

Interview with Philome Brannock

Steelton, PA

March 31, 1997

Interviewer: Jonathan Coldren

Oral History

Prof. Rogers

On March 31, 1997 I interviewed Mrs. Philome M. Brannock of 153 Adams St. in Steelton. Mrs. Brannock was born on January 12, 1909 in Steelton and has lived there all of her life. She still resides in the house in which she was born. She is retired from working now, having retired about ten years ago from domestic work. She worked for two families in Steelton, the George Walz family and the J. Paul Rupp family. Walz was an electrical engineer at Bethlehem Steel and Rupp was a President Judge of the Dauphin County Courts. She enjoyed working for these families very much, especially for Rupp where she worked for 40 years.

Mrs. Brannock most heavily emphasized her experiences and role in the church family of the First Baptist Church in Steelton. Mrs. Brannock, whose parents were actively involved in the First Baptist Church and upon her birth brought her into the church family as well, served and still serves an important role in the church. Perhaps her most important activities centered around the Missionary Club, the group in the church that gave support to those who needed it, whether it be financial or moral support, inside or outside the church. Despite the fact that Mrs. Brannock is confined to her house by Padgett's disease of the bone, she still serves a role as the "mother of the church." Mrs. Brannock was honored with this distinction by a state convention of Baptist Churches. Out of respect, she is called "mother" even by Rev. Cooley, the pastor of the First Baptist Church.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this interview with Mrs. Brannock were the things that she did not emphasize. Mrs. Brannock was not actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Similarly, Mrs. Brannock did not have much to say about World War II and World War I. It appears that these events did not touch Mrs. Brannock's life with as much significance as they touched other lives. It appears from Mrs. Brannock's interview that her day to day struggles to support and raise her children, and participate in her church community consumed

all of her time and energy. After these things which were the highest priorities in her life, Mrs. Bramnock did not have the opportunity to participate in these events. In fact, one difference that she outlined between her generation and her children's is that while she did not have time to attend the activities of her children during their education, her children do have time to attend their children and grandchildren's events. This is a luxury she did not have during her years of parenthood.

This interview with Mrs. Bramnock contained other aspects which were interesting as well. Her association with J. Paul Rupp was intriguing, for he was the first football coach at Steelton High School to allow an African-American on the team. Also, Mrs. Bramnock's education, first at the Hygienic School, a segregated school, and then at Steelton High School, an integrated school, offered interesting contrasts. Finally, Mrs. Bramnock's outlook on relations with those in Steelton of different races was interesting. She felt as though she was never the victim of overt racial discrimination because she knew how to treat people in a polite manner. This is an interesting perspective because instead of looking outward at the source of racism, white people, and blaming them, she believed she could control the problem with the way she acted. This is a perspective which may become more rare as generations that matured before the Civil Rights movement pass on.

Coldren: Alright this is March 28, 1997. My name is Jonathan Coldren and I am interviewing Mrs. Brannock from Steelton. To begin with, when were you born?

Brannock: January 12, 1909

Coldren: Okay. Where were you born?

Brannock: Steelton, Pennsylvania.

Coldren: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Brannock: Yes, I have two brothers and one sister.

Coldren: Okay, what were their names?

Brannock: John & Howard, my brothers and Nellie was my sister.

Coldren: How old were they in relation to you, were they older or younger?

Brannock: They were older.

Coldren: What were their ages by name, like John was how old and Howard was how old?

Brannock: Well let's see now . . . John was, let's see now he died when he was 20 years old. He was born in 18-, I guess I can tell you better when they were born. He was born in 1886. Yeah. And Nellie was born in 1889, and Howard was born in 1896. That's the way it is.

Coldren: Okay, that's good. Where were your parents born?

Brannock: My mother was born in Staunton, Virginia and my father in Greenville, Virginia.

Coldren: And those two towns are close together?

Brannock: Yes they were three miles apart.

Coldren: Why did your parents come to Steelton?

Brannock: They came to Steelton for working conditions.

Coldren: And where did your father work?

