

SS143,mp3

Bill Thomas- Now let's see this is tape 1 Mr. and Mrs., I am sorry the initials are L.J. is that right?

Mr. Reed- L.C.

Bill Thomas- L.C. Reed And their son, what his name?

Mr. Reed- You mean this one right here? James Irvin.

Bill Thomas- James Irvin yes and this is Bill Thomas and it is July the 14th and we are talking it is the 15th I have los the day we are talking in the Reed's home. Now if Mr. Reed let's see we will start with you I think basically what we are interested here is the fact that while you were on strike and while that was going on your son was playing out in Colorado. But if you could tell me a little bit about yourself how you came to Memphis and how you went to work with eh city and how long you had been working before all this came out.

Mr. Reed- I was (muffled) in 1953. I started with the city in 54, the 10th of February and I have been working there ever since, just about under 14 years. (muffled) went to Booker T. Washington school. After graduated, went to Fort Collins Colorado where he played football.

Bill Thomas- Did he play football here at Memphis?

Mr. Reed- Yes he played here at Booker T. Washington.

Bill Thomas- Booker T. and then what did he get a scholarship to go on?

Mr. Reed- Well yes (muffled).

Bill Thomas- Known as the Golden Shoe boy. Here or there to what?

Mr. Reed- Booker T. Washington.

Bill Thomas- at Booker T I see. And he was, what was he a half back there?

Mr. Reed- Full back.

Bill Thomas- Did he get a lot of offers.

Mrs. Reed- Yes he won about 25 scholarships, in the state.

Bill Thomas- Is that right? and why did he did he pick Colorado.

Mrs. Reed- Well he decided about Colorado, he was going to go to some Illinois and we taken him up there for an interview and they liked him and he liked it up there so finally when we got back a man flew from Colorado he was one of the coaches coach Lomack, is that's the name Lomack?

Mr. Reed- Mike Lou.

Mrs. Reed- Mike Lou.

Bill Thomas- Mike Lou huh.

Mrs. Reed- And he heard about him and he flew her and he talked to Tom and he offered him a better offer, so he decided to go there in the summer. They sent for him to come on out there and (muffled) up until school started and he has been out there ever since. And so he said he liked it and so this was his last year.

Bill Thomas- Let's see so future historians will know we are talking about is Mr. and Mrs. Reed's son Oscar who is a halfback with the university of Colorado. Did he play football all 4 years in high school here?

Mrs. Reed- He played footballs all 4 years in high school.

Bill Thomas- Did he win anything out of that?

Mrs. Reed- Well he won the golden shoes at Booker T. Washington.

Bill Thomas- I see and what is that now can you?

Mrs. Reed- Say what is that?

Bill Thomas- what is that exactly?

Mrs. Reed- Golden shoes they had golden shoes you know sprayed and they got them now in the showcase.

Bill Thomas- Oh they hang in the showcase?

Mrs. Reed- In remembrance of him.

Bill Thomas- I see. Do you remember how many touchdowns did he make or anything like this?

Mrs. Reed- Well to win the golden shoes you have to make 6 touchdowns, 4 touchdowns in one game.,

Mr. Reed- 250 yards rushing, he rushed 255 in one game.

Bill Thomas- in one game?

Mrs. Reed- And he did, he won trophy at Colorado State and reward at Colorado State. And he set up new (muffled) the paper said just he was the only one (muffled).

Bill Thomas- And let's see what year did he graduate form high school?

Mrs. Reed- Let me see what year, 60? 1962, this was his full year I mean this is the last year in college, which he has been 4 years in college that made him graduating from Booker T. in 64.

Bill Thomas- 64. Alrighty. Mr. Reed whereabouts in Mississippi were you born?

Mr. Reed- Lexington Mississippi.

Bill Thomas- Lexington? What is that close to?

Mr. Reed- That is (muffled).

Bill Thomas- I see.

