

Perry Letsinger

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Interviewer: Paula Bruno
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Abstract: Perry Lee Letsinger (1903-1993), the son of Peter Letsinger and Florence Letsinger, was born and raised in Scotland Neck, North Carolina where he worked with his father as a farmer. Mr. Letsinger married Annie Mae Baker in 1923 and they had a total of five children: Annie (died in infancy), Peter (died in infancy), Perry, Esther, and Mildred. Mr. Letsinger came to Perth Amboy in 1929 and was employed at Camp Raritan (later Raritan Arsenal) for approximately thirty years as a laborer, foreman, and surveillance inspector. He also worked as a salesman for Watkins Products and as a custodian at Campbell School in Metuchen.

In 1930, the Letsinger family settled in Metuchen and lived at 663 Middlesex Avenue for several years before purchasing their own home at 1 Sampson Street in 1939. Mr. Letsinger was an active member of the Second Baptist Church in Metuchen serving as a deacon, the Sunday school superintendent, and an advisor to the Missionary Society. He was president of the Metuchen-Edison Branch of the NAACP, a member of the Board of Directors of the Metuchen YMCA, and a member of the Grand Lodge. Mr. Letsinger also served on the Civil Rights Commission and the Borough Advisory Commission during the 1960s and 1970s. He is buried at Franklin Memorial Park in North Brunswick.

In this interview, Mr. Letsinger discusses his work at the Raritan Arsenal and Watkins Products, his spiritual activities as deacon and superintendent of the Sunday school at the Second Baptist Church, and his civic activities as president of the Metuchen-Edison Branch of the NAACP and the Civil Rights Commission. He also talks about his involvement with Freemasonry and his work in establishing a Fellowship and Unity Club and a Metuchen Community Center. The final part of the interview includes an extensive discussion on Mr. Letsinger's family, including his wedding anniversaries, his children, his grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren.

Interview note: There are several parts of the interview where Mr. Letsinger words are unintelligible due to his soft speaking and microphone issues. Those sections have been marked as unclear in brackets. The following interview was accompanied by slides, which are noted in the transcription. These images are attached to the end of this document.

Disclaimer: Please note that all oral histories presented by the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society are unaltered. The language, comments, and thoughts contained therein are solely those of the individuals interviewed. Our goal in presenting them is to make the personal recollections of these individuals available, to be considered within both their historical context, and during the time the comments were made, as a part of the historical record. The content and language of these interviews should not in any way be attributed to any of the past, current, or future members of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Board of Directors, or to the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society membership as a whole.

P. Bruno: Today is Tuesday, May 30, 1978 and this is Paula Bruno interviewing Mr. Perry Letsinger of Metuchen, New Jersey. [SLIDE 1] Mr. Letsinger is originally from about

a town of 4,000 in North Carolina. He moved to Perth Amboy in February of 1929 and came to settle in Metuchen in 1930. [recording paused]

I would like to start first by asking you why you settled in Metuchen?

P. Letsinger: Well, formally we planned to go to Long Island [New York], but I had some friends in Perth Amboy. So we went there first. And then we were encouraged—because at that time, they were hiring at Camp Kilmer (that was the name at that time)—and so I, instead of going to Long Island, we rethought, said it would be advisable for us to stay, reach out to where they have a job (job of the government), which would be easily somewhat permanent. So that's why we changed position or my location.

P. Bruno: What did you think about Metuchen as a town when you saw it and you first decided to live here?

P. Letsinger: Well, I wasn't exploring [coughs] so much the town [unclear]. The main purpose was, after leaving home with three children, I wanted to have a job so that was kind of security for me. And of course, Metuchen is small. It wasn't in its enormous state, but we gone on a long time, but for me it was kind of a small town that we left in North Carolina. We seemed to thought that it would be a nice place to rear our children up in the city where we could think, imagining the [unclear] were relatively [unclear] at that time. So we were in the one school. So it was adequate at that time, the school, Franklin School, the high school [Metuchen High School], the kindergarten right on through high school for all our children.

P. Bruno: Okay. Why don't we talk about your work at Camp Raritan [Raritan Arsenal] for a little while?

P. Letsinger: Well, I was hired as an ammunition handler, ammunition. And of course, it didn't require too much mental strain because the only thing was—it just was seeking and storing ammunition in various warehouses and setting things according to thirty-caliber [0.30 Carbine], forty-five [0.45 Automatic Colt Pistol], and also up to sixteen-inch [50-caliber] guns. We went as far as that to be stored in Ammunitions Inspector Place. At that time, physically, I was real strong, [unclear] so often. Physically, I stayed in that area for about two years.

P. Bruno: And then what—you stayed with the Raritan Arsenal, with the government, for thirty years?

P. Letsinger: Thirty years. But I was, as an employer, I stayed in the Ammunition Department for ten years as a laborer.

P. Bruno: As a laborer?

P. Letsinger: Yeah.

P. Bruno: And then where did you go from there?

- P. Letsinger:** Then I went, from there, I cruised [unclear], said, “Well, I had the experience.” And then, World War II broke out in 1939, started in 1939. So they took advantage of my knowledge that I had obtained through the Arsenal and gave me men to supervise. So I started as a gang boss, important at that time.
- P. Bruno:** A gang boss?
- P. Letsinger:** A gang boss. My job was to boss the gang, keep them working, keep them busy, and give them their assignment.
- P. Bruno:** How many men were you responsible for?
- P. Letsinger:** About ten to fifteen for that one gang; ten to fifteen. From then, my experience naturally increased to such an extent, they wanted—that in order to be capable of taking care of more men, allow them supervision, so they were going to make me a supervising foreman, which includes five to six gangs.
- P. Bruno:** And was this still within the Ammunition Department?
- P. Letsinger:** Yes, it was. In through the Ammunition Department, we received ammunition from ships and boats. [SLIDE 2] And they even dredged out the docks so that ships could come in directly. And we could load them up and take them exactly to, take them right to the barge in New York. And before that time, they used barges; you had to lower barges, which had to be hauled again before it got to the ship. But I read about the area so that the ships could come in directly, reload again, so our job was to see where they were stored.
- P. Bruno:** And when did you leave the Arsenal?
- P. Letsinger:** Before I left, I must say that I stayed in the Ammunition Department as far as a foreman and supervisor for 1929 till 1950. And then I left that department in 1950 and then went to the Surveillance Department, which we inspected ammunition. We inspect the storage of it so that it was safe, and see that everything was clean. And if we found any discrepancies in the area that we worked, the day we loaded up and brought them in to the places on the desk at the Ammunition [unclear], he hired men [unclear] incorrect storage and have them go out and correct, make it safe. I enjoyed that and was in that area for five years till nineteen-hundred-almost-sixty (1950 to 1956). I enjoyed very much. I stayed totally; I stayed in the Arsenal, Federal Reserve mostly, thirty years. I was fifty-six when I retired, and I promised my wife [Annie Mae (Baker) Letsinger] and [unclear] that if I made thirty years with the government, I was going to retire. So I did that. So now it's her and self-involved, I come out and go into some other area. So that's what I did. And I went from there, I retired, I went to [19]59, and I bought my new car. And I started selling Watkins Products¹, which I still sell (Watkins Products). That's an organization that been in that it is selling

¹ Joseph Ray Watkins is credited with selling the natural pain reliever known as Liniment. His company was established in 1868 in Plainview, Minnesota and became the first to introduced the trial-mark bottle in the United States. According to their website, “Relying on door-to-door sales, Watkins gave customer a risk-free way to try his products by adding a molded ‘trial mark’ to each bottle. Customers who used the natural products and stayed above the mark could get a full refund.”

those products since 1[8]68. So that does pretty substantial in selling their products, so they're inviting their souls and they're sending me out there free.

P. Bruno: What kind of products are they?

P. Letsinger: They are medication, medicine of all kinds, household supplies, cosmetics, and you name it, they have, around 300 items. And I still sell for Watkins.

P. Bruno: So through the years, you have really enjoyed your work.

P. Letsinger: Yes, I enjoyed it immensely to such an extent I was able to—I wasn't making too much money to be able to let my children go to school. And there wasn't enough money to send them all to college. So we only had one son [Perry A. Letsinger], so on the breakfast table, we talked it over. My wife and I, we'd already agreed what to do. But we wanted to hear him say it. I said, "We can only send one of our children out of three to school." They said, my two daughters, said that they think to sending the son because he would be the breadwinner of the family. So we sent him, and he really wanted to go. After high school, he went to Rutgers [University] for three years all the way up to 1949.

