they went in and stole . . .

Duff: Well, they opened it up again . . .

Hunt: It's open now?

CF: One of the windows . . .

[overlapping assent]

Hunt: [indecipherable] paying to have it boarded up . . . They went in, they took all the pipes out. That house, when my father in law passed, that house was really nice . . . they took all the . . . he put the bathroom in downstairs, they just took everything . . . Remember Bernadette Johnson, her mother was sick?

[conversation continues about Bernadette Johnson, how she had rented to Johnson, how her husband or boyfriend had "torn the place up," the eviction process. Then, discussion of how "druggies" moved in, etc., and how it cost her: "I have been putting out money, money, money, money."]

[conversation then turns to the property on Newton Street said to have been occupied by King, which Ms. Hunt claims was not true.]

Hunt: That was not true. He lived at 753 Walnut Street.

Duff: Why have you just kept this [history of 753] to yourself?

Hunt: The *Courier Post* did a write up.

Duff: When?

Hunt: I have it here somewhere, where the *Courier Post* did a write up, my father in law was standing in front of the house.

CF: Oh, when he was alive, when your father in law was alive.

Hunt: When my father in law was alive.

Duff: How long ago was that?

Hunt: Oh, gosh. When they took that? I was teaching at another school . . . I can probably see if one of my daughters . . . because I made copies and gave them to all my children . . .

Duff: Was it in the seventies, the eighties?

Hunt: It must have been . . . it was in . . . it had to be the eight—it wasn't the seventies. It might have been the nineties. Maybe you can get a microfilm from *Courier Post*. It was about that big, Daddy standing outside of the house . . .

CF: When . . . when did you father pass?

Hunt: He's been dead about ten years . . .

Duff: Yeah, but it was just him saying it at that point . . . it was just your, him, he was just saying it . . . there was no documentation to put him there. Now, that, that right there, that's the glue.

CF: That's proof.

Hunt: *Courier Post* came and interviewed Daddy. You're a researcher, right?

EC: I'm a reporter with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. He's doing some research.

Hunt: Oh, you're doing research. I don't know where that paper is. I thought about that paper once before. I asked my children, and I'll ask them again tonight since you're here . . . uh, maybe . . . let me have your name and phone number . . .

[assent, various exchanges of paper]

Hunt: Yeah, that's a fact, that's where he lived at . . .

CF: Yeah, this is the first time I ever seen . . . that I ever heard about 753. I knew the rumors about 940 Newton, but I never believed that.

Hunt: No, that's not true. I don't know where that guy got that information. In fact, I think my daughters tried to reach him to tell him that, no, you're not telling the truth.

Duff: Well, the interesting thing is, I have reached out to him and I called him, and I said I found this information that shows an address, and he wasn't very happy about it, actually. And I said to him, listen, my job, what I do, is I am a social activist, a civil rights activist, and it's not to worry about the temperament of somebody else, or if somebody's going to be upset, it's to find the truth, and then expose the truth. And, uh, like in Maple Shade—in Maple Shade, the incident that happened to him is told like it was folklore, like it never really happened.

Hunt: Yes, it did happen, because my father in law . . . I remember my father in law went up there to get them out, whatever trouble they were in, so that they could come back. When they came back that night, they slept at 753 Walnut Street.

CF: Yeah, that's the complaint they signed, their signatures right at the bottom.

[address exchanges continue]

Hunt: I often think about how close I was to him, but didn't realize that he would . . .

EC: . . . be, yeah, because at that point he was a student, and he wasn't known nationally or anything . . . How long was he in that house, at 753 . . . ?

Hunt: I guess until he graduated.

EC: Was that two years, or . . . ?

Hunt: If you could get a hold of the yearbook from Crozer, from the Seminary . . .

EC: Did he stay there from the time he went to Crozer, so from 48-51?

Hunt: I'm not sure, all I know is they say the time he went to the Seminary, that's where he graduated from, he stayed at 753, he never stayed no place else in Camden.

EC: Ok, so he probably was 48-51, you think, huh?

Hunt: Yeah, but the whole time he was at Crozer, that's when he was at 753 Walnut.

Duff: I got goosebumps everywhere.

Hunt: And I can almost visualize seeing him, even when we'd be outside on the sidewalk, him leaning up on the car, you know . . . but that's one of the reasons why I can't . . . I knew he stayed in that back room, and I didn't want to get rid of the house. Camden was killing me with the taxes, and nobody in it.

Duff: Well, you know the house next to it, they are $47,000 in back taxes and $95,000 in interest and penalties, that's what they owe on it.

Hunt: The house next door.

CF: 755.

Duff: The house next door, 755, so . . . That might be something I can help them out with too, because . . . . Didn't you guys own both houses, 755 and 753?

Hunt: That house was my father in law's house.

Duff: . . . ok, because I saw that in the records.

Hunt: But presently his daughter's son . . . something, I don't go over there.

Duff: Jeanette, right?

Hunt: I'm Jeanette.

Duff: Ok, you're Jeanette. Who's Lily?

Hunt: Me!

Duff: Ok, so Jeanette Lily is the same person.

[they discuss her name, origin, spelling, kidding around, phone rings, call taken by Ms. Hunt]

Duff: [while Hunt talks on phone] I told you I was right. I knew it, I had a feeling.

Oral History Interview:

Jeanette Lilly M. Hunt
340 Pine Street, Camden, New Jersey
Thursday, October 26, 2017, 3:15pm

Conducted by:

John O'Hara, Associate Professor of Critical Thinking, Stockton University
Michelle Craig McDonald, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Stockton University

Also present:

Patrick Duff, Local Activist

MCDONALD: Do you mind if we record you?

HUNT: No, I'm going to tell the truth.

MCDONALD: No, no, I just meant rather than my frantically trying to take notes.

HUNT: It don't make a difference. Whatever is convenient for you.

MCDONALD: Excellent, excellent. So the way we've divided the questions, the first are just to give us a little bit of background about you and your family, and then the next set of questions will be specifically about 753, and then we'll go on from there—753 Walnut. So [to O'Hara] are you ready?

O'HARA: I am. We're actually recording already.

MCDONALD: Alright. Simple question to start with—could you state your name for us?

HUNT: I like to be called Jeannette Lily M. Hunt.

MCDONALD: Okay. We're happy to call you what you'd like to be called.

HUNT: Mrs. Hunt.
here
MCDONALD: That's great. And can you tell me, are you from Camden?

HUNT: Yes, yes.

MCDONALD: Born and raised here your whole life?

HUNT: Yes.
MCDONALD: And when were you born?

HUNT: May 14, 1931 (phone rings; McDonald interjects "You can get that if you like." Hunt replies, "It's my son," and takes the call). Do we need to start over?

MCDONALD: No, we can keep going from here. Tell me a little bit about your parents and your family background here in Camden.

HUNT: I was born in Camden, not too far from where I'm living now, where I'm living right now. I attended the public school system here in Camden. I had one sister, and one brother.

MCDONALD: And what were their names?

HUNT: Mildred and Obie. He was an elder in our church. My mother died young too, my mother died when she was 45. So that just left us. But I married young. I remember when my husband asked my mother, she said, "If I marry her, I'll take care of her." So my mother said, "Alright." So I married right out of high school. Right out of high school. But I had a good husband. We were married for 65 years.

MCDONALD: Congratulations.

HUNT: And he worked for…the fire department used to be located over on…little past 4th street. That's where the firehouse was, so when we bought our home when we first married we stayed with his parents. But we only stayed there 'bout two or three months, because he got a place for us to stay. And then we moved here. And I've been here about 65 years, in this house. And he would just leave from here and go to work. And he worked for the city of Camden 'bout 35 years, for the fire department.

MCDONALD: So you were living here in 1948, then?

HUNT: Oh yes. Yes. Oh , wait a minute…1948. No, I wasn't here in '48. In '48, we had just gotten married.

MCDONLAD: Okay, so you were still living with your husband's family.

HUNT: Yes. But we only stayed there two or three months. And then we moved into our own home.

DUFF: What month did you get married?

HUNT: October. Halloween.

MCDONALD: Oh! Me too, we got married on October 30.

HUNT: I did too! That's mischief night!

MCDONALD: It is. That's why I chose it.

HUNT: I was so anxious to get married, I'm not even thinking about Halloween….that he was going to marry me, and I was going to marry him.

MCDONALD: Well, I chose it deliberately because it was mischief night.

HUNT: Oh really? I didn't even think about it. But we had a good home. We had a good family. Four children—Jethro, Jeanette, Darlene, and Shirley. And all of them are doing well. Thank God. You know that they able to take care of themselves. I thanks the Lord for that. And they helps me out, if I need anything. I don't get out like I used to. But if I give them a phone call, they tell me to make a list. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't.

MCDONALD: What year were you married? I meant to ask. So it was October 30….

HUNT: I think it was 1948.

MCDONALD: Okay.

HUNT: '47 or '48.

MCDONALD: And what was your relationship to Benjamin Hunt?

HUNT: My father-in-law. Good daddy. Good father in law.

MCDONALD: And he was living at 753 Walnut when you got married?

HUNT: Yes.

MCDONALD: How long had he been living there, do you know?

HUNT: Living where?

MCDONALD: At 753.

HUNT: Oh, I have that information. A long time. He was living there before I got married. That tells you something, because I was married 65 years.

O'HARA: Did your husband grow up there?

HUNT: Yes, he wasn't born there, but he grew up there.

MCDONALD: And that's the house you lived in just after your marriage?

HUNT: Yes, yes…

MCDONALD: For a couple of months. What can you tell me about the house? In terms of…

HUNT: Which house?

MCDONALD: 753, I'm sorry.

