

CCRSRI: Ethnographic Fieldwork & Sociolinguistic Interview

Oral history interview

'Bishop' James Edward Davis Jr.

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1:07:38 recording length

MICASE conventions were used in the following transcript with the addition of an extended underscored break (_____) to signal words/phrases unintelligible during the transcription process.

Sex, Ethnicity, Age, City of Birth, City of Habitation

AMT: F -- Caucasian -- 23 -- Cincinnati, OH -- Norfolk, VA

JED: M -- African American -- 80 -- Chesapeake, VA -- Cape Charles, VA

AA: M -- Saudi -- 28 -- unknown -- Norfolk, VA

LS: F -- Caucasian -- unknown -- unknown -- Cape Charles, VA

AMT: (0) alright if you could just begin just tell me your name um where you were born when you were born your parents you know just gimme a little bit of background about you

JED: hmm okay James Edward Davis Jr, and i was born, at Chesapeake Virginia they call it Eyrehall but eh uh but anyway about seven miles up the road yo- y- yeah its bout seven miles up the road [AMT: okay] and uh i was born nineteen thirty three so i started school over here about nineteen thirty nine something like that

AMT: okay and when you started school did you begin at the Rosenwald school

JED: yes yes I started there in thirty nine and i got out graduated out of there in forty six

AMT: oh congratulations what was um can you remember_ what was your very first memory of the school when you first started

JED: ... maybe the fac- i had to walk all the way over there <LAUGHS> <AMT, AA, LS: LAUGHS> no uh at that time i- i- it was s- such a thing you you definitely walked to school so i i lived up on Jefferson and from Jefferson one two three four ___ six blocks and then it used to be down here at this overpass it used to be a steps that went up on that end right near the pharmacy there with the set of steps that went up the side of the overpass and we walked all the way over there and down to the school for the seven years [AMT: wow that's a long time] it was nice

AMT: yeah was it a_ was it a nice walk were the seasons good to you

- JED: yes yes yes yes in fact it was so nice that we_ i had a friend that he decided he wanted to play hooky and his mother got a whip and whipped him all the way over to the school kinda helped a- assure that he got there <LAUGHS> <AMT: LAUGHS>
- AMT: how old was he when that happened
- JED: oh you're talking, must have been, eight nine years old something like this <LS: LAUGHS> yeah
- AMT: did you guys_ did you walk in a group did you have brothers and sisters that went with you
- JED: well see in my case i had an older sister so she was probably walking with me and uh they, younger children, maybe two or three years later cuz i was yeah _____ baby sister was, two years younger than me and then this two boys was, three years younger than me so it was children but it was plenty children cuz everybody walked i- it was no special _____ everybody walked to school except maybe on a rainy day [AMT: yeah] somebody might have some transportation but we always_ that was_ the_ transportation for school
- AMT: wow and um i know the schools they were built uh that your school was built in nineteen thirty so was it still kind of new feeling to you when you got there or had it been well-used by other children
- JED: uh no i would think it was still, uh in good shape good uh_ ri- and like you say it was the thirties so uh at that time i- it was_ wasn't beat up or run down or nothing it was it was built for us and like you say not long before so it it was still looking good in fact uh, i'd say its building don't look that bad now but i- its been forty years ago but uh it was looking good then [AMT: yeah] inside and out
- AMT: what did it look like can you remember any specifics about it was it brick was it wood
- JED: oh brick yes that was one of a few Rosenwald schools that was built out of brick [AMT: wow okay] if you check and i got some paperwork around here somewhere one of a few Rosenwald schools that was built out of brick [AMT: wow]
- AMT: do you i- was it was it nice and comfortable in there was it drafty at all
- JED: no i- i- it was [AMT: the brick] comfortable they had uh good heating system so forth yes and uh, it wasn't that drafty at all
- AMT: good um i was wondering how many how many classrooms were there i
- JED: four
- AMT: four
- JED: there's four big classrooms
- AMT: wow so you guys had a big school
- JED: yes you you never seen that school
- AMT: not yet <LAUGHS>
- JED: shame on you [AMT: <LAUGHS>]
- AMT: she's showing us later so
- LS: we're going after [JED: oh oh] i like to have them hear about it and then
- JED: it was four classrooms [AMT: mhm] and i say each classroom was about ... four times big as this room here

