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Interviewer: I'm Chavonte and I'm here with Jim and he is going to share his story and his connection to this community, he is our interviewee number 6!

Participant: Thank you, Chavonte. I first ran for public office in 1982, and, um, this area was in the house district. And I was, I was given a tip that, uh, it might be a good idea to come to Long and visit with Maise Clemens, who is a direct descendant of James Clemens. So, I called Maise and made an appointment, and when it came time for the day I came to his house and he took me into the kitchen and we sat down, to the kitchen table, with his wife Marie and with his good friends Velma and Willard Epps from PPS. And they were kinda like the, uh, patriarchs of the neighborhood. And so, we talked for about two hours, and they asked me a lot of pretty straight questions. We had a dialogue which was very good. They wanted to know why was I running for state representative, and what do I do, blah blah blah. And so, I, we had that conversation and we got done, Maise basically said "well, we like the way you answered the questions, we like your dialogue, we think you'll get a lot of support out there." So, I ran and I did. I got about 85% of the vote. But, my roots are agriculture, just as this area, agriculture. So, I spent a career and never forgot that the significance of the people in this area is so strong, because the heritage here is different. Most people know that, that this area was in the underground railroad. Most people do not know that the settlers here were freed slaves before the Civil War. They were freed indentured slaves, they weren't... most people don't know. So, and, the people whose roots are here have gone on generational, generational, generational, they're successful, hard working people. And, I've never forgotten that, and as a result of my association and my work, um, in my house district, [?] house district, this is a very large agriculture area here, and my house district

produces about 15% of total food production in Ohio every year. It's large in livestock and poultry and corn and beans and so on. It's very successful with rural families. And so, I've spent a career promoting that in Columbus and wherever I go. And so, I retired from the House in 2016. And so, I got involved in a project in 2011 in which I, uh, I decided to try agriculture education in areas that it isn't currently being utilized. In areas specifically is cities. So, I have started a pilot project with the school, now this isn't directly related to Longtown, but it is indirectly a relationship of what I've lived with, and the friendships and the families who are the icons of this area. The, **the Burdens and the Goens and the Carpenters**, and all the people that are descendants in this room today. And, and because of the way they've lived their lives, and because of the examples in leadership they've set, why not do that everywhere? So, here, so as a result, Cleveland East Technical High School and Gamble High School in Cincinnati, have been two pilots that I was able to get the support of the governor in the House and the Senate to put these, they have FFA, Future Farmers of America, in those two high schools, and then in Cleveland, 6 blocks down the street from East Tech at George Washington Carver K-8, they have 4H curriculum in the classroom. A teacher gets every kid in that school one period a week to talk about farm to plate to 4H. Then, in the school, after school, they have 4H clubs, just like 4H clubs do everywhere. They have projects that they work on.

Interviewer: Could you explain what 4H is?

Participant: 4H is heart, head, hands, and health. It's an agricultural organization for youth. Kids, it's basically an, in rural areas the kids have their projects and they compete at the fair. Like pigs and turkeys and chickens and cattle and that sort of thing. So yeah, most people don't know about it. What 4H and FFA education is, Chavonte, what it is is farm to plate education using

agriculture as a means to become productive *solutions*[?]. Uh, you have to be 8 or 9 years old to be eligible to be a member of a 4H club, alright? But 4H teaches manufacturing. Whereby when a child puts a grain of corn in the ground and then ends up with an ear of corn, they've made corn. That's manufacturing. I, it's, you talk about workforce development, that's the beginning of it. In Ohio, and I'm sure it's similar in Indiana, 1 out of 7 jobs here is agriculture related. Now, that's not corn and beans, but it's all of the ancillary jobs and industries that go in about food production and so on. Everything comes out of food, so the idea is to allow students to become successful and develop productive lives through agriculture. Now, we have 608 public schools in Ohio. 300 of them have FFA. We are short ag teachers. The only 2 schools in Ohio that have a 4 year, accredited agriculture teaching degree are The Ohio State University and Wilmington College. Last year and in 2014, Central State University, have you ever heard of Central State? It's a historic black, it's an 1890 land grant school. It's over in Wilberforce, Ohio, near Dayton. Historic black university, it now has land grant status which means it has a college of agriculture. So, they're focusing on becoming a teaching school for teachers. So, we're recruiting students to become, who want to go into agriculture, to take a look at becoming teachers.

