Paul Ortiz: We're talking about the convicts working for Sloss—

George J. Brown: Oh yeah, the convicts. They worked in TCI Iron, that's [indistinct 00:00:15], and I think that they were paid a dollar a day for their labor.

Paul Ortiz: Did you talk with any of those people?

George J. Brown: Well I did know a few but it was way back and they would tell you how they were rebuked and scorned. I might be able to get you. I hope I can. I believe that old man passed. I made a picture of him and I taped some information and he was 94. I looked that up and Ron Bates and I, I want you to call me and let me see if I can get it—and he work in the mines, see.

George J. Brown: But I never did like to mine. I didn't.

Paul Ortiz: Did you ever work there?

George J. Brown: Oh, yeah. I worked. We had to work, but I disliked every—I always was afraid. I didn't like it. The one thing I never refused to do but I never liked working in the mine, it's too dangerous. If you work in the mine, you don't work by no telephone, you don't work by no radio. You work by signal. They're getting ready to pull coal out the mine. He's beat on a brass rod wire run down in the mine. He may be six, seven miles down when he get ready to—That man ready to start that motor and pull that car, he had a signal that he hit on that brass line and he pick it up out of the mine. They were something else.

Paul Ortiz: When you begin working at Sloss 1929, 1930, you mentioned that workers would help you out—

George J. Brown: Oh yeah, oh yeah—

Paul Ortiz: Who would help you out?

George J. Brown: Well here's what it is. When you go in a blast furnace, there were so many things. There's whistles blowing, you couldn't hear your ears. There's so many things to do, the safety part about it and if you would be courteous to the employees, and work with them, do what they say to do, they always help you. That's the way it was.

Paul Ortiz: Black workers?

George J. Brown: Black, oh sure. Well now, see, the Black man has always had the dirty work. So for the machinists, millwright, boilermaker, no. He would take me and I'll take his tools. I'd take his pipe wrench, I'd take his Stillson wrench. I would tow his tools and he would walk along, you follow him and when you get

ready to take a pipe, you take it loose. He was getting paid for it.

Paul Ortiz: The White—

George J. Brown: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: So you were like a helper?

George J. Brown: Helper? You weren't no helper. We done the work.

Paul Ortiz: You were doing the real work.

George J. Brown: Yeah, man, you couldn't help it. And we would take care of them, and by being nice to them, they changed their attitude and their spirits. The thing actually worked both ways to a certain extent. We met a whole lot of them.

Paul Ortiz: What were race relations like between Black and White workers?

George J. Brown: Well, things that weren't so good. They still had their yellow [indistinct 00:03:53] back but it was a poor class type of people. See, you're dealing with a poor class of people that a whole lot of them couldn't read, they couldn't write and he'd call you "boy" or he'd call you a "nigger" when you get around them. "Better go yonder and get them niggers to do so and so." Well, we was organized too. When he'd sling mud at us, we had a better way of slinging mud at him.

Paul Ortiz: How?

George J. Brown: We'd sit down on the work. "I don't know." You can't get nothing more out of "I don't know." Say, "I don't know what to do." He know what to do.

George J. Brown: I've seen a guy roll and fell off a job way under, that'd kill a fella one time. They'd work him to death, simply because he took a job only which you had to be qualified. They don't accept the idea of being told by a Black man. "Boy."

George J. Brown: Most of those people were taught—now they stand hating and don't know the reason why. You couldn't tell them, you couldn't tell 'em to save your life.

George J. Brown: A White brother's wife died. He didn't have a dime. I told him I wanted to—went by and said I had the money. I let him have enough money to bury his wife. You could bury your wife and get a funeral, for about $225.

George J. Brown: I told him I wanted, borrowed the money. I said, "I want my money back." He paid me back. "He is a good nigger. He out—(laughs)"

Paul Ortiz: He said that?

George J. Brown: Yeah. "He's a good nigger." Yeah. "He's a good nigger."

Paul Ortiz: Did that make you angry when he said that?

George J. Brown: Well, I was used to it. I didn't like it but I never would use those type of insinuations [indistinct 00:06:04] because it ain't in my heart. I love people. I was born and raised like that. If I couldn't do you no good, I wouldn't do you no harm. I wouldn't fight back. Fighting fire ain't no good. Somebody got to have some sense. I was taught that.

Paul Ortiz: Can you tell me about labor union organizing?

George J. Brown: Yeah, I helped organize it.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, you did?