Brannock: My father worked at the Company Store in Steelton.

Coldren: And what kind of jobs did he do?

Brannock: He drove delivery wagon, you know, delivering things to peoples homes.

Um hmm.

Coldren: What did your mother do?

Brannock: She was at home.

Coldren: When were you married?

Brannock: I was married in 1946 the first time. And the second time in 1954.

Coldren: Okay, and who were you married to?

Brannock: The first time I was married to Shirley Washington and the second time to

Alonzo Brannock.

Coldren: Do you have any children?

Brannock: Yes, three children. Ronald, umm, isn't that awful. See this is what happens when you get old. Ronald and Alfred, and, oh my that's awful. Raymond. See this is what happens when you get to be my age. You know things, but it don't come to you right away but it does, you have to fish for it. Because I know the children (laughter).

Coldren: Well, I'll be patient. When were they born?

Brannock: Ronald was born April the fourth, 1933. Raymond was born October the twelfth, 1936 and Alfred was born October 24th, 1933.

Coldren: So one of them, their birthday's coming up this week, huh.

Brannock: Yeah, Ronald, Friday.

Coldren: Where did you attend school?

Brannock: The Hygienic School. That was the elementary school. And Steelton High School. That's what it was called at that time.

Coldren: Okay, the Hygienic School was a segregated school and Steel High was integrated, right?

Brannock: Yes, that's right.

Coldren: Okay, how far did you get in school.

Brannock: I graduated in the Class of 1927.

Coldren: That was typical for your friends at that time, most people graduated?

Brannock: Yes.

Coldren: What was it like going from a segregated school to an integrated school?

Brannock: It was a difference, but we got used to it. No problem, there wasn't any problem, no.

Coldren: Were your teachers in the high school, were they mostly white?

Brannock: Yes, they were all white.

Coldren: In the Hygienic School were they mostly black?

Brannock: Yes they were all black.

Coldren: What did you prefer? Did you prefer one or the other?

Brannock: No, well in elementary school there was Charles Howard, he was the principle. Well I liked all of my teachers, but he was the principle there.

Coldren: So you had certain teachers that gave you a certain motivation, they helped you out along the way?

Brannock: You mean in the elementary school?

Coldren: Just all the way through.

Brannock: There was a teacher in the school, Mrs. Mary White. She was my Latin teacher. She was very close to me. Miss Alice Jumper, she taught me a lot in sewing.

Coldren: What kind of things did you do for fun as a child?

Brannock: Well there wasn't too much to do. Just play with your friends. And visit the girls, or go to the movies. Of course Sunday school, we always had that you know and Church. Those were the things . . . I wasn't allowed to do too much.

Coldren: Why is that?

Brannock: Well, it is just the way my parents believed that girls should be at home being taught you know, how to keep a home. And she could teach me how to cook, and things like that. I would be there to help her.

Coldren: So you spent a lot of time helping out at home?

Brannock: Oh yeah, I spent a lot of time with my mother. And if I go to another friends home, it was the same thing. We weren't allowed to roam the streets (laughter).

Coldren: Were there any stories that you were told by your family that you remember?

Brannock: You know, I really don't remember anything in particular, that . . . of course, they just told me stories but it wasn't anything in particular.

Coldren: As a young adult, when did you begin working?

Brannock: I began working when I was fourteen years old, after my father died.

Coldren: Did you do this because your family needed the money?

Brannock: No, it was just something that I did to help me. A little spending money, you know for me.

Coldren: At this time, what did you think you'd end up doing with your life. What would your occupation be?

Brannock: I wanted to be a nurse.

Coldren: Was that your only dream?

Brannock: Yes, that was my only dream.

Coldren: What kind of things do you remember doing as a high school aged youth for fun. What kind of social events did you have back then?

Brannock: Well, I used to go to the games at that time. Well, there wasn't too many things to be done, you know, at that time. It was not like it is now. They didn't have things. You went to school, and you studied, and you came home and that was it.

Coldren: When you say you went to games, you went to high school sporting events?

