

Denison University Denison Digital Commons

Writing Our Story

Black Studies

7-19-2010

Clyde Brown Oral History

Clyde Brown

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/writingourstory>

 Part of the [Organization Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Clyde, "Clyde Brown Oral History" (2010). *Writing Our Story*. 75.
<http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/writingourstory/75>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Black Studies at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Writing Our Story by an authorized administrator of Denison Digital Commons.

Dr. Clyde Brown, Oral History
Denison University Student, Class of 1973

Recorded: July 19th, 2010
Interviewed by Vanessa Butler
Transcribed by Kiara Sims

Part 1

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay. Well, hello again. My name is Vanessa Butler and I am a member of the Class of 2011 at Denison University. I am interviewing you to gain a deeper understanding of how marginalized groups used protest to create social transformation by gaining power and influence.

In particular, this study seeks to explore and document the historical origins and dynamics of periods of student protest at Denison, by conducting oral history interviews with alumni, students, faculty, and administrators who were a part of these periods. We are interested in learning about the factors and conditions that, one, brought about protest on campus and, two, determined your participation or lack thereof in protest to create social transformation.

Our data collection goal is to complement Denison's existing special collection in archived materials on student protest by collecting oral narratives from students, faculty, and staff that participated in black empowerment protest, the Black Student Union, and the development of the Black Studies Center at Denison. Based on our research thus far, Kent State University is the only other college that has a digital archive of oral narratives related to the Kent State shooting, located at their library website.

Your interview will be tape recorded, transcribed, and placed in a digital archive available at the Denison University Library through its online website, special collections and archive. This interview will take no longer than two hours. You may leave the study at anytime. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with Denison University.

The principal investigators for this study are Dr. Tina D. Pierce and Mr. Roger Kosson. Doane Library is sponsoring this project through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Next Generation Library Mellon grant for 2010-2012. Do you have any questions about this project before we begin?

[DR. BROWN]: No, I do not.

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay. At this point I would like for you, you've already done this, to read over and sign the consent form we have given you. To participate in this research you must agree to have your interview tape recorded, transcribed, and placed in a digital

archive available at the Denison University Library through its online website, special collections and archive. Do I have your permission to audiotape this interview?

[DR. BROWN]: Yes, you do.

[INTERVIEWER]: Audiotape recordings will be transcribed and will become a part of this research data along with my notes. The audiotape data will contain appropriate attributions to your preferred name and title, as well as your affiliation with Denison University at the time of protest activities.

Upon your request, portions of your interview may be labeled confidential and separated from the remainder of your answers. You may make this request at anytime during the interview by telling me to keep your answer to a particular question or portion of an answer confidential. I will turn off the audiotape recorder upon your request to make confidential statements. Once you have finished making your confidential statements please inform me so I can turn the audio tape recorder back on.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this project. I will ask you questions related to Denison University and student protest. You are expected to answer each question honestly and to the best of your abilities based on your knowledge and involvement with Denison University and student protest.

Information and details obtained in this interview will be used for several purposes: to complement the existing special collection in archived materials for the creation of digital archive and as data in scholarly papers. There are several different subsections within the interview, including: background and context, the campus community and your relationship to it, power of the Black community, the Black Student Union, the Black Student Union and their role in protest, and finally consequences and outcomes of political action and social change.

These first questions that I will be asking are background questions about how you came to be at Denison and your particular context, as well as the dynamics of the rest of the campus at that time. So, Dr. Brown, what city and state are you from?

[DR. BROWN]: Currently I am living in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[INTERVIEWER]: Is that where you were before you came to Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: Before I came to Denison I lived in Cleveland, Ohio.

[INTERVIEWER]: And what kind of high school did you attend? Was it private, public, independent?

[DR. BROWN]: I was at Cleveland John Adams, a public high school.

Part 2

[INTERVIEWER]: Can you describe the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic composition of your high school?

[DR. BROWN]: My high school was a dynamic flux, as was Cleveland at the time. So when I first entered into John Adams High School as a tenth grader, it was probably roughly seventy to thirty whites to blacks. And when I graduated it had reversed to about seventy to thirty blacks to whites.

[INTERVIEWER]: What types of extracurricular activities, clubs, or organizations were you active in in high school?

[DR. BROWN]: Anyone that I could get into it.

[INTERVIEWER]: [Laughter] Can you give me a few examples?

[DR. BROWN]: I was on the football team for a short period of time. I was on the Boosters choir. I participated in the video team and did a show, Movies at Noontime, a hall guard, [inaudible].

[INTERVIEWER]: Did you hold any leadership positions in those activities, clubs, or organizations?

[DR. BROWN]: Not that I can recall.

[INTERVIEWER]: Overall, did you expect for your college experience to be similar to your high school experience?

[DR. BROWN]: Like a lot of high school students, I was led to believe that when I get to college, how difficult it was gonna be, I was going to have a really hard time. I would be fortunate to get "C's" in college.

So I went through a lot of trepidation. And you expect college to be a little tougher. People were all coming from, at least had some interests, who are competitive, etcetera. But you expect it to be a little bit tougher. That was what my expectations were.

[INTERVIEWER]: Could you please discuss the factors that informed your decision to attend Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: Quite easy. At that time, Denison had a very, very small minority population. In fact, I believe it was only about six, the year I first heard about Denison. At that time, I believe he was a sophomore at that time; oh no, he was a Junior. Fellow classmate named Henry Durant was touring the state, I guess, with Denison as a student recruiter to encourage more black students to come to Denison.

So I went to his presentation, I went to all college presentations. And so I heard Denison's presentation, and it was interesting. I took the time to go out and actually go visit Denison ahead of time, and I was impressed and fell in love with the campus. It was a beautiful campus and it still is today. So it was between the campus, Henry's presentation, my financial aid package. It was Denison all the way.

[INTERVIEWER]: In terms of academics, the culture of the college, and the kind of experience you would have, what were some of your expectations of Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: In terms of, say it again.

[INTERVIEWER]: In terms of academics, the culture of the college, what were some of your expectations and impressions of Denison, outside of the presentation that you've just spoken to?

[DR. BROWN]: As I said, I was led to believe that it would be very difficult. That it is a tough academic school, and that a lot of students find it, unlike high school, hard to maintain C's. I went there with a lot of fear. I was not the best student in high school. I was in what was called the academically talented level in our class. But we kind of fooled around a little bit. So I went there with a lot of expectations. I knew I had to work a lot harder to pass.

Culture-wise, I knew I was going to an environment that was different from where I was originally. I knew that my classmates, all together, as my freshman black students make it into the class, it was about forty black students out of two thousand students. A very small percentage. But I understood that, I accepted that, and I figured that I would be fine. I would be okay. And it was fine.