P. Bruno: Okay. Well, we'll get to your family a little later. Let's talk about your spiritual activities. You're a member of the [Second] Baptist Church in Metuchen.

P. Letsinger: Yes.

P. Bruno: And you are superintendent of Sunday schools for a while. Do you want to talk about that?

P. Letsinger: Yes. I joined Second Baptist Church [at 100 Durham Avenue] in its early stages, 1930. We had a small building there from the same ground that we have now. [SLIDE 3] And it was pastored by Rev. Nelson Tate, not only pastor, but he was the founder of the church². And I met his family. And one Sunday, the first time we met, and his son at the time was superintendent of the Sunday school, so they asked me to serve as superintendent of the Sunday school. So I accepted the job. And I was superintendent around approximately twenty-five years. I enjoyed it; I like kids.

P. Bruno: What were your responsibilities?

P. Letsinger: As a superintendent, to see that the teachers were well-supervised so that they would be able to instruct their classes properly. And the result of it, we had an adopted son or—yeah, adopted grandson who finished West Point [United States Military Academy in New York] last year. Another thing, soon, is he's booked to go to school in the Army.

² The Second Baptist Church of Metuchen was officially organized in 1914 by Rev. Nelson D. Tate. The congregation held its first meetings in 1913 in a small building at the corner of Middlesex Avenue and Amboy Avenue. Preacher Rev. Page Beverly conducted the first meetings before being succeeded by Rev. Tate. The congregation subsequently moved to a blacksmith shop on Middlesex Avenue and later rented the former Franklin Schoolhouse on New Street. The cornerstone of the new church at 100 Durham Avenue was laid in 1922.

My son, he's a senior scientist, and he's doing very well in New York City. We'll talk about him later.

P. Bruno: And you also became a deacon where you were asked to be a deacon in your church. How did that come about?

P. Letsinger: **When we first started, it was called a walking deacon. A deacon who would be observed to see whether or not he was moral or Scriptured, focusing, meet the requirements of a deacon. The deacon was supposed to be a quote-unquote [unclear], a man who's [unclear] able to teach. I'm saying he was supposedly the same as a bishop. The bishop was the one Baptist, the deacons were [unclear] bishop. So finally they put me on trial, for about six months, and I passed. So they set a date aside for ordination services. So I was ordained in the early thirties in the Second Baptist Church.**

P. Bruno: Now this was a real honor because not many are chosen to become deacons.

P. Letsinger: **No. Everyone is not. They're scrutinized, the person in bare clothes, before he can even be thought of as a deacon. And then he takes it from there. He can either make it or fail. That's up him whether he fails. My life was possibly—must convinced them because I went through the ordination service, which I must say, with flying colors.**

P. Bruno: What did the ordination services consist of?

P. Letsinger: **Well, there's the men that picked by the [Middlesex Central Baptist] Association, they're called permanent councilman and they come down and they ask you questions, quiz you, concerning the Bible, the Doctrine, and what have you, relatively to the Baptist activities, things like that. And firstly, they want to know where you were born, I guess [unclear]. That was the primary objective. In other words, scholastically, they actually passed, had not passed spiritually [unclear]. That was reflective of me, so I passed in all areas.**

P. Bruno: And what did you do as a deacon? What were some of the duties as a deacon?

P. Letsinger: **Well, the duties of a deacon are to set tables, and look at the widows and the orphans, see whether or not they need anything materially, and see whether there any suffering not only in our congregation, but in the head. That's right. People are probably less fortunate. There's always someone less fortunate than you are. But then they didn't want the upmost suffering from lack of help, and we supposed the good, that not only that, report it to the church and to our benevolent friend, aid them, [unclear], relieve them of that stress.**

P. Bruno: And you also served as chairman of the Board of Deacons.

P. Letsinger: **Yes. I served as chairman of the Board of Deacons and that's the person who is responsible for the deacon. Every organization has to have a head, so I was placed as head of the deacons. And by the way, I'm still serving as chairman of the deacons and that's been many—they have changed of the times, but they—my service must have been satisfactory, came right back to me again, right at this time, 1978 and [19]79, two years.**

P. Bruno: And how many deacons does the Second Baptist Church have now?

P. Letsinger: We have seven; seven deacons.

P. Bruno: And your congregation has really grown too, hasn't it?

P. Letsinger: Yes, yes. It must. We were, at the time when we started, oh, I guess around 215 people. That's all we had, and none of that was [unclear] seventy-five. Of course, we have a new leader now, a pastor Walter L. Crews.

P. Bruno: When was the new church built?

P. Letsinger: It's completed six years ago, six years ago, right in the same spot it was. While we were able to build there because we only had—the first church was only fifty feet across the front, and that wasn't adequate for us to make an extension on the lower part of the [unclear] church. So we bought the apartment building next to it. It gave us more ground and we got the same church—our church now is in the same spot the original church was in 1922. [SLIDE 4] And we got the building; we had to be selected to accommodate or meet demand of the day both spiritually and peacefully.

P. Bruno: You have been very active in civic activities as well when you first came to Metuchen, and you organized a Fellowship and Unity Club [in 1955] as well as a Metuchen Community Club. Could you talk about them a little while?

P. Letsinger: Yes. When I first came to Metuchen in 1930, I found the church had split. So there is no Second Baptist Church, some misunderstanding and out went a New Hope Baptist Church³, which is existing and progressing very well on Hampton Street. And I saw that people were divided so much, so I thought maybe a Fellowship and Unity Club would have a tendency to help to bring us together and socialize. So we carried on in that area for about two, three years. And then we didn't follow through and we decide because so many people, all the women there who just [unclear] wait, and we didn't have enough to carry on. But that was the first step.

The next time, the next venture was, I wanted to build a Community Center for all people (black and white), we knew—matter of fact, the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] [unclear]. But I thought that our people should make an effort to make a contribution to the town too. So we went ahead and listened to everybody, I thought, *Okay*, the chairman of the town—what was the area of that the store there?—[Metuchen Area] Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Commerce inside [at 323 Main Street], we got an okay from them. So we said, "Listen, here's money," and the fellow by the name of Watts Johnson [phonetic] who's going in—he worked at the Borough Hall for many years—he was my right arm in raising money. So we raised a lot of it, raised a lot of money. So we got a

³ The New Hope Baptist Church parish was started on December 11, 1923 with a house prayer meeting under the leadership of Robert Scruggs, William Booker, John Thompson, Jennie Booker, and Alice Thompson. The first worship service was conducted at the rented Franklin Schoolhouse at the corner of Pearl Street and New Street. A new church was constructed on Smith Street in 1933, and the congregation eventually moved to a new facility on Hampton Street in 1972.

building, started on Durham Avenue, and it was coming along nicely. But maybe it wasn't in the intentions of God to let it mature well enough because He sent a storm through and we weren't the only ones. But the storm came right through [unclear] and into Rahway and it did millions of dollars-worth of damage.

P. Bruno: Oh, when was this?

P. Letsinger: This was in the fifties.

P. Bruno: In the fifties?

P. Letsinger: In the fifties, yeah. So we suffered loss like others, but we didn't [unclear]. So we didn't—wasn't such a damage, we didn't have an inordinate amount of money anyway, so we couldn't—wasn't enough energy, enthusiasm with people to work with those who had, black and white at that time, the Trustees Board, white as well as black. So it was trying to get integrated. I always felt then, I feel now that one group of people will never be strong enough to carry on themselves. We need each other because we're the United States; I think we should unite, black and white all together. That was my philosophy then, and it still is. That won't ever change. The town has changed and that would be the new reality.

P. Bruno: You are also active in the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People].

P. Letsinger: Yes. So one thing about Metuchen, the image would not allow black folk to have any advantage. So we didn't have any black participation in the Borough. So we asked, we talked, but the same [unclear] language that maybe they would understand that we just march peacefully around the Borough Hall, the NAACP, and we got the cops. From that, we got a black cop because he wasn't the ones trusted, picked. They didn't screen him at all through us. We could have told him because we knew them better than they did. But they got a black cop, a few other men. In fact, one who was terminated very early because of his behavior⁴, which wasn't good for his own people, wasn't good for the family, wasn't good for the community. So we discontinued that. And they recently hired two more policemen, two at a time [unclear] integrated in the state [unclear].

