

Lucy Delaney

1830-1890s

Lucy Berry Delaney was born a slave in St. Louis, where she worked as a nursemaid, laundress, and house servant. When her mother sued for her own freedom on the grounds she had been kidnapped into slavery from the free state of Illinois, she also sued for legal possession of Lucy, as the child of a free woman could not be a slave. Twelve-year-old Lucy then spent seventeen months in jail waiting for her case to go to trial. She and her mother gained their freedom in February 1844. Delaney's is one of the most vivid descriptions of a slave suit for freedom, of which there were several hundred in antebellum St. Louis.

In 1845, Lucy married Frederick Turner and moved to Quincy, Illinois. Four years after Turner's death in a steamboat explosion, Delaney returned to St. Louis and married Zachariah Delaney. As Zachariah Delaney got increasingly lucrative work as a cook, porter, and mail clerk, the couple gradually joined the black middle class. By 1891, when she published her narrative, Lucy was a member of several charitable and women's groups and held executive posts in several black fraternal organizations, including that of Grand Chief Preceptress of the Daughters of the Tabernacle and Knights of Tabor. She bore four children, two daughters who died young, and a daughter and a son who each died in their early twenties. It is speculated that she died sometime in the 1890s, but her actual death date is unknown.

In the excerpt below, from her autobiography, From the Darkness Cometh the Light; or, Struggles for Freedom, Lucy Delaney recalls her childhood as a slave in St. Louis and her trial for freedom.

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In the year 18 ____, Mr. and Mrs. John Woods and Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Posey lived as one family in the State of Illinois. Living with Mrs. Posey was a little negro girl, named Polly Crocket, who had made it her home there, in peace and happiness, for five years. On a dismal night in the month of September, Polly, with four other colored persons, were kidnapped, and after being securely bound and gagged, were put into a skiff and carried across the Mississippi River to the city of St. Louis. Shortly after, these unfortunate negroes were taken up the Missouri River and sold into slavery. Polly was purchased by a farmer, Thomas Botts, with whom she resided for a year, when, overtaken by business reverses, he was obliged to sell all he possessed, including his negroes.

Among those present on the day set apart for the sale was Major Taylor Berry, a wealthy gentleman who had travelled a long distance for the purpose of

purchasing a servant girl for his wife. As was the custom, all the negroes were brought out and placed in a line so that the buyers could examine their good points at leisure. Major Berry was immediately attracted by the bright and alert appearance of Polly, and at once negotiated with the trader, paid the price agreed upon, and started for home to present his wife with this flesh and blood commodity, which money could so easily procure in our vaunted land of freedom.

Mrs. Fanny Berry was highly pleased with Polly's manner and appearance, and concluded to make a seamstress of her. Major Berry had a mulatto servant, who was as handsome as an Apollo, and when he and Polly met each other, day after day, the natural result followed, and in a short time, with the full consent of Major Berry and his wife, were married. Two children were the fruit of this marriage, my sister Nancy and myself, Lucy A. Delaney.

While living in Franklin county, Major Berry became involved in a quarrel with some gentleman, and a duel was resorted to, to settle the difficulty and avenge some fancied insult. The major arranged his affairs and made his will, leaving his negroes to his wife during her lifetime and at her death they were to be free; this was his expressed wish.

My father accompanied Major Berry to New Madrid, where the fatal duel was fought, and stayed by him until the end came, received his last sigh, his last words, and closed his dying eyes, and afterwards conveyed the remains of his best friend to the bereaved family with a sad heart. Though sympathizing deeply with them in their affliction, my father was much disturbed as to what disposition would be made of him, and after Major Berry was consigned with loving hands to his last resting place, these haunting thoughts obtruded, even in his sleeping hours.

A few years after, Major Berry's widow married Robert Wash, an eminent lawyer, who afterwards became Judge of the Supreme Court. One child was born to them, who when she grew to womanhood, became Mrs. Francis W. Goode, whom I shall always hold in grateful remembrance as long as life lasts, and God bless her in her old age, is my fervent prayer for her kindness to me, a poor little slave girl!

We lived in the old "Wash" mansion some time after the marriage of the Judge, until their daughter Frances was born. How well I remember those happy days! Slavery had no horror then for me, as I played about the place, with the same joyful freedom as the little white children. With mother, father and sister, a pleasant home and surroundings, what happier child than I!

As I carelessly played away the hours, mother's smiles would fade away, and her brow contract into heavy frown. I wondered much thereat, but the time came—ah! only too soon, when I learned the secret of her ever-changing face!

Mrs. Wash lost her health, and, on the advice of a physician, went to Pensacola, Florida, accompanied by my mother. There she died, and her body was brought back to St. Louis and there interred. After Mrs. Wash's death, the troubles of my parents and their children may be said to have really commenced.

Though in direct opposition to the will of Major Berry, my father's quondam master and friend, Judge Wash tore my father from his wife and children and sold him "way down South!"

Slavery! cursed slavery! what crimes has it invoked! and, oh! what retribution has a righteous God visited upon these traders in human flesh! The rivers of tears shed by us helpless ones, in captivity, were turned to lakes of blood! How often have we cried in our anguish, "Oh! Lord, how long, how long?" But the handwriting was on the wall, and tardy justice came at last and avenged the woes of an oppressed race! Chickamauga, Shiloh, Atlanta and Gettysburgh, spoke in thunder tones! John Brown's body had indeed marched on, and we, the ransomed ones, glorify God and dedicate ourselves to His service, and acknowledge His greatness and goodness in rescuing us from such bondage as parts husband from wife, the mother from her children, aye, even the babe from her breast!

Major Berry's daughter Mary, shortly after, married H. S. Cox, of Philadelphia, and they went to that city to pass their honeymoon, taking my sister Nancy with them as waiting-maid. When my father was sold South, my mother registered a solemn vow that her children should not continue in slavery all their lives, and she never spared an opportunity to impress it upon us, that we must get our freedom whenever the chance offered. So here was an unlooked-for avenue of escape which presented much that was favorable in carrying out her desire to see Nancy a free woman.

Having been brought up in a free State, mother had learned much to her advantage, which would have been impossible in a slave State, and which she now proposed to turn to account for the benefit of her daughter. So mother instructed my sister not to return with Mr. and Mrs. Cox, but to run away, as soon as chance offered, to Canada, where a friend of our mother's lived who was also a runaway slave, living in freedom and happiness in Toronto.

As the happy couple wandered from city to city, in search of pleasure, my sister was constantly turning over in her mind various plans of escape. Fortune finally favored Nancy, for on their homeward trip they stopped at Niagara Falls for a few days. In her own words I will describe her escape:

In the morning, Mr. and Mrs. Cox went for a drive, telling me that I could have the day to do as I pleased. The shores of Canada had been tantalizing my longing gaze for some days, and I was bound to reach there long before my mistress returned. So I locked up Mrs. Cox's trunk and put the key under the pillow, where I was sure she would find it, and I made a strike for freedom! A servant in the hotel gave me all necessary information and even assisted me in getting away. Some kind of a festival was going on, and a large crowd was marching from the rink to the river, headed by a band of music. In such a motley throng I was unnoticed, but was trembling with fear of being detected. It seemed an age before the ferry boat arrived, which at last appeared, enveloped in a gigantic wreath

of black smoke. Hastily I embarked, and as the boat stole away into the misty twilight and among crushing fields of ice, though the air was chill and gloomy, I felt the warmth of freedom as I neared the Canada shore. I landed, without question, and found my mother's friend with but little difficulty, who assisted me to get work and support myself. Not long afterwards, I married a prosperous farmer, who provided me with a happy home, where I brought my children into the world without the sin of slavery to strive against.

On the return of Mrs. Cox to St. Louis she sent for my mother and told her that Nancy had run away. Mother was very thankful, and in her heart arose a prayer of thanksgiving, but outwardly she pretended to be vexed and angry. Oh! the impenetrable mask of these poor black creatures! how much of joy, of sorrow, of misery and anguish have they hidden from their tormentors!

I was a small girl at that time, but remember how wildly mother showed her joy at Nancy's escape when we were alone together. She would dance, clap her hands, and, waving them above her head, would indulge in one of those wierd negro melodies, which so charm and fascinate the listener.

Mrs. Cox commenced housekeeping on a grand and extended scale, having a large acquaintance, she entertained lavishly. My mother cared for the laundry, and I, who was living with a Mrs. Underhill, from New York, and was having rather good times, was compelled to go live with Mrs. Cox and the baby. My pathway was thorny enough, and though there may be no roses without thorns, I had thorns in plenty with no roses.

I was beginning to plan for freedom, and was forever on the alert for a chance to escape and join my sister. I was then twelve years old, and often talked the matter over with mother and canvassed the probabilities of both of us getting away. No schemes were too wild for us to consider! Mother was especially restless, because she was a free woman up to the time of her being kidnapped, so the injustice and weight of slavery bore more heavily upon her than upon me. She did not dare to talk it over with anyone for fear that they would sell her further down the river, so I was her only confidant. Mother was always planning and getting ready to go, and while the fire was burning brightly, it but needed a little more provocation to add to the flames.

Mrs. Cox was always very severe and exacting with my mother, and one occasion, when something did not suit her, she turned on mother like a fury, and declared, "I am just tired out with the 'white airs' you put on, and if you don't behave differently, I will make Mr. Cox sell you down the river at once."

Although mother turned grey with fear, she presented a bold front and retorted that "she didn't care, she was tired of that place, and didn't like to live there, nohow." This so infuriated Mr. Cox that he cried, "How dare a negro say what she liked or what she did not like; and he would show her what he should do."

enough that this girl has been deprived of her liberty for a year and a half, that you must still pursue her after a fair and impartial trial before a jury, in which it was clearly proven and decided that she had every right to freedom? I demand that she be set at liberty at once!"

"I agree with Judge Bates," responded Judge Mullanphy, "and the girl may go!"

Oh! the overflowing thankfulness of my grateful heart at that moment, who could picture it? None but the good God above us! I could have kissed the feet of my deliverers, but I was too full to express my thanks, but with a voice trembling with tears I tried to thank Judge Bates for all his kindness.

As soon as possible, I returned to the jail to bid them all good-bye and thank them for their good treatment of me while under their care. They rejoiced with me in my good fortune and wished me much success and happiness in years to come.

I was much concerned at my mother's prolonged absence, and was deeply anxious to meet her and sob out my joy on her faithful bosom. Surely it was the hands of God which prevented mother's presence at the trial, for broken down with anxiety and loss of sleep on my account, the revulsion of feeling would have been greater than her over-wrought heart could have sustained.

As soon as she heard of the result, she hurried to meet me, and hand in hand we gazed into each others eyes and saw the light of freedom there, and we felt in our hearts that we could with one accord cry out: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will towards men."

Dear, dear mother! how solemnly I invoke your spirit as I review these trying scenes of my girlhood, so long ago! Your patient face and neatly-dressed figure stands ever in the foreground of that checkered time; a figure showing naught to an on-looker but the common place virtues of an honest woman! Never would an ordinary observer connect those virtues with aught of heroism or greatness, but to me they are as bright rays as ever emanated from the lives of the great ones of earth, which are portrayed on historic pages to me, the qualities of her true, steadfast heart and noble soul become "a constellation, and is tracked in Heaven straightway."

James Thomas

1827-1913

"He is very genteel in his manners," wrote Cyprian Clamorgan of James Thomas in *The Colored Aristocracy of St. Louis*, "attentive to business, and is a remarkably fine looking man." Clamorgan also said that Thomas was worth fifteen thousand dollars, a remarkable sum for any person in 1858, absolutely extraordinary for a black man who had been a slave. Cyprian Clamorgan doubtless knew Thomas well, for Thomas worked part-time for Henry Clamorgan, Cyprian's brother, in one of the most prosperous barber shops in St. Louis.

By 1873, Thomas owned six apartment houses and other properties in various sections of St. Louis, as well as real estate in Memphis and Nashville. His fortune of nearly five hundred thousand dollars made him not only the richest black in Missouri, but one of the richest blacks in the country.

Thomas was born in Nashville in 1827. His father was a prominent judge, John Catron, chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court. His mother, Sally, who ran a laundering business, bought her son's freedom in 1834 for four hundred dollars, but since the boy did not leave the state, as Tennessee law required of free blacks, he legally remained a slave. Thomas had to petition the Tennessee court for freedom and did not become, truly, a free man until 1851 when his petition was granted.

Thomas was an enterprising man, establishing himself as a master barber in Nashville at a time when blacks generally provided this service for whites. Some of his clients were among the most important men in Nashville. Thomas, despite being legally a slave for many years of his early adulthood, enjoyed freedom of movement and could go anywhere he pleased, even out of the state. He worked hard and amassed a considerable sum. Thring of Nashville, he came to St. Louis in July 1857. St. Louis remained his home for the rest of his life.

Thomas began writing his memoirs toward the end of his life. He had suffered a severe financial reversal during the Panic of 1893. He had nearly righted his affairs when a tornado struck St. Louis in 1896, destroying most of his under-insured property. His wife died in 1897. He was virtually penniless, having only his memories.

Despite his lack of education, clearly evident in the writing style of this excerpt from *From Tennessee Slave to St. Louis Entrepreneur: The Autobiography of James Thomas*, the book contains a great deal of valuable information and many shrewd observations. The portion included here discusses in detail the tensions in St. Louis on the eve of the Civil War. The "Hardy tactics" Thomas refers to was a popular book on military tactics by William Hardee. The capture of Camp Jackson that Thomas describes probably kept Missouri in the Union.

The southern states, clearing the deck for action, commenced an attack on free persons. Louisiana, Ark., Tenn., and Missouri were conspicuous. In Louisiana the creoles were badly scared at the threat of taking their oath. Many creoles in La. owned plantations and slaves. In Tenn., Missouri, and Ark. it amounted to a removal of free colored people from the state (those becoming free) or else compel them to selected a white man to stand their guardian. The property owned by them was to be applied to the education of poor whites. The ablest men in Tenn opposed it bitterly, and in other states equally so. The state of Ark lost no time in passing it. The measure was pending in the other states and would have been passed but for the coming on of the War. It was passed in the Missouri legislature but the govt troops gave them no chance to enforce it. I like the southern people individually, but collectively and politicaly, "Dam 'em."

St. Louis during the winter of 1860 and 1861 as far as business was concerned was dull. Merchants seemed to have an abundance of leisure. There was a frightful schrinkage in values. There was no buyers for property in the line of Real Estate. I heard one Merchant say he would not give as much for property along fourth st. by the Acre as it had [been] bringing pr. foot. People who had a little money hid it away there to remain indefinitely. Summer came. Many people continued to wear their old thread bare winter clothes.

All the younger people reading or rather studying Hardy tacketics. Whenever one took a seat, he would reach for his pocket and get out Hardee and try to get into his head how to parry and thrust. Boats were carrying large quantities of freight south such as would be needed in case of trouble. One Gentleman, a Merchant who had just returned from New Orleans, said that the people there had made up their minds and were making every preparation and that they had about Thirty million dollars hoarded up in banks. Many thought the matter would be settled without any serious trouble. Some said, O for a Webster or a Clay to pour oil on the troubled waters. Instead of the Political sky clearing a little it seemed to grow darker. They thought Mr Crittendon of Kentucky might be listened to but no talk from him or anybody made any impression. The masses wanted war talk, something like Mr Wigfall of Texas, such as "unfurl the banner to the breeze and write resistance on every square inch." Forensic efforts were common in Washington and strong language was used. Pryor of Virginia challenged Mr Potter. Potter choose Bowie Knives. Pryor declined the brutal method. Mr. Lander said he would fight Pryor anyway and with any weapon he choose. It looked now as though both sides were in pure earnest.

In 1861 Capt Lyons had home guards and regulars at the Arsenal in St. Louis. Being a little crowded he placed them on the commons around the Arsenal grounds. They were regarded as necessary to prevent the Arsenal from seizure. The citizens complained of having the city property used for

soldiers to camp on and prevailed on the mayor to request Capt Lyons to take his camp inside the Arsenal grounds. Capt Lyons replied that he would wait for orders from Washington before he would remove the troops.

The time had come when everybody was expected to show his hand. When he didn't do so he was asked how he stood in the matter. In other words what is your politics. Still the cooler heads were hoping that there would be an Amicable adjustment of the differences and that peace and quiet might return. A republican replying to the question, "What is your politics," was almost sure to say, I am a republican but no Abolitionist. There were not many men that had the boldness to admit themselves to be Abolitionist. To make that admission meant a coolness and maybe ostracism from neighbors on account of his (what was termed) fanatical Ideas. But the free soil doctrine had been gaining in St Louis under the leadership of F. P. Blair.

The old and wealthy families of St Louis were all southern in sentiment with few exceptions. A good many northern people and some foreigners joined their ranks to be classed with Aristocrats. When a string of foreigners came into the country, people knew it meant so many votes for the Democracy. The Whigs were the more [prosperous] of the two and controlled the bulk of the wealth. A few foreigners turned Whig, not until they had been in the country several years, made money and began to feel Aristocratic. The Germans North soon advocated and adhered to the free soil move. Then they were early in advocating freedom for the bondsmen. The Irish were Democrats and they wanted "Dooglass" made president because his wife was a Catholic. At all events they were "dimocrats" and ninety nine out of a hundred were southerners in sympathy. In fact, old St Louis, which was closely associated with the south through family relations and business, had a secession feeling. As a general thing they were strong in their utterances. The Irish belonged to the untrified democracy. The churches themselves were accused of being in politics. The old colored Catholics wanted to see Federal bayonets brought in. They had been on the anxious seat long enough.

The Women were if anything busier than the men. It must be remembered that women have ruled and ruined since the world began. I mean in alteration, not all rule nor all ruin, but just enough to add spice to the repast. I will say this, It has been my opinion that Mr. Douglass would have been nominated at the Charleston Convention if some men had not been advised to never allow that Estimable woman Mrs. Douglass to become Mistress of the White house. I have never heard anybody say anything about the matter, but while Miss Harriet Lane and many other ladies were parraded before the public in newspapers, there was a studied silence towards Mrs Douglass. Availability goes a long ways in Selecting a candidate for so Important a position as president of the United States. All that was necessary was to nominate Stephen A Douglass. They would have had a patriot and a good man at the helm of State, but the women didn't want his wife and the men acted according to Instructions. Which was well, as is well known we got a better man.

