

Lancaster County Historical Society
African-American Veterans Oral History Project

Interviewer: Carole LeFever

Interviewee: Hazel Jackson

Location: home of Hazel Jackson

Subject:

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Lefever: March 15th, 2007. I'm Carole LeFever and I'm at the home of Ms. Hazel Jackson, a long-time friend, and this is something I've wanted to do for a long time myself—have this conversation about your history, coming to Lancaster, starting maybe even where you came from, what drew you here? How did you end up in our midst? I'm so glad to have had it happen.

Jackson: It happened through my getting engaged to, um, my late husband Brady Jackson, uh I met him in South Carolina however and um, he was living here at this, that time, in fact I think he had lived here most of his life since about age nine. And, but he came to South Carolina to visit family members, and that's how we met, and uh, after several years haha we decided on the marriage thing, and I moved here in 1952.

L: A long courtship then.

J: Well actually it, um, lasted um, off and on I would say haha it was a long-term relationship—

L: I hear ya.

J: --Because he lived here and I was in South Carolina at the time. I was still in undergraduate school.

L: And South Carolina, what part would that be?

J: Um, my home is Seneca South Carolina, uh the school I was attending was Orange in Orangeburg, South Carolina it was the state college that I attended.

L: Alright and what were you studying while you were there?

J: I was studying, uh, I was studying to be an English major in secondary English. My, my hope was to teach English—my favorite subject. And um, the minor was history, and

um, that was... those were my best courses. Mathematics was not particularly my favorite, but um...

L: I hear that!

J: Haha.

L: Well tell me what drew you into English, was it uh, was it literature, was it grammar, was it a combination—what drew you in personally to that category and then by extension into history as well?

J: You know, I-I think it might have started off um, as grammar because I, I um, I liked grammar. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed the time we did sentence diagramming—

L: My favorite thing. I hate to say it's a lost art, but I used to love it! Haha

J: Yes, and I always used to enjoy reading, and um I always enjoyed reciting, and so poetry was kind of a favorite. And since I did well in English, that was always my best subject area. And, um, and I was encouraged by, by my high school English teacher because it was through that I actually um, had the, uh, was motivated to go on to college, I, I had no hopes of going on to college. It was little, um, opportunity for me at that time, my family certainly was unable to send me and, uh but and I had not even thought of going on to college until one day that she said she saw me going on and making something of my life. And, um she was actually making a comparison between me and one of the other students who was, hahaha, uh, behaving badly, and and, she pointed me out by saying "I see her going on to college and making something of her life and immediately that uh, spurred a desire in me to go on to school and um, and we were able to work things out so that I could go. Just go on to college, um, to the state college, and of course I chose as my major the subject that was most interesting to me and that was English.

L: Now what was her name and what was the name of that High School?

J: Um. At that time our high schools were named for the county we were in, so it was Okoney, Okoney County Training School if you will. Sounds like some sort of institution, but that was the name of the high school we attended. It was a segregated high school. And um the teacher's name was Freda Williams, um. And she was a maiden lady until, well, let's say it was after I graduated, um, from college I think. Then she, she got married and moved to Detroit. But I had an opportunity to tell her that she was, she was the uh spark for sending me off to college and it truly was. She uh, after mentioning that she saw me going and doing something with my life I thought, "Oh, Ok!"

L: But she never knew it at the time?

J: She never knew it at the time.

L: Ooooh. Who were some of your favorite poets, authors? Do you remember from that time?

J: Um, well of course, I, I, um, early, um, the, in the early part of my life I was exposed to African American, um, writers and poets and one poet was, um, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who wrote, um, interesting black dialect poems and they were just, um, many of them were amusing...

L: Southern black dialect?

J: Southern black dialect. And, and told interesting little stories about black life. And I learned to, um, to uh... recite them, and um, to do them, you know, in black dialect. Um, um, he was one of the early poets. Um, James Weldon Johnson also, um, the poems that he wrote in um, God' Trombone. Some of the biblical stories, and among them the creation, uh, the crucifixion, and uh, the story of, of, Moses and, and, so on but the one that I, um, memorized and um, and even to this day can still recite from memory is the creation one but give me something to memorize now and I'm not really so quite good at it any longer. Haha. But I still remember the creation. That was one of the first really long poems that I could really learn to remember. Um, Langston Hughes also, and uh, Longfellow. Um... Robert Burns, that was some of the early poets that I, I, remember and enjoyed reading.

L: So performance even from your early interest in, in, in art was, was, part of your entry into, you liked to not just commit it to memory but to, to, to share that then.

J: To share it, and to try to dramatize it, you know, that kind of thing. Yeah. So um, that was um, these, these are some of the poets. I'm sure there are some others that I might have failed to, to mention, um. Um, ok. Emily Dickinson is another one.

L: Emily Dickinson, yes. Now were you writing any of your own poetry at this time, or putting any form of literature into expression other than the performance?

J: No, I wasn't at that time, I uh think there was a time in my life that I wanted to, to write a novel. And, and I, I began writing. I must have been...I think I was still in high school when I started writing this novel. I read—it was a newspaper account of a um, um twin sister and brother who were separated, and um, were adopted, uh, during their early years and they somehow met again and, and they became, Ha!, attracted to each other. I thought that would make an interesting love story!

L: It would. Hahaha.

J: Hahaha. And so I attempted to write a novel about that. Uh but uh...

L: Do you still have what you had put down at that time?

J: No, I do not.

L: You never finished it?

J: I never finished it.

L: But it was a good process. Hahaha.

J: It was a good process. I thought the plot was—

L: It kept you interested in writing—

J: Right.

L: That was...wow. Well then uh, what did you do upon, well, even more importantly you said people pulled together and you were able to go to school. Can you tell me something about what your family...family's diet was like? How...wh-wh-what, how your family fit into a segregated society both into the white aspect and into the black aspect of that. Can you remember anything that stands out in the way of a revealing story or what comes to mind when I bring that up?

