

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Well, when I first started it's they, you know, they used to say that it was, um, a good town, a town with a lot of churches. Um, they used to talk a little bit about race and that, uh, it mostly is white. In fact, it's all white. At that time, I was 24 or 25 years old when I started, I had just freshly been in the military, been in Vietnam, had just gotten back into the States. And, um, to me, when I first started, it was peaceful and nice. And, uh, it was a beautiful place to work. But, um, um, I did hear the comments that it was all white. Um, but really, I didn't see violence as far as race and those kinds of things when I was young. Um, but I did hear about it. Uh, I heard that from the old officers, they used to talk about, um, the Klan and that the city was noted for that kind of thing.

Speaker 1 ([01:02](#)):

But I really did not see any Klan activity in my younger years nor have I to this present day. Um, I can remember at one time in the Southeast part of the city, uh, the older officers used to point out that, um, the, the older generation of the Klan would Mark on their garage door, the KKK in small case. And I did see that, but that's all gone now too. And, um, I don't know what you would call it kind of the, over the, over the Hill bunch or something, but it seems to be all gone. Um, I have seen or heard racist comments made, uh, once on a traffic stop that was in the city on East SIM 21. Tell me about what happened. Uh, I, there was five young black males that had broke down in the city. They lost their gas tank and we're trying to help them get it fixed and move the car, uh, so they can get back to Flint area and people would drive by making racist comments in, and that had the, probably be 1969, maybe 1970. But that's basically the extent of what I can recall right now in modern day. You just don't see that, uh, the people in the city doesn't accept that kind of comment or that kind of belief towards somebody else, as far as I can see on the surface that may be there. But if it is it's hidden,

Speaker 2 ([02:34](#)):

You said there are rumors, rumors of Octa and then other post bike communities that there, what are some of these rumors? What are these places and what are the reasons

Speaker 1 ([02:44](#)):

Cohachta is probably in the South East part of the County. Um, and if it's even in the County, it may be in Genesee County beds, right on the County line, uh, Shasta County and Genesee County. They used to say that grand wizard used to live in [inaudible] for the Klan. And, uh, Cohachta is located right near a shallow quasi Genesee County border on the South West or Southeast part of the County. And I used to hear comments about that.

Speaker 2 ([03:16](#)):

So, so what was it that you have seen

Speaker 1 ([03:19](#)):

On the garage doors? Uh, years ago they used to put KKK and small. It was capital case, but it was small capital case on the garage doors of some of the houses in the South, uh, East part of the city. Um, it was the, the older generation of the Klan is from what I was told. Um, they didn't seem, you know, we didn't seem to have much contact with them. Um, but I've seen that. Um, and then you don't see that today, that I know of. You don't see that today.

Speaker 2 ([03:57](#)):

How would you describe the city

Speaker 1 ([03:59](#)):

Today? It's, it's a very loving city. It seems to be, there are black families that do live in the city. I don't really know how many, and I think when we're talking on this subject back when I was young, that may not have been, uh, a good idea, you know, but today, you know, the people of Owosso do not accept, um, prejudice necessarily. They do not, um, stand for racism and that kind of thing. It's kind of a great place to live. I always did think it was a great place to live, but I think it's a lot better today to get back from Vietnam, got back. Uh, I went over July, 1963 and got back July, 1964,

Speaker 2 ([04:41](#)):

Back in 1964, the civil rights movement was pretty much, pretty much underway at that point. You want the police for them to get drunk, play sports when you pay him back immediately?

Speaker 1 ([04:53](#)):

I, it was, uh, 1964 or 1965. You're right. As soon as I got discharged from the army, I was on the Wassell police department.

Speaker 2 ([05:00](#)):

So what are your recollections of nighttime as far as people's feelings, you a, why so about that whole civil rights movement and things were happening in the country at that point

Speaker 1 ([05:09](#)):

And turn the camera off for a moment. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([05:11](#)):

No. What can you say while the cameras?

Speaker 1 ([05:15](#)):

No, I can't right now while they, the Owosso I didn't necessarily go along with Vietnam and stuff like that. Um, you know, that we seem to have protests. Um, I can remember that for sure. Yes.

Speaker 2 ([05:32](#)):

What about other, what about activities like, like in the South Birmingham, uh, the protests in, uh, Washington, the long hot summers, the riots, those kinds of things, a little more, any, any memory of what people may have been saying as you perform your duties, any kind of contact with, uh,

Speaker 1 ([05:53](#)):

No, I don't recall what people were saying. I remember a lot of that on TV myself, but I don't remember, um, people, uh, really making any real racist comments or anything like that here.

