

helping him so he could go off and do what I wanted to do with him, New York or whatever.

KOMOZI - So how old were you when you first start getting involved in this?

HONEY - In politics, I had to be in my 30s. Because I was in the merchant seamen in '34.

KOMOZI - Can you tell me what was the political scene like before United Brothers?

HONEY - Well, we before the United Brothers was even heard of, we had elected Irving Turner, Irving Turner in 1954. The first black to hold elected office in Newark on the municipal level. That was a strong, a history-making struggle. On a small scale...

KOMOZI - Who did you have to struggle against?

HONEY - Turner ran against two blacks Artie Ganney and Sam Stewart along with Johnny Savada and a Polish guy named Labronski, I don't remember his first name but his last name was Labronski. And Turner was able to make a runoff and eventually go on and beat Johnny Savada in a runoff. But that was history-making and quite a struggle but you got to understand the Italians at that time were dominating and by then there was no longer the third

ward. You had a charter change in '54 that had redesigned the city, set up a new form of government.

KOMOZI - This was a new seat, right?

HONEY - A new seat, the Central Ward, there was no longer the same third ward but the old Third Ward was made part of the Central Ward which actually was where the heart, and there's a story I think you should know...

KOMOZI - This was the first Central Ward, right?

HONEY - Yeah, but there's a story that you must know that is very important to the history. After the Charter won and the wards were drawn up, there was a gerrymandering job done where the Central Ward was, the Charter guaranteed, was supposed to guarantee and design so that every ethnic could have a representation, a chance to elect some ethnic representation. But knowing the politicians and the white controlled boards and things, it was dominated the same, actually controlled. They gerrymandered the Central Ward where the Central Ward took in the bulk of the property and made sure they had twice as many white people. It extended all the way up to the Irvington line which you know. Then there was a bunch of people called left-wingers which I never called them that. But they were thinking black and white people - Larry Coggins, Lorraine Hayes, was part of that. They were branded and everything but the child of God but they were

just some intelligent black folk. They saw there were some white counterparts - Spinnati, white good friends, guy named Herb, Peter _____, they came to Charlie Matthews who had been the Third Ward leader and now who was going to try and take over chairmanship of the Central Ward. And they said, look they got you in a trap. Charlie said, oh I can win. Because he was the kind of guy, Charlie had been dealing with Jewish people and he thought they were all fair but they couldn't get no census so they went to Irving Turner who had sought elected office under the old commission form of government and never could get elected. Turner went for it. But what they did, they did file up a suit, a class action suit against the city clerk, etc....

KOMOZI - Was this in /54?

HONEY - This is '54 after they drew the line.

KOMOZI - Before he was elected?

HONEY - Yeah, before they drew the line. He knew he couldn't win under those circumstances, they way they had done. So they took them to court and they hired a man named Nelson, a white lawyer that was supposed to be a lawyer's lawyer and he was somewhat retired but he came out of retirement to fight that people. They scraped some money together, Irving Turner was the vehicle they used but the money was coming from various organizations that led unions, leftwing organizations. Well they won the case and they

had to redesign the wards and that's why Turner ran under the slogan always, The Man that Made It Possible. He was at the forefront that took the city to court and made them realign the wards, that gave a black a chance to get elected. So that's why he used the slogan all the time, The Man That Made It Possible because he was in the helm to file suit against the city.

KOMOZI - Was that your first big campaign.

HONEY - Yeah, that was my first because I was affiliated with Charlie Matthews by then because of the thing with Larry so I could see and I tried to get Charlie to see that this ain't going to work but Charlie. But then they had another thing that you ought to know about. Blacks got together for the purpose of screening the candidates.

KOMOZI - Back in '54?

HONEY. Yes sir. The name of it was VIC - Voters Independent Council...

KOMOZI - So even before there was a United Brothers....

HONEY - Oh, a long time before that. They used to meet right here on Court Street, you know where the church is, on the same side but on opposite corner you see a pole by there, there's a house still there called the Luminar House, a bunch of black

professors that had this house, old house, they had a bar but more like private but they called it the Luminar House. They were holding meetings there but they were, Lancey was on it...

KOMOZI - But how big were these meetings?

HONEY - They were inclusive the neighborhoods getting together. Blacks were together, don't let nobody fool you. It was well attended. You had your candidates, the blacks were being screened. There was Roger Lancey, a lawyer who had also ran several times for a commission spot that was vacant. You had Sam Stewart, a probation officer and Irving Turner. Turner was more like a street guy. Turner was educated but he Sam Stewart was a college grad, Lancey was a lawyer of course. Turner was in real estate, a real estate broker and former newspaper editor. And Turner was getting the ground swell of people. I told Charlie we got to go and fight for Turner. Charlie was vaccillating, dilly-dallying because he a little picky, seeing that he had missed the boat because they came to him first and said Charlie, you get in on this case but he didn't feel that it was not going to change, they ain't going mean nothing. But I went in there and represented the Charlie Matthews Association and I was for Turner. I met Clarence Coggins, I met Bill Crawford for the first time. I met Whitey Goodfren and I had never worked with them before but I had met them in the Paul Robeson rally, when Robeson was fighting for the _____; there is so much I could tell you there

about struggle you should know when they don't but it in there because....

KOMOZI - You know what maybe I should do, have 2 or 3 interviews because I want to get that background.

HONEY - Yeah, so then this thing, you find it was quite well attended. There was a cross section of blacks there, only blacks were participating. We were about to elect a black candidate, knowing that if all these guys ran they would destroy each other.

KOMOZI - Before they went in then they pledge that only one would come out and they would abide by the vote?

HONEY - Yes they did. That was one of the stipulations of the candidates that was screened by the VIC - Voters Independent Council. So what it was, when they were making Turner, I never really talked to Turner and when he got in the finals they were allowed to appear and give their credentials and whatever they had to say as to why they should be chosen. Lancey came up who was a very good friend of my family, a good man. I found he was one of the best guys you ever wanted to meet. He was a down-to-earth black guy. Sam Stewart was a probation officer, I didn't know him that well. But while they went up, Lancey - I remember his speech very well. He gave his credentials and his qualifications. Turner, I remember who sat with Turner, it wasn't me, it was Lorraine Hayes told Turner you tell them,

they're up there talking about _____ - you tell them to vote for you. They were saying I don't want you to elect me because I'm black but qualified. Lorraine told Turner you go up there and tell them I want you to elect me because I'm black and when Turner came up there with that thing, that house went up! He had it. Turner said I want you to vote for me because I am black.

KOMOZI - He was a pretty good speaker wasn't he?

HONEY - Turner was a dynamic speaker and street fast. Turner was a street man, he could speak a little jewish, he could do everything. The people liked Turner because for these guys were home to the houses. Turner was a street guy. We never had a councilman with that kind of charisma. He had charisma. He was born in the city of Newark, he knew all the Jews, he could talk a little Yiddish. He was a former newspaper guy. He had been in a few..., the police had beat him up and threw him out of the 4th precinct before he got to be _____ because he was going down and protesting some lock-up of somebody. He got locked up and they beat him up and threw him out on the streets and he was a newspaper editor then. But...

KOMOZI - Let me ask you, was there much difference between that campaign and the Black Freedom Movement at that time?