P. Bruno: Did you meet any resistance from the people in Metuchen?

P. Letsinger: Relatively to this intention?

P. Bruno: Right.

P. Letsinger: No. We got fine cooperation. We had whites as well as blacks to march around the Borough Hall and no repercussions at all. Everything went very smoothly; we didn't do it destructively. Our intention was not that, just to sell the idea to the

⁴ Perry Letsinger may be referring to John Moseley, a black policeman who was dismissed from the Metuchen Police Department by the Borough Council in 1972. Moseley sued the Borough of Metuchen and the Metuchen Police Department for discrimination based on race, contending he was wrongfully fired and that his rights were violated by "not affording him a fair hearing, by not allowing him to call all witnesses, by uttering prejudicial statements during the presentation, by rubber stamping the decision of the chief [Edward Leiss] and captain [Howard Reeder], and by failing to investigate fully charges of racial discrimination."

Borough that they need some black participation. They hired [unclear] clerk in the bank. And of course, it's gone now, the little chain we have now—

P. Bruno: Which bank?

P. Letsinger: The National Bank [of New Jersey] [unclear].

P. Bruno: When you marched peacefully around the Borough Hall, was this at the same time that other civil rights marches were taking place throughout the country?

P. Letsinger: Yes, yes. Yes, it was on a larger scale, of course, but we were small. But we figured that we could do our share [unclear], and we got results, no backlash there.

P. Bruno: Now this was in the early sixties?

P. Letsinger: Late fifties to the early sixties, probably in that area. I can't remember the exact date. [recording paused]

P. Bruno: At this point, I'll turn the tape over. [recording ends]

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1]

P. Bruno: I'd like to talk about this dinner (the Fiftieth Anniversary Convention of the NAACP) that you attended in 1959. It looks from the picture that it was really quite an event. [SLIDE 5]

P. Letsinger: That was at the Coliseum.

P. Bruno: At the Waldorf-Astoria [Hotel]?

P. Letsinger: The Coliseum.

P. Bruno: Oh, Coliseum?

P. Letsinger: Yeah, Coliseum. Well, part of it was at the Waldorf-Astoria too, but the main venue set—well, matter of fact, it was split up in different areas in the Coliseum, some at the Waldorf-Astoria. But the time we all met, this way, this picture, [unclear] all the groups, it's about 48th Street then, all up assembly representing all of us in this.

P. Bruno: Were you with the representatives from New Jersey?

P. Letsinger: Yeah, I was. Yeah, I think my picture might be in there.

P. Bruno: Yes, you're right here. [SLIDE 6]

P. Letsinger: Yes, yes, yeah, that's right. New Jersey, yes.

P. Bruno: What do you remember about this convention?

P. Letsinger: Well, I remember the Roy Wilkins.⁵ This is prior to the NAACP and Walter [Francis] White⁶ in 1920s. Roy Wilkins was one of the most eloquent leaders that I have the privilege to meet: calm, cool, collected. But he got actually more done than Walter White, but he did all [unclear] was peaceful. He didn't [unclear] erratically move under no circumstances, we got the conference room, we had—of course, Martin Luther King followed the Roy Wilkins, the early birds as we speak. He started way before Dr. King, when he was born, and we put—from that, blacks were segregated early in the twenties particularly. But they were through big effort of the NAACP, the civil rights reform, Civil Rights Commission, it wasn't started before 1943 under the leadership of Roy Wilkins. And that made it possible for us to go anywhere and sleep, eat, and lodge as much as your money could afford.

P. Bruno: Now, I don't mean to interrupt, but the Civil Rights Commission, this was on the national level?

P. Letsinger: All over; in every state in the union, every state in the union. I think there are forty-eight states when we started. But we had branches; we had NAACP branches established in most cities, but maybe an exception in a few of the towns. Most cities anyway included towns, probably didn't have it at that time. But the aim was to nationalize the lower section of the country, and they accomplished much in the NAACP.

P. Bruno: What were some the early goals of the NAACP?

P. Letsinger: Well, time gave black people a chance to hide and do the job according to their ability, and not according to the color of their skin. That was the main objective to break down those barriers; the NAACP was successful in doing that.

P. Bruno: Do you think that their philosophy has changed any over the years, or it has somewhat remained the same? Probably the issues and the emphasis are probably being placed in the different areas. What do you think about the growth of the NAACP?

P. Letsinger: The growth has been progressive. I don't have the figures before me now, but they have grown by strengths numerically. It started off in a small group, [unclear] New York was the headquarters when it first began. And now they've grown to be an organization that is respected all over the world by not only the Presidents of the United States, but kings / important states all over the world now know the strength of the NAACP. But all of that was peaceful, we never—we didn't lead, we didn't then, and we don't now in order to fend ourselves [unclear]. We frown at that type of behavior anyway and we speak against it.

P. Bruno: Now you were active in the NAACP for a number of years.

⁵ Roy Wilkins was a prominent civil rights activist that helped direct the fight for equal rights and opportunities for black people. Born in St. Louis, Wilkins graduated from the University of Minnesota. He worked for a black-run newspaper, the *Kansas City Call*, before he joined the NAACP in 1931. He edited the NAACP magazine *The Crisis* from 1934 to 1949 before he became the executive secretary of the NAACP from 1955 to 1963 and executive director from 1964 to 1977. In 1964, he was awarded the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP for his work in civil rights.

⁶ Walter Francis White was a civil rights activist who led the NAACP from 1929 to 1955.

P. Letsinger: [unclear] two terms, eight years. I served for eight years and I, [unclear] when I was getting older, I had a [unclear] at that time and [unclear]. I understand from there I left off [unclear].

P. Bruno: President of the—?

P. Letsinger: NAACP of Edison and Metuchen. And that's one thing I did while I was president. Metuchen, the area—Edison was all around us. So someone suggested, "Why not have Metuchen and Edison branch?" So we sent that suggestion to the Board of Directors in New York and they met, thought of it, so we gave them three months, we got a new charter saying Metuchen and Edison, which allows us to function in Edison as well as Metuchen, the adjacent town, because see Edison didn't have anything and so they working in Metuchen. Matter of fact, they're consolidating now. They're no longer in Metuchen, and Metuchen [unclear]. [coughs] Excuse me.

P. Bruno: Just getting back to the local level and Metuchen, you served on the Civil Rights Commission in Metuchen [in the 1960s] and could you look at this and maybe remember some of the people that were in it? I can put it up here, right? Can you see them? [SLIDE 7]

P. Letsinger: Yes, Civil Rights Commission. [recording paused]

I noticed they weren't in the—they seemed to be at the head of the table with the judge. I think his name was Holger Holm, the judge, and we also [unclear] enough for a little while. And Mrs. [Elizabeth] Schenck, she was a real estate agent, similar to her daughter has on Main Street, 495 now. And Mr. [Ray] Herb, he was the history school teacher in the high school. And Enos Fouratt was the chief of police at that time in the Borough of Metuchen. And the other two gentlemen on the extreme right, and me, and I can't recall. I might know them well, but my memory sometimes leaves you a little while. [chuckles] But those were the ones that were active. At that time when I was serving, the woman by the name of—oh, the name in South Metuchen on Orchard Street, Orchard Street—what's his name?—Austin Banks. Austin Banks, he was the chairman, he followed her after I joined, Civil Rights Commission. He was picked as the chairman of the Civil Rights Commission, Austin Banks. [coughs]

P. Bruno: Was the Civil Rights Commission a commission appointed by the mayor?

P. Letsinger: Yes.

P. Bruno: And who was the mayor at the time when the Civil Rights Commission was formed? Do you remember?

P. Letsinger: Let's see, the mayor, as far as activities concerned, it might have been appointed, but it didn't get much work until Donald Wernik came in as mayor and he kind of got things going. But the early [unclear], we had several mayors before us who in name only on the role as we come in there, and we noted that Weber—?

