

Oral history interview conducted by James Newberry

JAMES NEWBERRY: All right, this is James Newberry. I'm here with CLARENCE SCOTT on Wednesday, February 8, 2012. Mr. Scott, I just want to ask if, you know, if you agree to this interview?

CLARENCE SCOTT: Yes, I agree to this interview.

MR. NEWBERRY: All right, I appreciate it. Now, where were you born?

MR. SCOTT: I was born in the city of Atlanta, on the west side of Atlanta, in a doctor's home. At that time my mother said they didn't go to the hospital. It was in a doctor's home on Hunter Street [now Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive] in Atlanta.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, and what year was that?

MR. SCOTT: 1949

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, but now, you grew up in Decatur, is that correct?

MR. SCOTT: Decatur, right. My mother and father lived on Marshall Street in Decatur, right near the downtown area of Decatur, near the courthouse area. The street's not there now.

MR. NEWBERRY: What's become of that street?

MR. SCOTT: It's--right now, it's just not there. The street is not a street. It's—if you go right down to the Decatur High School football stadium, the street ran right down to the football stadium on the back end of it. There are just buildings there now.

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, I see.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm. Yeah, buildings.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, can you tell me—

MR. SCOTT: Parking lot.

MR. NEWBERRY: --a little bit about your childhood, growing up in Decatur?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, we—I grew up in Decatur, primarily in the black neighborhood. At those times the neighborhoods were pretty much segregated, and so we were in about a two-square-mile area of—right off Trinity Place. And growing up in Decatur we had—there was no Little League—organized Little League events, so—but there were different fields and parks—Ebster Park, of course. My grandmother lived on White Street, and there were several vacant lots on the street that we used for

playgrounds and ballfields. My mother was a—we've always had a business in our family, a beauty salon—Williams Beauty Salon. My grandmother's—my mother's maiden name is Williams, so Williams Beauty Shop is the name of the business that my mother and my aunt and my family owned, was a beauty salon, and we've owned that for sixty years. It's now up on College Avenue.

But growing up in Decatur was wonderful. We had plenty of playgrounds and park spaces and close associations with families. Families knew each other, took care of each other. It was a great environment. We had role models—business owners, teachers, ministers, construction workers, roofers. My uncle had a janitorial business--cleaning service. He also drove a DeKalb County school bus out of--in the Scottdale area. So it was just a great place and time.

MR. NEWBERRY: What was his name?

MR. SCOTT: His name was Guy Seals.

MR. NEWBERRY: Guy Seals

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, at what point did you realize that you were a good athlete?

MR. SCOTT: Pretty much early on. My first strong indication was as a sixth-grader. The sixth grade was the grade where you began to learn how to play instruments. In elementary school that was the first grade that you did that in was the sixth grade in our school system. So I was supposed to get a trumpet. I told my mother that I was going to get involved in the band, and she needed to order a trumpet so that I could learn how to play the trumpet, and she actually ordered it. Between the time that she ordered it and the time that I got it, someone told me that when you get in high school, you can't be in the band and play football because they're performing at the same time.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: So we canceled the trumpet. I was supposed to get it for Christmas as a sixth-grader, which I was probably eleven years old, I think, or so—but, yeah, we told my mother that, once someone told me that you couldn't play football and be in the band, I said, "OK, no band."

MR. NEWBERRY: So you just—you already knew that—

MR. SCOTT: Yeah

MR. NEWBERRY: --that football was what you wanted to do.

MR. SCOTT: Was what I wanted to do. Even—

MR. NEWBERRY: Long-term

MR. SCOTT: --once I got to high school, for sure. But still, as I look back on it, I still could have learned the trumpet; because it wasn't until tenth grade that I actually played football. So sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, ninth grade I could have been learning the trumpet; but it just stuck in my mind that, no, anything that's going to interfere with me playing football, then, it's not going to happen.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: And it didn't.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, could you sort of describe the community of Decatur and maybe DeKalb County, you know, in terms of race relations at that point—the '40s, the '50s, early '60s?

MR. SCOTT: Ah, yes, I can. In the Decatur area, DeKalb County, where—that I grew up in, there was never—I don't ever remember any incidents or any fiery, incendiary events that—where things would get out of control. Even though we lived on separate parts of the town or the county, the minimum contact that we did—blacks and whites—have with each other, it was OK. I'm sure there were some tensions at times, but I don't ever recall having any bad situations. I'm not sure of any cross-burning or anything like that that might have taken place. I'm sure that there probably was, but it's not something that stands out in my mind. We pretty much—we got along real well because there was minimum amounts of contact between blacks and whites. But, you know, going to the grocery stores and the hardware stores and different businesses like that, I can always remember most of them were run by white proprietors; and so it was a customer-owner relationship. But, you know, there's some areas in the metro Atlanta area where there probably was some—much greater tension than I experienced in Decatur in DeKalb County. And there was a few guys that we played basketball together—there's a famous athlete from Decatur named Herb White. Herb and a couple of his buddies would come to the recreation center—Ebster Park was the black recreation center—so sometimes those guys would come up and play; and we got along pretty good. That's it.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, what did your parents do for a living?