[INTERVIEWER]: As a prospective student, were there any stories about racial tension on Denison's campus, you heard about before arriving?

[DR. BROWN]: Not really. But keep in mind that it was only six students. My freshman year it was forty black students, the year before that it was fifteen black students, the year before that it was nine, and then six and three. There weren't any black students there. I mean, there's always been a black student presence at Denison going back to the 1800's. But it never had been any significant numbers until my class, my freshman class. Yes, I heard some stories. Occasionally people had some [inaudible]...

Part 3

[DR. BROWN]: ...but nothing that worried me too much.

[INTERVIEWER]: Well, now that I've had the opportunity to hear more about your background before your arrival at Denison, we will now move into the second part of the interview, which is the campus community and your relationship to it. These questions

will also explore what was going on in the country at that time as well. So, to jump right into it, what was going on in the country at the time when you arrived at Denison? Were there any important social or cultural or political issues going on at that time?

[DR. BROWN]: Oh, quite a bit. There was a tremendous amount of turmoil, or changes happening in our country. September 1969, this was during the midst of the Civil Rights Movement. It was a year or two after Martin Luther King had been slain. There was unrest across the country in colleges.

There were protests, of course, about the Vietnam War. There was uproar about being drafted because no one wanted to be drafted. A lot of us went to college to try and avoid the draft, if you did not have a high enough number. It was the time of the hippie movement, the time of free love, and Woodstock took place in 1969, that summer. I can't think of anytime in our country's history that had any more changes than that period.

Not to mention the fact that because of the Civil Rights Movement there was a sea change in the number of black students that were being represented at white colleges. Prior to, let's say 1966, '67, because before I got to Denison, most colleges campuses had very few blacks, a token number. And the few who were there were mostly athletes. And in the South, there were none. Most colleges did not have any black athletes, etcetera, or black students for that matter.

It was in the time in 1966 or 1967, through, like 1973, there was a huge change in the number of black students represented in major colleges. Just Ohio State and [inaudible] who had students for a long period of time. Like I said, in the south, University of Alabama, and Auburn, all the sudden, they started having black athletes and so on and so forth. And so there was a big change across the country and particularly in college campuses. But at the same time period there was a lot of student unrest.

Problems with protesting the Vietnam War, problems with protesting students expressing their rights to be heard. Denison was also called for that movement, maybe to a lesser extent [inaudible]. That was the same time frame that Kent State took place, the shooting at Kent State. So there was a lot of trouble on a lot of campuses, and we were exposed to it.

[INTERVIEWER]: What was going on in Granville or in the Ohio area during the time you arrived? Were there any, like, pertinent issues around the closer proximity areas that affected you as a student?

[DR. BROWN]: No, I think [inaudible]. For the most part, Denison, even Granville, is kind of an oasis. Granville is basically the people who work in the university; it's a small community. But besides that, Denison being up on the hill is kind of isolated from everything else. [inaudible] It's not like you have the big university like Ohio State where you are in the middle of a larger city.

Basically we were the biggest part of the city, and we are up on the hill isolated from everything else. Our food came up the hill, everything we needed up the hill, our entertainment up the hill. Interactions with the town were minimal. At the time I was there, we had a movie theater there. They might have a movie theater, but we had movies on top of the hill. So, basically everything was on top of the hill, so interactions with the town were minimal.

As for black students, maybe even more so. Other than buying clothing in town, I wouldn't go there for the things you would normally buy. There wasn't much to buy in town. There was a pharmacist, but there wasn't much in town anyway. So there was little interaction with any of us, I think, from campus for the most part, and the town itself. Newark was a little further away, six miles away, may have a little interaction, but not that much. Basically we were isolated. So what happened...

Part 4

[DR. BROWN]:... Things that were happening in Granville were happening on campus. If anything, the people in town maybe reacted to what happened on campus. But most of them were professor or maintenance people, or the people who worked on the campus anyway, so they were [inaudible] already.

[INTERVIEWER]: What were some of your initial reactions after being at Denison as a student?

[DR. BROWN]: My first reactions? I never realized how I was impressed and overwhelmed by the amount of money and wealth of the students that Denison had. Not myself and not a lot of black students, mostly my white student counterparts. It was impressive. On our campus you couldn't have a car until your sophomore year, at least at the time I was there.

[INTERVIEWER]: It's still that way.

[DR. BROWN]: Not until the end of your sophomore year. But the cars students had were not the typical jalopies or second-hand cars. They were Volvos, BMW's, and Corvettes - the kind of cars that the teachers could not afford. So students had a tremendous amount of wealth at Denison, and not to mention the fact that when they weren't dressing up as hippies, they could dress. They had fine clothes.

It's no secret, okay, that the women in Denison are exceptional in their looks compared to any other campus in Ohio and in the nation. They have more attractive women at Denison than anyplace I've ever been before. And I know it was because of the amount of money they had.

Other than that, you know, I visited the school ahead of time, so I knew what to expect as far as the outlay of the campus with the hill, etcetera. I knew what dorm I was in etcetera, and you know, it worked pretty much as expected.

It was no shocks as far as the classes for the most part. Other than being new to the campus and being a freshman and getting acclimated to new food, new friends, and the environment; for me it was a pretty smooth transition.

[INTERVIEWER]: What organizations were you involve in at Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: My friends and I joined the choir, but I found out that it did not have the [inaudible] that I was used to, so I withdrew from that. I belonged as all students who were minorities, involved in the Black Student Union, which began my freshman year. Prior to that there were not enough students to have one, but we began my freshman year.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did you hold any... oh, sorry...

[DR. BROWN]: To address your whole officer question and the answer was I think I did but I don't remember. I wasn't the President, I know that. I was one of the other officers at some point during my four years there.

Besides that, I did participate in the football team one year, mostly for working out – I didn't go out for the football team. I played basketball for a couple of years.

Um, I'm trying to think. I volunteered for several organizations through DCGA. I did a trip to Tennessee for Thanksgiving, I think, my sophomore year. We went there for humanitarian aid of some sort, working with poor people in Tennessee.

And my junior year, my friend and I designed a research project called the Black Man in Europe. We developed a hypothesis that the fact that because Europe did not have slavery like America that the black man's experience was a little different. We explored that. We were fortunate to get some funding from the Board of Trustees and the student government to support our trip and research. I say "we" because it was a friend of mine named Clarence McAvoy (?) he was a senior at the time, during the summer of 1972, that summer.

Let's see, what else did I do while I was at Denison? I didn't join any fraternities, although that was a big thing on campus then. I was an independent and I'm proud of it.

Part 5

[DR. BROWN]: ...[inaudible] things I did while I was at Denison. Those were the key ones, I guess. I mean, I did work for the food service at the campus one summer. I worked out with the football team for exercise.