- AMT: wow about how many students fit in a classroom
- JED: (5) uh, now ... i would say they had three two or three classes in each one of them i i'm bad for estimating but, at that time i'd say we had easily <P: 05> easily forty children in each room easy
- AMT: wow wh- were you guys separated by grades or was it separated by levels of knowledge
- JED: well they now it had four classrooms four rooms and the first room was primer <PRON: /primmer/> first i think and second, three classes uh, the second classroom had third fourth, and maybe the fifth and then the last classroom had the sixth and the seventh grade ... tha- when i was there they wasn't using but one c- they we- they were using three so they had one classroom was basically empty
- AMT: why was it empty was it used for community or was it
- JED: eh uh i i assume there just wasn't that many students at that time that it was needed
- AMT: mhm did the school_ was the school used more after you left than
- JED: i wouldn't say_ i wouldn't say necessarily more but it was continue- somebody i i talked with somebody else later and an- they she was saying that they were using all four rooms when she was over there but she come along like i say some later [AMT: mhm] but uh it was three of it was used regular and then we had uh room for a little lu- lunchroom that was maybe the size of this [AMT: mhm] and then we had cross the hall from that the principal's office which also about the size of this [AMT: that's a good size office <LAUGHS>] yeah yeah like i said i- it was a very well built and very nice school and ____ was we had our toilets was outside we had to walk uh, i'd say, about the length of a block two-thirds of a city block but the girls was over on that side of the yard and the boys was on this side of the yard but they were outhouses you know what an outhouse is [LS: <LAUGHS>]
- AMT: yeah [JED: <LAUGHS>] so was that pretty normal to have outhouses around then
- JED: oh yes oh yes oh yes yep and uh i think, some of the schools when the county start to build them they maybe had th- in fact you might find some of the county schools might have had the outhouses to a point but uh like some of the- like the one in Cape Charles yeah there i think that school has always had indoor toilets and so forth
- AMT: when when you attended the Rosenwald school did you know anybody that went to the county schools
- JED: hmm yes cuz see in our case if you live in Cape Charles that's where you went to school [AMT: mhm] an- and then other children w- occasionally you know around the county and so forth they all got on the school bus and had to ride to school on the school bus
- AMT: so how was it different for you going to the Rosenwald school and not going with the other children on the school bus
- JED: hmm it wasn't a problem it's a lot of things like this if nobody ever tells you the difference you don't know the difference you don't care about the difference [AMT: mhm] but like i said i walked there all seven years an- and i- it was just what everybody did an- and you might find that uh it was uh a lot of schools throughout the county that they were also to a degree they they walked to school most of them they didn't walk to school and the schools

uh were ah much, more or less centered into the neighborhood well it's like that you build them more or less to the neighborhood and so uh it was no problem but things like that_ nobody tell you the difference you don't know the difference it don't make no difference [AMT: mhm] but everybody walked to school ___ and uh it wasn't no bus going out here so Cape Charles children over here the white children a- again was no bus there either if you went to that school over there you walked from where you lived in Cape Charles you walked to that school [AMT: wow] an- and so again nobody tells you the difference you don't know the difference so it don't matter

AMT: **(10)** that's true that's true no- what was_ what was the education like inside the school did you feel you learned a lot did it benefit you later in life

JED: oh yes oh yes it was good it was good in fact uh i remember an old lady her name was Alice Moses and she taught the, primer <PRON: /primer/> and the first grade and the second grade and that tha- that old lady, from, regular classroom education she also took the time for uh music class she she she herself was a music teacher and so for programs and acting and so forth back in that time you didn't have uh special ed teachers nothing of the kind but you learned to play act and so forth and we had an auditorium in that building i didn't mention that it was a nice big auditorium there i don't know when you show em the auditorium is is it's a mess now the auditorium was, i'd say ... it was as big as two of them classrooms if not three of them classrooms it was nice big auditorium got a stage and everything stage is still up there and uh it's a but uh it was a well-built situation it was it wasn't nothing cheap and junky about it it wasn't nothing except the fact that it it just happened to be what was allotted that time in life

AMT: mhmm m- you said uh Miss Moses was your the teacher for primer first and second grade do you remember any of your other teachers

JED: oh yes it was another lady named Mrs Jeanette Joynes an- and she was sort of a_ oh all of these was more or less_ they wasn't no new new somebody just out of college these were had a little age on them so forth so they were middle age people but her name was Jeanette Joynes and uh many times i ride past the house where she used to live out in Fairview and i i remember her from then and so uh she was_ again i think all of them were good teachers its just the fact that uh e- each one had his own character whatnot there but uh Mrs Moses she she never had to deal with the principal she knew how to get her metering stick her yard stick uh a switch and if the boys anybody didn't know how to uh be obedient she didn't k- send you to the principal

AMT: she took care of it herself <LAUGHS>

JED: she took care it herself and uh Professor Smith W-H- Smith again he was a hard man a good teacher and whatnot then i think they all did a very good job and uh i i wouldn't complain about either one of them as for a teacher i wouldn't have complained as for the building or nothing about that that as a school that he again he was principal but he'd get out there with the boys and he taught sports he'd get out there shoot marbles with the boys

he'd get out there and play basketball and whatnot that he taught the sports to the boys and everything out there so it was uh again uh i think it was a very very very good school

AMT: good what were your favorite subjects did you like music did you like sports

JED: i i liked sports but not a lot cuz my daddy wouldn't let me go out there play sports cuz back then he'd be wanting to worry about somebody getting their leg broke and so he wouldn't let me play no games and none of the games and i had two younger brothers that come along, three years later, and one of them was a four letter man in high school but i didn't get a chance to play none them games <LAUGHS> but uh no regrets ah i think he did what he felt was best for me and so forth so i i didn't have anything i think of as a favorite but

AMT: yeah so the last grade you attended was seventh grade

JED: seventh grade over there

AMT: did you go on to school after that or did you go to work

JED: yes yes then ___ after the seventh grade see we went to the high school the county high school [AMT: mhm] th- the white children had their high school i think here but uh the uh Rosenwald school uh was uh elementary school and after the elementary school we we caught the bus then and ride to the high school which was f- f- twelve fourteen miles up the road

AMT: (15) hmm was the high school um when you went was_ did_ was it segregated did you guys have a separate high school

JED: oh yes at that time everything was segregated like i said you hear me say white school the children down here went over here and uh again they went here we went over there and then the time of high school for the blacks we catch the bus and ride like i said fourteen miles up the road so forth and uh but until the segrega- until they removed the segregation which was, let's see i left there in forty-six nineteen-forty-nine, i left, the, high school and I went to New York but it was_ at that time it was still segregated but by that time they they built a high school the county built a high school built a high school so then when they did that uh they made everybody go to the new high school and th- they later built a new middle school cuz when they start to putting the big high school in there they had to call the high school the middle school and then the_ so the middle school took from eighth grade eighth ninth i think something like tenth and about that time until they also put i think the twelfth grade in there so uh but again when they made the changes you uh go with the change during those times everybody didn't get an attitude about whether it was segregated or whether it was not and again uh you know the difference but like i say nobody complained because nobody is there instigating tha- that much of a difference and that