HUNT: Well, 753 is a big house. Warm home, large rooms. And it was a Christian home, because my mother and father-in-law were very strict. No smoking in the house. No nothing in there, but, you know, just family gathering, family talk and that kind of thing. But it had a large…now the living room was almost this size. And then it was a dining room. And then the kitchen. And it had 1, 2, 3, 4 bedrooms, bath upstairs and a bath downstairs. Large yard you could drive in. The driveway is adjacent to the house.

O'HARA: We just drove by it, and stopped for a few moments. Now, did Benjamin…what immediate family were still living with him at the time you got married and moved out? So it would have been Benjamin—was he married? So your mother-in-law was there?

HUNT: My husband's brother, they weren't living there. The only one that was there was my, I think she's the middle girl—Sarah Hunt.

MCDONALD: So then it was Benjamin, his daughter, and his wife? Was she there as well?

HUNT: My father-in-law's wife? Yeah, it was…they were staying, like I said, you're going a ways back. They lived there, in the house, and I remember Sarah, she's staying in the house. My sister-in-law, they had another daughter, Mary, she got married, she moved away, but she was staying there a long time. But then she got married when she was up in age. And my sister-in-law, Thelma, she got married young, and she moved out. So it was a family home. It was really a family house. I don't like to say house. It was a family home. There's a difference between a house and a home.

O'HARA: Benjamin Hunt, in an interview back in 1981, he said something about the house having a swinging door policy where people would be coming and going a lot, and staying there. And he called it a swinging door.

HUNT: If it was a swinging door, it was only for church people. You know sometimes they would have conventions, and back in that time it was hard to get a room at a hotel, and daddy would let them stay there. But that, that's the only swinging door that would be. Unless it was one of the family; wasn't nobody else swinging in there.

O'HARA: So he didn't rent any rooms out?

HUNT: Oh no. The only people that stayed there was Dr. King. Now Dr. King did stay there, and Walter did come there. But Walter was his nephew, so naturally, you know, they were the only ones--nobody else stayed there.

MCDONALD: This is a question we've had a hard time trying to pin down—what is the relationship between Walter McCall and Benjamin Hunt. So you say it was his nephew. His nephew on what side of the family? Do you know?

HUNT: I think it was on, I think it was on the father's side. Blood relation, it was on the father's side. Because I remember going to Atlanta one time. In fact, I went to Walter's home, he had a home in Atlanta, and, yeah, that was on daddy's side.

MCDONALD: And how, when you say that Walter stayed there, and Dr. King stayed there, how would you characterize how they used the property?

HUNT: It was just like any other college student. Most of the time you're at the college, you know, just come there to stay at night. That was their residence, rather than being on campus.

MCDONALD: So how often do you think they would stay over in Camden? If you had to guess?

HUNT: I don't know, I had my own house.

MCDONALD: Okay, good point by you.

HUNT: Just one time, when I was…it's kind of hard, but I do remember passing him, and talking just leisurely, you know, when I would see them. That was it; you know I thought nothing of it. Hey, if I thought he would become Dr. King, it might have been a different story. But he was just there, they were just there, just like, you know, you'd go to your mother's house, and you'd see somebody, you'd speak to them, and maybe you'd exchange a few words, and then you go on to do what you have to do.

O'HARA: You knew Walter somewhat better?

HUNT: I knew Walter. I knew him because he was a family member. Like I said, I did go to his home. But the time I went to his home was during the time he died. I remember going to his home when he died, because daddy wanted all of us to go down there. Someone had sabotaged his sausage plant. He was getting ready to open up a business, with selling sausage. And that Sunday morning, someone had…he went there, he was on his way to church, and he noticed his place was sabotaged. They say he had a heart attack from that and he died. Because he had put a lot of money in there.

O'HARA: What year would that have been?

DUFF: 1976 he died.

O'HARA: '76.

HUNT: This young man over here (indicating Duff) he has a great memory.

MCDONALD: He has a great memory.

O'HARA: We were just saying he has a great memory, saying that on the way here.

HUNT: He has a photographic mind.

MCDONALD: Did you know any other members of Walter's family?

HUNT: I met his wife, but I never really had no communications with her, but I did meet her, and he had a couple of boys. I was so involved with family until I was, I wasn't, you know, I never was a person to do a lot of visiting. I had to keep my home together. Any other questions?

MCDONALD: Yes, I've got a few more….I've got a few more. So, you've actually, you've described the house, could you describe the neighborhood? What was it like?

HUNT: It was very friendly, it was very open. You didn't have to lock your doors like you do now. I could put the baby in the baby carriage, go to the store; I didn't worry about locking no doors. And everybody knew everybody. And it was quiet. It was like a family, it was just nice.

DUFF: And Mrs. Hunt, Bergen Square was where most of the African American people lived at the time, right?

HUNT: At that time, all the way down here, down to 2nd Street, which nobody is down in now—they're in the high rise, those that are living. But this area here where I'm in now was an Italian-based neighborhood. Down below Locust, below 3rd, this is 4th, that's 3rd, was the black neighborhood. Lot of blacks And then in Centerville, I remember that, lot of blacks out in Centerville, and Shelton Terrace, those areas, out there.

But basically down from Kane Avenue, well, I would say Atlantic, all the way back out to Margate. Blacks was all in there. And down to 2nd Street. See, on 2nd Street, they've torn all the houses down, it's just a highway. I mean 2nd Street is just trucks, you know, industries. But people all lived down there, and even in here and around 4th Street, here and up to Broadway, were Italians. Over on 3rd Street over there, there was some blacks over there, but like years ago; I remember when they made them move because they were going to bring a highway through. Never did. Never did. The houses still there, but those people owned their homes, but they made them move.

So it was quiet. You didn't have to worry about walking, you could go out at night. Like now, I wouldn't go out at night, not unless somebody is with me.

DUFF: You turn your camera on there, you see her camera?

MCDONALD: Oh, right. No, I hadn't seen it.

HUNT: Oh yeah, and at night I take my iPad upstairs at night because I have it on my iPad, so if anyone is out the front I can see who's out there. But I don't go to the door at night. One night the police was knocking on the door, I didn't let them in. I called the police on them.

Group laughs.

HUNT (cont.): I told them, "Someone's knocking on my door." Then I found out it was the police. Not too long ago.

DUFF: I remember you told me that. Someone got shot down the street, and they wanted to get her video from her thing. And she said "I'm not getting my video, someone could be watching me. Have a good day.

MCDONALD: So if I can tax your memory, and I realize this is really asking you to really think back, you said that you met Dr. King once or twice when you were in the house. Is there anything about that event that you can remember?

HUNT: They were just nice gentlemen, that's all I can say, they weren't loud, you know when they talked. They were just nice. My father thought a lot of both of them. He really did.

MCDONALD: Do you know why they would come to visit Camden? Was it just, were there other people that they knew?

HUNT: Well, the thing about it is, the reason were there was because my father-in-law was, well, they were cousins, whatever, a cousin. Walter was his nephew. So that's how Walter got there, so that's how Dr. King got there, because of Walter.

O'HARA: How long was Walter there? Like, before 1948?

HUNT: Just the time he was at seminary. Seminary is the reason why he came north. And that's the reason why he wound up at daddy's house. Rather than staying on campus, they stayed at daddy's. Or, you know, some time they may have had…did you [speaking to Duff] search that they did have also have a room on campus?

DUFF: Oh, they had a room on campus.

HUNT: Yeah, most students do that, you know. My granddaughter, she graduated now, she had a room on campus, but was home every week.

DUFF: Did you know, because when I talked to Thelma, she said that Walter worked as a substitute teacher in Camden.

HUNT: I don't hear nothing about that.

DUFF: Walter said the same thing.

HUNT: Well, I don't know nothing about that.

MCDONALD: Do you know, I know you've spoken about this in an earlier interview, but just for the purposes of our recording, so one of the events in which King is associated in New Jersey, is what happened in Maple Shade, New Jersey.

HUNT: I remember that, I wasn't living there but my father-in-law told me, when they were, when the police had them in Maple Shade, they called daddy because they wanted daddy to

come get them out. Well, Daddy called Dr. Wiggins. And they're the ones…but that night they stayed at 753 Walnut Street.

MCDONALD: After Dr. Wiggins got them out of the police station?

HUNT: Yeah, after they left there, they came back to 753 Walnut Street.

MCDONALD: Had they been staying there before that night, do you know?

HUNT: Yea, they had to be, they had to be staying there. But like I said, when you're in college you're back and forth. And it just so happened that night in Maple Shade they were out, and they got into trouble.

MCDONALD: Do you remember what the trouble was about?

HUNT: No more than what I read in the newspaper. You read that article too.

MCDONALD: Yes, I didn't know if there was anything else, other than what the newspaper had.

HUNT: No, no, cause my father-in-law told me they got into trouble and they called me to get 'em out. And Dr. Wiggins at that time was head of NAACP. I remember him very distinctly.

MCDONALD: What do you remember about him?

HUNT: He was a nice doctor, you know, visiting the homes, and…he was just down to earth, Dr. Wiggins was. He was a neighborhood doctor. Everyone who knew him liked him. I liked him.

MCDONALD: I'm assuming that, but I should never assume, but I was asked to ask, that in addition to your memories…do you have any….there's a 1981 newspaper clipping that you've provided to Patrick, but are there any other letters or photographs or anything from the time period that you have? No?

HUNT: Just busy, busy, busy. We've always been a busy family. I'm busy now, although I don't get out as much, I'm still overly busy.

MCDONALD: I keep hoping it's going to slow down at some point. It doesn't?

HUNT: Every day I'm busy, doing something. I'm very active with my church.

MCDONALD: Is there anything else about 753 that you'd like to tell us, that we haven't asked you already?