Mr. Reed- Calhoun County.

Bill Thomas- and what do you do for the city? What department do you work for the same department now as you did when you went to work?

Mr. Reed- Yup same department in the drainage department.

Bill Thomas- In the what?

Mr. Reed- In the drainage department.

Bill Thomas- Drainage department. And as I recall this was where things really actually started when they sent the fellows home, 2 hours clock time or something like that.

Mr. Reed- I was one of them.

Bill Thomas- Were you. I believe maybe you are the first one I have talked to then.... Were you one of the original 21 or 22?

Mr. Reed- 21 sent home.

Bill Thomas- There were 21? Can you tell me what happened that day. Now as I recall we have gone back over this and this was February or was it January 31st or February 1st?

Mr. Reed- That was January 31st.

Bill Thomas- January 31st right.

Mr. Reed- So come a shower rain that morning. It rained for about a half an hour after we shift in at work. They told us to wait awhile and after then come out and they would call the curtain down.

Bill Thomas- Start cutting the crews down.

Mr. Reed- That's right. So many went home and so many stayed.

Bill Thomas- Let me ask you this what time did you al report for work?

Mr. Reed- 7:15 you are supposed to work. Check us in and leave at 7:30.

Bill Thomas- They have a roll call? Or something like this. Do they do this in the drainage department.

Mr. Reed- No every (muffled) check his own men. So after they sent us, in fact we were leaving and the sun came out and so we saw another crew on the job, we was working on. They were doing our job. Our president T.O. Jones got wind of it and he asked them how was that. When they promised to pay us and they never did pay us and that got that whole work started.

Bill Thomas- Who was it,. Now who was it specifically who sent the men home do you know?

Mr. Reed- It was Stanley Smith.

Bill Thomas- And who is he?

Mr. Reed- The superintendent.

Bill Thomas- Superintendent in the drainage department.

Mr. Reed- Drainage department.

Bill Thomas- Had this, I would like to learn this because this is the first time we found somebody who was really there. Had this been done before? Was this anything new?

Mr. Reed- It wasn't anything new, it has cut the crews and for the crew leave the barn the sun would be shining pretty but still go home.

Bill Thomas- Even and this was just his decision? How did he pick who went home?

Mr. Reed- When they first started about 12 years back they said so many stay with this truck and so many stay with that truck, and see over 5 (muffled) 2 over 5 them 2 have to go home and then the next time those two stayed and the other 5 would go home.

Bill Thomas- I see, and so really you all when you went down you didn't know whether you were going to work or not it sort of depended on the weather.

Mr. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- But they never did send any white men out right?

Mr. Reed- No.

Bill Thomas- They always worked whether it rained or not.

Mr. Reed- Rain, shine, sleet or snow.

Bill Thomas- Well this seems very inequitable. I was wondering, the way the story first came out that these men were supervisors. And then I wondered well if they sent you know the men home then what would they supervise. What would they do to earn their money or did they do anything?

Mr. Reed- No it is sit there and they didn't have no one to work and they just sit there until 4:00 and then go home.

Bill Thomas- And draw their pay?

Mr. Reed- Draw their pay.

Bill Thomas- And this had been going on for a long time hadn't it?

Mr. Reed- Yeah.

Bill Thomas- Ever since you had started?

Mr. Reed- Ever since I had been there.

Bill Thomas- This was just the way they did things.

Mr. Reed- No, that is not a way to do things but it has been going on.

Bill Thomas- but I mean this is the way that they did it for a long time.

Mr. Reed- Oh yeah.

Bill Thomas- Well when the, when the men protested, or how did that happen. How did Mr. Jones hear, you know that they had sent you all home without and went ahead and paid the others.

Mr. Reed- Well he had some stewards there if anything happened to men's on their truck or you are supposed to point them to that stewards and they would report it to T.O. So they did report it and so he come out and talk with us and Mr. Blackburn was supposed to have paid us, had agreed to pay us. And it wasn't paid off until (muffled) see our check. When our check came he checked it out and they didn't pay us.

