

**ORAL HISTORYT-0026**  
**INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT H. GOINS**  
**INTERVIEWED BY DR. RICHARD RESH AND FRANKLIN ROTHER**  
**BLACK COMMUNITY LEADERS PROJECT**  
**JULY 29, 1970**

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RESH: This the tenth in a series of oral history interviews sponsored by the University of Missouri at St. Louis. The interviewer is Professor Richard Resh assisted by Mr. Franklin Rother. Our guest today, July 29, 1970, is Mr. Robert Goins, who for many years worked for the St. Louis Post Office, and is now employed by the United States Army and shortly will retire. Mr. Goins, could you begin by telling us something about your background? Are you a native of St. Louis?

GOINS: Well, of Missouri. I was born in St. Charles, and my family moved here when I was five years old. From that age until I was 48, I lived in St. Louis. During that time, I entered the Government service in 1937. I started in the Veteran's Administration, then I went to the Post Office, and then I went to the Aeronautical Chart Plant, and then when the Army records center moved from High Point, North Carolina, I transferred there. From there, I was transferred to Chicago in 1956, and in 196\$, I was transferred back to St. Louis, not with the records center, When the Government set up the Army Materiel Command in Washington, they built their staff by taking certain tech services from each service of the Army, quartermaster, engineers and signal corps, and like that. Well, I happened to be with the engineer procurement office. We were buyers for the Army. Our office in Chicago was taken in to help make the Army Materiel Command, but they took in ESCO down here in St. Louis, and the Army Mobility Equipment Command was built around ESCO downtown in St. Louis. Then they began to bring in the tech services that they had taken from other agencies to help to build this place out here. That's why I'm here.

RESH: Could you tell us a little about your education? You went to St. Louis high schools?

GOINS: Yes.

RESH; To which high school did you go?

GOINS: Sumner. As a matter of fact, that's the only one we had then I tell my kids that, and they couldn't hardly believe it. They say, "Where did all the people go?" And I said, "Well, there wasn't that many. We only had one Negro high school."

RESH: You entered the Postal Service then in 1937?

GOINS; Yes, no, no, no, I went into the Government service, down at Jefferson Barracks, I was a cleaner.. And that's also one of those days we couldn't get a hardly decent job, I took examinations' for everything. I thought well, the first thing that comes up, I'll take it. So, the

Veterans Administration took me in 1937, and in 1939, I transferred to the Post Office as a cleaner. I worked at it for two, three years, then I was promoted to a clerk, that is a clerk "typist.

RESH: Could you tell us something about your early experiences in the Post office? What kind of place was it to work in? Something about the discrimination?

GOINS: Yes, there were certain jobs we could not get and also during this time they began to hire white ladies, well, this was alright, but they were not hiring black ladies. And we had no black supervisors. So I don't know, somebody must have put the pressure on Jackson and he made a black man the supervisor, but he put him way down in the sub-basement handling those old, dirty mail sacks. And also there was another fellow, you know at the windows where they sell stamps in the lobby, an opening came at one of those windows, but before the Postmaster would put a black man in there, he was next highest man on the list, it was actually his job, but before he would give it to him, he paid him a foreman's salary to stay in the background. And that was absolute fact. And here's how they got the black women in there. Well, I started a private war of my own, I started talking about buying bonds to help the government with the war. Well, my beef was this, well, the good part or the bad part was that I was already buying bonds, myself, but they didn't know this, see. So I got into an argument with a fellow there and he was talking about buying bonds, and I said, "Why should I buy bonds to help pay the other fellow's salary?" They took the money we would buy bonds with and put it in the defense plants to pay salaries. And we were not included for those jobs. And my argument was that. And one fellow and I had a big row there one day and I just told him flat, I said, "During wartime it's our country, but during peace times it's my country^" but I said, "don't work, buster." I said, "It's going to be our country all the time or no time." All we had it then, he must have gone and told the postal inspector or something. So they called me in one day and they asked me about it and they questioned me about it, they asked me what organization I belonged to, I said, "I don't belong to anything, I belong to church." Well, at that time they discovered a movement among the Negroes, called the Pacific ••••••••I don't remember. Pacific something, I don't remember what it was. They asked me if I belonged there I said, "No, I never heard of it until I read about it in the newspaper.

