—Holland

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"Basically," he said, "I feel that the majority of the Swedes are friendly and warm and willing to listen to my side of the story . . ."

The statement was incredible, if you take into account the fact that Swedes were demonstrating daily, throwing eggs and obscenities to the point of forcing his wife and four children out of the country.

He regarded the demonstrations as an attack against the U.S. government and not against him personally. Somehow, for him, that thought made it all easier to beat . . . and to win.

"Peaceful demonstrations . . . are a part of American society," he said at that time, and the unpeaceful ones . . . "a part of life."

What concerned Holland most, was that he maintain his cool and do for the government what he had been sent to do: Improve U.S.-Swedish relations.

It was as much a commission as had been the rebuilding of Delaware State College years before. And, just as he had been unable to turn his back on that challenge, so was he unable to turn his back on his ambassadorship.

The spirit of indomitability was not unnoticed. In 1972 he was named the first black director of the Board of the New York Stock Exchange, a post requiring the type of forthrightness he had shown up to that time.

He was to look after the interests of public investors, one of ten members on the 21-person committee.

At the time of his appointment, New York newspapers heralded him as a man who had "triumphed over racial and political

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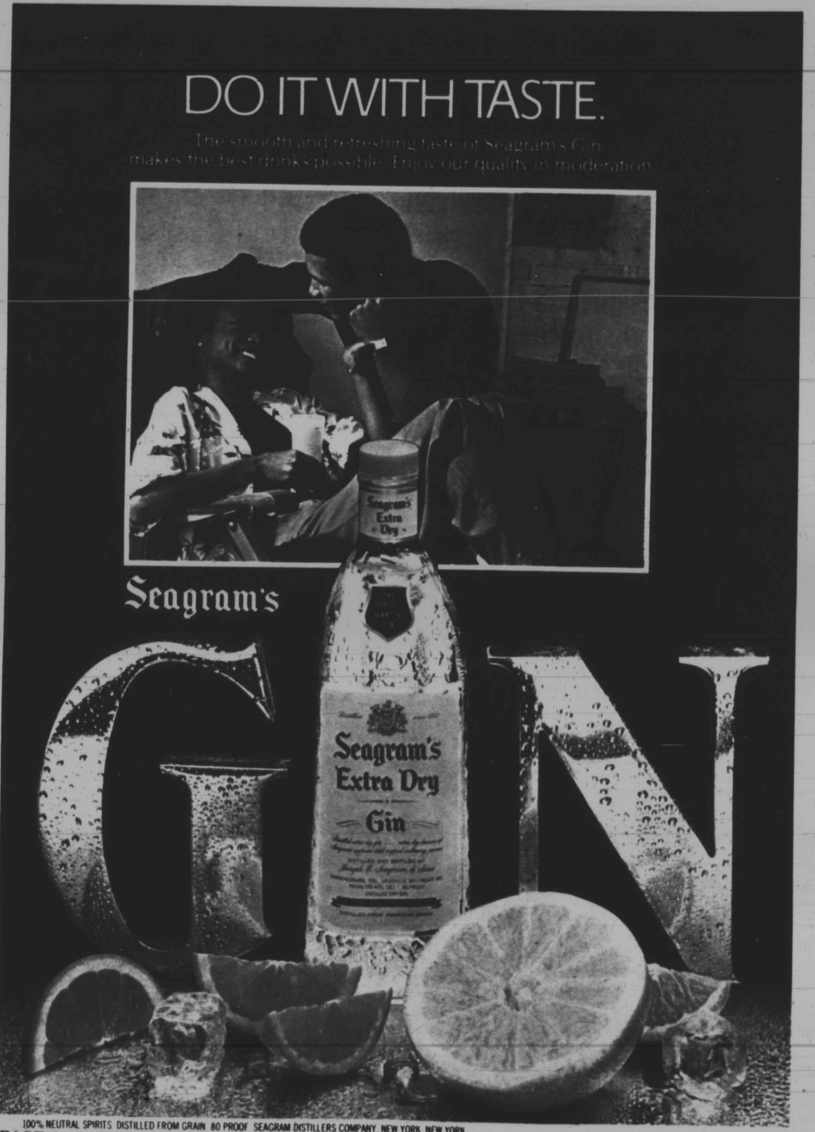

Football All American at Cornell University 1937 and 1938.

THE REDDINGS:

Making It On Their Own

Of course having an illustrious father didn't hurt their chances of entering the entertainment business — but when it came to success, they did it on talent alone.

En route to the nation's capital to talk with the Reddings, recording artists, I wondered what they'd be like. The day was blustery, and the sky was filled with swollen gray clouds, that looked ready to overflow any minute.