Bill Thomas- Yeah we had talked to Mr. Jones I forgot to ask him how he did hear but he I think he said that he had talked to Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Black burn indicated that something would be worked out. And then he had to wait until the pay checks came out to find out if indeed they were going to pay the men.

Mr. Reed- That's correct.

Bill Thomas- So they paid you 2 hours call up time for that day. What would that have amounted to, do you have any idea?

Mr. Reed- Oh about a \$1.46.

Bill Thomas- Not worth going down for. So when, what, when did you hear that something, a protest might be made about this, something might be done?

Mr. Reed- Well exactly what, it was on a Monday morning, T.O. Jones he came down and told not to get on the trucks that they called a strike and a couple more officials from the court house they came down and told him he was holding the crew of men two hours. He told them it would be 20 more days if you don't act right.

Bill Thomas- He said wait?

Mr. Reed- He said it would be 20 more days still at 2 hours if Mr. Blackburn didn't agree to pay us and so Blackburn went in and didn't agree and would he let the rest of the men go to work and let the 21 stayed out what thy had sent home. Because T.O. agreed on that. So he was supposed to pay us again and we got us check it still wasn't on there, this time (muffled).

Bill Thomas- I see. And so then when it didn't appear on the check, when you still didn't get paid then was a meeting called or something like that?

Mr. Reed- Yeah there was meetings called, it was mostly of one anticipating the meeting and T.O. decided that Monday morning on the 12th of February that nobody would work. And so that was when the walk out started.

Bill Thomas- There was a, those meetings as I understand it the Sunday night before February 12th before the strike. Did you go to that meeting?

Mr. Reed- No I didn't participate in that.

Bill Thomas- Yeah where Mr. Jones went over and talked to Mr. Blackburn. So then that, on February 12th that morning what did you do?

Mr. Reed- Oh I caught the bus and went on to the job and somebody met me at the gate and told me no work.

Bill Thomas- Now who met you?

Mr. Reed- One of the stewards and I asked him what it is all about. He tried to tell me but I don't think he knows exactly what., He knows to tell us not to go to work. I(muffled) supposed to pay me and didn't pay me.

Bill Thomas- Right, so you knew that this was kind of about...

Mr. Reed- It was edging up all the time and I didn't know it was going to happen on the 12th.

Bill Thomas- But you knew the reason though, you knew that the cause of the things was because they didn't pay you all on that rainy day, you knew that was one of the reasons?

Mr. Reed- No, I don't know what caused them not to pay.

Bill Thomas- No but you knew that was one of the reasons for the strike, you understood...

Mr. Reed- That was all included.

Bill Thomas- So then you didn't, what did you do then when the steward aid we are not going to work today?

Mr. Reed- He turn around and I had never been able to walk out before and I had heard lots about them and I didn't want to get whooped for not obeying.

Bill Thomas- Well did you, did you feel like at that point it was, it would be a successful effort or did you think you would just be going back to work shortly? What you think?

Mr. Reed- Well I didn't know. I sometime felt like we were going back to work shortly and then after a couple of weeks rolled around and I felt like we may not be going back to work at all. But after we lost reverend...(muffled).

Bill Thomas- Who is that Jackson?

Mr. Reed- Reverend Jackson, Ralph Jackson we all started participating meeting after meeting and that gave me a little more courage then. Stick together we would win and (muffled).

Bill Thomas- Were you when they started, very shortly after the strike started Lobe again trying to hire people back, were you afraid that they might fill your job?

Mr. Reed- No, I was scared of my job because there were mighty few people in the field of (muffled).

Bill Thomas- Yeah, well what is it you do in the drainage department exactly.

Mr. Reed- Well we, some of them lay sidewalks and lay pipes and you (muffled) dues for broke head.