The Young and old or middle aged ladies would meet their Gentlemen friends on the street, contrary to their former habits, stop and exchange a few words, sometimes hold a hurried consultation, then pass on. The young ladies, it appeared, were encouraging their big brother and sweetheart to go and share in the glory of putting the Yankees to flight. Some got tired waiting for the return of their choice and married somebody else.

The condition of the social, Financial and Political fabric was undergoing a strain.

Army officers were resigning their positions and going home in the South.

Jews were coming into the country from all parts of the world apparently. One told me what time he left Rio Janeiro. In fact they were about the only contented people or the most contented to be met with. While other people expected to lose, they expected to do some business.

The legislature of Missouri was kept so busy with more serious matters, had not found the time to take up the "free Nigger bill" and before they did reach it and while the free people were uneasy concerning it, The county court rounded up all the free people, ascertained their callings and their standing in the community, gave all permission to remain, which eased their minds. So the free Negroes got permission to remain and before a great while the legislative body had to make a precipitate move which dissolved that body of wise men for good. In rounding up the free people before the court there were many who were Indians, Spaniards, French, whose chocolate colored mothers had lived under the three flags. But they were not called on to prove nothing.

The Southern people used to repeat a small portion of what might be termed history. It seemed their Vocabulary of profanity was inexhaustible when a little excited. They would say, Now look, them blue bellied scoundrels went to Africa, stole the niggers, brought them here, sold them to us, then stole them from us, starved them and otherwise mistreated them, now they pretend and do want to tell us what to do with the balance of them.

Those self appointed conservitors of the peace were constantly nosing around to see what the niggers were doing. They never grew tired of lecturing the Niggers. Their lecture consisted of about ten words, which amounted to "You fellows must remember this is a white man's country yet." "I have no objection to a nigger as long as he keeps his place." If anybody ever made a remark in the Negroes favor the question was put, do you want a nigger to marry your daughter, sit at your table.

In St Louis there were many quiet men who said but little, was awaiting developments. But many of them secretly thought that just such a man as Genl Andrew Jackson would be the right sort of man for the times.

The Germans were ultra in their political opinions and at heart felt like wiping out the last vestige of the [secessionist] feeling from the city or country. There had been no real cordial feeling between the two factions in St Louis. The Americans had attempted to check their sunday parades. The Germans claimed they had the right to spend the sunday to their own liking and intended to do it.

The home guard used to parade the street in Squads, looking close right and left. Many men stood along the side walk, hands on hip pocket. On two or three occasions a pistol was fired and the guards emptied their guns in the direction of where the shot came from. As to be expected, somebody was hurt. Those parading said it was a pistol. Others said Stick broke. Some of those Germans couldn't speak English but were purely in Earnest and wished for a chance to kill the "Seush", it made no difference whether was governor or United states senator, he ought to be hung for insulting "my country's flag." Many of those Germans knew no English but "Cot fur tam."

All this talk back and forth was from the time of Mr Lincolns nomination and before. The people all knew Mr Lincolns sentiments. "We dont want to take anybodys property, Slaves or Otherwise. We do oppose an extension of slavery." After the War began, Anything but a destruction of the Union.

After the Election the friends of Mr Lincolns thought it better to get him into Washington without his being generally recognized. According to reports, they disguised him with a Scotch Cloak or some other. Any how those who opposed him in politics laughed heartily at the Idea. Peoples ideas were formed. When a man said we ought to go slow, Mr Lincoln may make a good president, the ultra element, who could be heard above all others, would cry out, "submissionist," "Abolitionist," and other unpleasant sayings. When an old cry baby would say we ought not to get into trouble among ourselves, "brother against brother," would only give the rabid a fresh start and would say something about such brothers in a severe manner. One man said if that kind went to heaven he didnt want to go there. Yankees.

Those in sympathy with the south were highly pleased when they saw the name of another of the Generals in the army and who had served with distinction handing in their re[s]ignations. That continued until a long list of the most familiar names had been marked off as out of the service of the United States. The incoming administration began looking to see what it had. They knew what they ought to have but they wanted to see in what condition it was in, whether it was fit for immediate use. The man that counted the money had the easiest job for there was no money to count, or less than a dollar, so they said. The arms of the government that should have been found in place by all means had been shipped south and placed where the stronger party could take possession when ready to do so, as all the south had been taught that the trouble would result in a walk over when the dogs of war were let loose.

But the dogs of war were let lose in a manner that at first attracted no special attention. Here and there an arsenal was seized all right. The people could say nothing. But there was a goodly supply of United States guns just lately received at St Louis. All or many of the arsenals were taken in South. The people of St Louis would have been not the least surprised and rather expected an attack or an attempt to seize the Arsenal. The seceders would rather have had somebody else than Capt Lyons to deal with and the Union people felt confident in his earnestness to the cause of the Union. Besides

Lyons, Col. Blair had been made Col. of a regiment containing foot and horse, two thousand men. While the southern people were elated with the seizure of United States property elsewhere they themselves didn't relish the idea of trying to seize the St Louis arsenal with Col Blair and Capt Lyons to defend it.

Many of the older men looked haggard and worn under the strain. It was clear that talk would do no good. It seemed clear that the differences must be settled with blood shed after the south had been supplied with United States weapons by Mr Floyd, they said, leaving the United States government nothing to fight with. The leading military men (officers) gave no money. The government had simply to begin over. All that visiting which occurred a year or two before Col. Ben McCullough and other southern men many of them traveled on the Morrison were then arranging for this thing which was arranged and carried out as they, I supposed, wished.

Now the Germans were highly elated over the report that Genl Franz Seigal was coming from the "faderland" and such was his knowledge and ability as a commander that scarcely anybody else would be needed in case of war which was certain to unless a back down from some one.

When it became known to the military authorities that some guns were brought to the city and had been received by the commander at what was named Camp Jackson, where there was quite a gathering of what was known (to all who felt inclined to investigate) to be secessionist. Those guns had been carried out to the camp. The people felt satisfied that as soon as the camp felt strong enough they would be hurled against the Arsenal. The commander at the Arsenal, Capt Lyons, sent word to the commander of Camp Jackson that he wanted those guns belonging to the United States. The commander of the Camp's reply was if he wanted the guns, he had better come and get them. Possibly, he thought they wouldn't come.

The reply of the commander of the Camp (to "come and get them") was of a sort that could not well be ignored. In the afternoon on the 10th May, Capt Lyons & Col. Blair went after those guns. They at the same time took along a few friends. The invitation didn't specify who must or who must not come. The best wines and liquors were plentiful, cigars abundant in the camp. All callers were well received. Visitors used to tell me how well every body was treated and several of the officers had invited me to come and I had promised to go.

On the memorable tenth of May in the afternoon a cloud of dust was seen approaching the camp from two or three different streets. Many in the Camp wondered what that meant but in short time it was made clear. Blair and Lyons had brought friends numbering about nine thousand Dutch and other soldiers. In addition to them there were almost as many more curious people, who knew what was intended, had followed along to see the fun and climbed on the fences and any place to get a good view.

The soldiers under Lyon and Blair surrounded the camp, unlimbered their guns (according to all the accounts I heard given of the affair) and demanded those guns. In addition they demanded an immediate and unconditional

surrender of the camp. While those negotiations were going on, the German soldiers fired a volley in the direction of where they thought harm was intended, their bullets ploughing through the ranks of the spectators killing fortunately only a few. One fellow who had climbed the fence to get a good view told me how he and a thousand others, supposing they had been shot, let go the fence and fell to the ground like a thousand of bricks and was afraid to raise their heads up expecting another volley. If there was ever a humiliated and disgusted set of people in the world they could be found among those at Camp Jackson that night. They swore and ripped, "Cussed" the Dutch, but they had to take the oath of Allegiance or go to their friends in the south.

The capture of Camp Jackson cast a gloom over the old set. They criticized the Dutch harshly. Many of their conversations were in French. I believe the majority of those young men went south and remained there until the close of hostilities.

In the beginning of Mr Lincoln's administration there were divers of opinions and suggestions made. Some of the leading men said let them go out of the Union if they want to. They will gladly come back before long. Different men's opinions were given daily, while Mr Lincoln was steadfast for the preservation of the Union. No compromising with Lincoln. The Union gentleman, the Union. The people laughed at "uncle Abes" grammar and the way he said things and used to compare his language with Mr Jeff Davis, who was a finished scollar. Now we only hear what "Abe" said, never hear of Jeff.

The southern people always expected in case of trouble between sections that we would have foreign intervention and that the European powers would not allow all ports blockaded. There were several southern gentlemen in Europe, there for the purpose of teaching the people the justness of their cause and to tell how they had been goaded into doing what they had done.

Training the guns on Fort Sumpter stopped all talk of speculative kind. Then the southern people had to hold their sides again when they read that Mr Lincoln had called for seventy five thousand volunteers. Those of the seventy five thousand that came to St Louis were sent off under Genl Lyons to beat back Genl Ben McCollough's army that was then invading Missouri did not have the time to be uniformed. Lyons was killed. The seventy five thousand were enlisted for three months. Their time expired about the time the battle was fought which was the battle of Wilson Creek. The fight was not far from a draw but it was regarded by many southern people as a victory because Genl Lyons was killed. The first I learned of the death of Lyons was from a young southern man who said to me hurry up and let me out of here. I'm told Lyons was killed and I want to get drunk.

People of the East nagged the life out of the Govt to hurry up, close the war. After a while, which seemed a long time to those who expected the war to close after one battle, the army went down to Bull Run to clean out the Confederates. The people of St Louis as elsewhere were eager for reports of the fight. Extras were issued often. It was a hot day. Many Congressmen went

along to see what battle looked like. A dispatch came stating that the battle was on in earnest. One of the dispatches read that the boys were fighting hard and had removed their shirts. All of those reports only increased the interest. The last read that the Union forces had stopped to give the horses water. Lastly it intimated that the battle would not be resumed that day. The following morning the papers gave a full account of a stampede of the Union Army. Instead of running towards Richmond, they had run every foot of the distance to Washington where they started from. It was highly entertaining to hear the southern people of St Louis talk and laugh over the affair. They were tickled nearly to death. They tried to look serious and sorry for "our" discomfiture before the Union people, but among themselves they laughed until tears came. They were only sorry the Confederates didnt follow up their advantage and seize Washington and then defy them.

Ex-Slave Narratives

The following narratives are interviews from the Missouri Historical Records Survey Project of the WPA at the Western Historical Manuscript collection at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress. The interviews were first published in 1972 as a series of volumes titled The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, edited by George P. Rawick.

HALE AND HEARTY AT 119

Charles Gabriel Anderson, 119 years old, lives at 1106 Biddle Street in St. Louis alone. He is 5 feet, 3 inches in height, has mixed gray hair and weighs 145 pounds.

He is slightly bent, but does not have to wear glasses, and is able to go anywhere in the city without assistance. He has a good memory, and cheerful attitude. Seated in the Church of God in Christ, a storefront church, next door to his home, where he attends because of the convenient location, he tells the writer the following story:

I was born January 5, 1818 in Huntsville, Alabama de son of Sallie McCrea and George Bryant. My owner's name was Miss Margaret Tony. She sold me to Edmond Bryant while I was quite young. I sometimes go by de name of Bryant.

"I was just big enough to carry water and help a bit with farming while Miss Tony had me, but I jedge I was 'bout 14 years old when Mr. Bryant got me, 'cause I was old enough to plow and help with de cotton and I done a man's size work in his field. I was his slave when de war broke out. I joined de army in 1864. I used to git a pension of \$65 a month, now I only git \$56 a month but last month I didn't git no check atall. I don't know why. Wish I could find out 'cause I needs it bad to live on. I used to nurse de white folks children when I was a little boy. I made a better nurse dan most girls, so jest kept on at it till I was old enough to be a field hand.

"I had a hard time till de war broke out. Soon as I got a chance, I run off and went to de army. I served two years and six months. I come out in 1866. 'Course I was in de hospital till '66. I don't know how long I was in der wounded. But I do know when I got better, I was such a good nurse de doctors kept me in de government hospital to help nurse dem other soldiers and dere sure 'nough was a heap of 'em up dere. Dat was in Madison, Wisconsin. After dey turned me loose from de hospital, I went to work in a barber shop up dere. I worked in it one year to learn de trade. After I learned de barber trade I don't remember how much longer I stayed dere. I left dere and went to Dodgeville, Wisconsin and opened a barber shop of my own and run it about

technique offensively, especially against a fighter of Nelson's style. The referee stopped the fight, thinking that I was hurt, but a sportswriter felt that I had quit and wrote this in his column. It took me a long time to live this down.

My next manager was George Wilsman, who took me to Ponca City, Oklahoma, for a fight. I had been promised \$35 for this fight, but received only \$12.

A short time later I met a man named Cal Thompson, who came to my dressing room after one of my fights. He was a real sharp dresser and a very persuasive talker. "Archie," he told me, "you've got a lot of class. You've got it, man."

"Well, thanks, Mr. Thompson," I said. My ears had perked up at the praise of this man, who impressed me by his expensive clothes and smooth talk.

"Yes, Archie," he went on, "you've got it. But, you know, in this game just having it isn't enough. You've got to have a good manager who can bring you along right, pace you just right, get you in the right fights."

I nodded my head. "I couldn't agree with you more," I told him.

"How many fights have you had, Archie?"

"Well," I said, "professionally only seven, but I've had a lot of fights and a good record as an amateur." I went on to tell him about all those kayos I had placed upon guys as an amateur.

Thompson seemed surprised. "You sure look like a man who's been a pro longer than that," he said.

In one sense he was praising me, but in another sense it was a put-down, probably to make the proposition he was about to offer more acceptable.

"Look," he said, "you come with me. Let me manage you and I'll get you all the fights you want. I'll make you the champion of the world."

Well, those are the kind of words I wanted to hear, you know, and I thought, well, this must be a terrific guy, and he'll get me somewhere in a hurry, and this plus the fact that I hadn't had a fight in almost four months decided me right then and there that I wanted this guy to handle me. He was telling me all these good things, you know, and anyone who has ever been to a fortune-teller knows that this is just how they operate. They tell you all kind of good things—like you are going to become rich, or make a trip, or get a promotion and all this sort of thing. Well, the mind is funny, because if just one of these predictions comes true you remember it and think, well, this fortune-teller is great. You forget all about the things she told you that didn't come true. So, anyway, I said, "Mr. Thompson, I would like you to manage me. When do we start?"

Thompson was all smiles. "Right now," he said as he shook my hand. "Right now. And believe me, Archie, you're going places."

Charles "Sonny" Liston

1932-1970

Known as the "bad boy" of boxing because of his criminal record and thuggish demeanor, Liston was one of the most feared heavyweight boxers in history. Born to an impoverished rural Arkansas family that was abandoned by the father, Liston was a wayward boy, unresponsive as a student, ridiculed because of his size and his "slowness." He quit school around the sixth grade and eventually wound up on the streets of St. Louis. He was convicted for armed robbery and sentenced to two concurrent five-year terms in the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City. While he was in prison, he learned to box, coming under the influence of a Catholic priest. When he paroled in 1952, Liston continued to box, learning the skills of the sport easily, turned professional in 1953 and worked his way up the ladder. He was forced to leave St. Louis in the mid-1950s after being convicted of beating a police officer.

Despite this criminal past, Liston made his way as a fighter. By 1960, he became the top heavyweight in the division, challenging champion Floyd Patterson. Patterson, a small heavyweight at 185 to 190 pounds, was reluctant to fight Liston because of the latter's size and power and also because it was a well-known fact that Liston was connected to organized crime. Finally, the two met in Chicago in 1962, Liston winning by a first-round knockout. Liston also knocked out Patterson in the 1963 rematch. Liston was eventually to lose his title to the brash-talking, lightning-quick Cassius Clay in 1964, despite being an overwhelming favorite. He lost a bizarre rematch with Clay, who had changed his name to Muhammad Ali, in 1965 by a first-round knockout in which Liston appeared to be unhurt.

He continued to fight, but Liston, possibly because of his performances in both fights against Ali, was never given a title opportunity again. Liston lived out his remaining years in Las Vegas, a close confidante of the great heavyweight champion Joe Louis, and apparently still closely connected to organized crime. Liston was found dead in his home in January 1971 by his wife, although the coroner set the time of his death as December 30, 1970, apparently the victim of a drug overdose, although many believe that he was murdered.

This selection from black sportswriter Andrew Sturgeon Young's 1963 biography, Sonny Liston: The Champ Nobody Wanted, chronicles Liston's years in St. Louis and his rise as a professional boxer.

In St. Louis, Sonny Liston was out of his element.

He had traded the wide-open spaces and the slow pace of Arkansas for the cluttered, slummy, asphalt jungle of a big city. He was a stranger there.

He was a boy, though big as a man, walking into a lion's den, hardly knowing lions hung out there; he was like an "innocent" in a den of thieves. "It was a year after the war when the . . . kid with the man's body first showed up around the alleys of St. Louis," Pete Hamill wrote in the *New York Post*. "He was looking for his mother," one St. Louis detective who knows him said, "and he found her. But he also found a town of con-men and hustlers, drifters and pimps, the flotsam and jetsam of a war . . . a town where a big kid could get jammed up. *It was the town that spawned Sonny Liston.*"

When Sonny arrived in St. Louis, he was awed and he was naive. He was looking for his mother, and he thought it would be A-B-C simple to find her.

"I figured the city would be like the country," he has said, "and all I had to do was to ask somebody where my mother lived and they'd tell me she lived down the road a piece. But, when I got to the city, there were too many doggone people there, and I just wandered around lost. But one morning I told my story to a wino, and he says I favor this lady that lives down the street."

