

**Interview with Charles Lockhart, Jr.**  
**April 8, 2004, Springfield, Illinois**  
**Interviewer: Jackie Wilkes**

Wilkes: Today is April 8<sup>th</sup> in the year 2004, and we are interviewing Charles Lockhart, and going to begin his interview with some questions about his childhood, and so Charles, how -- when were you born?

Lockhart: 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 1927.

Wilkes: 1927.

Lockhart: Yes.

Wilkes: Yes. What kind of memories do you have of your earliest days? Tell us a little bit.

Lockhart: I don't know. Probably where I begin to understand things a little bit is when I was enrolled at the Lincoln School, and attended Lincoln School, at Eleventh and Monroe, or Capitol.

Wilkes: Right.

Lockhart: Yes. And it's a middle school now, but I went there as a child, and we lived on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 800 block, 815 South 16<sup>th</sup>. That's about a block and half south of Cook Street on 16<sup>th</sup>.

Wilkes: And what I read about that, I heard that it was a quite a mixed neighborhood. Was the school Lincoln also quite a mixed school?

Lockhart: Oh, when I went to Lincoln School, it was predominantly white. The neighborhood was salt and pepper, you know, they were integrating, fully.

Wilkes: So, what was Lincoln School like?

Lockhart: Oh, I don't know. As I remember it, it was, it was quite an experience, but there's the real thing that I remember more than anything else was the teacher named Miss Gallagher.

Wilkes: Miss Gallagher.

Lockhart: Yes. I used to be a window gazer, I'd look out the window, and one day she got tired of that so she walked up behind me, she smacked me upside the head, and she says, now, I don't know, I must have straightened up too, and the next time, we'll tell your mama. You know, where I'd prefer another slap,

cause I didn't want, I didn't want no teacher talking to my mama, you know. So, I remember her. I never will forget that. That sure did happen. Then the school, this rural school was named after the guy that was the principal at the time I went to school there.

Wilkes: Oh really. You had a principal of Lincoln.

Lockhart: (inaudible). Yes. Looked a lot like that guy on the Buffalo nickel.

Wilkes: Is that right?

Lockhart: Yes. That's right. Yes.

Wilkes: Now back to Lincoln, you were talking about, an ice cream store?

Lockhart: Oh, yes, the Quality Dairy as a matter of fact. It was across the street, at let's see, it would be the northwest corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Monroe. And they had, somebody had a ice cream store there, and you could buy a ice cream cone in there but you couldn't lick it. Yeah, yeah.

Wilkes: You couldn't lick it if you were black.

Lockhart: Yes, well, yes, that made you different.

Wilkes: Yes.

Lockhart: (inaudible) I licked mine, you know.

Wilkes: Yes. You got away? You got away with it.

Lockhart: No, I didn't get away, I licked it, I intended for him to see me do it, you know. You know, and after that, I don't know, as I remember it after that, and after the incident well, you know, he called (inaudible) probably not much, and then after that, I mean, we would lick the cones in there.

Wilkes: Oh, is that right?

Lockhart: Yes.

Wilkes: You mean the rest of the guys and gals could ...,

Lockhart: And after that, he'd well, I'm not so sure that --

Wilkes: That's a drugstore experience, you know.

Lockhart: I'm not so sure of that the guy was -- I don't know, I don't remember, I'm not

too sure you know what was on his mind, you know, but he sure, he sure did that.

Wilkes: Hmm. And it was possible for everybody to then feel at ease with the ice cream.

Lockhart: Well, I don't know, I mean, I kept on licking mine. (laughter) It was, you know, I never did have any other problem.

Wilkes: Right, right. Did you have any other experiences in grade school that kind of related to the changes in the times, the times that were occurring in the 40's?

Lockhart: Well, I don't, I don't know, I don't know. I didn't really notice any differences like that, that actually was identifiable until I got to high school.

Wilkes: Right. Before we, before we go around to high school though, Charles, let me ask you did you play any sports in grade school?

Lockhart: I, well I was a marbles champion at Lincoln. And I can't think of his name right now, but the guy who went to McClernand school, had Bruce Radio, radios, TVs and things, down on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. He was a marble champion at McClernand, and when we met at the school thing, you know, wherever the conference is, well, I played him and I didn't get a shot. (laughter). Bulls-eye, you know, you shoot, you (inaudible) you knuckle down, you shoot, and then you hit and knock one out, and you stick there, but as long as you can knock one out, you just stay, you know.