Bill Thomas- now what is that?

Mr. Reed- That is putting down telegram horses about 12 feet tall and 4 feet in the ground and then the rest is 8 feet up and then the nail (muffled).(muffled) riff raff.

Bill Thomas- and what is that now?

Mr. Reed- Well that is old broke up rocks you lay them sort of like you lay bricks. It is not brick it is just old stones like (muffled) and different things from washing off.

Bill Thomas- This was, they made rip rap anything this was more than what was just along the river?

Mr. Reed- (muffled) washing away and you go there and dig out a footing and dig a concrete footing down and then we lay those rocks down lay them like you do bricks all the way up.

Bill Thomas- All of it sounds like pretty hard work.

Mr. Reed- It is heavy work.

Bill Thomas- Yeah. How many hours before the strike took place and everything how many hours normally a day would men work?

Mr. Reed- 8 hours.

Bill Thomas- 8 hours.

Bill Thomas- From what 7:00 about 7:15?

Mr. Reed- 7:30 to 4:00.

Bill Thomas- And this was, was this 5 days a week?

Mr. Reed- 5 days a week.

Bill Thomas- Before you came up from Mississippi and came to work for the city what did you do down there?

Mr. Reed- Farm, raise cotton.

Bill Thomas- Did you have a farm of your own or sharecrop?

Mr. Reed- Sharecrop.

Bill Thomas- There what around in the area you were born or what?

Mr. Reed- No down in Jonestown Mississippi.

Bill Thomas- Why did you quit that?

Mr. Reed- Well it was kind of a long story mostly based on (muffled).

Bill Thomas- Well is that something we shouldn't into or what?

Mrs. Reed- Well it doesn't matter, I just got tired you work all the time and at the end you hardly ever get anything. You work the whole year.

Bill Thomas- Right at the end of the year.

Mrs. Reed- And you never did, you (muffled) somebody but it wasn't enough to take in anything. I just got tired of it. Made my husband (muffled) if it hadn't been for me.

Bill Thomas- IO see you insisted that he change.

Mrs. Reed- I insisted that he change. We couldn't do no worse.

Bill Thomas- Some years you (muffled) virtually wouldn't have made anything.

Mrs. Reed- That's right, that's right I told him I know I could do better and so we moved on up here.

Bill Thomas- Do they have it set up, was that a plantation where they had a company store or something.

Mrs. Reed- This was a plantation you know, it's a plantation you be working share cropping you know. You, if you pick out 12 bales of cotton he would get 6 and you would get 6 it was halves you know and then you had to pay all the over head. All what you owed him out of yours.

Bill Thomas- And then what would that include? What would he charge you for?

Mrs. Reed- Charge you for?

Bill Thomas- You know what would you have to pay him?

Mrs. Reed- Well you know he on the farm back in that time peoples would borrow money from him on they crop and her would fund you so much a month starting in March. And he would fund it 6 month fund for you to buy you some grocery and see all that had to be paid back out of yours.

Bill Thomas- Right and so did he charge you interest or anything like that on anything?

Mrs. Reed- I imagine so but I didn't know nothing.

Bill Thomas- But anyway some years when they figured it up....

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- Just wouldn't have much of anything just started from scratch all over again.

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- Well is it better, this is better is it?

Mrs. Reed- This is much better, it is it really is.

Bill Thomas- Have, well during the strike you marched did you?

Mr. Reed- Yes sir. Yes sir I marched from Clayborne Temple to city auditorium and back to Clayborne.

Bill Thomas- Do you remember that march where they sprayed the mace, that was I guess that was when they had the meeting in city hall then they adjourned it and

went over to the auditorium because there were so many people there and then as I understands it they made there little announcements and then they unplugged the microphones and then everybody came back and everybody was going to march to Mason Temple I think and that's where the police first used the mace. Where you in that march?

