

TRANSCRIPT – FRED LINCOLN

Interviewee: FRED LINCOLN

Interviewer: TIMOTHY ST. PIERRE

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TIMOTHY ST. PIERRE: My name is Timothy St. Pierre. I'm conducting this interview with the Charleston Oral History Program at the Citadel. It is 8:03 AM on March 11th, 2021. Mr. Lincoln, are you okay with being recorded for this interview?

FRED LINCOLN: Yes.

TS: All right. Could you, introduce yourself and tell us how you came to live in this area?

FL: Fred Lincoln and my ancestors lived on the adjacent plantation, whereas now, and after slavery, they bought three hundred acres of land adjacent to the plantation, because, the reality was they worked free, but they still have to economically be tied to the plantation. So they were still working on the plantation, after slavery. So it was to the advantage of the slave owner to have them live adjacent to the property, to the plantation. So they sold them the 300 acres of land adjacent to the plantations. And luckily contain all 300 acres total. The present time.

TS: Is this all in the Cainhoy community currently?

FL: Yes.

TS: All right. So you're currently a resident, would you say, of that community?

Fred Lincoln

FL: Yes.

TS: Okay. So we're going to get a little bit more recent talking about that, that meeting tree controversy itself. What connections did you have with the community other than just living there? What was your participation in the area?

FL: We have organization the Wando-Huger, CDC [Community Development Corporation] that covers the total area. I act as chairman of that committee.

TS: Could you repeat the name of the committee please?

FL: Wando-Huger CDC and, we have been proactive on, and, trying to protect all community development came in 1992 until present. And I'm also chairman of our volunteer fire department in our community, and we, assist in maintaining our historical school and, our historical graveyard.

TS: Is that the Venning Cemetery? Is that the same graveyard?

FL: Yeah, Venning Cemetery.

TS: Okay. What do you know about the Clements Ferry Road Widening Project? This is, as I understand the one that prompted, you know, resistance to cutting down that tree.

FL: They had phase one a few years back and it wasn't a necessity at that time. We have fought so many battle, in the beginning stage of development, because we felt that development was encroaching on the community, and those trucking company right next to them. And then eventually home. And by the time it was time to widen, I'm road in the first stage, there wasn't any disagreement between the community and the highway department, because it was a necessity because the traffic was so bottlenecked that they needed to do something to widen the road, and all main focus was that folks who lived on

Fred Lincoln

that road or owned property on that road, that they were properly compensated. And that was all big issue. And we worked with people, residents on that road to make sure that they were properly compensated for it. Wasn't the issue that we fought, rule expansion.

TS: So why do you think the meeting tree, uh, where John Sanders, you know, he camped out there for a good long period. Why did that become the most noticeable subject? If you were just trying to get compensation for these people? Why does the media, why does the Post & Courier spend so much time on the meeting tree?

FL: Well, that's, that's how the media, they get the most sensational stuff so that we get the attention. So that's how they sell their product, by the most sensational activity that's going on. The tree was a concern for us because it's been there all my life. But the only reason we didn't see a large black participation in trying to save the tree because the alternative was that, black folk, would have lost property, they took option two, which was to go more North, and folk who live adjacent to that tree, they would have lost a lot of properties. So we were caught in the middle. We felt, we wanted to save the tree because of the history, but we also were mindful that people need places to live. So there wasn't a big uproar in the black community over the tree, but we supported Sanders and his effort to keep the tree.

TS: Okay. So I've read, um, from Post & Courier, again, that there was an environmental part to this debate that the widening project rather have to go through wetlands, I believe that's in the North as you say, or else it would have to be cutting this tree or cutting into the property on the South side. Do you know anything?

FL: Yeah, that was a, that was an issue also in a road like that, it was gonna infringe on the environmental aspect of it, but you know it's just that, what, you're going

Fred Lincoln

to expand the road, so you're going have to expand the road into the wetland and then choose with the direction that you want to go. Highway department picked option one, and the community offered option two, but they stuck with one.

TS: So the authorities, uh, they claimed that they took all this under sincere review and said they absolutely had to take option one, as you said. Do you believe them that the authorities were dealing honestly with your groups?