And I was asked by, at that time, the director for the food service, to help out as far as checking people in to the dining halls. It was like a two-year job where I worked as far as organizing people who would check people in. You know, they can't eat lunch until their ID gets checked in, etcetera.

In fact, I think I was the first one, I think, to design the first salad bowl cover. During one of those summers we were eating like we normally do, etcetera. And [inaudible] I was working in the dining room and I noticed people's hair or whatever would fall into their salad bowls, etcetera.

So I told the director, you know, I'm gonna design something to protect the salad bowl. So I went down to the woodshop down in Cleveland Hall and built a little box with a little top like a water well and put it over the salad bowl. Then it kind of caught on. [inaudible] anywhere. [inaudible] I am sure I was more involved but I can't remember. [inaudible] That's what I can remember at this point.

[INTERVIEWER]: Can you describe the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the student population, faculty, and staff at Denison when you arrived?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, my freshman year there were forty black students, twenty-five from my freshman class and fifteen upper classmen. We had a single black professor, I think Dean Garber was his name. I believe he was the minority recruiter. [inaudible] He was actually the first official one. But he was the first and only black faculty my freshman year.

As far as other minorities, there may have been an occasion of Hispanic students possibly, a few people who I knew [inaudible]. But for the most part we all fell in the category of being white. There weren't any other minorities, no Chinese, no Asians. I go to Denison now and visit and it's remarkable how it's changed, how much more diverse it is from when I was there.

But, like I said, it was basically blacks and whites, forty blacks and twenty-two-hundred and some white students. There was one black faculty member. I think there was a second person somewhere, but I can't think of it. I think Dr. Garber was the only person, the only black faculty there.

[INTERVIEWER]: And you said that was Dr....

[DR. BROWN]: Garner. I think it was Garman?

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay, Garman. How did you anticipate the experience of attending a predominantly white institution?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, I grew up in the dawn of the civil rights era, etcetera. The exposure to the civil rights era as far as the 1960's. So all my life I've always been in situations where I was one of the first minorities [inaudible] and that still happens today

to a certain degree. So that wasn't anything new, as far as being the first minority, you know, white or black in this class, etcetera.

My parents were, as you might call, middle class. They were always trying to find better homes for a better life, etcetera. So we were constantly shifting, moving to another neighborhood where we were the first ones or one of the very few. So going to Denison, I respect the difference as far as being one of the few blacks in that kind of environment, so that wasn't new to me.

[INTERVIEWER]: Can you describe what the climate was like for minority students and maybe contribute a story to describe the climate?

[DR. BROWN]: The climate back in '69. Well, you have to keep in mind [inaudible] this is within the context of the fact that we were all, of the forty black students, twenty-five of us were freshmen. Our first time away from home for many of us, etcetera...

Part 6

[DR. BROWN]:... some anxieties just being away from home. [inaudible] And that may have magnified some other experiences, making it a little more intense, if you will. To add to that, like I said, there was the unrest across the campus, etcetera. There was the obvious change in dynamics of more black students on campus.

And a lot of campuses, among the students that went to campus [inaudible], weren't necessarily happy about having black students there and that was [inaudible], we had a lot of students. There were several times we recognized, we thought [inaudible], did not like black students there. And they made it uncomfortable for us if they could. So, you know, it was a time when a lot of change was taking place and we come into this environment kind of wide-eyed, like deers in a headlight, etcetera. [inaudible]

Our first [inaudible] for the most part was pretty [inaudible]. People getting used to us and we getting used to them so to speak, but things were starting to build, that first day we got there on campus. [inaudible]

Our freshman year, second semester, we had our student protest, if you will. It didn't happen just then; it was something that builds from that first semester, etcetera. Part of that tension built in that period of time was the fact that there was some give and take or getting used to each other. [inaudible] because Denison never had forty black students, or any sense of black students on campus whatever.

And many of the students who would come to Denison [inaudible] for that reason. They didn't come and see any black students, etcetera. So for them it might have been a shock. And for all of us, freshmen, all of us had new roommates, and I think everyone of us had white roommates.

A lot of white roommates, it was kind of a shock. All of the sudden they had a black roommate, they weren't [inaudible] having a black roommate. Some handled it better than others, some formed good friendships, and some didn't.

So I guess it's safe to say it was a time of change because of the newness of the situation and us getting used to it and people, you know, some give and take. You know, there was some tension that built up over the course of that freshman year. It may have culminated into what we called the student protest; [inaudible] usually the second year.

[INTERVIEWER]: What were your relationships like with the students of color when you initially arrived on campus, and did these relationships change during and following protest?

[DR. BROWN]: I think it is probably a universal truth for all of us, seeing us, before we were on campus, there was some relief that we weren't the only ones. There was some safety in numbers [inaudible] having forty [inaudible] who we could rely on, who had similar type of background.

And we all did. All right, for the most part we were the top students in our classes back in high school, etcetera. Me and my classmates were valedictorians, salutatorians, so forth, etcetera. So we were good students, etcetera.

So coming into a new environment, we all came here, for the most part voluntarily. I think it was very few who were forced to come [inaudible] all white environment. You know, it was a little [inaudible].

I think a couple of factors, this was the first time being away from home, as well. So I think we were happy for each other. And I think we [inaudible], the reason I came, in fact, I was influenced by Henry, um, I forgot his name...

[INTERVIEWER]: Durant.

[DR. BROWN]: Henry Durant, who was a senior at the time. Who came by and told me about Denison. So I had visited campus and met some of the other students, so I was looking forward to it and it was nice that they were there. They were our mentors, if you will. And having been there themselves, when there was only fifteen black students, or nine or six.

For the most part we got off pretty well. I don't think that really changed but maybe got closer over the course of the year. There was some stress because of what happens on the student protest. There was no question that there were a couple of incidents that happened throughout the year where either a couple of male or female, I think mostly female students, were either verbally or...

Part 7

[DR. BROWN]:...assaulted, if you will. I don't think anything physically happened but, you know, [inaudible]. A few more things happened in the second semester, etcetera. And that kind of thing, if anything, brought us closer together.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did any of your impressions about Denison with respect to racial diversity change and if so, what caused these impressions of the college to change?

[DR. BROWN]: I think that all of us, [inaudible] knew we were coming there as pioneers. I accepted that. We were in an environment that was all white, but we knew we were the first ones. And, you know it was hard to [inaudible]. In order for change to take place, you've gotta be a part of that movement. And we were. Not just myself; my classmates were also the first ones in their family to go to college or first one to integrate this class or that class, etcetera.