AMT: yeah do you remember when the Board versus Brown of edu- Brown versus Board of Education decision came down in nineteen-fifty-four that said the schools couldn't be segregated anymore

JED: i don't know but i was in New York at the time i i left there in fifty ... and i went to Brooklyn New York and i graduated out of a trade school [AMT: oh] i went to Brooklyn New York Brooklyn automotive school i_ there i learned trade as a mechanic so uh that's

when they made them changes but New York already basically had their_ segregation was over with and they'd done already gone through those changes

AMT: oh so when you_ you moved from Brooklyn back to here right [JED: uh huh] was it was it different moving from a um like a a mixed school or a mixed area back to Cape Charles

JED: the difference again like i said nobody if nobody instigates problems you don't end up with problems [AMT: true true] but uh that was as it was again the trade school i went to they were blacks whites everybody and i say everybody cuz there was quite a mixture there and again uh you take what comes and uh same old thing is like i remember one day we had as a teacher i didn't ever know what a th- detention class was until i got to New York and but uh this little fellow he was small fo- teacher and i wouldn't say he was a bad guy but when we kept noise in class and wanted to have our little mischief poking around in class many time the teacher say sent us out of class and since class that meant we went to the detention class after school and this little guy that had the detention class his name was Raskin i remember and he always would very nicely let us know he says now for everything you get there's a price you have to pay you had your fun in class today and you now you pay your price and he keep us there a half-hour hour or so after class an- and uh but it was part of what coming to school did and again i i i i i never regretted it i did never see him as a bad guy and again i i somehow stayed out of mischief [LS: <LAUGHS>] and uh i've said many times i was only fingerprinted for the military and so forth that i've never gotten into mischief there_ i got a few whippings though i i remember the principal we had (20) over here W-H- Smith and uh i don't remember what the occasion was and what it was about i knew enough profanity whatnot i told him what he could do for me [LS: <LAUGHS>] and when i did that he got a switch and he give me a whipping and by the time i got home that message then got to my daddy so i got another whipping [AMT: oh boy <LAUGHS>] [LS, AA <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS> that was the way they did things those days you didn't argue about what the teacher did to you [LS: <LAUGHS>] the teachers_ while by my father would tell them many time he would tell them don't put your hands on them don't slap my children don't put your fists up at my children they out of order you get a swi- stick or a switch and so forth and put a whipping on them but don't you slap them upside the head don't you put your hand up at them and like i say the time i got a whipping over there at the school when i got home i got another one and uh it was the type of thing you were taught i was anyway you don't argue with the teachers you don't fuss with the teachers the teachers there to teach you an- and again i i'm eighty years old and i only remember fingerprints for the military and so forth i never was any real mischief i wasn't such an angel but uh that was my part in life

AMT: do you think the schools today would be better if the teachers took a switch to the kids sometimes

JED: uh yes [AMT: <LAUGHS>] yes yes now a- again i i think it goes all the way up the ladder cuz like i said that teacher i remember my daughter she, come along and uh ... i think she went to the scho- by that time they done changed over they done segregated and done close

the school down but she uh had teachers there that would give her a X for talking in class and so forth there and so when i would get her report card and there an X there and she said well i wasn't doing nothing she just put that on there she didn't mean too much about it and i'd call the teacher and she said i put an X on there cuz it was excess talking and i bet you do something about it and again you had to do what you had to do and i feel right now that those little things like that help to correct a child and bring up a child and like right now she fifty years old and so forth but again uh never been an issue for so forth that she learned her lesson and studied good and got to a decent place in life in now that she's kinda earn a salary a fair salary and whatnot then

AMT: does she still live around here?

JED: no she's in Washington D-C [AMT: oh wow what does she] (unintelligible) she works in the D-C area works with the government

AMT: wow so must be pretty proud of her for that

JED: oh yes like i say she_ i remember when i was_ when she was getting ready to go to college i says now you stay out of trouble and stay out of mischief and whatnot there an- and i'll see you through it best i can and we'll get you through college one way or another and she did and i did

AMT: ... so when you went to mechanics school did the Rosenwald school help you prepare for mechanics school or did you find out about that on your own

JED: uh i somehow ... i <P: 04> i don't remember for sure but the Rosenwald they didn't have a trade per se they didn't have no skill per se and uh i i guess between my uncle and some of the family that lived in New York i learned about up there like they had different schools that for_ some for uh automotive mechanic and some for electrical and some for various other things and i think i kind of got aware of that up there for a trade an automotive trade

AMT: you said you went into the army or the military

JED: uh yes

AMT: wh- what did you do in the military

JED: i worked on diesel locomotives [AMT: wow <LAUGHS>] see again i had the mechanics automotive and so when i was dra- <HICCUP> oh excuse me [AMT: <LAUGHS>] when i was drafted i was drafted and i was signed to an automotive mechanic school but knowing by this time there was a difference between automotive mechanic and diesel mechanic and so i was drafted under it and sent for automotive and then i took an extra year to take a choice of school and when i took the choice of school then the choice i took for diesel and so _____ like cross over here and there th- the diesel locomotives oh they_ that's more or less the trade at that time was cuz uh you could take and go, your locomotives was all (25) steam stuff like that was at the time and when they was converting over so forth so they built diesels and i i learned diesel as a trade and so again there i felt it was more of a future in it as a trade

