

**Interviewer: Mrs. Althemese Interviewer**

**Interviewee: Harry "Nick" Nims**

**Date of interview: Unknown**

**Date Transcribed: October 08, 2018**

Okay, I'm Nick Nims. Most people call me Nick. My real name is Harry. Umm, I was born in Tallahassee. In fact, I was born about one block from this residence and our current residence is 502 Bright Drive. I bet I've live there for thirty-six years.

Interviewer: You said you were born one block from here? Is that up on Gadsden...

Nims: Yeah, that's do west of here. That's on the corner of Gadsden and Jefferson, I believe.

Interviewer: Could you tell-that's very interesting- we find there are a few people who are still around who grew up, who were born and grew up in this neighborhood, could you give us a brief description of what the neighborhood looked like back then?

Nims: Well back then I don't remember because I didn't...I left that there at an early age. I think my father ran a stove on down on Senegal St. Augustine st and shortly after I don't know how shortly after, but he had a story, he built a store and also he built four or five small rental houses and we moved in the one next to the store and most of my time was spent not there, but spent there must been about until I was about seven or eight I guess, that's all I remember, but this area, total area from Gadsden going east was all black land. Black area...it use to be further...this was Smoky Hollow.

Interviewer: So, Gadsden was a part of Smoky Hollow?

Nims: Gadsden, right. From Gadsden going east was a part of Smoky Hollow.

Interviewer: Okay...

Nims: No, west of Gadsden, I can't recall any black people living... no, well the residents from Gadsden was basically black, but on the next street, I can't remember the next street up, were basically white you know, but from Gadsden back and maybe half way up the block was all black.

Interviewer: Okay and who were your parents?

Nims: My daddy was Pete Nancy's. He use to-I'm Richard and he too was Richard from Tallahassee and so was his father's and so was their father and his immediate family had six brothers and one sister and of the six boys...I think, no, seven boys and one sister, five of them had businesses in town, basically gave the community groceries stores.

Interviewer: Did you have occasion to come to the Riley house?

Nims: No, I passed here sometime later after I was maybe in high school, I would walk right here you know, visit my uncle's store over there on Lafayette, but no.

Interviewer: Did it ever...did you ever notice anything particular about the house as you would pass that kind of stands out in your mind still?

Nims: Well it was a usual because you know back in the early days black people really didn't have this type of home, two story home, I had an uncle that one right here on Bronough, right across from where Leon High is, it's still there, but wasn't many black two-stories. Maybe Riley's home and my uncle John Nims and the Martins and Mister Potsdam, Dr. Campbell, were the few I can recall at the top of my head who had two-story residences.

Interviewer: Now the one on Bronough street that you said was your uncles, you said it's still there?

Nims: It's on the corner of Bronough and Call. It's not the exact corner but its right near, right across from the library, (I don't catch the library he referred to.)

Interviewer: You know about how old that house is?

Nims: I have no idea because prior to them moving there they lived on Park Avenue or right near FSU. My father's mother and those had a home on the corner of Park and, ummm I can't think the name of that street, but its right across from Bills bookstore...said blacks used to have all that too - in fact they said that FSU was once, I mean A&M, was once a part of FSU...FSU or A&M, one of them was a part of the location where FSU now is located. I can't remember if it was FSU or A&M.

Interviewer: Now back to the Riley family, did you interact any at all with John...?

Nims: Oh yeah, yeah. They knew me.

Interviewer: What-what kind of people were they?

Nims: Very outgoing, regular. Ummm, Mrs. Riley, I can't think of her name, was a friend of Mrs. Cam, Dr. Cameron's wife and Dr. Cameron's youngest daughter was my girlfriend all though high school and we were going together for about three or four years and she was there a lot, and I got the chance to talk with her, but Emily and the others would be over in Frenchtown, where my daddy moved after staying in Smoky Hollow running a grocery store over there. He was one of the more of less founders of Frenchtown, back in the early days and he-

Interviewer: Your father was?