You know, we were forty students in number but, for the most part, we were still the only ones in our classes. I was in the science classes. I majored in English, minoring in pre-med. But most of my classes I was the only one in my class. A lot of the classes you were the only one so you were alone by yourself [inaudible]...when we were together at the Black Student Union or saw each other at lunch or so forth. I'm trying to [inaudible] what you're saying in this question, but ask me if I missed the question you want me to answer.

[INTERVIEWER]: You want me to repeat it?

[DR. BROWN]: No. I'm saying I'm trying to answer your question but I know sometimes I'm maybe going a little long on it. But if I missed your question, don't be afraid to ask me again.

[INTERVIEWER]: Oh no, you're doing very well actually, thank you. Thank you very much.

We're interested in understanding the power of the Black community and one, the institutional structure and two, broader social community at Denison. This project defines power as the ability through institutional and non-institutional, either coercion or influence, to cause others to act according to the will of the community. So, keeping our definition of power in mind, how would you describe the power of the Black community at Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: Relative to the total body, we had a minimal amount of power. But having said that, because we were who we were, because we were the experiment for Denison - for the nation as a whole, having blacks students on white campuses - we actually carried a little more power than other students. We did stand out as being the first minority students, etcetera.

And we didn't realize then the primary reasons we were there were financial reasons, okay? Schools got money for having blacks students on campus. But the fact is [inaudible] because by [inaudible] ourselves together the group said hey, there are some things we think need to be done better about this place, etcetera; make it more palatable for black students. We did have that force.

And at that standpoint we had, in some respects, more power than some white students. Because we were [inaudible] because they had to make some changes from the status quo, if you will. But most of the other students were quite happy to let things go as they had been going the last 170 years at Denison.

[INTERVIEWER]: Can you share a story describing the use of power by the Black community to address their political, social and economic position at Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: Even before we got there - my class of twenty-five freshman black students - the fifteen or so students before me, okay, their leaders got together with the university and said, hey, you know we need to make some changes, you know, if [inaudible] for the black students.

And that was an ongoing theme for all our time; all the time for black students at Denison, not just when I was there - even till today I'm sure. Before we got there they had cleared a space where we could congregate, okay, and have a place of our own - the Black Student Union. We had a room to ourselves, okay?

Part 8

[DR. BROWN]:... They had secured, I think, before I got there, a vehicle that we could utilize. But most of us did not have cars, [inaudible] we can take care of so to speak. So they had the power, in small numbers, to get together and say to the university, hey, in order to make it better for ourselves we need to have these things, etcetera.

It was there [inaudible] the school motivated to go ahead and recruit more black students, and they put their time and effort in helping to secure that goal. We did have input. And I asked her [inaudible] accelerated, after we had the student protest in the spring of 1970, my freshman year.

The one after that, other demands were made about having black faculty, Black Studies Department, and so forth. And as you already know, those things are here at Denison now because of those demands [inaudible] by black students.

So yes, the students had power, [inaudible] still the campus minority is [inaudible] majority on campus [inaudible] desire to satisfy the majority, so to speak. And we recognize that but the fact still there was some concessions made to this minority that had some power.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did the power of the black community change while you were at Denison and if so how? And what caused that change?

[DR. BROWN]: I think it became a little stronger. [inaudible] after my freshman year, I think my sophomore year they added about fifteen or twenty more black students. I think it was twenty more black students. My junior year they added another twenty-five or thirty black students.

So by the time I graduated we had near a hundred students. That makes a difference. You have more students [inaudible] more needs, etcetera. In that same four year period of time, we went from having one black faculty to having three or four black faculty. I take it back. There was more than one black faculty. There was another black faculty. It was more than just Dr. Garber there my freshman year, another black fellow. [inaudible] after the student protest, I can't remember his name now.

[INTERVIEWER]: Dr. Jackson?

[DR. BROWN]:...At least two black faculty back then at the time. But after my freshman and sophomore year, they added more black faculty, to the point that now they had out of five, six, seven, eight, several of them are tenured. That makes a difference.

Adding Black Studies again, making it something, if I remember correctly, something that is required among all students. To take stuff like Black Studies or Women's Studies or something like that for graduation. So those new choices have been exerted by the black students primarily, and has been put into place. And I give [inaudible] credit for recognizing that these are good ideas and following through with them.

[INTERVIEWER]: Now that I've had the opportunity to hear more about the campus community and the power of the Black community, I would like to move in to the fourth part of this interview and learn more about the Black Student Union, hence forth identified as the BSU. So how did you initially learn about the BSU at Denison and what were some of your thoughts about it after you learned about it?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, I had visited Denison before I arrived and I met the black students there. I knew about the BSU. [inaudible] The BSU actually formed my freshman year. And it's for me, I think, because we had the numbers, forty black students [inaudible], I guess we had the ability to form such a union, so to speak. And something we got kind of lost with [inaudible] just by being there on campus, we all [inaudible] all the black students, etcetera.

Can you ask your question again? I think I missed something there.

[INTERVIEWER]: What were some of your thoughts about the BSU after you learned about it?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, after I learned about it, it was something that we all voted for and we needed to have because it was important my freshman year. And we thought it was a good idea and we thought it was important for us to have some unity that we can as a group voice our concerns to make the campus a better place for all of us.

You know as black students we are a minority because of Denison and we didn't have much power individually, so to speak, etcetera. But as a group we had more power. But part of the reason we had more power is the fact [inaudible] made the university a better place [inaudible]. It's all safe to say we all like our school and we...

Part 9

[DR. BROWN]: ...they would never come back again. [inaudible] But for the most part, [inaudible] the university for what it had to offer. It was a good school; you get a great education, etcetera. We appreciate it for that. I definitely appreciate it for that.

So we [inaudible] the only reason I mention it [inaudible] a chance to, as a group, to make some changes in the policy direction, okay, for students, you know, it's better, a safer environment for as all of us concerned. Black Studies, etcetera - those type of things.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did you believe that the BSU was cohesive or fractured? That is, was the Black community able to pursue issues with solidarity?

[DR. BROWN]: Yeah, I think we pursued issues with solidarity but we had disagreements sometimes. I mean all the students didn't agree on everything; that's reality. Like our current political situation in this country, we have the Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and everything in between; so it's like that.

Our students came from different backgrounds. Some are more conservative than others, some are more radical than others, and some are more liberal than others. Despite that, we shared that one thing in common: we were all black students [inaudible].

But we didn't always agree on everything we did. I'm sure they haven't changed it.

[INTERVIEWER]: No, you're right.

[DR. BROWN]: We were probably more cohesive. The fact is we were a very small minority, okay, and there were some changes that took place on campus. I suspect now - I just remember this, my daughter went to Denison. She graduated a couple of years ago. Listening to her and her describing her experience there, there's a difference, definitely there's a difference. [inaudible] needed to make changes at Denison [inaudible] a more welcoming environment possibly than it was when I was there. Possibly, depending on the perspective. But like I said, it is what it is.