HUNT: No, no…I think all the neighbors up there loved daddy, and at one time daddy used to provide a vegetable garden up there, you know, for about 3 or 4 lots. And he'd plant collard greens, tomatoes, all those kind of vegetables like that. It was real pretty too. He kept it so well, and all the neighbors liked that because he let them have the vegetables. They liked that.

DUFF: Do you Benjamin Hunt, any of his brothers' names?

HUNT: Uh-uh. I really don't.

DUFF: And Benjamin was born, do you remember where?

HUNT: That was before my time.

MCDONALD: Do you remember how long he lived in the house?

HUNT: Like I said, he had to have been living there for over 65 years. I think when they bought the house, if I can think, it was back in the '80s. I'm not sure. But I think was about it in the '80s when he purchased 753.

DUFF: Well, the property records show that he bought it in 1945.

MCDONALD: Okay.

HUNT: That's when he bought it?

DUFF: That's what it says. But remember he owned 753 also.

HUNT: But I have a deed, I do have a deed, I saw it for when they purchased that property. Because before they moved to Walnut Street, they lived on 8th Street. And they moved from 8th Street, I think I'm right now, to Walnut Street. Like I said, you need time to sit down, when you doing history now you need to sit down and get them facts together. I just did a history thing. Remember I was telling you about (to Duff).

O'HARA: One question I have is, that trip to Atlanta to visit Walter McCall's family when he died, which would have been 1976. So you…What year were you born again?

HUNT: I was born in 1931.

O'HARA: So 1931. So that would have made you?

HUNT: About 19.

DUFF: No.

O'HARA: When you went to visit Walter McCall's family when he died?

HUNT: I'm not sure. I know I went there, when he died. I can't recall what year Walter died.

O'HARA: You must have been closer with Walter than…

HUNT: Oh, I liked him, we…we talked now, like I said, we talked. But I can't think of nothing negative about him.

O'HARA: And he was there during the seminary years, when he was at Crozier primarily…

HUNT: Yes, when he was at 753 Walnut. Now the year he died…

O'HARA: But you got to know him pretty well during those couple of years?

HUNT: Well, yeah, when I would see him, like when I would go to the house. But daddy talked about him all the time, so that brings about a closeness too.

MCDONALD: Did either Dr. King or McCall stay in touch with Mr. Hunt after they left seminary?

HUNT: I believe they did, because Mr. King's mother and father, they left, they drove all the way from Atlanta to meet daddy, but daddy was at a church convention. They said that they wanted to meet the man that housed their son. Housed their son. They drove all the way from Atlanta to Camden.

MCDONALD: Do you know when that was? Was it soon after King graduated or…?

DUFF: When he lived there.

HUNT: Yeah, it had to be during the time he lived. All I know he was there. He lived there.

MCDONALD: Okay. Do you have any other questions, John?

O'HARA: I don't. You were taking the lead on this interview.

MCDONALD: I was.

HUNT: And another thing about my family, all of our children finished college, everyone one of 'em. Me too.

MCDONALD: What did you study?

HUNT: I majored in elementary education, and secondary, and also was a guidance counselor. And certified in all three areas: elementary, secondary, teacher of the handicapped, and guidance counselor.

O'HARA: Did you work here in Camden?

HUNT: I worked for while in Pleasantville as a guidance counselor. And then I came back to Camden.

DUFF: Weren't you also president of the PTA?

HUNT: I was president of the PTA before I went to college. I loved it too. We were so close with the community that the board of Education set up the basement. They fixed it all up just like a kitchen. Put stoves in there, we was just go there, you know we volunteered—and fixed lunches for the kids, dinners, you know, we did a lot with the PTA.

DUFF: Did you know Robert Bert Johnson? Judge Johnson?

HUNT: I didn't know him too well. His name was familiar.

DUFF: Because he was the attorney for King and McCall during that incident.

HUNT: I didn't know him that well, but as far as that….the school is still standing, Fetter School. When I was a little girl, I had to walk past that school and go to Bourbon School, that's another school that's built in a spot right there there at 4th and Mt. Vernon. When I finished Bourbon School I still had to walk, past Fetter school, and when you're young you don't pay that no mind. You know, all I just knew I had to go towhere I was supposed to be. Then I had to go to Whittier School till 7th grade, and when I finished Whittier School, I had to walk past and go to Hatch, and then I left Hatch and went to Camden High. And I didn't go to college until my baby, Shirley, went to junior high.

MCDONALD: That was the youngest of your children?

HUNT: Yes, when she went to junior high, I had no one coming home for lunch, so I was free. Because back in the time when they was small, they came home for lunch. So you just about got the whole history. It may be a little scattered, sporadic.

MCDONALD: No, no…that's good you never know how pieces fit together, so it's always good to let you think about how it comes to your mind.

DUFF: What year did Jethro die?

HUNT: My husband? My husband will be dead 12 years this month. 1960--wait a minute….2005. You know, I tell you, I get shaky with the date. I think he died, my husband died in 2005. October.

DUFF: That's 1950.

HUNT: No he died, 2005…

DUFF: But you were married 65 years, right? Were you married in 1950? you know I can find that online.

HUNT: I have my marriage certificate upstairs.

DUFF: Do you?

HUNT: Yeah, I'll just be a little…not…

DUFF: You may have been married more than 65 years.

HUNT: Well, I know I've been married 65 and I know he died 2005. So that would make it about 12 years he's been dead already.

DUFF: Oh, and tell them what your husband did with the kids around here, the sports programs.

HUNT: Oh, he was in charge of the little league, and we had the south Camden recreation, about 5 or 6 or 7 busses would leave right from that corner, and the busses would leave here every morning taking the kids anywhere, we didn't care if they was from another neighborhood or not. All they had to have was permission, a slip signed by the parent, before they'd let them get on the bus. And we were able to hire teachers from the school system because it was during the summer when school was out. And they when they'd come back, and I'd be with them too, and we'd come back into the city around 4 o'clock, and then we'd go out into a neighborhood around 6 o'clock and stay in that neighborhood until about 10 o'clock. But then the city took it over, they took it over because they could get funds. See we were funded by the state. That's how we could pay young people to work, and they all grown now, but they talk about how we hired them, you know, to work at the program. And that's how we were able to hire teachers, to come and work in the program, and it was just a full day, with the kids.

O'HARA: Fantastic.

MCDONALD: What did your husband do?

O'HARA: Fireman.

HUNT: My husband? Well, like I said, he was a fireman for 35 years, but he also had his own business, home sanitation service.

DUFF: He was one of the first African American firemen in the city.

MCDONALD: And he was from Camden as well?

HUNT: My husband? Like I told you, he grew up in Camden, but he was born in South Carolina.

DUFF: That's where McCall's family is from.

HUNT: I think he came, his father brought him here, when he was either 5 or 6 years old. His father brought him here.

MCDONALD: Great.

O'HARA: Alright.

HUNT: Now you're going to write that up?

MCDONALD: Yes.

HUNT: I'd like to see it, and then I'll have a copy. I'd like a history for our church.

MCDONALD: Be happy to. I'd be happy to.

HUNT: You know, you can't trust politicians. And over the years, I've heard them say they coming into the neighborhood to do this, and to do that, and you go to meetings where they supposed to be setting up how you would like for it to be, but it never comes about. Never takes place.

MCDONALD: How many people have you met with about this project? Have you spoken directly to different people.

DUFF: The DEP. And them two reporters.

O'HARA: Your first interview.

HUNT: You need to contact John Lewis and let him now.

DUFF: I did.

HUNT: Oh you did? Oh good.

DUFF: Oh, I'm not one to walk quietly.

HUNT: Yeah, they brought him here. I have it on my phone.

O'HARA: Oh wow. That's pretty neat.

DUFF: You do all that, you do all that, and then you don't inform us about what is happening. And then, by the way, they contacted the *Courier Post* and told them that they let you know what's happening.

HUNT: No, they did not. They didn't, haven't, cause most everything is on my phone or my iPad. They haven't contacted me, not one time. The last time they contacted me…

DUFF: Remember, the last time they contacted you they tried to go around me, and have her sign off on the house, the contract left her on the hook for almost everything. So I read the contract and I said absolutely not, she's not signing this. And then they made her right a letter saying that I'm her representative for the house. So then she wrote the letter, and now I was the representative, and they completely misrepresented every single thing they told us. We sat at a meeting and said "We're 100% on board, no problem, we're going to take it from here as long as we get city designation," and she was right there, and, "Okay, that sounds great." And I even

asked them, you remember, “this doesn’t require state designation for this?” “No, no, we’re all on board.” And we signed a contract and it didn’t come to closing.

HUNT: And I just need to sign so they can put a roof on. They said we want to put the roof on before any damage is done to it. It seemed like to me that in November.

DUFF: That was last year, yeah.

HUNT: Yeah, last year.

O’HARA: I still can’t figure out why that grant not would be…

DUFF: Well, she just hit it on the head. She’s been in the city for a long time and people say they’re going to come in and do this and do that. Now the grant money might come, but is the project happening? So, this is the story of Camden. This is a microcosm of Camden and you’re seeing it right here, with this house.

HUNT: They say things, make it real, real, real, most of the time, worse than it is. Then they get the money, the people, the grass roots don’t see nothing happen. I’ll see them fix up by, like, where the business area, I seen them fix up over there. But down here, nothing, Nothing. If you get anything done, you have pull it out your own pocket. And then they come tear up your pavement, they don’t fix it back, you’ve got to fix it back.

DUFF: How many properties have you bought here around on Queen?

HUNT: I bought, we owned this house, the one over on the corner and I own those lots back there, trying to keep ‘em clean. When my husband, when he was with the sanitation business, he had trucks back there. And I’m still paying taxes on that property back there. And I pay more taxes on that than I do in this one. I ain’t never understood that.

