MEMORANDUM

To: Tim West

Fm: Joe Sinsheimer

Re: Interview With Emma Allen

Dt: November 29, 1998

Enclosed is an interview I conducted with Emma Allen, a local civil rights activist active in the Greenwood, Mississippi area in 1962-1963.

In the interview, Allen discusses 1) Robert Moses’ leadership role in the movement 2) the role of different black churches in supporting the Greenwood movement 3) black Greenwood’s economic boycott of Slim Henderson’s store in 1964 4) and the difficulty of attempting to register to vote in Greenwood.

Also enclosed is an interview with Father Nathaniel Machesky, who served as a Catholic priest in Greenwood during most of the 1960’s. Father Machesky came to Greenwood in 1951 and started working with Greenwood’s black community in 1952. A founder of the St. Franci Center in the heart of black Greenwood, Machesky was an active supporter of the Greenwood civil rights movement.

In the interview, Machesky discusses 1) Dick Gregory’s effort to bring food to black Greenwood during the winter of 1962-1963 2) the formation of a weekly newsletter/newspaper (the Center Light) to serve black Greenwood 3) the relationship between Greenwood’s white Catholics and Greenwood’s black community 4) development of economic boycotts in Greenwood in 1967-69 5) the formation of a credit union in Greenwood to serve the town’s black population 6) the role of various white leaders in Greenwood during 1962-63.

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Interview with Father Nathaniel Machesky
Charleston, Mississippi
June 26, 1985

Father Nathaniel: How can I help you?

Joe Sinsheimer: Mostly, if you could talk with me about how the (St. Francis) center fit into those early years, and your perceptions of what was happening in Greenwood during those years, and just, I guess it will gradually come out what I am interested in as we talk, I hope it will.

Nathaniel: Okay.

Sinsheimer: I am also, aside from what I am doing, fascinated by the whole idea, the whole concept of a mission and that. I am very interested. People are doing a lot of good work down there still.

Nathaniel: Sure. Well Joe, I will tell you. I was born in Detroit, educated mostly in Wisconsin and Illinois, Indiana. And was very much concerned about the few number of Catholics in Mississippi, so it seemed like a challenge. Our order (Franciscan) is a mission order. We came to Mississippi with the hope of evangelizing people about the good news.

When we came down the idea was to establish a church in the black community. The first thing we did was to visit every other previously established church in black communities. The philosophy had been to go into a community with missionaries, build a school--number one-- and then build a church. And hopefully through the school children you would be able to evangelize the parents. Every so called mission that we called on told us that that was a good philosophy in the early 1900's, 20's, 30's, 40's maybe, but it was really not the correct approach now. They felt there ought to be a direct approach to the adult population. And so some other way.

And that was the reason for Pax Christi. They were an extension of the whole missionary idea of performing the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy. Fulfilling people's needs, whatever they were. And that grew, it actually mushroomed in the '60's. There were as many as 22 members at one time, plus a lot of volunteers who came in for the summer. Some would come in for a year, give a year.

Sinsheimer: When you say member, what did being a member entail?
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Nathaniel: Well, a full member of Pax Christi is one that has had two and a half years of training and has consecrated her life forever. The first time they made promises to be poor, not to marry, and to be obedient. They are supposed to intend it for life, but it has legal binding for only one year. They renew these promises every year and are free to go at any time. The idea was that we did not want anybody there who would be there because they had to be.

And there the ones that really did the work. The school grew a grade at a time until, all through high school.

Sinsheimer: Do you know when you started this school?

Nathaniel: Yeah, the first classes were in '51.

Sinsheimer: '51. And it was an all black school?

Nathaniel: It was of course a Catholic school open to anyone, but it sort of happened only black students came. We opened with a Kindergarten and a first grade. Added a grade a year through high school. The high school program only lasted all together six years because our enrollment never went over 45. We had ... graduates came from out of the elementary school but standards were pretty high. There were not any transfers from the other school.

In the meantime Pax Christi was doing whatever had to be done. And out of that-- I was no big civil rights hero, I was just trying to be a Catholic priest doing what I had to do. As a matter of fact I was, I am sure I was paternalistic, a do-gooder perhaps. Didn't really get involved until the '60's. I just sort of preached goodness and love until I finally realized that justice was at stake.