FL: Well, I would think I would question their integrity on it, but the decision had to be made, however you go, I mean, I don't think you could avoid the wetland because the bridge was always there, but now you have to widen, expand that bridge. Either way, you're tampering with wetlands, but you know, there's so, so there's gonna be a few issues that wetland, when the bridge is going to be expanded. So they go South or North, they were gonna deal with the wetland. So I don't think a wetland was a major issue. How could we circumvent the tree? And this is where it was a tough decision.

TS: Okay. Were you ever present at the Meeting Tree during the, uh, the standoff, so-called?

FL: Oh, yes. I went, I went down and spent some time with uh, Sammy Sanders the day before they took the tree down. That was just one of the issues that we were dealing with in the community. It wasn't the major issue, but it was an issue, you know.

TS: Okay. So you would argue that the Cainhoy Meeting Tree was just, it was not the central piece of this whole debate. Do you think it distracted from the genuine movements you were trying to do against the uncompensated seizure of people's property? What, was the Meeting Tree a distraction, or did it help your cause?

Fred Lincoln

FL: Well, the Meeting Tree is a part of it, but I don't think we, we couldn't do both and one would interfere with the other. One would just get more media attention. But my main focus was that the reality is that the road would be expanded, and we have folks along that road that own property and anticipating, uh, commercializing their properties so that they could benefit from it. Usually in the black community, when a road comes like that, eventually the black folk who owned the property, vanish, and folks come in and for generations they make all the money, and we're gone. And, we're probably in worse condition than we were. This time, we had a strategy of having black people who commercialized their property or lease it, or come up with a commercial venture that would benefit them for generations rather than just walking away from their property with a few dollars. And so that's what I would concentrate on more, of organizing folks to take advantage. And you just have the opportunity to cry about it, knowing that it's the reality that the road will be widened, that a commercial venture would expand on the road. So we wanted to be a part of that, that we would not be like, I saw happen in Mount Pleasant. All the black-owned property is now generating generational income for other than the original property owners. Those were my main, main concerns. And we could do that and give our ear to the tree at the same time. Okay.

TS: Were you involved in, uh, opposing this, uh, this intervention from phase one, in other words, as soon as you caught wind of the Clements Ferry Road Widening Project, were you already beginning this activism?

FL: Oh, we've, we've been involved 20 years ago. Uh, the, the road was, the expansion was not a major issue, um, for the community. For the reality was we know what's going to take place. Ours was only that just compensation for properties and, uh,

Fred Lincoln

faced the reality that the road would be expanded. And we didn't want to be taken advantage of in that process. And all major issues have taken place, you know, long before the road expanded commercialization of all residential communities.

TS: So you mentioned that you were a member of the committee that, you know, you mentioned earlier, would you say that committee was the central force trying to organize the community to ensure that there was an equitable use of property?

FL: Oh, yeah.

TS: What was your role on that committee, specifically?

FL: The chairman.

TS: So what do you do as chairman? Are you in charge? Um, is it like an executive position where you can kind of direct how things happen?

FL: It's a volunteer where everybody sits down and tries and come up with a strategy of how are we going to go forward and how we're going to try to preserve the integrity of our community,

TS: If you were willing to, could you actually describe some of the strategies that your group has tried to do and whether or not they were successful? For example, John Sanders, you know, he had a vigil on a tree for several months. What kinds of things could your committee bring to the table?

FL: Well, uh, you know, for years we just got kinda complacent. We're trying, we tried to get involved in the County Comprehensive Plan. We tried to plan our community and have our community interests interjected into the Comprehensive Plan. Um, we have been in the area trying to deal with issues like property and all the involvement that that had and what effect that had on our community when development comes into the

Fred Lincoln

community. We have been working with families trying to discourage them from selling their property in the early stage of the development, when we didn't even have water or sewer coming along Clements Ferry Road, trying to sell well, even if there were going to fail, but wait until you get it where the property value is increasing, get the perfect dollar for it. And, uh, and we have, uh, worked with members in all areas to have their property, uh, divided. So, so that their property was a threat at that time, when you have 30 acres, more than likely you lose it, but if you divided it up in 30 partials, then you may lose a proportion of it, you wouldn't lose all. Those are the major activities that we have with dealing in, at the same time, running our own volunteer fire department so we wouldn't have to be annexed to any city, we could be more independent because we were all tired. So we were a working community, an independent community and trying to maintain ourselves, maintain our history and maintain the history of our ancestors who'd fought so hard for us to have these properties. We didn't buy these properties, they were passed down to us. We had an obligation to try and maintain it.