Wilkes: You didn't get a shot.

Lockhart: I didn't get a shot. Yes.

Wilkes: Well, that was OK. That was good.

Lockhart: No, it was -- well, he had, he and I was friends --

Wilkes: For life?

Lockhart: Until he died.

Wilkes: That's wonderful.

Lockhart: Yes.

Wilkes: No sports. At that time, your dad was doing something about boxing, right?

Lockhart: Well, uh, yes he was.

Charles Lockhart

Wilkes: But you didn't partake?

Lockhart: I was too young.

Wilkes: Oh, was too young. Oh, that's high school, is it?

Lockhart: Yes, well, you got to be, you got to be 16 to get permission. Yes.

Wilkes: I see. Excuse me for my ignorance. Now from Lincoln, you went to Feitshans, right?

Lockhart: Yes. I went to Feitshans, Mr. Nichols was the principal.

Wilkes: That's wonderful that you remember your principal.

Lockhart: Well, I should. (laughter) He used to talk to me about accompanying people to the room and the classes. I would do that, that he told me, you keep going now, or I'll have to do something about it. One day he caught me and he told me to go home and bring my dad when I come back. And that was early afternoon. Well, it took me longer to get home that day than any other day. Cause I couldn't go back without him. It wasn't funny.

Wilkes: No.

Lockhart: Believe me.

Wilkes: It's only funny now.

Lockhart: (inaudible) But believe me, it wasn't funny. But later, when I, after I grew up, well it was fun, but it wasn't funny, it's not even funny now. You know, because that was a tough time for me.

Wilkes: And why, why was it, why was Feitshans tough?

Lockhart: No, I mean, it was tough times for, between the time he kicked me out of school and the time I had to bring my dad back in the morning. Feitshans was, Feitshans was good, I mean, it was, there was people out there that really cared about children.

Wilkes: Were there any black teachers?

Lockhart: I don't remember any, so I don't guess there were any.

Wilkes: Who was a mentor to you then?

Lockhart: Oh, I don't know. When you say a mentor, at that time, I had started taking

saxophone lessons and then I was playing in the band, and a fellow named Josh Douglas, who started the Springfield municipal, the colored Springfield municipal band. He'd come and got myself, and Luther Banks, and we were close friends. And he played clarinet and I played saxophone, and we played in the colored municipal band. And, when you say mentor, I mean, as I understand the word, in them days, everybody five years older than you had some control over you because you respected and you minded --

Wilkes: That's right. It's a part of the community respect.

Lockhart: Right.

Wilkes: That's correct. Yes. The word mentor probably is a new, a new development, but nonetheless --

Lockhart: Well let's see --

Wilkes: There were people --

Lockhart: If you want to use the same word, but it just has taken on a new connotation because now the relationships between the two people is different.

Wilkes: The Springfield, the Colored Springfield Municipal Band, tell me how long was it in existence, to your knowledge?

Lockhart: Well, I don't really know when it started, but -- I don't know, it was just a few years ago it was merged. And I was probably 14, 15 years old when I started playing in the band, when Luther and I started playing in the band. And Josh Douglas, while he was there, we played in it quite a while, when, while we were there, there were several people that impressed us, we were becoming musicians, yes, we wanted to play.

Wilkes: Charles, have you continued to play the sax?

Lockhart: No, I hadn't played since I left the Navy. I played in the Navy Band.

Wilkes: You did?

Lockhart: Yes. Played with Johnny Coltrane.

Wilkes: Did you hear him?

Lockhart: Yes, I sure did.

Wilkes: For how long?

Lockhart: For a year. Matter of fact, we roomed together.

Wilkes: Let me come back to that, cause we could stay with Feitshans for just a minute, your high school. Was there anything else that you, that you wanted to speak of in the high school years?

Lockhart: Well, we had a teacher named McQueen, the social studies teacher. He, he told me something that I never did forget, and there's been times when I found it kind of useful too. He said when you are present at a time of catastrophe, where you witness or you see or walk up on somebody who's been hurt really bad, he said, the first thing to do is to look at them and say I'm glad it's not me. He said, then you can help them. He said, if you start having empathy and feeling sorry for them, you're not going to be able to help them like you need to, cause you need to be at your best if they're hurt. I never did forget that. I know it sounds funny now, but I'm telling you, there's been times when that's happened to me.

Wilkes: Oh sure. I know that when we start talking about the, your police days, and the Navy days, that'll be true. So from high school, did you go straight to the Navy?