Sinsheimer: What was the community's reaction to your opening up of the school.

Nathaniel: Interestingly enough I served in the white parish fulltime during '50-'51 and after that I still helped out. It was a rather old priest and he needed assistance so-- because of our involvement there the white Catholic community was just splendid until the Supreme Court decision saying that segregation was unfair. And after that it just turned around, turned the other way. We didn't exactly experience any difficulties in those days just coldness that we detected. But in the '60's when we got involved ...

Sinsheimer: Right. Do you remember first meeting any of the SNCC organizers, when they first came to you?
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Nathaniel: We had decided that we would not be an integral part of that organization. CORE did they call it? When they organized and came down, we were not unfriendly, we were friendly, but we were not involved in any of the decisions, we did not attend any of their meetings. We had a couple of dialogues with Stokley Carmichael and his staff. We were never really involved that much. When he came to town and was arrested, put in jail, I went to the city hall nad actually bailed him out because we were concerned. But I was not really involved that much.

I became, we became directly involved with the Greenwood Movement that started in '67 actually.

Sinsheimer: With the economic boycott?

Nathaniel: Right. Do you want to hear about that?

Sinsheimer: Sure.

Nathaniel: There had been one or two enemic, embryonic boycotts-- I can't think of the man's name now but he had decided to picket Liberty Cash (a small supermarket) or a Chinese store.

Sinsheimer: James Moore.

Nathaniel: No, I know James Moore. This is another person. And they made some signs and they walked around in front of the store. And the white people laughed. And they thought it was, you know, that they would never have to worry about that because-- well I won't tell you the reasons-- but they just knew that none of the early boycotts were effective. So we had at the meantime thought we are not going to get anywhere unless we really organize. I had been there now, eighteen years. And when outsiders came in, local people always said outside agitators and so forth. But we thought that the real need was to organize people. And so we started out forming the Greenwood Movement. That became a tool that was largely effective for bringing about change in Greenwood.

We were really organized. We had seargants and captains and generals. Within twenty minutes we could fill the center just by phone calls when an emergency arose. And it was that organization that I guess that helped us do some things.

Sinsheimer: Was that helped run through the black churches as well?

Nathaniel: Oh yes. We held rallies twice a week once on Sunday, once during the week. Sometimes often. We would meet at different churches, some would not allow us. The biggest Baptist
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Nathaniel (cont.): church in the black community would not allow us. They supported us but they just viewed it that it meant worship or whatever.

Sinsheimer: Right. Let's back up and let's see if I can pick your memory. In the winter of '62-'63 there was the whole controversy over the commodity program. Do you remember that when the county board (of supervisors) decided not to (run the commodity program)? Did you help when they were bringing the food into Greenwood? Was the center involved in helping distribute that at all? Or were you doing your own?

Nathaniel: Well, none of that. A lot of food came in. Dick Gregory sent some turkeys and other people sent some stuff in. We helped distribute that at the center. It was strickly a private thing.

Sinsheimer: Do you remember much of those of those days when Dick Gregory was in, and the big marches?

Nathaniel: I remember some of it. I wasn't always there. In those days I did a lot of preaching during the summer, conducting sister's retreats. Very often I was away, but of course I kept up with the local news, read the papers and talked to people when I got home. I was not involved though in any way at that time. I was still dealing with stay out of strikes, stay out of violence, and that kind of stuff.

Sinsheimer: What about Greenwood itself? How much-- well who do you think ran Greenwood during those times?

Nathaniel: Well there was no doubt about it who ran it. It was a white clique of rich, powerful men. Hardy Lott who represents the legal profession. Charlie Sampson, the Billups family, Charlie Saunders and a lot of other ... the newspaper Mr. Gillespie. There is no doubt about it, they ran the town. They discouraged any kind of industrialization in the 50's.

That was the time of a really radical change over from handpicking to machine picking. So those were difficult times.