Mr. Reed- That was the time Dr. King where they sprayed their mace at Clayborne Temple. We all marched to Clayborne Temple, we got to Main and Beale and someone, I don't know who it was but it was whiskey store sitting on the corner.

Bill Thomas- Of Main and Beale?

Mr. Reed- And one down by Mulberry and Beale and there was glasses flying and brick throwing so everybody got to come (muffled) called on the walkie talkie to go back to Clayborne Temple and so a lot of us headed back there and we got back there and at that time that called the polices county sheriff, got them out and they run down and started shooting that mace. After they started shooting that mace I got to be fearful, I kind of cut out a little bit.

Bill Thomas- Yeah, I don't blame you a bit. I would have too. Were you, you were in the march then whereabouts in the march were towards the front or the middle or?

Mr. Reed- Well when we started out half of the street was the sanitation workers, on the left side marching from Clayborne Temple and on the right side it was you know some more participator son the side, when all the sanitation people to be together but as we got there to 3rd and Beale well we got mixed up some kind of way and had a lot of youngsters in there and they were running up through the crowd and hollering let me get by I want to get to the front. So we all got kind of mixed up from 3rd on to Main St.

Bill Thomas- Right. Did you see where the youngsters came from or anything they were just all of a sudden there?

Mr. Reed- Well...

Bill Thomas- Did they come up form the march or where they on the side?

Mr. Reed- They were all in the march but they was behind and so they just come up through the line and made it to the front.

Bill Thomas- So they got in front of the march then?

Mr. Reed- These of them got close to the front, see reverend Lawson and all of them was leading the march and Dr., King but the sanitation workers and these all next and had the young people behind, but after it got 3rd and Beale they really got unruly and just come on up through the line.

Bill Thomas- So where did you, did you march too where you in that march?

Mrs. Reed- No I wasn't in that one.

Bill Thomas- And so where, you, where did you go after the march broke up.

Mr. Reed- I came home.

Bill Thomas- This was a real surprise to you?

Mr. Reed- It sure was.

Mrs. Reed- It was really a surprise to me because Dr. King he really don't believe in no violence he always lead the march without any violence but I mean I think he hasn't got a chance to talk to the people and to explain all at once thing with King and the march. I believe if he had come and talk to them and everything I believe there would have been no violence.

Bill Thomas- Right.

Mrs. Reed- Because he had led lots of them other than them and there wasn't any violence.

Bill Thomas- No in fact I think this was the first one.

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- That he led that....the day could...oh let me ask you another thing. Did you have any trouble during the time getting food stamps or getting along?

Mr. Reed- No I got some food stamps and I believe one time and then they started giving groceries down at the Mason Temple first and then a man go and sign up and he can get him some grocery depending upon how many was in your family and they were called to give you groceries to the size of family you had.

Bill Thomas- And let's see you just have the little boy at home now?

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- And his name is?

Mrs. Reed- James Irve.

Bill Thomas- James Irving?

Mrs. Reed- Irve.

Bill Thomas- And he is 18...

Mr. Reed- 17months old.

Bill Thomas- And the, so things were never really too bad during that period really were they are?

Mr. Reed- No it wasn't too bad..

Mrs. Reed- But he does like to be working though.

Bill Thomas- Right.

Mr. Reed- Could have been worse.

Bill Thomas- Yeah it really dragged on.

Mrs. Reed- I think the union was really nice though when he was on strike. They did what they could you know.

Bill Thomas- Right.

Mrs. Reed- They did what they could. And so many of them you just can't look for anything like if you was working go and get it yourself. So it was just one of those things you just have to make out when things like that happen you just got to make out the best way you can.

Bill Thomas- Do you all own the house here or do you rent?

Mrs. Reed- We are buying it.

Bill Thomas- You are buying it. Did you have any difficulty you know when the payments came?

Mrs. Reed- They paid it once didn't they?