This lady, so Sonny's story goes, was his mother. Mrs. Helen Liston told the story of his arrival somewhat differently, tossing a bouquet to the police.

If the search for his mother had taken Sonny into a fine neighborhood, where she either lived or even "worked in service," Sonny could, at least, have seen how the other half lived and, speculation is, he might have been inspired to reach up, over his head, grab a limb of the better life, and pull himself out of his rut.

But, the search for his mother led him to the slums of St. Louis, where even today the rough brick streets in some of these St. Louis parts will shake bolts out of your car and rattle your bones while you're riding and, though slum clearance progresses, ridding the scene of some awful eyesores. There the dank, rusty houses, apartment buildings and warehouses, covered with the soot of many coal-burning winters and much manufacturing, must have been a sorry sight for this thirteen-year-old country kid who was seeing it all for the first time.

This was 1946.

When Liston appeared before a Senate committee headed by Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, who was investigating underworld control of boxing, he was asked:

"What did you do when you got to St. Louis?"

"Well," Liston replied, "my mother put me in school, and then, after I got started going to school, other kids seen me coming out of—I was such a large

boy—other kids would see me coming out of such small kids' room. So they would make fun of me and start laughing and I started fighting. Then I started playing hooky, and from hooky, I led to another thing, so I wound up in the wrong school."

"What school did you wind up in?"

"Well, the house of detention."

"How old were you then?"

"I was about 14."

"How long did you stay there?"

"My mother, she got me out, and then, well I figure—she got me out and I went right back for the same things."

"You did what?"

"I went back to the same thing and wound up in a bigger house this time."

While collaborating with Wendell Smith of the *Chicago American* in his by-line story just prior to his fight with Patterson, Liston threaded this story further:

"After drifting around St. Louis, from one place to another, I got a job with a construction gang. The other workers treated me like a man, not the boy I was. They thought I was a man because I could work as hard and as long as they could.

"Well, I don't need to tell you that they were some pretty tough men. Many of them had been in jail and others were to eventually wind up there. But they were the only friends I had. They were my associates. They influenced my life, the way I thought and the things I did. I never knew there were any other kind of people.

"I'd heard of Negro doctors and lawyers, and outstanding businessmen, of course, but how was I going to get with them? They were educated, refined people. I wasn't educated and knew that I wasn't refined . . .

As far as "refined Negroes" were concerned, Sonny Liston never had a chance! On the night Liston fought Patterson in Chicago, the *New York Post* assigned writer Ted Poston to "ringside" in Harlem at Loew's Victoria Theatre. Leading off his story next day, Poston noted this immediate reaction to Liston's victory:

"The stocky, conservatively dressed man half rose from his seat in Harlem's packed Loew's Victoria Theatre and his soft words carried far beyond his elevated box seat. He said, simply:

"God help us."

"And in the stunned silence of at least 20 seconds, he seemed to speak for over 2,500 Negroes in their \$6.75 seats, for the hundreds of standees ranged behind, for scores of others crouching in the crowded aisles and for dozens of teen-agers who had slipped through a back door, dashed from behind the TV screen and lost themselves in an earlier joyful crowd, only half-heartedly chased by the cops.

"For Loew's Victoria belonged to Floyd Patterson for two minutes and five seconds last night. And no bad man in the worst melodrama had been hissed and hooted as wildly for the same length of time as was a villain named Sonny Liston."

After making notes on crowd-reaction at Loew's Victoria Theatre, Poston went over to the Hotel Theresa in Harlem where, almost traditionally, Negro fight fans congregated for post-bout communion and spirits and sidewalk ogling in the Joe Louis era, the Sugar Ray Robinson era, and later.

"The Hotel Theresa's corner at Seventh and 125th, which Joe Louis owned a dozen times, had not a single celebrant," Poston reported. "Not a single Black Muslim on a step ladder on any of the other corners.

"One lonely straggler paid a reluctant tribute to the new champion.

"No other Negro in all history," he said, "has so united his people in a common hope—the vain hope that he'd get his block knocked off."

"Harlem had an early curfew last night."

Before the fight, Sonny Liston was talking to Wendell Smith, and he was saying:

"... I wasn't educated and knew that I wasn't refined . . .

"You can look at yourself and tell just about where you fit in. I fit in with the construction gang. They spoke the only language I knew. It was tough language, but I could speak it with the best of them—and I could fight the best of them and hold my own."

Liston learned early in St. Louis that his best friends were his fists.

"It's Sonny's hands that always got him into trouble," a St. Louis writer has said. "Nobody realizes what a temper this guy has. Why he has the temper, I don't know; but he has it. And when you get a guy with hands like his, and a temper to trigger them, you got trouble. Sonny says that first charge was a truancy charge. I heard it was for busting up a couple of smaller kids."

This is what the detective was referring to:

Shortly after he arrived in St. Louis, Sonny was arrested. The very first year there, this was. There is some mystery about what Sonny actually did. Some say he committed an assault. Anyway, he was given a lecture and was released to his mother.

This brush with the law didn't scare Liston out of "mischievousness." Monroe Harrison, who was to become big in his life, has mentioned an incident, which may, or may not, have been the one above. Harrison said that, on this occasion, Liston took five dollars from another boy who had been sent to a store to buy groceries. "He was fifteen years old when he got his first major rap," Harrison said, adding: "He was hungry."

Liston fell in with a gang of kids who meant nobody any good. When he was about sixteen, he and his gang pulled a caper and were nabbed by the police. As Liston has said:

"We broke into this restaurant about two in the morning and got away.

But, after we'd gone ten blocks, we decided to stop and get some barbecue, and then the police came along and barbecued us."

Again, Liston was released on probation, but, by this time, he was a two hundred-pounder, he was immensely strong (Harrison has recalled that one time Sonny lifted up the front end of a Ford, just because someone said he couldn't do it!), quick-triggered with his fists, characterized as being "evil," and called, in his gang, the "No. 1 Negro."

By January of 1950, Liston was pretty well immersed in crime. He was arrested for six muggings, one that brought just a nickel. Liston, and his companions, also were charged with the robbery of a luncheonette.

"Suddenly in the area in which Liston and his gang stalked, there occurred a series of muggings," writer Gene Courtney said in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "One victim was struck in the mouth, knocked down and robbed of six dollars. A second reported three men beat him and dragged him into an alley where they relieved him of nine dollars. A third was pulled into an empty lot and forty-five dollars was taken forcibly from his billfold.

"Liston and his juvenile delinquent friends had found another outlet for their energies. It was daring; it was physical but it wasn't very profitable.

"As in any form of education, the good student gets promoted. Sonny and his cronies were good . . . and so, naturally, they advanced to armed robbery."

Liston once explained his activities this way:

"We were just always looking for trouble. Someone says, 'Let's stick up the restaurant' and we did. We never got a chance to count the loot. To this day, I don't know how much there was in the haul. There were four of us, me and three other kids, and we never split it up or anything. We just did the job like the stupid, crazy, bad kids we were."

In 1950, Liston hit a real snag.

A St. Louis service station was robbed. Two people were beaten for no apparent reason. Liston was caught. He was sentenced to serve concurrent, five-year terms in the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City. The convictions were obtained on two counts of robbery and two counts of larceny.

"In my opinion," a St. Louis policeman has said, "going to the can was the best thing that ever happened to him. If he hadn't gone to the can, he would never have met Father Stevens and if he never met Father Stevens, he never would have learned to box, and if he hadn't learned to box, he'd be dead of a bullet in the back."

Liston himself has admitted, "If I hadn't gotten in trouble, I'd never have become a fighter."

Mrs. Helen Liston has said:

"I had already left St. Louis when he got into trouble. They say he confessed . . . I don't know."

Mrs. Liston went from St. Louis back to the Arkansas farm, "made two crops with the kids," and then headed North again to live in Gary, Indiana, for

eleven years. She was not a part of the historic events that started Sonny off on the road to the world's heavyweight championship!

The story of Charles Liston's incarceration in the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City is composed of one part fact and one part legend, which may also be fact.

Liston entered the prison on June 1, 1950.

In June, 1952, he was "released" to the prison farm, a semi-trustee, minimum-security auxiliary unit located about ten miles outside Jefferson City, the state capital.

On October 30, 1952, he was paroled into boxing.

Since that time, Liston has returned to this particular pen only once, on a visit, about a year before he dethroned Patterson.

While discussing Liston with the author after the Liston-Patterson title bout in Chicago, Warden Nash said, "I can bring two hundred men into this office and they'll all tell you that they were Sonny Liston's cell-mates." But the truth is that prior to the beginnings of his prison boxing career, Liston wasn't especially famous inside the big-house, which was populated with more than three thousand men, a third of them Negro, two-thirds of them Caucasian.

According to prison authorities, he was no disciplinary problem. Once or twice, the records now show, he was reprimanded for shooting craps; on another occasion, he was chastised for "hollering in the line."

He was enrolled in the prison school program for a brief period of time, but dropped out. "At that time," Warden Nash has explained, "the program wasn't what it is now. Now they have civilian teachers with degrees. Then there was one civilian instructor and the others were 'good inmates.'"

Many facets of the Missouri State Penitentiary are better today than they were in Liston's time, partially as a result of a national riot, in 1954, when more than eight million dollars worth of property was destroyed and life was lost; largely because of the enlightened program conducted by Warden Nash, a stern, forceful, frank, yet humane person who believes "we're our brothers' keepers" and declares that "we try to give them [the prisoners] something tangible." Currently, Jeff City prisoners are permitted various means of learning and recreation. They are racially segregated while eating and sleeping, but all other facilities are integrated.

W. P. Steinhauer, a huge, friendly man who is now Assistant Warden, worked at the penitentiary during Liston's time and remembers him:

"As well as I can remember, Liston was assigned to the kitchen and worked on the docks—where they bring the vegetables in and unload them from the farm. He got started boxing under Father Stevens. He was just a big, stout man. His arms were as big around as my legs. He was a pretty slow starter (in the ring). It seemed that it'd take him a couple rounds to get started. But I don't think you could hurt the man. Whenever Liston hits you, it's just too bad . . .

"He wasn't too much of a mixer here. He was a reserved sort of fellow. He was the sort of fellow you almost had to draw a conversation out of. We had no trouble with him at all. He was all right. When he was here, very few even thought of him as being a potential world's champion."

Andrew Lyles says he did. Lyles says he was serving a burglary sentence at Jeff City in 1950 when Liston was brought in. "I guess I was the onliest one back then who said Sonny was going to be a champion," Lyles told the *Associated Press* after Liston kayoed Patterson. Lyles said he spent more than a year in the same cell with Liston. "He's just shy," was Lyles' personality appraisal. "Of course, if he don't like you, it was pretty tough to get close to him."

Fact and legend merge and the story moves on:

A former boxer, an inmate named Joe Gonzalez, is credited with nicknaming Liston "Sonny." Originally, Gonzalez, who tried to interest Liston in boxing, called him "Sonny Boy," but eventually the monicker was shortened to "Sonny."

Legend declares that Sonny Liston became an in-prison champion of the Negro race before he became heavyweight champion in the ring. As this colorful saga goes:

The Jeff City prisoners were divided into gangs. A man named Hank Calouris ran the Westsiders; Nick Baroudi ran the Italians; and a convict simply known as "Frankie" headed the Eastsiders. These three groups ganged up on the Negroes.

Liston resented it and, so the story goes, one day he walked across the prison yard, hit Calouris with the back of his hand and said, "I'll do that every time I hear you touched a colored boy. If you don't like it, I'll see you in the hole at six." He hunted Baroudi and Frankie and told them the same thing.

Liston had selected "the Hole," a storage room beneath the cells, because it was the only place they could fight without being disturbed.

Five minutes after the four began fighting—three on one—Liston came out, leaving Calouris, Baroudi, and Frankie in beaten hulks on the concrete floor in the Hole.

There is another prison fight story: "Taunted by older inmates, Sonny flew into a rage, became embroiled in a vicious fight with one of the tougher long-termers. 'I told Sonny,' Father Stevens is quoted, 'that this sort of thing could only extend his sentence. With his physique, I invited him to try out for the prison boxing team.'"

When I contacted Father Alois J. Stevens at the church he now heads in Southwestern Missouri, I told him of the fight story above and also mentioned that the records read to me at the Missouri State Penitentiary failed to substantiate these stories. Father Stevens asked me if I had been shown a "yellow record sheet," and I told him, no. I repeated the fight story attributed to him, and he said: "That's been so long ago. I don't want to put the writer on the spot who wrote the story. *But I don't remember the incident.*"

Father Stevens was the prison chaplain. He was also the prison's recreation director. The most popular sport was baseball, but boxing and wrestling were big during the winter months.

"At first," Father Stevens said, "Liston was just one of many (participating in the boxing program). But he developed so fast that it wasn't long before we realized his potential."

Boxing matches were held in an auditorium which was destroyed in the riot as well as in the prison yard. Three or four boxing shows were arranged each year for the inmates; one or two were open to the public from Jefferson City. "Aside from training sessions," Father Stevens said, "I would guess that Sonny had eight or ten bouts. I think he went through two seasons there."

Having been impressed by Liston's potential, Father Stevens conceived the idea that he might be a professional prospect. "I didn't say very much to Sonny until I talked to Burnes (Robert Burnes, Sports Editor of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, which, at that time, sponsored the annual Golden Gloves tournament in St. Louis). There was no need to 'rev' the kid up until I could see what I could do. But he was willing to go along. Sonny doesn't talk much now. He was less talkative then . . ."

"What about Sonny's intelligence, Father?"

"I think he's a pretty intelligent boy. He's no fool. He's not dumb by any means. He just never had a formal education. But he's pretty shrewd. He has a great sense of humor. He learned to write his name and a few other little things in Jeff City. But he could count money. He learned that a long time ago."

Burnes listened to Father Stevens' story, to the proposal. "He was willing to give it a try, anyway."

A former fighter who had once been a Joe Louis sparring partner also, Monroe Harrison, was closely tied in with the *Globe-Democrat's* Golden Gloves program.

"Burnes had Harrison in mind as Sonny's manager," Father Stevens said. "But Harrison worked as a custodian at a school in St. Louis and didn't have any capital. He brought in Mitchell (Frank Mitchell, now publisher of the *St. Louis Argus*, a Negro newspaper, and also a man who managed fighters). The way I understand it, Mitchell would contribute the capital, while Harrison would handle the fighter."

Before anyone was to make a serious move on Liston's behalf, it was decided that he should be tested by a professional heavyweight.

As Frank Mitchell told the author:

"Bob Burnes scratched his head and tried to figure who would be the best man to take to Jeff City to test Liston in a fight. Bob Burnes called Monroe Harrison. Monroe Harrison called me. I had a stable of fighters. I was to be the bankroll man, if this thing worked out. Tony Anderson, a veteran trainer, was consulted. He knew fighters. He could spot them—snap!—like that! Tony took the best heavyweight in St. Louis to Jeff City for this scouting trip on Liston."

The fighter selected to "test" Liston was Thurlow Wilson. Included in the group that went to Jeff City were Anderson, Harrison, Mitchell.

When the fighters were ready, Liston was asked: "How many rounds?"

"Don't make no difference to me."

"Make it five or six rounds," Wilson said confidentially. "He won't last that long."

In the first round, Liston started jabbing his left. "He had a terrific left hand even then," Anderson has recalled. "He was born with it."

"He had a great left hand but no right hand at all," Mitchell told me.

"He had a right hand," Anderson said, "but he was afraid to use it because of the tremendous power he had."

After two rounds, Wilson called it quits.

"I don't want no more of him."

After the brief session was over, Wilson thoroughly roughed up, Harrison told Father Stevens: "You found me a live one."

"Get him," Anderson advised Mitchell. "I can make a champion out of him."

"It was my recommendation that clinched it with Mitchell," Anderson told me.

"Liston was a good, strong boy and he had all the potentialities."

Mitchell promised Father Stevens that day, "You'll hear from me."

"I got him paroled," Mitchell told me, "got him a room at the Pine Street YMCA and a job with a steel company. He worked during the day and trained at night."

"We entered him in the Golden Gloves that February (1953). He left-handed everybody out of the Golden Gloves. In Chicago, he romped right through until he met [the late] Ed Sanders. He was scared to death of Sanders but he beat hell out of him. He romped all the way through the Golden Gloves. No contest."

Bob Gibson

1935-

Despite a number of childhood afflictions, Omaha native Bob Gibson grew up to become a star athlete, playing both baseball and basketball at Omaha Technical High School and at Creighton University. Gibson left the Harlem Globetrotters in 1957 to join the St. Louis Cardinals. His career did not start well as Cardinal manager Solly Hemus had little confidence in him. However, when Johnny Keane became manager of the Cardinals in 1961, Gibson blossomed. With a smoking fastball and wicked slider, Gibson, along with the Dodgers' Sandy Koufax and the Giants' Juan Marichal, became one of the dominant pitchers in the 1960s, helping the Cardinals earn three World Series berths—in 1964, 1967, and 1968. He set a record in 1968 with a 1.12 earned run average and 13 shutouts. Indeed, so stunning was his performance that major league owners lowered the pitching mound the following year to lessen the pitcher's advantage. In 1981, he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame on the first ballot, and in 1998, the St. Louis Cardinals erected a statue outside of Busch Stadium commemorating his contribution to the history of the ballclub. After his career with the Cardinals ended in 1975, Gibson has been a baseball announcer, a pitching coach, and is currently an assistant to National League president, Len Coleman.

Always fiercely competitive and outspoken, this passage is taken from Gibson's second autobiography, Stranger to the Game (1994, with Lonnie Wheeler). Gibson talks about race relations on the Cardinals in the early 1960s and his development as a dominant pitcher.

. . .