J: Um, you know segregation was kind of a way of life and I suppose a way of life that when you grew up, um, with this kind of thing, um, you sort of accepted it. You realized that there was unfairness, and um, and discrepancies I guess uh, in-in our way of life as compared to the uh, Caucasian way of life. But-but we somehow adjusted ourselves to that as best we could, and-and got along together uh, reasonably well. But uh, one of the things that definitely stands out for me, uh, was the experience that I had, um I guess, uh, not I guess, it was um, when I was a second grader in a one room elementary school that I attended. And um, at that time, when the teacher felt that a student was ready to move on could possibly skip a grade uh there was no advanced work to give the student to help him ya know, uh, work, be challenged in a higher level um, you actually were moved to another grade level. And uh, a second grade teacher might have felt that I should be promoted to the third grade but because we attended this segregated school, and um, used the books that were left over in the uh, uh, from the white school, whatever books that were left over were turned over to, to the uh black school. And, um, by the time my teacher decided that I uh, should be promoted to the third grade I was really the only third grader that she had in the school. And there were no third grade books, uh, available in our school at that time. And, and they um, she requested books from the white school and was able to get all of these subject, um subjects that she needed to teach me in the third grade except a math book. Haha. And...um...and I did well in all of the subject areas that I had, but uh I continued to study the second grade math or arithmetic at the time. And...the following year, possibly my, my, um...um...lack of mathematical skills began to show or something, I don't know. But uh, the following year she did not, she felt I suppose that I needed, I still needed the third grade math and that I would have done well in my other subjects. So I was promoted to the fourth grade and the following year I took the third grade math as I was taking my fourth grade subjects. And...when I was promoted to fifth grade, a new teacher came into the school and I don't know that

whether I failed to explain to her that I had not had, I had not had the um...fourth grade, um...math. At any rate, I was moved, uh, I was given all fifth grade subjects to take—including math. And that gap between third, ha, into fifth grade was just too big—too big a bridge for me to, to uh... to span. And I was not doing well in my fifth grade math and it seemed as though that was...it continued to be—

L: It followed you.

J: Yes, it followed me. It-it-was uh...

L: So it was separate, but not quite equal in that what you had was what they were finished with.

J: Exactly, exactly.

L: And would you say that would be the situation with most of the...what would...what did your school like in comparison to the white facility, the structure of the building, uh, the number of the students, the number of the teachers? Can you remember those things, or...

J: I-I vaguely remember, yes, and-and certainly well enough to give some comparison. Um...a one room school was exactly haha how...what it appears...what it's stated to be—a one room school. Um...but it, it was large enough to accommodate the students that we had, which might have been about fifteen or twenty students.

L: In how many grades?

J: Um...from one to seven. And one teacher taught all of these grades.

L: Mmhm, mmhm.

J: Um...the uh, elementary school, for the white students, was a lovely building, um, with many rooms and many teachers. I-I would say there was probably a teacher for each of the grades. Uh, I-I don't recall specifically—maybe they doubled up some of the classes, you know maybe one teacher might have taught a second and third grade or something like that, I don't recall. I remember there were certainly far more teachers in the white elementary school. And I also know that um the white students were bussed to school, because I lived about three miles from, from the elementary school that I attended. And in all kinds of winter weather—

L: You walked.

J: --we walked. And while the white busses road past us, um, um, in inclement weather, uh whatever the case happened to be, there we were walking and they were riding.

L: And it occurred to you at the time there was distinctly something...

J: Something is, is—

L: --about this is not like black people. Yeah, yeah.

J: Hahaha.

L: Why can't I ride on the school bus to go school?

J: Mmhm.

L: But that's how it was, and...um, so little could be done to change that, because the um, policy was it's separate but equal, but it was, it was quite obvious that um, there was certainly the separation was quite, quite obvious and, and quite clear and, um, whether or not your resented the separation and that sort of thing we-we went along with it. Because I also remember in the downtown areas and public facilities of which you're aware of, uh, the water fountains were separate, and you know it did not, there was a white, and at that time the word "color" was sort of a euphemism for black..haha..and so white would uh be labeled for the white fountain, and uh for the, the fountain where whites drank and colored was the label for uh, our fountain and, and the restrooms were similar. And, the um, you know in the train stations and that kind of thing um, uh and in-in other areas uh where public facilities were used there was the white and the colored. And the colored was always just a little uh, haha, one little spot that was not very well kept and was not taken care of very well at all. And it was always inferior and in its opposition, and, and um—

J: Upkeep too!

L: Upkeep, yes, everything was, was certainly very secondary.

J: Well tell me about your family. The family that you came from, and finally ended up here among us. Tell me about the fam—the family when you were growing up, uh, how many brothers and sisters did you have...brothers and sisters. Tell me about if there was one that was immediately important in your life.

L: Yes. Um. Our family was a very large family. Um, there were five brothers and there were also, uh, five daughters in the family. So there were, the uh, there we were equally—hehe—uh, uh, in the uh, sexes, we were equally, equally divided, five males and five females. And I was, the uh, the third youngest in my family. Um, it was a very loving family, um, our way of life, um, was an agrarian one. You know, where we farmed, um, we uh...we were cotton farmers but we did more than just raise cotton, we raised um, uh vegetables in...

J: That were for the family.

L: That were for the family. Uh, we had livestock, uh, for the family. So were more fortunate than some of the families um, because we had the, we had um...we had beef

that-that would be killed during the year and we had plenty of um—we had plenty of good food because...

J: Now did your family own your land?

L: No, we did not, in the beginning we did not.

J: But you ended up?

L: Yeah. Finally, yes. But uh, during my younger years we were tenant farmers and um...the a portion of, of the profit from the cotton um, um production that-that-that we uh of the cotton that we raised and harvested, uh would be turned over the profit of that would be turned over to the owner.

J: Mmhm.

L: And uh, we had a-a reasonable share, I would say it was a reasonable share because we were blessed to have a um, a land owner who um tried to be there. Um the uh...the uh person whom we um rented from of uh, who was our land—who was our landowner—

J: Mmhm.

L: Was the wife of a, uh, of a, I mean her husband had preceded her in death and she the woman, the uh, uh, the wife was in charge of the, of the farm, and she just sort of left things to my father to take care of.

J: What were their names, the husband and wife?

L: Uhh...Kilburn was-was the uh, name of the family who owned the-the land on which we lived and the house.

J: And how big a plot was this land?

L: It was quite large. Um...I don't recall the number of acres but a large number of acres.

J: A good size to self-sustain and beyond that to sell.

L: Exactly, exactly. And it was um, I suppose it was always good to have a large family to help.

J: Workforce, ha.

L: Yes, yes, um, yeah. And uh, males were especially important. Because, well, males and females for that matter, but as far as you know, actually plowing the land—

J: Mmhm.

L: --we used the livestock for plowing. There were no tractors or anything like that.

J: Right, right. Definitely a part of the uh...uh...the early way of farming. Uh, that was how we farmed. But um, I-I don't think of it as being an extremely, um unpleasant life. It was, it was—

L: It was a good life.

J: It was a good life, in a sense. We would have the outdoor toilets and that kind of thing...hahaha.

L: Hahaha.

J: No indoor plumbing, hahaha.

L: A lot of people were those folks.

J: No, the comforts that um, uh that we thin of we-we take for granted now. Um we did not have that um. But life was good, um and we uh had good neighbors, um and we got along well. Ya know, um we lived among whites who were also some of them were tenant farmers as well. But we all managed to—

L: Get along. Haha.

J: Get along.

L: Well now was your experience in being able to go for a higher education, go to college, was that unique for you and your siblings? Was that a unique opportunity for you?