Brannock: High school games.

Coldren: What kind of games did you like to go to?

Brannock: Well you know, at that time they had football, you know.

Coldren: Was church and religion important to you?

Brannock: Yes it was, very important.

Coldren: What ways did you participate in your church?

Brannock: Well, I started with being a cradle rollers member when I was 6 months old.

From then on into Sunday school, and then I joined the church, became a member of the

church. At that time, then I went on the choir. Then I sang on the choir for 46 years.

Coldren: That's amazing.

Brannock: Yeah, I really enjoyed that.

Coldren: Which church did you belong to?

Brannock: I belonged to the First Baptist Church of Steelton.

Coldren: It was right across the street?

Brannock: Across the street, yeah.

Coldren: Were you involved in any other social events in church too?

Brannock: Yes I was involved in the missionary society. And that was the main society I was involved in at that time. And then of course, later I became president of the missionaries and served there for 25 years. And then, the other clubs. We had a dramatic club that I was very fond of. We used to do plays, you know. And recently, I joined the senior citizen club. So I've been very active in just about everything in the church.

Coldren: What kind of things did you do for the missionary club?

Brannock: Well, we helped people like if they need some support, like financial or whatever it was we would help them. When they were sick you know, look after them. So I've just done about everything.

Coldren: The things you did for the missionary group, was that a local thing or . . . ?

Brannock: It started local, and then it, see our church belonged to the convention, you know the state convention and the association and I've been members of that, working in there. That's all church work. So I've just been very active up until I'd say about five

years ago. I couldn't do the things I liked to. So I took up the telephone ministry so that I could still feel that I'm doing something. The church looks on me as a mother of the church and I've received a certificate from the state convention pertaining to that.

Coldren: Are there any other people in the church that are considered the mother of the church or is that something that they gave specially to you?

Brannock: I don't think there is right now anyone that they call the mother of the church. In fact, the minister, he calls me mother.

Coldren: Oh really?

Brannock: Oh yeah. His family, I look on them, see that's his picture over there. Doc. Cooley, you saw him.

Coldren: Yeah.

Brannock: He's the one, he calls me . . .

Coldren: He calls you mother.

Brannock: Yeah, he calls me mother.

Coldren: Your parents were involved in church too?

Brannock: Oh yes, that's where I got my start. My father was a deacon in church, an ordained deacon. My mother, of course she was a missionary. That's the way I got my start.

Coldren: What was your relationship with your family like?

Brannock: I mean it was a good relationship . . . with all my family.

Coldren: Who do you think you were closest to in your family?

Brannock: Well, when my mother lived it was my mother. Of course now, my children

because that's all I have.

Coldren: You said you had a brother and a sister pass away. So it was basically . . .

Brannock: Two brothers and a sister.

Coldren: But when did your brothers pass away?

Brannock: The first one, he passed away in 1906. He was 20 years old.

Coldren: That was before you were born.

Brannock: Yeah, and also the girl. I never saw them. And then I had a brother that passed away about 15 years ago, Howard.

Coldren: So when you were growing up, it was just your brother and you?

Brannock: Yeah. Just Howard and I.

Coldren: And your mother.

Brannock: Yes.

Coldren: 'Cause your father passed away early on.

Brannock: He passed away when I was fourteen.

Coldren: With just the three of you and your mother working in the house, what kind of responsibilities did you have as far as financially?

Brannock: Well, in the early days there was no financial support. But later years it was financial.

Coldren: When did you stop living at home?

Brannock: I've lived here, I was born in this house so I haven't lived anywhere else.

Coldren: When you became around 20 years old the depression hit, did you lose any work during this period of time?

Brammcock: No I didn't lose any work. No that was, see when the depression was I wasn't able to do that much work. Yeah because . . . I don't remember what year that was.

Coldren: It was 1929.

Brammcock: '29. See then, I wasn't doin' that much work then.

Coldren: Without your father around, how'd your family get by during the depression?

Brammcock: Well, my brother. He took over the reign. Because we three lived here, so he was the mainstay.