Sal Maglie, the old warhorse pitcher, was released before the 1959 season started, but on his way out he apparently put in a good word for me with one of his sportswriter friends from New York, where he had previously played for the Giants. On Maglie's advice, a writer from a magazine—all these years, I'd remembered it as being *Sports Illustrated*, but in trying to verify that I haven't been able to—showed up in St. Petersburg one afternoon, and we had a cordial conversation while a photographer shot pictures of me with one of my teammates, a black first baseman named George Crowe. I didn't know what to expect in the way of an article, if anything, but I felt reasonably good about the interview. When the magazine came out, there was a forgettable short story accompanied by a photograph with an unforgettable caption that said something like: "I don't do no thinkin' about pitchin'. I just hum dat pea." Charline wrote the magazine (whichever it was) a very sharp letter in response, explaining, in effect, that I hadn't

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studied Uncle Remus dialect at Creighton. Certain that the article and caption were in *Sports Illustrated*, I never bought another issue until I broke down in 1993—thirty-four years later (by which time I'd begun to have doubts about where the piece appeared)—when *SI* put me and Denny McLain on the cover of a 1968 nostalgia edition.

I had a good chance to make it with the Cardinals in 1959—ostensibly—and then again I really didn't. On the encouraging side, I was learning a slider to go along with my fastball (and to give me a better option than my curveball), and the team was in a rebuilding phase. After breaking Dizzy Dean's Cardinal strikeout record for a season, Sam Jones had been traded to the San Francisco Giants for a first baseman and outfielder named Bill White. That left a mostly unproven starting rotation of Lindy McDaniel, Ernie Broglio, Larry Jackson, and Vinegar Bend Mizell, and I was a leading candidate (allegedly) for a job that would be split between starting and long relief.

The bad news was that my performance would be judged by the Cardinals' overmatched new player-manager, a utility infielder named Solly Hemus, who, at thirty-six, was two years younger than our universally popular superstar, Stan Musial. Hemus must have been the only manager ever to have a problem handling Stan the Man, who didn't hit well that year—in part because Hemus had him and our other power hitter, Ken Boyer, bunting and hitting behind the runner, a strategy best restricted to utility infielders like Hemus—and found himself on the bench, of all places. Then Hemus moved him from left field to first base, which sent Bill White to the outfield, where he floundered. Under better circumstances, White might have gotten some help in the outfield from Curt Flood, who was the best center fielder I ever saw, but Flood was in no position to help anybody after Hemus told him he'd never make it as a big leaguer and replaced him with Gino Cimoli.

Hemus's treatment of black players was the result of one of the following, and I won't try to speculate which: Either he disliked us deeply or he genuinely believed that the way to motivate us was with insults. The result was the same regardless. He would goad us, ridicule us, bench us—anything he could think of to make us feel inept. He told me, like he told Flood, that I would never make it in the majors, and went so far as to suggest that I take a shot at basketball instead. He was apparently convinced that I didn't have a thought in my head when I was on the mound, and was not in the least reluctant to insult my intelligence. When the pitchers would meet before a series to review the hitters on the other team, Hemus would say things like, "You don't have to listen to this, Gibson. You just try to get the ball over the plate."

As far as I was concerned, Hemus's true colors came out one day when we played a doubleheader against the Pirates. He started himself in the second game, and in the first inning the Pittsburgh pitcher, a black righthander named Bennie Daniels, hit him in the leg. The team had not been hitting, and I can understand that Hemus wanted to light a fire under us, but that was no excuse for calling Daniels a "black bastard." Daniels didn't think

so either, and the fight that ensued emptied both benches. The next time up, Hemus doubled to the opposite field, and in the sixth inning Daniels knocked him down again. This time, Hemus flung the bat at him and they wrestled on the mound. We had a team meeting after the game, and in it Hemus referred to Daniels as a "nigger." Either it didn't occur to him or he didn't care that guys like me and Flood and White and Crowe—not to mention Musial and Boyer and Alex Grammas and other white players—would be personally and profoundly offended. It was hard to believe our manager could be so thickheaded, and it was even harder to play for a guy who unapologetically regarded black players as niggers.

Needless to say, I didn't stay in touch with Hemus after we parted professional company, and I didn't give him a lot of thought. But we bumped into each other at the hundred-year Cardinal reunion in 1992 and he approached me to say that despite what I and Flood thought, he was not a racist. I reminded him of the Bennie Daniels incident and he said that it wasn't a matter of racism; rather, he was a master motivator doing what he could to fire up the ballclub. My response was, bullshit.

I made the team in 1959, but Hemus had me convinced that I wasn't any damn good and consequently I wasn't. My first appearance came in the fifth game of the season against the Dodgers. We were trailing 3-0 when I relieved Larry Jackson, and the first batter I faced was a thirty-year-old infielder named Jim Baxes who was in his first and only season in the big leagues. He took me deep. John Roseboro, the Dodgers' catcher, did the same thing the next inning and we lost, 5-0, as Don Drysdale—a pitcher I would often be linked with in the years ahead—completed his shutout. The next night I got banged around in another defeat by the Dodgers. Two nights after that, I relieved Phil Clark with two outs and two runners on in the eighth inning against the Giants, and Orlando Cepeda tagged me for a double. Then I sat for a week and the Cardinals sent me back to Omaha.

We were at the stage of our careers where we still questioned ourselves. Looking at Bob, for example—here was one of the all-time greats, with so much talent, and in the Cardinal organization it seemed that things too often were made too hard for someone like him to succeed. It seemed we were looking at brick walls all the time. We'd make strides, and then we'd be sent back to Omaha. Up and down, up and down. All along, I thought there was more involved than purely professional judgment. I thought there were personal prejudices that entered into it. I was very suspicious of that.

—Curt Flood

I would have been happier in Omaha if Johnny Keane had still been there, but he was busy in St. Louis trying to talk some sense into Solly Hemus. Under the new manager, Joe Schultz, I nonetheless pitched better than I had with the Cardinals, going 9-9 with a couple of shutouts and returning to

St. Louis in late July. The Cardinals were in sixth place at the time (there were eight teams in the National League) and headed down. With nothing to lose, Hemus started me for the first time on July 30 against the Reds and Jim O'Toole, a young lefthander whom I had known briefly during my semipro days in Chamberlain, South Dakota. Actually, O'Toole and I had competed for the same spot on the Chamberlain team and I had won it. He had beaten me to the big leagues, though, having broken through late in 1958.

Maybe seeing another Basin League face put us both at ease that night. For whatever reason, we pitched like veterans for a couple of hours, especially after I wriggled out of a two-on, one-out jam in the first by retiring Frank Robinson and Jerry Lynch. Boyer doubled and Joe Cunningham singled him home in the second, and I took a 1-0 lead into the ninth. Lynch led off the ninth with a single, but Ed Bailey forced him and Willie Jones fouled out. I was one out away from a shutout, but then I walked Frank Thomas, a dangerous right-handed hitter. At that point, I was half-expecting Hemus to yank me out of the game. McDaniel was beginning to establish himself as an excellent closer—although the term had not yet been invented—and there was no telling what Hemus would do anyway. Once, a black pitcher named Frank Barnes was working on a no-hitter in the fifth when he walked a batter and Hemus relieved him on the spot, never to start him again. But he let me continue against the Reds, even when I walked Don Newcombe (who was pinch-hitting despite being a pitcher) to fill the bases. The next batter was Johnny Temple, a good-hitting second baseman, and with the count two and oh he lined a ball to short center that Flood caught on the run. It wouldn't be the last time that Flood saved a game for me, or a shutout.

Hemus made me the fifth starter after that, but even then I never knew where I stood with him. I pitched and sat and pitched and sat. One night the first batter of the game hit a fly ball to White, who was playing out of position in center field. He misjudged the ball, which was not surprising for a first baseman, and I suppose it rattled me a little bit. I walked the next batter, and with that Hemus came storming out of the dugout. When he reached the mound he told me I was out of the game. I said, "Why in the hell are you taking me out after two batters?" He said, "Get somefuckingbody out, and I'll leave you in!" I thought seriously of punching him as we stood there, but decided against it and walked off.

Late in the season I broke a personal losing streak by beating the Cubs with a six-hitter and striking out ten, but apparently Hemus was unimpressed. For whatever reason—he didn't really need me—I stayed on the bench until the last day of the season, when I got the victory in long relief against the Giants to finish the season 3-5 with a 3.33 earned run average, second best on the team behind Larry Jackson's 3.30.

The Cardinals would have liked me to try winter ball again after the season, but our second daughter, Annette, had been born and I didn't want to be that far away for that long. Besides, I had a better offer. Willie Mays had

invited me to barnstorm with his team of black all-stars. They toured the South (there's always a catch) playing against a team of white all-stars selected by Mickey Mantle and sharing in the gate receipts. A guy like me could make as much money in a month of barnstorming as he made the whole regular season.

Although I didn't fraternize much during the season, I was familiar with most of the players and had met several of them at Don Newcombe's wedding, where I tasted champagne for the first time. White and Jones, the two guys traded for each other before the 1959 season, were on the tour, as were Newcombe, Frank Barnes, an American League catcher named Earl Battey, and one of Mays's former Negro League teammates, Piper Davis.

I had gotten to know Mays through Bill White, who had played with him in San Francisco. When we were on the coast during my rookie season and had a day off once, White took me out to Mays's house for a casual dinner. I had pitched against the Giants a few times in relief, throwing hard and wild, but Mays didn't really know me up close—especially with my glasses on. When he opened the door, he looked at me, then he looked at White and said, "Who the hell is that?" Bill said, "That's Gibson." When Mays gets excited, his voice goes up a couple of octaves, and this time he became a soprano. "Gibson!" he screamed. "Gibson wears glasses?! Why don't you wear 'em when you pitch, for God's sake? Shit, man, you're gonna kill somebody!"

We did kill Mantle's team, over and over, on a circuit that took us to Baton Rouge and Houston and Laredo and a stop or two in Mexico. The black squad traveled in a caravan of cars, staying and eating along the way in black neighborhoods. It wasn't always easy to get what we needed and occasionally we resorted to gimmicks, such as sending somebody into a white restaurant wearing a chauffeur's cap. Sam Jones could sometimes pass for white if he wore a hat and didn't say much. So he'd pull a stocking cap over his ears and pretend to be a deaf-mute, ordering hamburgers with sign language.

No matter how much I did it, I could never get accustomed to traveling in the South. Nor could I ever forget my first experience there, as a teenager, when our family drove to Louisiana for the funeral of a relative. I vividly recall that we stopped at a filling station in Texarkana, Arkansas, and I asked the attendant where the bathroom was, but his accent was so thick I couldn't make out the answer. I couldn't keep from laughing, and the whole time my mother was nudging me in the side, trying to get me to stop. When he left she told me I was supposed to go around to the back of the building. There was a filthy, stinking room back there with no lighting or sink, and I decided to just pee in the bushes instead. Ten years later, I still dreaded pulling into gas stations and watching Charline and our daughters walk into Colored Only bathrooms. When that was the only alternative, I sometimes told the attendant to forget about the damn gas. When we finally filled up the tank, I drove until I could drive no more, then we slept in the car because the motels wouldn't take us.

St. Petersburg itself was no better, the difference being that the men who made up the Cardinals, with the exception of the manager and rare others, represented a more enlightened society than the South. We were segregated by the law of the land, but by the spirit of the Cardinals—the players, that is—we were together. It was largely because of that attitude that we were able to reverse the segregation that prevailed in our part of Florida during spring training.

Down in Vero Beach, the Dodgers all stayed together at their training complex, but the other Florida teams were divided into black hotels and white hotels in keeping with the Jim Crow traditions of the South. Many of the black players in the big leagues were from that part of the country and had become resigned to segregation, so there was no serious movement to correct the situation during the 1950s. By 1960, however, the mood had begun to change. Black players had become superstars in large numbers, a fact that served to underscore the ignorance inherent in banning us from places where white people and players could go.

On the Cardinals, the issue came to the fore over an incident involving the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, which every year hosted a breakfast for members of the Cardinals and Yankees, who also trained there. Players were invited individually, on different days, and we noticed that the list of Cardinal players—which was supplied by the Cardinals—included Doug Clemens, a rookie outfielder who had never swung a bat in the major leagues, but didn't include Bill White or Curt Flood or Bob Gibson or George Crowe or Frank Barnes or Marshall Bridges. White, in particular, took exception to this. He has been raised in a basically white community in Ohio, was college-educated, and by nature took shit from nobody. He was polite, dignified, and unyielding on this point, having been hardened by playing minor-league ball in Burlington, North Carolina, where he sometimes carried a bat in order to get through the hostile crowds that stood between him and the team bus. Local people threw stones at the bus as it drove off.

White made a point to mention the Yacht Club invitation list to Joe Reichler, a baseball writer for the Associated Press out of St. Louis. Reichler wrote a story that was printed by the black paper in St. Louis, which was sufficiently offended to call for a public boycott of Anheuser-Busch, the brewery that owned and still owns the Cardinals. When the news got around, black players on other teams training in Florida began to speak out about the Jim Crow laws, under which not only the hotels but also the restaurants and movie theaters and swimming pools were segregated. White was our unofficial spokesman in St. Petersburg, aided by a black doctor named Ralph Wimbisch who was a friend of the black players and a well-known advocate of civil rights issues in the area. As the pressure increased, August Busch, owner of the brewery and the Cardinals, took up the cause and threatened to move the Cardinals out of Florida if conditions didn't change. About that time, White was quietly asked to a Yacht Club breakfast at some ungodly predawn hour. He said no, thank you.

Meanwhile, a local businessman arranged to buy two of the best motels in St. Petersburg and make them available to the Cardinal players and their families. Several of the white players had traditionally stayed with their families in beachfront cottages during spring training, but when Musial and Boyer gave up their private accommodations to move in with the rest of the team—blacks included—the Cardinals had successfully broken down the local custom. The Cardinal motel became a tourist attraction. People would drive by to see the white and black families swimming together or holding one of our famous team barbecues, with Howie Pollet making the salad and Boyer, Larry Jackson, and Harry Walker (who gave me a great recipe for barbecue sauce) grilling up the steaks and hamburgers.

I didn't want to go to the Cardinals when I first heard that I had been traded there, because they trained in a city where intense segregation was the rule. There was the infamous story of when Jackie Robinson played in St. Petersburg in 1947 and the Cardinals and the fans razed him mercilessly; even threw a black cat onto the field. When we were able to integrate our motels, it proved to be a major thing, I believe, not only for the team—I think the unity on our ballclub was a direct result of the entire integration process—but for the city of St. Petersburg as well. To get it accomplished, there were a lot of unsung heroes. Stan Musial and Ken Boyer gave up their personal comforts to move in with the black players, and that lent a large measure of credibility to what we were doing. I also appreciated the considerable efforts of Bing Devine and Arthur Fleischman of the Cardinal front office, because as long as the ballclub accepted segregation, there would be no change. It took a lot of people to pull off what we did, and in the end I think most of us came away with a new respect for the South. It was our own little civil rights movement.

—Bill White

The camaraderie on the Cardinals was practically revolutionary in the way it cut across racial lines. Musial, for starters, never met a feller (as he would say) he couldn't get along with, and that included Solly Hemus. I suppose that if Stan had made things hard for Hemus, which would have been easy to do, he could have done the club a favor, but Musial never concerned himself with that sort of thing. While he stuck mainly to his hitting and his harmonica, Boyer was the real leader of the team. It was a role Kenny took on naturally. When we traveled, for example, Boyer was the one who rallied everybody together for dinner or a movie or whatever, which went a long way toward establishing the distinctive character of our ballclub. Close friendships were struck up between black and white players like George Crowe and Alex Grammas, or—and this was completely out of the blue—me and Tim McCarver.

I first met McCarver when I spent a few weeks at the major-league camp in 1959. He was younger by six years, but on a much faster track. McCarver

had been practically a legend back home in Memphis, but he was still a teenager and had never been anywhere else to speak of. It was not surprising that he shared the social attitude of his southern homeland. In fact, I expected this of him, and he didn't disappoint me. I happened to be watching him one time that first spring when a black kid jumped the fence during one of our practices and tried to run off with a foul ball. McCarver went after the kid and called him a "little nigger." When I heard that, I got right up in McCarver's face and told him what I thought of his language, his mother, his hometown, his catching ability, and anything else I could think of.

We got along a little better after that, but there was still an air of racial tension between us. After a ballgame in Bradenton one really hot day in the spring of 1960, McCarver got on the bus eating an ice-cream cone. I was eyeing him as he sat down and then I nodded at Flood, who was sitting next to me, and said, "Hey, Tim, can I have a bite of that ice-cream cone?" McCarver didn't know what to do. He looked at me, then he looked at Flood, then he looked back at me, and finally he mumbled, "I'll, er, I'll save you some." Flood and I just exploded in laughter. By then, though, McCarver was already changing, and he ultimately did a 180-degree turnabout in his racial attitude. I have to give him a hell of a lot of credit for that. It was the first time I ever saw a white man change before my eyes.

I think it's pretty obvious how I was affected in relating to Bob. My prejudices were related directly to my early environment—Memphis, Tennessee, where I was brought up through the age of seventeen years old. Memphis, of course, was a place where some of the most acrimonious protests were held against integration. When I was signed by the Cardinals in the late fifties, I had never played against a black man, much less with one. I heard prejudices spoken around me all the time when I was a kid. It was a substantial thing to overcome all of that. I hadn't formed any opinions of my own. Thank God I was out of there at age seventeen.

—Tim McCarver

As well as we got along with the white players, the black players on the Cardinals had been through a lot together and there were still things that we liked to do by ourselves—such as play basketball. We had some guys who could play basketball. One time a group of faculty from a black junior college in St. Petersburg challenged us to a game. They had been playing together as a team and thought they were pretty good, but they had no idea what they were getting into. In addition to me—and I was by no means the hotshot on this team—we had Dick Ricketts, a pitcher who was six feet seven and had been a first-team all-American (along with Bill Russell and Tom Gola) at Duquesne; his brother, Dave, a catcher who was just about as good as Dick; George Crowe, who had played with a famous touring basketball team called the Renaissance Five; and Bill White, who was our hatchet man. (White was

as strong as they come, but to this day I've never seen another human being as completely stiff. I called him Robotman. After he was traded to the Phillies, I used to stand in the dugout with my arms out, rocking like a robot, while he was out on first base trying to keep a straight face.) With the talent we had, even White looked good on the basketball floor. We kicked the crud out of those teachers. I expect that, with a little practice, we could have done the same thing to most of the major college teams in the country.