AMT: yeah did you stay in the military for a long time

- JED: no no <LAUGHS> [AMT: <LAUGHS>] three years and i got out and uh i got out and i still worked with uh more or less mechanic work
- AMT: mmmm so when did you meet your wife
- JED: uh, i got married the first time in nineteen-sixty, [AMT: mhm] and so ... a- as it happens in many cases in that case it didn't last that long although it last thirty thirty something years and so my last marriage was s- s- seven years ago so [AMT: oh congratulations] mhm so
- AMT: so did you_ once you were out of the military did you continue to work with the diesel locomotives or did you
- JED: i had a problem getting a job for diesel [AMT: mm] so i ended up working on construction but on the construction site i had uh some diesel and it wasn't a locomotive diesel but a commercial diesel which the heart of it's the same it's just th- the purpose is a little different but if you know the diesel a diesel's a diesel so
- AMT: <LAUGHS> you're talking over my head <LAUGHS> [JED: <LAUGHS>] i can drive a car that's about it
- JED: i- it it's the same thing with a car you know so uh you got different makes and different models and so forth there but they all kinda travel the same way they they put an engine in it you got to shift your gears [AMT: <LAUGHS>] and so forth there and so you go back and forth to school or you get out you might want to run up and down the highway you might wanna who knows different purposes but [AMT: <LAUGHS>] same thing
- AMT: that's interesting now did you make a good living off of working on the construction working with diesels and stuff
- JED: uh i i'd say f- fair [AMT: fair] not- nothing to brag on but fair [AMT: yeah] i i i, i would have loved to had more of an income but i i i'd say i did fair i had no false complaint
- AMT: how did your work and how did your job sites compare to those of um like the white construction workers or the white diesel workers
- JED: uh uh it was its a difference uh those some of the times when you finally, see some of the differences and uh some of them you can do something about and some you can't and so like in my case i've been_ i worked over here the bay shore and uh uh a mechanic over there was making it one time i remember he was making like six i think it's six dollars and change an hour but i i noticed the white boys getting made twenty cents more than i was getting [AMT: mhm] they they they got their jobs at some- somehow and you get to arguing with them whatnot there so forth they they were getting twenty cents more than i was or sometimes it was prefer_ a preferable job uh and uh this one might get uh shop _____ where and i didn't but that came with the program and i learned to do my job so that wherever i was i could handle it and uh it_ little twenty cents didn't didn't send me to the poorhouse so
- AMT: that's good when_ so you so you came back and worked around here right
- JED: yeah well see in between here now i i left the military in fifty-six [AMT: mhm] i worked Brooklyn automotive i live- i worked in Brooklyn area from fifty-six to about sixty-eight [AMT: mhm] and then from sixty-eight i come back home and i stayed around here uh

eight ten years and uh, i ... i think i went back to Washington D-C i worked i worked in Washington D-C for twelve fifteen years [AMT: wow] an- and again a mechanic is a mechanic and so i got a job and i worked and uh i _____ you work hard y- uh most time you can keep your job and so, again after another twelve fifteen years there i moved back home and so it was s- sixty-eight i moved back home and then uh, between the church i (30) ministered at the church i took three years and went to the mission field as a missionary and so from sixty-eight til like i say what [P: 05] seventy-nine i think i stayed home here then in seventy-nine i went to mission field, an- and i come back home again

AMT: was it_ was it a lot different for you when you came back home in sixty-eight after the school had been closed

JED: eh no t- to me again ... a lot of these things until somebody take the time and stir you up with some ... uh something to complain about ... if nobody don't tell you the difference i- i- it don't make no difference i i i i i remember a time <LAUGHS> as children me and the little white boy next door get out there in the mud hole together we wrassled together we fought together [AMT, LS: <LAUGHS>] we played together uh if there's any scraps coming up there uh his mar- mother father might take him in the house and gave him a whipping and i ge- get whipping when i get in the house but we we got along fine until they got bigger and someone start telling well you this and not that and a- again until they start stirring up the difference and even then i i remember some of the boys around here that uh_ some us still live here cuz_ i remember the uh, attitude was something that was taught into the children [AMT: mm] an- an- and i- if, if uh i think a lot of its right now still some of the same type of thing bu- but i i knew the lawyer's son W Dixon over here two boys Amos and Andy we got along fine ___ son we got along fine the grocer Paul and his boys w- we got along fine until somebody start to stirring up some, us and them and when they start talking the difference and they had the difference then you start to want to compete and show your difference

AMT: do you think_ we- when did those changes start happening do you th- was it_ was the Rosenwald school still functioning was the Rosenwald school closed

JED: no the Rosenwald school had done closed then they they closed i think they closed that school i'm not sure but i think in fifty-nine or something like that [AMT: mhm] i i was a_ i was in the New York area i think at the time when they closed it they they closed that school and they integrated the white school over here

AMT: how did that go

JED: well, again i didn't have a problem wi- i think it went along fine cuz my daughter ended up going over there [AMT: mhm] an- and uh as it turns out though same thing happened to her Catherine Aimes was the black teacher if she if she if Tyiesha talked too much to her she she'd give her an X and so the same thing i remember wh- there's another lady down on the beach there similar type of thing Tyiesha and her fast mouth there an- and she give her an X for talking too so same old thing and i remember here <P: 05> off and on right now if she come home she might stop by and see if that lady white lady down there was still alive