Coldren: Where did he work?

Brammcock: He worked for Pennsy Supply.

Coldren: He never had a problem with his job during the depression.

Brammcock: No. No, he worked there for years 'til he retired. He retired from there.

Coldren: Did he think he was particularly fortunate because he didn't have any problems?

Brammcock: Well, I think so.

Coldren: You think so.

Brammcock: Yes.

Coldren: Looking back on it you think . . .

Brammcock: Yeah that's right. We were able to make it. And when you didn't have, you did without or else someone would give you a hand. Your neighbors, and then we had a garden for food. We made it.

Coldren: Do you remember helping other people out?

Brannock: Oh yes.

Coldren: What kind of ways did you . . . ?

Brannock: Well, whatever we had we'd divide with people that needed.

Coldren: Did you do this through church a lot of times?

Brannock: Yes.

Coldren: Do you think that was the main group that kind of pulled together and helped , each other out?

Brannock: Well, I know the church did because that's where you get your training too. We were brought up that way to help other people.

Coldren: So ever since you were a little child you knew that that was the right thing to do?

Brannock: Oh yes.

Coldren: And then when the depression hit it was just natural.

Brannock: See that's it.

Coldren: In what ways do you think this difficult time influenced your life?

Brannock: I beg your pardon.

Coldren: In what ways do you think this time influenced your life, the depression?

Brannock: It just taught us how to help others and get along.

Coldren: After the depression, World War II came, in what ways were you affected by World War II?

Brannock: Well the only way that I was, my sons, they went into the service. Yeah, both boys, Ronald and Alfred.

Coldren: Did they fight in World War II then?

Brannock: Yeah, well, World War II was what year was that, I'm not thinking good now.

Coldren: It ended in 1945.

Brannock: '45. Well, no they didn't, they went in the war after World War II. That's the one.

Coldren: Did they fight in the Korean War then?

Brannock: Yeah.

Coldren: Did anyone else in your family serve?

Brannock: No, they did. Some of my other parts of the family. Oh yeah they did. Because everybody that was around that age of the young men, they had to enlist or be drafted.

Coldren: That must a difficult time.

Brannock: It was. And then for them to have to go to war, it was just rough, but they had to do it.

Coldren: Did your brother ever have to serve in any war?

Brannock: Yes my brother did. He served in the... World War II, no he served in World War I, that's right he served in World War I.

Coldren: Did he go to Europe to fight then?

Brannock: No, he didn't. He was on the boat three days when the armistice was signed.

Coldren: Well that's good.

Brannock: That was good. That was a good feeling for us.

Coldren: Yeah I bet. Did any soldiers who returned after the war, did any of them share their experiences with you?

Brannock: No.

Coldren: What kind responsibilities did you have when you worked? Where did you work and what kind of jobs did you do?

Brannock: Oh, I did domestic work?

Coldren: How many households did you work for?

Brannock: I worked in two households.

Coldren: Were they good employers did you think?

Brannock: Oh yes they were. The one man was the electrical superintendent at Bethlehem Steel. The other was president judge of Dauphin County courts. So they were good jobs.

Coldren: Were they big houses?

Brannock: Yes they were.

Coldren: That was a lot of work then huh?

Brannock: Yes they were.

Coldren: What were their names?

Brannock: The electrical engineer was George Walz and the other was J. Paul Rupp.

Coldren: Steelton was an ethnically diverse town. What were your relations like with different ethnic groups around the community?

Brannock: Oh we were friendly with them, yeah we were.

Coldren: Okay, did you go to any social events with people of different ethnic...?

Brannock: No, I didn't.

Coldren: You were friendly but did you remain apart?

Brannock: Yeah, just speaking to them as you see them on the street and pass and speak to them. That was in a friendly way you know.

Coldren: Is that as far as it went?

Brannock: Yeah, and if you went in a store, it was just a friendly hello or speak to them, that's as far as I went with them.

Coldren: Was this kind of natural?

Brannock: It was natural I think.