George J. Brown: Labor union, out there at Sloss. Helped put the first flag on. It's a sad story, I'm going to tell it to you. We organized the Sloss United Mine Workers of America. District 50.

Paul Ortiz: 15?

George J. Brown: 50. District 50. Yeah. N.B. Ragner was the original director, Carl Waddell was a committee man, Charlie Fanchem was a committee. Those men, I could name every one of them.

Paul Ortiz: Can I get those names again?

George J. Brown: Carl Waddell .

Paul Ortiz: Carl Waddell. Two D's?

George J. Brown: Charlie Fanchem.

Paul Ortiz: Charlie. Okay, how do you spell his last name?

George J. Brown: What? What did I said?

Paul Ortiz: [indistinct 00:07:28].

George J. Brown: Just spell it the way you understand it. Fanchem, then N.B. Ragner. He's still living. Then we had Willie Joe Pupil. He's living, he was one of our union officials, Joe living. I wish you could talk to

Shorty. I didn't bring my book. And there's quite a few more but those union officials. We organized and set it up. Went in that local union hall. We sat over here and they sat over there.

Paul Ortiz: Where was the hall at?

George J. Brown: Hall at? The building is north Birmingham, there on 27th Avenue.

Paul Ortiz: It's [indistinct 00:08:23]?

George J. Brown: No, no, no. Birmingham. Right here by—still Birmingham. But when Jim Waller bought that company and cut the furnaces down, the union went out just like that. We got no union, done away with, cut the union's throat. That's what Ronald Reagan done, he—

Paul Ortiz: How did you organize at Sloss?

George J. Brown: A union?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah, how did you [indistinct 00:08:49]?

George J. Brown: I'm going to tell you. When we start organizing it, we started at the city furnaces, where you went the other day. That ain't [indistinct 00:09:10]. You negotiate with the companies and you come up with [indistinct 00:09:21] your working conditions. Throw it out. [indistinct 00:09:31] If the company don't agree then they'll strike on you. Then when we strike, you go [indistinct 00:09:41]. White men didn't [indistinct 00:09:46] but yet he won't help us [indistinct 00:09:48] so we got to getting a little behind together and so I want you to hear [indistinct 00:09:57] didn't you? She said [indistinct 00:10:01] competition between us [indistinct 00:10:02] in the union.

Paul Ortiz: What was the competition?

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:10:09] you pay 2.50 union dues, or 3.50, whatever it is, he pay 3.50. Same thing you paying, he's getting twice as much money. He's a machinist. [indistinct 00:10:25] can't bid and get no machinist job. I couldn't bid on [indistinct 00:10:28] job. I couldn't bid on electrician job. You got to have apprenticeship [indistinct 00:10:34] hire people out of the street. Ain't no apprenticeship coming over for me and so I got you just where I want you. That's [indistinct 00:10:45] union and the union just continued those things. That's why a whole lot of strikes would come in on the union. As the younger generation came over with education, that made the thing kind of show up. They could read too and they wanted to come in. They done that for a long time but we put up with it and some of those White fella's wives, they used to come home before they was bathed in the bath house. They'd run them back.

George J. Brown: They wouldn't let them get in the car because you're going to bathe before you come and get in my car. But we wouldn't rejoice, we wouldn't say anything but the women stood by and made them [indistinct 00:11:33] and bathed, respected each other.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, you mean when the bath house was [crosstalk 00:11:40]-

George J. Brown: Integrated, yeah.

Paul Ortiz: What year was that bathhouse [indistinct 00:11:42]?

George J. Brown: Bathhouse was integrated—Let's see. [indistinct 00:11:42] was going on.

Paul Ortiz: Like 1965?

George J. Brown: Well, it was in the 60s.

Paul Ortiz: [indistinct 00:11:42]

George J. Brown: But they didn't start until about 63 I think. I feel 63 because that was a rough time than [indistinct 00:11:42] the 60s but [indistinct 00:11:42].

Paul Ortiz: So the White workers' wives would come—

George J. Brown: Yeah, pick them up.

Paul Ortiz: Now the White workers didn't want to bathe in the same bathhouse.

George J. Brown: They wouldn't bathe. They were, "These dang Colored boy [indistinct 00:12:21]." We didn't want to do it. We had one White fella came in there and he was [indistinct 00:12:27] "I believe in the Millwrights," something like that. They tried to beat him up. We guarded him. We didn't bother the man.