- and so forth if she did she call little hello and whatnot there and so forth so the children, didn't make no difference til somebody started teaching the difference [AMT: yeah] mhm
- AMT: now do you remember at all_ i mean it probably would have been your parents that would have told you stories_ do you remember stories being told about when the school was built and how important it was to you the community
- JED: i i don't remember anything about them saying that much about it my <P: 06> i i doubt if they knew anything about it then th- th- that Rosenwald business of that school i would say in the last <P: 05> twenty thirty years somebody might have o- opened up the idea and said something about it so forth there but uh i doubt if they knew anything right now again it's something that uh it's being op- it's being talked about and if you dig into it uh it's a reality but a lot of people never knew nothing about the difference of it all they know is it was a school is a school is a school [AMT: yeah] and uh like i say they ... i don't think my parents knew that much about it at all
- AMT: were they proud to have sent their children to such a great school [JED: ah] or was it just an (35) everyday school for them
- JED: it was just an everyday school, cuz actually like it was that school there was one of a few brick buildings, and if you get into the county eh some of the county had some frame buildings but uh that was a a brick building that was built built for the blacks built for the blacks and so like right now still some of the county schools that_ they were built by the county and white and black went there and some of them were brick and some of them frame [AMT: wow that's so cool] you want to buy a good building and a lot of land and so forth you go buy one of them buildings there cuz they got uh asbestos in them and can't do nothing with them <LAUGHS>
- AMT: hmm just have to tear it down <LAUGHS>
- JED: y- you got to do more processing than what is_ you think is worth it but it's quite a few of them buildings right now and they good looking buildings from the outside and so forth but uh they got that asbestos in them and uh cuz again they had steam heat and whatnot there though [AMT: hmm] i don't know how that building got without steam heat in it with its_ it it had i think hot air heat in it
- AMT: whoa now did your building have hot air and heat or was it just
- JED: i- it was hot air
- AMT: wow that's nice <LAUGHS> [JED: ye- yeah] our buildings at O-D-U don't even work half the time [JED, AA: <LAUGHS>] they're either hot in the summer or cold in the winter [JED: oh <LAUGHS>] right [AA: exactly <LAUGHS>] they're awful <LAUGHS> um so now i've heard that you are known as the Bishop around here so um [JED: yeah] did you enjoy your_ did you go to seminary school missionary school
- JED: uh now i had some schooling [AMT: mhm] i i_ when i acknowledged my calling i went to Manhattan Bible Institute and uh i took two or three courses over there between evangelism general bible and so forth there and, again a lot of the rest said is between uh some small quarters or whatnot there but i wasn't a one of them who went through bible college and

got a degree as a theologian but <LAUGHS> see that_ a lot of that goes depends on uh the denomination you're dealing with [AMT: mhmm] there some uh, Pentecostals that, the pastor, he think that the Lord wants you to preach to them you get your leader's permission and you start to studying and do what you can and sometimes you go to school and take some courses sometime no but then there are others like A-M-E and some of if to say uh if you think you supposed to be preaching they say you got to attend our school for fo- four or five years and they they'll authorize you to one degree and then if you think that you you're supposed to be pastoring or whatnot there they th- so good you take another two three years of school and get your degree and then we'll let you pastor see so they depend on the denomination the Baptist don't bother with all that preliminaries they they have a different hoops they put you through and so forth and so it depends on the again th- the affiliation [AMT: mhm] some of them don't all- allow women preachers and that they got so nowadays they do, like a lot of other things they accept uh changes in life and one say we do it this and later on two or three come along vote and say let's do it a dozen other ways

AMT: so what was it like for you after you left the Manhattan Bible Institute did you immediately come back [here and start preaching](#)

JED: [i came here because](#) well after i got out of uh Manhattan b- uh this church where i'm at now, didn't have a pastor, and then it was little small country town and so forth there and uh some of the older leaders died out and, and the younger ones moved away whatnot there and so at that time uh this church didn't have a pastor but my family and others that knew me uh was more or less looking it over for a pastor and i felt uh this is where i should be and i i made the move and come down and i was ordained and what not and uh, i'm still here

AMT: how many years have you been with the church

JED: that was nineteen-sixty-nine when i was ordained

AMT: **(40)** so has your um_ has the membership in the church has it grown since then has it decreased since then

JED: both

AMT: both [JED: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS>

JED: like i say the the the the older ones died out and uh it depends on your denomination depends on your teaching and a lot of that is how well it grows and uh how it does not grow an- and it's the type of thing that_ well all all over the world now you you got the big mega-churches and so forth there [AMT: yeah] they talks about the thousands and then again like uh th- the Chinese and Korean and so forth they they talk about millions <BACKGROUND NOISE> in the congregations _____ some round here bragging about hundreds but th- the- there's Korean congregations there's millions of people so forth there so some again and like it is some of us are good sensitive ministers and some of us are otherwise [AMT: <LAUGHS>]

