

as well as other communities on the arsenal. The researcher looked for the names of those interviewed in the Huntsville telephone directory. In one case, the couple interviewed over twenty years before had been quite elderly at the time of the interview, so the name of a son who was mentioned in the article was called.

When the researcher called the numbers, she always began by saying, “This is Beverly Curry, and I work on Redstone Arsenal.” This was to prevent people, who wouldn’t recognize her name, from hanging up because they thought she was a telemarketer. No one hung up.

As to be expected, while the names were the same, some of the people called had no association with the person interviewed years ago. However, some of the calls resulted in interviews. In one instance, the person who answered the telephone had the same name as his father, who had been the one interviewed for the *Redstone Rocket*. His very elderly father lived with him. He talked with his father, and they consented to an interview. In two other instances, the person who answered the telephone was the person sought. The son who had been named in one of the articles was reached and agreed to an interview.

The Interviews. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the subjects. In two instances, elderly gentlemen were met at a local Burger King. The researcher knew from past experience that some elderly gentlemen seem to hesitate over the propriety of having a woman visit them alone in their home. If the researcher sensed any hesitation when she offered to come to a person’s home, she offered to meet in a public place of the person’s choice. One woman preferred to meet the researcher in a meeting room the public library.

In general, most people seemed to find the researcher coming to their home convenient for them. In a number of instances, a daughter or other family member was present when the researcher arrived. It was noted that this person usually hovered in an adjoining room, giving privacy to their elderly relative, but ready to step in. The researcher appreciated the caretaker’s concern and found it appropriate. In almost all cases, the caretaker/relative became interested in the “conversation” of the interview and joined it. Some of the “children” of the subjects were old enough to remember the pre-arsenal days and/or were very knowledgeable about the people and the communities because they had heard about them all their lives.

Based on prior interviewing experience in Black communities, the researcher was aware that many Black people have not had White visitors in their home. This sometimes causes what could be termed an initial sense of formality as the subjects (and/or other family member present) evaluate the researcher. The researcher always began an interview with a question that people are comfortable discussing. She asked the names of the subject’s parents and grandparents, and proceeded to ask other questions about family. The subjects sensed the researcher’s genuine interest in their family, and they enjoyed sharing their memories. The subject would become involved in the conversation, and the comfort level that comes with people discussing a common interest developed and lent itself to the entire interview.