Paul Ortiz: Why did they want to beat him up?

George J. Brown: Because they bathed in the bathhouse. That's right. [indistinct 00:12:52] whole lot of us. This stuff come up unnecessarily but if the other guy got the pressure on you, you got to go [indistinct 00:13:02]. I hated to see those things happen but now when one get sick, we'd pass [indistinct 00:13:16].

Paul Ortiz: Did a lot of people get injured working there?

George J. Brown: Sometime. Sometimes it'd get careless [indistinct 00:13:43]. Sometimes things [indistinct 00:13:43].

Paul Ortiz: Do you remember any accidents that happened?

George J. Brown: Oh, I've seen guy got [indistinct 00:13:49]. Whole lot of that and I've seen hot water steam

line [indistinct 00:14:06] into your room. That's why I could assure you those things [indistinct 00:14:08] they working on a pipe. It blew up and killed two people, killed three people. Electrician, I've seen electrocuted him and a pipe spray and paint condenses, the thing around there, hit that [indistinct 00:14:34]. Whole lot of people killed like that but you just got to watch yourself [indistinct 00:14:44] steel plants and things like that. If you ought to get drunk, you better wait until you leave because if you get drunk, you'll get killed.

Paul Ortiz: Do you remember the 30s communist party organizers?

George J. Brown: I don't know. [indistinct 00:15:08] communist parties within itself, I never did. I never did [indistinct 00:15:18]. All the parties are good as long as you don't make it bad but the communist party I know, people came in and asked for your information a whole lot of times but I'd ask questions. When you talk with them, you don't [indistinct 00:15:49] somebody kill you. You won't even get involved because if you get involved, you will get killed.

Paul Ortiz: But you remember people perhaps handing out tablets?

George J. Brown: They didn't hardly ever do that.

Paul Ortiz: What did they do?

George J. Brown: They didn't hand out a pamphlet, a booklet of anything of that type. They might talk to you and tell you if they could feel their way and see what the situation is, if you agree with them or something like that. Other than that, they wouldn't just come out and tell you that. They'd be in a secret meeting or something like that.

Paul Ortiz: Do you remember other Black workers that became involved in any [indistinct 00:16:38]?

George J. Brown: Let me see. No, they didn't. We were interested in something like this thing here, civil rights, something for the benefit of the people. They called it communist but it ain't communist but the civil rights movement [indistinct 00:17:04] done good than it done harm. It worked both ways. They made mistakes. We had [indistinct 00:17:12] patrol ready [indistinct 00:17:13]. He's retired. Whole lot [indistinct 00:17:20] work, made millions of dollars. They forgot about the Black man. You represent me, why you ain't got nothing when you get it if you're going to put me down? Forgot the Black people. I had [indistinct 00:17:34] Chief of Justice of Alabama.

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:17:38] little office right there in the [indistinct 00:17:39] building on the 17th floor. When it got up [indistinct 00:17:42], they forgot about the people. We got E. W. Clemens. [indistinct 00:17:49] He's a member of this stuff here along with me. He ain't got time now. Remember the time he needed help. He'd come down. [indistinct 00:18:02] God don't intend for you to do that. If he put you up in the world, you thank him and keep doing it and help other people. That's my motto. I love everybody. I never hate nobody. Never. Never been in a fight. [indistinct 00:18:20]. Raised four children.

Paul Ortiz: When did you first meet your wife?

George J. Brown: My wife? We were living in another section of town about seven miles from here. She was going to school [indistinct 00:18:45] Is my coat hung up in [indistinct 00:18:55]? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I see what it is. I had to hold back [indistinct 00:19:00]. Let me see, I might have her picture somewhere. We've been married 52 years. 52 years and I never [indistinct 00:19:16]. I work and make good money. She tended the businesses. [indistinct 00:19:31] I got that one. That's from [indistinct 00:19:34] Served the vice president but I made the pupil. I knew the [indistinct 00:19:44] I told them White people they done a good job. I think I got that picture. We'll look at it.

George J. Brown: You know where we left off at? We branched off there a little bit.

Paul Ortiz: Yeah. I asked you how you came to meet your wife.

George J. Brown: I met her, she was going to school and I stayed single and she's a nice person like that right now. That's her right there. We've been married 52 years.

Paul Ortiz: 52 years.

George J. Brown: 52 years.

Paul Ortiz: So she was going to school when you first met her?