J: It was indeed, because only one of my other, um...um...sibling was able to go to any form of higher education. Uh, this was an older sister who went to a junior college. Uh I don't know, I don't believe she completed her time there but at least she went to the junior college and I believe she at least spent one year of uh...training in that institution. But yes I was the first in my family to complete a college degree. And out of the..out of the um...ten brother and sisters—the nine other siblings—

L: Would you share what year you graduated from college and where did you graduate?

J: Uh, 1948 was the year of my graduation. And it was from, uh, South Carolina State College. It is now a university as are many of the state colleges. It is now, it now has a university, uh, status now. But it was South Carolina State A & M College it was called at that time and the "A" was the acronym "A" stood for agricultural and mechanical the "M."

L: A vocational—

J: It was a vocational school, right. And-and I remember, um, the economics was just a major pain.

L: Haha.

J: Um, ah, it was certainly not my area of expertise. But um, uh, that was—that was promoted very highly. And of course, you know it was good to acquire mechanical skills, that kind of thing.

L: Useful.

J: Very useful, very practical. And-and I think, uh there was, the intent was to prepare people, you know, to be useful in the areas of home-making and farming, I mean those were very, very—

L: Mmhm.

J: —important areas.

L: What was your degree in there exactly.

J: My degree?

L: Your degree, what degree did you get upon—

J: A liberal arts degree in, um—

L: Liberal arts.

J: —in, in secondary English.

L: And then when you graduated, what were your dreams and what became of them? What did you end up doing to pursue them, or in that direction?

J: Right. Uh, my dream was to become a teacher. And uh, to become an English teacher and I was able to pursue that upon graduation. I um, I was hired at one of the, one of the uh...uh...high schools, and I taught um...um... eleventh and twelfth grade English. Um, uh during my first year of teaching.

L: Where was this, what was the name of the school?

J: Uh, the school Pendlet—Pendleton High School, and uh it was in a little town about ten or twelve miles from my home, Pendleton, South Carolina.

L: And this was a segregated school?

J: It was a segregated school also, exactly.

L: Now what were th—young boys and young women, were they segregated as well as a certain point...some-some histories of-of even cross the lines ethnically, that did happen early on. Was that ever a part of the education system you were part of?

J: No, no, I uh...the-the uh...the male and female population always, uh, studied together, we-we were, of course ya know there were-there were courses that, um...that the-the male students took, such as shop and um...yeah, I think it mainly that kind of thing. And of course, um, the males were not included in Home Economics either, haha. So um—

L: Gender, haha.

J: Yeah, gender played a very, very vital role in-in certain areas, yeah. But other than that, ya know our other academic classes, we were um, the male and female group, uh, uh, uh, persons were together. It was uh, heterogeneous.

L: Now what do you remember from those first years as a young teacher in that school? Is there something that stands out in your mind, some student, some incident, some-something?

J: Yeah, um...one of the things that stands out for me, I'd always enjoyed dramatics and poetry and that kind of thing. And I started a um...I started drama class, um...and that was kind of an extracurricular class that we had. Uh, well maybe not a class but we always did plays, and uh...uh...so that became ya know a-a part of what I did outside the regular classroom.

L: This was your initiative?

J: This was my initiative. And also um, um there was already in place an oratorical contest that was held every year. And, and...there the county that I was in, the um, my home county is Okoney County, but um...the school that I was teaching in was Anderson County. Well, uh, in the city of Anderson, which was the main high school, uh, for African Americans in that area, in that county, um, this school had always taken first place in the oratorical contest. And, uh, on my first year of working with one of my students—I worked with one of our very brightest students who was very articulate—very bright, and just just did a magnificent job with the speech that we uh, worked on for her. And she took first place in the contest and that broke a long-standing record, haha, of uh, of-of-of another school winning first place in the oratorical contest. And I must admit, the leading school was not very happy with this.

L: I guess not! Well what was her name, and what was the name of the piece?

J: Ookay, I wish I could...Oh dear, I can see her face, I can see her face very clearly, ah yes.

L: I can see she's part of your memory, if it pops up let me know.

J: I think it was Darlene, I think was her first name. Oh dear. And, uh the last name has escaped me but she was just outstanding. And-and we continued during, during the four years I was there we continued to win first place in that contest so, hahaha...we became kind of the enemy!

L: A-ha...I bet!

J: To-to...the main high school that went and had the record of—

L: What was the name of the main high school, do you remember that?

J: It was Edison—

L: I think you did say that, yes.

J: Edison County High School.

L: Well now, you said you were there for four years. What happened after four years?

J: That's when I moved to Lancaster.

L: Ooooh...

J: That's when the marriage took place, and I moved to Lancaster uh, but had been warned by, uh, my husband's family that you know, teaching was not to be even given much uh consider—was not to be given any consideration because there were definitely, um, no teachers of color in the school system here. And, I-I-I really enjoyed teaching and uh, I uh that was a little crushing to think that I was going to have to try to find something other than teaching to do because that's what I had uh studied to uh do and-and was very happy with what I was doing. And so I was not-not very pleased to uh have to pursue something different, but that's how it was and so I just sort of accepted, uh, the um... the opinions and views of the people around me because there certainly were no other teachers of color in the school systems...

L: Were the schools segregated at the time here in Lancaster?

J: Uh.. Only by de-facto segregation I would say, ya know, because so many um...

L: Neighborhood schools...

J: Yes. Um...The uh...The African American community uh...was was all I mean most of the African Americans lived in a uh...in the southeast area. And, and most of them attended um...well, uh, for the um...elementary and junior high. Well the junior high school was the Hand Junior High School. That was, that was the um junior high school where I would say about ninety eight or more percent of the African American students attended that school. So it was uh, but there were white students in this school as well. And I think the white student population, um, outnumbered.

L: And all the teachers were...were white?

J: And all the teachers were white, yes.

L: Ok, you've arrived in Lancaster. Everybody is disappointing you about pursuing the career that you've studied these years for, and were so fortunate to have the opportunity to study for. How did you deal with it? You, you've told me you accepted it at first but what else did you do? What else did you do while you were in the process of accepting it? Maybe it's a better question.

J: Ok. Uh...I just I-I suppose um...my life in the south had kind of prepare me—haha—to resign myself to the way things are and to make the best of, of the situation I've found myself in, and even then to working at RCA was not the most uh, enjoyable thing for me because I was really not that skilled in working with intricate parts. And that's—

L: This was assembly line work?

J: This was an assembly line work kind of thing. And I had a really difficult time with it. Haha. Um...Making the production kind of thing was not, was not good for me. Uh, but I struggled through, and um...and...uh, eventually, I became at least proficient I suppose. That's how I was doing. And one of the things that, that added to some of the uh... a bit of the uh...uh...if you can say, interests, or it certainly wasn't excitement, but, um, there was an opportunity to submit um...suggestions for improving whatever work you were doing—

L: Mmhm.