At that point, nothing had changed my mind about being a better basketball than baseball player. Nothing had changed Solly Hemus's mind, either, but at least he kept me with the big club to start the 1960 season—for a while. He also put White at first base and Flood more or less (with emphasis on the "less") in center field, where everybody in St. Louis and the National League knew they belonged. The pieces were slowly starting to come together. Ernie Broglio, with one of the best curveballs in the game, was poised for a big year, and Lindy McDaniel had made a home for himself in the bullpen. Musial wasn't the player he once was, but Boyer had become a full-scale star at third base. It seemed like I was about the only one who wasn't keeping up with the program.

Part of the problem was that I was still messing around with the curveball, which, coming out of my hand, did not resemble Broglio's. A few years ago, I was reminded of my curveball troubles—and why I eventually junked it, for all practical purposes—when I saw Ted Williams at an old-timers' game in Boston. During the cocktail party after the game, he came over to talk and I said, "You know, I faced you once in Arizona." Before going north to start the 1960 season, we stopped in Arizona to play an exhibition game with the Red Sox. "That's right," he said. "I hit a ball past your ear." I couldn't believe he remembered. Naturally, I would remember it, even though it was nearly thirty years before, because he was *Ted Williams*; but I was practically a rookie at the time and it was spring training, for crying out loud. "Yeah," I said. "I got fastball strike one, fastball strike two, and then you hit the curveball." That's where our memories parted. "No," he corrected me. "I took the fastball for a strike and you threw the curve on the second pitch." I guess that's why he was Ted Williams.

Predictably, I didn't see much action early in the 1960 season. I had pitched only nine innings when the Cardinals sent me back down to Rochester. Dick Ricketts and I had a thing working where he would go up and I would go down, then I would go up and he would go down. There was also a complication named Ray Sadecki, whom the Cardinals had signed as a nineteen-year-old bonus baby. He and Julian Javier, a fast, talented second baseman, joined the team at the same time and moved right into prominent roles. As I slinked back to Rochester, it was obvious that the team in St. Louis was taking shape without me.

It was the middle of June when I rejoined the Cardinals for good. Or for bad, as the case was. With Hemus lurking over my shoulder, I felt like I had to

strike everybody out to get another chance. The result was that I walked nearly everybody instead—sixty-nine in eighty-seven innings—and if I wasn't walking them I was in danger of it, which meant that I laid in the fastball and got creamed. The high point of my season was bringing us to within three games of the Pirates by beating them in an August start. The low point was everything else, which added up to a 3-6 record and a 5.61 earned run average for a team that improved to third place. I was so messed up that my best hope lay in the fact that Hemus, as much as he seemed to dislike me, might not really *know* me. He kept calling me Bridges, confusing me with Marshall Bridges, who was several years older than me, skinnier, and pitched left-handed. But he *was* black. Solly got that much right.

My discouragement reached the point late in the season that I was seriously thinking about taking Hemus's advice and turning to basketball. One day, when I was grumbling words to that effect, one of our coaches, Harry Walker, heard me and came over to lay some benevolence on me. Ironically, Harry the Hat, a Mississippian, was one of the Cardinals who gave Jackie Robinson such a rough time in 1947, and he had a reputation back then as one of the most bigoted players in baseball. But, like McCarver, he had changed his attitude completely after playing with and getting to know black players. And in my deep depression of 1960, he gave me some of the best career advice I ever received. It wasn't much, but it hit the right chord. He said, "Hang in there, kid. He [Hemus] will be gone long before you will."

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

1962-

Born and raised in East St. Louis, Jackie Joyner-Kersey is considered one of the most prolific female athletes of the twentieth century. Her athletic career began in 1977 while attending Lincoln High School, winning three consecutive Amateur Athletic Union National Junior Olympic pentathlon championships. Kersey earned a B.A. in history at UCLA on a track and basketball scholarship, while collecting two NCAA heptathlon titles and the NCAA Broderick Cup in 1984 for best female college athlete. Her post-college career is highlighted with six olympic medals and five world records, primarily in the heptathlon. In 1997, Kersey played for the Richmond Rage in the American Basketball League. She is the former spokesperson for Nike's Participating in the Lives of America's Youth (PLAY) and established the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Community Foundation that provides scholarships for America's youth. She remains a resident of the St. Louis region.

The following excerpt covers her childhood in East St. Louis in the 1960s and 1970s from A Kind of Grace: The Autobiography of the World's Greatest Female Athlete (1997, with Sonja Steptoe).

. . .

East St. Louis, Illinois, is twenty miles across the border and the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri. Our home sat on Piggott Avenue, between 14th and 15th Streets on the south end of town, in the center of a rough-and-tumble precinct. Tiny, wood-frame shotgun houses with painted cement porches lined both sides of our block, except for a fifty-meter stretch of assorted businesses directly across from our front porch.

For a certain kind of man, those enterprises catered to almost every need. He could grab a haircut, shave and shoeshine at the barbershop, then walk to the corner convenience store for a pack of cigarettes before joining his buddies in the poolhall for a cold beer and a few games. Or he might lay down a bet on someone else's cue stick and listen to the blues playing on the jukebox. After that, he could fill his tank in the tavern next door and grab a fifth for the road at the liquor-sales counter. The Swahili Club, a bar and lounge just around the corner on 15th, catered to the velvet-banquette-and-tablecloth crowd. Ruby D's, another lounge in the vicinity, had similar ambience.

The entire one-block radius around our house was a magnet for assorted winos, pimps, gangsters, ex-cons and hustlers. But we always said hello to the men who called the spot headquarters. Two of them, who were known to everyone in the neighborhood as Squirrel and Doug, were around so much they seemed like neighbors. My father had grown up with them. They practically adopted Al, who worked in the barbershop shining shoes for 35 cents with the

kit Daddy had given him as a Christmas present. In addition to Squirrel and Doug, I vividly recall three other men whose nicknames were Slick, Dick and Bubba. They wore sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats, shiny alligator shoes, brightly colored suits with bell-bottom pants and open-necked print shirts. And lots of gold chains. Slick, Dick and Bubba were reputed to be the biggest gangsters in town—men who'd actually committed murder, according to local legend. The men greeted Al the same way each time they walked into the barbershop. They extended an open palm and waited for my brother to slap it, a gesture known as "givin' 'em five." "Hey little A. J., what's up, man? Anybody messing with you?" they'd ask him during the ritual.

Al pulled his box over, shined their shoes and listened to their war stories. When he was done, they gave him fives—bearing Abraham Lincoln's picture. I walked out on the porch one afternoon and found them sitting on the steps with Al, helping him put his train set together. During my brother's senior year in high school, Slick, Dick and Bubba were ambushed late one night and gunned down, gangland style. When Al heard about it, he cried as if a member of our family had been killed.

I never feared the men who hung out on the corner and in front of the liquor store. Whatever bad things they did, they didn't do them around us. When our parents weren't around, these men were our protectors.

During the day, things were quiet, except for occasional joking and friendly arguing. As the sun descended, the action heated up. Cars abruptly pulled up to the liquor store and poolhall, or came screaming around the corner. Men and women climbed out and entered the clubs and taverns. Sometimes they ran back out, shouting over their shoulders at someone inside. When arguments turned ugly, with curse words or murder threats, Squirrel and Doug usually warned us to get off the street and go inside. At other times, events exploded without warning.

That's how it happened the night my sister Debra narrowly missed being shot. Al was stooped over, shining someone's shoes near the doorway of the barbershop. My great-grandmother was on the porch talking to our neighbor, Mrs. Newman. Two men burst out of the tavern screaming and cursing at each other. One of the men turned to walk away and the other pulled a gun out of the front of his trousers. At the same time, Debra, oblivious to the altercation, was darting across the street toward our front yard.

The unloading gun chamber sounded like Fourth of July fireworks. Debra didn't realize what was happening or how close she was to the line of fire until the victim dropped dead on the sidewalk practically at her feet. If any of those seven bullets had missed their target, she would surely have been hit. She stood there, looking at the dead and bleeding body, stunned.

Al ran across the street, the shoeshine rag still in his hand, and rushed my great-grandmother and Debra inside. When they told Angie and me what had happened, we jumped up. We were eager to run out and see the corpse. But my brother wouldn't let us. He said the sight was too gruesome.

Another night, we were all outside when a guy nicknamed Bird was shot as he came out of the tavern. He survived and filed charges against his assailant. A month later, he was shot and killed late one night inside Ruby D's, along with Ruby the tavern owner, her security guard and another man. The men in the barbershop told Al that the police caught the man who did it, thanks to a clue left by Ruby. She wrote his name in her blood before she died.

The violence and intrigue fascinated us. We were too young to perceive the danger. But my mother deplored it and tried to shield us from as much of it as possible. She didn't want us playing in the street or peeping out of the windows to see what was happening. "One of these days you're going to look out that window at the wrong time and whatever's out there is gonna get you," she warned me.

Eventually, the violence did hit home. It changed forever the way I regarded murder and drug abuse. My parents got a call from the police in Chicago telling them that my grandmother Evelyn, who wasn't yet fifty, had been murdered in her sleep by her boyfriend. A chilly silence engulfed our house for days. My parents never explained the circumstances of her death, but from the whispering I overheard, I surmised that it had been drug-related. First the men and women in the neighborhood, now Evelyn. I was still in elementary school, but I was old enough to make the connection. It seemed that every time someone I knew died violently, drugs or alcohol were somehow involved. No one had to tell me to stay away from them after that.

With work keeping my parents away from home, most days our aging and sickly great-grandmother was the only adult around. We were virtually on our own, and my brother and I constantly squabbled about who was boss. Al was the oldest and in junior high. Debra, Angie and I were in grammar school.

Every morning, the script was the same. At 7:00 A.M., about an hour after my mother had gone to work at St. Mary's, I jumped out of bed, roused Debra and Angie, and prepared for the moment I relished. Rubbing my hands together, the sleep still caked around my eyes, I took the short walk down the hall to the room at the back of the house. I burst through the door, and with all my might, gave the slumbering lump on the bed a violent shove.

"Wake up, Al! It's time to get up!" I shouted to my older brother.

He jumped up, swinging his arm at me. "Touch me again and I'll pop you!"

"You gotta get up *now*!"

"Get out of my room, you old buckethead!"

As I left, I laughed and shouted back over my shoulder, "You better get out of that bed!"

Al and I took different approaches to just about everything. I was diligent and responsible. He was undisciplined and happy-go-lucky.

At the start of each school year, Momma asked each of us: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" One year my answer was a Broadway dancer, the next a teacher, the next a physical therapist. The answer wasn't so

important. She just wanted us to always think about and plan for our future.

When he was thirteen or so, Al told Momma he wanted to be a pimp when he grew up. She slapped him on the side of his head and reported the comment to Daddy. Then, Al confessed that he didn't know what a pimp was. He was only repeating what his friends said. Daddy explained to him that it wasn't a job he should seek. Furthermore, Daddy said, "If you don't stop running with that bad group, you're going to end up right where pimps end up—dead or in jail."

Al didn't like school and was frequently suspended for fighting in elementary and junior high school. My father whipped him with an extension cord every time it happened, but Al's behavior didn't change. Those mornings before school were sometimes the only time my sisters and I saw Al until the evening, just before Momma got off work. We were all supposed to come directly home after school, but with no one at home to enforce the rule, Al never did.

Before long, my brother was skating on thin ice with Momma and Daddy. He was caught behind the wheel of a friend's car, driving without a license. The police officer who stopped him knew Daddy, so he let Al go without a ticket. But when Daddy found out, he grabbed the extension cord, stormed down to Al's room and closed the door. All we heard was the sound of repeated lashings.

Al was following a group of boys who were older and more streetwise than he was. They enjoyed throwing rocks at the windows of passing cars. One day while Al and my mother were at a relative's house, someone spotted his buddies breaking more car windows and called the cops. The police combed the neighborhood, rounding up them all. That close brush with an arrest and the thought of what Daddy would do to him scared Al. He never went near that gang again.

I, on the other hand, loved school and hated to miss a day. But in the fifth grade, I was having trouble with arithmetic. I just couldn't figure out long division. Unfortunately, the students who performed poorly on tests got whippings with a ruler, and I became Victim No. 1. It got so bad, I dreaded going to school.

I went to my mother in tears one morning and told her I didn't want to go. She knew something was wrong. When she saw the bruises on my leg, she walked to school with me. She met with the teacher and demanded that he stop the whippings. With the pressure off, I relaxed and was able to concentrate. I sweated over my math homework every night for several more days, reviewing the examples in the book over and over again, trying to decode the process. Finally one night, it all clicked. I had mastered long division. I called Momma at work to tell her. She was as excited as I was. My self-esteem soared.

Growing up, I could always count on Momma to be my champion. Her constant encouragement formed my deep well of inspiration. I wanted to prove to her and everyone else that I had the ability to excel. I have approached every endeavor since then—athletic and otherwise—with that same sense of purpose.

After school and on weekends, I spent hours playing in our front yard with my sisters, cousins Gerald and Sherrell, and the youngsters from the Cole family who lived next door: Kim, Felicia, Michelle, Phyllis, Renee, Keith and Craig. We made up games that reflected our yearning for the things we didn't have.

One of my favorites was called "first star." At dusk, we stood in the yard and twirled around with our heads back and noses pointed at the sky, searching for the evening's first star. The person who spotted it got to make a wish and, we told each other with conviction, it was guaranteed to come true. I always wished for a big house and good food to eat.

During the day, after a round of tag or a race around the block, we rested on the porch, fantasizing that the passing cars were ours. By then, our family car was an old jalopy that didn't always run. The other kids knew a lot about cars and could spot the various makes and models from a distance. But, when it was my turn, it didn't matter to me what kind of vehicle came by, as long as it was new, shiny and running.

Every Fourth of July evening, Al, Debra, Angie, the Coles and I took turns climbing the oak tree in our front yard to stare west and watch the fireworks exploding above the St. Louis Arch. The edifice was called "the Gateway to the West." Glimmering against the backdrop of those sparkling bursts of red, green, blue and silver, the Arch to me was a gateway to the whole world, a bright and shiny symbol of life beyond East St. Louis. As I watched the show, I yelled down to the others, "I can't wait for our field trip to the Arch next spring."

"I went last year," somebody said. "It's great up there. When you look out the windows, it's like you're in the sky, standing on the top of the whole world. You can see all over!"

The words made me tingle inside. Aside from a few family trips to my father's relatives in Toledo, Ohio, I hadn't traveled far away from home. Everything was so drearily familiar in East St. Louis. I wanted to know what the rest of the world looked like. I stared at the Arch. I just had to get up there and see things for myself.

When the elevator doors opened that spring morning, I ran to a window and soaked up the view. All around me were pathways to the rest of the world, the Mississippi River, the highways and the bridges. Seeing it all stretched out before me made the possibility of finding that other world real. I remembered the words of a man who had spoken to our class earlier that year. Our teacher had invited him to tell us about his life and to offer some advice. He was successful, but he said his life had been difficult initially because he was lazy and didn't work hard. Once he turned his life around, he said he had vowed to give every task his very best effort because he didn't want to look back with any regrets.

Although I was just eleven, I took the advice to heart. Standing at the top of the Arch as a wide-eyed sixth-grader, I just knew that if I followed those roads leading out of East St. Louis, I wouldn't regret it. I knew they would lead me to better things.

One day, in 1972, when I was ten, a sign-up sheet for girls' track appeared on the bulletin board at the Community Center. "If my legs are strong enough for dancing and jumping, maybe I can run fast, too," I thought to myself. I printed my name on the first line.

A bunch of girls, including Debra, Angie and me, showed up for the track team on a sunny afternoon in late May. We were dressed in T-shirts and shorts and we squinted and cupped our hands over our eyes to shield them from the sun as we looked up at our coach, Percy Harris. He explained that practice would be held every afternoon and that we had to run around the cinder track behind the Center to prepare for our races. He pointed to the area.

"All the way around there?" one girl said after she turned around to see where his finger was pointing. She turned back to Percy wearing a frown. "It's hot out here!"

"That's far!" another complained.

It did look like an awfully big circle, which grew wider as we got closer to it. But I kept my thoughts to myself. Momma and Daddy told us never to talk while adults were speaking. Besides, I wanted to see if I could make it all the way around. I was ready to run.

That circular track, which still exists at the back of Lincoln Park and became a fixture of my teenage years, is unconventional. It measures about 550 yards around, roughly a third of a mile. A standard track is oval-shaped and measures 400 meters, a quarter-mile. Those of us who completed the lap were panting hard by the time we reached the end. We bent over and put our hands on our knees when we finished. The other girls had stopped running and were walking. Percy said we had to run around two more times without stopping to get in a mile workout. Some of the girls mumbled and rolled their eyes. I took off around the track.

Each day, fewer and fewer girls showed up until finally the track team consisted of the three Joyner girls, two of whom were there under protest. At that point, Percy gave up the idea of forming a team. But I wanted to continue running, so he introduced me to George Ward, who coached a half-dozen girls at Franklin Elementary and brought them to Lincoln Park in the summer to practice.

"I don't know if I'm good," I said shyly when Mr. Ward said I could join his team.

"Don't worry about that. We're just having fun. If you win a ribbon, good. If not, that's okay, too," he said. I breathed a sigh of relief.

The practice sessions with Mr. Ward's group were a lot of fun. Suddenly I had six new friends. I didn't know Gwen Brown or any of the others from Franklin Elementary because I attended John Robinson Elementary and the schools were in different parts of town. Most of the others had been training with Mr. Ward for over a year and, as I would soon discover, were already very strong, fast runners.