MR. SCOTT: My father was a day laborer. He worked for a paper company over in Marietta—over in Atlanta, out Marietta Street, right through downtown Atlanta, out to Marietta Street. He drove over there every day. It was called—the name of the company was S. P. Richards Paper Company, and they—I’m not even sure what they did. But I know that when it was time for us to go to school, my sisters and I, my father would always have—provide us with notebook paper that came from the job where he worked; so that was just one of the kinds of paper that they produced. I’m not sure what other kind they produced, but I do know that we had plenty of notebook paper as children going to school. My mother—my family, as I mentioned earlier, owned a beauty salon.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: Let’s see—my mother, her sister—her oldest sister—they worked together, side-by-side, on White Street in Decatur at Williams Beauty Shop and did it for years. And even when we—when the blacks left Decatur because of the renewal of the city, even when we moved up to Kirkwood, we’ve still got a location that’s on College Avenue right now that was originally right in the heart of Decatur on White Street that’s now on College Avenue. But my mother and sister owned a beauty salon, and my father was a laborer—a truck driver—for S. P. Richards Paper Company.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what were their names?

MR. SCOTT: Clarence Scott—I’m a junior; my father is Clarence Scott, Sr. My mother is Dorothy Scott.

MR. NEWBERRY: Dorothy Williams Scott?

MR. SCOTT: Dorothy Williams Scott, yes.

MR. NEWBERRY: You talked about the “renewal” in Decatur. Could you elaborate on that a little bit?

MR. SCOTT: The Urban Renewal—we had homes—the homes that we lived in—were, you know, old and dilapidated, except for the project area; so most of the homes were—needed to be replaced and revitalized. So when the Urban Renewal programs came along, they just tore those old houses down—which they needed to be torn down, anyway. So at that point we began to leave immediate area of down—of Decatur and move up to—across Atlanta Avenue, across DeKalb Avenue, up into the Columbia Drive area, Candler Road—out Candler Road, up College Avenue, Glenwood—over into the Glenwood area—but we had to relocate. Some people moved down to Scottdale, but most people moved up in the Kirkwood area of Atlanta. Those were some of the

closer neighborhoods to Decatur, so we weren't too far from our original home when Urban Renewal came along and we moved away.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, you went to Trinity High School.

MR. SCOTT: Yes

MR. NEWBERRY: And tell me about playing high school sports there.

MR. SCOTT: Trinity—first of all there was Ebster Park is where we played basketball and football and baseball. Trinity was an all-black high school, and we were a single-A in terms of classification; so we would travel to Marietta and play Lemon Street, to Hamilton High School in Scottdale, Bruce Street in Lithonia, Forest—Fountain High School in Forest Park, Fairmont High School in Griffin. We would travel to other single-A classification black high schools to participate. But it was a great time because we were in a concentrated area; we had a lot of great athletes for such a small area.

MR. NEWBERRY: Did you see this newspaper article? It talks about Trinity playing Hubbard.

MR. SCOTT: Ah, yes

MR. NEWBERRY: It singles out you and Carroll Jefferson and Ronald Ward—

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --as particular—

MR. SCOTT: And Jack Pitts as well. If it didn't say Jack—yeah, I see Jack Pitts's name on here. It says, "The Decatur team was led by their brilliant quarterback, Jack Pitts, who has scored 31 touchdowns and thrown 17 touchdowns." Yeah, we were led by Jack Pitts, no doubt about that. But we just were close-knit guys. We played against each other growing up. Different streets would play against other streets. We had our own little league system, where White Street would play the projects, or the wood houses would play the projects, or White Street would play Elizabeth Street—the Elizabeth Street Rams, as Dick Simms says. So—but we had our own system, but we were close-knit, knew each other most of all our lives. And so then when we came together at Trinity, we had enough good athletes and good football players that we were usually in contention when it came to championships or play-offs or that kind of thing.

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, what—I mean, did you have a position that you played in high school that you would later, you know—I think you were defensive back—

MR. SCOTT: Yes, I played wide receiver primarily in high school; then my secondary position was defensive back. We played both ways. We didn't have—we were a small school, so a lot of guys had to—the best athletes had to go on both sides of the ball—football—and—on offensive and defense. So I was a wide receiver on offense and defensive back on defense. And because we had a great year in '66 when I was a junior and Jack Pitts was a senior, he brought in a lot of college teams that had never come to that area to scout guys—Big Ten, ACC, Big Eight. No SEC schools, because SEC was not integrated yet. But there were teams—Wake Forest, Michigan State, Northwestern, Clemson—there were teams coming in to scout Jack Pitts. And I played defensive back; and so that's how I got a look, because there were so many teams coming in to watch him. So they saw me catching his passes as a receiver, and so I got offered scholarships to go to Kansas State University, which I did the following year, after the state championship game. And after that senior class of state champions I came along the next year and went off to Kansas State and played there for four years.

MR. NEWBERRY: You're saying that the—you were a junior at the time that this senior class was a--were state champions?

MR. SCOTT: Were state champions, right.

MR. NEWBERRY: At Trinity.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. I was a starter as a junior at wide receiver and defensive back on that team.

MR. NEWBERRY: So you were on—you were on, obviously, on that state champion team.

MR. SCOTT: Yes. I was starting on both sides of the ball.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: And so that was a pretty great season for all of them, obviously.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, it was--undefeated and state championship. We had to travel to play the state championship. We had to go all the way to Tifton, Georgia, and play Hubbard High School down near Valdosta area. We went down early, and we stayed at Albany State so we wouldn't have to travel so far the day of the game. We

went down a day early and stayed in some dorms at Albany State University, which is an all-black college—SBU [?—and then traveled to Tifton, Georgia, Hubbard High School, Tifton, the day of the game. I think it was a Saturday, the day of the game.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you were the last segregated class in '67, is that correct?

MR. SCOTT: Yes, right. When we graduated in '67, my class—and, in fact, the next year we didn't do near as well in football without the great leadership of Jack Pitts. But we had a pretty good season. But—yes, but after my class graduated, '67, they—the city of Decatur school system said, "We're going to send all of the kids to Decatur High School" in integration, although they were able to go two years before that, but they weren't—it wasn't mandatory. They wanted to—

MR. NEWBERRY: Was that like the "My Choice" thing?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, it was by choice, right. Because it was a whole different system, and they didn't want to force it on anybody; so some kids stayed at the all-black Trinity High School. A few kids—just a few—went on over early to Decatur High School.