J: --And it seemed as though I, I constantly was able to offer suggestions that were accepted and I was paid um, not exorbitant fees for these, uh, because they probably weren't worth a whole lot, but sometimes as much as seventy-eight dollars or one hundred and twenty five dollars for some of the suggestions that I offered.

L: Well I'll be.

J: And so it was kind of fun to uh...haha...submit these to see if, if they...

L: Creative Writing! Hahaha.

J: Right! Haha. So um, I certainly did not consider myself very technically in anything, but it was just sort of common sense kind of things that led to making the job um, uh, facilitating the doing of the job.

L: Can you remember any of these suggestions?

J: Ok, um...Let me see now, ok. I'm recalling, one of the things, I-I worked in an experimental lab and that was truly, ya know, that's what I was all about—experimenting with the color kind of uh...of um, TV tube, and uh...now there much of what I was doing was experimental by the engineers who set up various experiments for us to work with. But that was much, I-I liked that much better than the kind of intricate work I was doing over and over again. Um, then there was another area where I work where I must have received at least, four, five um, um...uh, rewards if you will or payments for, for suggestions that I offered. And, that was um, oh dear. I-I know that um...we were working with, with some kind of tube and it was light, kind of work but it was not the intricate kind of work that I was always glad to be relieved of that. And um...I must admit, I just remember, um, the suggestions paying off.

L: That was the important part!

J: Hahaha.

L: Let's get off of that one, those details aren't necessary.

J: Hahaha. Yeah.

L: Why um...So how long did you work at RCA?

J: Ok I...after moving here in '52, I was there until the um...the spring of '63. That's when I finally, um, was um, was uh, was uh accepted into the I should say, was hired to finish out a term here in the Lancaster City School District. And I continued to work there until...until um...un—until the, the, the, hiring took place um...with the school system.

L: So you were like a substitute, a long term substitute if you will, for somebody?

J: Uh, actually I was finishing out the um...the end of the term for one of the teachers who had to go on leave.

L: Ok.

J: At the end of the school year. And, um...and I suppose this was the, a good way for the um...the principle and possibly the superintendent as well to determine if I were eligible, haha, you know for working in the school system because I was hired in March and school ended in, in June.

L: What was this teacher's name and what was the subject?

J: It was English.

L: It was English.

J: Seventh-grade English.

L: Do you remember her name?

J: The teacher who I uh...

L: Who you replaced.

J: I uh...um...

L: Now what school, which school was this?

J: This was Hand Junior High School.

L: At Hand, ok.

J: It was in school where...

L: Now tell me, that sounded almost too easy. I know this can't have been your first try. Um...tell me about what brought to that point. And were there many others who were people of color who were trying to do the same thing? Or...tell me about this experience.

J: Alright, actually, uh, as far as the teaching I-I suppose I might have been the only person who I know was actually trying to get hired into the Lancaster City schools. Um...I know the uh, uh one of the ministers who moved here um...his wife was already had, you know, had experience in teaching, had taught for a number of years. And she applied for work here and didn't get it, so she um...applied in Coatesville and was able to get work there. I don't know if the schools were still segregated there, or just um...

L: Mmhm.

J: Uh, but, at-at any rate, she was able to get work in the Coatesville area.

L: Do you remember her name?

J: Ok um...uh...Mrs. um... ok. Oh dear.

L: Ok, I'm being brutal here aren't I? Haha.

J: No, no. Haha. A memory for names is not one of my strong things, and-and yet I know this, I-I know the name of this minister and wife very well indeed.

L: What church was this, do you remember that affiliation?

J: It was the church that I now attend, the um...AME Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. That's a, a mouthful when you say the whole name—haha—but it's for, uh, the shortened name is AME which stands for African Methodist Episcopal Church. Um...and um...Doctor Fortune? It was not Doctor Fortune. It was not Fortune, and but it was something um...the, the last name began with a letter F and, and...

L: Well that's at least a start.

J: Anyhow, it was his wife who uh, and well that had nothing that had no bearing on-on my getting work here but it was just that I thought well, maybe uh, if I couldn't get work ya know, in the immediate area, maybe there was another place where I might be able to get work but I would have to had commuted to and from, um... but...

L: Did you drive then, or would this have been a train thing probably?

J: Nn...I probably would have been driving; I think I was driving by that time, yes I was driving.

L: Well tell me about your life in Lancaster, um...you know both when you first moved here, just life outside the idea of pursuing a job, a career. Tell me about your everyday life—what was Lancaster like when you came here and first got to know it? For you.

J: Um...It was, it was certainly different from the life that I know. Moving in-into an area where I was not around family was a new adjustment for me—

L: Mm.

J: --Because I always then at least knew my family, and um...coming into a um...a completely new area uh...without family or friends was um... was, was, was indeed somewhat of a challenge but not really because I did make friends and...um...found the people um...mostly warm and accepting, um...uh...I've heard said by many uh outsiders that come to Lancaster that they find that the uh...people here a bit clannish and, uh, a bit um...within their own little groups and that kind of thing. That they uh, cliquish and sort of uh...leave the outsiders on the outside—Hahaha. The people who are not native Lancastrian. But I was, I was able to make some friends, enough friends that I felt—

L: What was—where did you find your first friends?

J: Um...in, in uh...well uh, one of my first friends was uh...the friend of uh actually was my husband's um...friend's wife. Um...and um...the name of-of the woman whom I can name was um...Doris Johnson was her name and...she really just sort of took me under

her wing as a sister and I say that because I was truly not the domestic type of person and she was sort of just took me on.

L: Hahaha. Filled in the gaps. Haha.

J: Yes. She became my surrogate sister. And—

L: Was she older?

J: No, she was actually, uh, she was actually maybe a year or so younger than I. But, I had not learned too-too much of taking care of, ya know, domestic skills were not—

L: You were the scholar! You were the scholar, come on now.

J: Hahaha. Well, I can, I can uh...surely say that um...domestic skills were, were very weak. Cooking and, ya know, taking care of a house and all those kind of things were things I had not done a great deal of. I think I was generally...that was not true of um, southern women. They learn these things as they're going up. But being in a large family and being um...

L: Uniquely talented—hahaha.

J: And being the only one in my family who was left-handed, I um...

L: Ooooh!

J: My family found that to be strange I think, ya know because I was the only one who had, who truly was a left hander. And um, they felt that I was always slowing up and they, they kept telling me that all the time. They would not allow me to learn...

L: How to be a little faster and less awkward! Haha.

J: Right! And to learn the skills that I need to learn around the house—

L: Oh goodness.

J: --So that I would be more proficient in, ya know, uh...house-keeping things, um...and um...I-I remember one of my older sisters telling my husband before we were married that, "You gonna have to work with her because she really doesn't know too much about house keeping!"

L: Hahaha! Oh I love it.