RESH: This was suppose to be some organization, Pro-Japanese or something like that.

GOINS: Yes, yes, Pacific movement or something. And he asked me if I belonged to Pacific. And I said, "No." And he asked -me if I belonged to any organization And I said, "No, nothing but church." And he went on to question me about this, that and the other. I answered the questions just like he asked me. So he gave me a piece of paper, and he said, "You write it out just like you and the other fellow said it." and I said, "I told you just what was said and the way I said it, and like that," So after awhile they, the Postmaster-General, called me up and I got a two week suspension. And then I got to tell him, I said, "Now before you were present, there was a Negro girl here that wanted a job here and you would not give it to her. She had to go to Chicago to get a job, I said, "You got white ones here, so why can't you hire black ones here too." There was difference in\_\_\_\_\_ but this is a government job. He just leaned back. So I took my two weeks off. And so when I came

back, I had to go and see him. RESH: This is Rufus Jackson?

GOINS; Yes, this is Jackson, he said, " Well, you are back on the payroll now and there have been some changes now, we got some colored girls down there now. And when I got back there were some girls there. And he said, " We got some colored girls down there now and you shouldn't go at such thing in such a war-like manner." Those were his actual words. "A war-like manner," I wasn't going in a war-like manner, I was just telling you the facts, the way it is. And I'm telling you the way that it should be. I said, " They take just as much tax out of my check as they so the other fellow, I'm due just as much citizenship in this country as the, other fellow." I said, " One thing we are tired of second-class citizenship." So he said, " We'll remedy that ... . Then he talked real nice, I was waiting for him to fly up, but he talked real nice and that was that. Arid then again, I don't know what place this was, I wrote to some company, and asked them just laid it on the line. " Why ain't you hiring Negroes?" I said, " You get your contracts from the government, the government pays you with our money every citizen's money." " Now why don't you hire us." " Hire some of us in your plants and factories." Oh, I don't know how long later, I had almost forgot I wrote the letter, I got a call from some fellow and he told me to come over to the place. That was almost twenty-five or thirty years ago, I had almost forgotten about it. So he told me to sit down and I sat down and we began to talk about the letter I wrote. And he told me, since you wrote this letter Mr. Goins we have hired, I don't know how many, he read off a list of Negroes that he had hired and that his company had hired. And I said, " That's all I want." Then he said, " Now you can go back and tell your organization what happened." And I thought to myself, if he knew I did this on my own, he probably have me thrown in jail. So I said, " Ok," and I thanked him and he went out. I never belonged to any kind of organization , I don't even know what company to write that letter to, but to Mr. Webster. Now it was probably after one of their meetings down at the auditorium. And I wrote him the letter telling him just what I had done and what had happened. So, then I couldn't do much more then anyhow, I was in the government service and they would have thrown me out and I had a wife and five kids, and I could not afford to be out.

RESH; One of the men at the post Office was quite vocal about his opposition to practices of discrimination and segregation at the Post Office and he had an opportunity to translate, his grievances to print, this was Henry Wheeler, he worked in the St. Louis Post Office during the war and he was also an. occasional columnist for the St. Louis American. Do you remember him?

GOINS: What was his name?

RESH: Henry B. Wheeler.

GOINS: No, no I don't remember him.

RESH: He kind of got in some trouble for being so out spoken.

GOINS: Must have been part of the Carburetor plant, there was a big doing up there, I walked picket around there. And when they built that big ammunition place, I was where I am now, I walked picket around that place . They don't want to hire any black people in that place and when they did, they put them off in the two-hundred area, they had a building, that was the colored building. Finally they had to do it. But that was just, that was just the trend of things.