MR. NEWBERRY: What do you think motivated them to do that?

MR. SCOTT: Well, first of all the opportunity came along. They said, "The system—the schools are now integrated, so you can go—you can go to Decatur High if you like, and Trinity High School is still here." So that first year of integration they just didn't want to make—force everybody to go over; so it was by choice, which was great.

MR. NEWBERRY: So you didn't choose to?

MR. SCOTT: I didn't choose to go; I stayed at Trinity. My best friend, Richard Wilson, was the first black athlete to play on Decatur High School's sports scene as a basketball player. His mother was the first African-American mayor of Decatur High School [sic—means mayor of City of Decatur], Ms. Elizabeth Wilson. But he and I were teammates at Trinity in basketball, but we didn't get a chance to play together as juniors or seniors because he went over; and I was supposed to go, but at the last minute I decided to stay at Trinity.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you're—are you glad you made that decision?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, I am. That's my--my only regret is that he and I didn't play together. I thought we could have put together a real special basketball team as well, because we had come up playing together for quite some time. And so I didn't get to play with him as a senior in high school; but, you know, I chose to stay at Trinity, and it worked out fine for me.

MR. NEWBERRY: And now, were there—did you have any other choices on college, or did Kansas State just aggressively recruit you?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, I had Michigan State, and I also could have gone to Clemson and Wake Forest; and I chose Kansas State. And my coach encouraged me to go to a school other than the one—other than Michigan State, because Jack Pitts, our quarterback, had gone to Michigan State the year before. So my coach, in his wisdom, he said if I would go to a different school, then that means from Trinity we would have another door opened so that guys coming out of Trinity would get a look from a different school other than Michigan State.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see.

MR. SCOTT: So I chose to go to Kansas State. So that means that they had two choices now, because we had someone at Michigan State, someone at Kansas State; so we could bring some scouts in to look at guys at Trinity. But little did we know that would be the last year of Trinity, so—but that was OK, it was a good choice. Kansas State was a good choice for me.

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, could you tell me a little bit about your college football career?

MR. SCOTT: College football career was just wonderful. I've always gotten along well with people. I've always been mature, so even going away from Atlanta all the way out to Kansas State was a long way from home. I did not have any problems adjusting to being away from home. I know there were some guys who were there with me as freshmen who returned home in their first year just because they was not used to being away from home, and, you know, for whatever reason they decided to return and quit—leave school and go back home.

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

MR. SCOTT: And they only had, you know, fifty, sixty miles, a hundred miles or so to go back home; and I was six, seven hundred miles from Atlanta, but it worked out OK. I was always starting. Although they recruited me as a wide receiver, they put me in the position of defensive back once I got out to Kansas State. Coach Vince Gibson, who passed away a month ago, God rest his soul, my head coach—he had come from the Tennessee—he had come from the University of Tennessee, so he had some experience with athletes in the South. But my experience at Kansas State was great. At that time freshmen played only against freshmen; there were freshman teams. We freshmen had a full game schedule, and you didn't play with the varsity

until your sophomore year, junior year, or senior year. They don't do that now; you can go in as a freshman and play. But--so we had a full game schedule as freshmen. We did pretty good; and then, as the next year I was starting on the varsity as a sophomore as a defensive back, as opposed to a wide receiver. That was OK—I didn't have a problem with that, because I just wanted to play; and they--I knew I could play, and so they started me as a defensive back, corner back. And for the next three years I was starting as defensive back at Kansas State, enjoyed it very much, had some good teammates—Lynn Dickey, Larry Brown, that played for the Washington Redskins in the Super Bowl, where Miami beat the—Washington, to cap off their undefeated season, the only undefeated season, Super Bowl included, that a team has ever had. Larry Brown was the starting running back for the Washington Redskins; he was one of my teammates at Kansas State. And by the time I reached senior—by the time I became a senior, I was the top-rated defensive back—corner back—I was the top-rated corner back in the country. And I was the first defensive back chosen in the 1971 draft at number fourteen. And that class included—I was an All-American, I was Kansas State's first All-American in thirty-four years. That class included--Jim Plunkett, Joe Theismann, Archie Manning were the first two guys—three guys to be drafted. John Riggins, J. D. Hill, Jack Hamm, Jack Tatum, Jack Youngblood—those—all those guys were first-round draft picks in 1971, along with myself, at number fourteen.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you were All-American in the 1970 season.

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: So what did that entail? Like, what were you able to do? I mean, did you see the President? I don't know what all that involves.

MR. SCOTT: That's a great question, because--what it did involve—it involved—I don't know if you are old enough to remember a comedian named Bob Hope?

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, yeah

MR. SCOTT: OK, Bob Hope used to have the All-American team on his variety show every—during the holidays at Christmastime. So I was invited to appear on *The Bob Hope Show*, which means I had to fly out to California and go to a studio and go through a rehearsal and—for the TV program, *The Bob Hope Variety Show*, and my mother and family back here in Decatur, they were able to see me on television, not just playing football but on a variety show with Bob Hope. Being a stand-up comedian, [MR. SCOTT and MR. NEWBERRY both chuckle] Bob Hope talks about this joke and puts in on you, but it was fun. It was great. Then you also—you get to go to all of the All-

Star games at the end of the year as an All-American, and I got—I played in four All-Star games between my last collegiate game and reporting to the Cleveland Browns the next year in '71. I played in four All-Star games in between—played in the Senior Bowl in Alabama—where was that?—Mobile—the Senior Bowl that was played in Mobile, Alabama. They used to have a North-South All-Star game in Miami; I played in that one. There was an East-West All-Star game that was played in Lubbock, Texas; I played in that one. And then there was an All-Star game where the top college players used to play the pro team that won the NFL championship; they stopped that game a few years back. We played the Baltimore Colts the year after Jim O'Brien kicked a field goal; we played against them in 1971. So you got a chance to play in the All-Star games, and so—and just having your name in the paper on the All-Star teams is what it entails.