[INTERVIEWER]: Do you think differences such as gender, differences you know, things surrounding around gender issues, differences in sexual activity, socio-economic class, differences based upon Greek affiliation, may have enhanced these issues with maybe - you said that there was a lot of solidarity but did those types of issues cause breakdown within the organization?

[DR. BROWN]: Issues like, you said, socio-economic issues?

[INTERVIEWER]: Yeah, like socio-economic, class, male-female issues, among those that were particularly involved with the BSU at the time. You can speak to the Black community as a whole or those that were more so active in the BSU.

[DR. BROWN]: I think, like I said before, I think our backgrounds were all very similar. Socio-economically, there was very little difference. Maybe some students who were among blacks who were poorer than others, there's no question about that. There were a couple of others who came from wealthier backgrounds; a student's father was a doctor or lawyer, something like that.

But for the most part we were in pretty much the same situation, at least as far as aspirations, if nothing else. We were all there for a purpose, to get a good education, so we could come out and become doctors, lawyers, so on and so forth.

My freshman year, I think, of the twenty-five of my classmates freshman year, probably twenty-one of them were pre-med. [inaudible] By the end of our sophomore year though, there were only two of us left. [inaudible], one of the things about being pre-med.

So we all had similar aspirations. But our solidarity was based on the fact that we had a common experience, that we were all black students in this sea of white students, that brought us together.

And there were students who we considered minority and [inaudible]. And they said, what minority? Who we knew of as being at least, what we'd call biracial, who didn't necessarily identify with ourselves. We recognized them as being black but they didn't recognize themselves as being black. Those are a couple of exceptions, etcetera. There were other students who were very fair but we considered those black students. So he was one of us, you know?

Part 10

[DR. BROWN]:...For the most part, we were solid in our belief in working together to accomplish different goals, etcetera. Okay? [inaudible]

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay. Using the following definitions – and stop me if you need me to repeat something. But, so you have radical – the willingness to use unconventional

methods to force social change; liberal – the willingness to use conventional methods within political and social institutions to bring about social change; conservative – the belief that personal accomplishments within the black community will lead to social change. To describe one's political ideology toward creating social transformation, how would you describe the BSU's ideology?

[DR. BROWN]: It was definitely more radical. It wasn't the belief where we could just, by being the students, that that would make [inaudible], that was the overall part of the issue [inaudible] in my judgment [inaudible].

Our actions were to go and confront the administration and say, this is what our needs are, this is what we need to see to make this place a better place, etcetera. And [inaudible] taking place, okay. So definitely more active, more [inaudible] radical, [inaudible] more proactive approach, that's all.

There was nothing radical about it. I mean, if you were in the same – if anybody [inaudible] in the same situation, where you're the only one, etcetera, [inaudible] if they want to [inaudible] more comfortable [inaudible]. There's nothing radical about it, okay.

This wasn't some students who had some radical ideas about getting out and getting machettes and going out and doing some stupid stuff, you know. But they were the minority. [Laughs] For the most part, we were all [inaudible] change in positive ways [inaudible] different ways of doing it.

But as a group, the BSU was definitely much more proactive – that would be a better term than [inaudible] radical. And definitely not conservative.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did you ever read any of the writings in the Vanguard or Black Rage?

[DR. BROWN]: Inaudible

[INTERVIEWER]: You said you did or...

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] back in college we were reading things like [inaudible], Eldridge Cleaver, [inaudible], about the Black Panthers [inaudible], but not [inaudible] the Vanguard.

[INTERVIEWER]: How did the BSU educate their members and campus as a whole about what was going on in the campus community and nationally in terms of social transformation of the position of black communities in political institutions and societies?

[DR. BROWN]: As far, for ourselves, our members, we met nearly once a week. I think it was a Sunday afternoon, something like that. Although we had, the lounge was open all the time, and people would congregate and we'd talk about what we were gonna talk about, etcetera. But we had, particularly, a weekly meeting where we would discuss current events, etcetera. You know, our plans, our goals, so on and so forth.

As far as influencing other [inaudible], lost me there [inaudible], although I can say, though we were a small campus, we somehow had a lot of influence beyond our own environment, etcetera. We were known at the time for having some of the best parties in the state. So we had people from all different campuses – Ohio State, etcetera – would come out to our parties.

But the more important thing, I think, is the fact that we were the first, I think, one of the first colleges of black alumni groups [inaudible] that formed their first black alumni reunion. We had our first black alumni reunion back in – after I graduated. It was – oh, shoot – I want to say [inaudible] '73. It was like '75 or '76, something like that. It was very early. Look, I know, I was involved in the planning. So we had an active black alumni organization. [inaudible] most schools did, etcetera. And we kind of set the trend [inaudible] other schools.

So we had influence in that respect – our parties, our – you know, things we did. I mean, [inaudible] unique in that respect, but [inaudible] we were in. Our university, our administrators [inaudible]. Not only did they listen, they responded...

Part 11

[DR. BROWN]:... [inaudible] needed more concentration [inaudible] at least one, two cars, so we could get around [inaudible] so to speak. [inaudible] a place we could congregate. They responded by offering Black Studies, etcetera.

I think it was soon after we [inaudible] these vans. I mean, these vans in 1970, in the spring of 1970, and then by the following year [inaudible], having Black Studies, so forth, [inaudible], etcetera. It was a quick response, and a lot of those changes were not a temporary thing; they became permanent changes.

So a lot of schools may have had the same idea [inaudible], but they either didn't follow through or it took a while to get it done, etcetera. So you have to give credit, I mean, we were forced into an environment where [inaudible] we had to say.

[INTERVIEWER]: What methods, including protests, demands, sit-ins, incorporation into student government, coalitions with faculty, did the BSU use to create social change?

[DR. BROWN]: By far the biggest change took place after we had these student unrests in the spring of 1970. And it's interesting because, you know, being there, being an eyewitness to it, it was somewhat surreal, in that the [inaudible] campus [inaudible], Kent State students getting shot, etcetera. You know, that kind of violence, etcetera.

Other student had their, would take over administration buildings, okay, and hold out for weeks at a time, whatever the case may be.

We had our student protests in the spring of 1970. Ours was very organized, and it was, how shall I put it, it was basically – and our student protest was initiated by, and the momentum was started by, the white students.

[INTERVIEWER]: Really?

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] came about because of maybe some verbal assaults of black female students, etcetera. And concern about safety and other issues. That actually spurred the thing. But as far as – I mean it was initiated by black students at that point, because it was about safety issues, and our anger, etcetera, about being a minority on campus.