George J. Brown: She was going to school, she graduated. She was going to the [indistinct 00:20:58] school, [indistinct 00:21:00] and she graduated and after she graduated, I said, "I'm going to see if I can get that lady." [indistinct 00:21:09] and it was mixed up family.

Paul Ortiz: A mixed up family?

George J. Brown: Yeah. Most her people's White. They're mixed in too. But her mother was this Black woman and so that's the problem that you got. People [indistinct 00:21:27] separate and be like, "How the hell you going to separate something that you already—" [indistinct 00:21:38] Black man would say, "Well, I came from [indistinct 00:21:43]. Down where I came from, [indistinct 00:21:49]."

Paul Ortiz: Mixed race?

George J. Brown: Yeah. [indistinct 00:21:54] whoop your ass. But this is it, [indistinct 00:22:01]. It's everywhere and I could see something good in her and I married her. Bought a home, bought a place, raised those children. [indistinct 00:22:22] no trouble. I moved out. I tried to get out [indistinct 00:22:27] got so busy, so bad here. When they put the dope and kept ruining the cities, that's a disgrace. You say you wanted freedom, you got your freedom right there. [indistinct 00:22:39] going to kill [indistinct 00:22:40]. You're supposed to love people. You don't do that.

Paul Ortiz: When you would get off of work at the end of the day, what kinds of things would you do [indistinct 00:22:59]?

George J. Brown: Me?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

George J. Brown: I'm going to tell you. When I got off my work, there was a night club and a big dance hall. I was the head waiter at the Cascade Plunge. It's still out there. 68 Street, 1st Avenue North. [indistinct 00:23:22] were picnics, parties, anything they would book. When I got off my job, I was gone.

Paul Ortiz: Cascade Plunge?

George J. Brown: Cascade Plunge, that's it. It's on 68th Street, 2nd Avenue, South, Birmingham now. [indistinct 00:23:38] bought that thing. The people died [indistinct 00:23:44]. I was waiting tables. I ran picnic, I ran parties. Stayed busy. When I make that money, I got give it to my wife. Yeah. She took care of me. Educated four children. I got one who won't do nothing. He don't want to be nothing. [indistinct 00:24:10], he's got a master's degree [indistinct 00:24:13] nothing but a [indistinct 00:24:14]. You've got a master's degree and you going to fool out here with a [indistinct 00:24:19] job? You need to be shot in the behind. I didn't have that opportunity. I didn't have it.

George J. Brown: You'll see a whole lot of that going on now. It costs you something to get what you got. Ain't nobody give you nothing. Go ahead. Sorry I interrupted.

Paul Ortiz: Did you and your family go to the movies or was there any kind of night life?

George J. Brown: Well, when you had that—Downtown, we just remolded the Cobb Theater. We had theaters all over Birmingham. Avondale, all sections of Birmingham. You had somewhere to go and there was always something to do. But you ain't got no where to go now. The dope dealers destroyed [indistinct 00:25:16].

Paul Ortiz: So you'd go to the Avondale Theater?

George J. Brown: I'd always come downtown and either [indistinct 00:25:23] or we had two, three more. If it didn't, I could go to Avondale. All parts of Birmingham. Now these are the only two. If you went to the White theater, they had them downtown, you'd go upstairs, you couldn't go down there with the Whites but you could go up and see the picture.

Paul Ortiz: So did you spend a lot of time around the Black business section?

George J. Brown: I know them but I'd be down at the masonic temple building over there because I was

involved with the blue [indistinct 00:26:03], all houses of masonry. I'm Past Master, past [indistinct 00:26:09] used to be. I didn't call myself a [indistinct 00:26:15], I just would love it here, that's all, and I could satisfy the people. I done it for a long, long time. Masonry teaches people to be curtesy, respectable. You [indistinct 00:26:31] and it was always something good in it. I just loved it, lived it, done it. I had a good time with that.

Paul Ortiz: Did you ever go to places like Bob's [indistinct 00:26:48]?

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:26:49]?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

George J. Brown: Bob Williams used to be [indistinct 00:26:54]. He had a big cafeteria. Bob Williams, that was his name.

Paul Ortiz: Bob Williams.

George J. Brown: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: Did you ever go there?

George J. Brown: Oh, I'd go in sometimes because [indistinct 00:27:07] shrines. We'd always go down and patronize the other Shriners.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, he was Black?

George J. Brown: Yes, he's Black.