MR. NEWBERRY: How did that feel when, you know, after—

MR. SCOTT: It felt wonderful. It was—it's what you dreamed about, because you grow up watching football and hearing names; and, you know, you know all the greats, the all-time greats, you hear their name every Sunday. You know their names, whether it be college or professional. You said, "Man, I sure would like to do that myself."

MR. NEWBERRY: Did you see it as—like a ticket out and to a different way of life, or how did you view football?

MR. SCOTT: I viewed it—not so much as a ticket out; I viewed it as a way to bring great pride to my family and to my community. When I was a young guy, I used to sit around and listen to people talk about sports and talk about the athletes who participated in sports and how much joy they brought to people, how people loved athletes, you know. Their favorite athletes they really have a great kinship with, and so I just said, "Man, if I was ever able to"—as a youngster I could remember saying to myself, "If I was able to become a professional football player, I could—these—this community, they would just love me. They would, you know, they would have—they would be honored," because I could hear them talking about athletes. And so that was the main thing, is that I could bring some pride to my community by becoming a professional athlete; and I did. And the experience was just as good as I thought it would be, if not better, you know, because when I talk to people now—I was inducted into the Decatur Wall of Fame this fall, so I was able to go back to the school at the beginning—when the basketball season first started. At halftime they recognized me as—you know they've got in the gym, the new gym at Decatur [High School] they've

got some pictures called the “Wall of Fame” of—plaques, rather, of some of the great athletes that have come through; so I was inducted into that. And so, you know, great pride to my family. I went back to Cleveland this year. Cleveland—they brought—for the November 13th game they played the St. Louis Rams, they brought back myself and another defensive back to play with me to become—to be honorary captains, meaning, at the beginning of the game against the Rams, we were to go out on the field with the team captains at the coin toss, one of us on each side of the captains—the present—the current captains and just be honored. They had us run out in our street clothes at the beginning of the—when the team came out, and, you know, your fans there that—see, I’ve spent my whole career in Cleveland, so I was there for thirteen years, so it was just good to be back up there.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, now, tell me, before you were selected by the Browns, did you like them before that? You said they were your favorite team.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah

MR. NEWBERRY: So why were—and you mentioned Jim Brown.

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: Could you tell me a little bit about him? I believe he was drafted to the Browns in, like ’56?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, either ’56 or ’57—somewhere in there.

MR. NEWBERRY: Was he like a role model to you?

MR. SCOTT: Well, as a football player, yeah, he was a role model, because I just—he was the best football player probably that’s ever played the game, according to a lot of people; and so, you know, they were my favorite team because of him.

MR. NEWBERRY: I think he was from St. Simons originally, I believe.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. That’s true. I was glad to hear that story. A few years ago I remember seeing bits and pieces of it on TV, and I didn’t know he had a Georgia connection. You know, I knew he went to Syracuse University, because, you know, you always know where guys play college ball. I know he tried to get Ernie Davis out of Syracuse to go to Cleveland also. And he did get Ernie Davis to sign, but he developed some disease and never made it to a camp, because he died before he was able to make it to camp. But Jim was just my hero, and—

MR. NEWBERRY: So was it because of him that you were a huge fan of that team in particular?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And they were pretty—they were a good team. They were the best team in football at that point in time. There's a point back in the day when Otto Graham was playing and some of the other guys. They won what was called the World Championship in '64 before there was a Super Bowl. The Super Bowl came in '68. But in '64 it was called the World Championship game. The Browns played the Colts in Cleveland—Baltimore Colts, before the Colts went to Indianapolis; and they beat them, and so they won a World Championship. But even before that, when Otto Graham was there, they won championships, you know, just right behind each other. So they were really respected in the league at that time. Kind of like New England is today.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: And some of the other teams.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. And you were selected in the first round—

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --number fourteen—

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --pick, is what you said.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: So you were the first defensive back.

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: Can you tell me, were you—let me just—elated or had you sort of expected--did you--or how does that work exactly?

MR. SCOTT: It is—I knew I would be drafted. I didn't know where, I didn't know how soon, I didn't know if I was going to be in the first round. Because I made the all the All-American teams, and that's a good indicator, playing in the All-Star game, being selected as an All-American, that tells you that you're among the top players in the college or pros, whichever one you're in. So that's an indicator right there. But you have no idea exactly when you're going to be drafted. I just had a good feeling that I would be, because of—I was—played in the All-Star games, and that's when the best players go to the All-Star games; they're chosen at the end of the year. So it was just great experience for me, because I'd followed it all my life, dreamed about playing in it. And then when it happens to you—and see, then there was not near as much fanfare then as there is now. There were no combines. Do you know what a combine

is, where the guys come to certain places in the off-season to perform and work out, do drills for scouts who come from different teams?