Sinsheimer: Why do you think they discouraged industrialization.
Nathaniel: You see if a factory came in it would have taken their hands they needed to pick the cotton. There has been a major revolution in Greenwood and other places in the South because of the cotton picker. It was as radical as the gin.

Sinsheimer: I talked to Charlie Deaton (state representative for Greenwood for 20 years) the other day and he was telling me that he thought that one of the problems that helped to aggravate the situation was that the black community grew so rapidly during the late 50's and early 60's. Do you remember it growing like that.

Nathaniel: Oh Yes, yeah. But at the same time decreasing substantially. So I don't know if there is all that much growth. There was a massive exodus out of Mississippi in the '50's and the population figures will back that up. Population actually went down.

Sinsheimer: Right. I guess what he was saying was that people were moving from the country into the cities, but people from the cities were moving northward. And I guess his analysis was is that as rural people came in they needed even more services and things then even before.

Nathaniel: That's true. Charlie Deaton is a good man. I respect him.

Sinsheimer: What about the Center Light (weekly newsletter published by the St. Francis Center during the early 1960's), how did the idea come up for that.

Nathaniel: There was a need. We are there to answer a need. The newspaper just ignored black people. It would not even publish their obituaries. So we did a corny job of writing up obits, you know, John Jones, father of so and so and so, went to his eternal reward and that kind of stuff (laughter). You don't write it that way normally but we wanted to tell the white community hey this is somebody. He has dignity. There was a very real need so we started it. It was an expensive thing, but we felt it was a real necessity. Nobody was ever speaking on the side of the black man. So that was a kind of exciting time. I wrote editorials for that every week. We were absolute beginners. Someone who gave us some encouragement was the Senior Hodding Carter. He invited our staff to his home and he taught us a few tricks and said keep your heads up it doesn't have to be fancy but you have a message.

Sinsheimer: Right.
Nathaniel: So much so when we realized that the need was no longer there we just decided to abandon it.

Sinsheimer: How was the mission in general being financed? How would you finance the paper?

Nathaniel: It came out of our general funds, the financing came from the general funds of the center. We had trouble enough keeping the school open, paying our bills. But they were able to get some excellent people to work for the paper. (Names--inaudible) And they put it together and they organized the kids and sold the paper. It went very well in the white community. (laughter)

Sinsheimer: I heard that (laughter), I heard that it sold.

Nathaniel: Yeah.

Sinsheimer: Right. How did you, where did the general funds come from?

Nathaniel: Donations generally, friends, supporters ...

Sinsheimer: From how large an area?

Nathaniel: All over the country. Our relatives, our friends, people who heard about us.

Sinsheimer: (Sister) Joie told me that today that the white Catholic Church will send over I think she said $75 a month. Were they doing that at all ...?

Nathaniel: Oh no.

Sinsheimer: When you first started did they help you at all?

Nathaniel: Before the Supreme Court ...

Sinsheimer: Before '54?

Nathaniel: Yeah. As a matter of fact there was a Diocesan policy that parishes should twin to adopt a poorer church, help support it. And when this first came out they refused to adopt us, they adopted a school in Clarksdale. You can't blame them, that was a great, great hurt that we did. They held a mass meeting in the church uptown and they got a petition drawn up with something like 136 signatures asking that I not be allowed to preach there anymore, that our sisters not be allowed to teach there anymore. Emotion was high, they were looking at the loss of their business and stuff. Because no matter what they say that boycott was very effective in the first months.
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Sinsheimer: What about police presence in the black community. Was it, was there ever a shift do you think towards the idea of a little more decent behavior. A lot of the complaints that people say of that era, talking about police harassment, I mean were you bale to notice any of that or?

Nathaniel: One of the things that we struggled for was black policeman, there had been no black policemen at all. I heard, I never saw any, I heard a great deal of talk about that. They would break in at early hours of the morning, you know, and use force and violence. I never saw it, I heard a lot about it.

Sinsheimer: I guess the question that I am, one of the questions that I am struggling with is that I know that the first two organizers were in Greenwood for about six or seven months before really any thing happened. And so the historical question is what really did happen? Why all of a sudden in '63 did you just have this explosion. And part of it seems to be linked to the food program when the commodity program was cut off then people were in a way desperate enough to try something, when the civil rights workers were bringing in the food. What do you think activated Greenwood whether it was in '67 or in '63?