P. Bruno: Yes, Tom Weber [Thomas Weber].

- P. Letsinger:** Tom Weber, he was a mayor too, earlier. I'm not too sure; I think he was the mayor when the Civil Rights Commission was born in Metuchen. And I think it would be a new birth in Metuchen, the Civil Rights Commission.
- P. Bruno:** What has the Civil Rights Commission in Metuchen accomplished over the years?
- P. Letsinger:** Well, it works in conjunction with the NAACP. It's like watchdogs; anything that is happening that you can discern, any type of discrimination because of the color, skin, or national, color or skin, because of race, what have you. It goes into to correct that mistake, providing that it's brought to their attention. So the Civil Rights Commission would get it first and resolve all that energy in what they couldn't do and then they would turn it over to the NAACP so they could follow up. We have national records; we had it then and we absolutely still have national records in order to enforce the laws, that is only statues, that's all the time, not to create new laws, enforce those that are already there.
- P. Bruno:** Why don't we talk about this picture a little while, the memorial services for Dr. Martin Luther King at the Borough Hall in 1976. [SLIDE 8] Was this one of the projects of the Civil Rights Commission?
- P. Letsinger:** Yes, yeah. This was a project of the Civil Rights Commission then, and we had a celebration, memorial services for the late Dr. Martin Luther King in 1976. And they made me the chairperson of the project so we had—my brother [Rev. Gilbert Letsinger] here is in back of the Father [Dominic A.] Turtora, he started the first playground in Metuchen in early thirties.
- P. Bruno:** This is the Rev. Gilbert Letsinger?
- P. Letsinger:** Rev. Gilbert Letsinger, yeah. And this person to the right here, see, we listed her as the Natural Soloist [Jennie Thomas]. She sings without any voice coaching; they had no voice coach. Matter of fact, she went to get her voice improved and the person whom she went to said that her voice natural and it would damage her to try to give her lessons. She sang then and she sings now.
- P. Bruno:** And this is Jennie Thomas?
- P. Letsinger:** Soloist Jennie Thomas, yeah, um-hm. And the Mayor Wernik, he's been a friend of ours for two years. Matter of fact, when he came to Metuchen in 1930, we met his father—grandfather had a pharmacy on [412] Main Street, and Boro Pharmacy [Metuchen Pharmacy] also on the corner [at 396 Main Street] right near the railroad station too. But I must say eventually, Father Turtora, he backed this program up to such an extent he brought it in from seventy-five to 100 people in his church, his parish. It was so filled that you couldn't get into Borough Hall, and the black cooperation from the music director in the high school also, so they had a band, but they couldn't get in because of the crowd. But they opened the doors so that the music could come in, very beautiful thing. One of the more togetherness program, I think, that I witnessed since I've been in Metuchen.

- P. Bruno: So you really have seen over the years since you first started in your civic activities to see people coming together and sharing more.
- P. Letsinger: **Yes, I should say so because, of course, when I say way back in the thirties we changed pulpits with black and white, First Baptist with Second Baptist [Church]. Our minister would go to the First Baptist and the First Baptist would come over to the Second Baptist and we had a pretty good relationship then. But they have built and has grown more for individuals since then because of these activities, I think.**
- P. Bruno: You gave a talk at the Middlesex [Central] Baptist Association in the summer of 1977 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, which is in New Brunswick. This looks like a very stately picture of you. [SLIDE 9] What did you speak on?
- P. Letsinger: **Well, then I was conducting devotional services and the Association, which consists of sixty-two churches, picked me as a chairperson for devotional services before the Association started. And that was my main thing. I don't know whether I was talking or reading or seeing, but I was participating in the devotional services.**
- P. Bruno: This is for the Association?
- P. Letsinger: **Yes, for Middlesex Association, it was at Ebenezer Baptist Church celebrating their 105th year at the church [unclear] now.**
- P. Bruno: Okay. How about your participation as a mason? You belonged to the King Hiram Lodge, Scottish Rite, Newark Temple at 105 Broad Street. [SLIDE 10] I know that Masonry, being a mason, is a secretive organization. But can you talk a little bit about what a mason is?
- P. Letsinger: **Without divulging any of the secrets?**
- P. Bruno: Yeah.
- P. Letsinger: **Yes, I can. I joined, [burping] excuse me, that organization around 1940. And when I was early in my masonic life, I was made a deputy grand master; that person, child, was all over with the grand master. And I shared in that work from Amityville, New York back to Trenton. And there many times, I'd come in after initiation and just early enough to shift clothes and go to work, which I was at Raritan Arsenal then. And I built up a strong relationship at the masonic [unclear] and I still have it. I started from the early part of Masonry to the Thirty-Third and Last Degree. I have obtained it from the masonic family, so I can go anywhere in the world and be identified right now.**
- P. Bruno: What was the deputy grand master responsible for?
- P. Letsinger: **Well, he got the assignment direct from the grand master. And the grand master's job was enormous, chief to the Masonry and Eastern Star Chapter together, and where he couldn't go, he would send me, in order to, in time, to organize the chapter and to—I had one job, one present job, my assignment, they're having a few problems with the Eastern Star Chapter, so I was sent to**

Amityville to straighten things out. So I did straighten it out momentarily and I was able to bring back thirty-four to the grand master at that time. Naturally, people, masonry, you have to have [unclear], and one person [unclear].

P. Bruno: In this photograph, you're grand inspector general. [SLIDE 11]

P. Letsinger: Yes, that's when I was crowned inspector general around 1965, around that time. Of course, I was there [unclear] part of my life, I enjoyed it and of course it had with the dignity and, not pride because pride [unclear; loud bang] before for destruction, the whole spirit will fold. So you're proud to obtain that position in order that we may inspire others in the family [unclear] fortunate enough to get that height, obtain that height [unclear].

P. Bruno: So you have been a mason since 1940 and you're still one today?

P. Letsinger: Oh yes, I still am. I happened to be a member of the Grand Council, so anything turns up that can't be solved that easily, they call me to solve it. You have been listening just there, the job is not very pleasant because when we come together something that happened that will tear or destroy that we have built up, and we don't want that. So we have the Council agree, function, or meet once a year from another time that we might resuscitate [unclear].

P. Bruno: So masonry is really spiritual as well as—?

P. Letsinger: There's a spirit—masonry is—well, there's symbols and signs, masonry as well as symbols and signs. That's what masonry [unclear].

P. Bruno: Well, I guess, since I'm not a mason, I don't know what those symbols and signs are? [laughter]

P. Letsinger: Well, we work well. We know each other anywhere. We separate and we can be identified each other without even—you go in a foreign country, and you can't speak a language, you still could be identified [unclear]. So that's where signs are important.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

P. Bruno: At this point in our interview, I would like for you to talk about your family. And we can start with your twentieth anniversary, if you'd like?

P. Letsinger: Yeah. Well, this [picture], we had been married twenty years at this time, and we were encouraged by our children to go have our pictures taken. So we went to Plainfield to have these taken. [SLIDE 12] And of course, I was forty at this time, my wife was thirty-eight. You can see that age [unclear] by forty. But we had twenty good years, hoping to have twenty more, so we've had more than double at this point.

P. Bruno: Do you want to talk about your family as a unit, and just your philosophy a little bit about a close-knit family?

P. Letsinger: Yes, living in the early part of our life, children life, we were reared up in church. But the church didn't meet as often as they do around here. But in 1930, when we first came to Metuchen, we trained—my wife prepared to be [unclear] and I took them to Sunday school. I went around in South Metuchen, picked up other kids. Each Sunday morning, they looked forward to that. At that time, I was superintendent of the school. And we made sure that they got the difficult training that they needed in order to substantiate what we were trying to do, indoctrinate into them the meaning of the Bible and how to be regular—not just church members, but Christians in their heart. So we tried our best to indoctrinate into them by the way we act for them and the way we lived. So I think it rubbed off because our three children, which are men and women now, they have practiced and still practicing church life. Some of them are more active than others. Our son lives in New York in Jamaica, Long Island so he doesn't have time like my two daughters have. But they all are fascinated by the fact that we still holding on—the world has changed, are changing, but they still holding on to the same fundamental principle that we taught them in their early years. Solomon said, I think it was Solomon said, "If you train up a child, the way they should go, when they get old in that department, when we get mixed up sometime in training and teaching." See, teaching, you can teach a child from the books. But if you train them, you have to train them by presets and examples. So what we did, we carried our children to Sunday school. We were right there with them. We came back, we brought them back, and then the church services, et cetera. And that's why I think we got the background that we have now.

P. Bruno: So religion really played an important part in your family unit.

P. Letsinger: Yes, yes. Such an extent that even it changed an environment which you have mixed people, mixed, and they had to play with them and all like that because you never dare to ostracize our children from the other children. But they had enough indoctrinated in them that they didn't throw at them from the way that they were trained. They were still able to surmount and the obstacles that sent down our pathway try to deter us and change us from our thinking [unclear]. So far it would work.

P. Bruno: Good. Let's start talking about your oldest son (Perry A. Letsinger) for a little while.

P. Letsinger: Yes. Well, he went—and we said that we only had three children who lived: the two daughters and one son. So we decided around the breakfast table since those were lean years, we didn't have as much money as we would have liked to have had. So we only could afford to send one of our sons to college. So our daughters were grieved with that. We had already had in our mind, but we wanted them to see it so it wouldn't be feelings of different between them and our son. So they said that "We think he should be sent to college because he would be the bread buyer of the family." So that we done.