The first race I ran for Mr. Ward was the 440-yard dash, now called the 400

meters. He lined us up opposite two bent steel poles. Then, stopwatch in hand, he walked around to the other side of the circle and stood on the board 440 yards away. From there, he yelled, "On your mark, get set, go!"

The rest of the girls charged ahead. I ran as hard as I could, but I couldn't catch them. I finished last. Once I caught my breath, I was disappointed. I couldn't believe how fast the others were!

"What can I do to get faster?" I asked Mr. Ward.

"Just keep coming to practice, you'll get better," he assured me.

I finished last or nearly last in every race that summer. But Mr. Ward stuck with me. When school resumed, he picked me up every afternoon at home in the spring and drove me to track practice at his school. I looked forward to it all day. I was eleven. I would rush home after school, cram down a few oatmeal cookies or a bag of potato chips, quickly do my geography, math, spelling and science homework and then do my chores—or pay Debra to do them—so that I was ready when his car pulled up. I waved good-bye to Momma, who was getting home about the time I left, and hopped in Mr. Ward's car.

The practices were pressure-free, but there were rules. We weren't supposed to talk while running. But I chatted away with my new friends. Every time Mr. Ward caught me, he stopped us, pulled me out of the group and scolded me. As punishment, he made me run in the opposite direction from the others. I didn't mind. I was so happy to be out there with the others. With a smile on my face, I ran clockwise while the others ran counterclockwise.

One day I got sick and started throwing up while running. Mr. Ward asked me what I'd eaten. When I told him about the oatmeal cookies, he shook his head. Junk food was a no-no, he said. My punishment that time was three extra laps, all in the opposite direction. He said he wanted me to feel how eating junk food would affect my endurance. But it didn't bother me. I felt as if I could run forever. I just wasn't very fast yet.

After several more races and no ribbons, however, I became discouraged. "Am I ever going to win anything?" I asked.

He gave me a consoling pat on the back as we walked to his car. "You will if you keep working hard."

I wasn't crazy about running the 440-yard dash. But it was a challenge. I wanted to catch those other girls. My real love was jumping. But I was too shy to tell Mr. Ward. At the time I didn't know anything about the intricacies of the long jump. I just knew my legs were strong and I was a good jumper, based on my cheerleading and dancing performances.

For weeks, I watched Gwen Brown run down the long-jump track and leap into the air, like a plane taking off. I bit my lower lip as she practiced, yearning for just one chance to run down the dirt path and jump into the shallow sand. When I returned home that afternoon, I got a brainstorm. I found potato chip bags and convinced my sisters to go over to the sandbox in the park, fill the bags and help me bring the sand back to our house. Over the next several afternoons we secretly ferried sand from the park to the front yard, where I made a small

sand pit. On the days when I didn't go to practice, I hopped onto our porch railing, which was about three feet high, crouched down with my back arched and leaped into the sand. The feeling was so satisfying and so much fun, I did it over and over again for about an hour.

One afternoon after all the other girls had left practice, while I waited for Mr. Ward to drive me home, I walked over to the runway. It was nothing more than a long strip of grass, marked off with a strip of tape at one end and a shallow hole with a thin layer of sand at the other end. The sun was ready to set, but the air remained hot and thick. I was tired after running sprints and conditioning drills in the oppressive heat. But standing there, looking down the long-jump lane for the first time, I was energized. I mimicked what I had seen Gwen doing. I charged down the lane as fast as I could, planted my right foot and jumped up as high as I could. I kicked my legs out in front of me and pushed myself forward.

What a feeling! It was like flying. I stood up, content with myself and feeling daring. I smiled as I dusted the sand off my shorts and legs. Mr. Ward ran toward me. I was afraid he was going to be mad. But there was an excited look in his eyes.

"Do that again!" he shouted.

I trotted back to the starting line and repeated the process: charge, plant, push, kick, fly. His jaw dropped.

"I didn't know you could jump!" Mr. Ward said when I emerged from the sand.

"Oh, I love to jump," I said. "My legs are strong from cheerleading. I have wanted to try jumping for the longest."

"Starting tomorrow, come to the long-jump pit and I'll work with you and Gwen together," he said.

I was delighted. When he dropped me off, I skipped through the yard, bounded up the steps and ran inside to give everybody the news.

Mr. Ward was volunteering his time to the after-school track program. In coaching young girls, he and Nino Fennoy, a teacher at Lilly Freeman Elementary who had organized a girls' squad at that school, were exploring uncharted territory and exposing themselves to criticism. No one in town had ever tried cultivating athletic interest among girls. While boys had high school and junior high teams, Little League baseball and Pop Warner football, girls in our community had no organized sports activities whatsoever.

Congress had recently passed Title IX, the federal legislation requiring public schools to give girls and boys equal opportunities to participate in athletics. Mr. Ward and Mr. Fennoy used the new law to develop opportunities for girls in sports. The combined Franklin-Freeman Elementary School team competed against other schools during the academic year. In 1974, when I was twelve, the two men organized a track squad of male and female athletes from all the schools in town that competed in summer Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) track meets. The squad was called the East St. Louis Railers.

Although I didn't realize it at the time, my participation on the Railers squad set me on a course that would lead far beyond Piggott Avenue and the Arch, into a world full of life experiences both painful and joyous.

"Garland cried all night," she said. "He didn't have anything to eat."

I sat down next to her at the kitchen table and told her I spent all the money. She cried.

"Did you have fun, Richard?"

"I had fun here before I left, Momma, all the folks coming by to see me. Had fun out on the porch telling Boo and everybody about the dance I'm going to one day."

She put her arm around me. "It's my fault, Richard. I know kids don't go to that kind of dance without having twenty dollars in their pockets. I should have borrowed more."

No, Momma, twenty dollars wouldn't have been enough for me tonight. I still would've messed up. I would've had to pick up all the checks in that whole restaurant, Momma, I would've had to pay for everybody."

There were other proms after that, and I learned what to do to have fun, to take girls who wanted to be with me, who wanted to dance to funky songs. I learned to slip out of the dance two hours early and buy some wine for the meanest cat standing outside. He'd get drunk then and dog somebody else a little more, but he'd let my crowd through. And I learned to introduce my girl to the hoodlum chief. That's all he wanted. When we left the dance he'd make all those cats stop fighting for a few minutes. Now that he and my girl were acquainted, he didn't want her to see him acting so badly. And by my third prom I figured out how to stop the beatings altogether. I opened the windows so the cats outside could peep right in. I brought special guys and girls by the windows and introduced them to the hoods. After a while those cats would whisper to one of my friends, "Hey, dance with that girl over there for me," and before you knew it, they were passing their bottles through the window and saying, "Have a drink on me, man." The guys on the outside were in on the party, too. And they acted nice because they didn't want those windows pulled to shut them out.

Miles Davis

1926-1991

Undoubtedly one of the most influential musicians of the twentieth century, Miles Davis was born in Alton, Illinois, but reared in East St. Louis, where his family moved when he was a year old. The son of a dentist, Davis enjoyed a middle-class upbringing which provided him with fine clothes and music lessons. His mother was a pianist and violinist, so Davis learned music constantly in his home. At age thirteen, Davis began taking lessons from "a great German trumpet teacher named Gustav," who played first chair trumpet with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. At age sixteen, Davis began playing trumpet with Eddie Randle and his Blue Devils, a popular band in the St. Louis area, and was fully aware that music was his destiny. Clark Terry was also a mentor.

In the fall of 1944, after graduating from Lincoln High School, Davis left East St. Louis for New York City, where he attended the Juilliard School of Music. He eventually left Juilliard to play with saxophonist Charlie Parker. Davis first made a name for himself with a series of performances released on an album called Birth of the Cool. This record, featuring both black and white musicians, started a new style of jazz called "cool" or "progressive" jazz, distinct from the bebop and swing that preceded it. After a stint on drugs, Davis organized the first of his influential bands and recorded a series of pathbreaking records for Prestige. He signed with Columbia Records in the mid-1950s and produced some of the most breathtaking jazz of the post-World War II period, including extraordinary collaborations with arranger Gil Evans and what many consider to be the single best jazz record ever made: Kind of Blue (1959). Davis played with virtually all the great musicians of his generation, including Thelonious Monk, Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, and Bill Evans. He also nurtured many younger musicians such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, and Dave Holland. In the late 1960s, influenced by rock musicians like Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix, Davis began to add electric guitars, congas, electric pianos, and the like to his music as well as rock rhythms. The results were In a Silent Way (1969), Bitches Brew (1969), and A Tribute to Jack Johnson (1970), among other rock-influenced albums that caused much consternation among his older fans.

An automobile accident and a recurring drug addiction forced Davis from the scene for five years, 1975 to 1980. But he returned with a new rock band of young musicians in 1980 and continued to perform publicly until his death in 1991.

In this excerpt from Miles: The Autobiography (with Quincy Troupe, Jr., 1989), Davis recalls discovering his passion for music and his decision

to leave St. Louis. In this passage, we learn that Davis met and played with Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Sarah Vaughan while he was still in St. Louis, playing a brief stint with Billy Eckstine's band. Mr. B's band had several players associated with bebop and was considered, by many of the younger players, one of the hippest bands around.

. . .

By the time I was twelve, music had become the most important thing in my life. I probably didn't realize how important it would become, but looking back, I can see just how important it was. I still played baseball and football, still hung out with my friends like Millard Curtis and Darnell Moore. But I was seriously taking trumpet lessons and was really into my horn. I remember going to Boy Scout camp near Waterloo, Illinois, when I was about twelve or thirteen. It was Camp Vanderverter, and Mr. Mays, the Head Scoutmaster, knew that I played trumpet. He gave me the job of playing taps and reveille. I remember how proud I was for him to ask me, picking me out from everyone. So I guess by then I was starting to play all right.

But I really started to stretch on out as a player after I left Attucks Junior High and went to Lincoln High School. My first great teacher, Elwood Buchanan, was at Lincoln. Lincoln was both a junior and senior high school; I went there for junior high and stayed all the way to graduation. When I started playing in the band I was younger than everybody else. After my father, Mr. Buchanan was the biggest influence on my life up until then. He was definitely the person who took me all the way into music at that time. I knew I wanted to become a musician. That was all I wanted to be.

Mr. Buchanan was one of my father's patients and drinking buddies. My father told him how interested I was in music and in playing trumpet, specifically. So he said he would give me trumpet lessons and that was that. I was going to Attucks when I first started taking lessons from Mr. Buchanan. Later, after I started going to Lincoln High School, he still sort of looked after me to keep me on the right track.

On my thirteenth birthday, my father bought me a new trumpet. My mother wanted me to have a violin, but my father overruled her. This caused a big argument between them, but she soon got over it. But Mr. Buchanan was the reason I got a new trumpet, because he knew how bad I wanted to play.

It was about that time that I first started having serious disagreements with my mother. Up until then, it had been over small things. But it just kind of went downhill. I don't really know what her problem was. But I think it had something to do with her not talking real straight to me. She was still trying to treat me like I was a little baby, the way she was treating my brother, Vernon. I think this had something to do with him becoming a homosexual. The women—my mother, my sister, and my grandmother—always treated Vernon like a girl. So, I wasn't having none of that shit from them. It was a matter of

talking straight to me or not talking to me at all. My father told my mother to leave me alone when we started having problems. And she did most of the time, but we really got into some bad arguments. Despite all that, my mother did buy me two records by Duke Ellington and Art Tatum, though. I used to listen to them all the time and that helped me later in understanding jazz.

Because Mr. Buchanan had already given me trumpet lessons at Attucks before I came to Lincoln, I was advanced on the instrument. I was already playing pretty good. Then in high school I also started studying with a great German trumpet teacher named Gustav who lived over in St. Louis and played first trumpet with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. He was a bad motherfucker. He also made great trumpet mouthpieces, and I use one of his design even today.

At Lincoln High, the band under Mr. Buchanan's direction was a motherfucker. We had a hell of a cornet and trumpet section. It was me, Ralaigh McDaniels, Red Bonner, Duck McWaters, and Frank Gully—who played first trumpet and was a bad motherfucker. He was about three years older than I was. Because I was the smallest and youngest person in the band, some of the kids would pick on me. But I was mischievous, too, playing little pranks on people and shit—throwing spitballs and hitting people upside the head when they weren't looking. You know, little kid, teenage shit, wasn't none of it serious.

Everybody always seemed to like my tone, which I kind of got from the way Mr. Buchanan played at the time. This was on cornet. As a matter of fact, Red and Frank and everybody else who was playing cornet or trumpet in the band used to pass around Mr. Buchanan's instrument; I think I was the only one in the cornet section who had his own instrument. But even though they were all older than me and I had a lot to learn, they all encouraged me, liked the way I sounded, the way I approached playing. They always used to tell me I had a lot of imagination on the instrument.

Mr. Buchanan kept us playing strictly marches and shit like that. Overtures, real good background music, John Philip Sousa marches. He didn't let us play no jazz shit while he was around, but when he would leave the band room for a while we would try to get into some jazz. One of the hippest things Mr. Buchanan taught me was not to play with vibrato in my tone. At first, I used to like to play with vibrato because of the way most of the other trumpet players played the instrument. One day while I was playing in that style, with all this vibrato, Mr. Buchanan stopped the band and told me, "Look here, Miles. Don't come around here with that Harry James stuff, playing with all that vibrato. Stop shaking all those notes and trembling them, because you gonna be shaking enough when you get old. Play straight, develop your *own* style, because you can do it. You got enough talent to be your own trumpet man."

Man, I never forgot that. But at the time, he hurt and embarrassed me. I just loved the way Harry James played. But after that I started to forget James and found out that Mr. Buchanan was right. At least, he was right for me.

By the time I was in high school I started getting really serious about my clothes. I started caring about the way I looked, trying to look hip and everything, because about this time girls started paying attention to me—although at age fourteen I wasn't really into them yet. So I started dressing real hip, taking a lot of time about selecting the clothes I bought and wore to school. Me and a couple of my friends—who were also into clothes—started comparing notes on what was hip and what wasn't. I liked the dress style of Fred Astaire and Cary Grant back then, so I created a kind of hip, quasi-black English look: Brooks Brothers suits, butcher boy shoes, high top pants, shirts with high tab collars that were so stiff with starch that I could hardly move my neck.

One of the most important things that happened for me in high school—besides studying under Mr. Buchanan—was when one time the band went to play in Carbondale, Illinois, and I met Clark Terry, the trumpet player. He became my idol on the instrument. He was older than me and was a drinking buddy of Mr. Buchanan. Anyway, we went down there to Carbondale to play and I saw this dude and walked right up to him and asked him if he was a trumpet player. He turned and asked me how I knew he was a trumpet player. I told him I could tell by his embouchure. I had on my school band uniform and Clark had on this hip coat and this bad, beautiful scarf around his neck. He was wearing hip butcher boy shoes and a bad hat cocked ace-deuce. I told him I could also tell he was a trumpet player by the hip shit he was wearing.

He kind of smiled at me and said something that I have forgotten. Then, when I asked him some things about playing trumpet, he sort of shined on me by telling me that he didn't want to "talk about no trumpet with all them pretty girls bouncing around out there." Clark was really into the girls at that time, and I wasn't. So what he said to me really hurt me. The next time we met it was a different story altogether. But I never forgot that first time me and Clark met, how hip he was. I decided then I was going to be that hip, even hipper, when I got my shit together.

I started hanging out with my friend Bobby Danzig. Bobby was about the same age as me and was a hell of a trumpet player. We used to go around listening to music and sitting in wherever we could. We went everywhere together, we were both into clothes, even thought a lot alike. But he was more outspoken than me. He would tell a motherfucker off in a minute. Man, we'd go to a club and listen to a band and if the horn player was standing wrong, or the drummer had his drums set up wrong, Bobby would say, "Let's get out of here, man, because this motherfucker can't play. Look at how the drummer done set up his drums, man; they're wrong. And look at how that trumpet player's standing. His posture's all fucked up. Now, you *know* that motherfucker can't play standing up there on the bandstand like that! So let's get out of here!"

Man, Bobby Danzig was something else. He was a great trumpet player and he was even a greater pickpocket. He'd get on one of them trolleys that was running in St. Louis and by the time it had reached the end of the line, Bobby would have himself \$300, or more on a great day. I met Bobby when I was

sixteen and I think he was the same age. We joined the union together and we'd go everywhere together. Bobby was my first musical best friend, my running partner. Like I said, it was him who went with me to the Riviera when I went to audition for the Billy Eckstine band, and he could play trumpet like a motherfucker. I later became good friends with Clark Terry, but Clark was about six years older than I was and so we were into different head sets. But Bobby was right there in the things we liked to do together. Except I was never into picking pockets like he was. He was the best at it I have ever seen.

Another great trumpet player was Levi Maddison. My teacher Gustav used to rave about him. Levi was his star pupil, and man, he was a motherfucker. Back in those days, around 1940, St. Louis was a great city for trumpet players and Levi was one of the baddest, if not *the* baddest. But Levi was a crazy motherfucker who went around laughing to himself all the time. And once he started laughing at something he couldn't stop. A lot of people said he was laughing all the time because he was despondent. I don't know *what* Levi was despondent over, but I know he could sure play the trumpet. I used to love to watch him. His trumpet was an extension of him. But all of the trumpet players from St. Louis at that time played like that—Harold "Shorty" Baker, Clark Terry, and myself. We all played like that, had what I used to call "that St. Louis thing."

Levi would always be smiling with that crazy look in his eyes. That distant thing. He was out and he was always being confined in the nuthouse for a few days. He didn't never hurt nobody, he wasn't violent or anything like that. But I guess people back in those days didn't want to take no chances. Later, after I left St. Louis to live in New York, every time I would come back home for a visit I would go and see Levi. Finding him was sometimes difficult. When I found him, though, I would always ask him to put the trumpet to his mouth just because I loved the way he held it. And he would, with a big smile on his face.