Nathaniel: Also the big people came in to Greenwood to establish the Freedom House just off Broad St. and they were in the community and gosh I admired their zeal. They tramped through the fields and would tell people what the score and get them to (attempt to) register to vote; and they would be harassed by the plantation owner. And just that sort of ferment started, just circulated in the community. First there was SNCC, then there was SCLC. We did not, at that time, we did not agree with their techniques so we were really not that involved.

Sinsheimer: You said earlier ... how long did you keep writing editorials?

Nathaniel: ... I have forgotten, '67, '68.

Sinsheimer: But you were still writing the editorials during let's say '63-'64.

Nathaniel: Whenever there was an editorial in the Center Light that was mine unless we had a guest editor.

Sinsheimer: Right. Well, I forgot to bring them but there were several in there that I was curious (about) that would have been
Sinsheimer (cont.): written a few months after the series of large demonstrations (in Greenwood) in the early spring, March, April, May. And then that summer there were several editorials saying ...

Nathaniel: COFO go home?

Sinsheimer: Well, in a sense. And that the marches were not a very effective way of doing that and pushing a more (conservative) Christian message. But from a political standpoint pushing a more conservative message as well. Why did you think that the marches were ... ?

Nathaniel: I am not sure that I felt that. I myself took part in a big march after Martin Luther's death.

Sinsheimer: But that would have been five years later though.

Nathaniel: Yeah. I think I was really concerned about indigenous leadership which I thought was not being developed. I am not sure anymore. It could be that I still hadn't been converted, that I was still conservative, that I still hadn't fallen over the edge. Because I thought there was a definite change in me, in myself.

Sinsheimer: When do you think you fell off the edge?

Nathaniel: Well surely by the time ... oh it was much before that. Martin Luther's death in April (1968) and before that we started our organization at least in November of the previous year. So I think it may have been Medgar Evers death, maybe that is what did it. Or maybe when the bombed the center. I didn't appreciate that.

Sinsheimer: When was that?

Nathaniel: I can't tell you the exact date. But certainly it was before--not it wasn't-- that was '69, '68 or '69.

Sinsheimer: So it started after the economic boycott?

Nathaniel: Right.

Sinsheimer: How did you end up with your name on the lawsuit?

Nathaniel: I happened to be chairman of the Greenwood Movement.

Sinsheimer: So you were the natural person for them.
Nathaniel: Yes.

Sinsheimer: And Joie told me that-- is this right-- you lost the first round and then you won in Appeals (Court)?

Nathaniel: That is correct.

Sinsheimer: That would have been in New Orleans.

Nathaniel: Yeah, it was the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Nathaniel: Oh, all the memories of those courtroom scenes. Hardy Lott walked in with a stack of Centerlights to prove that I was a communist (laughter).

Sinsheimer: Yeah?

Nathaniel: It was interesting.

Sinsheimer: What about the white kids that came in the summer of '64?

Nathaniel: Beautiful people, really beautiful.

Sinsheimer: In talking with Charlie Deaton--we had a really good talk and I was very impressed with his attitudes-- but his attitudes towards the white volunteers was very, very negative, saying that that he thought that they were dirty and greasy and the girls walked around with no bras and no morals. I didn't want to press him on it too much, but I wondered whether he would have even seen... and whether this was a genuine reaction, or whether this was his reaction from what would have been circulated around. I was just curious to know what you might have thought?

Nathaniel: Well, I am not surprised that he had that attitude because if you are unhappy with people you have to find something to criticize. These were clean kids. They took a shower every day. They didn't wear fancy clothes. But no morals? How could they say a thing like that. We had mass every day and we had meals together, oh that is absolutely not true. I would deny that. These were beautiful kids. Giving their time, risking their lives. What they did not have though was southern courtesy, politeness. They were brash, and I suppose some of them were maybe a little loud. And that kind of ticks people off. And they did things that you are not supposed to do. They would take a bunch of
Nathaniel (cont.): kids off the streets and spend the day in the country with them on the farm that Pax Christi owns. And you could tell that people were unhappy with just that because they burned the place down for us. Took us almost a week to get the sheriff to investigate it. Oh my goodness they did so many good things. They organized a ball team for the kids, they did tutoring. They did a lot of good things.