MCDONALD: What house, you mean 753?

HUNT: No, that house next door. This is my property from here to the corner.

MCDONALD: And technically you still own 753 Walnut, is that right?

HUNT: Oh right, I just paid up the taxes for the year. They didn’t even take over the taxes.

DUFF: They promised us they would.

HUNT: You know, but I kept paying them. So when the tax bill come in, I say just, you know, they did lower the taxes on it. But I said I’d pay it.

DUFF: $507 a year.

HUNT: Yup, that’s all I have to pay now.

MCDONALD: And it's been sitting vacant now for how long?

HUNT: Oh, a long time. It's been vacant a long time.

O'HARA: 20 years, you said?

DUFF: Something like that.

HUNT: I think it's been at least 20 years, because my husband has been dead about 12 this month. I would say about 20.

MCDONALD: Is there anything else you'd like to share with us? I've asked you a lot of questions, but is there anything else?

HUNT: It wasn't that many. I just feel like it wasn't in chronological order.

MCDONALD: Oh, it doesn't need to be.

HUNT: I like things to be organized. And that was so sporadic.

MCDONALD: Well, we can certainly send you, what we can do is type it up and send you a copy, so you can see what it looks like and see if there is anything else that you would like to add, or…oh that's your clock.

HUNT: That's my clock.

MCDONALD: I thought it was the phone at first.

HUNT: It will play a little bit every hour on the hour.

DUFF: Well, thank you.

O'HARA: Thank you very much.

HUNT: What's your names? I don't have your names.

MCDONALD: I'm going to give you a card.

O'HARA: I don't carry a card, but how about if I write my name on yours.

MCDONALD: Why don't you write your name on the back of mine, and then she'll have both of them.

DUFF: We've got to get you a card.

O'HARA: Well, I could just put in for one and they'd deliver it to my mailbox.

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

MCDONALD: Yes, you could.

HUNT: I remember when Stockton first got started.

MCDONALD: Do you?

HUNT: Everyone was worried….how is this community college going to make out, but now it's been down through the years. But it's still standing.

MCDONALD: We're still standing…we're growing.

DUFF: Remember, these are the professors I told you about, the ones that did that exhibit about civil rights in south jersey. Remember I told you I called them and I said, "Hey, you missed something," talking about the King event. So it's been a long relationship both ways here. But you guys are not allowed to tell me what they found yet.

MCDONALD: Not yet.

HUNT: I had worked at one time for a state teacher's college, back in 1970 and 71. I was working on my Master's so I was on the deans' list. And they gave me an office. They called me an Assistant Director of Academic Advising. And I was there because, and one of the men that worked there said he didn't understand how I could grasp all that information, in regards to when the student would come in for their programs what for the year, I knew how to direct them, and the teachers, well they said that the teachers…strangest thing. At one point, the teachers in Camden all had to be certified in the area that they taught in. They made them go down to Glassboro. They had an abundance of credits, but they were in the wrong area. And I was the one that would lined them up so that they would take the right courses.

O'HARA: We do a little bit of that.

HUNT: But then the college said they were running short of money. You know, last to be hired, first to go.

O'HARA: Well, here's Michelle's card, and my name is on the back.

MCDONALD: His is easier to read because he wrote bigger than I did.

O'HARA: Reach out any time you need to.

DUFF: Her email is [redacted].

MCDONALD: Hold on, let me write that down. And ours are easy. They're just our names, I mean they're long, and they're on the card, but it's just our names, so they're long xxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx and this is xxxx.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.

HUNT: Wait a second, I don't have my glass on. I see it, Michelle. Yeah, I remember when you were birthed. I was working that time in Pleasantville, at the high school.

MCDONALD: We do some work in Pleasantville now.

HUNT: I used to oversee the high school guidance counselor. You used to work at Pleasantville High School?

MCDONALD: No, we do some work their now. We have some after school programs (to O'Hara: you don't need to record this, we don't need to transcribe my voice).

Oral History Interview:

[Transcribed by Michelle Craig McDonald from audio .mp4 file provided by Patrick Duff. Includes voices of Thelma Lowery and Patrick Duff]

T[h]elma Lowery
Camden, New Jersey
Friday, December 1, 2017, 7:50pm

Conducted by:

Patrick Duff, Local Activist

[phone rings]

LOWERY: Hello?

DUFF: Hello, may I speak to Thelma?

LOWERY: Speaking.

DUFF: Hey Thelma, it's Patrick Duff.

LOWERY: Mmm….hmmm.

DUFF: How are you?

LOWERY: Okay.

DUFF: So, I would say, would you mind if I just asked you a couple of questions via phone, so then I don't gotta really bother you?

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: So, first, if you could, because whenever you're kinda trying to document something you want to make sure you've got everything right, and I want to know a little bit about you. When were you born…what's your birthday and year?

LOWERY: 5/25/32

DUFF: And then what about… how do I spell your name?

LOWERY: Well, my last name now? LOWERY

DUFF: And your first name is Thelma?

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: Okay. And then where did you grow up?
LOWERY: In Camden.

DUFF: Okay. How long did you live in Camden?

LOWERY: All my life.

DUFF: Okay, and what house did you grow up at…do you remember any addresses that you grew up at?

LOWERY: Well, I started on Second Street, okay…don't ask me the address, okay..

DUFF: Okay, and can you tell me after Second Street?

LOWERY: And then I moved to, uh, what's that, Ferry Street?

DUFF: What's it called?

LOWERY: Ferry Street.

DUFF: Ferry Street. And then after that?

LOWERY: In the 600 block. And then we left and went to Eighth Street, okay? And then we went to Walnut Street.

DUFF: Okay. And how long, do you remember how long you stayed at Eighth Street?

LOWERY: It was three or four years, something like that.

DUFF: Okay. And how about Walnut Street, how long were you at Walnut Street?

LOWERY: I was there, let me see what grade I was in, let's see what grade I was in, I was in 8th or 9th grade…. I was in Whittier School when we moved in there.

DUFF: Okay. So you were.

LOWERY: I think they went up to the 6th grade, because I didn't go there all the time; at first I went to Mt. Vernon Street School. And then I was transferred in when I moved on Walnut Street.

DUFF: And what was the address at Walnut Street, do you remember?

LOWERY: 753 [laughs].

DUFF: Just asking so I can confirm. And then when you lived there, who did you live there with?

LOWERY: My parents, my mother and father, and I had a sister….in fact I had two sisters. And my brother.

DUFF: What were their names?

LOWERY: Well, my older sister's name was Mary, 'cause Jethro was the oldest, my brother. Then there was Mary, then there was Sarah, then there was myself.

DUFF: Okay. And how long did you live there? Did you live there until you got married?

LOWERY: Yes..mmm….hhmmmm.

DUFF: And what year was that? Do you remember?

LOWERY: Well, I got to look it up, the first time I got married. I think the first time I got married was in, wait a minute, '51 or '52.

DUFF: Okay, so you were living at the Walnut Street house…

LOWERY: Yeah, right.

DUFF: Right. And were there frequent guests at the house, ever?

LOWERY: Yeah, all the time, because sometimes the church members would come over, and then my cousin and King would come through on weekends and what-not—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

DUFF: When you say, your cousin, so Walter McCall was he your cousin, or was he Benjamin Hunt's cousin? Your dad.

LOWERY: He was my cousin.

DUFF: And he was your dad's nephew,

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: Aha…

LOWERY: Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, I got to double check that one. I'll double-check it with my cousin in the south. Because I know he was my cousin.

DUFF: Who is…you said you have a cousin in the south now that you can confirm this with?

LOWERY: A younger one, the one who knows everything.

DUFF: What's that person's name?

LOWERY: That person's name is…what's her name…was it Cynthia or Linda? Oh, Sylvia.

DUFF: Do you know her last name?

LOWERY: Hunt.

DUFF: Okay, Sylvia Hunt, and then you said that King had stayed there. Who's King?

LOWERY: Martin Luther King.

DUFF: Did you ever talk with him?

LOWERY: Yeah, 'cause, you know, it wasn't so much talking we could do because it was an old time situation, you understand what I mean?

DUFF: No.

LOWERY: You just don't ask grown people's business. You understand what I'm saying?

DUFF: Sure.

LOWERY: They talk, you gotta go.

DUFF: And now you had said, because you were living there at the time, how often would the two of them stay there?

LOWERY: Every weekend.

DUFF: Every weekend.

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: And then what about …Walter, did he work anywhere?

LOWERY: He lived there before, in fact, he came up when they started college. But now where he worked before he came up here, I don't know.

DUFF: Okay. Did he work anywhere in Camden?

LOWERY: Not as I know of.

DUFF: Okay. And then what about, do you remember anything about like Dr. King staying there that would be significant to like your memories?

LOWERY: I mean, he was just another person to me.

DUFF: Okay.

LOWERY: I'm serious…

DUFF: I know, at that time he wasn't even famous.

LOWERY: He was just another person in the house that daddy and them liked, and you know…

DUFF: There was an incident that took place in Maple Shade, New Jersey. Do you know anything about that incident?

LOWERY: I know daddy told them not to go, and they went, and then they got locked up.

DUFF: Hmmm… can you elaborate more on when you said daddy told them not to go…

LOWERY: Okay, they was having a discussion, right? And they knew that certain places in Camden, Maple Shade, anyplace where we could not go…as blacks, could not go. Okay. And this was a type of place that blacks was not allowed. And daddy told them. And Martin said, well, it's a free country, you know. They shouldn't be segregated, you know. And they went, and they got locked up.

DUFF: And when you say they got locked up, can you tell anything more about that?

LOWERY: Well, all I heard was daddy said they got locked up and he had to go get them out.