Then once when I came back I couldn't find him. They said he started laughing one day and couldn't stop. So they took him to the sanatorium and he never came out again. Or, at least, nobody ever saw him again. But the thing Levi used to do on trumpet was just too bad, man, he was a hell of a musician. When he picked up the horn you would hear all this tone and brilliance, you know? Nobody else had it and I have yet to hear a tone like that. It's almost like mine, but it was rounder—sort of in between Freddie Webster's and mine. And Levi had that air about him when he picked up his horn that you were going to hear something you'd never heard before in your life. Only a few people had that attitude. Dizzy had it and I think I have it. But Levi was the man. He was a motherfucker. If he hadn't gone crazy and went to the nuthouse, people would have been talking about him today.

Gustav would tell *me* I was the worst trumpet player in the world. But later, when Dizzy had a hole in his lip that wouldn't heal and so he went to see Gustav about changing mouthpieces, he said Gus told him that I was his best pupil. All I know is that Gus never told me that to my face.

Maybe Gus thought that by telling me I was his worst student that I would play harder. Maybe he thought that was the way to get the best out of me. I don't know. But it didn't bother me. As long as he taught me that half an hour for the \$2.50 I paid him, he could say anything he wanted. Gus was a technician. He could run chromatic scales about twelve times in one breath. He was something. But by the time I was going to him for lessons I already had some confidence in my playing. I knew I wanted to be a musician and so everything I did was leaning toward that.

While I was in high school I started hanging out with a piano player named Emmanuel St. Claire "Duke" Brooks. (His nephew, Richard Brooks, an all-American football player, is now the principal of Miles Davis Elementary School.) He got his nickname "Duke" because he knew and could play all of Duke Ellington's music. He used to play with the bassist Jimmy Blanton at a place across the street from where I lived then called the Red Inn. Duke Brooks was two or three years older than me, but he had a big influence on me because he was into the new music that was happening at the time.

Duke Brooks was a hell of a piano player. Man, the motherfucker played like Art Tatum. He used to teach me chords and shit. He lived in East St. Louis and had a room by himself in his parents' house, off the porch. I'd go over to his house and listen to him at lunchtime when I was going to Lincoln High School. He lived about two or three blocks from school. He smoked a lot of reefer and I think he was the first person I knew who did that. I never did it with him, though. I never did like reefer too much. But then, at that time, I wasn't doing nothing, not even drinking.

Duke eventually got killed when he was hoboing a ride on a train somewhere in Pennsylvania. He was in one of those cars filled with gravel and sand. I heard the shit fell on him and he suffocated. I think this was in 1945. I still miss him and think about him even up until today. He was a hell of a musician and if he hadn't gotten killed, he would have been a motherfucker on the music scene.

I was starting to play the running trumpet style that I was hearing around St. Louis. Me and Duke and a drummer named Nick Haywood—who had a hump in his back—had a little group together. We used to try to play like the black guys who played in Benny Goodman's band. Benny had a black piano player named Teddy Wilson. But Duke played hipper than Teddy Wilson. Duke played piano then like Nat "King" Cole. He was just that slick, Duke was.

The only new records we had during this time were mostly the records they took out of jukeboxes and sold you for a nickel. And if you didn't have money to buy it then you'd just have to go and cop it by listening to the jukebox. I was playing by ear back then. Anyway, our little group would play tunes like "Airmail Special." We'd play it with those hip accents. Duke was such a motherfucker on the piano that it made me play in the running style he had.

About this time I was starting to have a little reputation around East St. Louis as an up-and-coming trumpet player. People—musicians—thought I

could play, but I wasn't vain enough to admit it out loud. But the way I was beginning to think to myself was that I could play as good as any motherfucker walking. I probably thought I could play better. Because when it came to reading music and remembering the parts, I had a photographic memory. I didn't forget anything. I was also improving as a soloist from working with Mr. Buchanan and being around guys like Duke Brooks and Levi Maddison. So, a lot of things were starting to fall into place. Some of the best musicians around East St. Louis wanted me to play with them. I was beginning to think I was the hippest thing around.

Maybe one of the reasons I didn't say it out loud was because Mr. Buchanan was still on my back to get better at Lincoln High. Although he leaned toward me in the band after Frank Gully graduated—I was playing most of the first parts—he still came down on me hard sometimes. He'd say my sound was too small or he'd tell me he couldn't hear me sometimes. But he was always like that—hard on you, especially if he thought you could play. Once when I was younger and everybody was thinking I was going to be a dentist, he had told my father, "Doc, Miles ain't gonna be no dentist. He's gonna be a musician." So he'd already seen something in me even back then. He told me later that it was my curiosity, wanting to know so much about music, that was my edge. That was carrying me forward all the time.

Duke Brooks and Nick Haywood, some other guys, and me used to play at a place called Huff's Beer Garden. Frank Gully used to play there with us sometimes. We'd make some pocket change on Saturdays. But it wasn't nothing to call home about. We'd just make the gigs for the fun of it. We played all kinds of little gigs in East St. Louis: social clubs, church affairs, any place we could play. Sometimes we'd make as much as six dollars a night. We used to practice in my basement too. Man, did we play loud. I remember one time my father came by Huff's to hear us play. When he told me about it the next day, he said all he could hear was the drums. Anyway, we were trying to play all of Harry James's tunes. But after a while, I quit the band, because outside of Duke's playing there wasn't nothing happening for me in it.

Thinking about nothing but music cut me out of the gang wars and shit, and limited the time for playing sports. I was practicing every chance I got—fucking around trying to learn how to play piano, too. I was learning how to improvise and really getting deep into jazz. I wanted to be able to play the things I heard Harry James playing. So I quickly got tired of listening to motherfuckers who couldn't play hip shit. Some of the guys who weren't advanced in music started to laugh at me for trying to play the newer music. But I didn't give a fuck about what they were talking about. I knew that I was on the right track.

About the time I was sixteen I had a chance to play some gigs on the road—Belleville, Illinois, places like that. My mother said I could play on weekends. This was with a guy named Pickett. We used to play shit like "Intermezzo," "Honeysuckle Rose," and "Body and Soul." I would just play the

melodies because nothing else hip was happening. We were making a little pocket change. But I was learning all the time. Pickett played that roadhouse music, or what some call honky-tonk. You know. That shit that they play in black "bucket of blood" clubs. "Bucket of blood" refers to the fights that were likely to jump off in those clubs. But after a while I got tired of asking when I was going to be able to get off—play the hip shit I was getting into. It wasn't long before I quit Pickett's band.

By the time I was fifteen or sixteen, I had learned how to play chromatic scales, too. When I started playing that shit everybody around Lincoln stopped and asked me what I was doing. They started looking at me differently after that. Also, me and Duke were beginning to catch jam sessions in Brooklyn, Illinois—just up the road from East St. Louis. One of my father's best friends was the mayor of Brooklyn, so he let me play even though I was too young to be going into clubs. A lot of really fine musicians played those riverboats on the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis. They were always sitting in up in those all-night Brooklyn nightspots. Man, them places was always jumping, especially on weekends.

East St. Louis and St. Louis were country towns full of country people. Both towns are real square, especially the white people from around there—*really* country, and racist to the bone. Black people from around East St. Louis and St. Louis were country, too, but kind of hip in their countryness. It was a hip place. A lot of people from that area had a whole lot of style back in those days—still probably do. Black people from that area of the country are kind of different from black people in other places. And I think when I was growing up it was because of the people—especially black musicians—moving back and forth from New Orleans. St. Louis is close to Chicago and Kansas City, as well. So people would bring the different kinds of styles of those places back to East St. Louis.

There was a hipness in the black people then. After St. Louis closed down at night, everybody over there came to Brooklyn to listen to the music and party all night long. People in East St. Louis and St. Louis worked their asses off in them packing and slaughterhouses. So you know they was mad when they took off work. They didn't want to hear no dumb shit off nobody, and would kill a motherfucker quick who brought them some stupid shit. That's why they were serious about their partying and listening to music. That's why I loved playing up in Brooklyn. People were really into listening to what you were playing. If you weren't playing anything, the people in Brooklyn would let you know it quick. I've always liked honesty and can't stand people being any other way.

About this time I was starting to make a little money, not much. My teachers at Lincoln knew that I was serious about being a musician. Some of them heard me up in Brooklyn on weekends or at other jam sessions. But I made it a point to do real good in my studies, because if I didn't, I knew my mother and father weren't going to let me play. So I studied harder.

When I was sixteen, I met Irene Birth, who was going to Lincoln with me. She had real pretty feet. I was always a sucker for pretty little feet. She was about five feet six inches tall and weighed about 103 pounds. A slender woman, but a real nice figure—reminded me of a dancer's body. She was half yellow-looking in color. You know, kind of light-skinned, but half-assed light skin. Outside of her being pretty and hip, with a good body, her feet is what really attracted me. She was a little older than I was—I think she was born May 12, 1923—and a couple of grades ahead of me. But she liked me and I liked her and she was the first real girlfriend that I had.

She lived up on Goose Hill, which is a part of East St. Louis that is over by the packing houses and the pens where they used to keep the cows and pigs after they unloaded them from the trains. The neighborhood was poor and black. There was always a real bad smell in the air, of burnt meat and hair. The smell of manure and cow shit mingled with this smell of death. What a weird, funky smell. Anyway, it was a long distance from where I lived, but I used to walk over there to see her. Sometimes alone and sometimes with my friend Millard Curtis, who was by then a star football and basketball player; I think he was captain of the football team.

I was really into Irene. I got my first orgasm with her. I remember the first time I bust my nuts I thought I had to pee and jumped up and ran to the bathroom. I had had a wet dream before, when I thought I had rolled over on an egg and burst it. But, man, I had never experienced nothing like that first nut.

Irene and I used to take the trolley car across the bridge over the Mississippi River to St. Louis on weekends. We'd go all the way out to Sarah and Finney—which was the richest black neighborhood in St. Louis back then—to the Comet Theatre, the best black movie house in town. The whole trip cost about forty cents for both of us. I used to carry my horn every place we went, because I figured I might get a chance to play. Always wanted to be ready if the opportunity presented itself, and sometimes it did.

Irene used to dance in one of those groups they had around East St. Louis. She could really dance. I never was a good dancer. But I could dance with Irene for some reason; she seemed to be able to pull the shit out of me and not make me stumble all over the place and look like a fool. She actually made me look like I knew what I was doing. But Irene was one of the only girls—besides my sister, Dorothy—I could dance with. I didn't like to dance because I was too shy back then.

Irene grew up with her mother, who was a good woman, strong and fine like Irene. Her father, Fred Birth, was a numbers writer. He was a gambler, a real tall dude. She had a younger half-brother named Freddie Birth who I used to give trumpet lessons to. He was a pretty good player, but I was hard on him, like Mr. Buchanan was hard on me. After I left Lincoln, Freddie played first trumpet in the school band. He is a school principal back in East St. Louis today. Freddie Jr. grew up to be a very nice and hip dude.

Irene also had a little brother named William, about five or six years old. I

think, who I liked very much. William was a real cute little boy, with curly hair, but thin and always coughing. He had gotten real sick with pneumonia, or something like that. So anyway, this doctor came over to see William. Because Irene knew that I had thought of being a doctor—following in my father's footsteps, but on the medical, not dental side (something few people knew about me)—she called me to watch what he did. The doctor came and took one look at William and flat out said, without any emotion, that there was nothing he could do. He said that William was going to be dead before morning. Man, that shit made me so fucking mad. You know, for a long time I couldn't understand how he could say something like that and be so cold about it. It just turned my stomach, man. William did die early the next day in his mother's arms at home without the doctor ever taking him to the hospital, and that shit hurt me so bad.

After this happened, I went to my father and asked him how a doctor could come to see William and tell his family that he was going to be dead before morning and not do nothing about it. He's a doctor, ain't he? Is it that they don't have no money, or what? So my father, knowing that I was asking these questions because of my interest in medicine, said, "If you go to some doctors with a broken arm, they will just cut it off instead of setting it because it might be real hard for them to set it. It might take too much effort. So it's easier for them to cut it off. He's one of them kind of doctors, Miles. There are plenty of them in the world. Those kinds of people, Miles, are only in medicine for the prestige and money that it brings them. They don't love it like I do, or like some of my friends do. You don't go see him if you're really sick. The only people that go to see him are poor black people. Those doctors and he don't care nothing about them. That's why he was so cold to William and his family. He don't care nothing about them, do you understand?"

I nodded that I understood. But, man, that shit shocked me, disturbed the fuck out of me. Then, I found out later that this doctor had this real big house, that he was rich and had his own airplane. He had all this shit that he made off people—poor black people that he didn't give a fuck about. That shit made me sick. So I thought about William's death and what my father told me about how some doctors were. I just couldn't understand how someone could look at somebody whose heart is still beating and just say that that person's going to die tomorrow morning and not try to do something about it—at least try to ease the pain. It just seemed to me, at that time, that if someone's heart is still beating then that person's still got a chance to live. I decided that I wanted to be a doctor so that I could try and save the lives of people like William.

But you know how it is. You say you want to be this, you want to be that. And then, finally, something else just comes along and moves it out of your head, especially when you're young. Music just moved medicine out of my head. That is, if it ever really was there in the first place. I had in my head that if I didn't make it as a musician by the time I was twenty-four, I was going to do something else. That something else, in my mind, was medicine.

Anyway, going back to Irene. I think William's dying like he did brought Irene and me closer. We got real tight after that. She used to go everywhere with me. My father never liked Irene, though. My mother did. I really don't know why he didn't like her, but he didn't. Maybe he thought she wasn't good enough for me. Maybe he thought that she was too old and would misuse me. I don't know what it was, but it didn't change the way I felt about her. I was really into her.

Irene was the person who, when I was seventeen, dared me to call up Eddie Randle and ask him for a job in his band. Eddie Randle's Blue Devils band was hot, man; them motherfuckers could play their asses off. I was over to her house when she dared me, so I told her to give me the phone, and I called him up. When he answered the phone, I said, "Mr. Randle, I hear you need a trumpet player; my name is Miles Davis."

He said, "Yeah, I need a trumpet player. Come on over and let me hear you."

So I went over to the Elks Club in downtown St. Louis where the Rhumboogie Club was located. It was on the second floor, up a long, narrow flight of stairs, in a building sitting off by itself. It was in the black community, so the place would be packed with black people who really were into music. This was where Eddie Randle played. His band was also billed as the Rhumboogie Orchestra. I auditioned with another trumpet player and got the job.

The Blue Devils played hot dance music so good and there were so many good musicians in that band that everybody used to come hear us play, no matter what kind of music they themselves played. Duke Ellington came through and heard Jimmy Blanton, the great bass player, sitting in with us one night and hired him on the spot.

There was an alto saxophone player in the Blue Devils named Clyde Higgins, who was one of the baddest motherfuckers I ever heard. His wife, Mabel, played piano with the Blue Devils. She was a great musician and a great woman. She was fatter than a motherfucker, though, and Clyde was skinnier than a motherfucker. But she was something else, a beautiful person. I spent a lot of time learning from her. She showed me a lot of shit on piano, which helped me to develop even faster as a musician.

Another dude who played a great alto was Eugene Porter. He was almost as bad. He was younger than Clyde and wasn't in the band, but he sat in a lot. Eddie Randle played a mean trumpet himself. But Clyde Higgins was so bad that when him and Eugene Porter went down to audition for a gig with Jimmie Lunceford's band, Clyde blew them all away. See, Clyde was a tiny, real black man, and he looked like a monkey. Back during those days a lot of bands that played for white people liked to hire light-skinned musicians, and so Clyde was too dark for them. Eugene said when Clyde went for the audition and told Lunceford he was a saxophone player, everybody laughed at him and started calling him "the little monkey." They gave him the toughest music they had in their book to play. Clyde, being the great musician that he was, ran right through it like it wasn't nothing. At least, that's what Eugene said. When

Clyde got through playing, all them cats in Lunceford's band had their mouths hanging open. So Lunceford said to them, "Well, how y'all like that?" Nobody said nothing. Clyde didn't get the job, though. Eugene did, because he was better-looking and light-skinned, and a real good alto player. But he wasn't even close to Clyde Higgins. And he told everybody that Clyde should have gotten the job. But that's the way things were back then in those days.

Playing with Eddie Randle had to be one of the most important steps in my career. It was with Eddie Randle's band that I really started opening up with my playing, really got into writing and arranging music. I became the musical director of the band, because most of the other guys in the band were working regular gigs in the daytime, so they didn't have the time to get the music together. I was in charge of setting up rehearsals and rehearsing the band. They had other acts at the Rhumboogie, like dancers and comedians, singers, shit like that. So sometimes the band accompanied another act and I had to get the band ready for that. We traveled some and played all over the St. Louis and East St. Louis areas. I met many other great musicians when they came through. I learned a lot being in Eddie Randle's band, and I made more money than I had ever made, about \$75 or \$80 a week.

I stayed with Eddie Randle's band for about a year, from 1943 to 1944, I think. I used to call him "Bossman," because that's what he was to me—the boss—and he ran a tight band. I learned a lot from him about how to run a band. We used to do the musical charts and arrangements of Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, Duke Ellington, and all them bad cats that were playing back then. There were a lot of great bands around St. Louis, like the Jeter-Pillars Band and George Hudson's band. Man, both of *them* bands was motherfuckers, too. But Ernie Wilkins, who was the arranger for the Blue Devils when I was in that band, and Jimmy Forrest came out of Eddie Randle's band, so I guess I would have to say that he—Eddie Randle—was a leader of great musicians. But George Hudson was a mean trumpet player, too. St. Louis, like New Orleans, is a big trumpet player's town, maybe because of all those marching bands in St. Louis. All I know is that some bad motherfuckers on trumpet came out of there and when I was growing up trumpet players from all over the country used to come through to play in those jam sessions. But I hear it's a lot different today.