But the actual groundswell, the power that be, if you will, because white students got activated, okay. Without them, it wouldn't have happened. [inaudible] it did happen, etcetera. But because white students got all excited, etcetera, that we had these student protests, etcetera. Those were very, very well organized, okay. And we just [inaudible] because, you know, the students said we're gonna take over the administration building. The faculty said okay. And at the time the president was – oh, shoot...

[INTERVIEWER]: Joel Smith?

[DR. BROWN]:...[inaudible] my freshman year he came as the president [inaudible]. I can't think of his name...

[INTERVIEWER]: Was it Joel Smith?

[DR. BROWN]: Joel, Joel Smith, yeah. Because Joel [inaudible] said, yeah, you can have your protest. And so [inaudible], the administration building, Doane Administration Building, on Monday from nine to five. [inaudible] yeah, nine to five, and [inaudible] unusual. That's crazy. But hey, [inaudible] it was not [inaudible] other campuses, where they had violence and [inaudible]. It was well organized and, you know, [inaudible] by the university, of what you could do, so to speak.

We had a day where we took over the administration building where we had professors who were [inaudible] if you will, who spoke out. And on the day of the movement, the day we took over, the [inaudible] that day was the black students, okay. It was the upper classmen black students. And I was [inaudible] to show up because [inaudible], I know these people, and these people were the validictorians, the salutorians of their class. They were the bookworms, you know, they were the ninety pound weaklings that people knocked sand on back in school, etcetera.

All of the sudden, here they are now in college and now they've got on these Army fatigues and black glasses. They put their contact lenses away. I mean they put their glasses [inaudible]. And now they're militant. That for me was kinda funny.

But they became leaders on that day, okay, leading discussion, leading the...

Part 12

[DR. BROWN]: ...movement, if you will, along with some black professors, etcetera. At least a black professor. And he was [inaudible], Latin Studies, something like that – some type of [inaudible] studies, anyway.

So we [inaudible] that day, we had our meeting, we had classes where we were taught [inaudible] what we discussed about our concerns, and so forth. And [inaudible] other students [inaudible] in the [inaudible] discussion, etcetera. [inaudible] in one day. And then [inaudible] the next day.

The Plain Dealer wrote an article about it. And [inaudible] was very telling. [inaudible] and I quote, “The beautiful people have erupted.”

[INTERVIEWER]: The beautiful people have erupted?

[DR. BROWN]: Yeah, [inaudible] I said before about Denison is unique, in fact, the women – and the men, too – but the women there are more attractive than other campuses. And the Plain Dealer said the same thing, they said, you know, [inaudible] beautiful [inaudible] on all campuses, etcetera [inaudible] has there student protest, etcetera, and ours was, like, weeks after Kent State and others – we were the last to have it.

But ours was well organized, you know, we followed the rules, and [inaudible] Black Student Union after that. [inaudible] after we had those protests, [inaudible], we did get Black Studies, and we did get more black professors and more black students, and so forth.

But like I said, it was not a violent protest whatsoever. It was definitely one that was [inaudible] allowed by the administration.

[INTERVIEWER]: Right. [Laughter] How were these social change methods publicized and financed?

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] finance [inaudible]. I mean, after we had our student protest, etcetera, [inaudible] at some point after that the board of trustees met and they discussed the concerns and [inaudible], etcetera. And between the board of trustees and the administration, they came up with the tools, the finances to put together, you know, [inaudible] program.

Most or more important – money, I don't think, was ever an issue. They had the money to do what they wanted to do. [inaudible] The only question was to have the will, the desire. And that's what I give them credit for. They had the will to not only come together with a

program, but to [inaudible] one that actually had some teeth, had a strong foundation [inaudible].

To this day, we still have a Black Studies and a Women's Studies Department. I'm not sure if other schools still have theirs. I know we do. I think that says a lot.

[INTERVIEWER]: Can you...So we're gonna move to the next section – the BSU and their role in protest. Can you share a story describing a time of heightened racial tension at Denison?

[DR. BROWN]: Heightened racial tension?

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes. A specific story.

[DR. BROWN]: There were several incidents, okay, but I didn't witness. All I heard was second or third hand. Some of our black females were either called names, they were – I [inaudible] made to feel threatened. I know – we had on campus at that time – and you might still have it – but it was called the Wingless Angels. Which looked to us like the Ku Klux Klan. They were members of the fraternity groups on campus, and I think most people [inaudible] dumb things, you know, they were [inaudible] in the night and you know, doing stupid things that young boys do, I guess.

But they were alleged to have maybe [inaudible] surrounded them or – you know, you heard so many different stories, you didn't know what was going on. But there were enough people who were upset about being accosted by these groups. And not necessarily these groups – other students might say something, too. It wasn't just the Wingless Angels. But that was the group on campus that they had the reputation of, you know, somewhat belligerent, if you will.

[INTERVIEWER]: Would you describe what you remember about the BSU's involvement during time of political action or mobilization? And if you could, tell a specific story about a particular racial incident, and describe for me the BSU's involvement.

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible], I can't think of...

Part 13

[DR. BROWN]: ...[inaudible] at Denison [inaudible]. And me personally, no one ever cursed at me or said anything mean but it depends on the person you are dealing with. I was one of the taller, bigger people on campus. I had a presence that I guess no one wanted to mess with me.

But I have heard some of the [inaudible], particularly [inaudible]. [inaudible] one of the smaller men may have been assaulted or whatever - and those kind of things happened.

[inaudible] my freshman year those incidents were reported to us through the BSU meetings because you didn't see, you heard about it. And at the time there was concerns on what should we do about it.

The more radical approach was to go out there and get weapons and go out there and do something about it. Others said we need to band together and form like the [inaudible] wingless angels, these angels, to escort our girls back and forth to the dorm, in particular the night time. But the big thing is that we made the university aware of our concern about it and [inaudible] wanted it safe for our students.

So in our meetings it was a discussion kind of thing and there were questions [inaudible], that kind of thing came up. [inaudible]. Particularly, the women would get very upset. And even more so during the time of the – we had our student protest, like I said. What initiated that student protest was the fact that some of the black women felt they were threatened, they were verbally assaulted, etcetera. It was like a number of incidents had happened in a short period of time.

After that incident that led to the student protests and the black demands or [inaudible]. So [inaudible] as a [inaudible] to focus, to gather information, and then focus and determine how we should respond to it, you know, these threats, etcetera. And go from there.

[INTERVIEWER]: Did the BSU have a coalition with other organizations on campus during this time?

[DR. BROWN] Coalitions? Not really.

[INTERVIEWER]: No?

[DR. BROWN]: I mean, I'm not sure what you mean by coalitions because, you know... The BSU was a collection of black students, okay. And each of us had other interests. You know, others were involved in basketball or football or sports or other student activities. And so, even when our girls were being accosted by somebody on campus, the information went back to the BSU.