TS: Were there any heated moments during this, that protracted protest-slash-equitability movement? Were there confrontations with police or authority figures, anything dramatic that you would like to share?

FL: No. No. Never had any competition with anyone involved. Everything goes through, we continuously went before Loaning Boards, County Councils, Charleston City Council fighting for the issues that we thought were important for our community, the whole big development with the Cainhoy Plantation properties. That we've fought the master plan two years, trying to make sure that the master plan would include, uh, low income housing. And we didn't need, you know, projects and stuff. We wanted a property

Fred Lincoln

that would, a certain area that would be sold that you could have a mobile home on those properties build smaller houses for folks from the service sector would be able to own a home, and those were our issues. Those were issues we put before the Charleston Council. And, uh, we were able to get 150 acres of that property zoned, where you can put mobile home on it or very small homes, it would not be increasing value. Well, well folks from the service industry, which is all we have in these areas, folks working in the service industry not more than \$10 an hour, but nobody was building a sub division where they could actually hold land not just rent, affordable housing throughout Tri-County Area, not focus on renting. We came up with something different. We want property ownership for the underclass or making that 10, \$10 an hour, that they would have a place sold that their property value would not push them out of the market.

TS: How successful were these efforts? Do you think that you were actually able to accomplish many of your goals with this master plan?

FL: Yeah, because 158, but we were asking for ten percent of the property, um, with the mayor came up and we bet we could have upwards of 150 acres zoned so that it would be a low-income community forever. Once you interject mobile homes, nobody had ever put in the master plan to allow a mobile home on the property. No one, we were the only ones that came up with that idea. That, that's the only true affordable housing when people take pride in ownership. And that was property that would allow for mobile homes. Uh, so we got that idea on the table, and 150 acres more were set aside for that. And that came from our efforts.

Fred Lincoln

TS: Okay. Would you say that local governments were actually listening to your committee and your groups doing this? 'Cause it sounds like if not sympathetic, they were at least responsive. Does it feel that way to you or are you frustrated?

FL: Well, what happened? We did better than most communities. We took busloads of people down to the County, to the Charleston Council meeting and those numbers mean something to politicians. And they show how serious, we showed how serious we were. And I think we gained a level of respect, no one had ever brought that many people down to a meeting,

TS: The Post and Courier likes to portray, um, especially, you know, how they always like to focus on the Meeting Tree or on John Sanders. They tried to show that as an example of how both sides in this case were uniquely civil. As in there wasn't a lot of name calling there was no violence or anything. Would you say that was overall true for, uh, the organizations that were approaching this Clements Ferry Road Project? In general, were people civil?

FL: Yeah, um, everything, uh, so far has been civil, there wasn't any major disturbance in the whole event. So, yeah.

TS: Do you think that might've been a reason why your community was more successful than some others?

FL: Because we were more civil?

TS: Do you think so, or do you have another explanation for your success?

FL: Well, I think in our community, the organizational effort, um, played a part in it. You know, you can have a community with ideas. If you didn't have the community united behind you, then you don't really make any progress. But everybody knew that we

Fred Lincoln

could get 75 people at our council meetings in an instant. And I go to a lot of meetings where I never see that many people come out for issues, for issues that we were dealing with. I think that may be because, and we did the same thing when we were dealing with the Port Authority when they were trying to bring, I don't know if you read the history of the Port Authority, trying to bring a railroad and a truck route straight through all community. We fought that for three years and won.

TS: Were you able to prevent the Port Authority from putting those in, or did you win concessions for property?

FL: I don't know if you read up on the Global Gateway, the Port Authority was gonna put this massive port on Daniel's Island but they weren't gonna come from Daniel's Island. They would come through the back, through our community with the railroad track and, uh, truck routes. And that would have decimated the whole community and, um, everybody felt like we couldn't win all. Uh, they offered us \$5 million after we fought for a year, so, and we're rejecting, and that was 25 years ago and we rejected the \$5 million and continued to battle. Until the end, with the support of some regular allies we were able to win.

TS: So do you think--

FL: And gained a level of respect for us, because we were able to fill the auditorium with people to protest that. We had busloads of people coming from all over. So that, from that, they gave us a level of respect. And that's why I think there wasn't so much are still be going forward with, in dealing with the developer when the development came.

Fred Lincoln

TS: So these authorities, they were basically giving your community the raw end of the deal to benefit other areas. And you think by making yourself known, they were forced to consider what they were doing.