Bill Thomas- Did they? Wow. Well ok. Do you remember anything about the day Dr. King was shot? Do you remember there was to have been a meeting I think that night. Were you going to go to that meeting? Or do you remember where you were when you heard the news?

Mr. Reed- Oh I was home.

Mrs. Reed- I was at work I was at work and someone called us. Told us that Dr. King had been shot and so then we said we hope he don't die and then the next news we heard someone called us and said he was dead.

Bill Thomas- The reducing salon was still open at that time?

Mrs. Reed- Yes that is right it was still open and because there was one of our customers you know we called them and told them.

Bill Thomas- Right and let's see the news that he had died came somewhere between 7 and 7:30?

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- And then you were still open then?

Mr. Reed- We were still open.

Bill Thomas- Yeah and then what, did you close up then or what?

Mrs. Reed- Well we were fitting to close when we got the news we were fittin to close then. But when we got the news that we had been shot I think we allowed about 30 minutes or 45 minutes until we would have been through.

Bill Thomas- Did you have any trouble getting home or anything?

Mrs. Reed- No we didn't have any trouble getting home I don't know whether they had the curfew or not but we didn't have any trouble getting home.

Bill Thomas- How about and you were already home? What did you hear it, how did you hear it on the radio?

Mr. Reed- I heard it on the TV, all during the strike time I would look at the 5:00 news and be at home and that is when I heard.

Bill Thomas- To find out how things were going. Well what did you think, this was a really be a big setback? Can you remember what you thought when you heard?

Mr. Reed- Well I was very sorry after the next day or so reverend Ralph Jackson asked us as the tragedy did happen we will (muffled) stick together. We voted on (muffled) we said that we wasn't going to stop marching and so we continued marching everyday.

Bill Thomas- Right well it finally paid off. Are things better now than they were?

Mr. Reed- Yes they are better.

Bill Thomas- Are they?

Mr. Reed- They better.

Bill Thomas- They don't send anybody home anymore on rainy days I guess.

Mr. Reed- Well they haven't so far but I won't say what to come.

Mrs. Reed- I think all this could of have been avoided I really do. I mean it really just like they could have settled the strike before you know they did. Because the same that Patterson was asking that is what they give them.

Bill Thomas- Councilmen Patterson?

Mrs. Reed- That's right, that's what they give them. If they had went on this before I don't believe that Dr. King and all this violence wouldn't have been. If they had just went on and settled.

Bill Thomas- Why do you think they didn't?

Mrs. Reed- Well I mean why they didn't is because they (muffled) he is the one that was holding the thing because he said he didn't care if garbage piled up higher than the buildings he just wouldn't have done another thing I believe if Mr. Lobe had a table of men's and talked to them and you know explained to them that there weren't no money and they explained to them that he would give them a raise when he could but still he was telling them like some little child like you tell a little child look go on back to work I will give you some candy or stop that. You be treating them like little children you know men's are men's these days no matter what color they are. They are men. And they (muffled) look out for themselves. You don't tell men's just talk to them in any kind of way. I believe that if he had just come on down and talked to them and explained to them that they would have went on back to work and al this would have been avoided.

Bill Thomas- Yeah the agreement that was finally signed it was so close to what they had just a couple of weeks after the strike began.

Mrs. Reed- That's right and after Dr. King got killed then it went on and signed it you know and settled it. They could have did it in the first place.

Bill Thomas- Alrighty. Well now about your young man is that the only two children?

Mrs. Reed- I have three I have a daughter (muffled).

Bill Thomas- And what does her husband do?

Mrs. Reed- He works, for some family down in (muffled) Indiana.

Bill Thomas- then there are so that is the 3 children?

Mrs. Reed- Three.

Bill Thomas- My you waited a long time for them.

Mrs. Reed- I sure did. 21 years.

Bill Thomas- Was he kind of a surprise there.

Mrs. Reed- Yeah. Surprise to me.