RESH: The picketing was kind of a bold gesture during the World War II period.

GOINS: I picketed the Carter Carburetor, for they didn't hire black people, and also this very place, the U.S. Cartridge Company.

RESH; What year was that, 43 or 44?

GOINS: Well, it could have been, yes, it could have been or earlier than that.

RESH: Were you picketing in cooperation with a group?

GOINS: Yes, yes, yes.

RESH: March on Washington .....

GOINS: I don't know even who they were, I knew they were going to picket so, I just went on out there and got me a sign too, I didn't know who they were, even up here on the Carter Carburetor, I just read where they were going to picket, walk, so I just went up there and they handed me a sign and I walked on with them.

R3SH: While you were at the Post Office was Mr. Jackson pretty vocal about the position that blacks could get in the Post Office?

GOINS: Yes, he said, " I 'm an old dyed-in-the-wool Democrat and as long as I am postmaster there will be a lot of things that you won't be able to do." And those were his words. He said, "I'm an old dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, well, he was born and raised up somewhere in Missouri, somewhere, up in one of those country towns. Well, his wife's name was Eighty-nine, because she was born in 1889, honest to goodness. When they told me I couldn't believe it. A white fellow told me and he was one of his personal friends. I said, " Eighty-nine." He said, " Yes." Was that the best they could do. So I said " Why?" He said, " Because she was born in 1889." Honest to goodness, that's the truth, the absolute truth, her name was Eighty-nine.

RESH: Did you belong to any postal unions at the time ?

GOINS: No.

RESH: Was this because of your strong strain of individualism, that you wanted to fight your own battles?

GOINS: Well, I suppose so. I never liked to get into anything, I never did like organization in any thing. I didn't like organization.

RESH: You never did belong to the N . A. A. C. P. then?

GOINS: No.

RESH: Urban League? GOINS: No, I like to be free and independent, I don't like to belong to anything that every Tuesday night, you have to be here or Thursday night or every other

Wednesday night you have to be here or one of those particular nights I won't be here, on one of those particular Wednesday nights I may have something else I want to do. I don't like anything routine, this, that every day or every week. When I go to work in the morning sometime I go up this way and sometime I go around that way. I don't like anything routine. I guess that's why I fit in so good when I was here in St. Louis, now I stayed in the service 19 years and the best that I could get was a GS-3. They would hire a white person and I would train them.

RESH: This was at the Post Office ?

GOINS: No, this was at the Record Center, that outfit came from High Point, North Carolina, And they brought some Negroes with them. I asked someone, " Didn't you have any Negro clerks down there?" He said, " No, all the Negroes done when they were in High Point were janitors and messengers." When they came here they had to hire Negro clerks. A bunch of those people got together and went to the colonel and told the colonel, we want separate washrooms and separate cafeterias and we want the Negroes to sit in the back of the bus and we want to put them off by themselves. The colonel started out by saying we have no control over the busses and second there shall be no separate washrooms and cafeterias and next, the work will be divided equally to every one and any of you that don't like that you can go back to High Point. A bunch of them went back to High Point, North Carolina. And do you know a lot of those people went back to High Point. That seems crazy to me.

RESH: Could you tell us a little bit more about the Post Office, were there salary differential?

GOINS: No, no, no, no.

RESH: Between blacks and whites?

GOINS: No, they couldn't do that, but what they could do, was not hire blacks in the same capacity. Now we had college graduates at the Post Office and they were pitching mail just like me, but when the white fellows graduated, they could be bookkeepers and well, not working on the floor pitching mail, they could work up in the executive offices and in the front offices, payroll offices, they are there now, because a fellow belonging to our church works there now, he's a typist. But at that time, only thing that a black man could do was carry mail, drive the little mail trucks not the big ones, the little mail trucks and pitch mail in the field and sweep and be a mail carrier.

RESH: Then promotions were extremely hard to get?