DUFF: Okay, have you ever met any of the people…was there anyone helping them at that time?

LOWERY: Helping who?

DUFF: Walter McCall and Dr. King.

LOWERY: No, they wasn't really into that …they did a little bit like that thing in Maple Shade, that was on their minds, you know. Like the Civil Rights thing. But see they was at the wrong place, because they was in college, you know, so they couldn't take no college person coming through there making trouble.

DUFF: Do you think they went there on purpose, to see what would happen?

LOWERY: They went there because they wanted to go there and they said it was freedom. They did, so they just wanted to go, because that was them.

DUFF: And Thelma, just so I'm a little more clear, because you're saying they stayed there on the weekends, like Friday, Saturday, Sunday …

LOWERY: When they was in college.

DUFF: Yeah, who drove? Did Walter have a car or King have a car?

LOWERY: I think King had a car.

DUFF: Okay, do you know if Walter had a car?

LOWERY: No, Walter ain't had no car. No, he had my father's car when he came over, you know.

DUFF: Okay, so your dad would let him stay at the house and use the car.

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: Well, that was very nice of him.

LOWERY: Oh, daddy was like that when it came to family.

DUFF: Hmmm…and then how about, if you could just elaborate on, like, a time period, because I know they started school in 1948. Were they staying there that time, the whole time?

LOWERY: Yeah. They stayed there the whole semester, and then another semester they started staying there.

DUFF: And when you say semester, do you know about what year that would be?

LOWERY: No, I gotta look it up.

DUFF: That's okay. And were they associated with any local churches in Camden? That you know of?

LOWERY: No, no…not on the weekends.

DUFF: Okay. So, I'm just trying to think of any other questions…and do you want to add anything about, because I know you spent some time at that house, was there anything about Dr. King personally that you remember that you'd like to add?

LOWERY: I was young, as I said, he was just another person in the house at the time, you know what I mean?

DUFF: Sure.
LOWERY: It wasn't a big thing…it was like daddy always had company, had members of the family, right. He would because, like, if his people came from the south, they would camp there, you know what I mean? That's the way daddy was, a family person. So if his brother, his cousin bring anybody there, he gonna make them welcome.

DUFF: Okay. And did you ever, during the summer times, were they ever there during the summer time?

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: What about, do you know anything about the house itself, like how…like where did they live in the house?

LOWERY: They lived in the ….it was a four-bedroom house. They live in the third bedroom.

DUFF: And where was that located in the house?

LOWERY: Upstairs.

DUFF: Upstairs in the middle or the back…

LOWERY: Second floor.

DUFF: Middle, front or back second floor?

LOWERY: Okay, you have the front bedroom, second bedroom, third bedroom, the bathroom, and another bedroom.

DUFF: Okay, so they had the third bedroom.

LOWERY: Yes.

DUFF: Okay, I'm just trying…because when I go into the house I was trying to get the layout of it.

LOWERY: You'll see it.

DUFF: Yeah, I saw it, and then there's like a back bedroom.

LOWERY: Yes.

DUFF: So it wasn't the back bedroom, it was the third bedroom?

LOWERY: No, it was the third bedroom.

DUFF: [laughs] This whole time I thought it was the back bedroom.
LOWERY: Uh-huh.

DUFF: And then with Walter, I mean, do you remember, did he call…did he call your dad Uncle Ben, or was it like, 'cause I was trying to, trying to figure out whether he's your cousin, or if he's your father's cousin.

LOWERY: That's what I'm saying, he called him cousin.

DUFF: And then you said…

LOWERY: No wait a minute, wait a minute, did he call him uncle or did he call him cousin? He called him Uncle Ben.

DUFF: Uncle Ben.

LOWERY: Mmmm..hmmm.

DUFF: Okay, so then that was your cousin. So Cynthia…Cynthia Hunt, is there any way that you can give her…

LOWERY: I didn't say Cynthia, I said Sylvia.

DUFF: Sylvia, I apologize. Is there any way that you can give her my phone number?

LOWERY: Yes.

DUFF: Oh that would be great, that would be incredible.

LOWERY: 'Cause she only knows what her momma told her.

DUFF: Sure.

LOWERY: That was my dad's sister.

DUFF: And do you remember anything about when Walter died?

LOWERY: I knew when he died because we went to the funeral, but I forgot the year.

DUFF: Do you remember how he passed?

LOWERY: He had a heart attack.

DUFF: Okay, were they any….do you remember the circumstances at all?

LOWERY: Well, I know prior to that, he had a store down there, in Georgia, and it had got bombed. And I think it was behind that.

DUFF: That's sad. Well, I really appreciate your time. And then, if you could, what about any were there any times that you met or you talked with Dr. King, or was it, was it kind of not welcome for a person to talk to the guest?

LOWERY: It was like a guest. When we went to the funeral he spoke to us, you know. When we went to Walter's funeral.

DUFF: And who spoke to you?

LOWERY: Dr. King's family.

DUFF: Oh, his family…they were there at the funeral.

LOWERY: Yes, oh they were very close.

DUFF: Now, now, did Dr. King's family ever come to Camden?

LOWERY: Not as I know of, no

DUFF: Okay.

LOWERY: If they did, they didn't get in touch with us. I would have liked that, you know. I'm telling the truth!

DUFF: Well, is there anything else you'd like to add, 'cause this has been very beneficial.

LOWERY: Well, what I really want to ask you is who's handling the house. Because my niece called me and said a man went up on the roof with a piece of board today.

DUFF: Yeah, and they fixed …they fixed the hole on the roof on the other side.

LOWERY: Alright, as long as you all know.

DUFF: Yeah. Absolutely, yeah, yeah…

LOWERY: People go in there and do anything.

DUFF: Yeah, so we had someone go up there and just make sure the hole was fixed up there so we don't have to…

LOWERY: Okay, alright.

DUFF: Because we're trying to save it.

LOWERY: Okay, well, that's alright by me.

DUFF: Hey, what do you think …

LOWERY: Because anyone prowling around like that, I would call the cops.

DUFF: What do you, what do you think about whether that building has historic significance at all?

LOWERY: Yeah, but it's going to have to have work done in it. Because I have a chair here that he sat in.

DUFF: You have a chair at your house?

LOWERY: Yeah.

DUFF: [laughs] Goodness.

LOWERY: I do.

DUFF: Thelma, is there any possible….

LOWERY: And you know how I got that chair, it was my mother's….

DUFF: Hmmm…

LOWERY: …and my father's chair. And that's the only thing that I could…and I held on to that, and the dining room set. But I gave the dining room set to my aunt.

DUFF: Were there ever pictures of the family with Dr. King?

LOWERY: No, that's what I'm saying, I've been looking for those pictures and what not; I think my sister-in-law got ahold of them.

DUFF: Okay.

LOWERY: And she act like she don't want to give them also.

DUFF: Hmmm….

LOWERY: But she's that type.

DUFF: [laughs]

LOWERY: She is. That's why, you know, I said in the beginning I will stand my distance.

DUFF: Well, you're very important to the story because you actually lived there.
LOWERY: Yeah, right.

DUFF: And so, just, if you have any questions or you need to get ahold of me…

LOWERY: Well, I got your number now because I was going to look for your number, and I said no….because you were selling cars or something, right?

DUFF: Right, and now I'm selling houses.

LOWERY: Because last time I talked to you, you said you were doing a sale.

DUFF: Well, I really appreciate talking to you, and I'll talk to probably again very soon.

LOWERY: Well, okay then, alright.

DUFF: Thank you Thelma , bye.

LOWERY: Bye.

DUFF: That was an interview with Thelma Lowery. It is now 8pm, December 1 and 2017. My name is Patrick Duff. Over and out.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: Walter McCall

INTERVIEWER: Herbert Holmes

SUBJECT: _____

McCall:

My name is Walter R. McCall. I was born in Conway, South Carolina, on August 23, 1923. I was taken to Marion, South Carolina, as an infant; there I grew up around Marion. In my senior year of high school I lived in Wilmington, North Carolina, where I worked at the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company. Upon finishing high school, I went to Philadelphia and there I took up residence until I went into the Army in 1943. Upon coming out of the Army, I went to New England and stayed about a year and then went to Detroit in search of work so as to enter college. When I entered college, I left Detroit, Michigan, and had my freshman year at Morehouse. I then went back to Philadelphia and there I remained through all my tenure as a student at Morehouse. Upon finishing Morehouse College in 1948, I attended Crozier Theological Seminary. Before entering Crozier, I worked three months in

the public school system of Camden, New Jersey. Upon finishing Crozier Seminary in 1951, I worked as an Area Director and Counselor for the Central YMCA Summer Camp in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Subsequently, in that fall I began working at Fort Valley State College as Dean of Men and Professor of Social Science and College Minister. Upon leaving there, I came to Providence Baptist Church in 1957. I might add that while I was at Fort Valley I left for a year to study at Temple University. Upon coming to Atlanta, I studied at Atlanta University and I also studied one summer at Mercer. For the time being, I am still at Providence as a minister.

Holmes:

When did you first meet Martin Luther King, Jr.?

McCall:

Well, let me call him "Mike" because that's the name I've always known him by. I always called him "Mike" and he called me "Mac". We met in 1948 during our freshman year at Morehouse in the first month.

Holmes:

And the two of you became close friends during this first year?

McCall:

Yes.

Holmes:

Since 1948?

McCall:

Since 1943, or rather, 1944.

Holmes:

And the two of you attended classes together?

McCall:

Yes.

Holmes:

Can you remember King's performance in these classes. Do you know what type of student he was?

