

Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative  
Oral History Interview – October 12, 2013

Thomas Godwin (Interviewee)  
Wauneta Godwin (Interviewee Wife)  
Jade Huffman (Interviewer)  
Ellen Cline (Observer and Interviewer Assistant)  
Linda Schulz (Videographer, Interviewer Assistant, Project Director)

Sex, Ethnicity, Age, City of Habitation

TG: M AA 75 Cape Charles VA  
WG: F AA 75 Cape Charles VA  
JH: F C 28 Hampton VA  
EC: F C 60 Norfolk VA  
LS: F C Cape Charles VA

JH: alright um i'm interviewing Thomas Godwin he's going to tell us a little bit about himself and we're going to talk about the Rosenwald um project kay um can you start off by just telling us a little about yourself

TG: well < LAUGH > you asked me already

JH: i know i that was just a little bit of [TG: yeah] interview just some basic information about

TG: well Tom Godwin born in Cape Charles uh my parents were Thomas L Godwin and Alison Godwin my fa- my mother was a fu- funeral director and my father was cement contractor [JH: yeah] and uh probabl- fact i think was about the only cement contractor at that time in the town at\_ at\_ i think he started around nineteen-eleven [JH: yeah] now i did hav- assist him in the later years uh we used to a uh kinda comp- uh compliment the funeral business by by making vaults and tombstones and puttin vaults in i had a few little jobs here and there in my life that i can think\_ wasn't able to uh do very well working for others [JH: yeah] i always wanted to work on my own [JH: i understand that.] so i had my\_ uh i guess own business about first- my own business was probably i had a grass cuttin business when i was about twelve [JH: mhmm] had about thirty lawns that i used to cut in town i was always trying to do other things to uh earn money and i ha- i had uh uh kind of an ingolfant (sic) mind i could do things that\_ once i saw you do it uh saw or i could read and figure out how to do it so along my quest along with being a funeral director and embalmer and i did a little electrical work i was electrician wired about thirty-five houses here in town wired this one [JH: wow] did a little plumbing and <P:05> uh and i was always involved in in politics because my mother was [JH: okay] from from childhood uh <PHONE RINGS> [JH: oh dear] a lot of the things we uh\_ <PHONE

RINGS> i'm trying to remember some things that i\_ of substance <LAUGH> uh  
<PHONE RING>

JH: that's okay um that's really good so you you mainly\_ um you did a lot your own business a lot of entrepreneurial work

TG: yeah and we always had uh uh we were home to a lot of people with a lot of problems they they may not have been problems but they were just uh concerns or issues [JH: mkay] uh my phone number is my funeral home number is three-three-one-thirty-eight-ten the significance of it which means that the number thirty-eight was the number of phones that were there when she got it [JH: uh] so there were thirty-eight phones in the tow- in the whole town [JH: wow] meaning that it brought us all close together cause most people did not have a phone [JH: mhmm] most people did not have a car [JH: mhmm] Cape Charles was a walking group of people we walked everywhere you went the\_ only in the recent years have we started uh walkin when somebody got a car we all gather around the community [JH: mhmm] to go and see the car and admire it with the person [JH: mhmm] that was gettin the car [JH: mkay] cause there wasn't any interest ra- uh rate like they do and you\_ [JH: uh'hu] but quite quite often it was a handshake uh arrangement most of the time [JH: yeah] fam- are you familiar with that

JH: yup definitely

TG: yeah [JH: yeah] i've actually been been to uh Norfolk and bought things [JH: uhuh] uh in fact we bought a car and i call back home and i told 'em you know i just got a car will you cover it for me < JH LAUGH > [JH: yeah] and got my insurance and things like that [JH: very good] so\_ and i\_ i still feel that way if i owe you some money i'm gonna pay you [JH: yeah] whether you do all that paperwork or not

JH: right exactly [TG: yeah] it's a honor right

(5) TG: well that's that's the way we always did it [JH: yup] and we have some honor among each other too i believe in uh if you give me\_ uh uh you tell me your secret and you tell me to keep it i will [JH: that's good] and now there are some people who uh who have died and i still got that secret in me [JH: yeah] so i believe in keepin it

JH: very good [TG: uh] alright i'm gonna ask you some questions now about um the school uh for the project um how did the uh separate but equal doctrine um affect schooling here in Cape Charles

TG: well the school that i was attending did not have running water [JH: alright] or bathroom facilities [JH: uhuh] it had a hand pump out side [JH: uhuh] and we all would gather around there and pump the water for our- ourselves and there was a outdoor privy in the back [JH: mhmm] and i guess we adopted to it because it was the way of life nothing we could do about it [JH: mhmm] you know at that time we really wasn't trying to make comparisons uh till later on [JH: mhmm] the only time i

really began to make any comparisons when i saw books that were\_ that were handed back down to us from the oth- uh the white school [JH: mhmm] or the desks or somethin like that and then we knew then that and that they they had typewriters and we didn't [JH: wow] so i i think that we we as a people have done remarkably well [JH: yeah] given the fact that we didn't have never had a in fact even through high school we didn't hav- long time before we had a typewriter in the whol- only person\_ the only place was the typewriter was in the office [JH: wow] so we weren't geared toward uh business [JH: yeah] so we had do that kinda on our own so and um so we knew about what was in store for us i guess we're either going to the factory or we're gonna go to a- a- a college or we're gonna just leave here and go north and look in search of work