J: And he-he thought she was kidding but he-he found out it was the truth.

L: But he found out—hahaha. Well where did you first live when you came here?

J: I lived on North Street, um...

L: What was the neighborhood like?

J: Well...one of the things that I disliked about the neighborhood was living in row houses. I didn't like the row houses. That's where we lived. Ya know..um...and in fact most of the uh...people in the southeast area I think lived in row houses. And um...

L: You missed the land.

J: I'm sorry.

L: You missed the land, the country.

J: The space, I was always uh been in a place where there was space around me and um...being crowded together in that manner was—was just quite an adjustment. I found that difficult. But I...managed to—to uh...work through it and, and I—I-I can't say that I ever um...accepted whole-heartedly but it was—haha—

L: Haha—accepted it with as much heart as you needed right?

J: I obliged, yes, haha, that was the way of life and so...

L: Well now how long were you at Hand's school then?

J: I was there until um... uh from '63 until 1970 when um...when the job opening came at Millersville.

L: And what job was that?

J: And that was also teaching English. I um...I began *clears throat* uh...um...a program that was being offered through Temple University at Franklin and Marshall um...and actually it was a Masters in Education and...um....several of-of my colleagues from Hand had decided, "Ok, it's time for us to, to venture into um...increasing our-our um capacity by getting, getting additional um training and um getting another degree."

L: Focusing on degree and education.

J: Focusing on degree and education. And-and so there were a group of us who began this program.

L: Do you remember who they were?

J: Yes. Arthur McComsey, um...and um...Zerby was one of the last names of the other people, um...uh...um...Mike Crate, Michael Crate who is um who is a teacher at McCaskey, um...uh...let's see who was...Benny um...Benny...ok...haha. Ok.

L: When do you think this was? What period of time was this? And this was out of F&M through a grant that you were able to—

J: Well it was just an extension of the Temple program that was being offered at F&M.

L: Ok.

J: Well uh through Temple. And um, and-and so uh we-we started this program and upon completion of the program, um...one of the professors who was teaching in-in-in the Temple program here was-was a local professor from Millersville and um...one of the uh...he was teaching the courses in-in the humanities and um of course uh...I had a course with him upon completion of-of my degree he asked me if I would be interested in applying for a position at Millersville.

L: Who was this?

J: Uh, Dr. Jennings. Dr. Jennings, uh, um....Can't think of the last name—haha.

L: Well uh... he uh, and so what year would this have been then that he suggested you apply?

J: That was in the, actually that was in the when I graduated in-in the uh...in the spring of '69. That's when he approached me. And though maybe it was, yeah, it must have been the spring of—I knew I graduated in '69, but uh I began, I actually began teaching in the fall of '70.

L: That's when I came to the school district.

J: Oh really? Hahaha.

L: In 1970.

J: Yes. And but actually it was through his invitation to me about taking a position at Millersville.

L: Well now tell me about that new evolution of your career. What was different, what was fulfilling, what-what surprised you. And it seems to me that your broke barriers there as well.

J: Once again there were no other African American teachers in the in-in the uh...in, on the faculty there. Mmhm. Um, there...there seemed to have been some other

uh...ethnicities or another person of-of ethnic some other ethnic background who might have been Indian, I-I don't know, uh. At-at any rate, he was a man of color. Haha.

L: Mmhm.

J: And...but he was the only person there, there were no other African Americans who were teaching there and um...I accepted uh..I uh applied after being in invited to join the faculty there by this, hehe, by this Dr. Jennings—who was then the uh chair of the English department. And so I met with the president, and I met with the—

L: Can you remember who the president was then?

J: It's President Duncan. Um...William Duncan, and um Dr. Nicholas Brown was the Vice-Provost. And so I uh... I met with them and, and we had an interesting interview, if you will. And uh...

L: You felt good about that.

J: I felt good about that. Yes. And uh...it was...um...I was really accepted um...without the usual fanfare that one has to go through to—haha—uh, ya know without going through the search committee, this type of thing. So um, that worked out very well. Where were we?

L: Ah, the beginning of your teaching career at Millersville. Uh...did you feel like you were breaking barriers or was it like you say in many respects uh-uh the door was open and it was an easy transition?

J: Well it was a relatively easy transition but it was somewhat of a challenge to go from teaching junior high school youngsters to college students, um, and-and I think I brought with me some of my um...teaching techniques from-from the uh...from the junior high school level of having to repeat the assignment, and having to—haha—

L: It doesn't hurt just to get it right! Hahahaha.

J: --Explain things very clearly, and uh...and um, at um, I think-I think that was one of the criticisms, one of the early criticisms was that um...um...there is um...too much time spent on stressing the importance of the assignment and repeating the assignment. Haha. I could see these people felt they were ready to accept, ya know, the assignment was there, it was on the syllabus, it was all of that. But I was so accustomed to doing it—

L: I hear ya.

J: --The old way that I sort of followed that pattern for a little while, and, and that was kind of a change for me but.

L: Tell me a story from that time, from your first years teaching at the University. It was a college at that point, or a university?

J: It was a college at the time.

L: It was a college, I thought so.

J: Um...ya know, um...I can truly say that, that my um...my time there was pleasant, I, I um...I made friends, uh, with the people in the department, uh, there was some strange characters to adjust to but—haha—on the whole we got along well. And, I felt very fortunate because um...all of the English courses were taught in Bassler Hall, and that was kind of the English building of course—we um, no, uh yes. The majority of the courses were taught there. But, then um...uh, there were very few office spaces that were in Bassler. And but the um...um...the chair of the department, and um...our uh...head secretary, and um...it's the—I think there were two other offices that were that building of Bassler. And it was such a delight to me that one of my friends was Margaret Woodridge, who was one of the senior teachers in the department. And she requested me as her office mate. And I was so pleased because I was in the main building, when the weather was bad I did not have to—haha—walk—haha—a distance across campus to get to my classes. I was right in the building that the classes were taught. So that—that turned out to be a-a really uh, real blessing for me to uh, be able to have my office in the building where most of the classes were taught. And um...uh, it-it was pleasant, it was pleasant there. Of course there were some instances where uh students um...sort of at-at that time I-I think there was controversy about the affirmative action uh...uh...policies that were in effect. And um, there were students who were, ha, offering their views about that.

L: White students.

J: Yes, white students. And um...and who were angered about the way things were going and that sort of thing and stuff.

L: And so you had to—you had to deal with that.

J: I had to deal with that, I had to deal with that. And to you know, be open and objective to both sides, and-and yet—

L: Haha

J:--to try to point out the, uh, the value—

L: So your classes were sidetracked occasionally from literature—

J: Haha. Occasionally. Especially the uh, composition classes where we had discussions of the uh essays that we read because uh, we would use essays as a source of-of um, of

provoking um...um...or invoking thoughts for various writing assignments and uh, and some of these essays uh had-had uh materials that led to that kind of discussion. And uh..