Bill Thomas- Well and your son, would he have been able to have gone to college if he hadn't gotten the scholarship?

Mrs. Reed- Well I don't think he could have went to where he did because that is an expensive school.

Bill Thomas- It really is yeah.

Mrs. Reed- He probably could have went somewhere around here if he had worked his way through you know. He would have had to work to go because.

Bill Thomas- It would have been a lot tougher.

Mrs. Reed- That's right.

Bill Thomas- And what did he take up?

Mrs. Reed- He is taking up that electronics.

Bill Thomas- Electronics, yeah.

Mrs. Reed- And it still cost money where he was but it didn't cost us much as it did when if he hadn't won a scholarship.

Bill Thomas- Right did the scholarship paid tuition and room and books and so much a month I guess?

Mrs. Reed- That's right it paid for everything food and books and everything and then they gave him so much a month. About 15 or 16 dollars a month (muffled).

Bill Thomas- And so when did he hear about the pro football offer, did they make an offer this year or what?

Mrs. Reed- Yes they made an offer, when did they make the offer? Before school was out, they made him an offer, it was in the paper who draft him because we didn't know exactly who was going to draft him and he didn't either. Because he wanted to go with the Dallas..

Bill Thomas- Cowboys?

Mrs. Reed- Cowboys, that is who he wanted to go with but you know it is not like it used to be you just have to go with the one that drafted you.

Bill Thomas- Yeah I think the draft comes?

Mrs. Reed- In May wasn't it?

Bill Thomas- Yeah it is fairly late in the year. And now he is going to understand that he is going to play in an all star game?

Mrs. Reed- Yes he is going to play in the all star game August the 2nd and they will be playing the Green Bay Packers.

Bill Thomas- These are the college all stars?

Mrs. Reed- That's right, the college all stars.

Bill Thomas- Yeah, now what is his first name?

Mrs. Reed- Oscar.

Bill Thomas- Oscar Reed I know Oscar Reed from the sports page, sure I just never did really put it together. Have you all seen him play?

Mrs. Reed- Oh yes we in college?

Bill Thomas- Yes.

Mrs. Reed- We had seen him once we flew out there in October.

Bill Thomas- Did you?

Mrs. Reed- Yeah we sent him they played at Colorado Springs that Saturday and (muffled) I really enjoyed it that was the first time. I was tense the whole time I was there.

Bill Thomas- You were worried about him?

Mrs. Reed- Well you never who they are going to carry off the field next so it does make you tense.

Bill Thomas- Yeah you are worried about that giant he is 240 pounds there. Alright let's see for the record Mr. Reed can I ask your age sir how old are you?

Mr. Reed- I am 47.

Bill Thomas- 47. You were born about 1818 somewhere along in there, I mean 1918 yeah.

Mr. Reed- It was close to 1921.

Bill Thomas- Alrighty. Well it looks like he is certainly well on his way.

Mrs. Reed- We are pretty proud of him.

Bill Thomas- Yeah I would think so. Was he aware well I guess of course he was later on aware of the strike.

Mrs. Reed- Well you know he had been to Minnesota and he had to go up there for an interview and so when he was on his back to college he stopped back by here and you know the day that it snowed because he was going to go down there and march with his daddy.

Bill Thomas- Oh I see the day the snow he was going to march.

Mrs. Reed- Yes he was going to march that day not that day because it snowed but then that Monday he had to go back...

Bill Thomas- So he never did get to march.

Mrs. Reed- Never did get to march.

Bill Thomas- Well that was a freak snow wasn't it.

Mrs. Reed- it sure was.

Bill Thomas- Really strange.

Mrs. Reed- Sure was.

Bill Thomas- Well he came I just on his way to Minnesota I guess?

Mrs. Reed- No he had been to Minnesota and he stopped back by here on his way back.

Bill Thomas- On his way back I see.

Mrs. Reed- And they had gotten up there that morning both of them was getting ready to go down there and march. But they knocked it out.