So we sent him to high school, we sent him to Rutgers University and he finished his—he got indeed his degree in—B.S. [Bachelor of Science] degree, I'm sorry, in 1949. He also was taking a pre-med course because our aim was to make him a doctor. But then, after he got out, the Korean War came up. So Uncle Sam drafted him and he went in the services and worked as a technician and doctor.

[SLIDE 13] So he stayed in there two years and probably some months. And when he came back, he said rather than to continue in medical school, go to medical school, because he knew our financial status, so he compromised in thinking he would take up embalment, so he went to McAllister Embalming School [in New York]. And why he went there instead of New Jersey, it would take two years and nine months to finish embalming school, but he went to New York and took one year (twelve months). So he was able to finish McAllister Embalming School so he went in the business with the fellow. But he just happened to hook up with the wrong type of person because money was coming in, but it wasn't coming in to the business. So he, rather than to fuss, so he sold his part out. And then he started working for the government. Now he is the senior scientist in New York City, and he works in radiation, which is a really—it's kind of partially a secret-type of work. But he also has a job of signing [unclear] or processing the doctors and nurses and all the medical people who come in the five boroughs of New York City, who seeks to practice medicine or nursing, or dermatology, what have you. All that has to be processed through his office. That's in the five boroughs of New York City, so he's—

P. Bruno: He has a very responsible position?

P. Letsinger: He has about seven to eight men and women working under him. But he seems to be alert, seems to be holding on to it. He held on to this job, in five more years, he will be put twenty-odd years in. And then he expects to retire, he's going in some other area. He's done well, he's doing well. He's been happy, he's the only one of the three that lived as a boy. Our two oldest children died when they were young. I don't know what they would be like, but the three that's living are just happy. We're a close-knit family together, even though the world changes, but we have managed to deliver God, and sitting down talking together, stay committed together because we taught both of them when they were young, "Together we stand and divided we fall." See if we divided, then everybody lose everything. So we don't want to try that way, we rather be—we know what togetherness have found and we know that it will continue to work in our children and children's children.

P. Bruno: How about your daughter Esther?

P. Letsinger: Esther [(Letsinger) Chambers], she's quite aggressive young lady. She's the oldest one. [SLIDE 14] And after she finished high school, she took an extensive course in secretary work. So she worked in Raritan Arsenal, where I worked for a while, and also Camp Kilmer till that closed up. Then she went in International Starch [Company] in Dunellen and she was the first black to go in their office. They weren't hiring blacks there often, but she broke that.

P. Bruno: Was she uncomfortable in her working condition at first?

P. Letsinger: No, she was kind of like her father. I have then integrated in my mind to such an extent that I have mixed, and intermingled, and socialized with many clubs and organizations. I was the only black in there and I didn't feel uncomfortable at all, and she doesn't. Matter of fact, she accepts people as people, and color doesn't enter her mind at all and she's taken much after me, I think, in that. [chuckles]

P. Bruno: And she has one daughter, Pam?

P. Letsinger: Yeah, she has one daughter Pam [(Chambers) Dashield]. [SLIDE 15] And Pam is working now at Merck [pharmaceutical company] in Rahway. And she was working as a person who is in the front—what do you call it?—Hospitality Club because she moved up from there; and she's moved up to the Office of Secretary. She's a secretary, and her boss is taking her right along with him. When he moved up, she moves up. And she's a very friendly type of girl. She gets along and mixes with everyone, black as well as white. She has a dual personality. She can be alone or she can be with thousands, her personality never changes.

P. Bruno: You think she got a little bit of that from you?

P. Letsinger: Oh Lord. [laughs] I don't want to sound egotistic, but I think heredity plays a part in a person's life. So I think if you have a strong enough background and your children, and children's children, will inherit some of the characteristics that you have obtained through the years. I think so. I do think that heredity has a big part in helping to shape a family's life.

P. Bruno: And you have one great-grandson?

P. Letsinger: One great-grand; his name is Jimmy, James Dashield. [SLIDE 16] And he is quite a guy; he is 5:20⁷ in my soul.

P. Bruno: He's a real cutie.

P. Letsinger: Yes, and he got his certificate as a swimmer at the YMCA. And I was much elated that I talk to the board (I happen to be on the Board of Directors of the YMCA), so when we were talking, one thing to another, and I told him that I understand that my great-grandson is taking swimming lessons. And they laughed, and then later, I heard that they gave a little certificate that he passed the test.

P. Bruno: I think they call them water babies, don't they?

P. Letsinger: I believe so. I'm not too familiar with the extra names they give them. But anyway, my granddaughter said that, "You got a gift certificate." [laughs] Yeah, in fact, the only great-grandson they have, or great-grandchild they have. That's the only one. They've got another one on the way, a granddaughter Diane.

P. Bruno: And you told me you're hoping for another grandson.

P. Letsinger: Boy. Grandson, because boys are very scarce in our family. I came from a family of seven and there was not a girl in the family. See, so girls are our theme in our family. We hope she have a girl, but boys, boys—since they're—I shouldn't sound like I'm prejudiced, I guess, but I'm not. But since seven of us boys and no girls, look like I would mind that I would have more girls. But it is not true. Somehow it seemed because I think boys plays a larger role in the miracle, in the world, than girls do. Not saying anything against the recent thing that's being—women's rights or equal rights and all like that because I think man should play a bigger

⁷ James 5:20, "...let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."

part because man was first. Our main man, and other man who made woman. So I think man will not be, assumed will not be, should have a larger of a responsible life toward shaping, helping shaping mankind.

P. Bruno: But do you see changes in women's roles today?

P. Letsinger: Oh yeah, somewhat, because you see with my wife and I, we were in the early part of our life, when the children were small, she stayed home and took care of the children. And I worked; I brought the bacon home. Now the economical channel changed so much, and inflation, everything is so high, looks like it takes two people to be able to make out in order to buy a home. So women are working more now, much more than they were when I was coming up. So I think that will change, maybe substantially.

P. Bruno: And I think with that change of more women working, the family unit in this country is also changing.

P. Letsinger: Right, right. It's more, it's more murkier. And I attribute a lot to negligence of the family. See in the family, the home, when the kid have to stay there and practically rear themselves, they don't get no values. They pick up the bad things, rather than the good things. The wife could be anyone, shooting everything, they figure they have the reality of life, so they pick up those traits. We have more murdering now than ever in the history. And it doesn't seem to subside. It's getting worse and worse all the time. But when I said that, I mean families involved. And I mean this outside of people killing families, families killing families, we have that. And that's a tragedy. That's really pathetic. You hate to see that or hear about it, news media bringing it out there to us. I don't know whether that's good or bad.

P. Bruno: Well, let's go on to a cheerier subject. [chuckles] Let's talk about your youngest daughter, Mildred, for a while.

P. Letsinger: Yeah, Mildred [(Letsinger) Hooper] is our youngest daughter. [SLIDE 17] And she married twenty-five years. So she had a larger family; they had four children. She has four children rather: Marjorie [Hooper], Diane [Hooper], James [Hooper], and Karen [Hooper]. And she worked for a while, and plenty of times we bringing them up, but when part of the time, we were actually living in Metuchen. They lived with us and my wife helped to take care—what's the word?—nurse, no—what you call?—I wouldn't say nurse—but she was babysitting for a while until they got able to live out there on their own, go to school, what have you. So now her oldest daughter Marjorie [SLIDE 18], she got married recently to a very fine fellow and he's a [unclear], both living in Pennsylvania now. And they are moving to Lancaster early, which is closer to all of us. It only takes about two hours from there, here. So she's happily married and her husband is an insurance agent and they are very chummy. They get along very well so we're very pleased with that. Of course, she didn't have any children yet, but she says she going to wait a while till they get themselves together and she's going to produce us, probably, a few, two children. That's Marjorie Gale.

And Diane now is the next oldest one. [SLIDE 19] And she's quite aggressive. She's one of these car queen girls [unclear] in New York. And of course she got

married and had a very handsome fellow. And so she went to school at New York University and she's completed there. Now she going to—she is getting Columbia University [in New York], but she hopes to obtain a degree as a psychiatrist. Because she told her that was long haul, but she's quite energetic, and aggressive, and she's young. Now she's the one that's going to have us another great-grandson or daughter. What she's going to hope to do is to get someone in the home to [unclear] the daughter; and whether she'd be able to do this or not? And she's going to still further her education, she's quite aggressive and hopeful there that she will be able to conquer herself then.