GOINS: There were no such things as promotions, for at that time they had no black supervisor and from the floor that's all that you could be, be a supervisor. And every certain man was a supervisor, standing around with one of those brown coats on with his hands behind him. That has always been the most politically operated service in the government services. The Post Office. Now when they changed the administration they didn't fire the ones that had top jobs, but the Democrat administration came in , well some Democrat in the office would get the job and they would put this fellow in his job. They couldn't fire him, but they could manipulate like that and they did. Cause that didn't bother us any , cause we never

did have any top jobs anyway.

RESH: Did things change at all, did things improve at all when former Mayor Dickmann came in, that was in 1944, as Postmaster?

GOINS: Yes, yes, things changed, he began to put them on the floor, he began to upgrade them and they gave them jobs they never had before. That's when things began to change, when Jackson got out. So, from Dickmann's time on its been real nice. That's when we got the chance to prove what we could do, cause long as Jackson was there it was rough.

RESH: Did you find at all that during the second World War, that any or either of the two Negro newspapers in town, the Argus or the St. Louis American, did either or both of them give the Negro postal workers considerable support ?

GOINS: Well, yes they did, as much as they could, but they couldn't do much. This is just a southern hick town that's all, although there's a difference between this place, we don't even have street-cars now, well the only difference between, St. Louis and southern towns was that we had streetcars. That's all. How we don't even have streetcars, now we all have buses.

RESH: A couple of weeks ago we talked with Mr. Nathaniel Sweets, who is the editor of the St. Louis American, and he said that St. Louis Negroes had the terms “down South and up South”.

GOINS: Yes, yes.

RESH: Down South means Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia and Alabama, and “up South” was St. Louis.

GOINS: Yes, that's it, the next state is Arkansas, a lot of those people would leave Arkansas and hit St. Louis and this was it. They were “up North” then. I remember when we first started going in the city offices, city offices, I mean like the city restaurants, the city owned places. And that was because the Negroes got together and they got to kicking, they got tired of being taxed for nothing. Now I'll tell you what my sister did in St. Charles, well when they paid their taxes in that time they were not allowed in the library, at that time we couldn't go to the library. I wasn't living there at the time, I was living with my mother. Well when they paid their taxes they gave them an itemized list, account of where each dollar went, well my sister drew a line through that library and went and paid them. And they wanted to know how she was doing that. She said, “Why should I pay for something I don't use?”. And they didn't do anything about it, they just took those taxes.

RESH: Getting back to World War II period, what were your recollections of Basil Grandoff, did he give considerable support to St. Louis Negroes?

GOINS: Yes, yes he was well liked, he was well supported, because every time he spoke at the auditorium it was packed. But it was packed with white people too, that's one thing all of them weren't against us, but we have had a hard time, but there has always been some people for us. And that helped out a whole lot. We would have missed out if all of them would have been down on us, we would have been slaves. There is good and bad in every race.

RESH: Would you care to contrast racial conditions in Chicago with those in St. Louis?

GOINS: Now or then?

RESH: Then or now either one. You went to Chicago in 1956?

GOINS: Yes, but I had been there before then because I was living there with my aunt. Now Chicago was about as high as ice cream is over mud, as compared with St. Louis. They lived together, they went to school together, they could go to any theater they wanted to, any restaurant, that's the way it was in Chicago, but not here. When I left here in 1956 I couldn't go to the Forum, down here on Seventh Street, none of the restaurants could I go to. Famous or one of the stores, set up a lunch counter in the basement for black people, see. We couldn't go to the theater and show "no," we went to the American Theater and that was the only one we could go to see the general road shows. But in Chicago you could always go. We couldn't, go out here and swim in any pool down here. If I wanted to go swimming I'd get up a bunch of us boys and get in an automobile or catch a freight train and go up to Chicago and swim in Lake Mich. and come on back. A many times I did that when I was little. But now St. Louis is improved, we can go anywhere now, any restaurant, shows, poolrooms, and schools as they do any-where. I'll tell you one thing, as long as those schools in Chicago were integrated, just ordinary didn't anybody kick, but when they passed this law in 1954, that when they began kicking, I don't know why. Why we always mixed schools in Chicago. Why one thing it was, one reason was that there were just as many whites in some neighborhoods, just equally divided, just whites and blacks, we just lived next door to each other, in this block and that block and like that, even on that south side. I'll tell you one of the main things that did that. Do you want this to go with that, because I'm going to talk about us now?