Lockhart: Well, I was going to graduate in, at the end of May, it was the end of school year. I joined the Navy in January to keep from, well, to keep from registering for the draft. I either, I either, my birthday, so I joined the Navy. So I didn't, I didn't want to go in the Army.

Wilkes: Yes.

Lockhart: That's the only reason. Yes.

Wilkes: Well, so you missed high school, you missed graduation?

Lockhart: I missed graduation, yes.

Wilkes: And where did you make that up?

Lockhart: I had a GED when I got out of the Navy.

Wilkes: Got out of the Navy.

Lockhart: Well, I didn't do that till later. But I did do that.

Wilkes: Sure. Of course. OK. So then tell me a little about your life, your Navy life.

Lockhart: Well, it wasn't very long, it was really kind of interesting because --

Wilkes: Well, certainly when you were with Coltrane.

Lockhart: Yes. Well, yes, but that part was interesting more as a result of what's happened since, so you know. Playing in the band, we was just having fun, but I learned a lot about how to relate to people and about relationships since that time because of his music. Definitely. It's like, we knew each other pretty well, see, cause we lived, there was rooms, there was two in a room, and we was bunking together. It's like when, when I hear him play, I heard him play then, and he and I was about the same place then, but it's obvious that he was at another place in 1966, yeah, and so when you know, it's kind of a whole another relationship. I mean, it's unexplainable.

Wilkes: Yes. Yes. OK. Back to the Navy. Did you, were you stateside all the time?

Lockhart: Well, no. I was at Great Lakes during my boot camp. And at that time, you learned how to iron your clothes sleeping on them. Yes. I mean, and there's certain ways that you can roll those clothes up, and when you unroll them, they're ironed too, you know. And that ditty bag you have.

Wilkes: Never forgot that for packing, did you?

Lockhart: Oh no. And that ditty bag, you always see them with that bag. Everything you've got is in that bag. Everything that a person lays out. [coughs] Excuse me. There's a certain way to fold and roll it, it will all fit in that bag. Yes. So I learned a lot of things in the Navy, but definitely this kind of thing. It was, I didn't tell that, but I had fun.

Wilkes: Well, that's good. Did you learn discipline?

Lockhart: No doubt. You know, you're experienced at doing what you're told. It's not as simple a thing as you, you know, as you think, you know because you're doing what you're told, knowing you have to do it, you learn a lot of things, you learn a lot of things about yourself, and about the changes that are necessary, and how you look at things, it makes it compatible with that, doing what you're told, because in the boot camp, you do what you're told.

Wilkes: That's for sure.

Lockhart: I had fun because the relationships; we had a lot of fun.

Wilkes: Were you in for two years or more?

Lockhart: No, I was, I went in January of one year, and went for a year and a half. I got out on points, what they call points, a year or so long and good, (inaudible). And at that time, Hawaii was overseas, and that's where I went.

Charles Lockhart

Wilkes: You were in Hawaii.

Lockhart: Yes, Waikiki Beach.

Wilkes: That's not too bad.

Lockhart: We was about halfway between town and (inaudible) Air Base. And then there was Schofield Barracks, that was an Army camp, and we'd play out there. As a matter of fact, we played more for the Army than we did for the Navy.

Wilkes: Yes.

Lockhart: Yes, I mean for fun. (inaudible). I mean for fun.

Wilkes: And then when you left the Navy, what did you do?

Lockhart: Well, I come in here and I worked for Allis-Chalmers.

Wilkes: Did you? Hmm. By the way, don't forget to stick in here when you married (inaudible) Farber.

Lockhart: That's a--

Wilkes: When is that?

Lockhart: Maybe about twelve years.

Wilkes: OK, well, now, so let's go back to Allis-Chalmers. Allis- Chalmers.

Lockhart: Yes, I was (inaudible) [?outstanding then] and I worked in the (inaudible) and I would do well in school. (inaudible) And I (inaudible) I was there, it was (inaudible) [?getting on to]'47 to '51, or something like that.

Wilkes: I see. Oh. And how was it as a work environment? It was an integrated mix-up, wasn't it?

Lockhart: Well, at that time, it was a little early for that kind of thought.

Wilkes: Was it? OK.

Lockhart: Oh, yes. I mean, everybody was getting along and thinking that everything was all right, because, my contacts in things, it was a working environment, always around everybody that had to work. So, if you have to be there, there's no difference. I mean, you (inaudible); you learn how to get along with people when you know you have to be there. It wasn't -- at least it wasn't as



noticeable as giving you the impression that it was happening to you. You understand what I'm saying? It was going on, but it didn't impress me any -- no impression on me.