Coldren: Did anyone really think about it?

Brannock: In fact, some people had other relations I guess. They were around them more. But see, I never was around them, only at school.

Coldren: Now in school, did you think that, what kind of ways did you experience, when the schools integrated, what things did you experience in high school that were different from elementary school?

Brannock: Well, there wasn't anything different other than, I mean we were just in classes together. Then when school was over, we came home and they went to their homes and that was about the extent of it.

Coldren: Now these people that you worked for were they white?

Brannock: Yes.

Coldren: What were your experiences with them like?

Brannock: Well they treated me as family. Yeah, they did, both places.

Coldren: Now how long did you work at those houses?

Brannock: The electrical engineer, I think I was there about ten years. And with the judge, I worked for them for forty years.

Coldren: Forty years, wow. So you must have been very close with that family.

Brannock: I was. They were very, in fact they had two girls. Those girls keep up with me now, they come here to see me and call me and come and bring me things and make sure I have what I need. Because I raised those girls.

Coldren: You helped raise them?

Brannock: Yeah, I helped raise them, yeah because the youngest one was I guess she must have been about in the third grade when I went there.

Coldren: So they kind of look at you as a mother?

Brannock: They do, they call me mother.

Coldren: Both of these families lived in Steelton?

Brannock: Yes they were in Steelton. Of course the first family, their not here, their both dead. They lived up on Cottage Hill.

Coldren: This second family you worked for forty years, that was the guy who was the president judge. He must have held a pretty high position in the community. What kind of things did he do around the community?

Brannock: What did he do? He belonged to every thing. He was a church man, he belonged to the United Brethren Church. Well he was just very active in everything. Politics, he was a big politician.

Coldren: You mentioned that he was a football coach?

Brammcock: Oh yeah, he was football coach.

Coldren: Was the team integrated when he...?

Brammcock: He was the team that integrated the black boy on the team.

Coldren: Were you working for him at that time?

Brammcock: Yes.

Coldren: You don't think you had anything to do...?(with Rupp's integrating the team.

The question must have been asked off the tape because at this point I had just flipped to side B).

Brammcock: No I don't think so. I think that was the way he was brought up. See he was a country boy, you know, and I mean his parents brought him up that way, that there was no difference.

Coldren: That's good. So you appreciated working for him.

Brammcock: Oh I did.

Coldren: Did you ever experience any kind of racial bigotry in Steelton?

Brammcock: No I haven't personally.

Coldren: Do you know people who have?

Brammcock: I know people that have. I haven't personally. I know how to get along with people.

Coldren: Do you think this was because of your nature?

Brammcock: I think so. At least that's what everybody tells me. They tell me that I'm different from some people. But I think that's just my background. That's the only thing I can say.

Coldren: In what way do you think your different from other people who might have problems?

Bramnock: I can always see the good in people. I just can't be any other way.

Coldren: While you were living here at home and when you were an adult working and things like that, did you have any time to do anything that was for entertainment for fun?

Bramnock: What do you mean?

Coldren: Did you have social events with the church or anything like that that you did?

Bramnock: Like here at home?

Coldren: Like when you were an adult, not necessarily here in the house. Other than work.

Bramnock: Yes. For the church. We had teas, and dinners. Whenever there's deaths in the home we'd take over, try to give whatever assistance was needed in every way. Well, we just try to help people.

Coldren: Does your church and other churches get together and do things like that?

Bramnock: Yes they do. All the churches here in Steelton, they do just like my church. We're all working the same way.

Coldren: And they work together a lot of times?

Bramnock: This past week the Lenten season. They were all held at my church. They come together like that all the time. Whatever's going on, they're together. They work together.

Coldren: Do you think this makes Steelton a closer community?

Bramnock: I think it does, I know it does.

Coldren: As you saw your children grow into adults, how do you think their lives were easier than yours? Or do you think they were easier?

Brannock: Well they had more advantages. Yeah they did because they had the advantages that I didn't have. Well they didn't go to segregated schools to begin with. And going to the integrated school they were able to participate in things. And job wise too, there were better jobs. I think they came along much better than we did.