McCall:

In college Mike was an ordinary student, I would say; but the ordinary performance was not due to his capacity. I don't think he took his studies very seriously but seriously enough to get by. I suppose that I could detect that he had a seriousness of purpose. He was young--only 16 years old when he entered Morehouse--and I was about twenty or twenty-

one, a little older than he. His attitudes, I think, reflected his youthfulness. You wouldn't expect a kid sixteen years old to reflect or to manifest an attitude of an older fellow.

Holmes:

During this period did he ever discuss the great issues of the day?

McCall:

Oh, my goodness yes; of course, yes. We used to sit up oh way into the morning discussing the social issues of the day. One professor in particular, Walter Shivers, who taught us sociology, constantly brought before us the serious social problems of the day. He and I, being interested in law at the time, thought that this would be the best way in which we could fulfill our life's roles and goals and thereby help liberate our people, so to speak, and help bring about a better relationship between the races in this country. Particularly, we discussed very seriously at many times the role of leadership in liberating the Negro.

Holmes:

So you and Dr. King and several others would sometimes form ad hoc groups or were these formal groups?

McCall:

Well, these were ad hoc groups.

Holmes:

And you would sometimes sit up in the dormitory late at night discussing these matters?

McCall:

Yes. Sometimes at his house. Many times we would congregate on the corner at Yates & Milton Drugstore upon leaving some of the more profound teachers' classes--like Dr. Ira D. Reed and Walter Shivers and N. P. Tillman. All of these men are dead now. And _____ Trevor, yes. Somehow what these men discussed always had direct bearing upon our thinking patterns. We would take the classroom discussions to the campus, and sometimes we would even involve teachers after class.

check names

Holmes:

Well what about Dr. Mays? One person I interviewed talked about his Tuesday morning chapel sessions and about how he often referred to Gandhi's passive resistance movement in India. He said that everybody on campus was affected by this.

McCall:

Well, I don't think that everybody on campus was affected by the Gandhian movement, but the students by and large who were sensitive to the social problems of minorities in this country, I think, were more articulate. But there were those among us who were very interested in the Gandhian movement. King, of course, as well as myself, was very, very much interested in the Gandhian movement. But before the Gandhian movement, I must admit that the influence of Dr. Mays upon both of us, I think, was tremendous because it was Mays who during those turbulent and very dangerous years fought very relentlessly all forms of segregation. We remember when he fought the segregated patterns in seating for Negroes on the train. This made a terrific imprint upon us. When I say "us", I mean King and myself and many other students who were sensitive to the problems, the social problems of the day.

Holmes:

What do you think made King decide to change from wanting to be a lawyer to being a minister? Can you tell us at just about what point he made this decision?

McCall:

Yes, I think King came to the conclusion that he should be a minister during his second year in college as a result of growing in his comprehension of the greater possibilities of the preacher of being able to occupy a larger format, or a broader format, upon which to operate. I think also bearing upon that was the relationship that he had with some of us who were ministers, young preachers, at the time and the fact that he came up under his father who is a preacher. All of these things, I think, had direct bearing upon his life.

Holmes:

Did you decide to become a minister about this same time? ~120

McCall:

No. I was already a minister when I came to Morehouse and I had planned to lead a dual role as a lawyer and a minister. But being impoverished, I recognized that I couldn't carry along both at the same time. So I just went on and remained in the ministry and went on to seminary.

Holmes:

Do you remember much about King's social life during this period, his going to parties, concerts, etc.?

McCall:

Well, of course, yes. King was just like any other boy; he loved the lighter side of life as any normal boy would do. But of course he at the time was under the influence of his father who at that time was far more provincial in his outlook than he now is. Many times he opposed our dancing and things like that, but he would slip off anyway and go. Many times he and I as well as his sister and some more girls would congregate at his house while his Daddy was at church, and we'd put on a party. Many times the old man would slip in and catch us dancing. One night I remember so well; boy, we had a good time going. The old man waited until, or rather, he stood at the door to listen to the music and he peeped through the keyhole and we didn't know it. All of a sudden he burst into the house and there we were just swinging away on into the night. And boy, he just _____. About this time he was changing somewhat. He chuckled, and we were so embarrassed that we stopped and broke up the party. But, of course, when it comes to the concerts, recitals, and things like that, he was right with it--very, very much with it. He loved the finer types of music. Of course, I think he also had an appreciation for certain forms of gospel music that I couldn't appreciate too much because I

by that time was going through a very revolutionary stage of my life and abhored a taste for that which was labelled religious. I came up in an environment where I heard a lot of not necessarily gospel music but a kind of music that was born out of the souls of our people, much of which I appreciated and appreciate until this day but the gospel music I never really did like. Well, I had an utter distaste for it. But King always kept a slight taste for this, but the finer type of music, religious music, claimed his attention.

Holmes:

What about his appreciation of what you might call Black secular music, like the Blues?

McCall:

King didn't come up in an environment where the Blues was heard too much. He came up in an environment where the jazz and some of the fox trots and things like that were heard for the most part. Your typical Blues characterized more or less your less urbane society. Of course, in big cities where Negroes have been in large numbers, something like the ghetto, well the Blues characterized those people. But for the most part he didn't have an appreciation for the Blues as such; and yet, he had an appreciation for them but

not in the typical sense of the word. As I recall we took a class under Howard _____ where we analyzed various institutions and we analyzed many forms of the Blues, so to speak. And the Blues, of course, where people truly understand them carry a kind of spiritual overtone. A lot of people don't know this. It was from that point of view that King appreciated them.

Holmes:

Did he ever use Blues passages to dramatize his speeches?

McCall:

Not necessarily, but I do recall that some years ago Nat King Cole came out with a song which was about the greatest thing in life is to love and to be loved in return. That, of course, is a basic truth; King, of course, picked up on that. Johnnie Mercer came out with a song on "You've got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with what's inbetween." Many times he and I used to discuss that. Things like that became classical notes in his thinking pattern. Then I recall another song that came out was "I'd rather be a poor man with a penny than a rich man with a worried mind." We remembered those things; King did,

I'm sure. We used to discuss this as a part of philosophy of life. Another was "A bad, bad whiskey made me lose my happy home." We used to discuss this at length.

I don't recall him using these too much in his preaching, but I do know that in his general discussions these would come up from time to time.

Holmes:

Do you remember where King would eat when he was at school?

McCall:

Well, he ate wherever he could (laughter). When we were at college, sometimes we would eat at Yates and Middleton and we used to go down to Paschal's. During those years Paschal's had a little hole in the wall on Hunter Street. We used to like their fried chicken. Of course, during those years, many of the places that are now open were not open. But when we were in seminary, we ate in the dining hall. Many times we'd go off to Philadelphia or New York, and we'd hit the finer places. Of course, King had a peculiar habit of eating. He used to always have everybody rolling because you used to could tell that he never did learn the finer arts of eating as his mother taught him. He'd take the food with

his hand--the food would be very good--so he'd dip in there and start eating. We'd just--oh, boy--we'd just laugh at King. He's say, "Man, this food is good, man! I can't wait on youall."

I remember one time when we were in New York. I can't remember the name of the restaurant, but it was truly a heavenly place in appearance. We bought some of the finest food in the place. Instead of King kind of putting on the dog in terms of table manners, he brought his same old country habits of eating there; and we just rolled. We just couldn't help from rolling.

Holmes:

This was later on in life?

McCall:

Yes.

Holmes:

Can you name some of his other close friends who were in college during the time that you knew him?

McCall:

During his college days Larry Williams was his next closest friend, I think. Larry and I were his closest

friends during those years. Larry now pastors the church that Ralph had in Montgomery, Alabama.

Holmes:

What about Charles Morton?

McCall:

Yes, Charles Morton was a close friend to King, but he wasn't as close as we were. You now there are certain types of friends. You've got some friends who share in the totality of your life's experiences, and then you have some who share in certain phases of your life's experiences. I don't think that Charles shared in the totality of his life's experiences. He was a mutual friend of ours, so to speak.

Holmes:

And Dr. James Jones from Fort Valley?

McCall:

Yes, James Jones was a friend. Ryal Cass was too. These are some of the guys who were his closest friends.

Holmes:

Do you consider your college days to be the days when you were closest to King? Or do you think it was at a later period?

McCall:

No, we remained exceedingly close through college and seminary. Of course, when he went to Boston and I went to Fort Valley our affairs began to widen. But we remained friends throughout, but were not as close in terms of baing able to share in each other's experiences as much.

Holmes:

You did have periodic contacts through the years?

McCall:

Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, just before he died we were to have a little get-together. He and I used to love to shoot pool together. As a matter of fact, I was supposed to build him a pool table--just before he died. Of course, he died before I got a chance to build it for him.

Holmes:

Did he play pool a lot? Or whenever he got a chance?

McCall:

Oh, yes. In seminary we played pool sometimes until three o'clock in the morning.

Holmes:

Was this in the seminary pool room?

McCall:

Yes.

Holmes:

What other type of recreation did he like to participate in?

McCall:

King could bowl well, and we used to play cards a lot during our seminary days. We used to take in some symphonies and operas and that kind of thing.

Holmes:

Did you ever play cards in the Kings' home?

McCall:

Yes, but not when the old man was there.

Holmes:

I take it that their mother took a much more relaxed attitude.

McCall:

She did. But Rev. King came to the conclusion that these things were not so bad as he had thought they were.

Holmes:

King showed a great interest in all types of sports during his college days, didn't he?

McCall:

Yes. I'm trying to think of this fellow's name, and I don't see his name on this list. Maybe ...

Holmes:

Were you surprised when Dr. King became a famous national leader?

McCall:

No, I wasn't surprised because the situation in which he was thrown into I felt that he would handle it the way he did because we constantly talked about how we should handle the situation. And I thought that he handled it very magnificently. I would have been surprised if he had handled it otherwise. Of course, the thing that is very interesting is that he didn't seek that kind of situation. He was thrown into it. He was caught in it.