L: Well now were any of these students that were of that particular stripe open to adjusting their opinions or was this simply a-a-a place to express the two versions or however many there were?

J: Well, I-I think there might have been some that were open, but there were others that were very strong in their opinions and who felt that they were absolutely, yeah. Uh...

L: It seems almost like they stood out.

J: Yeah, they stood out. Another little instance that, uh began to surface more uh, after I had been there for a few years um, was um, in the composition classes again because composition of course was something that all the English faculty taught. And, um, the students were assigned ya know, the um freshmen students were assigned to their particular classes so they had no choice in whom they were taking and had no knowledge of whom they were taking until they entered the classroom. And I found um, through my early years there, that um, in the uh...in the composition classes where these assignments were made, uh, invariably there would be one or two students who resented my being um, uh their being assigned to this class, it was as though—

L: Because you were African American.

J: Right. Um. They, they would enter the class with an attitude of indifference and um...and apathy and um “I don’t want to be here” type attitude. Um, they would look out the window instead of listening to uh what was going on or...

L: How did you deal with that?

J: I um...I began as they continued to ignore my being there as a teacher in the classroom I began to ignore their presence. I thought, if I were invisible to them then I would let them be invisible to me and-and so I um...I-I always liked to interact with my students with eye-contact and that sort of thing and during my teaching I-I did that continuously. But since they chose to be invisible I treated them as if they were not there.

L: How did that work?

J: It worked very well. They came around each time. Very often they became my best...some of-some of the better students in the class.

L: Alright then.

J: It worked every time. Haha.

L: Now how many years were you at Millersville and how did your, your position there evolve—what was your first position, uh, un-until you left was it similar, the same or different/

J: It evolved, it evolved, and um. Because I continued to, to I-I think gain um...greater confidence and uh, and to just enjoy the work that was I doing, especially once we were able to include um the African American literature in our curriculum.

L: When was that?

J: Uh, that was, that was through a combined effort of um...Bruce Kellner, um, it was Bruce Kellner and I who um, well actually Bruce kind of actually initiated the idea but I worked along with him.

L: He came to you.

J: Yes and-and we were able to have um African American literature included as a required course in the English department.

L: Is, is that still the case then?

J: Yes.

L: Good to know.

J: Yes. And um...uh, prior to that there was a course in black literature, it was called "Black Literature" that was taught at that in the uh early years during the '70s. But um, the African American Literature came into being in the '80s, uh I would say within the '80s I would say we got that included in the curriculum. But what I did to kind of um, bring in some of the African American writers um, even in the introduction to literature class because there was some variety of writers included, I would not only use the ones that were included but I would have uh, copies of various other works by some of these writers um brought in and-and shared with the class. And—

L: Exposed to more than basic—

J: --Exposed them to far, yes exactly. And-and I was just so pleased to see that the white students were just eager to um, do their papers and additional work on African American writers. Uh, and that meant—

L: Where would you find this before, before that moment? It was, you know, a new thing for students of any brand and it was interesting I believe in being a person who came to it that way uh, you know when you discover something new that's wondrous it doesn't, if you're really looking to go on to realize that you have something here.

J: Exactly.

L: Does anyone or any student such as in this category white students who jumped into it, do any of your students white or black for that matter stand out in those early days, uh, and-and how did, how did you feel when you began to see black students as well as black teachers increasing in number, or did you see that?

J: Well, there were a few, there were a few black students but they were minimal when I first started but of course the numbers grew. And um...as the numbers grew, one of the things and-and this I-I'm not answering the question that you raised I think was first how did I feel, um, I felt that, that our students um...um...needed something more that related to their lives and something more that they could identify with than um...than, than what was being offered at the college. And-and uh slash university. And certainly in the beginning it was um, um it was Millersville State College. We began a program entitled um...Black Expressions and we did that each February and, and that thus gained such popularity and prominence I would say—

L: Ooh.

J: --On the campus that students from the other state um...state colleges came to visit us during our major presentation it-it was that, it was that well known and-and well received.

L: Describe this presentation, what would it have been?

J: It entailed um, using um, as many of the arts as we could. We-we did drama, we did poetry, and we did music. Um...by African American composers, and poets, and-and writers and so on. And um...un-until we had these three segments that were included, and it involved our students doing the performances.

L: Wow.

J: And it was just an exciting time, I mean, hehe, we had newspaper coverage and all of that. So it was—

L: What period of time would this have been, what year?

J: It was during, it began during the early '70s doing this.

L: Ok.

J: And the students looked forward to this each year. "When are we going to start rehearsing for our, uh black history celebration?" it was called. And um, and-and Bruce Keller worked well with us during that time as well. He-he um, he would uh always uh do a special um...display on African Americans.

L: Now he was in the English department as well?

J: He was in the English department, right.

L: I've known him for many years as well and I wondered when I saw him at your birthday party, and now I know the story, ha.

J: Right, right. Because he had worked with um...ok...um...I have to think of it, a writer that Bruce knew well and um...and he was, he was a uh...he was a scholar, he was a-a benefactor to African American poets, this-this writer, uh what was his name...

L: Oh so he himself was introduced—

J: Wells—Yes he—uh...uh...Bruce was introduced to African American writers through his friend, who was truly a um...benefactor of um..

L: He would collect African American artists' work and support it.

J: Yes, he did that. And did photographs of them, and all sorts of things. And um...and he and Bruce were very good friends. Uh, during his college years. And, um...and so Bruce became kind of a, a...

L: He already had the seed planted.

J: I guess, yes.

L: Well now how many years were you at Millersville?

J: Twenty-three.

L: Oh my goodness. What would you say, we've heard at the beginning a few bench marks if you will. What would you say your, your...legacy if you will at this point looking back on it, uh...what would you say, how would you say it had changed, or influenced or allowed your life to evolve? Looking at it from any of those different perspectives at this point.

J: Um...I would say that...uh...just, just being able to be...uh...be in a position of...of...uh, influencing and maybe um...um...sharing with, with students uh, as an African American teacher, um...because that was kind of a novelty. It was a novelty for, it was something new for many students who had never been exposed to...

L: Possibilities.

J: The possibilities, exactly. And I'm thinking also there were white students who had never been exposed to people of color and as a teacher I'm certain that many of these students who came to my class with the attitude of "I don't want to be here, and I resent

the fact that I'm here" felt that they had obviously, uh, been, been told and believed, truly believed that um people of color were incapable and incompetent. Haha.

L: So you challenged them to make their world to grow to include a little more than they had been comfortable with.

J: Exactly, exactly.

L: So it's the teacher-mentor thing that stands out the most.