But also [inaudible] with their roommate, who might be a white girl who [inaudible] roommate got accosted. [inaudible]. So we interacted with other organizations because we were, you know, members ourselves. But not a direct, you know [inaudible]. No, not that I can think of.

[INTERVIEWER]: What was your own personal response to the racial tension and social change methods that the black community participated in? And did you participate in the social change methods which, I'm assuming you did, but what was your personal response to these?

[DR. BROWN]: Personal response? [inaudible] I would say yes. There was some concern about the safety of some of our black students. And so we were talking about leaving campus, okay, for some period of time, and either not coming back or coming back later.

I was not one of those who [inaudible], I wasn't going anywhere. I didn't feel threatened, for one, and I didn't see any advantage to that, etcetera. You know, I would expect others who might feel we had to leave, etcetera. [inaudible], I mean, there were students who left who didn't come back for other reasons – what I mean is left is [inaudible] because of the student protest, etcetera.

But, yeah [inaudible], they [inaudible] classes, [inaudible], discussion groups, etcetera, and anything as far as how [inaudible], particularly the BSU, etcetera.

What was the other part of your question?

[INTERVIEWER]: Did you – well, I asked you if you participated...

[DR. BROWN]: How did it affect me, I think you said.

[INTERVIEWER]: Well, how did it affect you, what were your personal responses, and overall, how did you just feel about your personal participation...

Part 14

[INTERVIEWER]: ...within these methods of social change?

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible]. The student protest, to me, was somewhat of a joke. I mean, it was not actually protesting. It was like, they [inaudible] we could take over the building. And I did not take over the building. [inaudible] I wasn't being funny [inaudible] the night hours.

Mine was more the periphery, as far as being, participating in the different discussions [inaudible] that day, [inaudible] positive change [inaudible] particularly as [inaudible] BSU [inaudible] better environment for black students, etcetera. For any of these students, not just black students, any [inaudible]. [inaudible] take place, having more black faculty, more black students, more minority students, etcetera.

And how did it affect me? I mean, it meant time off from class, it meant that kind of thing. But the effect was more of just being a participant and learning, being part of the history that was taking place, not only on our campus, but across our country.

I mean, I think [inaudible] go far beyond what happened then. [Phone beeps from being disconnected.]

Part 15

[DR. BROWN]: You asked, you know, what my response to the protest was, in so many words, etcetera. And my response is that, you know, it didn't, of itself, change me that much, you know. I participated because I was there and I was a part of the environment, I'm soaking it all in, and I'm participating, you know. But that was my response to just being there, etcetera.

But what it did for me and other students, when you left the campus, you know, you've been baptized in this fire of student protest, etcetera. And so now you interact in the future in a similar kind of way. You're maybe a little bit more aggressive because you know that by banding together as a Black Student Union you can get, you know, cars, and you can get more students on campus, you can get more black faculty, you can get Black Studies, etcetera.

That shows you the fact that there is [inaudible] to moving together. And so now when you are out in your own community, you may keep that in mind and [inaudible]. You learn from that in the past. The benefits of the response to being part of that environment, it's part of our lives and probably goes throughout the rest of our life, and will effect how we respond to certain types of situations.

And I think all is said in fact, that even though we were forty students okay, and there was like a president and a vice president. We were all leaders of a sort because, you know, just being the first ones there. And still, being the first ones in our class, we were pioneers. It was like Jackie Robinson [inaudible] for baseball, we [inaudible] black students at Denison. We would be first one in our chemistry class, or first one in our biology class, or first one in whatever class we were in.

I got another call, can you hold one second?

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes sir.

Part 16

[INTERVIEWER]: So during the periods of protest were there times when students behaved emotionally and what kinds of behaviors were exhibited?

[DR. BROWN]: At Denison student protest, like I said, because of stories of women being verbally or possibly physically assaulted - black women specifically - there was concern about the safety - there was some hysteria. I mean, it was twenty-five of us in my freshman class, but twenty of them were women. There were only five men in my freshman class; I was a minority [inaudible] students.

And they were [inaudible], wouldn't come back. And [inaudible] lose out what you already put in as far as time and so forth. And so there was a lot of concern about that.

First time we [inaudible] school, [inaudible] how to react, etcetera, a place for safety, etcetera.

But after the dust settled, I think it's safe [inaudible] I know they all [inaudible] all of us stayed, okay, one or two left [inaudible] didn't come back the following year, [inaudible] for other reasons, etcetera.

But a lot were concerned about the safety, but they did weather the storm and stayed. There was a lot of concern, a lot of hysteria because of the protest and the concerns of black women's safety.

[INTERVIEWER]: I think you touched on this earlier, but what were some of the responses on behalf of faculty, staff, and administration during the methods of social change that you described earlier?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, Denison has been Denison since, what, 1931, when it was founded. At least I think that is when the two colleges were jointed to make Denison.

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes

[DR. BROWN]: And from that point until 1966, for the most part, [inaudible] more than one or two black students. [inaudible] there had been black students at Denison going back to the eighteen-hundreds, etcetera, with one here, one twenty years later, you know, every now and then.

Starting in nineteen sixty-five, sixty-six, you had two or three, then you had six, then you had fifteen, something like that, etcetera. And then my class was forty. And [inaudible], if you will, reach a critical mass, as far as black students.

Since then it's been a number larger than that, okay, [inaudible] greater than that number from then on, etcetera.

So our numbers have steadily increased, okay, and makes for a better environment across the board. I mean, [inaudible], at least when my daughter was there, okay [inaudible] black students, you have Hispanic students, Asian students, Indian students, and it makes for an interesting mix.

So prior to '66, there were hardly - there were none of those students but white students. So some of the faculty who were there did not like the idea of having black students there. And it was very clear, particularly with some of the ones in the sciences. [inaudible] I was in the sciences, etcetera, and there were a couple of professors who did not like having black students be there. They made it very clear in their demeanor that they didn't want black students there.

[inaudible] some who had mixed feelings about it, [inaudible] it was a change from what they were used to, etcetera. And bringing black students there means that you have to

make some adjustments, okay. We changed the status quo. So there was some resentment, no question about it.

[inaudible] some strong, some mid [inaudible], and some students and faculty who were all for it, who thought it was a great idea, etcetera, you know. You had liberal faculty and you had conservative faculty. So it was mixed feelings, etcetera.

You know [inaudible], the two extremes, the conservative faculty and the radical faculty, and most were right in the middle, like most of the students, right in the middle.

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay, well, we're gonna move into the final portion of the interview – consequences and outcomes of political action and social change. What were some of the positive outcomes or effects of the political action that the BSU engaged in, and can you give an example or share a story that illustrates one of the positive effects?