Paul Ortiz: What other shops would you patronize that were owned by Shriners?

George J. Brown: We had the Shriners club and in the Shriners club, that's where we raised money for charity or all the organizations [indistinct 00:27:29]. We had our non-profit stamps set up and all like that. We done a whole lot of good things.

Paul Ortiz: What other businesses—

George J. Brown: In here, in Birmingham, Black people had a whole lot of grocery stores. They had a whole lot of businesses, small businesses, and downtown we had 18th Street and 4th Avenue, all back in this area. Part of this property here, the Black people were living in here. White people, they moved out and then Blacks moved in. But back in August, when I came to live here, White people lived in all these areas and Birmingham has servants at every house. I was [indistinct 00:28:23] back servants [indistinct 00:28:26] take care of them. They paid rent. [indistinct 00:28:30] bother them people.

George J. Brown: We had [indistinct 00:28:34]. The type they had [indistinct 00:28:39] surrounding area, this town was covered with electric cars operating by batteries. [indistinct 00:28:53]. Tip your hat. YOu'd have chauffer. I used to be a chauffer [indistinct 00:29:01] downtown, get a job chauffer [indistinct 00:29:06]. I think they may have paid 50 cents [indistinct 00:29:09]. White folks [indistinct 00:29:13] you'll wait on them. [indistinct 00:29:17] but they're paying you. Them Jews, I used to love them Jews. He ain't going to give you too much money but [indistinct 00:29:30] pretty good people.

George J. Brown: You needed [indistinct 00:29:34]. If you paid him, he'd be—All these buildings, empty buildings down here. Jews own these buildings now.

Paul Ortiz: You raised four children here. Did any of those children go to Industrial High School?

George J. Brown: No, they went to Parker High School. I was living right near Parker High School. Three of them graduated Parker High School. Parker High School I believe the Tennessee State and my daughter went to [indistinct 00:30:08] then my baby daughter, she went two years to—Where did she go? I forgot right now. Anyways, she took two years of college, then she married but they all had an opportunity. If they want to [indistinct 00:30:42]. I didn't have that opportunity to get an education. I had to work but I wanted them to make something out their lives. They can do it. You trust God and do what's right, you'll get what you want.

Paul Ortiz: You talked earlier about accidents that were happening at [indistinct 00:31:03]. What would happen when people would get injured? Do you remember the kinds of medical care that were [crosstalk 00:31:13]?

George J. Brown: If he got hurt at [indistinct 00:31:16], we had ambulances [indistinct 00:31:21]. You get hurt, they'd load you up in truck and carry you to the hospital.

Paul Ortiz: Which hospital?

George J. Brown: We had [indistinct 00:31:30]. That's the Saint Vincent Hospital. When you go there, the Black man, we had to go in the basement. You couldn't go in the other part of the hospital. That's where we were and that's where we went. It was in the basement. And you ride street cars. You got two people, a conductor and a motorman. Street car open the middle. You go to your left, the right go to your right but you couldn't move the boards up if it wasn't but one White only. [indistinct 00:32:18] Guess we got where we wanted to go.

Paul Ortiz: Anybody that you knew back in those days, did you know if Black workers or Black people who were challenged kind of push back against that system?

George J. Brown: Oh yeah. There was plenty. They didn't care for that system. Oh yeah, we fought it but they were fighting a losing battle.

Paul Ortiz: Like in the 30s?

George J. Brown: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: What would people do?

George J. Brown: Whole lot of time, we had a probleM down here by the water fountain right here. You couldn't drink out that water fountain. You couldn't do that. You get on the elevator, you had to take off your hat or they'd knock it off. You couldn't do nothing about it. You can't [indistinct 00:33:20] out in the street and beat your brains out. [indistinct 00:33:23]. But that was the law of the land, what they called the law of the land. That's what they done.

Paul Ortiz: How would Black people fight against that?

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:33:37]?

Paul Ortiz: You mentioned earlier that there were some Black people who would fight that.

George J. Brown: What we'd done was a whole lot of demonstrating. We got organized through churches and organizations and we would fill this town going up there. So many of us, you couldn't do nothing. And [indistinct 00:34:02] it was Bull Connor. [indistinct 00:34:04] wasn't even there. [indistinct 00:34:08] and he got shamed. The water hose. The police went and stomped on him. You ever had that? The policeman and the fire department. If you want to put some more water on him, them folks said [indistinct 00:34:25]. The White people got sick of it. [indistinct 00:34:29] you'll just take over and see it. We were always told to be non-violent but [indistinct 00:34:43] be some violence if you don't watch. [indistinct 00:34:49].