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

MR. SCOTT: And they go to Indianapolis or they go to some place, and they put them through all these tests and all these drills. See, we didn't have that. Where they saw you then, back in those days, was at the All-Star games. The teams would send some scouts to the All-Star game, and during the practices they would get to watch you practice, they would get to watch you play in that game—in that All-Star game. But, see, now, in the off-season, like between now and the draft, they're going to have some combines, you know, where guys will come together; and scouts will be there from different teams to just work out, 'cause they can put it on TV. We didn't—like the top drafts guys, now they bring them to New York, and they have them up in New York, ESPN. See, there was no ESPN; so we stayed at the school, in the dorm. They—all the teams had your vital information, how to get in touch with you, what schools you were at. So they would call you at your school in your dorm. And that's how I found out that I was drafted by Cleveland. I got a call from them on the draft day saying, "This is Art Modell, owner of the Cleveland Browns. We have selected you as our first-round draft choice." See, now you get to see it—you can sit at home--on your TV or either—and the top guys get to go to New York and, you know, see who's drafted first and come out and have Roger Goodell call your name, and you come out from behind a curtain—*laughs*.

MR. NEWBERRY: So you think it's, like, gotten less—I mean, what do you think about the change?

MR. SCOTT: No, it's just changed with the times. That's--

MR. NEWBERRY: Changed with the times

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, that's just mass communication—

MR. NEWBERRY: Media—

MR. SCOTT: --yeah, media. Yeah, there's just so much more of it now than there was then.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: But those are—yeah, I have no problem with that. I'm just saying that it's different now because most everything is different—technology is different—

MR. NEWBERRY: Yeah

MR. SCOTT: --yeah, you know.

MR. NEWBERRY: What did you do to celebrate when you found out?

MR. SCOTT: Just got with some buddies. I was in school; and so when you're in school, you know, you don't have a lot of resources and a lot of stuff, so just celebrated with some buddies. I had a roommate who was expected to get drafted, and he didn't get drafted on that first day or the second day, so that was kind of a bummer. They used to do it in two days—I think they still do it in—take a couple of days to do it. But my roommate, you know, waiting on him to get drafted, that kind of put a little damper on it. But I was elated, happy, just giddy, you know. It was a great experience.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what was the response from, you know, Decatur and home?

MR. SCOTT: It was great response. I used to—let me see if I got any of the—any of this information you're looking for—*Voice trails off as he looks through papers or memorabilia for particular information.* Let me see here.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. Is it an article? *Reads:* "Decatur High grad inducted into Hall of Fame."

MR. SCOTT: No, that's not—that's into the Sports Hall of Fame—the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. *Sounds of papers being shuffled through, with occasional comments from MR. SCOTT and MR. NEWBERRY.*

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, yeah—that's '99, OK. I just want to read it into the recorder—1999.

MR. SCOTT: Let's see—it might be in here.

MR. NEWBERRY: All right

MR. SCOTT: That is a 2003—there was something recent. This is the--my Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. That's what that is about. Let's see.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: That might be part of the same thing, but if it is, that's OK.

[Inaudible comments]

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, yeah, the induction. Hall of Fame?

MR. SCOTT: You saw that. OK. Yeah, but I just can't locate it now.

MR. NEWBERRY: No, that's fine.

MR. SCOTT: That's OK. We're all right.

MR. NEWBERRY: No problem. So tell me about some of the highlights of your professional career.

MR. SCOTT: First of all, being selected in the first round was—mm-hm--being--
Pauses to look through more papers and apparently passes one to MR. NEWBERRY. OK,
see? See right there?

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh. And this is what they took into consideration for—this
shows you my college record—

MR. NEWBERRY: So who nominates [for induction into the Hall of Fame]?

MR. SCOTT: Sports writers. Sports writers—people who cover the guys.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you were four times captain of the Browns—

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --Pro Bowl '73 and '74—

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm *Sounds of papers being shuffled, off-microphone
comments as articles are being read silently.*

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, who is—who is Ash?

MR. SCOTT: Just somebody that I know. She sent in the information to the
Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. Sent this information to them, and they—and they said
yes. They said yes. Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: And that—that induction was in—was in '99.

MR. SCOTT: In '99, right.

MR. NEWBERRY: Let's see. But, now, you were—you were—so, according to
this—excuse me—four times captain of the Browns and Pro Bowl honors in the '73
season.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: And, I mean, just—you want to talk a little bit about that?

MR. SCOTT: That was just my best season. That's being selected to the Pro
Bowl and coaches, players. At that time they weren't going to Hawaii, you know,
before. They would—it was always played in one of the local stadiums. And so it was
a great honor. It was a good season.

MR. NEWBERRY: It says—one thing I'd researched said you had five
interceptions for seventy-one yards and one touchdown, I believe, in that '73 season.

MR. SCOTT: That '73 season, yeah. Uh-huh

MR. NEWBERRY: So is that the one that stands out among the thirteen?

MR. SCOTT: Probably so, probably so, I would say that one. You know I had—
didn't have—I was shutting down wide receivers, and so it was a good year.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what was the, you know, lifestyle of an NFL player at that point? I mean—*Both MR. NEWBERRY and MR. SCOTT laugh.*

MR. SCOTT: Well, it's wonderful, you know. You're living a dream life. You're doing what you've always wanted to do. You got a job that is a dream come true, so along with it there is some responsibility that comes along with it, which, you know, gets a lot of people—a lot of guys in trouble because you got so much freedom, you got a lot of free time. What you're doing, you don't have to do a lot of studying on it—you have to do a lot of work, a lot of hard work; but a lot of it is instinctive and is things that you've been doing all your life, so now you're just getting paid to do it. So you got to have some discipline about yourself, you got to get to places on time, you got to show up when you're supposed to show up, because they're paying you; and if you don't—if you do it irresponsibly, it can be taken away from you right away. You know, guys get involved in things that the commissioner or the league doesn't like you to do or doesn't represent the league; and so then they suspend you or fine you. But it's a great lifestyle. People look up to you. And so, as I said, there's a responsibility that goes along with it that you've got to keep your nose clean. You've got to not look down on anybody else, because it can be snatched away from you in an instant. You can—you can be hurt, you can get injured and be away from it, you know, and just spend one year in it or less than a year in it—you know, some guys, because of injury. So you just have to be thankful for it, when you have it, while you have it, and do the best that you can with it, and be responsible to it at the same time. It's a blessing, so you've got to—you've just got to treat it in a special way. You can't treat it any kind of way.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what kind of a city was Cleveland? I mean, you obviously lived there for thirteen years.