FL: Yeah. Yeah. When you have an organized effort, you gain a level of respect. Um, what happened? Our community has been chosen for, uh, roads and stuff like that because they seek the path of least resistance and our community has always been less organized, had less influence. So they would pick our community rather than pick an established community with lawyers and everything waiting for them. Our community didn't have that. So they would pick our community to put a highway or railroad track. So, and once we showed them that we are willing to fight, and we were organized and, uh, we weren't gonna, you know, so stolen lot to happen. So that, that gained that level of respect. That's why when the development came, um, We had already established ourselves.

TS: Okay. That leads me to a question. And I know it's a bit of a hard one, but you mentioned that the Cainhoy community is this path of least resistance that authorities would try to go through. Why did that turn out to be misguided? Is there something unique about your community that allows you to earn the respect of the authorities by organizing this way? Or was it just good fortune of having leaders like yourself who were able to bring people together?

FL: The thing about it, you have a community, that's not a transit community. If you have a community that's a transit community, it's different from our community. All the kids that I went to school with, you know, they're still here. Um, people through generations, they still here. So they have a certain amount of pride, a certain amount of

Fred Lincoln

"This is our home," more so than a person who lives in a city, or like North Charleston and places where folk move from other places there. They don't have a grounding there. They don't have anything to fight for. They'll just move to another place if things got out of hand. So we don't have that option. We don't see that as an option, leaving our ancestral property and going somewhere else and being forced out. So we would more than likely fight more than people in the inner city that I see, or people who do not have a tradition and a heritage in the area that they're willing to fight for: they are transit people. We are not transit people, but when we've we build a house and that's going to be our telephone number, our address for a lifetime. I think that's easier, if that's being threatened. It's easier for us to get those people to come out to a meeting. If you send for them, that you all, your quality of life is being threatened, your heritage is being threatened, it's easy for me to get those people to a meeting that someone organizing in the city.

TS: Do you think there are other communities like yours around Charleston that could benefit from earning the respect of the authorities and the same type of organization?

FL: Well, we have one that's doing it right now. If you read the news, the deal with the port community right down the street, they, they just, they're fighting now and won the first battle in stopping a road expansion through their community. And they've had people who were fighting longer than me in their community, and they have the same situation. Like we have. They have people that have been there for generations. they're not a transit community, and they're, they're fighting and doing an incredible job. They were trying to bring a four-lane through their community, five lane in a sense, and they

Fred Lincoln

fought and fought, and the other night. So a committee, in Charleston County Council, Charleston County voted to agree with them that there should not be a five-lane coming through their community. So, you know, those people, uh, we followed them. They are similar to our community.

TS: Okay. So these communities aren't isolated. Do you think there's any hope that the communities are learning from each other and that they might be able to share ways to organize?

FL: Well, you have organization, African-American Settlement Community Commission. Well, all of these communities are connected with them. So when something happened over here, they're aware of it, and I know what's going on in the Gullah community. They know what's going on in my company. And we come to each other for everybody, we feed off one another. Then new thing, when I sit down with them, they know things that I don't know, I told them one thing that I'm aware of. So we, we do piggyback from one another.

TS: Okay, well, we'll have another chance in a little bit to discuss, you know, the big movements that are going on around Charleston real quick. I would actually like to refocus kind of on the Cainhoy Meeting Tree, that aspect of it. I know it's only a minor part, but it's, you know, it's big in the papers. So people see that as a representative of the community. So would you mind discussing that for a moment? Has you met John Sanders personally? Do you know him personally, outside of visiting the Meeting Tree while he was doing a vigil?

FL: Well, we have a long history. You know. Um, it was the white community and the black community. Well, Sammy is part of the white community. Uh, when we