Holmes:

Especially at the Montgomery movement.

McCall:

Oh, yes.

Holmes:

Have you participated in civil rights activities?

McCall:

The first civil rights struggle that King had ever been in was with me. It was in Maple Shade, New Jersey, in 1950 I think. We went into a restaurant one night and to my amazement it was a discriminating type of place and the man refused to serve us. The man shoved a 45 in my face while King and our guests were seated at the table. As a result of what took place, I brought a suit against the man. King and I served as our own defense. It was the first time that we had ever been in any kind of civil rights struggle. The Attorney General for that section of New Jersey, Johnson, was a dear friend of mine. He provided counsel for us and we won our case in the preliminaries. Then it was taken to the Grand Jury. We couldn't be our plaintiff and defendant at the same time. It just happened that the young white boys who were there and were to testify against the owner discovered that their parents had brought pressure against them and they couldn't appear. As a result, we just dropped the

thing. I'm sure that Ernie, who ran this place, was very happy as well.

Holmes:

How would you say Dr. King was different from his brother and his sister?

McCall:

I think that when it comes to his brother, I think he had more of a seriousness of purpose than A.D. Let me put it this way. He had a more seriousness of purpose earlier, I think, due to the fact that he was older. Secondly, the mere fact that Mike went to a Northern seminary meant that he was brought into dynamic relationships with a more diversified group than his brother. I think that these things helped to bring about a sharp difference between him and his brother.

When it comes to his sister, in a measure you could say the same thing. I think his sister always had a seriousness of purpose. Here again, age played a part as well as the circle of friends. The circle of friends with whom his sister and his brother--that is, A.D.'s brother Mike--fraternized was slightly different and maybe they had more of a seriousness of purpose as well. But as A.D. grew

older I think he developed a seriousness of purpose.

Holmes:

During his college days he was far more active than Dr. King, wasn't he?

McCall:

Well, I can't say because A.D. was so much behind me that I wasn't able to gather too much about his activities during his college days. I believe that I had already left college when he came.

Holmes:

How would you describe the influence of his father and of his mother on his personality and his ideology?

McCall:

Well, as it has been said, the home is the first place that sets a boy, a child, on the road to success. But I'd go a little further: the home is the first place that sets a child on the road to success or failure. I think that it was in this primary group that Mike grasped the larger _____ of values in life. His father has always been a very courageous sort of person, and I think that he got this from his father. When it comes to his mother, I think he got the sweetness in

religion from her. She has always been a sweet kind of person. She may be classified as a member of the Essene group that prevailed during Jesus' time. It was said that Jesus--the chances are--came out of a group like that, a sweet loving, passive kind of person. Not violent, but kind and gentle.

So I think that the combination of his mother and his father gave him, or rather, made him the product of something that was very glorious. I think I could be rather objective in saying this.

Holmes:

How do you think the two of them affected his thinking and his ability to dissect ideas and to understand-- ?

McCall:

Well, as you would normally expect, a boy or a child develops a thinking pattern as a result of the thinking pattern to which he has been subjected during the formative years of his life when his father used his mind. And if think that, of course, from what he got from his mother and his father--his mother and father being intelligent people--and the fact that he was thrown into schools, you see, he was able to build upon the thinking pattern that he had received from his parents. And this is normal and understandable.

Holmes:

Did you see any important changes in King from his college days to the period when he became a national leader?

McCall:

Let us not think in terms of the change having taken place when he became a national leader. I would rather begin with his entering the seminary. The drastic change came in him when he entered the seminary. He began to take his studies more seriously; he began to take preaching more seriously. He began to take what glorious opportunities that his father and mother provided for him more seriously. And, thinking as he did, he devoted time to his books night and day. He would sometimes, if necessary, stay up all night to make certain that he got an idea or pursued an idea to his satisfaction. And, of course, he had thought in terms of the fact that the competition was greater after he got into seminary. Here he was a Negro thrown into a competitive academic community with students from Greece, from China, from England, from India, from the North and South, from the East and West. There was one Jew from _____ and a student from Panama and places like that. So all these things, I think, influenced his habits as it related to his study patterns.

Now, of course, when he was thrown into this Montgomery situation, I think that as anyone would normally expect, he began to think even more seriously as it related to what he had to do. And this is understandable.

Holmes:

Were you a member of SCLC?

McCall:

No.

Holmes:

Have you been an active member of any civil rights organization?

McCall:

I shouldn't say that I was not a member of SCLC. I helped formed Operation Breadbasket here in the city. I was actively engaged in that from its inception even until now.

Yes, I have been actively engaged in the civil rights struggle. As a matter of fact, when SNCC was beginning here in the city much of the thrust of that organization came as the result of the cooperation that was given by me and our church; and their headquarters during the very crisis years were in our church. And I was even in that and even went to

jail later on--not with the SNCC group but when the ministers who were involved in the ... .

Holmes:

Do you know of any persons who disliked King when you knew him? I don't mean the ones that you read about, like _____ _____, but just maybe in your college days or maybe some of your church members. You don't have to identify them, but what were the type of reasons they would give for not liking him?

McCall:

No. During our student days I don't recall any student who basically disliked King. Mike was a fellow who didn't bother anybody, you know. He didn't go around trying to make life hard for anybody. When he became a national leader--as you would ordinarily expect--you would find some people who did not go along with his technique and approaches to some problems. So I would hear them talking, you know, about what they disliked about him. Things like that.

Holmes:

When and under what circumstances did you last see or talk to Dr. King before his death?

McCall:

Well, I believe, three weeks before his death I was down at the broadcasting company in the building which SCLC occupied. He was walking down the street coming up to his office, and I noticed that he was coming alone. We greeted each other the way that we normally would.

He said, "Mac, where are you going?"

I said, "Don't ask me where am I going but where am I coming from." I said, "First of all, you've got no business being out here by yourself. Here you're walking down the street with not a single person with you." I said, "Fool, don't you know that you could get your darn head blown off?"

And he laughed and we laughed.

He said, "Shucks, man, even if I'm with somebody I could get my head blown off." He said, "Well, you don't worry about that." He passed it off lightly.

It was at that time that he said, "Man, we've got to get together. We haven't been together in a long time."

I said, "Okay, let's get together. Let's be in touch." Just like that.

That was the last time I saw him.

Holmes:

Do you remember the date?

McCall:

No, I don't remember the date. It was about three or four weeks before he was killed.

Holmes:

How did you react when you heard of his death and where were you?

McCall:

I was sitting at the table when the news flashed. About one or two seconds before the news flashed a man, it appeared, jumped out of a manhole near our house. We were sitting at the table, and the children jumped up screaming. I guess about two seconds after that the news broke that Dr. King had died.

And, of course, as you would normally expect, I was moved tremendously. And, of course, I was not shocked too much over his death, but I was hurt because I know that society doesn't allow people so engaged to live forever. And I'm sure that Mike recognized this because he and I had discussed this many times. I mean many, many times we'd discussed this. Of course, even now I still feel the weight of his death even though we were not as close as we used to be by virtue of our performing different roles.

Holmes:

Could you briefly describe what you consider to be his major strengths and his weaknesses?

McCall:

Well, you don't like to talk about a man's weaknesses because people generally know them. But his strength, I believe, was found in the degree of his commitment to the lofty principles as set forth in the teachings of Jesus and his courageous stance to follow through on those ideals as he conceived them to be.

And, of course, I might say that I would point up the intelligible weakness. Sometimes he would become overly burdened as a result of the criticism that people would make against him. I used to tell him that he who would do great things must also tighten his hide such that when the criticisms are levelled against him he would never fear them.

-30-

From: O'Hara, John [mailto:John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx]
Sent: Wednesday, June 07, 2017 11:59 AM
To: McMickle, Marvin
Cc: Sauve, Stephanie; McDadeClay, Tom
Subject: Stockton University follow up

Dear President McMickle:

I am writing to follow up on previous efforts to contact CRCDS related to institutional records from Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, PA, particularly those providing information about Martin Luther King, Jr., and Walter McCall from 1948-51.

The New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation (NJOHP) has awarded Stockton University a grant to investigate the significance of a certain property in Camden, NJ, in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., while he was a student at Crozer. This property was apparently occupied some of the time by Walter McCall, and King is also thought to have spent a portion of time there -- including a week in the summer of 1951 when he encounter racial discrimination in a Maple Shade tavern, and followed up by filing charges against the proprietor.

The thinking among some Camden residents and city leaders is that historic preservation of the home might be warranted. My research team has been charged with investigating and reporting on the significance of the site in King's formative experience in order to determine whether or not historic site designation should be sought. Senators Kean (R-NJ) and Norcross (D-NJ) have weighed in, and Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) has offered assistance, too. For some background, please see The New York Times on the issues at play, link below.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/15/nyregion/martin-luther-king-jr-camden-new-jersey.html?_r=0

We are working directly under Kate Marcopul, referenced in the article as the administrator of the New Jersey Office of Historical Preservation, and others at NJOHP.

As a previous message requested, we would very much like to identify any pertinent information or records held by CRCDS related to Dr. King's residency, including information about

- dormitory policies from 1948-51 (costs, terms of residency, duration of residency);
- school policies related to resident students (were students required to stay on campus, asked to sign in and out of dorms, etc.?);
- information about King and McCall vis-à-vis residency (did either or both pay for rooms each term; did McCall really commute daily from Camden, and if so, would he have been able to stay with King on select nights, and vice versa – would King have spent any as-yet-undocumented time at the Camden residence?);
- any documents or evidence showing King's or McCall's presence on campus or in Chester or Camden on evenings and weekends from 1948-51;
- any other information relevant to the central question about the importance of the Camden address (753 Walnut) to King or McCall during their time at Crozer

The record is so scant, any bit of information will help. We would be delighted to visit and examine institutional records if anyone at CRCDS can help us identify pertinent resources.