Bill Thomas- Mrs. Reed about February 1st there was two sanitation workers that were killed in a rather grim accident on a truck. Did you know them by any chance?

Mr. Reed- No.

Bill Thomas- The compressor unit or something on that truck they got caught in it.

Mr. Reed- That was on Democrat part of town. I didn't do none of them.

Bill Thomas- The drainage department it has the same men all the time does it? They don't switch around among the departments or anything like this?

Mr. Reed- No. Same.

Bill Thomas- I was confused at first since the problem began on the rainy day involving the drainage department how it became known as a sanitation strike but I guess you all basically belong even then to T.O. Jones Union, I guess that is the answer.

Mr. Reed- The answer the reason why they call it the sanitation strike was seeing that there was about 1,000 workers at the sanitation and only about 290 or 300 at the drainage department and they are just called all sanitation workers.

Bill Thomas- They just outnumber you.

Mr. Reed- That's right. We started the ball rolling and then they outnumber us.

Bill Thomas- And they picked it up, that's the way it goes. Alrighty this has been very illuminating. And you worked all the way through did you Mrs. Reed?

Mrs. Reed- Yes I worked all the way through in the evening time we would close before when they would throw the curfew we had to leave before time.

Bill Thomas- Did the reducing business fall off?

Mrs. Reed- Yes it really did it really hurt us. Whiles that was going on because most of our customers worked and they would be at night coming and so we had to be at home before they were. It really hurt our business.

Bill Thomas- Were you, were you all harassed any during the time, did anybody bother you during the time?

Mrs. Reed- No they didn't bother us but a friend of mine said that he was I the café and when the curfew come on they said they gave him change to get home and said one of the police beat him up (muffled) they just come on in and beat him up. But they never did bother us because I didn't get out. I (muffled).

Bill Thomas- Did you have any problems during the curfew times getting back and forth or anything Mr. Reed?

Mr. Reed- No because I was in on time.

Bill Thomas- Right, well there was an awful lot of talk and I have no doubt that it was true that the curfew was just for the negro community.

Mrs. Reed- That is right.

Bill Thomas- Yeah I a sure that is right. Which is another sort of bad thing. There was one other thing that struck men. Did you attend any of the early meetings at city hall? I think they went down on a Tuesday or a Thursday real early there did you attend any of those?

Mr. Reed- No I didn't attend any meetings.

Bill Thomas- Yeah, they had gotten the police out already in rather large forces which seemed sort of strange I couldn't figure out why they were doing that. Alrighty well let's see now if your young man were here and would say a word or two we would get him. I don't believe he has got anything to say.

Mrs. Reed- He has gotten (muffled) when you leave.

Bill Thomas- Right. Some additional notes on the interview with Mr. and Mrs. Reed. Which was found out in later discussion. The Reeds live at 1609 Good Bay in the south section of Memphis which is predominantly a negro district but it is a very comfortable frame house. Mrs. Reed is a plump jolly type of woman and her husband is a long slender man who looks like he had spent his life in the cotton fields of the Delta. The son is handsome husky mustached athletic type. The golden shoes award has been given only twice at Booker T. Washington and this is an award for an usually outstanding athlete. The awardee is chosen in his junior year and through the football season, through the regular football season of his senior year he wears a pair of golden shoes through the games. Young Reed's shoes now hang in a trophy case in Booker T. Washington high school. He was too have

marched with his father, at one point he had been signed to a pro football team by the Minnesota Vikings. Had gone to Minnesota to discuss that contract and stopped off to visit his parents on his way home going back to Colorado University to finish up his year. This was late in the strike and he had planned to march during the first march announced by Martin Luther King. He like 1,000's of other protesters got ready to march and that particular even was the one that was snowed out by the record Memphis snow storm. Since he had only two days to visit his parents he went on back to Colorado University and therefore never did march in a sanitation protest. (Tape End)