RESH: Well we can reverse the tape \_\_\_\_\_.

GOINS: Some of us, I don't want to live by myself, see. All right now, a lot of them came from the South, here, in Chicago and New York and the big cities, they had it in for the white man, see. And they just made things rotten, if you understand what I mean. Now, like buying a house and wrecking it and tearing it up and breaking windows and not putting the glass back in the window. Well my home, lot of Negroes are decent, the majority of them are, one thing, well in every place, because it happened in Chicago, what one black man does bad or evil they accuse the whole race of being that way. Now like a fellow, of course he's here now, but we came down from the Engineering Procuring Office, when that marine shot those three police officers in Cleveland. He walked up to me and said, "Well, Bob, what are you going to do now?" I said, "What do you mean what am I going to do now?" So that man shot those policemen in Cleveland. I said, "Wait a minuet now, I don't even know who he was and I don't know the policemen, I'm sitting way down here, almost a thousand miles from Cleveland and you asked me what am I going to do." I said, "Now listen, that just like me calling a child rapist, the only people I ever heard of raping three and five year old children were old white men. You haven't heard of a black man raping a child, now he will rape somebody, but he will get him a woman, somebody he'll have some pleasure. Now suppose I call you a child rapist, I said, I have just the privilege to call you that as you have to call me whatever that marine that shot those policemen." I told him to start looking at it that way, I said, " You better start looking at it that way." I said. If you want to judge all of us

pick somebody decent, somebody that's done something, the more of us have been good than have been bad." I said, "Well-got the same thing in all races, you don't judge a whole race by what one or two people do." Now that's one thing about the Italians in Chicago was complaining about, the other races of people up there down the Italians because of Capone, well actually he was a Sicilian, see. Well most of the gangsters were Italians. And they were down on the whole Italian race because of the Capone gang. Well, that was some of the Italians are the best people in the world, just like everybody else, they are human. Well, why should they down all Italians , judge them by the bad ones. During the 20's and the early 30's, while prohibition, they had speak-easies and things like that, I could go to any speak-easy I wanted to.

RESH: You could?

GOINS: Sure, any joint here. Chicago or New York.

RESH: Were the joints integrated then?

GOINS; Yeah, they were always that. All right just like the theatrical world, they have always been good for the black actors and actresses in the theatrical world. Now in those days they called them "good timers" . And if they liked you and you were one of them, then you were just one of them. I use to go to a lot of places like that and then sometimes we would go down to New York and go down in Greenwich Village , they just treat you just like everybody else, I had the same money in my pocket that they had. And that's all there was to it.

RESH: You got around then in the 20's and the 30\*s, you did a lot of traveling? When you were in New York and those places, did you go down in Harlem and hear the music.

GOINS: Yes, I went to Harlem.

RESH: Duke Ellington?

GOINS: Duke Ellington, yes, I was a musician, when I was younger and I was all set to make Duke's band, but I got married. And after about a year, after our first baby came, then I realized that I couldn't raise a family making one night stands and living on buses. So it was either the family or the music I love my family , I can get another job. But I was all set to make Duke's band. I played with the Sonic Band here, and we would play concert, and in the band we had two or three little jazzers and I played it too. And I could have played with Earl Hines in Chicago, see. But Earl had a reputation for not paying his men. So I said, " This isn't for me. ", cause the first time I got off that bandstand and he didn't pay me, well, we would have had it. So I just couldn't play with him. But I was all set to make Duke's band, I was a trumpet man, the old Cotton Club, of course at the Apollo that's where most of them got their start, Lena Home, the tisket, tasket girl.