P. Bruno: Well, I think that she will.

P. Letsinger: Now, James Jr., he's in the Delaware State College [Delaware State University]. [SLIDE 20] He's in Delaware State College, and he will finish there rather next year. And he hopes to go into, not settled yet, to maybe insurance and might further go into engineering. But he's not certain just what he'll do yet. But he is making out good so far. He's the only great-grandson that I have, see all the rest are girls. Now Karen, she's in Baltimore University [in Maryland] and she's hopeful they will get out in two years. [SLIDE 21] She was close to James, there wasn't too much difference in their age. Matter of fact, about a little over a year different in their ages, so she was going to graduate the same time that Junior, but his father thought better that they kind of hold her back a year because, see, they both be in college at the same time. So he didn't encourage her to finish the same time, she finished the next year, high school I am talking about now. So she's in this college, she's hopeful they will finish in a couple of years. She's looking forward to getting married soon too.

P. Bruno: Do you think it worked out well that they didn't finish school at the same time?

P. Letsinger: Yes. I think it did because it would have created a hardship on the parents, they're working parents. And this way, they'd give them a breathing spell even though they've gotten government grants. Now Marjorie, the oldest one, she got a grant too. But she paid hers back. But these two have to pay theirs now. See, I think that they will, oh, working out real good.

P. Bruno: Okay. Let's talk about your fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973. Now this was a big party that your children gave you?

P. Letsinger: Our three children got together: Perry, Esther, and Mildred. They got together. They informed us because they couldn't have this, a thing of this size, without ruining a surprise. So informed us what happened, but they didn't let us spend a dime. They got together and they share everything, all the responsibilities and festivities, food and everything they had. And we had about 130 people. And of course, our honored guests were the Mayor Don Wernik and others who we knew, who worked with my wife and I. And we had our family; we had my brother and his wife, who was a minister in Newark [unclear]. We had my oldest daughter and her husband, Junious Chambers, and then my son and his wife, and then my daughter, the youngest daughter Mildred. Her husband for some reason he didn't make it or couldn't make it. And this is my wife with I, pardon me, on the bottom tip there. [SLIDE 22] So we had one of the greatest—and then

we had my wife's—this is my pastor and his wife, are here together, so you know the [unclear] staff that we used to [unclear].

P. Bruno: Yes, it's a very nice picture. What's your pastor's name?

P. Letsinger: Rev. Walter L. Crews. Walter L. Crews. And this is Ella, his wife. Her name is Eleanor Crews. [SLIDE 23]

P. Bruno: And he's the current pastor of the Second Baptist Church?

P. Letsinger: Yeah, he's been with around six years, and he seems to be very successful to get things done. As I said before, these are the Behrenbergs—Vandenberghs, excuse me. The Vandenberg, my wife's friend long time ago. And this is the mayor and his wife, yeah, um-hm. [SLIDE 24] And this is the entire picture; as I said, my family, yes, um-hm.

P. Bruno: And there's a close-up of just you and your wife and your brother and his wife. [SLIDE 25]

P. Letsinger: And his wife, yes.

P. Bruno: Now your brother's name is?

P. Letsinger: Gilbert; Rev. Gilbert Letsinger. Gilbert Letsinger.

P. Bruno: And he is a pastor where?

P. Letsinger: No, he's an Evangelist. He pastored three churches, but as he got older, he figured it was a little bit hard on him. So he does Evangelistic work from one place to the other. Matter of fact, they have them at our church on the fifth Sunday in July. And he goes around because he's known all in the state. He worked for the Office of Fitness and Benefit in Newark and he also worked as a consultant in biblical work. He had to teach and train people who come in, not only the Baptists, but other denominations also. So he was well-versed in the Bible, but he likes it.

P. Bruno: And here's just a few of your grandchildren. [SLIDE 26]

P. Letsinger: Yeah, this is Pam. See, this is Pam.

P. Bruno: In pink.

P. Letsinger: Pam in pink, where as our great-grandson. And this is [James] Junior, he lives in the Delaware. This is Diane, who's in New York City. And this time, she didn't have her husband. She hadn't married at this time. Diane hadn't married at this time, but she got lovely husband now, Bruce. And they're charming, they are loving together, and so we pray that they will stay this way.

P. Bruno: And this is my favorite one of you and your wife cutting the cake. [SLIDE 27]

P. Letsinger: Yes. Yes, this was a fascinating hour for us. And believe it or not, they put fifty years of marriage life together. It didn't seem that long, but she is just as cheerful

now as she was then. We will soon, and all of us will be able to have fifty-five years now.

P. Bruno: Oh, congratulations!

P. Letsinger: Yeah, thank you. The Lord has seen fit to let us live.

Now is that enough of that?

P. Bruno: I think so. I'd like to thank you very much for coming again and sharing some of your life with us. And for helping us out with our Oral History Project. And this will be in the archives in the library for years to come for others to enjoy as well as your family.

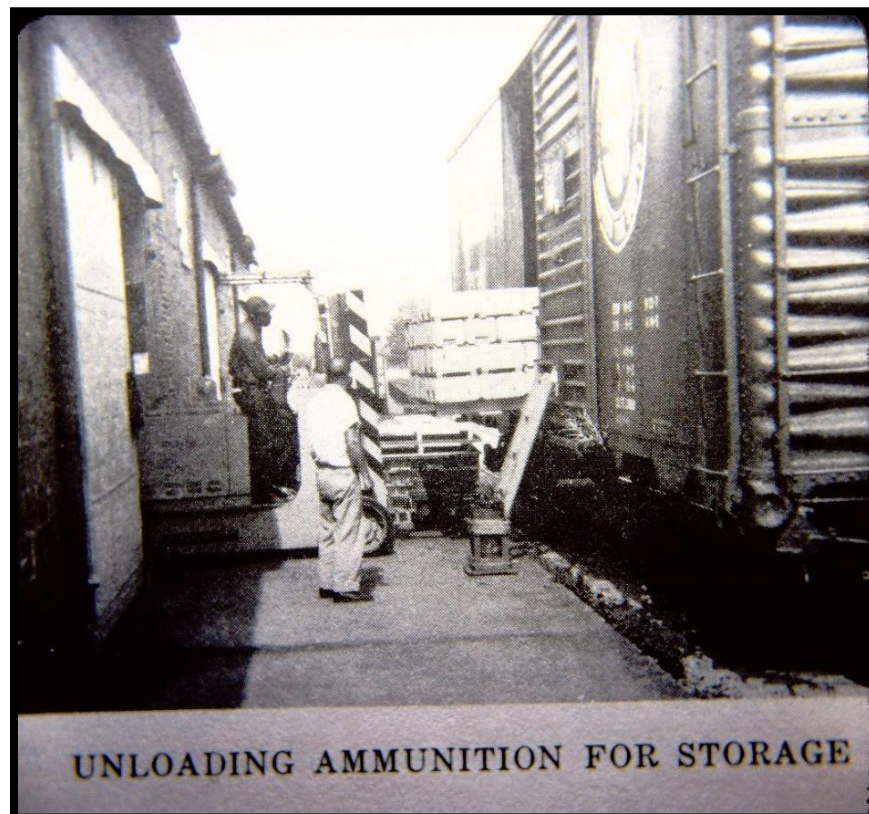
P. Letsinger: Now tell me this, I have a lot of friends throughout the state ... [recording ends]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

INTERVIEW SLIDES



SLIDE 1: Perry Letsinger being interviewed in the Grimstead Room on May 30, 1978.



SLIDE 2: Workers unloading ammunition for storage at the Ammunition Department of the Raritan Arsenal.



SLIDE 3: Group photograph after a May 6, 1956 service in front of the Second Baptist Church at 100 Durham Avenue. The late Rev. Nelson Tate served as pastor.



SLIDE 4: Photograph of the new Second Baptist Church building, which was constructed at 100 Durham Avenue during the 1970s in the same location as the previous 1922 church (see above).



SLIDE 5: Fiftieth Anniversary Convention Dinner of the NAACP at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on July 16, 1959.