J: That stands out. And I would say that one of the really uh...really special things that have occurred as a result of my having been there is the scholarship. I'm very, very pleased that, that has taken place and that it will have a, um...long...if all it certainly should have a long-lasting effect since we've increased it now to a reasonable sum where maybe now we'll be able to um...we'll be able to give more or to share with more students.

L: Mmhm. What's the name of this scholarship and what are the, what does it underwrite?

J: Oh, it's, it's the Hazel A. Jackson scholarship that was begun as an endowment upon my retirement and it has now um...reached its, it started off as \$10,000 and has now grown to \$25,000 and uh, so we're certainly we could use much more—haha.

L: Mmhm.

J: But that, that's was commendable.

L: Who would be eligible?

J: Um, this scholarship is open to African American students um...

L: At Millersville University.

J: At Millersville University. And um, they must be um in the either an English major or studying um...courses in the humanities to be eligible. And um, one of the requisites is that they show leadership skills and that they have a financial need, and that is, that is uh when we have them apply for the scholarship, their letter has to speak to that, to their leadership skills.

L: How many students have benefited from this program, do you know approximately?

J: Well let's see, it's been going on since um...I suppose the, the first scholarship was in um the fall of '95. Um, after my retirement, and um...from '95 um, to present, um...that's eleven years. Yeah, eleven.

L: So there would be one student each year?

J: One student each year.

L: Wow, that's wonderful.

J: Yes. And, I am uh...and I have to speak to um...a very special person who really um, is the creditor if you will—ha—should be given the credit I'll put it that way, should be given the credit for um...standing firm and, and seeing that this scholarship um...was uh, was eventually carried out. Uh, that we were able to get the endowment. And that's Dr. Rita Smith Wade-El (?). Uh when she, she was the one who recommended that upon my retirement there should be a scholarship endowment started, and we were told by people in positions of power that, "Uh, no you don't want that." They told us what we didn't want. "You don't want that." You should just, whatever you raise at the uh, banquet, it'll make it a once kind of thing where whatever funds you have you can, you can donate that as a scholarship and I think that will take care of it.

L: In other words this has a shelf-life, haha, this has no future.

J: Yes, yes, Haha, yeah no future. No future.

L: Just grab what we can and do it this time!

J: One, a one time and, and that would be the end of it. Um...but she was very firm, and stating that um, that we were going to get the endowment, uh, at whatever cost.

L: And so it came to be.

J: And so it came to be. And, and, Bob Sabinsky was another person who, who um certainly contributed largely to making that happen because it was through the uh...student services donation of \$5,000 that uh on that, on that first event that helped us to get the \$10,000 on the first year around. I mean, we would have worked towards getting it eventually but he made it happen by donating very generously.

L: Well now you've retired, then, in '95. How has your life changed since that?

J: '94 was that.

L: '94 then. How has your life...what-what was the initial chapter upon your retirement, what did that look like in your life/

J: Um...initially, I-I-I retired to uh...to work with my husband during his illness, um. So that um, because he needed uh, special care, and um...it was becoming increasingly difficult to see that he was cared for. And, and so um...um...I, I continued to care for him until this, his death which um...uh, he died in, in the uh summer or in the fall it was actually in the fall of '95. And uh, *clears throat* um, so that was kind of initially that,

that was my focus was taking care of him. But since then, I have um...I've just continued to be engaged in doing and-and-and dramatic things, I've engaged in um, quite a bit of uh, of work with, with the theatre, and uh...and music, I enjoy music.

L: Well I would say you're rather well known for your theatre work. Could we talk about that a little bit? What was one of the first productions or theatre pieces uh, that really gave you satisfaction like, I've done this now and then beyond that what, since you've retired, what theatre since you've retired from the school setting which was where most of this played out til that point, would, can you talk about?

J: Alright well the first, the first work that I did was um, a um, life story of, of, of Richard Allen who is the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A, a fascinating story in fact a story about his life that, that certainly influenced my wanting to become a part of, of this denomination. Um...

L: Oh alright.

J: And, yes. Um—

L: So your family wasn't necessarily brought up in this denomination?

J: No.

L: You choose it, chose it because of his story.

J: Right, yes.

L: Oooh.

J: Most southerners are Baptists, hahaha.

L: Yes, I do understand that. Hahah.

J: That's what I was when I came here, then his—

L: So it was here you became—

J: Yes.

L: Uhh...AME.

J: Exactly.

L: Alright.

J: And it was the life story of Richard Allen that, that certainly influenced my thinking of, ya know, the greatness of this man. I was just fascinated by his life. And so I did, uh a brief, um...kind of uh, dramatic skit of, of just a few scenes from his life.

L: A theatre piece.

J: A theatre piece that would be in our Sunday school. And following that we did a production, a-uh an extended production at both Hand and, and McCaskey High Schools. Um, and, and this was initiated by Reverend Taliaferro who was in the school, ya know working in the school district at the time. And he requested the use of these pieces.

L: He knew of them and had seen them.

J: He knew of them and had seen them and had felt that they—

L: When would this have been, what year?

J: This was also in the '80s, I believe, not eighty, '85 or there about.

L: And what was the name of the piece?

J: A Man for all Seasons, hehe. And it was a wonderful production that we did because at the time *clears throat*, it's kind of a long story about this. Um. We needed white characters to, to carry out the authentic story of, of the Richard Allen story. And, um... *clears throat* Reverend Taliaferro was hoping that the drama department that he could draw from the students at McCaskey, uh for these parts. But the drama teacher chose not to have the students participate, and he warned them not to be a part of it.

L: Ooooh!

J: Haha. So we were left without, ya know, the support of the drama group to work with us in-in-in this particular piece, but, by chance the Conestoga Valley High School had a grant, I think to have uh, some sort of interaction with uh, with, with, other, other groups outside, they wanted—

L: Ethnic interaction.

J: Ethnic interaction is what they wanted. And when they found out that we were doing this play they were very pleased to be a part of it.

L: So they had to be—hahaha—imported from Conestoga Valley into the city schools? Oh!

J: Haha. Exactly. They brought their drama group and it was, it was outstanding because it was a drama group, ya know, who were skilled actors, and most of our African American students had not done a great deal of acting because, um...

L: So they learned as well from this then.

J: They learned, they learned, and-and.

L: Do you remember the teacher at Conestoga Valley that was involved?

J: Oh no, I don't remember his name.

L: It's no problem then, if we could just throw one in every once in a while.

J: Yeah, yeah. Haha. Yeah, but he uh...

L: Well now that play has been uh...put on since that point then, has it not?

J: It has been, it has been.

L: So it has a legacy even from that point then, it wasn't just something that happened that was unique, because that really was the unique confluence, if you will, these things coming together.

J: Exactly, and um, it's one of the things that um...I, I really hope and I say this because I'm great at being a procrastinating type of individual here, and at putting things off, but um...I do hope to, to get this work published. And—

L: It hasn't been published?

J: It hasn't been published yet.

