Name of Project: R.O.O.T.S of Sunflower County

Date of interview: June 24, 2016

Location of Interview: Indianola, MS

Name of Interviewer(s): Theon James **(A)**

Name of Interviewee(s): Cedric Perryman**(B)**

Name of File: IMG\_0034.MOV

[0:16] **A:** Are you a native of Sunflower County?

[0:18] **B:** I am.

[0:20] **A:** How long have you been working here?

[0:25] **B:** About four years.

[0:31] **A:** What brought you to Sunflower County?

[0:36] **B:** I was born in Sunflower County.

[0:49] **A:** What do you like about Sunflower County?

[0:54] **B:** I like Sunflower County. It’s been a lot of changes made in Sunflower County from the time I came up and some of the changes I thought I never would see. They integrated the schools and we use to have to live on one side of the track and other people lived on the other side of the track but now Indianola has changed, you can live anywhere you got money to buy a house so that’s one way.

[1:32] **A:** Can you explain a few things of how it was when you was a teenager or early 20s and 30s? Can you explain how the community was, how white people were against black people or if whites communicated with blacks at the time?

[1:48] **B:** whites did not communicate with blacks. Certain things you couldn’t do, certain places you couldn’t go into. You couldn’t just come up here to the courthouse, they had a black and white water foundation uh, basically like I said they lived on one side of the track and they had better things on one side and we had what we could on the south side of the tracks. They were on the north side, we were on the south side.

[2:30] **A:** Did you ever feel like you had a conflict or personal problem with white people?

[2:38] **B:** Well my mother kind of seen it but I never had to do anything with them because she didn’t allow us to come across the track or do any kind of work. When I finished high school I left for a minute and came back and I got a job and uh…things just started to change. That was in the 60s, like ’68 or ’67. Things had changed a lot and uh..you worked, earned your money, you always felt like you didn’t get your fair share of money that you think you worked for and I worked in the fields for three dollars a day but that’s some of the past now. You don’t see people going to the field now like they use to. You ain’t see young people hanging around on the corners at night time or through the day because they knew they had to go to bed at night and get up at about five o’clock in the morning and go to the field. You know you had to work through the summer months. In the winter months you just didn’t hang around anyway because it’d be cold outside and so to me it was better then because you didn’t have the youth court and all this—it wasn’t no youth court. You got all your youth court at home, your parents took care of you and whatever you needed taken care of—they did it. The old saying is ‘be home before the streetlights come on’ and you had to do that but now they stay out all night and do everything now. That’s one big change I think the city need to try to stop the young people from hanging on the corner.

[4:42] **A:** With this new generation and with things not being so separated, do you still feel like problems exist within the community around racism and the new generation and how they interact in the community?

[5:01] **B:** Well it’s always going to be racism. They prejudice, I’m prejudice too to a certain extent but there’s not anything you could ever do about that and I don’t see it in Indianola but there might be a couple of communities where they don’t want blacks in to buy a home but basically you can live anywhere in Indianola that you want to and like I said, I never thought I would see the day the things happening would happen but you still don’t get your fair share of what you need. For example, I went to Gentry, I graduated in ’67. Gentry was the same way before I got there, the same way today. You don’t even have decent sidewalks to walk down Jefferson Street to get to Gentry and same thing about B.B. King Road. The black community still looks the same now going towards the school where you have ditches and you have to jump out the way of cars; it still looks the same. But really for county high schools like Gentry High School they need a whole lot of improvement, with my idea they need to push it down and build and build a new school and maybe kids will be more interested in going to school if you have something to look forward to go to. A good scenery make a good person .