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh. So Cleveland was a great sports town because they had had a lot of success. Even the Indians early on were successful as a baseball team. The Browns had been successful—one of the most successful football teams in the NFL back in those days, so—and they had great support from their fans. There are not a lot of other exciting things that go on in Cleveland, or it's not a place that people visit to vacation and do things like that. It's a blue-collar town. But they do love their athletes; they give great support to the athletes. And they just endear you there. You know, when I go back now, you know, it's real special to see the way the people react to you, the way they treat you, how they remember a lot of little things that you think—you

might think they've forgotten or it's gone by their mind, and they'll bring it up. You know, it's just amazing how sports does bring people together in a special way. Gives them that sense of pride, you know, like the Super Bowl. You know, those people walking around in New York now, they got their chests stuck out, and they're feeling good. *Laughs*

MR. NEWBERRY: I mean, it's something like a hundred and fifteen million viewers or something? It's just unbelievable.

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh. Yeah, was it a record? In terms of—

MR. NEWBERRY: It was either—

MR. SCOTT: --the numbers?

MR. NEWBERRY: --equal or right below last year. Last year was the highest ever so far.

MR. SCOTT: And who played last year?

MR. NEWBERRY: Gosh. *Laughs*

MR. SCOTT: Let's see—that's OK, it was Green Bay—

MR. NEWBERRY: I have to admit--

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh.

MR. NEWBERRY: --I'm not a huge sports expert.

MR. SCOTT: Let's see, who did Green Bay play? Oh, they played the Steelers. Green Bay beat the Steelers.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. Well, do you have a particular, you know, game that stands out? Do you—an experience in the actual—on the football field?

MR. SCOTT: A particular game? Let's see. Yeah, intercepting Kenny Stabler at the end of the—at the end of the game. *Looks through papers*. Playing against the Oilers and intercepting a pass from Kenny Stabler. That put the Browns back in the play-offs in 1980.

MR. NEWBERRY: 1980.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. And—mm-hm. Yeah, 1980, playing against the Raiders—I'm sorry, the Oilers—

MR. NEWBERRY: Oilers

MR. SCOTT: --intercepting a pass from Kenny Stabler to seal the game. *Continues to look through papers*. And I do have a picture of me with the ball.

MR. NEWBERRY: That wasn't in this group, was it? *Shows MR. SCOTT another group of papers or clippings*. In any of these? There were a couple pictures from—

MR. SCOTT: I don't think it was--

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: --'cause I'm holding the ball—the ball I'm holding up like this.

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, I see.

MR. SCOTT: And I've got a picture of it. I've got pictures of it, several pictures of it at my mother's house. Mm-hm. See, now, I don't think it's in here. I don't see it in any of these.

MR. NEWBERRY: So, what—so that's—that's a particular moment that stands out for you.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: And I mean, when—is that how, like, if you look back on a career like that, is that the sort of thing that you remember, or is it just the camaraderie and the fan—the fans' love for their team, or, you know, what's the biggest part of it that stands out for you?

MR. SCOTT: Let's see, here. Probably the camaraderie with the guys is the number-one thing, being friends with guys that you love and respect because of what they do. That would be number one.

MR. NEWBERRY: Which of your teammates did you form sort of the closest bond with?

MR. SCOTT: Tom Darden, the guy that I—that they told you that went back on November thirteenth that they also had two of us back up for a game?

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: OK, Tom Darden was one of the guys that went back. OK, and we got a chance to visit each other.

MR. NEWBERRY: Where does he live now?

MR. SCOTT: He lives in Iowa. He's an Ohio native, but he went to the University of Michigan in college. And so they were really—you know, they didn't like the fact that he went to Michigan, because Michigan State and Ohio State have this rivalry. But he was a great guy. We had a wonderful relationship. It was good to see him. You're not old enough to remember a guy named Fair Hooker [sic].

MR. NEWBERRY: No, [inaudible].

MR. SCOTT: But Fair Hooker was also a Cleveland teammate of mine. We just had a great relationship, loved the relationship that we had.

MR. NEWBERRY: And who was the head coach primarily?

MR. SCOTT: I had—primarily was Sam Rutigliano. But when I first got there, there was a guy named Nick Skorich, and then there was a guy named Forrest Gregg, who was one of the old Packers—Greenbay Packers' linemen that had become a head coach. And after Forrest there was Sam Rutigliano, who put together the 1980 team.

To himself: Oh, yes, somebody has my book.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you were there through '83?

MR. SCOTT: 1983, yeah. Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: So did you, like, return to Decatur often while you were in the NFL?

MR. SCOTT: When I was in the NFL, I would come home every year. I did not stay in Cleveland year-round. Some guys would--had homes in Cleveland. I always—I had a home here in Atlanta, so I would come back here every off-season.

MR. NEWBERRY: So where were you living while you were playing?

MR. SCOTT: While I was playing, I stayed in—over on Wesley Chapel near Rainbow Drive. There's a subdivision over there called Churchill Downs that runs Wesley Chapel—Rainbow Drive. Rainbow Drive runs from Columbia Drive to Wesley Chapel, and the subdivision was called Churchill Downs, a nice subdivision over near the Southwest DeKalb High School area. I lived right in the district.