Changing channels over the course of an hour's drive, we heard the Reddings' new single, "Remote Control," on four different radio stations.

As the saying goes in the music industry, they have a "bullet," or in other words, a record that's headed straight up the charts.

Their age was something to reflect on. The interview had been scheduled for 3:00 p.m., so that Otis III (affectionately called junior by his family) would have time to get there from school.

Believe In A Dream Studios (BID), located in downtown D.C., would be our meeting place. The newly-founded studio is the brainchild of black businessman, Russell Timmons.

At the studio, we were greeted by an anxious looking, lanky, young man, "Hi, I'm Otis." He looked older than he did on the album cover, perhaps because he was wearing glasses.

We were soon joined by 20-year-old Dexter, eldest son of Otis Redding and 23-year-old Mark, his nephew.

They gave us a quick, shy smile and we were ready to begin the interview. I learned that Sagittarian Otis is the spokesman for the group. He was quite articulate and thoughtful when answering my questions.

Do you think you'd be in the music industry if it were not for your father? Do you think you've been given extra consideration because of your heritage?

"No! We're being given a chance because we have talent. If we didn't have talent, they'd tell us to go back in the woods. We went through every step in order to have an album produced.

"We sent out demonstration tapes like anybody else and we got no special attention, no breaks. We've been in the business for four years and we've paid our dues. We're still paying our dues!"

Do you ever feel you'll have problems living up to your father's image? Is being a member of the Redding family a help or a hindrance?

Otis replied, "It has worked both ways for us. At times the name helps. People stop and say those are Otis Redding's sons. Sometimes people expect a little bit more from us because of this."

You're self taught musicians. Do you feel you'd play differently if you had lessons? Do you think it's important for younger musicians to receive formal training?

"I'm sure we'd have a different sound. But music just comes to us naturally. I'm the only one who can read music so far. I'm taking music theory this year at my school, St. John's College.

"It's a Catholic middle school, goes from the 7th to 12th grade. It's definitely more advantageous. If you're just starting out and need to work, you can be a studio musician if you can read music. You have to be able to play a song without having seen or heard it before. They will put a song in front of you and say — Look at this and play it."

"We put a song together from rhythm tracks," added Dexter. "We may have an idea in our head and we go into the studio and collaborate. It may sound great at home and when we get in the studio it may sound different, so we just change it until we feel it's right," Mark spoke up.

Otis clarified it further. "We usually make our tapes at home in our room, then we have to bring it in and present it to the studio for their approval. We've been lucky so far, because they have accepted everything we brought in." The group writes a lot of their own music and Dexter explained,

"The things we write can come from a mood we're in at the time, or something we remember that happened to us or a thought that comes to us." "When we make a recording, we think — that would sound good in someone's home or on the radio," said Otis.

"Yeah, Dexter and I go to discos to see what they like, what rhythms people like to hear and dance to. We're not going out to steal anyone's sound, but to get a feeling for the people," Mark concluded.

The Redding relax — and smile prettily for the camera. The three are Dexter, Mark and Otis.

Jazz is the Reddings first love. Why would a group who started out in jazz switch to popular music or disco? "It's not just for the money," Otis insists.

"We want to play something people will like to listen to. Unfortunately not that many people are into jazz. Americans are into their music. Our whole way of life is centered around music and the people who play it. Take John Lennon's death — I thought the Beatles were great. I felt like a good friend of mine had died.

"People can't tell by looking at me, but it affected me greatly. It reminds me of my father's death and the way people react even until this day. You don't realize how great a person is until they're dead and gone."

Describe your relationship with your mother? How does she feel about you having a career in music?

"Our mother is our manager. She has a nightclub in Macon, Georgia and lives there with our two sisters, Carla, 18 and Demetria, 7. However she comes to D.C. every week to take care of things for us," replied Otis.

By this time Dexter had become a little more comfortable talking with us.

He said, "Our mother never discouraged us. She always let us do what we wanted to do as far as our careers were concerned. She stays on us to make sure we go in the right direction.

"We're getting ready to go on our first promotional tour. We'll be going to Atlanta, Miami, Los Angeles and Chicago and our mother will be chaperoning every step of the way." All three boys laugh.

Do you have girlfriends? This question caused a lot of consideration. The answer — Mark and Dexter have a girlfriend, Otis doesn't. We continued talking on other subjects.

A few minutes later Dexter said, "Wait a minute. I want to change what I said about having a girlfriend. I never had a girlfriend that I could trust. I really don't trust anyone but my family. I've never had a friend."

I had to interrupt and point out how unlikely this was. Dexter replied, "Well, I may have had

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