- AMT: so what makes you stay here in Cape Charles yo- you told me you kept coming back you leave and you come back you leave and you come back is there something here that just sticks with you
- JED: uh now when i_ since i come back in sixty-nine and was ordained i only left one time on a temporary situation on a mission field for three and a half years, but ou- outside of that it's a_ something how i don't whether i can explain it to you or whether you uh hear it and accept it but and you look at life in many cases and y- you wonder how it work that way with you and don't work that way with them i i accepted as a calling i don't know what you know that word or not but in the ministry or as a Christian [AMT: mhm] there's a word calling, uh the Scripture what I think is Paul talk about a fact of a calling and so it depends, how you receive that word calling and how you obey that word calling, and some, uh accept it to a degree and walk away from it and some don't and i yet fit the don't class yet <LAUGHS> and so_ but tha- tha- that calling comes in way of, a a a conviction and it comes when the_ between the word and the spirit of God that it leaves a conviction and tha- that that's why the difference come and that's what a part of the same thing whether they do or don't how fast they hold to the conviction how sincere they about it and some again, uh the whole idea of being a Christian depends how sincere you about it
- AMT: is your congregation pretty sincere d- do they show up regularly or do they come every once in a while
- JED: the few i have [AMT: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS> y- you don't get h- a_ if they're not sincere they won't stay they they they they kinda go their own way they, listen to their own <P: 05> w- what's the word i want, leading their own leading their own guidance and sometime it lines up perfectly with the word and sometime it i- i- it don't [LS: <LAUGHS>] and uh th- they listen to their own guidance they they suit themself good or bad and otherwise they they do what they feel God wants them to do and they stay with it and, that differs too, but
- AMT: that whole quality not quantity thing
- JED: right
- AMT: makes sense makes sense are any of your parishioners_ did they also attend the Rosenwald school
- JED: they have yes yes
- AMT: do you guys talk about it a lot
- JED: well one of them is uh, Diane she she she she went through there and so forth there, and uh her, her sisters and brothers too although they're not here now but she had four brothers and sisters they all went through there i got two well i had four brothers and sisters there but they_ we all went through there but they like myself now they, they're they age ___ years ago
- AMT: (45) do you_ do you feel that the Rosenwald school helped prepare you especially well for being um a minister for being the Bishop of your church

- JED: uh yes in two ways i tell you why i say so, in some things you you you you're taught and you you don't know the value of it and it instill_ it it has its value and later on it shows up i i i i tell people a lot of times that uh i i i'm basically color-blind, an- and i am i i i took two physicals in New York City for the Transit Authority and uh on their subways and so forth the- they got lights down there that all colors of lights and here and there and so forth and i failed the color blind test twice [AMT: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS>
- AMT: so you didn't work for the Transit Authority <LAUGHS>
- JED: no <LAUGHS> but o- on the same hand uh i learned to_ being raised here in Cape Charles when uh, when i moved back home in ninety-eight i ran for town council an- and so when i did i found out that ... i come here knowing ... black and white, an- and uh i'm not uh dumb enough to think that its not a difference but i got along with the white as well as i did the black to a degree when i was voted for council i had more white votes than i did black [AMT: wow] an- and again the eight years i was on i got along with everybody, the white as well as the black because i said i was color-blind naturally so_ but again uh, racially whatnot there i basically dealt in in the c- color-blindness i get along with the town whether it's the, town police or the firemen or whoever it is i- what's fair is fair and never mind us and them or whatnot there you and i uh it don't make no difference [AMT: yeah] and uh, i guess it's just, something built up in there i tell people i i i know what it is i've gone through segregation and what not there but it don't bother me I_ again I wherever and whatever do as you gotta do
- AMT: yeah seems_ it seems like you seize every opportunity that comes your way d-
- JED: i try
- AMT: yeah do you tend to_ y- just from the stories you tell me it seems like you embrace change do you enjoy change or do you just take it in stride
- JED: well i heard something one time and it just st- idea of change idea of change depends i don't have a problem with change but long as it's for progress [AMT: hmm good point] i i i i i i don't have a problem with the change but if it's for good then fine but just to be changing or just because somebody else's ideas uh it don't make me no difference i i accept, a change in a heartbeat there and i try to see what's the reality and if it's for good fine i don't have a problem with change an- and like it was i remember sometimes uh uh even when i was on council there i see some things i thought need changing they say we just change that two years ago i said i think we need to change it back so we change it back an- and after the fight a year or two there enforcing and voting and whatnot there oh okay we_ we'll accept the fact that change was good for that idea but i don't think it was good for this idea and i take what goes you know what's good and what's bad and deal with it
- AMT: has the town of Cape Charles_ has it changed for the good since you were a child or has it changed for the bad what would you say, or has it stayed about the same <LAUGHS>
- JED: uh i i don't think it's necessarily changed for good or bad [AMT: mhm] i i think, you have to deal with life and l- life brings about some change you have to learn to accept and part of that is like i used to do with a boy i was in the army with i was a diesel mechanic and he

was a steam mechanic and he could out-argue me on the fact of a steam locomotive, [AMT: mhm] and uh he could tell you how it was better and the advantage of it and whatnot and my only point that made me uh win my argument was i say you tell me why they throwing (50) away them old s- iron horses and spending millions of dollars to replace them with diesel, an- and so so there was an advantage to diesel and so forth an- and i i stuck with what i felt was an advantage and he'd argue and we'd fussed and whatnot the whole time i was in it peacefully so but uh yeah_ i think the whole town is just like it is y- you had to go through some of the changes of time i- i remember years ago when the, the town was a railroad town [AMT: yeah] and so the railroad done gone out of business though just about we got enough railroad over there to kinda say it's a railroad [AMT: <LAUGHS>] but nothing to write home about and get excited about [AMT: mhm] but the railroad's gone out and uh they're trying to make it a a town with golf and sports, <BACKGROUND NOISE> and uh, the change is coming whether <AUDIO DISTURBANCE> you ___ the change uh it's a slow process, people <BACKGROUND NOISE> always died out the younger ones say well hey we want a tourist attraction we want to have uh this or that and these things of change and i say fine but you gotta deal with the fact there's still some of these people here can't deal_ there's enough going that peo- that tourists is gonna supply a a livelihood so you gonna need some blue collar work you gonna need somebody making ten dollar an hour shoveling coal or doing mechanic or farming or whatnot there everybody gone be able to say we got to have a a a piece of ___ on the train ride now for tourists [AMT: wow <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS>