Fred Lincoln

were fighting for the Port authority, um, Sammy worked with me on that issue. Um, when they had problems involved in their community where a developer wanted to, uh, build something there that they didn't want, I fought with them, and through the years we have had that type of relationship. And so this is not just happening now, that's happening for the last 30 years on issues when I need them, you know, they would be there for me. When I, when we had the big meeting North Charleston Coliseum, he was there, Sammy and other people in that white community. Um, I have a level of respect in that community, and if I needed their help on something, I could readily, um, get that support. And right now we are fighting for the integrity of a graveyard, right adjacent to that tree. Well, at that grave site, you have the white grave yard, and adjacent to it you have the black grave yard, and it been there for generations. But I knew very little about it until they brought it to my attention. And now we are fighting to make sure that developers do not infringe on that graveyard. They claim it as private property that they own it. Those grave sites over there belong to my ancestors. So we'll fighting now to try to get the developers to relinquish authority over the graveyard. So now we could combine the graveyards as one, where one's a white and black graveyard, now we could combine it and make it one graveyard to reflect the time, 2001. So we're working on that issue together. And Madame [Inaudible], uh, we have, and she's [Inaudible] on it than us and then she's the one who brought it to our attention that there are black graves out there. So there's a history of us working together just in the last 30 or more years.

TS: Okay. Well, if you wouldn't mind talking about that, um, the graveyard you mentioned, I believe we said that was the Venning Cemetery.

Fred Lincoln

FL: Nope. Venning Cemetery is on the plantation itself, original plantation. Uh, this graveyard is off Clements Ferry Road, right, right by the, uh, the Meeting Street Tree, and there's a little bridge that separates the graveyard and this tree, and the tree. So, it's so close together you can throw a stone.

TS: So is the widening project what's threatening that graveyard right now? Or is there a different developer?

FL: No, it's gonna come closer, but it's not gonna deal with the integrity of the grave yard, but, uh, with our effort is with the developers just started developing that area and we are trying to, uh, have them not to infringe on the graveyard or not to petition to move and integrate. And we want to combine the two graves together in the same plot, but they have been separated for generations.

TS: Okay. What type of settlement are you hoping for? Would it be perhaps they relinquish rights to the property in exchange for compensation, similar to the widening, you know, the road widening project?

TS: The graveyard is not of any economic value to them. And if you combine that with the white graveyard, and it's a benefit for everybody, the developer and everybody. It's properly maintained, and the fence that they have contributed, something to bring our community together, people no longer would be buried in separate graveyards, it would all join in one. So I thought that would be a good, good idea.

TS: Yeah. It seems like a noble one. How optimistic are you that you're going to be successful saving that graveyard?

FL: Well, we're gonna try and get in touch with their corporate headquarters. They're a big, big company, and maybe we could get a better response, cause on the local

Fred Lincoln

level it's not, not getting to hear, you know, what you want to hear. Maybe we could make that work, and it's going to take the effort of, right now. The effort of the white and black communities on the same page. I think we can look for an optimistic, um, future concerning that gravesite.

TS: Okay. That's all very enlightening. Um, you mentioned that there was a big meeting in North Charleston where you cooperated with, uh, uh, Sammy Sanders and who he represented, like, at the coliseum.

FL: Yeah. We had a big gathering, um, uh, dealing with Port Authority and we were dealing with the Port Authority. It stopped the railroad from coming through our community, you know, and we've sold the Fine Arts Center that night. And I think that impressed, but all the politician was there and from the area, and all that. And once we showed them how serious we were, and they went to poll that place, and, uh, nobody had ever done that before. And we made the presentation before them, and it's like, it's like, you know, our history, our community and we're passionate about it. And I was able to get some of the staunch Republican, um, lawmakers to work with me from that point on. And that's how we became successful. If I had just depended on Democrats, then we would have lost, but, here we could count on support of key Republicans to work with us from that juncture on because they saw how many people that came out and how passionate we were, and how organized we were.

TS: Okay. So it sounds like there's more of a close-knit and widespread movement here than, you know, the news would imply because they just like to focus that there's this one tree and you have in danger being cut down and that appeals to people's imagination. Um--

Fred Lincoln

FL: There's more to our community than that tree. We have lost much more than that tree since this development started. In certain areas, we have lost a lot of property, you know, and, uh, for us this is one aspect of it, but it's all connected.

TS: So, the tree has already been cut down. Have you visited that site since, uh, February? Since when it was cut down?

FL: Yes, so what's gonna happen. Uh, we, uh, about twelve years ago, we had a historical black school that, uh, our ancestors who built that school themselves. And some of them were former slaves. In the '20s, they built that school. Now, Hugo had damaged that school. So we reconstructed the school, and that's a historical site. So what we're gonna do now is to take that tree. We're trying to find a way to take the part of that tree and treat it and bring it down to that school and put it, put it up as a monument, uh, to, to the history of our community. So that's how we are working now, to see if we could get someone to take a portion of that tree and treat it. So it wouldn't rot and put it at the (key?) School.