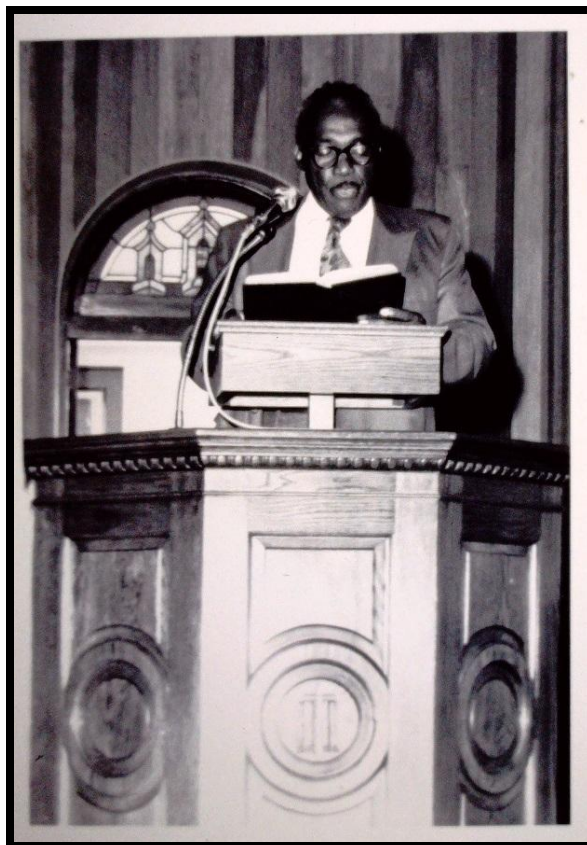
SLIDE 6: Perry Letsinger (circled) with the New Jersey representatives attending the Fiftieth Anniversary Convention Dinner of the NAACP at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on July 16, 1959.



SLIDE 7: Perry Letsinger (right) alongside Holger Holm, Elizabeth Schenck, Ray Herb, and Enos Fouratt at a meeting of the Civil Rights Commission in Metuchen.



SLIDE 8: Memorial service for Dr. Martin Luther King at Borough Hall in 1976. Left to right: Mayor Donald Wernik, Rev. Dominic A. Turtora, Rev. Gilbert Letsinger, Perry Letsinger, and Jennie Thomas.



SLIDE 9: Perry Letsinger conducting devotional services for the Middlesex Central Baptist Association at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in New Brunswick, Summer 1977.



SLIDE 10: Members of the King Hiram Lodge, A.F.A.M., Scottish Rite, Newark Temple at 105 Broad Street. Perry Letsinger is located along the bottom row, second from the right.



SLIDE 11: Perry Letsinger as grand inspector general of the King Hiram Grand Lodge, ca. 1965.



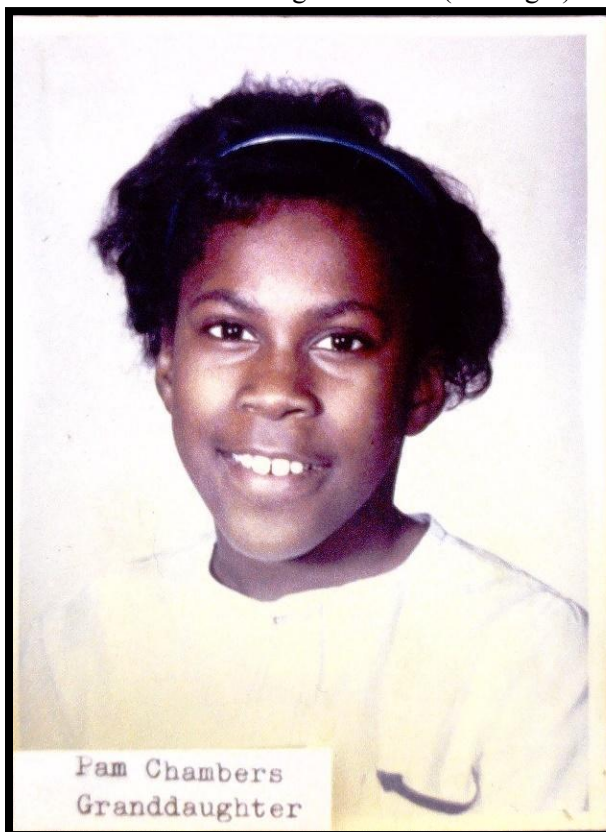
SLIDE 12: Photograph taken of Perry Letsinger and his wife Annie (Baker) Letsinger in Plainfield for their twentieth wedding anniversary.



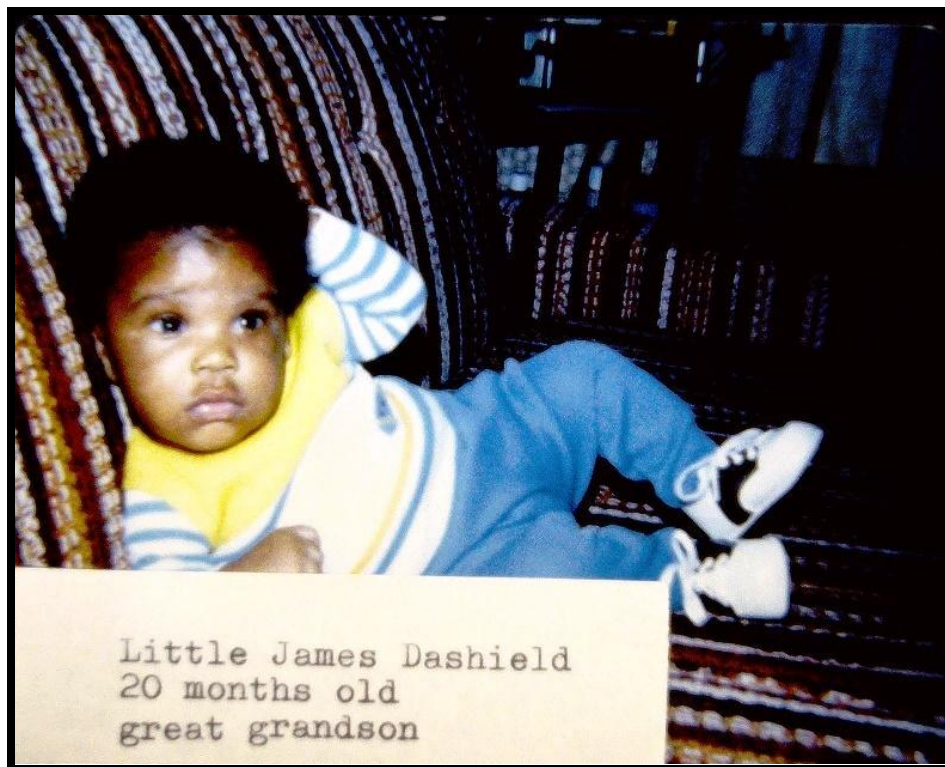
SLIDE 13: 1950 military portrait of son Perry A. Letsinger during the Korean War, where he worked as a technician and doctor.



SLIDE 14: Portrait of eldest daughter Esther (Letsinger) Chambers.



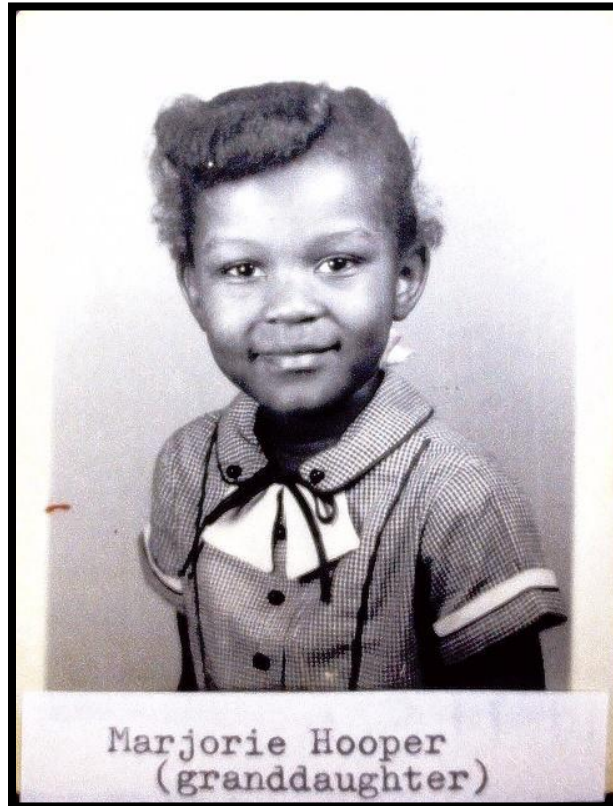
SLIDE 15: Portrait of granddaughter Pam (Chambers) Dashiield, daughter of Esther (Letsinger) Chambers.