Interviewer: For agriculture?

Participant: Yeah. So, that's a package and the results are astounding.

Interviewer: All of this coming from your experience over the years with this community here?

Participant: Yeah, a lot of this community is the result, yeah, a result of what's happened in this community for years. That's my story.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for sharing! I think that's incredible.

Participant: You won't hear another story like this around. But it's brand new, and the [????] is, yesterday, here's what's happening. Now where did you tell me your home was originally?

Interviewer: Houston.

Participant: Houston! Okay. Yesterday, in Cincinnati, part of this project in Cincinnati. A group of people from Cincinnati have recruited over 60 adults to become 4H club advisors. A Central State extension has sent people to Cincinnati, teaching those adults how to become advisors for 4H clubs. What they've done is they've identified 19 vacant lots in Cincinnati, all size, different shapes. One of them is 5 and ½ acres in the middle of a housing block. What they're gonna do is they're gonna clear those lots and they're gonna create "pocket parks," which are really vegetable gardens and fruit orchards and so on. And what they're gonna do as they develop a lot, they're gonna have a 4H club that's gonna take that on as their project. They're gonna maintain that. The bigger lots are gonna have, uh, greenhouses put on them, and they're gonna be managed by the 4H kids too. And so, this is gonna be a total program, eventually, whereby you're gonna have oodles of 4H clubs, not only maintaining these lots, but having 4H clubs in the neighborhood as well as, there are 16 high schools in Cincinnati, and they want every high school to have FFA just like Gamble does. And there are 46 K-12 elementaries, and they want them to have 4H in the classroom just like Rosenberg [???]. So, you're gonna have a total agriculture education package in Cincinnati and I'll give you the example of at East Tech High School, in Cleveland. They started out their first year of FFA at the high school. The previous year they had 46% graduation of that senior class. By the end of the 4th year, they were over 80%. And, the top 6 graduating seniors... the valedictorian, salutatorian, next 4 ranking

members, were all FFA members. They're excited about hands-on learning [????????]. I'm not sure if that has any interest for you or not, but I thought I'd mention it.

Interviewer: No, no, I think it had a lot to do with this neighborhood and its projects.

Participant: People who come from this neighborhood have had a direct influence on my perspective as to what we can do to help agriculture. In other words, twenty years from now, if every... my goal is in Ohio, to have 4H and FFA in every school building. If we did that, twenty years from now we wouldn't be talking about getting rid of guns, we would be talking about all the good things that have happened with the families that are productive. And the opportunities are unlimited. Kids are, they're... a mile and a half from East Tech High School is a big Italian bakery. 450 people work there. When the, when the HR director found out that East Tech had FFA education, he looked at the teacher and said "I'll take 20 of your kids every year." After school, part-time, in the summer, when they graduate they'll have a full time job here, if they wanna go on to post-graduate work, we'll help them, because we need more dough-makers here. We need salespeople, we need engineers, we need everybody, I'll take you. And I know that the kids that are going through FFA, when the work starts at 6 o'clock every morning, they're there at 6 o'clock everyday, they wanna be successful. That's the effect of what we're talking about.

Workforce development. Now what grade are you in?

Interviewer: I am in my second year of graduate school, I'm 25.

Participant: Well, uh, 25, I'm 79 going on 50.

Interviewer: Yeah, haha.

Participant: I never grew up.

Interviewer: Good for you, that's an accomplishment.

Participant: Yeah, I'm semi-retired... I only work about 70 hours a week... I dropped down from 100. Alright, now what are you majoring in?