



Winthrop University
Digital Commons @ Winthrop
University

[Browse All Oral History Interviews](#)

[Oral History Program](#)

4-27-1981

Interview with W. T. "Dub" Massey

W. T. Massey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/oralhistoryprogram>

Recommended Citation

Massey, W. T., "Interview with W. T. "Dub" Massey" (1981). *Browse All Oral History Interviews*. OH 138.
<https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/oralhistoryprogram/153>

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History Program at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Browse All Oral History Interviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact bramed@winthrop.edu.

LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview #138
MASSEY, W.T. "Dub"

MASSEY, W.T. "Dub"

Member of Friendship 9, Guidance Counselor, Assistant Pastor

Interviewed: April 21, 1981

Interviewer: Phil O'Quinn

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 45 minutes

Abstract: In his April 27th, 1981 interview with Phil O'Quinn, W.T. Massey recollects his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement as one of the Friendship 9 protestors and non-violent activists. Massey retells the preparation and events leading up to the sit-in at McCrory's lunch counter. Massey also shares the negative effects he experienced with his involvement as an activist and leader in the Civil Rights Movement, in particular, his arrest from the McCrory's sit-in. Massey concludes his interview with advice and hope for the black community. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Friendship 9, Grassroots movement, sit-in, non-violent protests, Rock Hill, McCrory's, discrimination, segregation, Jim Crow, NAACP

Interview Session (April 21, 1981): Digital File

Time Keywords

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:14 *Question:* Education background? *Answer:* A guidance counselor in York and assistant pastor, part time at Carrowinds. Went to Emmett Scott High School, Friendship Junior College, Johnson C. Smith, Winthrop, military.

00:01:10 *Question:* Civil rights involvement? *Answer:* Freshman at Friendship Junior College and heard about NAACP few protests. Students from Friendship Junior College got together to meet – wanted to break down the barriers of Jim Crow and segregation.

00:03:23 *Question:* Feelings towards Jim Crow when you were young? *Answer:* Didn't have any personal ones. Lived in a place that had everything he needed. People knew

Massey's grandfather.

- 00:04:20 **[no question]** Back to civil rights involvement. Students did not like the food on campus at Friendship Junior College – wanted to go downtown to eat. Students began marching during lunch breaks. Students were prepared to handle hecklers, etc.
- 00:06:50 *Question:* How were the police? *Answer:* They were hostile, because they were expressing the sentiment of their constituents. Students picketing for several weeks but felt they weren't being that effective. Someone suggested the students go in and sit at the counter at McCrory's. Students would leave when they were asked. Would go from lunch counter to lunch counter. Students felt they still weren't being effective, so they decided to stay at a lunch counter, even when they were asked to leave. Police would man-handle the students. Massey says it was hard to control himself in those situations. Massey talks about the students' communication with NAACP. People's jobs were threatened, because of the students' involvement.
- 00:12:20 **[no question]** McCrory's sit-in. Police took them away and pressed charges. Charged with trespassing and disturbing the peace. There were no signs keeping black people out, but it was known. Taken to jail. Decided to serve the sentence of 30 days of hard labor. Went to court, had two of the best black lawyers in the country: Matthew Perry one of them.
- 00:15:15 *Question:* Did the NAACP approve of you going to prison? *Answer:* No. They were concerned for the Friendship 9's welfare. Others saw it as a breakthrough in the Civil Rights movement. Went to York County Prison. Massey told to shave his goatee off. The prisons were segregated. Massey tells story about a protest in prison – put in solitary confinement.
- 00:17:45 *Question:* When were you in prison? *Answer:* February 1961. Released in March. Massey talks about the atmosphere in prison and how it differs from today. Massey did not have any fear in prison. CORE gave the Friendship 9 a week trip to New York to talk and share their experiences
- 00:20:45 *Question:* Reception from Friendship Junior College? *Answer:* "We were heroes." Massey initially did not want to be involved. Took part in another protest with women – got arrested. President Kennedy vindicated participants in the civil rights movement. Massey refers to a mark in his record in Rock Hill.
- 00:23:14 *Question:* Did you feel the cause was worthwhile when you were prison? *Answer:* Yes. Massey talks about religion. Sang "We Shall Overcome" in prison. Had a great feeling of importance.
- 00:24:13 *Question:* Did the black community in Rock Hill support you? *Answer:* Tremendous

- support. Refers to mass gathering near prison to support Friendship 9.
- 00:24:50 *Question:* Parents? *Answer:* Finally accepted his work and realized they would not be hurt.
- 00:25:15 *Question:* Were you ever frightened? *Answer:* Only once. John Gaines was sent to York and no one knew where he was.
- 00:26:20 *Question:* Any negative feelings? *Answer:* No negativity now. May have different 15, 10 years ago.
- 00:26:42 [slightly inaudible] Massey talks about motivating and educating young, black males.
- 00:30:10 *Question:* Discrimination in the job market? *Answer:* Definitely. Political prisoner. People in the Rock Hill community always assumed Massey was an instigator in civil rights events/protests. Massey mentions his credentials and how he has not been given a job that meets his education/experience. Political and economic discrimination. Massey says this used to make him mad.
- 00:35:06 *Question:* Would you do it again? *Answer:* "I would do it the same way..." Massey's grandfather was very influential. People would come in train protesters – desensitizing them to violence and verbal abuse, creating time schedules, etc. Training sessions would last approximately an hour. At first, the training sessions were upsetting, but Massey grew to enjoy them.
- 00:40:25 *Question:* Do you know the best way to lead protestors? *Answer:* Yes, but would the system allow him to do that. Massey speculates that he could lose his job. He feels very adept to lead any group looking to affect change.
- 00:41:13 *Question:* Current activities? *Answer:* New President of the Rock Hill branch of the NAACP. Working on establishing public events and help the NAACP's image. Massey wants to put the organization back with the people. Involved in a fraternity at Winthrop. Massey wants to increase awareness in the black community on how to succeed and survive. Massey talks about the importance of the church in the black community.
- 00:45:22 *End of interview*