Coldren: What are their jobs by the way?

Brannock: Well, Ronald, he's retired now but he worked for the federal government. The middle boy died. And Alfred, he works for the Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Agency in Harrisburg. So they had good jobs.

Coldren: Do you think there were any ways in which their lives were more difficult than yours?

Brannock: Well, I don't know. They have problems that we didn't have. There's problems with segregation for one thing. I think that would be their biggest problem.

Coldren: How's that?

Brannock: Because job wise. But now, they have good jobs.

Coldren: Do you think it was the efforts of your generation that helped their generation get ahead?

Brannock: I believe so. I think so.

Coldren: In what ways do you think that was possible?

Brannock: Well, just in talking to them. Each parent talking to their children. That's the only way they could do it.

Coldren: Because you were good parents to them, they moved along?

Bramnock: See my parents trained me, and I trained my children, and my children now are training their children. So you see, that's good. I wasn't able to keep up with my children with a lot of things like going to games and things that they were involved in.

But my children are able to go to their children and in fact, Ronald, he's at every game because his grandson is one of the star players at Steelton. Duke McKamey.

Coldren: How many grandchildren do you have?

Bramnock: Oh boy, I think I have about 13.

Coldren: And they have children? How many great grandchildren do you have?

Bramnock: I have about 20. I count 'em every once in a while. Its about 20, I guess around 20.

Coldren: You mentioned that your son's generation had good parents. Do you think they had to fight for certain things also.

Bramnock: Oh I'm sure they did.

Coldren: When did you retire from working?

Bramnock: Oh I retired, let's see its been about 10 years ago.

Coldren: Why did you retire?

Bramnock: My health wouldn't allow me to work anymore.

Coldren: About 30 years ago, the Civil Rights Movement had become a factor. Did you participate in the civil rights movement?

Bramnock: No I didn't. Other than over the telephone because I didn't get out into it.

But over the telephone talking and all, just with ordinary people you know. I didn't get

into meetings or anything like that. 'Cause I wasn't able to do that. See I've been kind of handicapped because of getting around for a long time. This arthritis really hit me. And I have Paget's Disease of the bone. I can't do these things but I can talk. That's what everybody says, they tell me I look good and I look the same, and people come to see me and talk on the phone and they say, "oh you sound good" and I say "well there's nothing wrong" with my (inaudible word).

Coldren: You don't look, what are you 88? You don't look 88.

Bramnock: Yeah I was 88 the twelfth of January.

Coldren: Wow. Do you know people that did participate in the civil rights movement here in Steelton?

Bramnock: Yeah, I know, I just can't call names now. But I mean I do know people that worked for the civil rights.

Coldren: How do you think the civil rights movement affected the black community in Steelton?

Bramnock: Well, I don't know. Sometimes I think it's good. In fact we should have it because you have to keep trying to make things better. So you just have to keep after it. I'm for the civil rights movement but as I said I can't do a lot of things but my children can, see I depend on them, I tell them my day's over for things like that.

Coldren: Do you think the results of that movement helped people out here?

Bramnock: I think so.

Coldren: What kinds of ways do you think?

Bramnock: Well in every way, financially and job wise. I really think it has.

Coldren: Now that you've reached a point in your life where you can look back on things. Do you think the black community in Steelton has a better position in the community than when you were a child, when you were growing up?

Brannock: Well I don't know because . . . the different generations as they come along, you know, seems like they just have problems. I'm sure they do.

Coldren: What kind of problems do you think . . . ?

Brannock: Well I don't know, things just don't seem to be like they should be but I just don't get into it. It keeps me busy trying to keep myself together, so I don't get into things now. I let my children take care of whatever needs to be.

Coldren: As far as the black community and civil rights movement and things like that, do you think anything still needs to be done as far as equality is concerned?

Brannock: Well I just don't know. As I said, I just don't get into too much of that.

Coldren: When you look at your grandchildren, how do you think their future is different from the life that you had. Do you think they have a better future or their future is more dim?