TS: Um, what's left of the tree? I have not visited the area myself. Is it just laying there waiting to be pulped, or--?

FL: Yeah. It's just laying there.

TS: What other, uh, damage has your community suffered from the widening project? You mentioned that there was quite a bit of, not just lost property, but, uh--

FL: No, no, no. When I said we have lost a lot of property, not because of the highway. So, uh, the other area before the highway.

TS: Okay.

Fred Lincoln

FL: Where folks were enticed and cajoled into selling property that they should not have sold at the time in the early stage. that's what I was talking about "lost." When the development by the Mark Clark they put in place, uh, people coming around, wanting to buy property at that point, people at that juncture were not much conscious of the value of their property. And a lot of them didn't boat there, so they sold a lot of property of the community because of the development in there, before that property, no one would even, uh, venture to offer your price for them. Once the Mark Clark came across, expansion of Clements Ferry Road, that's when we lost a lot of property.

TS: So kind of getting at the, uh, the bud of the issue. You mentioned how you were pragmatic about it. You knew that there was no way to stop the project itself. You were just trying to make sure that did not harm the community more than it had to. Do you think this, uh, increased traffic will benefit your community in any way? Or do you think the dangers it poses are more serious?

FL: Yeah. Now what's happened, now, with the, the development of the area, you know, can have two different aspects to it. You know, let's talk about the good things that have happened. Well, I, if I needed my lawn mower repaired, now, I no longer have to go to Mount Pleasant or Charleston. I have one about two minutes away from my house. If I wanted to go to the hardware store, I don't have to go all the way to Lowes, I could go right on Clements Ferry Road. It's about five minutes from me, and the time I needed to get to the airport, you know, that has been cut almost 75 percent in time to get to the airport. Uh, jobs, uh, jobs on Clements Ferry Road, folks in my community could walk to work or ride a bicycle to work. Those are the good things, with the development; they're not all that's bad. Well, the bad thing about it for, um, zoning issues in the beginning

Fred Lincoln

stage of this development were detrimental to all community. Um, people coming in and enticing folks to sell all their property, that was a bad thing. The Port Authority coming in with no respect at all, threatening condemnation to folks and taking that property, that's the bad thing that happened to our community. And at this juncture, um, our area, we are now having people with no place to live because family members have, who don't live there have sold the land, and now these people end up to go to North Charleston, and they no longer own property. They were living on 30 acres of property that their ancestor left them, but because the other folks who didn't live there sold their property, uh, they are now basically homeless people, without homes. And that's not a part of our tradition. We've always lived on property that we own, uh, I myself live on 19 acres of property, just me and my sister. And, um, so, you know, and that's, and we're right down the street from Daniel's Island, but, um, those are the good and the bad, it's not all bad, it's not all good.

TS: So there are other communities you've mentioned that have to deal with the same problem. And often they're not as fortunate as Cainhoy has been, what's happening to these communities that fail to prevent exploitation from these projects.

FL: Well, you have most of the community. If you go into the Mount Pleasant area, you have, what we call Four Mile area, the Sweet Shop area, um, Greenhill, Romney Point, those communities now are not the same communities anymore. They have been decimated by development. They're no longer, the only black community you have in Mount Pleasant that's basically still intact would be the Snowden community, and, uh, they're still intact. And, um, they fighting daily, you know, to maintain their integrity.

Fred Lincoln

TS: So would you link this to what people call gentrification? You know, the, uh, uh, wealthier, typically white classes moving in and taking these properties or, you know, taking over after.

FL: Yeah, well, you know, gentrification is all economics, and I have seen it happen in our community. You know, gentrification in our community has affected the whites more than they've affected blacks--in our community now, only speaking only of the Cainhoy Community. All the poor whites that I, they are now calling us asking for a place to put their mobile homes. They don't have any place to stay. Most of them have to have to move far up to Ladson or Summerville area. They, they no longer live in that, our area anymore. They're gone, and gentrification is only basically economic, the whole thing. Somebody wants your area more than you. And, now, they got the money. They'll, buy out the community, and, um, people don't talk about it. Mount Pleasant and all those communities, all the white, poor whites are gone. Closed down all the mobile home parks. That's the gentrification nobody talked about. And they're all related. But, if you go to Mount Pleasant, you can't find any poor whites there, they all used to live in those old mobile home park. They must have had about eight or nine of them. All of them are gone. That's gentrification.