L: I didn't know that.

J: And um, I-I have enough material that all I need to do is just refine it a bit and, and get a little work on it. And I think now that I know there is well, I should have know that there is, there was a drama workshop that's taking place here in the city someplace, but the Fulton does sponsor a drama workshop.

L: Have you approached them?

J: I haven't approached them. I just recently interacted with someone who is a part of that.

L: Mhm.

J: And I thought, "Ok. This is a time for me, to, to um...get my work into this workshop and work on, on refining it."

L: Oh that's exciting! That's exciting!

J: Yeah. So I hope to do that, yeah. Beyond that I've done, the Seventh Sister Theatre, I've done the Voices of Freedom, Crying in the Wilderness was uh...so I didn't want to plagiarize because it was a book entitled Voices of Freedom, so I, I added to Voices of Freedom "Crying in the Wilderness!" Hahaha.

L: That's more dramatic anyway! Haha.

J: Hahaha. A bit lengthy but...

L: It works. What was the focus of the piece?

J: It was African American women who had a very vital role in, in the freedom movement.

L: I've actually seen that, I saw it at Crispus Attucks. That was put on in a number of places, was it not.

J: Yes, yes. In Hershey at the Hershey Conference Center. In uh, in New Jersey at the junior college there, and uh...in Philadelphia, um...and in numerous places in uh...I-I would say overall, we've probably done this piece uh at least fifteen times.

L: Oooh.

J: Mhm.

L: Alright.

J: Continues to...and we were requested to do it just this year, haha, but I haven't gotten to it yet.

L: Well, the year's not over—haha.

J: This will be the first year we actually haven't done it since ninety, um...two thousand...I think it was about two thousand was our first production of that and have just, ya know continued to do it each year sometimes more than—

L: Well let me just say this, I know that you've had an ongoing interaction with education, and with theatre, and uh, but there are many many other time times that your name comes into conversation, in so far as supporting this community and being a part of what's growing about this community, that's my description but I've heard it other's peoples put it that way. How other than your theatre and your mentoring has your time expanded to include what other categories?

J: Ok, um...My *clears throat*, my involvement with my church has been rather significant, I think, in my life. And um...and I continue to be concerned about our youth and I, I'm not done um...major programs to work with large numbers of youth but I-I think I've worked individually with a number of young people and in small groups and in that kind of thing, and, and I have a real concern and a real um, um...feeling of the need for mentoring and in trying to um...help our youngsters through the difficult years because I know that their teen years are very difficult ones.

L: And increasingly so as, as the world gets bigger.

J: Absolutely.

L: And I was unfair to see beyond and above mentoring because that truthfully is the theme of your life uh...from, from when I first even was introduced to your story. But, um...your family and mine has woven in and out our experiences um, please uh...let's just do a, a family tree here quickly. Starting with the name of your parents and your siblings, and uh...coming to Lancaster then and your own children and grandchildren.

J: Ok. Um...beginning with my family, *clears throat*, my mother was Pearl Harris. And upon marriage became Jones. And my father was Charlie um...Berkley Jones. And, to their union, um...actually eleven children were born, one of, one of the siblings died at um...I think she was about eleven months old though I don't know. Um...I don't recall of what, ya know, the uh what caused the death. But um, the oldest of the um, of the children was Leo um... the second brother was R Jay. Now this is not unusual in the south to simply use, um, initials for names. So, his name was R, the letter R—

L: And it didn't stand for a name, it was just R Jay—I love it!

J: And the J was spelled Jay. R Jay was the second brother. The third brother was Robert Jones. Okay. Um...then, um, there was an older sister who preceded Robert and her name was Mable, then Robert came. Um...Eula was the second oldest sister. And...the next um, the next and um...Maddy Lilly was the, the um baby who died at eleven months. Alright. And I'm not exactly sure if she came before Eula or after Eula but she was in that grouping. Um. And, um, following Eula was my brother Charlie, named for my father. And um...then my sister Clara who is still alive, and then I, Hazel, was the um...I guess I was the eighth, I was the eighth of the children. And of the living children, anyway. And um...and then the, um, ninth was um, my sister Maggie who is deceased, and my brother Harry who is still alive. He was with us on um...at the birthday party.

L: So there are three of you alive, a sister and a brother and yourself.

J: Yes, you might remember the brother who told a funny story. Hahaha.

L: I did, I did.

J: He is known for his funny stories.

L: Hahaha.

J: He loves to tell funny stories.

L: That's probably why he's still around. Hahaha. It sustains him.

J: Yeah. And um, my own family in my own family, there are um...two children, um...by my marriage, and a one son, that um, that was born prior to um, to my marriage to, to Brady, to him. This is his son. Um, and there names are the two daughters in my family are uh, Cheryl who is now Cheryl Holland Jones, and Roslyn is my second daughter, and she is presently living, I didn't ask where they are living, but she is not presently at Lancaster she is in North Carolina. And uh, the son is Charles Daniel, um, Jackson. Uh, this is Brady's son. So that makes up my immediate family. And, um...I believe that was what you asked for.

L: That's it. How about some grandchildren now, I know there are at least a couple.

J: Yes, there are indeed. Cheryl has two children from her first marriage, and they are Amber and Justin are the two older grandchildren. And um, Roslyn has a son, and his name is uh...Ian Demetrius. And um...and Charles um...the stepson, has a son also and his name is, is um...well, haha, his baby, is Charles but we call him Poppy. Haha. So that was the name they came to buy was Poppy.

L: Okay.

J: Haha. But he's actually named for his father.

L: And what are the ages of your grandchildren now, the spread.

J: Okay, the oldest one is twenty five. Um, the next oldest is um...twenty one, I believe his is twenty one. And um, and Ian is now fifteen. And the youngest is I believe he is thirteen. So—

L: Well that does cover the spectrum of adolescence there!

J: Yes, haha.

L: Well Amber uh, I've known her since she was a little girl. She's grown up with my son Xander, and they've gone to school. So we've been, like I said, knowing each other around the edges for a long time and I'm very grateful to you for sharing your story today, um, because we're going to add it to the Lancaster's history because it's an important part. Are there any parting words or thoughts that you would like to end your story with? We're going to do another chapter here at some point because we aren't finished yet. And if not, it's certainly been eloquent to this point.

J: Well I want to say thank you to you, who um, I see as a real icon in our community. Uh, for the wonderful work that you do. And the way you've um, just reached out to bring in other cultures and, and people of other backgrounds to enrich our lives in a very special way. And, and um...you certainly have made your mark in this community in a very marvelous way and uh, we thank you.

L: Well I'm most honored.

J: And the fact that you also took on the role of working with our youth in school to help them with the kind of things that help them to feel a sense of belonging and identity, so thank you.

L: Thank you, and that is our one real, real beginning moment of empathy.

J: I think so.

L: Thank you.

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