Paul Ortiz: You felt like non-violence sometimes was—

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:34:58]. I never liked [indistinct 00:34:59] but let me tell you here. Here in the 60s, every school got out at nine o'clock all over Jefferson County. Every one of them came right down town. You couldn't see nothing but Black folks. All the department stores. Everywhere. [indistinct 00:35:37]. They were just in them stores going and coming. [indistinct 00:35:39] but we wanted help. They were bombed just like [indistinct 00:35:46] church. They turned that man loose. That was bad business. Then they bombed up on Smithfield, up there [indistinct 00:35:56] up there. [indistinct 00:35:59] bombing up there and messed up a whole lot of people.

Paul Ortiz: Is that dynamite [indistinct 00:36:07]?

George J. Brown: Dynamite. Yeah, that's what he called dynamite. Yeah, that's it. That's the name of it.

Paul Ortiz: Can you tell me a little bit about that area?

George J. Brown: Yeah. The White people were living in one or two houses up there by some politician [indistinct 00:36:23] some land [indistinct 00:36:26] had some property up there. [Lawrence Umphrey 00:36:30] [indistinct 00:36:32]. Black man. He let him have the money to pay down on a house when they was fighting [indistinct 00:36:39]. They found out [indistinct 00:36:41] was unnecessary and [indistinct 00:36:42] and the White people got behind me themselves. They said, "Well, you can do two [indistinct 00:36:52]." And so they took it up and [indistinct 00:36:56] along before they settle the hill and everybody got [indistinct 00:37:00] you want to build up on the hill, I'll build up there.

Paul Ortiz: And that's the area that's now [indistinct 00:37:05]?

George J. Brown: No, Smithfield.

Paul Ortiz: Smithfield.

George J. Brown: Smithfield, that's it.

Paul Ortiz: Smithfield. When did those homes start getting bombed?

George J. Brown: It was in the '49s and '50s. I can't give you the correct date. I can't pick it up but you find it in [indistinct 00:37:33] a continuous thing. Then rebuilt it, we had to. Got organized on the hill. I'd work sometimes all day, stay up all night watching the family. We patrol the community and the streets. Had so many of them assigned everywhere.

Paul Ortiz: So you were living up there?

George J. Brown: Oh yeah. Yeah. Over there, back then. Built up there. Bought a lot and built a place up there but it was better than what I had and Arthur Shores, I know you remember talking about him. He's, "I bought the lot. I bought the lot." Think I paid him $1500 for that lot and built that house. And it's a funny thing. I'd have been in that house right today but my kids are very superstitious. My wife had two aunts that died in that house and them children wouldn't live in that house. [indistinct 00:38:36] until you get your own house that way you won't be running me around here trying to buy a house. We laugh about that thing right now. But I've been lucky in Birmingham. I've [indistinct 00:38:56] to a certain extent. The Black man got a whole lot of support [indistinct 00:39:03] admitted and told him.

George J. Brown: You didn't get much help [indistinct 00:39:10] Italian but the Jews put money down. Whole lot of these business people would help these people. If you wanted help and the person willing to help you, they can help you, you get him to do it. That's my [indistinct 00:39:29] and it's not to say that some of these White people didn't hate us. Whole lot of these women was against being abused, doing wrong but just stayed in their race of people. These White women stayed. They were better than men. We ain't going to tell that though. Yeah, you know that. That's [indistinct 00:39:56].

George J. Brown: Yes sir. Now where we left off on that while ago?

Paul Ortiz: Oh, I asked you about Dynamite Hill [indistinct 00:40:09] Smithfield which was Dynamite Hill.

George J. Brown: Dynamite Hill is right. Center Street Hill.

Paul Ortiz: [indistinct 00:40:11] and you built a house up there?

George J. Brown: Yeah, I built on First Street North. 1148 First Street North. The house is there right now.

Paul Ortiz: And that was also part of the area that was [indistinct 00:40:35].

George J. Brown: The bombing area.

Paul Ortiz: [indistinct 00:40:36].