Sinsheimer: Where was the library, was there a library started in Greenwood, in the black community?

Nathaniel: Yes.

Sinsheimer: Do you know where that was.

Nathaniel: Well the library was the Jodie Wilson library on ... what is that, the street that goes right into mainstreet? That ridiculous, Stone Street.

Sinsheimer: That was the old ... it is still a library today?

Nathaniel: Still a library. We had kind of a library at the Center but it wasn't much.

Sinsheimer: Let's see ... I was going to, I had a question ....

Nathaniel: I do remember an article, an editorial I wrote, "COFO Go Home." A group of black people came in, they were really distressed with me.

Sinsheimer: Would that have been during the summer?

Nathaniel: The summer?

Sinsheimer: Right, the summer of '64.

Nathaniel: Yes.

Sinsheimer: What prompted that?

Nathaniel: I thought, I felt that they had done a lot of good things, but please let us do it now.

Sinsheimer: What about, what can you tell me about some of the ministers that were here at the time. I am going to get a chance to talk to Rev. (Aaron) Johnson, he has been on vacation. Hopefully will see him tomorrow. What about Rev. Rucker over at the, Wesley Methodist?

Rev. Rucker is a good man and he was very much with us, but couldn't actually participate for some reason. This is the largest Methodist Church in the black
Nathaniel (cont.): community. A good man, I felt a whole lot about him. His heart was strictly with us, but he didn't come to our meetings and he didn't take part in the marches. Rev. Wallace and Rev. Black were co-chairman with me on the Greenwood Movement. Wallace was a charismatic man, he could really move people.

Sinsheimer: Where was he pastor?

Nathaniel: He was pastor at Jennings Temple.

Sinsheimer: Which is affiliated with...?

Nathaniel: It is a C.M.E. or A.M.E., I think it is C.M.E..

Sinsheimer: And Reverend Black was...

Nathaniel: Rev. Black, where was he? Turner's Chapel? No, Turner's Chapel is where Wallace was and Black was at Jennings Temple.

Sinsheimer: Okay. At Turner's Chapel was it Rev. Tucker before.

Nathaniel: I don't remember that. Before Wallace?

Sinsheimer: I think. Because the newspaper report, that he was in '63 when the dog was, he was the one bitten.

Nathaniel: Could be, I don't know. I don't recall. That scene really embarrassed Greenwood. "Oh, we didn't bring any dogs, I just took my pet with me." (laughter) It didn't look good. I don't believe that they had a trained canine core but they had a viscous policeman and he used, viscous shepherd and he used him.

Sinsheimer: Who was the policeman?

Nathaniel: I don't know.

Sinsheimer: What about-- trying to see if I have this down--most of the people in the black community in Greenwood in the early 60's, they were still linked to the agriculture, to the...?

Nathaniel: In the '60's there was a change considerably. In the '50's they were still linked to it because they were...

Sinsheimer: So they would be trucked out to the various farms if they lived in Greenwood.

Nathaniel: That's correct. They had, the plantation owners had
Nathaniel (cont.): arrangement with some manager who owned a truck. And it would be up to that manager, whatever they called it, to get a crew together. And he would pay each one off at the end of the day. And he would get his cut for transportation.

Sinsheimer: Right. So that was beginning to wane?
Nathaniel: Yes, a little.
Sinsheimer: There was no other jobs coming in then?
Nathaniel: No jobs of any position, no white collar jobs for sure. Another thing that we struggled for was to get clerks in supermarkets. They would always tell the people have you had any experience, which is ridiculous because you can't experience unless you are hired. So that was another reason for the co-op store. We organized our own store so there are people working now who really got their first experience in that co-op store.

