

Jerry Collins
Current and Historical Holloway Terrace Resident
Route 9 Oral History Project

Interviewed by: Michael Emmons, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware

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Abstract

Jerry Collins is a current and historical resident of Holloway Terrace, a community along the Route 9/New Castle Avenue corridor. Having previously lived in the City of Wilmington, Collins and his wife moved into their current home in 1966, where they lived happily across the street from his wife's parents for many years. Having lived there for nearly 67 years, Collins offers some perspective on the changing demographics, visual layout, and social and community attitudes in Holloway Terrace. To date, Collins remains an active member of the Holloway Terrace Civic Association, providing insight into the industrial developments in the Port of Wilmington and its impact on the local communities.

In this interview, Jerry Collins recalls life in Holloway Terrace from the 1960s to the present day. He remarks on the transition from owner-occupied homes to the increased presence of rental properties in the neighborhood, the pressures of development, the upkeep and maintenance of the subdivision, and the growing concerns regarding increased truck traffic and industrial development along Route 9.

Jerry Collins describes the general demographic of Holloway Terrace as a "generational thing," wherein predominantly white families raised their children who, later in life, would move back in and/or acquire their family homes. The Collins family purchased their home from its former owners, the Leonis, as a small, single-story home. Over the years, Collins has nearly "doubled" the home's square footage, as have many of his neighbors through additions and expansions. Collins describes his and his wife's feelings of pride in owning and tending to their home, especially their flower gardens surrounding the property. According to Collins, the neighborhood has become increasingly desirable for new development and, consequently, has seen a major increase in house size and price over the years. Collins discusses how very few homes in the neighborhood reflect their original, ranch-type construction.

Although there was no formal community center, Collins recalls that the residents of Holloway Terrace largely stayed in contact through word-of-mouth communication at the local corner stores and the community churches, First Baptist and Holy Spirit. Children in the neighborhood were free to play outside safely, and many participated in Little League baseball as Collins remembers. Largely owner-occupied, change in Holloway Terrace had been minimal up until the arrival of prospective developers. In fact, one of the largest changes to the neighborhood that Collins recalled was the building of a park on 11th Street and East Avenue in Holloway Terrace sometime in the mid 1990s. Presently, the neighborhood is a more diverse community of owners and renters from varied socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds.

Describing recreational opportunities for children and adults in Holloway Terrace, Collins indicates that there “wasn’t very much to do.” He recalls that many residents had access to transportation, decentralizing the need for entertainment in Holloway Terrace. Many families enjoyed the luxury of owning at least one car, and public transportation was readily accessible. Neighborhood children attended one of several local schools, including the McCullough School, Saint Peter’s, Saint Mary’s, and Rose Hill School, expanding local social circles beyond the immediate residents. Collins describes that, as with many places, his feelings towards Holloway Terrace have fluctuated over time. Despite a home break-in in the mid 1990s, battles for the neighborhood’s upkeep, and the need to work with the county to improve local safety, Collins believes that the neighborhood is in a period of general improvement.

In the final 10 minutes of the interview, Collins discusses environmental concerns from the residents of Holloway Terrace. He cites a “slight leak” from the Borden Chemical Manufacturing Company, illegal dumping of waste off of Interstate-495, the recycling plant in the Port of Wilmington, and truck traffic through residential areas as the biggest threats to public health for communities along the Route 9 corridor.