[DR. BROWN]: Like I said, you know, prior to even having the student demands, the BSU said, you know, I don't know if this is a trade-off or not, you know, we wouldn't help you to recruit more minority students wherever we may be, etcetera, [inaudible] we need a better environment.

One of the things we need to have here, most of the black students do not have vehicles to get off campus, etcetera. We need [inaudible] share, so they can get off campus. So my freshman year they had, and maybe the year...

Part 17

[DR. BROWN]:...before they had it, I knew they had it my freshman year. We had a station wagon that we could utilize as black students. We just signed for it and rent it out; we didn't have to pay for it. We just signed up for it; we had it for two hours, three hours, whatever the case may be. You could go grocery shopping, or get your hair cut, go to church, or whatever the case maybe.

Because black students wanted a place where we can congregate, other than the library, [inaudible] black student lounge, that's a positive response, as a result. And that lounge did provide an oasis, a refuge for us as black students [inaudible].

It's changed a little bit, I know, since I graduated. Not that we never had white students come to the black student lounge, but after I graduated [inaudible], it became a much more frequent occurrence.

[INTERVIEWER]: Really?

[DR. BROWN]: Besides the black student lounge, of course, we had the request and the response of having more black faculty. I'm not sure what the numbers are now; I've heard as many as ten, but I don't know if that's the case – you can tell me. But definitely more black faculty, far more black faculty, than in the past.

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes.

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] three or four [inaudible]. Having the Black Studies Department and Women's Studies is a direct result of the black student demands, okay.

And all this [inaudible] for a kinder, more, you know, safer environment for black students in general.

[INTERVIEWER]: Right.

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] For minority students in general, okay. Other than maybe a few Asians, we didn't have other people of color there, [inaudible]. If nothing else, the professors who didn't like it, [inaudible] get used to the idea of students of color around, so as not as big a deal as it might have been back in 1966.

So there's no question, those are the obvious, you know, changes in a positive way when it came to black student protest. But these less casual [inaudible], you know, having a better environment, okay, and having a, having more students who are coming because they see the environment's a better place, etcetera.

[INTERVIEWER]: Right. What were some of the negative effects from the political action that took place?

[DR. BROWN]: Probably the most negative was that it created a very tense environment, okay. Our [inaudible], like I said, here we are, first time away from home, trying to study and get things done. And every weekend, we're meeting and having some concern about threat to our security or - so that issue, etcetera.

So a lot of times the BSU meetings were very tense. And a lot of times the students were tense, because of, in terms of safety, or concerns about things going on in our environment that we may have little control over, etcetera.

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay. If we consider black empowerment to refer to the feeling that blacks as a group can create change on campus, did these events of social change increase or decrease your collective sense of empowerment?

[DR. BROWN]: Oh, no question, definitely increased. I mean, you can't deny, all the things I mentioned before – Black Studies, the student car, the more faculty, etcetera. All were a direct response to student protest, okay. And positive things took place, etcetera.

And there's no question in my mind, this made for a much better university – and the university recognized that, too. I mean, being one of the first universities to follow through on these type of things, etcetera, [inaudible]. You know, the more [inaudible] black students in general, etcetera.

And [inaudible] ideal, [inaudible] have a much better environment for students in general. If I'm [inaudible] mistaken, the minority population – approaching around 200 minority students, if you add in Hispanic, Indian, Asian, blacks, etcetera, at Denison right now. Is that about right – about ten percent?

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes.

[DR. BROWN]: Yeah, so when I was there it was maybe about three percent, four percent. Big difference.

[INTERVIEWER]: Right.

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] critical mass of students there, okay. And now because they've been there, their friends have been there. You know, I went there, my nephew went there, my daughter went there, you know.

You have more people coming back because they're legacies or [inaudible]. This critical mass of students that will continue to be, you know, to support and go to Denison, etcetera.

So it makes Denison a better place for everybody. [inaudible] the whites at Denison now, okay, interact, have roommates who are black, etcetera, are more [inaudible] than ever before. [inaudible], because they go out and [inaudible] the world and now there are, somehow, CEO's, etcetera...

Part 18

[DR. BROWN]: ...interact with people in a much easier way than [inaudible] could have asked.

[INTERVIEWER]: Right.

[DR. BROWN]: [inaudible] plus for them as well. Whether they appreciate it or not, definitely a plus for them.

Our world is becoming more diverse, whether we want it to or not. So if you can interact with a diverse community, you're better off. So it affects all [inaudible] students, in a positive way.

[INTERVIEWER]: Okay, well we're gonna wrap up with our final question, and this is just an overall reflective portion. So thinking back on your experiences at Denison, and the goals of this project, are there any additional comments you would like to make related to the social transformation of the black community at Denison and the BSU?

[DR. BROWN]: Social transformation of the black community? Nothing [inaudible] to make it clear, the social transformation you're speaking of took place among black students, but it transformed the entire campus. The transformation of the entire Denison community, etcetera, okay.

Because we're all left with a better education [inaudible] otherwise, okay. [inaudible] we learned, probably the most important lesson I could think of. So it was [inaudible] a positive thing, etcetera.

But [inaudible] because of maybe unrest and some concerns, but because of [inaudible], things that have [inaudible], I mean, I graduated from Denison in 1973, this is 2010, so thirty-five years ago....

[INTERVIEWER]: Which honestly is really not that long ago if you kind of think...

[DR. BROWN]: No, it's not. But the fact of the matter is, and [inaudible] back to Denison, it's been a long time ago.

[INTERVIEWER]: Yeah, yeah.

[DR. BROWN]: I've had a chance to witness several generations of [inaudible] to go through, etcetera. Like I said, it's [inaudible] a much better environment, that's been transformed. I mean, [inaudible] without that, what else has changed [inaudible] much? Nothing I can think of.

Other than the student protest having, you know, more Black Studies, Women's Studies, and so on. You know, I guess, [inaudible] came out of the gender, you know, whatever, other things that came out as well.

The fact is, the university has become a much kinder, gentler place for everybody, because of what happened through the black student demands.

[INTERVIEWER]: Yes.

[DR. BROWN]: And so, like I said, it's made for a better university, etcetera.

[INTERVIEWER]: Well, I'd really like to thank you so much for sharing with me a bit of your history today. And I've definitely gained much more appreciation about the black history at Denison's campus. And I know that other individuals from my generation and other generations to come will hone in on this knowledge and grow from it. Not only as a black student, but also as a black individual. So I have to thank you again for taking time out and participating in this project.

[DR. BROWN]: You're welcome.

[INTERVIEWER]: Thank you so much.

[DR. BROWN]: You have a great day.

[INTERVIEWER]: *Thank you. You too, sir.*