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### Wayne Sayer

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Wayne Sawyer

**Interviewer:**

Unknown

**Interview Date:**

February 24, 2023

**Interview Location:**

San Bernardino, CA

**Length:**

00:02:45

**Interview Summary completed by:**

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

**Description:**

In this interview, Wayne Sayer is the guest. Sayer speaks of his time in high school where, as a freshman, he saw a riot about to break out between the Mexican and White students. Sayer also explains that previous to that event, there was a lot of racial tension that was occurring in the school, such as fights. Sayer then answers the interviewer's questions regarding school activism, saying that he and other students wanted to confront a problem at that moment. For the question of whether he had any advisor or teacher that he remembered fondly, Sayer talked about his wrestling coach. The interview ends with Sayer saying he has many memories of high school but will take too long to discuss them.

**Subject Topic:**

- High School
- Racism
- Riot
- Memories
- School Authority

**Spatial Coverage:**

| Name of Site (if relevant)                  | General Location/Address                       |
|---|--|
| California State University, San Bernardino | 5500 University Pkwy, San Bernardino, CA 92407 |
| San Gorgonio High School                    | 2299 Pacific St, San Bernardino, CA 92404      |

**Temporal Coverage:**

1976 - 2023

**Key Events:**

- Sayer in freshman year sees a riot between Mexican and White students.
- Physical fights that occurred on campus.
- Verbal fights that occurred on campus.
- Advisors/Teachers that Sayer remembered fondly.

**Key Organizations:**

- Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT)

**Interview Index:**

| Media Format  | Time (hh:mm:ss)     | Topic Discussed  |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Digital Video | 00:00:14 - 00:00:59 | Sayer explains the riot that took place between the Mexican and White Students. The SWAT had to be called to put a stop to it. |
| Digital Video | 00:01:00 - 00:02:12 | The race relations that had been occurring in San Geronio at that time.  |
| Digital Video | 00:02:13 - 00:02:29 | Sayer's memory of the wrestling coach, Jim Hart.   |

**Related Materials**

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Q: If you could say your first and last name?

WAYNE SAYER: Wayne Sayer, class of '79, (inaudible) High School.

Q: Beautiful. And if you could tell me about your memory of 1976?

WAYNE SAYER: First year in high school, we found out there was going to be a riot between the Mexican and the white at the back of [Saint Jean?], so all of us Black was lining up on the hill of -- back of Saint Jean. And all the Mexican was on the right side, and all the white was on the left side. And the principal ran down the hill next to -- the same time, the principal ran down the hill to -- trying to stop it from happening, the police were coming in from the back. So I think there were four or five SWAT cars standing there, and a helicopter was circling around the school after our principal was telling us to go to class. So as we were approaching to -- the class, they were doing their diameter like they were ready to go at it, and the principal kept us apart. And so that's when they stopped the riot right there.

Q: [00:01:00] Beautiful. Why were they...?

WAYNE SAYER: We don't know. I think it was racist things because my last year in high school, we had two white people that were going around yelling, "Ku Klux Klan!" And as they was doing that by the offices in the middle of Saint Jean, these young Black kids jumped them and beat them up and stuff. They was beating them -- you could feel the vibration on the ground when they was beating them up. And then the principal came and got one Black and one white, and took them to the office. And the other guy was thinking about doing it, but they were letting him know they were going to get him. So they waited until the principal took the other guy, and then they jumped him and beat him up.

Q: Okay. So there was a lot of --

WAYNE SAYER: A lot of things.

Q: Undercurrent of tension, okay. Did the BSU play a part in this at all, or...?

WAYNE SAYER: I don't remember. I don't know.

Q: You guys didn't do anything on campus to protest, or...?

WAYNE SAYER: Actually, I don't think we did any kind of protest. We -- [00:02:00]  
when we heard something like that going on, we wanted to confront it, and so we -- but  
most of the time, it ended up being with our fists, not with verbal. And so if you got tired of  
it --

Q: Did you guys have an advisor, a teacher that you remember really well?

WAYNE SAYER: The only teacher I remember very well is my wrestling coach, Jim  
[Hart?], and he was our sex ed teacher. And he was also our wrestling coach, and he was  
pretty good.

Q: Okay, beautiful. Are there any other memories that you would like to share as  
you're thinking back on your high school time at Saint Jean?

WAYNE SAYER: I have a lot of memories, but it's going to take a long time to talk  
about.

Q: (laughter) Okay. Well, we'll stop right here. Thank you so much.

WAYNE SAYER: All right, thank you.

**End of Interview:**

[00:02:45]