George J. Brown: Fella cursed me out one night. I had a pretty long little old [indistinct 00:40:44]. I had a garage door. You raise the door up, go and put your car in the garage and then go up the steps, going up [indistinct 00:40:54] going into the house. This fella came down and said, "Boy, you got your damn [indistinct 00:41:01] knock on the door, you got your damn car in the street over the ditch in there about 40 feet deep." He says, "Boy, get your car." I say, "Okay." I say, "Buddy, I'm sorry. I didn't meant to block you." [indistinct 00:41:20]. I went in there and got my damn rifle. Had a lady there by the door. He cranked that car floor board right over in that ditch. He got it. He talking, "I might go back up there [indistinct 00:41:37] get the hell beat out of you."

Paul Ortiz: So you got your rifle?

George J. Brown: Yeah. You put your rifle—I ain't know what he was going to do but all of us scared to be on that hill [indistinct 00:41:51].

Paul Ortiz: Really?

George J. Brown: Yeah, [indistinct 00:41:52].

Paul Ortiz: For basically self-defense?

George J. Brown: Yeah. The police department was always on the Black man. He would ride you and [indistinct 00:42:06] Bull Connor, the city commissioner [indistinct 00:42:11]. They were on Black people too [indistinct 00:42:14]. We came through all that stuff. Ignored them to a certain extent and took a whole lot. We got job the job done [indistinct 00:42:29]. We did a pretty good job too. As long as they ain't hurting me now is what's happening now. It's a heart-breaker. [indistinct 00:42:37] used to gain the whole world and lose your soul. That's what happened. Look at the Black people. What they doing for us? You don't like that. Nobody got any sense. You see babies having babies. Syphilis, gonorrhea, diseased to death.

George J. Brown: Dopes doing it. Just haul it in here with submarines, trailer trucks, in airplanes. [indistinct 00:43:06] down for the money. Someone will wake up and do something, they're going to be to late. They diseased to death. It's pitiful. I used to stay in my housing, didn't lock a door. Didn't worry about locking no doors. [indistinct 00:43:26] didn't break in your house. Boys didn't rape no women. You think about your family, you don't know what happened to them and as long as stuff coming out of Brazil and Peru, them folks making money over yonder. America ain't going to have no money [indistinct 00:43:48] if they keep on. [indistinct 00:43:48] all out. Look at this racket they got down there in Mexico.

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:43:57] place in no-man land. They come in and settle down. [indistinct 00:44:04] load it up and haul it on. It's something to think about. You leave home, you don't know when you're going to get back. You ain't [indistinct 00:44:16] I won't give you no more of that. What is it we talking about?

Paul Ortiz: We were talking about Dynamite Hill. I wanted to ask you one more question, I don't want to take up too much of your time.

George J. Brown: Well, I don't mind it. Get what you want now.

Paul Ortiz: And I have some paperwork that I would like to work with you to fill out [indistinct 00:44:44] the file. One more question that I have regarding your work at the spas, did you see changes in Sloss over time from the beginning to the end [indistinct 00:44:57] and were you there when it shut down?

George J. Brown: [indistinct 00:45:00]. I was there when it shut down. '71 I believe [indistinct 00:45:05] shut down in 1971. I wanted to see their furnaces. I had moved to the number five, North Birmingham where the big blast furnaces was. You could sit that little furnace over here in that blast furnace [indistinct 00:45:21]. This was a part-time. This furnace [indistinct 00:45:29] here and they was having all this pollution problem any way. So I just went on to the blast furnace where they was making good money. Made big money over there. [indistinct 00:45:45] over time. I'd do 16 hours and I'd have 8 hours of rest but you had to know how to do it. You know what to do. My [indistinct 00:45:59] out the way. "I know what to do."

George J. Brown: Something need to be done, I didn't wait on him. He'd be somewhere sleep. As long as the job was going on, [indistinct 00:46:09]. White man [indistinct 00:46:09] I'd go home and get some sleep. He'd go home and go to sleep. I'd sit right there, run that engine, whatever he had to do and they never said about it. When you got organized, you get help.

Paul Ortiz: When you get organized—

George J. Brown: Yeah. When you get organized on a job like, [indistinct 00:46:36] 8-hour job done [indistinct 00:46:38]. You didn't see [indistinct 00:46:41] unless he wanted something extra to do and we knew what to do and we got our work caught up. We had a [indistinct 00:46:50]. We go sit down at the [indistinct 00:46:53]. Just sit there. [indistinct 00:46:58]. That's the [indistinct 00:46:59] we had to operate.

Now, we ain't even finish that last question, did we?

Paul Ortiz: Which—