AMT: it's a beautiful town

JED: it's beautiful an- well see all that comes with the town see i i lived here, and to me i i knew what it was to go down on this beach here and i knew what it was seaside and bayside and i didn't see that so big about a waterfront property or so forth or_ i knew the waterfront down there cuz i lost three or four friends they got drowned down there so forth so <BACKGROUND NOISE> what i knew of the waterfront but uh she comes here and she adores th- the waterfront she adores the bird-watchers i knew a a place down there that Fort Custis and th- the area whatnot there [AMT: mhm yeah] i knew a difference in the black bird and the crow but uh [LS: <LAUGHS>] i didn't know nothing about no bird-watchers and so forth there <LAUGHS> [AMT: <LAUGHS> me neither] and there's people here that travel hundreds of miles that_ for this bird-watchers they they know the difference of a whole lot of these birds an uh_ some of it right over here i remember when they first built this industrial park i took a walk through_ they had a a walking place from the building out to the water and there they had again bird-watchers and so forth and like i say i i know a pigeon from a blackbird [AMT: <LAUGHS>] but i <LAUGHS> [LS: <LAUGHS>] ___ admiration for a birds ___

AMT: <LAUGHS> i'm the same way i i know a couple birds but [JED: <LAUGHS>] that's about it they all sound like birds

- JED: <LAUGHS> uh huh so it is you live and learn as my father used to say and y- you die and forget it all some of it y- y- you take it and deal with it and <BACKGROUND NOISE> i like the boating and the fishing and whatnot there so forth and even that got so one man told me my boat was a a yard ornament [AMT: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS> it wasn- it didn't look like i was doing much fishing it was there as an ornament decorating the yard <LAUGHS>
- AMT: um i say_ i guess one of my last questions for you will just be_ w- have you been over to the Rosenwald school recently have you seen it in the last couple years
- JED: sure i been in and out of there they_ we_ i uh <BACKGROUND NOISE: let me call you right back> i try going on_ but we_ i i been in and out of there for the_ we dedicated a marker for the school here about what two years ago three years ago and so i've been in and out of there and i i i i keep a watch on it i'm part of the initiative there so i keep some good watch on it i can't do much about it cuz it ain't ours but uh we watch for it and hope to make some changes and maybe later on we get control of it and whatnot there but, i i keep a good watch on it
- AMT: what type of changes are you looking to make i know you guys are hoping to buy it right buy the land and buy the school back
- JED: mhm again find something useful for it and uh this area here as it is right now uh we could (55) use a convention center <HICCUP> convention center
- AMT: oh yeah sounds like the school was big enough
- JED: yes big enough and land enough around it so uh i don't know where the money gone come from <LAUGHS>
- AMT: well hopefully if we get the interviews out and get those circulating and get some donors in here for you [JED: yeah yeah yeah] i can't wait to see the school [JED: i i i i]
- LS: that's where we're going next
- AMT: oh do you have any questions
- LS: yeah i_ things just popped into my head as you talk um uh so during the time you were at the Rosenwal- at the_ it's Cape Charles elementary actually right [JED: yeah] um what were the_ what was the role of churches and the community in the school did did the churches and the community were they involved or did they **did they stay away or**
- JED: **it it** they_ to a degree there was an involvement there but it wasn't announced as much that you hear me talk about this Alice Moses [AMT: mhm] and so forth uh we come to school in the morning we had a a a a small i think you would call it more or less a chapel or a, time first thing in the morning that we took the time for pledge allegiance an- and a word or prayer this was every morning the teachers pushed it forward and the whole school went that way especially over there now i don't know what they did the others but we always an- and so again uh the teachers that i knew of_ teachers during those days it was a a an identity y- yo- you you didn't see teachers out doing something and everything their their manner was that of a distinction you knew that was Miss Moses and you knew she was a teacher so you didn't see her out drinking and boozing and partying and all this W-H Smith

that was our_ i found out years later uh they they might have had some of them little quiet spots and gone to clubs what they did sort of thing but uh uh th- the teachers held an example and that example was i wouldn't say it was announced by the church but it was respectable enough that it it would be approved by the church

AMT: did the community follow in the teachers' footsteps did they try to live up to the teachers' standards **did** the students do that

JED: **well** students i i think it was a good for the students now now again how good it was and so forth there's a a life_ i had something happen to me this past week, a young man, uh <BACKGROUND NOISE> and he started picking on me_ he didn't pick on anybody but he he identified me and him i married him about ten years ago [AMT: <LAUGHS>] an- and so i said where's my wife and so he said i think he said she was in Philly and he lived in Jersey i say what she doing over there and so forth i chewed on him as if say why you not with her and whatnot an- and so he start to telling me some of the things that we do many times you know how you take some things that uh this is the way the world says it and this is the way everyone thinks of it and so forth there an- and part of it was yes and part of it was sort- not quite in line with the Bible and so i was in the barber shop and i i i saw this book up there on the counter and it was an old Bible that the barber had left laying around after years and they read it occasionally and so forth an- and it wasn't one i was familiar with cuz i i got a variety of Bibles but this was a an interpretation i didn't know but what he was saying was so far out of line so i went and got this Bible and showed it to him and this and that and he began to read it and i let him read it i say what now what does that say there an- and that said enough contrary to his thinking and so forth and so we went on about three or four different verses an- and i didn't pay as much attention to it as the barber did he got on his cellphone somebody <P: 04> must've called him on his phone or something so he got up and he listened to his phone and he walked out the door an- and so the barber says don't look for him to come back here he_ you done put him in the Bible he ain't coming back in here he'll wait until you leave here he ain't got nothing he want to see in that Bible th- [LS: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS> an- an- and so there are people that this choice an- and what they think is right fine what they feel they want to do that's good and **(60)** some will say yes to what the Bible says and so on says but they throw a but in there and i say the but is like the goat th- th- the Bible talks about the sheep being preferable to the children of God but the goat is uh l- contrary so <LAUGHS>