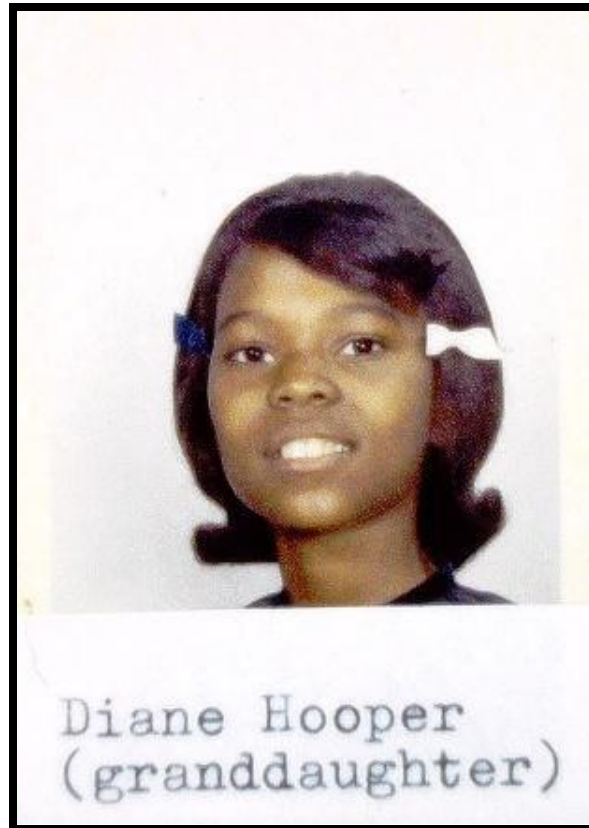
SLIDE 16: Photograph of twenty-month-old great-grandson James Dashield, the son of Pam (Chambers) Dashield.



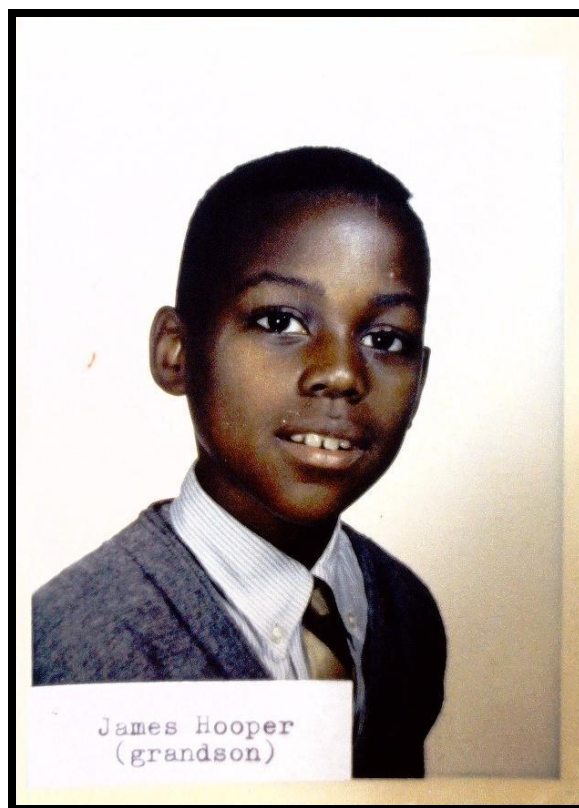
SLIDE 17: Portrait of youngest daughter Mildred (Letsinger) Hooper.



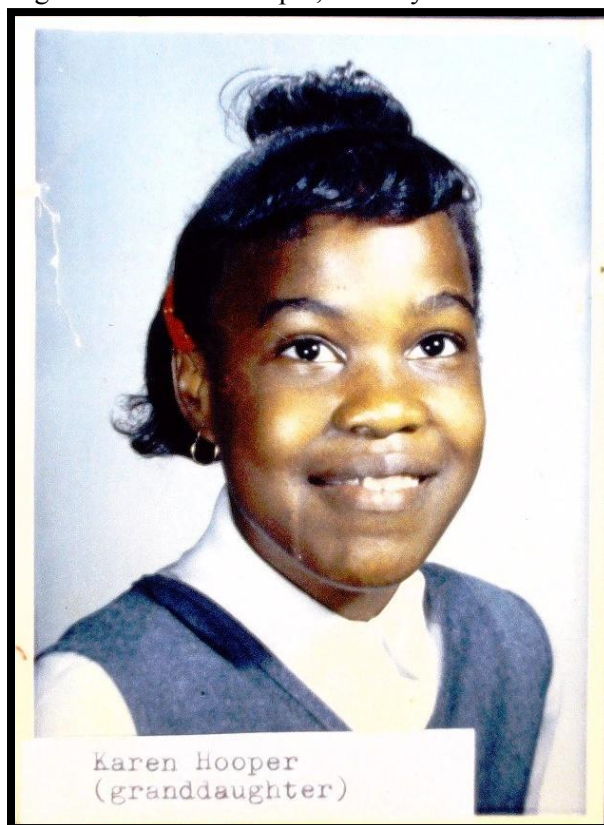
SLIDE 18: Portrait of granddaughter Marjorie Hooper, the eldest daughter of Mildred (Letsinger) Hooper.



SLIDE 19: Portrait of granddaughter Diane Hooper, the second eldest daughter of Mildred (Letsinger) Hooper.



SLIDE 20: Portrait of grandson James Hooper, the only son of Mildred (Letsinger) Hooper.



SLIDE 21: Portrait of granddaughter Karen Hooper, the youngest daughter of Mildred (Letsinger) Hooper.



SLIDE 22: Perry and Annie Letsinger (below left) with his brother and wife (below right) and his children and spouses (above) for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.



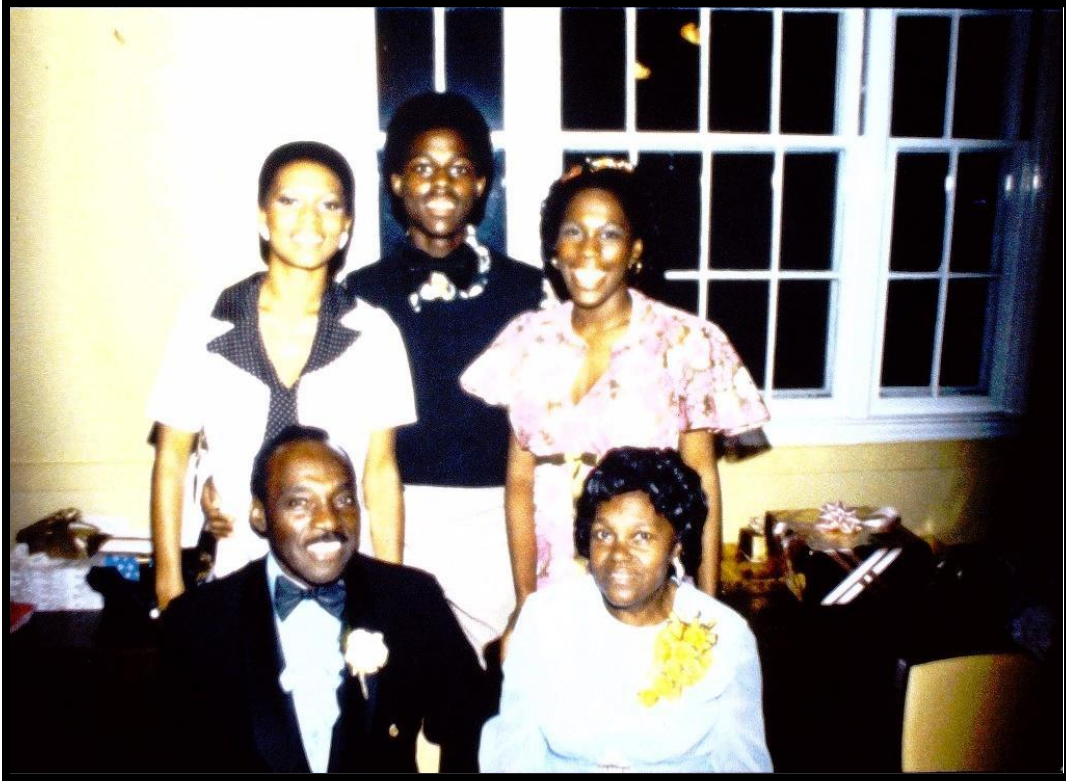
SLIDE 23: Perry and Annie Letsinger with their pastor Walter L. Crews and his wife Eleanor Crews for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.



SLIDE 24: The Vandenberghs (back left) and Werniks (back right) alongside Perry and Annie Letsinger (below) for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.



SLIDE 25: Perry and Annie Letsinger with his brother Rev. Gilbert Letsinger and his wife for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.



SLIDE 26: Perry and Annie Letsinger with their grandchildren Diane Hooper (left above), James Hooper Jr. (middle above), and Pam (Hooper) Dashield (right above) for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.



SLIDE 27: Perry and Annie Letsinger cutting the cake for their fiftieth wedding anniversary at the Presbyterian Social Center in 1973.