Wilkes: And have you ever welded since you left Allis-Chalmers?

Lockhart: Yes, that was in 1956.

Wilkes: OK. A while back to Allis-Chalmers. That was nice, it was nice to have that advantage while Allis-Chalmers was here. I'm glad that you had that. What happened in your learning process there? Did you learn anything from the Allis-Chalmers experience?

Lockhart: I don't know, by that time, I already knew how to do what I was told. So. (laughter)

Wilkes:: Yes. Yes. You got that discipline in the Navy.

Lockhart: Right. So, it wasn't any other -- well, I welded mainframe, you just have a job to do. You had inspections, you weld your quota. You know. You started another one, for another guy, so when he come in, you'd have one that was started, he wouldn't have to start a new one. It was good experience.

Wilkes: Teamwork. Teamwork, this is. OK. And from Allis-Chalmers, that's when you began to look at the testing for the police, evidently?

Lockhart: No, I went to work for the police department in 1951, June of '51.

Wilkes: Was there something between Allis-Chalmers and the police?

Lockhart: No. I left Allis-Chalmers (inaudible). At that time all the black officers was in plainclothes. So, I was the first one in uniform.

Wilkes: You're not talking about the difference between detective and something else, you're talking about --

Lockhart: Well, they were -- I never found any difference between white detectives and the black guy in plainclothes, they were identified as detectives. Now, I don't know anything about the pay scale or anything, I mean, I wasn't privileged to ask that. So those guys were, as far as the community knew and as far as I knew, they were real beat cops. You know, you can't (inaudible), as a matter of fact, I worked with them, for a while. But then later, they put me in -- I was in uniform, I drove a three-wheel motorcycle, and I wrote tickets. And I directed traffic. Went to the movie free.

Wilkes: (shared laughter) You went to the movie free -- because you were in uniform.

Charles Lockhart

- Lockhart: Well, you could, anyway, your badge. Rode the bus free.
- Wilkes: And did you get your coffee free?
- Lockhart: No.
- Wilkes: That seems to be what happens today, I think. But rode the bus, and got into the theater free.
- Lockhart: Well, you couldn't stay long, you had to work. Couldn't stay too long. You could stay long enough to take one of those Coney Islands up there, take up the whole area that they was (inaudible).
- Wilkes: Tell me about the police work. Did you enjoy it?
- Lockhart: Oh. Sometimes. There was lessons to be learnt, there. Like, when I thought I was going to be able to be a good ol' Boy Scout for everybody, that's what I was taught, to go back for the kids --
- Wilkes: Your dad said that, didn't he?
- Lockhart: Yes. So, it was always help for people. That's when I really got to understand something about the relationships with the working individuals. You know, how systems work, management systems, and things. I learned a lot about prejudice, too, I'm not sure that the guys meant for it to be experienced in that way, but it was. And I got a lot of help from my good friends, but old Father Watts, Jack Jones, Paul Ivory --
- Wilkes: Tell me who you're naming here, because I --
- Lockhart: They were all police, they were older then --
- Wilkes: Oh, they were older?
- Lockhart: -- been on the police department, for a while.
- Wilkes: White or black?
- Lockhart: Black, they were all --
- Wilkes: They were both black?
- Lockhart: They were all black.
- Wilkes: OK. Gotcha. You were the first in uniform, and they were detectives when you first came in right?

Lockhart: Right.

Wilkes: OK. And what you had learned about discipline and following orders, was it -  
- could you use that in the police?

Lockhart: Well, yes, see, the police is a semi-military concept. They're based on  
(inaudible). Their line of command would be more on the military side, so  
they'd be -- well, you don't salute, but they nod and say, "glad you're here,"  
meet your eye. But it was quite something then. My probation time, they had  
little plans, so I understood the phrase, "done very well." But you see at the  
time, they had me walking a beat 11 to 7, and at 3:00 in the morning, I'd be at  
Eleventh and Cook. And the phone, it was on a telephone pole. It'd light up in  
the station, and you'd talk, and you'd report (inaudible).

Wilkes: You'd say that you were on duty.