RESH: Ella Fitzgerald ?

GOINS: Yes, Ella Fitzgerald, I knew a lot of them. Around then my aunt lived in New York, I stayed in New York and Chicago with my aunt every now and then, then come back home, here and stay with my parents during school years. But after that, after I got on my own, then

I went where I wanted to go. From the time I was sixteen to I was twenty-three, I married when I was twenty-three, that same little girl right there, we will be married thirty-nine years this coming 3rd of December. But during that time I got around, I know what it is all about. The entertainment people, I don't know, we didn't know if you were white, black, blue, yellow or red or purple. If they liked you all you had to do was to be able to keep up with them.

RESH: Was the music pretty good in St. Louis during the 20's and 30's?

GOINS: Music in St. Louis wasn't pretty good for anybody, this has always been an old conservative town. At nine o'clock the people would go into their homes and pull them in with them. That's why Guy Lombardo and the big bands, Lou Baron, and Artie Shaw, the old maestro, Ben Beirnie and Little Boy Blue, when they come to St. Louis, they would stay in St. Louis about two weeks at the most. They used to come to the country club and up to the old Hotel, at the St. Louis University, where the girls dormitory is now, on Lindell and Spring. They came there, now, during that time out on Compton and Pine, there was a place called Lee Hills, and those boys would leave those the bandstands and come there at Lee Hills, and we would all get our instruments and sit in there and we would jam all night . They didn't care who you were, just so you could keep up with them or keep them ahead of you, there was no prejudice along those lines. We had a whale of a good time, ate together, drank together, if one guy got too drunk and another got too drunk, we slept together. I t was just in this sophisticated world and now, a lot of our boys in order to make a living at music, they went to Chicago and New York. I know where Louie Armstrong came from New Orleans, he stopped right here in St. Louis. The old Meadowbrook Country Club, have you ever heard of that?

RESH: Yes.

GOINS; The old Meadowbrook Country Club, out in the county, I can't think of the band that the fellow brought, but he had two Negro players with him, but they didn't want to keep them at the country club. I think it was Little Boy Blue, he was a great big fellow and they called him Little Boy Blue, and his name was Blue, I can't think of his name, but his last name was Blue. But they called him Little Boy Blue. And he had two Negroes, playing with him and they didn't want to put them up like the rest of the band, but he just told them, " If they don't stay, we don't stay." So they had to put them up,- because they had a contract. Other than that.

RESH: What about Negro entertainment spots in St. Louis during the 20's and 30's and 40's?

GOINS: We had old Jazz Land, there were dance halls all over the place and of course, during the 20's there were speakeasies, the cluttered up the place, I knew every speakeasies from the river to the county.

RESH: Were any of these speaks run by the Negroes?

GOINS: Yes.

RESH: Owned and run?

GOINS: Yes. Lots of them.

RESH: Did they ever use candy shops and confectionaries, as fronts for speakeas, or for moonshine?

GOINS: No.

RESH: Because they did that in Harlem'

GOINS: No, but they did use candy stores and ice cream parlors for gambling, my wife's cousin run one. On Vandeventer, between Winter and West Belle, he had a ice cream place, I don't know if it was a Velvet Freeze or what, well they put ice cream in the front and in the back they had them a gambling joint. And right around the corner on Delmar, they had a House of Custard. Here's what started that, he worked for like .... His first pay for two weeks was like ninety-five dollars. He said, "Shucks I could beat that."

RESH; What period are you talking about then?

GOINS: This was around 1930.

RESH: Okay.

GOINS: He said, " I can beat this." So he quit, and went to this ice cream company and they set him up and in the back he opened up his place. And in the first year he told me, he said, " Bob I made 13,000 dollars, but I only paid income taxes on nine. And then he got this place down on Delmar, and he just went out, he wanted me to come in with him, but my wife couldn't see it. This is what I got to say about that, we couldn't go to the white people's places, but they came to ours and had a ball, they didn't care who colored their as long as you had that long green .....