Speaker 2 ([06:07](#)):

I'll tell you I was working in Midland, laying water main, and I was on a water through when did a summer. That story went up and I remember the comments. There are only a gas tank away from us I'm loading up. And that was Midland.

Speaker 1 ([06:25](#)):

Well, I can remember that the Detroit riots and 67, I believe it was, I can remember everybody was on heightened alert in this area. And, um, I can remember seeing state troop cars go through the city, heading to grand Rapids. And, um, apparently coming out of the loop here and Flint area at that time, we did not have, uh, a Michigan state police in the city. So that those things I remember, but I, I really can't remember too much, uh, about the problems at that time, as far as race and that kind of thing

Speaker 2 ([06:59](#)):

I want to, Oh, I'm sorry. Do you think a number of people have mentioned that, uh, Watson doesn't have apparently cause they have a problem as far as race or racism goes as far as what can be seen today? How much of that do you think is because it is attributed to the fact that there's not a significant minority population here. Let me, cause what did it was, was there wasn't wine? That's just how I would be. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([07:25](#)):

You guys, you asked me a good question and I don't know, you'd almost have to, I would almost have to see that kind of a situation to really understand or to know how that would be. Um, I wonder, I wonder myself. I just really don't know.

Speaker 2 ([07:41](#)):

You did talk to us about, about several incidents, a co worshiper. You were someone who went here, church who had problems because of race. I wonder if you could set that stage for us.

Speaker 1 ([07:51](#)):

We did have a young man that worked in the city that, um, um, married to a white young lady and, um, he did have problems, um, where they cut his car tires and those kinds of things. Um, now he's transferred out of the city, but that's, that was before I became chief. And that's probably in the eighties, middle of the 80 someplace in there.

Speaker 2 ([08:18](#)):

What was your relationship with this one?

Speaker 1 ([08:20](#)):

I would give him my, my phone number so he can call me personally. And, and then sometimes we try to track down who we thought may have been doing this. And a couple of times we actually set up stakeouts set there with him. Um, you know, he went to the same church I went to and uh, so we, we kind of worked together. It was sad that to me, that was sad.

Speaker 2 ([08:44](#)):

Now you related to me a little earlier that there had been some incidents of appliers and in this town about this time, what, what happened there? What, what did you, what did you

Speaker 1 ([08:52](#)):

And some of the clothing is some of the stores, somebody would put that white supremacists group meeting. Um, if you want to be part of that meeting sin name and address to a post office box and in a Owosso here. And we did track that down and we did find that person. Um, and then there were some flyers left in people's yards talking about the white supremacist meeting. And that's actually has happened in the nineties. Um, probably I don't think it's in the middle of the night. It's probably like a 92 93 someplace in there,

Speaker 2 ([09:33](#)):

But the first amendment gives us the right of free association. Is there anything against the law informing a white supremacist group and inviting others to join? You know, I mean, what would you do with this person? Hey, you can't wait, what? You gay, you can't charge him with anything. You've done nothing against the law.

Speaker 1 ([09:50](#)):

No, really hadn't we, uh, but we still need to know. We just don't want that kind of behavior, but there's really not much we can do about what we need to know. I need to know. I, you know, in case things do happen, at least, you know, who is possibly can do those kinds of things. I don't think so. Anything else you want to say? No, there isn't.

Speaker 2 ([10:14](#)):

So to people who might look at this program, what this community means, what is driving you anything?

Speaker 1 ([10:18](#)):

I think a wasp has come a long way. In fact, I think America's come a long ways, you know, as, as far as, as the race and as far as making things equal, um, to me, it's a great country. It's a country that, uh, Owosso reflects well, you know, if, if you want to see some patriotism, um, it's, it's a place to see that, uh, for the soldier and that kind of thing is spatially or before nine 11 or before September 11th. Um, we had the national guard go to Saudi Arabia and I could not believe the people that turned out for that when they laughed. And when they came back, the crowd started in a WASO and went South on [inaudible] core, out past Delaney road when they come back into the city. So the patriotism here is great. It's kind of a, it's a city with many churches. It's a city with, uh, a lot of good people.

Speaker 2 ([11:19](#)):

You're welcome.