Nims: After he ran the store here, he moved, I guess he must have seen that Frenchtown was a growing pop for blacks because blacks tend to been hemmed in and Smoky Hollow, you had

the country club, the golf course and here and over this side at Magnolia High, so black people- the capital West of black people were hemmed in, there wasn't any room for expansion. So, he built- went Frenchtown, built another store and had a house that he found there, renovated right across from it and we stayed there forever...and as a result my Uncle Bob from Jacksonville came-moved to Tallahassee, he took over the store that my father had, but in the later years he built a new store, a biggest store, right across the street from the others and it stayed there. The state put-started preparing for Apalachee Parkway and the State Building...you know where the State Transportation Building at...right at corner.

Interviewer: So, that's where your Uncle Bob Lewis store was?

Nims: Yeah, my father's store was right across the street from there, Bob's, last store they built was right in that spot. He also had a store too when he had that one. He opened a little store on the corner of Macomb and Madison Street for a while, that stayed there. Then my Uncle Joe had a store, you know on the corner, he stayed there forever on (I don't catch the road). I imagine you probably stopped by there and got some cookies or something.

Interviewer: Now the store, what-what kind of chores did you do in the store?

Nims: Ummm, basically just wait on people.

Interviewer: Did you have any white customers or were they all black?

Nims: Occasionally, yeah.

Interviewer: Was it like a one-about how large was the store?

Nims: I think it was, ahhh, let me see what was the size of the lot...about 40 by 80...yeah, sound about right, it was about a pretty good size store. We had, um usually we had three clerks in it.

Interviewer: How did you keep your meats and stuff frozen?

Nims: We had a refrigerator. Not a refrigerator, but icebox to start with. I think they had the refrigeration...the electricity.

Interviewer: But initially you probably started out with an icebox?

Nims: Oh yeah, we had a big, I can remember we had a big square thing and had a big opening, it must have put 50 pounds ice every day. The man would come in with a big thing on his back and he would dump it in, fellow name was Mr. Woody...yeah, that T-Model would come around and he was a black guy.

Interviewer: A black guy? Iceman?

Nims: Yeah and over here I can remember him very well...ummm, Mr. Woody everybody knew him as (I don't catch this) goin' get. I mustered I can hardly remember how old I was but anyway he had a horse and a wagon and had the ice in the bag and he would go to people houses and business.

Interviewer: And where did you get your meats from that you sold in the store?

Nims: They had retail, I mean wholesale the second-

Interviewer: So, you didn't farm...your people don't farm?

Nims: Oh no, well this-this is what my-my...when my father was a youngster they, his father had kept a lot account at a place called civilly lake and this is where he kept all their cattle's and they all had horses, must been high school and they did whatever rounded up, butchering and Everything...as I told yea, Frank's father, Uncle Johnny had a meat market and his market was right across the street from City Hall on Jefferson Street and umm, he had a meat market there and he's sold for most of them basically white and a few blacks and also there were of the blacks downtown. Martin Taylor and the Stewards... they had a barbershop who catered to white's. Black people always cut the white people hair. Martin basically for white people. His tailor shop was right on, right across the capital, I think at the time it was Pensacola Street. I believe that was the name.

Interviewer: This is AB Martin's people?

Nims: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Now the Hicks that lived right across-

Nims: He was a part of JR Ross...I think he was (I don't catch what was said)

Interviewer: Of course, you were around when the stores were dissolved, right?

Nims: The grocery stores? Oh yeah well, my uncle Bob store, he had got rid of his store because the state purchased all that property. He was in the line for umm...for the Parkway, Apalachee Parkway and the new State Building?

Interviewer: So, you're like eminent domain or did they negotiate?

Nims: They made a negotiated. He got a pretty good share and he also had some more property over in that area that he was able to sell and he built a brick home, nice brick home on (don't catch the number) block of Carolina Street and my father went out of the grocery business because uh after been here for I don't know how many years, the chain stores moved in. You know like it wasn't Winn-Dixie. Back at that time was a Tampa Store then they had jitney, not jitney, ummm Piggy Wiggly. He sought it wasn't a future and then he got out of the business.



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