RESH: This is the nightclubs you're talking about now?

GOINS: Clubs and dance halls and things like that.

RESH: But the speakeas were integrated ?

GOINS: Yes.

RESH: How do you account for that? Why would there be a difference between a nightclub and a speakeasy?

GOINS: All right, the speakeasy was illegal in the first place and you know people love to do things that are illegal anyway and they don't care who they do it with. That's the only thing that I could say would account for it. Another thing different between now and then, people acted like decent folks, even us, we go out now and want to fight and everything and anywhere, we went for pleasure. Just like you would go for pleasure, so what. I'm drinking out of my bottle and you're drinking out of yours, you're not bothering me and I'm not bothering you, and the man behind the counter didn't care who those bottles belonged to, they could belong to a purple man. Now that accounted for that, see. 'But the real nice places, now

probably, we could have went, maybe the management didn't care, but he had to cater to the customer, the people.

RESH: That was the galling fact about Harlem in the 20's when places like the King Cotton, the Cotton Club, I think it was black owned, black performers but they refused to allow black customers, at one point at the Cotton Club, despite white customers came in there.

GOINS: I don't know when that was, that must have been before I was born, because every since I have been able to know it.....

RESH: That was in the late 30's, in the real late 30's.

GOINS: No, no,

RESH: I read that somewhere.

COINS: No, that's wrong. I was in and out of there, because Cab Galloway, Duke Ellington, that place was held between Cab and Duke , but it was integrated. A lady in Chicago, now, an interior decorator, I used to work for her, she lived at 1010 Fifth Avenue, right on the corner of 82d Street and Fifth Avenue, right across from the Metropolitan Art Museum , that's in Central Park, around that whole block there, on the west side of the street. She lived in an apartment on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 82d Street, she had a big penthouse on top there, with glass all around. She was telling me how they used to go slumming in Harlem. She said, "We would never do it now, we might get our heads knocked off." They used to go there, they went to the Cotton Club, they would go to the Apollo Theater , they would go to Connie's Inn and I don't know some of the other places like that, they had no trouble at all. None, they almost made Harlem, see, they called themselves going slumming, they would come there and mingle with me . It never was the rich people that was down on us anyway, it's the poor ones. It never was the wealthy ones. It's worse now than it has ever been, when I was coming up, shucks, I didn't even hear it, my mother raised me in a neighborhood and it was mixed, but they were decent people, they weren't mad at each other. We didn't bother about race prejudice when I was coming up, to a certain extent. My mother told me, well, she taught me what would happen, but she told me to be nice. So all I had to do was to be nice. I'm glad I did, because some of my best friends are white people. Matter of fact I never judged people by their color, I don't care what color you are, I judge you by your character and I've had a lot of white people say the same thing to me. But there's lot of them that don't do it. And there's a lot of us that don't do it. Now, we got a friend, when they had street cars, she would not sit down beside a white person, we told her that she was crazy. I asked her "Why do you hate them, they have not done any thing to you." I said, " You're not suppose to hate anybody." So, I tell some white people that, and they think that all the hatred is on their side. And I say, " No, it is equally divided." It has always been. But it's up to you whether you want to be a decent human being or ..... see. That's the way it was, it wasn't all that bad, of course there were certain things we couldn't go to, turn right around, the same person that wouldn't let us go to their dance halls, would come in the speakeasies and we would dance together. That's the way life ran, but actually they are more separated now than they were then. The only difference now is that we can get a decent job and we allowed to go to the theaters. Here's something else I couldn't go to St. Louis University neither Washington University. I had to go to Chicago to go to college. But that has changed now.

RESH: Did you go to the University of Chicago?