TS: Okay. You, you mentioned that in Cainhoy, at least, that these changes have affected the white population more, poor whites. Why is there this difference between the poor whites and the black community? All right. Yeah. The black aspects of the community and Cainhoy. Okay. I'm interested in the history of your community here.

FL: Yeah, well, um, and, and, in the white community, um, their property was of more value than ours in the early stage because they would more readily get people to

Fred Lincoln

live in their area. So they would buy those properties first, and then later on, they'll come after ours. So in the early stages, a lot of them, their property escalated in value. Folks sold, and now the poor one's left behind. They had no place to live. They had to go. One person or so probably made money off the property, but the rest of them, no. And now we don't have, you know, we have the Cainhoy Village, which is, uh, you know, a more progressive white. Most of them are still there, but a lot of them have lost their property, also. No longer there.

TS: It seems almost like an irony of a racial past in a sad way.

FL: Hmm. Yeah. Yeah. It's a reality that no one talked about.

TS: Well, you've mentioned that, uh, you don't have a lot of time this morning, so is it all right if I wrap up with just one or two more questions?

FL: Yeah. Almost nine o'clock I got so many things to do today.

TS: I understand, sir. I really appreciate your time so far. So let me just ask you real brief. Uh, first, what future activities might your committee, your committee be taking part in? Uh, you mentioned, uh, the adjacent communities often have similar issues. What's looming on the horizon that you're gonna have to deal with?

FL: Okay. Um, we're trying to get a hold of this pandemic so that we can have more, um, sit down discussion on strategy as we go forward. What, the thing that we're trying to get now, we're trying to get, uh, uh, uh, city water throughout our community. We got it down the main street, but we haven't gotten into a lot of other areas and we're gonna fight to get that. We need the clean water. Um, we're trying to fight, uh, DHEC [Department of Health and Environmental Control] Uh, a lot of our community, now, uh, we're having a problem with getting septic tank permits. So it's too full, we have to fight

Fred Lincoln

DHEC on some of the regulation that's in place. So we think they're taking up too much property to put down septic tanks. So you've taken up almost three quarters of an acre a property just putting down a septic tank. And, um, at the same time, we're trying to get a commitment from CPW, uh, to bring in sewer in our community. We know, we probably have to fight for federal grants and all that, but in order for us to develop our property, to live on it, um, sewer is a necessity. In the beginning, we were afraid of sewer, because sewer makes you a major property, more attractive for developers, but now that they have settled the property issue, we're no longer intimidated by development. The property is divided up. They don't want one acre. They want thirty. So we, we're in a position different than when we were thirty years ago. Now we can talk about bringing in the sewer, which would be to our advantage so we could have more people living on our property. And, um, we have issue with sewer. I mean, with, uh, garbage pickup. The County excluded us from negotiating a pickup service from private industry. So we have to go out on our own where the people who are in the County district, they pay \$30, every three months. We have been paying, like, \$130 something every three months. So those are the things, um, that we're working with the County now to correct. And water, sewer, those are the issues we're dealing with now, and the good thing that that means we have a lot of kids, grandkids that know nothing about this area moving back into the area from the North. Um, we are seeing, now these kids come down and see our community, and they no longer want to live up North. They want to live here. So we have to make provision for them.

TS: Alright, well, uh, Mr. Lincoln, we're close to the time. So I think I'm going to have to wrap this up, correct?

Fred Lincoln

FL: Uh-huh.

TS: What I want to say real quick is though, um, it means a lot that you're willing to take this hour off with me. And what you've done--you know, I'm not from here. I was born in New York, lived in Tennessee. And so coming into this part of the country, uh, most of the sources I get about what's happening in the community, around where I live, I'm missing out on the stuff like you're talking about because there's a monopoly from the newspapers. And they described this Meeting Tree as the center of everything, but you've blown it open. And now, like, if this is on record, something that we can put in our oral history program, people are going to get a lot more out of it because of what you've been willing to share.

FL: Thank you.

TS: Yep. Quick summary, would you say: Cainhoy is more than just a tree, and its people are not transit people. That seem like a good summary?

FL: You said it perfectly.

TS: Thank you very much, sir, and have an excellent morning.

FL: Thank you. Bye.

End of Interview

Norbert Timothy St. Pierre
11th March, 2021

MLL 4/30/21