LS: <LAUGHS> um i just have a one thing that i'm really curious about um what did your parents do your dad what was his work

JED: my father years ago and somebody got on this here not too long ago i think it was_ i was listening to the Baldwins up here the other day_ my father and his brother years ago they drove tractor on the farm for G-R Webster [LS: **mhm**] Webster had one of the bigger farms in the area he had farm equipment that's drove from Kiptopeke on up past Eastville that he look at old diamond T trucks and farm haul tractors and so forth there four wheel trailers to hauling produce and fruit to cannery and whatnot there so my father and his brother drove

truck f- and tractor and stuff for G-R Webster for years but in later years he drove_ he bought taxis [LS: oh] and so in this area here we go back as far as nineteen-forty forty-one or forty-two uh, we had about, thirty-two taxis in this Cape Charles area [LS: <LAUGHS>] between Cape Charles and let's say _____ [LS: uh huh] we had thirty-two taxis and my father had three uh it was another fellow here Cook had four and around it was one two and three around the community and my father run taxis up until he died

LS: wow interesting so it it sounds to me like um the community must have valued education and your fa- and obviously your father expected you to do well in school and then_ and your parents_ um and then to move onto high school um did most of the kids have that value in their families

JED: well uh i i'll say something i don't know how much he expected [LS: hmm] but he taught me the value of a whip and correction [AMT, LS: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS> and being a decent son <LAUGHS> he taught me that and i guess that led up to the rest of it [LS: right]

LS: well what did everybody go to high school who who who who a-

JED: we had quite_ we had quite a a a sch- school scholarship so forth yes definitely the whites and the blacks we had uh i don't remember having the busses i know but uh, right now i i was school board for a while we had busses running up and down here an- and they went to school schools around here too i i got a book Mr Bell and i wen- went up to the [LS: museum] museum thing here the last time it was over at_ was it at Nantucket i believe it was [LS: mhm] and this lady, had wrote this book and she had a listing of the schools throughout the county and there was schools enough around here for white and black rich and poor and a lot of times you didn't have to worry about running all over town to get to it i i was surprised when Mr Bell was telling me it was one school right across the road from where he live at and it was an old frame school there but it was a school and i know i remember one school that i went to was up on uh what they call Crossroad a- that time but now they call it Pet Town road but again it was school over there an- and the princ- the teachers they they they taught the difference that you hear me talk about this little man at at school talking about d- detention class and we had an old man around here and they called him Mr McCune and Mr McCune was the principal at this school over there over there by Pet Town road and far as he was concerned you was taught manners you was taught to discipline and so forth an- an- and it wasn't no thin- choosing whether you worked or not he taught you and if you didn't like his teaching you had a problem cuz he was he was very firm [LS: hmm] and just like i remember up at the high school we had a fellow that J-F Banks whe- when i went to the high school and even when it was all black far as he was (65) concerned J-F Banks wasn't a bad man he wasn't a hard man and so forth but J-F Banks was firm enough and he had a manner about him to a degree that uh <BACKGROUND NOISE> you knew what it was to be disciplined and he come out there ___ and that high school at that time had a_ his office was sitting like here and the steps that go upstairs was over here a classroom was over there and a classroom was over there and th- the step that went downstairs over here but he could come out his office_ he could

just watch everything that went around in that school to a degree and he see you out of your class young lady why are you out of your class [LS: <LAUGHS>] an- an- and uh you didn't have a worthwhile answer he say you go tell Miss Bell i sent you Miss Bell was the janitor and that meant you gonna rake some leaves [LS: <LAUGHS>] or do something helping her clean up [AMT, LS: <LAUGHS>] and do some janitorial work and uh i didn't know him necessarily with a a whip or a ruler or whatnot but he was firm enough any young man my age or give or take ... maybe ten years younger and a lot of the old ones you mention J-F Banks [LS: <LAUGHS>] J-F Banks left his mark and it was a well-mannered young man [LS: mhm] throughout the county and not only him it was plenty of em around here Alice Moses was over here at this school who we had a a lady uh i remember was in Cape middle school and again a lady but i remember she got the job done she, let you know you was to be disciplined and she was gone see to it and but all around there you you were well_ there there were those that did a good job to say teach and bring a child up decently and again children went to school they you didn't decide if you want to go or not like i told you this lady she whipped her son all the way back to school and made sure he went to school <LAUGHS> [LS, AMT, AA: <LAUGHS>] you you didn't have no what they had a thing where they_ i'm not thinking of the word right now but uh when the school didn't go to school that day the city and the town forced them so i- it didn't happen that mom and dad made a difference

LS: <LAUGHS> wow that's wonderful okay well i could go on and on [AMT: oh i know] but Clarence Small is expecting us <LAUGHS> so [JED: okay okay] it was love- (67)