Lockhart: Yes, I'd be on the beat, by way of reporting, vocally to the station. I'd  
observed the night lieutenant following me around, so, we'd start -- we got us  
a little game, all -- I'd hitch me a ride, and they'd park in the (inaudible)  
viaduct and I'd walk up to the telephone, but he wouldn't be able to see me  
because there was a filling station at the time, where the Urban League Head  
Start Program is, and he'd be sitting there in the car. So he'd make that  
(inaudible) I wasn't doing (inaudible) in the station. I'd be talking to the guys  
in the station, (inaudible) I'd go back and (inaudible).

Wilkes: And so, that created -- I presume you're saying that he put in a report against  
you.

Lockhart: Oh, yes, he went to the mayor. So the mayor called me in, and he told his  
story. And the mayor said, "What you got to say about that?" And I said,  
"Well, it ain't no difference what I've got to say, you got a witness, I don't  
have a witness. You've got to (inaudible) to the same thing. You know?" I'd  
say, "That woman there, I'd be calling."

Wilkes: And then did they let you go?

Lockhart: They said, "You go on back to work, because I don't want to talk to you  
anymore, I'll get in touch." That was fun.

Wilkes: That was fun. OK, but you were actually walking a beat. I don't think  
policemen walk a beat in this decade. But, nonetheless -- you were walking --

Lockhart: -- they were walking downtown, then. Because they were writing tickets, and  
not really an institution, yet, (inaudible) feel at that point. But they had me  
walking 'way out there.

Wilkes: What else did you do for the police? You stayed from '51 to when?

Lockhart: Well, I was director of police-community relations, at the time, in the '60s, and they had -- there was groups of kids that (inaudible) different things, (inaudible) the man thought they should. And one group was the Black Egyptians. They was mostly, originally from East St. Louis, and other places. And there was a local guy that I knew, that -- he was a good man, because he fed more people than public aid. Yes.

Wilkes: How many Black Egyptians were there? Roughly.

Lockhart: You couldn't tell. Because they -- as an organization, when they wanted to do something where they would be seen, some of them would come from East St. Louis. But locally, all the guys I knew were recruited by him, local guys, and they did what he told them, so although the people had the feeling, (inaudible) go to different organizations and explain what the Black Egyptians were, (inaudible).

Wilkes: Were they the only gang?

Lockhart: Well, they were the only gang, whose presence was felt --

Wilkes: In community relations, though, you had other factors, didn't you. Because this was the early 60s, so there were lots of "explainings," lots of "bringing along" that you had to do.

Lockhart: Well, yes. There -- even in that Police-Community Relations thing there was a lot of developing to do, because they had what they called "High Intensity" human relations seminars, or, what is it? I almost said it.

Wilkes: Our city.

Lockhart: The Park, over there, Arlington? Anyway. I forget.

Wilkes: I'm not really up on that. But anyway.

Lockhart: We'd go over there, we'd take a group of people from the business area and the communities, trade communities, trade people, and police, and some of the Black Egyptians. People thought like (inaudible). And we'd go there and spend the weekend.

Wilkes: Oh, I know what you mean. Allerton.

Lockhart: Yes, Allerton Park--

Wilkes: Over by Champaign. Gotcha.

Lockhart: And we'd spend the weekend, then when we -- at first I was a little suspicious about those (inaudible) [outings?] but later I found that they were very effective. Several (inaudible), (inaudible) in Springfield, he (inaudible) some (inaudible) to the program. And the effect of the program on them in terms of their behavior after that was very impressive. As a matter of fact, the program was impressive enough that (inaudible) committed (inaudible) [?magnet] staff to many seminars here in town.

Wilkes: That's very good. Yes.

Lockhart: It was good.

Wilkes: That was a really good function for you, Charles, because you listen and make people hear one another very well. And you always have. So, what else did you -- did you have any learnings from your police time? Any other learnings?

Lockhart: I'm not sure what I learned. Other than what I learned about people. I learned a lot about people -- individuals and groups. I learned a lot about myself, too. But see, I talked to a lot of people, and a lot of people that I hadn't normally been in contact with. Yes, it was quite an experience. Can't explain it.

Wilkes: Charles, by the way, was it during this police time that you married Barbara? Or was it after?

Lockhart: I -- think it was in -- let me think now -- there was -- I was (inaudible) -- I was on a leave of absence from the police department.

Wilkes: To the Human Relations --

Lockhart: The State Human Relations.

Wilkes: State. OK. When you married Barb -- we're ending the tape, we'll just let it go, we'll stop and turn it over, OK?

**End of Charles Lockhart, Jr.**