I remember when I ran into Clark Terry again at the Rhumboogie; it was a different story from when I had first met him. Now, here he comes into the Rhumboogie to hear *me* play. I said to him when he ran up to me telling me how bad I was, "Yeah, motherfucker, you come up to me now saying that shit, when you wouldn't even talk to me when I first met you over in Carbondale; I'm the little dude you shined on over there." So man, we just laughed, and have been great friends ever since. But him telling me I was bad and could really play at that time did a lot of good. I already had confidence, but Clark telling me this just gave me more. After Clark and I became friends, we hung out all over the St. Louis area, sitting in and going to jam sessions, and when

people heard that Clark and I were going to be sitting in on a particular night, the place would fill up quick, be jammed-packed with people. Clark Terry was the one who really opened up the St. Louis jazz scene for me, taking me with him when he would go sit in. I learned a lot from listening to him play the trumpet. He introduced me to the fluegelhorn, too, which I played for a while, calling the one I had "my fat girl," because of the way it was shaped.

But I had an impact on Clark also, because he used to borrow my fluegelhorn and keep it for a couple of days because I preferred playing the trumpet. That's how he started playing fluegelhorn, and he's still playing it today and is one of the best in the world at playing it, if not *the* best. All through this period I loved Clark Terry—still do to this day—and I think he felt the same way about me. Every time I got a new horn back in those days, I would go looking for Clark to fix up my horn, get the valves to working, and he would fix it up like nobody else could. Man, Clark had a way of twisting and lightening the spring action of the pumps of a trumpet, just by adjusting the springs around, that would make your horn sound altogether different. It made your horn sound like magic, man. Clark was a magician with that shit. I used to love for Clark to fix my valves. And he used to always use those Heim mouthpieces of Gustav's design with his instrument, because they were very thin but very deep, and gave a big, round, warm sound. All the St. Louis trumpet players used them. One time I lost mine and Clark got me a new one. After that, every time he would find an extra one he'd get it for me in St. Louis.

While I was with Eddie Randle's band, like I said, a lot of other great musicians used to come and listen to the band—people like Benny Carter and Roy Eldridge, and the trumpet player Kenny Dorham, who came all the way from Austin, Texas, to hear me play. He had heard about me all the way down there. Then there was Alonzo Pettiford, who also played trumpet, and who was the bass player Oscar Pettiford's brother. He was from Oklahoma and was one of the baddest trumpet players around back in those days. Man, could that motherfucker play fast—his fingers were a blur. He played that real fast, hip, slick Oklahoma style. Then there was Charlie Young, who played both saxophone *and* trumpet, and played both of them *real* good. And then I met "the President," Lester Young, when he would come down from Kansas City to play in St. Louis. He'd have Shorty McConnell on trumpet in his band, and sometimes I'd come over with my horn to where they were playing and sit in. Man, playing with Prez was something. I learned a lot from the way he played the saxophone. As a matter of fact, I tried to transpose some of his saxophone licks over to my trumpet.

Then there was "Fats" Navarro, who came through from Florida or New Orleans. Nobody knew who he was, but that motherfucker could play like I had never heard nobody play before. He was young, like me, but he was already advanced in his concept of how to play the instrument. Fats was in a band of Andy Kirk's and Howard McGhee's, who was also a fantastic trumpet player. One night him and me got into a jam session on trumpet that was a

motherfucker, turned the whole place out. I think this was sometime in 1944. After I heard that band, Howard became my idol, replacing Clark Terry for a while, until I heard Dizzy.

I also met Sonny Stitt around this time. He was playing in Tiny Bradshaw's band and so in between sets at the club he was playing at he would come over to the Rhumboogie to catch our set. After Sonny Stitt heard the band and my playing, he approached me about going on the road with Tiny Bradshaw's band. Man, talk about excited, I couldn't wait to get home to ask my parents if I could go. Plus, Sonny had told me I looked like Charlie Parker. All the cats in the band had their hair slicked back, was wearing hip shit—tuxedos and white shirts—and acting and talking like they was the baddest motherfuckers in the world. You know what I mean? They impressed the fuck out of me. But when I got home and asked my parents, they said no, because I hadn't finished high school yet. I would have been making only \$60, \$25 less than I was making with Eddie Randle's Blue Devils. I think it was the idea of traveling on the road with a big time band that impressed me the most. Plus, they seemed so hip and were wearing such hip shit. At least, it seemed that way to me back then. I got other offers from Illinois Jacquet, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, and A. J. Sullivan to travel on the road playing in their bands. I also had to turn them down until I graduated from high school. Man, I wanted to hurry up and graduate so that I could get on with playing music and living my life. I was still quiet. Still didn't talk much. But I was changing on the inside. And I really was into clothes—I was clean as a motherfucker, or like they used to say back in St. Louis, cleaner than a broke-dick dog.

Things were going great for me musically, but things at home were not going so good. My parents were getting along worse than ever and were just about to separate. They did separate around 1944, I forget which year it was. My sister, Dorothy, was starting college at Fisk, and by this time people in East St. Louis felt that Vernon was on his way to being a homosexual. Back in them days that was some other kind of shit.

My father had bought a three-hundred-acre farm in Millstadt, Illinois, before he and my mother separated. But she didn't like being out there with all the horses, cows, and prize-winning pigs my father was raising. My mother wasn't into the country living like my father was. But he started spending a lot of time out on his farm and this probably caused them to break up quicker than they would have. My mother didn't cook or do housework. So we had a cook and a maid. But that still didn't seem to make her happy. I liked it out in Millstadt—riding horses and all. It was peaceful and beautiful. I've always been into shit like that. In fact, it reminded me of my grandfather's place, only it was bigger. The house was white, with colonial-style columns, and had about twelve or thirteen rooms. It was two stories high and had a guesthouse. It was really a beautiful place, with a lot of grounds and trees and flowers. I used to love to go out there.

After my mother and father separated, things got real bad between my mother and me. I stayed with her after they separated, but we didn't seem to agree on anything, and with my father not there to keep her off me, there were a lot of screaming arguments. I was getting independent, but I think that the real cause of the problem with my mother was my relationship with my girlfriend Irene Birth.

My mother liked Irene, but she was pissed off when Irene got pregnant. She had plans for me going to college and this was going to cause a problem. My father, like I said, didn't like Irene, although he warmed up to her later. So when I first heard about Irene being pregnant, I went and told my father and he said, "So? So what? I'll take care of it for you."

So I said, "No, Dad, it don't go like that. I'll take care of it myself. I helped do it and I got to be man enough to take care of it." So he kind of paused for a minute and then he said, "Listen, Miles, the baby might not even be yours, because I know all them other niggers she's been fucking. So don't be walking around thinking you are the only one. There's others, plenty of others." I knew Irene was messing around with another dude named Wesley, I forgot his last name, who was older than me. And I knew she was going with a drummer named James—a little bitty guy—who used to play around East St. Louis; I would see her with him from time to time. But then again, Irene was fine and popular with the men. So my father wasn't telling me nothing I didn't already know. But I was convinced that the baby was mine and that I was doing the right thing by owning up to it. My father was really pissed off with Irene for getting pregnant. I think it was one of the things that stood between them ever really getting tight as they could have been. Anyway, I graduated from Lincoln in January 1944, although I didn't get my degree until that June. We had our first child, a daughter, Cheryl, that year.

Meanwhile, I was making about \$85 a week playing in Eddie Randle's band and with other people, and I was buying myself some hip Brooks Brothers suits. I had myself a new horn, so I wasn't doing too bad. But the problems with my mother were getting out of hand, and I knew I had to do something about that and also do something about taking care of my family. I never married Irene legally, but we were still like man and wife. But I started to see some other things about how women were with men. I was also starting to think seriously about leaving the St. Louis area to live in New York.

Margherite Wendell (later Willie Mays's first wife) used to work the door at the Rhumboogie. Me and her got to be good friends. She was from St. Louis and was one of the hippest women I ever met. Anyway, she used to come up to me and tell me how handsome all the women, her friends, thought I was. But I didn't pay much attention to that kind of shit. That just seemed to make them bitches more serious about getting me in bed with them. You know what I mean? I remember this one woman named Ann Young, who turned out to be Billie Holiday's niece, coming up to me one night telling me she wanted to take me to New York and buy me a new trumpet. I said I got a new trumpet and I

don't need nobody to take me to New York because I'm going to get there anyway. Well, the bitch got madder than a motherfucker and told Marghuerite that I was silly. Marghuerite just laughed, because she knew how I was.

Another time when I was in Eddie Randle's band, there was this dancer named Dorothy Cherry, who was finer than ten motherfuckers. Man, she was so fine guys used to send her roses every night. Everybody wanted to fuck her. She was an exotic dancer and we used to play behind her act at the Rhumboogie. Anyway, one night I was passing by her dressing room and she said for me to come in. Now, this bitch had a fine, low ass, long legs, hair down her back; just a pretty, Indian-looking woman. Dark, with a great body and beautiful face. I guess I was about seventeen at the time and she was about twenty-three or twenty-four. Anyway, she tells me she wants me to hold a mirror under her pussy while she shaved her pubic hairs. So I did. I held the mirror while she did it and didn't think nothing of it. The bell rang announcing that intermission was over and it was time for the band to play again. I told the drummer in the band what had happened and he looked at me really funny and said, "So, what did you do?" I told him I just held the mirror for her. And he said, "That's all? That's all you did?"

I said, "Yeah, that's all I did; what else was I supposed to do?" The drummer, who was about twenty-six or twenty-seven, just shook his head and started laughing and then he said, "You mean with all these sex-fiend motherfuckers in this band she lets *you* hold that goddamn mirror? Aw, man, ain't *that* a bitch!" Then he started looking for somebody to tell. For a while after that, the guys in the band looked at me kind of funny. I just figured that it was just show business, right, everybody helping each other out.

But after I got to thinking about it later, that fine bitch having me hold that mirror for her and me looking at that sweet pussy—what was on her mind? I never found out. But she would look at me in that sly way women look at men who are sort of innocent. It's like they're wondering how it would be to teach you all they know. But I was stupid about women then—except for Irene—and I didn't know when I was being hit on.

Once I had graduated from high school I was finally free to do what I wanted to do for at least a year or so. I had decided to try to go to the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. But I couldn't get in until September, and I still would have to pass an audition to be accepted. So I decided to get in as much playing and traveling as I could before I went to Juilliard.

In June 1944, I decided to leave Eddie Randle's band to play with a group out of New Orleans called Adam Lambert's Six Brown Cats. They had a kind of modern swing style, and Joe Williams, the great jazz singer—who was unknown at the time—was singing with them. Their trumpet player, Tom Jefferson, had gotten homesick for New Orleans while the band was playing in Springfield, Illinois, and decided to go home. I was recommended to take his place and they paid me good money. So I went with them to Chicago—the first time I had been to that city.

After a few weeks with the band, I came back home because I didn't like what they were playing. That's when Billy Eckstine's band came to St. Louis and I got that chance to play with them for two weeks. This really made up my mind for me to go to New York and attend Juilliard. My mother wanted me to go to Fisk, where my sister, Dorothy, was. She was telling me about how good Fisk's music department was and about the Fisk Jubilee Singers. But after I had heard and played with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Buddy Anderson (the trumpet player I replaced in the band in St. Louis; he got sick with tuberculosis and went back to Oklahoma and never played again), Art Blakey, Sarah Vaughan, and Mr. B himself, I *knew* I had to be in New York, where the action was. But my father had to settle the argument between my mother and me over my choice of school, and even though Juilliard was a world-famous music school, it still didn't make no difference to my mother. She wanted me to go to Fisk, where my sister could keep an eye on me. But I wasn't having none of that.

East St. Louis and St. Louis were getting so depressing to me around this time that I had to go someplace, even if it was wrong. I especially felt like this after Clark Terry left and joined the Navy. For a while, I was so down, I thought of joining the Navy myself so I could play with the great Navy band they had up there in the Great Lakes. Man, they had Clark, Willie Smith, Robert Russell, Ernie Royal and the Marshall brothers, and a whole lot of other dudes who used to play with Lionel Hampton's band, and Jimmie Lunceford's band. They didn't have to do no drills or duty or nothing; all they had to do was play music. They went to boot camp, but that was it. But finally, you know, I said, fuck it, because Bird and Dizzy weren't there and that's where I wanted to be, around them; that was where it ultimately was at and they were in New York, so that's where I took my ass. But I came real close to joining the Navy in 1944 after I got out of high school. Sometimes I wonder what would have happened if I had done that instead of moving to New York.

I left East St. Louis for New York in early fall 1944. I had to pass my audition to get into Juilliard, and I passed with flying colors. The two weeks I had spent with B's band in St. Louis had been good for me, but I had been a little hurt when B didn't take me with them to play in Chicago's Regal Theatre. B had gotten Marion Hazel to replace me, since Buddy Anderson wasn't coming back. That had hurt my confidence a little. But playing around East St. Louis and St. Louis again before I went up to New York helped me regain my confidence in myself. Plus Dizzy and Bird had told me to look them up if I ever came to the Big Apple. I knew I had learned all I could from playing around St. Louis, knew it was time to move on. So I packed up my stuff in the early fall of 1944 and took a train up to New York City, confident in my heart that I was going to have some shit for them motherfuckers playing up there. I ain't never been scared of doing new things, and I wasn't scared when I got to New York City. But I knew I had to get my shit together if I was going to hang with the big boys. I also knew I *was* going to do just that. I thought I could play the trumpet with anybody.

Darling, you know I love you, I love you for myself . . .

And boy, Ike—that blew him away. He went, "*Giiirrrll!*" And he stopped playing the organ and he ran down off that stage and he picked me right up! He said, "I didn't know you could really sing. What else do you know?" I was real embarrassed, but I said, "Everything they play on the radio." I told him I knew some Little Willie John songs, and some of the blues stuff, and a lot of the things that he and the band were playing. So Ike started playing the things that I knew, and I started singing, and the band began drifting back in with their women—who are all wondering, "What's this," you know? "Who's that girl up there?" But once they got a good look at me, they fell in love with little Ann—because I was no threat to any of them. I didn't have a big ass, so they didn't think the guys would be interested in me, right? So, soon they're going, "Girl, you can *siiiiing!*" It was the first time I ever felt like a star. And I was in: I started singing with the Kings of Rhythm. Ike let me do "You Know I Love You," and "Since I Fell for You," and I duetted with Jimmy Thomas on "Love Is Strange," things like that.

But then it was like, "Uh-oh, if Ma finds out, she's gonna have a fit."
And of course she found out.

Tina: Ma hit the roof. She could be a mean old son of a gun. I'll tell you. We really almost had a fight. She hit me a backhand lick to the side of my face, and when I saw it had given me a nosebleed, I nearly hit her back. She said, "So you been singin' with Ike Turner"—and the way she said it sounded like a banner headline: PISTOL-WHIPPING IKE TURNER. Because that was the reputation he had—if there was a fight, Ike would pistol-whip you, right? Here some guy would come, looking for his wife, maybe, and ready for a decent fight, and Ike would go *whunk-whunk-whunk*—get him with the butt of his gun. The whole band had guns. So nobody wanted their daughters involved with these guys, you know?

But I hadn't done anything wrong. I felt that I was a good girl. I went to school. I did all the housework at home. I didn't think I deserved to be hit. That was when I realized how much I resented my mother. Here she had left me when I was ten years old, and now she was gonna start playing mother on me? But she said, "No more singin'—don't even ask." And that was that, for a while.

We moved from that house down to the Hoderman Tracks where all the streetcars were—things weren't looking too good for the family at that point—and after that I didn't go to hear Ike Turner anymore. But then one day—it was still summer—I got a call from him. He needed a singer. Well, Ike was always getting along bad with his musicians. So he came over to the house to talk to Ma. He was wearing a red Ban-Lon shirt and gabardine pants—Ike always dressed nicely—and he looked very boyish, not at all like the bad man Ma and everybody else had heard so much about. He was only a little bit taller than me. He sat down and said, "How're ya doin'?" And Ma was

immediately won over. Ike wanted me to come with him for a very important college engagement in Columbus, Missouri—the out-of-town jobs paid more money than the local ones. He promised Ma that nothing would happen, that he would take care of me. And she said okay: I could go, and I could sing with him every weekend, too.

Boy, was I happy! From then on, Ike and I were like brother and sister. He went out and bought me my first stage clothes: sequined dresses, honey, in pink and silver and blue, with long gloves up to here and rings to wear over them. Bare-backed shoes, the stockings with seams, even a fur stole. Boy, I was sharp! Got me a gold tooth, too. See, Ike was very into taking care of people. The first thing he would do when he met you was buy you clothes; and if you needed your teeth done or anything—I think I had a cavity at the time—he would take care of that, too. He had to make you become his. He had to own you.

Well, we played this fraternity party in Columbus, and God, those were wild white kids—all screwing and getting drunk. The band was rocking. And we came back to St. Louis, and I was riding around in Ike's pink Fleetwood, with the fish fins and all, sitting right next to him and whichever girlfriend he had along, wearing my first form-fitting dresses, and a padded bra, and long earrings—I tell you, I felt like I was rich! And it felt good! We would pull up at the club, and I would get out and walk in and sit there real grand, like I was the star. And after a while, Ike would call me onstage. He'd say, "Now we're gonna bring Little Ann up." And I'd walk up there and sing my three songs, and everybody would clap. It was wonderful. They were clapping for me. Little Ann.

Slowly, Ike began to look upon Little Ann as his possible ticket out of St. Louis. He lusted for the big time, the national-tour circuit—the Apollo in New York, the Howard Theatre in Washington, the Regal in Chicago. But the Kings of Rhythm—as sharp and exciting as they were—were still an R & B party band: capable of covering any hit, but short of distinctive original material.

"Ike could cover," says Clayton Love. "He had a keen ear, and he could play a song just like the record."

A copy, however, no matter how expert, is still a copy. Ann Bullock had introduced an element of the extraordinary into the Kings' sound. Her voice combined the emotional force of the great blues singers with a sheer, wallpaper-peeling power that seemed made-to-order for the age of amplification.

"Her voice was different for the type of music we were doing," says Gene Washington. "A woman doing that type of thing then was kind of a no-no. She was like Bessie Smith and some of those other great singers; but they sang the down-home blues. What we were playing was more of a swinging-type thing. So Ann was something completely different for us—but she fit right in. And things just exploded right from there."