Sinsheimer: What about the credit union when did that start?
Nathaniel: In the early fifties, '55, '56.
Sinsheimer: That would have taken some start-up money right?
Nathaniel: Right.
Sinsheimer: And that just came from the center?
Nathaniel: Would you believe we got no actual start-up money from anybody, just the nickels and dimes that people agreed to put in it for starters. We-- everybody told us that we were going to lose our shirts. Have you been to the Credit Union in Greenwood? It is really quite an operation. They have assets of over a million and a half dollars.

Sinsheimer: So that was sometime in the mid '50's you think, '55, '56?
Nathaniel: Yes, '55.
Sinsheimer: Was that your idea?
Nathaniel: Well, a lot of good people but I had dreamed of starting one since I knew what it could do. Had a lot of trouble getting that one started. That was considered a communist organization, at least
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Nathaniel (cont.): socialist. Today every state has a credit union league. I had heard about them because I wrote a letter to Madison (Wisconsin) which is headquarters for CUNA, Credit Union National Administration. They wrote back and said contact your league representative and so I wrote a letter there. And it was months I didn't get an answer to my letter. So finally, finally he came out to the mission like 9:00 pm at night.

Sinsheimer: The Credit Union representative?

Nathaniel: Right. And he said you know I could get my -- I won't use the terms that he did -- but he said I could get it shot off if I came here and started organizing a credit union. And so would you believe we actually dared to start on our own not knowing a thing about banking and about anything else. Just based upon an idea we bought bankbooks and passbooks and the whole frigging thing. Until finally someone came from Washington and signed us up and we got a federal charter.

Sinsheimer: Do you know when that was?

Nathaniel: The actual date?

Sinsheimer: I mean that was in '55, '56?

Nathaniel: Right, that was right at the very beginning. I am trying to organize one now and I am having an even tougher time than we did then. So the man from Washington finally did come. Did not too much at all, signed the paper and they gave us a charter. Now they want us to survey and get promises of deposit from ten percent of the total population of the county. Which is ridiculous.

Sinsheimer: Why do they have that law?

Nathaniel: Tell me.

Sinsheimer: How ... what is the basic function of (a credit union)?

Nathaniel: It is a co-operative where people save together and borrow together.

Sinsheimer: And who makes the decisions about loaning the money?
Nathaniel: You have a board of directors that is selected by the people. And the board of directors are responsible for the overall operation. And the members also elect a credit committee who passes on loans. They have a supervisory committee and an education committee. Seven members are elected to the board and the board elects its own officers.

Sinsheimer: That is the same principle they used in Greenwood?

Nathaniel: Exactly. The charter now has several requirements and a lot of laws on lending, anti-discrimination in lending and things like that. It's very complicated now, you get a whole packet of instructions and manuals from the government now. It has been raised to a cabinet level, National Credit Union Administration, it has its own secretary.

Sinsheimer: Okay. What about-- I got a chance to talk with Pinkie Pilcher. And I guess her memory is a bit faded. Do you know anything about the kindergarten that she started?

Nathaniel: I know she had one.

Sinsheimer: Do you know anything more about it?

Nathaniel: She was very active with COFO, with SNCC and SCLC and we were not, at the time we were not. So I got to know her and we were good friends, but then it seems that she sort of pulled back after she grew older and everything.

Sinsheimer: You didn't go to the March on Washington did you?

Nathaniel: I did not. A lot of people from Greenwood did.

Sinsheimer: What about other people to see in Greenwood that are still there?

Nathaniel: Well, James Moore of course. David Jordan was never a part of us. He was young I guess, a little bit afraid, he was precarious with a brand new teaching job. He has since emerged as a spokesman but he was never a part of us. 
... You don't need to record this. ... The day after he (Martin Luther King) was shot the kids broke out of the high school marched down the streets and they stopped in front of Turner's Chapel. It so happened that Father Daniel was meeting there with a group of ministers who were planning a youth day. Father Daniel is stationed in Lexington (in Holmes county Mississippi). And he could remember. That man marched and marched and marched.