Brannock: I don't know, the way the world is going today, I feel sorry for them. I do. I mean, people have changed so. I really feel sorry for what the young people are coming up against.

Coldren: What kinds of things scare you in particular?

Brannock: See with me, its financial, you know getting along, making a living. And there is just so much hatred. And I just don't see that.

Coldren: In what ways does the church support you now?

Brannock: Well they keep up with me, I get the bulletins each week they send me the bulletins. And then whenever there's fairs going on at church, lots of times they may have socials, they all send me some of what they have. Let me know that I'm still being a part of them. And they also send me money. The different clubs and the church. For Easter I got money from my missionary circle that I worked with.

Coldren: That's interesting.

Brannock: Anything that I would need, I know I could get it. But I support the church, I don't depend on the church to support me. No, I still support the church like I did while I was there.

Coldren: So when you were younger you gave to the church and now you still give to the church, but if you needed it, they would just give it back.

Brannock: Yeah.

Coldren: That's good. Do you think over the years you've gained an awareness of the importance of African-American's history?

Brannock: The importance of it? Oh yes.

Coldren: Do you think you've learned more about it over the years?

Brannock: I always did know about it because we were always taught.

Coldren: Where were you taught?

Brannock: Well my parents, and in school we were always taught. We knew a lot of the history of our race, the teachers taught us.

Coldren: In the Hygienic School?

Brannock: In the Hygienic, that's where we got it.

Coldren: Did you get it in the high school?

Brannock: We didn't get it in high school. We really got in the Hygenic School. All the children that went to Hygenic School, those teachers saw to it that we got the information.

Coldren: Are you glad that you got to go to the Hygenic School because of this?

Brannock: Oh yes. I am.

Coldren: Do you think that there's become more awareness of African-American history since then? Or do you think it's worse now that schools like the Hygenic School aren't in existence anymore?

Brannock: Well, I don't know. Well there's no one now to teach the children. If they don't get it through the churches and their homes, they don't get it. And the children coming up now, they don't get what we did.

Coldren: Who did you learn about when you were in the Hygenic School?

Brannock: Well we learned about the people that stood for something. Well anybody that made good, we would know about it.

Coldren: Were they role models for you when you were growing up?

Brannock: Well, they were yes. Because this is why the teachers taught it, so they could be.

Coldren: In what ways do you think Steelton has changed over the years?

Brannock: Well it's not as pleasant as it used to be so I understand. See I'm not out with these people now. Listening to my children talk, you know, some people are not like they were when we came along.

Coldren: So you've been hearing that people aren't as nice as they used to be?

Brannock: Yes I have.

Coldren: Before pretty much everyone in the community, they were mostly nice people?

Brannock: Yes they were.

Coldren: So have you enjoyed living in Steelton?

Brannock: Have I enjoyed living in? Oh yes. I wouldn't live anywhere else.

Coldren: Really, well that's good. How do you think your experience as an African-American in this town, with the different ethnic groups and the type of town that it is, how do you think that's influenced your life?

Brannock: Well, I don't know. It's just the idea, you just accept things and go on with it. It's nothing you can do to change things so you just accept it and go on.

Coldren: Do you think that you took an attitude where you decided to live with things rather than fight for things or did you . . . ?

Brannock: Well see I never was a fighter, no. I just never was.

Coldren: Do you think with the civil rights movement and everything, do you think that that was a, I don't know how to put this. Do you think that people of that generation were different in that they were more of fighters, or is that something that you would have fought for?

Brannock: I guess that's it.

Coldren: So you don't think you would have fought for anything like that?

Brannock: Well, if I would have been involved in it, I probably would have. But things were good for me, you know, the type of life that I live, I live a quiet life and I mean and

I didn't have any problems with it. I think that the generation now should really push for what they want.

Coldren: You seem very content with the life you've lived.

Brannock: I'm content with the life I lived.

Coldren: That's all the questions I have, I appreciate the interview.

Brannock: I hope that's been a help.