GOINS: For while it was public, Chicago U. Well I had my choice, my mother wanted, she said you can go anywhere you want to go. She wrote to Northwestern and also Chicago, and got all the literature. I said, "I would just as soon go to Chicago" I had an aunt living there, I didn't have to live in the dormitories, so I went to Chicago. Another reason, as for as I knew that was the most liberal college that I had ever known of, Chicago U. And I had a good time, a lot of times I didn't know whether I was black, purple, blue, or yellow, I was just one of the guys. That's the way it should be. That's why these kids now days are changing things, these young people.

RESH: How do you think they are changing things? GOINS: They have more of us in with them and more of them are helping us and more adults, just like Marlon Brando, he's in everything. Now I don't believe in fighting and violence, and all that monkey business, but I mean, as a matter of fact, everything we have gotten so far has come through the court. Supreme Court decisions, but I don't believe in fighting, I'm more like Martin Luther King, I'll ask you for it and keep on talking at you and show you the place I need it and deserve it and maybe I can wear you down. And you'll say, " Come on let's give this man what he wants and get rid of him. And you do that and I get improve what I can do, and you say, " This guy is better than I thought that he was." I have had that to happen, see.

RESH: : Did you notice any change, Mr. Goins, in World War II in race relations in the city, did it seem because of the influence of migrants from the South, that there were increased tensions in the city?

GOINS: Not during World War II, but after that. Yeah, yeah, during World War II, yeah, we'll say during World War II, it got more tensions, because my son worked at McDonnell, he helped design and build that capsule that Glenn went around the world in, but the reason he quit McDonnell, he worked under a supervisor that was from the South and they just could not get along, he didn't want to recognize his ability. So my son said, "I guess I better quit before I kill him." So he quit, then he went to Granite City Steel Company, he was some kind of metallurgist or something, I don't know, he tested steel. Well, he didn't like it over there, so then he came out and he went on the police force. And that's something else, when I was coming up they didn't have black policemen or firemen. But now they got them, one of my best friends was one of the first men , one of the first ones to go on the force when they integrated it.

RSSH: Who was that?

GOINS:A boy named Frank Cook. You know this Grimes up here at the 8th district on Locust, he knows him well because he served with him . Middlebrook, Gross.

RESH: There was one Negro policeman during the war, but I believe he left for service, Bolden.

GOINS: Yeah.

RESH: Edward Bolden.

GOINS: But they say , they would treat each other .... But during that time they didn't put them too much in the white neighborhoods but somebody told me they were not allowed to arrest white people, but they were, I know that, they didn't discriminate on thing like that, and even the firemen, my son's a city fireman now.

RESH: Well, Mr. Goins I want to thank for sharing your experiences and reminiscences with us,

GOINS: Well, I hope I did some good, I enjoyed it because every now and then I think back on what I did and what I'm doing now that I could not do then, I'll tell you what my brother, my grandfather is a full-blooded Cherokee Indian, my brother, the second one, he looked just like an Indian, he had coal black hair and red face, high cheek bone, oily skin. He could go in the theaters and shows that I couldn't go in, my brother. Alright, he got sick once and he went to this No. 1. Hospital down on Lafayette, of course it is integrated now, but he went down there rather than to go to Homer Phillip's. So we didn't want to go down there to see him and spoil it, cause he had gotten in there, so I stayed away as long as I possibly could, so I went to see him and the nurse asked me, " Is he your kin?" I said, " Yes, he's my brother." She said," Oh, no, no, no. I said, " Yes, he is too." She couldn't believe it. I went to see him and that next evening the transferred him to Homer Phillip's Hospital, they did. And he could go places I could not go, he could pass for Mexican or Indian, he had long black, straight hair, high cheek bones, oily red skin. My mother is fairer than you are, she had long, wavy hair, way down her back, I got two sisters that are real fair. I am the color of my father, so we say we don't know what we are, we are just messed up, that's all.

RESH: You've got all of America in your veins.

GOINS: Just about. But I don't care, I know one thing, I a man, a man.

RESH: Thank you very much Mr. Goins.

GOINS: You're welcome.