I appreciate yours and CRCDS's willingness to work with us on this important historical research.

Sincerely,

John F. O'Hara, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of General Studies
Master of Arts in American Studies Program
Stockton University
Galloway, NJ 08205

From: McDadeClay, Tom [mailto:xxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx]
Sent: Wednesday, June 7, 2017 12:49 PM
To: O'Hara, John <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>; McMickle, Marvin <xxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx>
Cc: Sauve, Stephanie <xxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx>
Subject: RE: Stockton University follow up

Dear Dr. O'Hara,

We reviewed your request and, unfortunately, we do not have any of the documents or information you are requesting.

It is unlikely that all the records from Crozer Theological were transferred to our campus in Rochester after the merger. I also think it is unlikely that the types of records you are requesting would have been retained by Crozer for a long period of time, although we do not have information related to their document retention practices. We will be certain to contact you should we come across anything that would be helpful to your efforts.

There are Crozer graduates who may be able to speak to the general policies during their time at the school. Should you wish to speak with them, please let me know and we can discuss how to proceed.

I am sorry we are not able to assist you in this effort. We wish you all the best.

-Tom

Thomas McDade Clay
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

From: O'Hara, John [mailto:John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 3:24 PM

To: McDadeClay, Tom
Subject: RE: Stockton University follow up

Dear Tom:

Thank you very much for your response. This research has been difficult because we are looking for something we don't know is "there," in fact. Our report would benefit from any piece of the puzzle we can put together. For example, if we learned about dormitory policies, it would show a comprehensive effort, even if we learn little.

Contacts for any alumnae from that era who would be willing to correspond with me would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

John O'Hara

McDadeClay, Tom <xxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx>
Tue 6/13/2017 3:28 PM
To:
O'Hara, John;
Ok. Thanks, John. We will put out a notice to some of our Crozer alums and encourage them to be in contact with you directly via e-mail. There are still living graduates from that time period, but not too many.

I was just down at the old Crozer campus last week. It was sad to see the old buildings in various states of disrepair. I appreciate your efforts to help preserve the physical places related to Dr. King's legacy.

-Tom

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

Email and Telephone Interview:

Janet Milton [redacted]
Thursday, October 26, 2017

Conducted by:

John O'Hara, Associate Professor of Critical Thinking, Stockton University

The email exchanges below with Janet Milton, the daughter of Walter McCall, friend to Martin Luther King, Jr. at Morehouse College and, subsequently, at Crozer Seminary. The initial conversation took place following a telephone conversation on Wednesday, October 25, 2017, between John O'Hara and Janet Milton, as well as her husband Julius Milton, in which Mileton agreed to participate in Stockton's biographical investigation on behalf of the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, but requested to do so by email and in writing.

All original phrasing and spelling has been retained.

[Follow thread top to bottom – i.e. the original correspondence appears first]

On Thursday, October 26, 2017 7:51 AM, "O'Hara, John" <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx> wrote:

Dear Janet (and Julius):

Thank you very much for getting back to me yesterday about our research project related to your father. My apologies for being out of breath and low on battery!
I am especially thankful that you are willing to take out time to answer my questions via email. I have attached the questions as well. You may answer by reply to this email, or in the document—whatever is most convenient.

As I mentioned in my phone message, we are working for the State of New Jersey in an effort to better understand both Walter McCall's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, activities in Camden, New Jersey, while they were students at Crozer Theological Seminary, in Chester, PA. Once our report is submitted to the state, I would be glad to share it with you. I would also like to follow up after this report is completed to attempt to write a fuller history of Walter and Martin, their shared backgrounds and their paths as intellectuals, theologians, academics and activists.

Below are a set of questions – it is no problem if you don't know or recall answers, but any efforts to remember any details are appreciated.

With much appreciation – John
John O'Hara, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Stockton University
Galloway, NJ 08205
609-652-4249 / office
484-432-6873 / mobile (preferred)

Questions:

1 Walter and Martin were friends from Morehouse and both ended up attending Crozer in Chester, PA. Do you recall learning about the circumstances in which they both ended up at Crozer? Did they start at the same time? Do you know where Walter was living, working or being educated between June 1948 and January 1948?

2 Do you know anything about their summer 1948 trip to Haverford College in PA for training in field work practices interviewing southern Baptist ministers, especially anything about where they stayed during this trip?

3 Do you know if Walter lived in the dormitories at Crozer during his time there? If so, did he ever speak of dormitory life with MLK – such as where their rooms were, etc.? Did Walter ever speak of campus activities, day t day life on campus? Did he ever speak of other activities such as what they did for leisure or fun at the time?

4 MLK was threatened by a fellow classmate with a pistol in Crozer's "Old Main" dormitory in 1950. Did Walter witness this incident that you know of, or ever speak of it? If so, what did he say?

5 Can you recall any other information about Walter or Martin's activities on campus, in Chester, or the surrounding area, including Camden, NJ?

6 Your father in a 1970 interview said that he went to Philadelphia after high school "and stayed there until I went into the Army in 1943." Do you know where he lived or stayed during this time?

7 In the same interview, he says that after his Freshman year at Morehouse (1944-45?), he "went back to Philadelphia [and] there I remained throughout all my tenure at Morehouse." Do you recall where your father stayed or lived when he was in Philadelphia area, when he was a student at Morehouse BEFORE entering Crozer Theological Seminary?

8 Did your father or do you have family relations in Camden, NJ, wither during the 1940s and 1950s or today?

9 Do you know of or have you ever heard of Benjamin Hunt, who owned a property in Camden where Walter and Martin were said to have stayed occasionally?

10 Have you ever heard of the incident of racial discrimination encountered by Martin and Walter in Maple Shade, NJ, on June 10-11, 1950. Can you recall Walter ever speaking about it?

11 Can you recall any other information from your father about Camden, NJ – any time spent there, whether or not he preached or spoke there, whether or not he alone (or with Martin) ever visited, stayed, etc., in Camden, and if so any information on people or places they visited?

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

From: Julius Milton [redacted]
Date: October 26, 2017 at 4:25:51 PM EDT
To: "O'Hara, John" <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Subject: Re: Interview Questions re: Walter McCall
Reply-To: Julius Milton [redacted]

Hello, John. I have attempted to answer your questions as accurately as possible. The answers are attached below. I wish you well with your project.
Janet MCCall Milton

[answers were appended as a Word file, and were copied and pasted here to create a complete record]

Answers to Interview questions for John O'hara

1.Yes, both Dad, Walter, and Mike (Martin) started Crozier together at the same time. They were very good friends at Morehouse; so, they pretty much mimicked each other in many ways even deciding on a seminary. I do not know where he lived between June '48 and Jan.'48

2. No idea about this question.

3. For a time he did live in a dorm, but I have heard him speak of being housed by friends and others while he was a Crozier. The only thing I can recall is that they like to play pool together. He often alluded to the fact that they were competitive.

4.I never heard Dad speak of MLK being threatened with a gun.

5. The only mentioning that I recall was that they both loved to sit at the feet of J. Pius Barber. He was a mentor to both. I think this was around the same time he was in Chester or Camden.

6. I have forgotten, but I used to know the name of a family that befriended him in Philadelphia. The Kirklands for some reason sound very familiar. I am not sure if he stayed with them after high school or years later.ne

7. I never heard Dad say that he remained in Philadelphia throughout his years at Morehouse. This is news to me. How was he able to matriculate living in Philadelphia? We did not have online school back in the day. I am pretty sure this info was misinterpreted. To my knowledge, he spent his days on campus. I have a few pictures (had) of him on campus with my mom and a few other friends.

8.I do not know of any of his family members who lived or live now in the Camden area.

9.I have never heard of Benjamin Hunt

10.Dad spoke briefly about encounters. Was this the one where they sat all day in the restaurant until they were ejected and arrested? Not sure if this is the same account.

Email Redacted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-9.b, and an expectation of privacy.

11. Actually, I don't recall him talking much at all about this area. I was very young and often inattentive. I wish I had listened to him and Uncle Mike more in my youth. I just didn't deem it important at the time.

From: "O'Hara, John" <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Date: October 26, 2017 at 6:38:32 PM EDT
To: Julius Milton [redacted]
Subject: Re: Interview Questions re: Walter McCall

Dear Janet: Thank you so much for your attention and answers. With such a scant record, every bit helps.

One final follow up. Today, I interviewed 86-year old Jeanine Hunt, the daughter in law of Benjamin Hunt, the man thought to have temporarily housed your father in Camden, who at one point called him a cousin.

Mrs. Hunt may be mistaken but she said that she and her father traveled to Atlanta for Water McCall's funeral and visited your family. She also mentioned that she thought your father at the time had a business -- something involved with meat processing -- and that she had heard his business had been sabotaged in some way (she wasn't very clear on this point).

Does any of this ring true or accord with my facts you know of?

Apologies for such personal questions, but again much appreciation if you can respond.

All the best,

John

From: Julius Milton [redacted]
Date: October 26, 2017 at 11:10:12 PM EDT
To: "O'Hara, John" <John.O'xxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>
Subject: Re: Interview Questions re: Walter McCall

Hi again, John. There were so many people at his funeral, I really do not remember meeting Mrs. Hunt. My dad did indeed have a sausage business at the time of his demise, and yes, his equipment for making the sausage was sabotaged a few days before the grand opening of his official business. We really think that this act had a great physical impact on his body, thus attributing to his ultimate fatal heart attack. I am so very sorry that I do not remember Mrs. Hunt.

Janet Milton