MR. NEWBERRY: That's while you were here, while you were in the off-season.

MR. SCOTT: In the off-season, when the season was over.

MR. NEWBERRY: But when you were in Cleveland, did you, like, live in a hotel, I mean--

MR. SCOTT: No, I lived in an apartment or a house—or rented a house for the season.

MR. NEWBERRY: So what—I mean, what made you come back to Decatur every year?

MR. SCOTT: Because I didn't want to stay up in Cleveland in January and February and March.

MR. NEWBERRY: Because of the weather or—

MR. SCOTT: Yeah

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: And so you maintained a very strong connection to Georgia, then.

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm, yeah, because I knew whenever I did get through playing, I was going to be coming right back here.

MR. NEWBERRY: And how would you feel returning to Decatur as, you know, a professional athlete-celebrity, that sort of thing?

MR. SCOTT: I felt good about it. I felt good about it, because that was my main—my motivating source while I was playing was the people in Decatur that I was representing, that I knew was sending up prayers for me, that was wishing me well, that was glad I was in the NFL, because no other black athlete anyway had been in the NFL that had come from Decatur. So when I was there doing it then, you know, the community really adored me; and so they were my motivation. You know, I'd want to represent them and do well because of them. So that inspired me.

MR. NEWBERRY: I know you were a defensive back, so that doesn't necessarily mean you were focused on bulking up, right?

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: So have you had any sort of health-related issues from having played professional football?

MR. SCOTT: Not so much from having played professional football. I was diagnosed in 2007 with colon cancer, went through chemotherapy, radiation treatments, went through surgery to remove the tumor, but football-related? Not so much. Not so much. If you look at my fingers, every finger on this hand—right—is different from every finger on this hand. *MR. SCOTT and MR. NEWBERRY laugh.* And the reason is because I'm right-handed; and being right-handed, you know, my first swing, my first hit is going to be with my right hand. So, see—

MR. NEWBERRY: You mean, like, the end of the fingers?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. Right here, yeah, on both of these—

MR. NEWBERRY: Yeah

MR. SCOTT: --on both of these.

MR. NEWBERRY: It's swollen.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, right, right. That's where—that's a jammed—that's a jammed finger. You see, some guys have their fingers taped up in sports.

MR. NEWBERRY: Yeah, right

MR. SCOTT: Even on their little finger, their little finger on their right hand—see, right in there, at some point, it got jammed up, it got hit. And this one was dislocated.

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, yeah.

MR. SCOTT: But I kept playing. They popped it back in place—

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh!

MR. SCOTT: --I kept playing football. But, see, see, see—look how different that is from this one.

MR. NEWBERRY: So—oooh.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah

MR. NEWBERRY: So, I mean, after—you say you kept playing--

MR. SCOTT: *Laughing* Yeah, I kept playing.

MR. NEWBERRY: But, I mean, what did they do afterward?

MR. SCOTT: It was OK because it popped back in place.

MR. NEWBERRY: See, why is it so—so big?

MR. SCOTT: It just got dislocated at that instant when I fell on it and rolled over on it and came up, and it was looking funny, and it pulled--it popped back in. And it just has never—it has never been the same.

MR. NEWBERRY: *Laughing* I see that.

MR. SCOTT: And it has never looked like that since then. But on my—but my right finger—and I showed this to my mother not too long ago, too—but every finger on this right hand, because that's the one you're hitting with, you're slapping with, by me being right-handed—and those linemen! You should see some of those linemen, because the defensive linemen, they do a lot of engaging and trying to share blocks; and you should see some of their fingers.

MR. NEWBERRY: I know. I think about them as being the ones that really—like they suffer for it later, in a way.

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh, yeah.

MR. NEWBERRY: The physical part of—

MR. SCOTT: Right—

MR. NEWBERRY: --the sport.

MR. SCOTT: --because there is a toll that the physical part of it takes on your body. But I've been blessed, though. And I never had—other than this—I've never had anything. I had a dislocation. I had a broken clavicle--

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

MR. SCOTT: --that was in ninth grade. This was when I was playing in ninth grade and didn't even have a pad, just playing sandlot--

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

MR. SCOTT: --on a field. But other than that I hadn't had any other injuries while I was playing football. No surgeries, no knee or ankle or anything like that.

MR. NEWBERRY: So, now, when you retired at—I guess it was about thirty-four? You were thirty-four?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, exactly. Right. I was thirty-four.

MR. NEWBERRY: So you—I assume you moved back—I mean, you moved here permanently to your house?

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm. Came back, right.

MR. NEWBERRY: Did you have a career after that?

MR. SCOTT: Career?

MR. NEWBERRY: I mean, another career?

MR. SCOTT: Another career? The first thing we did was open a travel agency. I had a travel agency over on Memorial Drive. Do you know where the Publix grocery store is? Or—what's the name of this street? On Memorial Drive there's a Publix grocery store--

MR. NEWBERRY: Yeah

MR. SCOTT: --where there's a post office in the same little plaza, near where the IHOP is.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: The IHOP is in the same plaza as the Kroger [Publix?]. I had a travel agency in that plaza right there.

MR. NEWBERRY: What was it called?

MR. SCOTT: It was Clarence Scott Travel.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: Travel Agency.

MR. NEWBERRY: And how long did you do that?

MR. SCOTT: I did it for four years. We had met some—a travel agent in Cleveland, my wife and I—my first wife. My wife now is my second wife. But we were—we had some good friends who had a travel agency, and we liked the idea of travel. She loved travel. And so we decided to open a travel agency. And they—we gave them a franchise fee to come down and help us put it together and get it going. So that was the first thing I did.