But he called me and said, "Hey, we have got a riot on our hands." And I was by that time chairman of the Movement, as a matter of fact I was chairman by myself until after that. And he said, "We have got to do something. These kids are going to go downtown and tear it up." So I went immediately and met with the ministers and
Nathaniel (cont.): they asked me if I would go out and face those kids, stop them. It really is an exciting moment. Here is a white guy telling these kids not to do what they want to do so bad. So all we could suggest was "Let's no show them we are dumb. We can organize. So if you all go home peacefully we will have a march this afternoon at 2:00 pm." And then things started happening. The mayor was scared to death, he would not give us a marching permit until some other people persuaded him it is better than having the town torn up. So he called got the National Guard through the Governor. Came in the big personnel carriers and guns and all that kind of stuff on all the corners. We marched to the courthouse, we marched back and nothing happened. I think really truly it could have been a disastrous day for Greenwood if those kids had just gone down and torn up ...

Sinsheimer: What about Sampson (Charlie Sampson—the mayor) what kind of man was he?

Nathaniel: Well, number one he was living in the old southern tradition. And he didn't have any idea about equality, my goodness, he was just a typical southerner at that time. Unreasonable, unbending, unwilling to listen. Delegations would go the courthouse and he would say, "Well, we will take that under advisement." I wrote a couple of editorials about that. And nothing would happen.

Sinsheimer: What about Larry, police chief Larry?

Nathaniel: You know I think that he was a very fair man. I think that he was a good man. I think that he was under tremendous pressure when all your policemen are saying niggers, you know that still prevails in the white community. He was sensitive. I don't think he was cruel or unfair.

Sinsheimer: A lot of people have said that, remember that he would be the only one, for example, when someone would be saying a prayer in a meeting to take off his hat. It is interesting how people remember that from years past. I didn't think it was just one memory ...

Nathaniel: He was a good man.

Sinsheimer: When we talked a little earlier about the people who ran it (Greenwood). All right Sampson would have been mayor, was in business as well?
Nathaniel: Cleaning business.
Sinsheimer: Dry cleaning? Okay. You said Saunders, David Saunders is that right?
Nathaniel: No, Charles Saunders.
Sinsheimer: Charles Saunders, what was he into?
Nathaniel: He is in the Billups corporation?
Sinsheimer: Billups?
Nathaniel: Yes, he married ....
Sinsheimer: What is Billups?
Nathaniel: Petroleum company. He has since sold out to, I don't know the name of it but they went public. But at that time it was still private.
Sinsheimer: And Hardy Lott was a lawyer?
Nathaniel: He was the city attorney.
Sinsheimer: Anyone else part of that group?
Nathaniel: There is a firm, I don't remember all the people. Three or four people in that firm. They defended all the school cases and all the city cases. Who else would there be. There would be the Wades and the Pillows.
Sinsheimer: The Wade family? What were they into?
Nathaniel: A big plantation and farm animals.
Sinsheimer: So, in a sense though, the city itself wasn't run by the plantation owners, it was run by this other group who were in the town?
Nathaniel: Oh, I suppose they had a lot to say. Even though they had a plantation, they still lived in the city. A lot of them did.
Sinsheimer: What about the two-- one thing I am trying to do is trying to understand the community. What about the Chinese population? Charlie Deaton told me that several of them were very successful in the small grocery business. I mean what was ...
Nathaniel: They were terrified people. I got to talk to a couple of them. Jpo's Market was across from the center. This beautiful man sometimes he would send us over a chinese dinner and
Nathaniel (cont.): he would talk. They were terrified. Neither the whites, they couldn't identify with the whites or the blacks. And most of their income came from blacks. But they just were terrified. They couldn't turn one way or the other. Charlie Sampson was very much anti-Oriental.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Nathaniel: All they do is work and sleep and get more people over from China.

Sinsheimer: What about-- there were two synagogues in Greenwood?

Nathaniel: There were two. There is just one now.

Sinsheimer: There were two. Do you know who might be able to tell me about the Jewish community in Greenwood?

Nathaniel: I know his name. He works in the tax collector's office, he is a lay leader. Oh my goodness, he testified in that trial. I can't think of his name. He works in the tax assessor's office.

Sinsheimer: He is still there.

Nathaniel: Yeah.

Sinsheimer: Well, I can't go and ask for the Jew in the tax collector's office (laughter).

Nathaniel: No (laughter). Let me get that number for you. (Break)

End of interview.