And then after me and my wife separated about after four years and went in separate directions, then I started working for a vending-machine company. I was managing a vending-machine company. A Jewish guy had Take Five Vending. I did that for ten years.

MR. NEWBERRY: So was it just something that you wanted to be working, or did you—I mean, what did you—why did you decide to—

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. I needed to be working. I needed to be working.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: So could you tell me about your family today?

MR. SCOTT: My family today? I'm a proud grandfather of four—

MR. NEWBERRY: And what's your wife's name?

MR. SCOTT: Eleanor. My wife is named Eleanor, Eleanor Scott. This is my second wife. We've both been married once before, now. And it's her daughter who—who lives with us, who's an airline—a flight attendant with Omni Air International, who's at home now from flying because of the intermission that she's on. But anyway, I have three children myself; and she has one daughter by a previous marriage. I have three children—two daughters, one son--by a previous marriage. My mother's still living. My two sisters are still living. I didn't have a brother; it was just me and two sisters. And I've got, I said, four grandchildren. There are some pictures of them over there. Those little children right there, those are my four grandkids.

MR. NEWBERRY: Do they live here?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, yeah. Everybody lives here in the metro area, in the metro Atlanta area.

MR. NEWBERRY: So how are you involved in the community, like DeKalb County, today?

MR. SCOTT: I'm an Optimist Club member. I'm getting ready to put on a golf tournament over at Sugar Creek Golf Course. Have you ever heard of Sugar Creek Golf Course?

MR. NEWBERRY: I [inaudible]

MR. SCOTT: It's over on Bouldercrest. And as an Optimist Club member, we do things for the—for youth. We identify things that we can do to assist the youth in—we put on an oratorical contest, we put on an essay contest, on Thanksgiving we give out turkey dinners—turkey and all the dressings that go with it, and as I say, we do an

essay contest and an oratorical contest. We do a golf—we do a junior golf tournament. Optimist [Club] is an international organization, and so we have districts--Georgia District, and then break it down to different clubs in Georgia. So I stay busy with my Optimist Club work, and I'll go to some different schools and let them know if they've got any golfers who want to participate in a junior golf tournament that'll have an international championship in Florida, if they want to win at a local club, then they can go to a district club, complete with kids from all over Georgia, and then the winners go on to Florida to an international golf tournament. So that keeps me busy.

MR. NEWBERRY: And I spoke to Eddie Fowlkes [former teacher and athletic coach at Decatur High School]—

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh

MR. NEWBERRY: And he works on this, you know, Decatur High School sports exhibit. And what involvement have you had on that?

MR. SCOTT: I'm not sure what the sports exhibit is. I don't know if I've had a—none that I'm aware of.

MR. NEWBERRY: But you had mentioned going to Decatur High School, the new gym.

MR. SCOTT: Right.

MR. NEWBERRY: Talk about those—the walls there.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, it's called the Wall of Fame. They just honor—each year they honor former athletes from Decatur who have, you know, made contributions or reached certain levels that they feel like they want to honor; and they get a plaque at a ceremony. And they—so that they--eventually they're going to have it all around the new gym; but they've only got one wall now, because it's only been going on since about two or three years.

MR. NEWBERRY: Are there any other athletes from DeKalb County that went on to play in professional sports that you're aware of?

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, there's quite a few from DeKalb County. From Decatur itself, you know—like--let's see—well, Hines [Ward]. Hines is not from DeKalb—Hines Ward. You know Hines?

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, yeah.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, but he played at Southwest—no, no Hines played at Forest Park. He played his high school ball at Forest Park [in Clayton County]. Yeah, but there have been plenty others. There's a guy, David—he's got a son playing right now

for Seattle. I guess he's still with Seattle. I can't think of his name. But yeah, man, there have been—*remembering* Danny Buggs.

MR. NEWBERRY, *apparently referring to a photograph or other artifact*: And describe what was happening here?

MR. SCOTT: That's—this is a college here. This is at my college.

MR. NEWBERRY: Kansas State?

MR. SCOTT: This is at Kansas State. This is halftime of a basketball game. They were playing Texas Tech back in 2003, when Bobby Knight was still coaching basketball at Texas Tech.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: So they were—so myself and Lon Kruger—Lon Kruger coached the Hawks for a year. But we were, along with about three or four other people, were being inducted into the Kansas State University Sports Hall of Fame.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, so you're in the Georgia State Hall of Fame—

MR. SCOTT: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --and the Kansas State University Hall of Fame—

MR. SCOTT: Right. And that's at Kansas State right there.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: So we went out at halftime of a basketball game, and they gave us those plaques. That's the one on the wall up there that I'm holding in this picture, is that one up there.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

MR. SCOTT: Uh-huh

MR. NEWBERRY: So do you still travel a lot? Or do—

MR. SCOTT: Not a lot. I don't travel a lot. I'm in an energy business where we have to travel. In--we're going to—first of March we're going to Dallas, to the corporate headquarters to an annual convention.

MR. NEWBERRY: This is with what business?

MR. SCOTT: It's called Ignite—I-G-N-I-T-E. It is an energy business.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

MR. SCOTT: It's—we--

MR. NEWBERRY: So you're still working.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah. Yeah, but on my own schedule, though.

MR. NEWBERRY: So did you just—do you prefer to be working now? Do you enjoy--

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, I prefer to be working. I prefer to be doing something with my time—something productive with my time. And this is a great opportunity for me to make some money and to leave some legacy money to my family and my children, what I'm doing now. And so I'm enjoying it. Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, well, I appreciate it.

MR. SCOTT: I appreciate you, brother.

MR. NEWBERRY: And I'll—we'll stop here.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by CS