JH: yeah [TG: yeah] well and uh

TG: but the school you- you want me to stay with the school i'm sorry

JH: no it's okay no [TG: uh uh] this is excellent [TG: the uh] it's really good

TG: in in in the school there was\_ <P:04> we had .... three teachers and a principle [JH: hu] the remarkable thing i remember most of all in the school was the whole time i went to elementary school ... there was\_ the teacher was always there she never missed a day [JH: wow] in all the years i was there [JH: that's amazing] unless she missed a day when i missed one but in all\_ everyday i was there she was there [JH: that's amazing] and uh i remember my first grade teacher [JH: hm] i remember her having these three dresses four dresses a green and white polka dot a brown and white polka dot a blue and a white polka dot and a plain brown [JH: uhuh] dress and with the with gran- with the granite shoes [JH: mhmm] i don't remember anybody being set a side or off the side or being considered uh special [JH: mhmm] uh everybody had to uh had to learn [JH: mhmm] whether you were slow or fast [JH: yup] and uh you did not move from one class to another without meeting suitable proficiency in the proceeding class [JH: yeah] so you just remained there if you didn't\_ if you weren't\_ if you didn't make the grade you didn't\_ you didn't move up

JH: there was no social promotion

TG: no

JH: that's nice

(10) TG: none of that < JH LAUGH> they had a way of getting it to you had devotions in the morning uh i think\_ i believe it wasn't\_ yeah we had private devotions in the class [JH: mhmm] but on\_ i can't remember whether it was Monday or Friday that we would have an uh a general assembly [JH: mhmm] and we would have the uh church songs and uh prayer very short so then we got started [JH: mhmm] i always felt that that kind of made me behave myself for the first half of the day < EC LAUGH > <JHLAUGH> <TG LAUGH> so then then i was on my own after that i guess

JH: yeah were the rules very strict in school

TG: yeah

JH: yeah

TG: very strict uh <P: 08> uh they had a- a method of teaching you ... uh that's why i can't understand why we uh have to have these special groups uh so much now uh maybe they do have some kind of psychological profile that not good [JH: yeah] but if someone ... is teaching you a word ... and you keep missing it and somebody hits you across your fingers when you did\_ you keep missing that word you can't spell it after a while you're get tired of the pain <EC LAUGH> you gonna learn the word [JH: yeah] or somebody pull your hair or step on your foot [JH: yeah] yo- you'll get it after a while

JH: i i hope so < LAUGH>

TG: well i- i- i like i said i don't remember anybody i- i- i think\_ i remember two fellows who were drafted out of the seventh grade [JH: mhmm] and were in the army [JH: wow] so like i said you didn't move till you were\_ but at that time if you had a third third or fourth degree i- i mean third or grade education if you- if you were good at that you could make it [JH: yeah] and seventh grade well you- you cou- you could survive you could find a way of doing it [JH: yeah] because uh we all had to su- survive [JH: yeah] but there was money here at that time you- you- you could\_ if you really wanted to go out and uh make a little money you could do it [JH: yeah] yeah [JH: very good] you got a little ingenuity it took that [JH: yeah] school books uh <P: 05> as i look back it could have been a little bit depressing uh depressing because i remember this book [JH: mhmm] we were studying from an- and it was about Billy ... and Jane ... i i can't remember all the other ones an- an- and a monkey called Winky so the uh the whole story was ... it it really wasn't us [JH: mhmm] because uh Billy's dad was going\_ he had his briefcase\_ he was going to work and he was gonna catch a plane and he was going to his office [JH: yeah] but that was not for us

JH: yeah couldn't relate real well.

TG: no no we couldn't i mean and the pictures all white he's got yellow hair so uh and uh and all the whole family they doing they living a utopian life style you know we weren't\_ so yo- so it\_ so but i guess what it was we did learn the words and we could understand it [JH: mhmm] better but it wasn't a true picture

JH: yeah very good um what was like the- the\_ i know you said about the water and the typewriters and the books but how was the actually building compare um today to what the building and schooling was like um then

(15) TG: it it was well built very well built probably you should be able do something with it now because of the blocks the- the heavy thick cement blocks uh i don't know if you\_ if the\_ if there was cement i can't remember what what you would call it but it was excellently built uh they took\_ there\_ in fact it it was meticulously built well built everything on it the handrails the steps the windows they had radiators steam radiators they had a ball in the back and uh i recall as one of the rewards some time we would go and uh take the key and uh let some of the steam out of there ou- out of that uh uh radiator [JH: uhuh] because you needed to purge it uh [JH: mhmm] let it off every once in a while [JH: mhmm] so

JH: very cool very cool um what was the uh community involvement uh with the school like from parents and church

TG: uh had a lot of\_ uh w- we had a lot of plays and um <P: 06> the activity uh we would do recitals people singing uh showing off their talent talent shows [JH: mhmm] uh ... and i don't see that much anymore we had to learn long poems about the different people like Longfellow and uh uh Roger Kipling so uh we got a taste for that and the old uh negro\_ at that time negro hymns and their poems that were written and we kinda got a idea after a while that that was\_ that was more relative to us than than Jane [JH: yeah] and Billy [JH: yeah] because we were living that life so

JH: yeah and was the church really involved with the school as well

TG: oh yes the church was always involved as a matter of a fact ... it was one of the requirements of a teacher to to be at Sunday school and to teach and if they didn't go to church uh they would probably be questioned by the school board [JH: okay] or they\_ if not\_ if not\_ is the superintendent and that went on for a long time even up through my high school [JH: mhmm] you were expected to be in Sunday school if you were a teacher

JH: yeah and you had said you had devotions once a week with the whole school anyways

TG: yes uhuh

JH: right and then also in class

TG: right

JH: yeah [TG: so] very cool uh what other curriculum did you guys use um out side of

TG: the math uh arithmetic the three what are they three r's [JH: yeah] writing - rithmetic and what reading

JH: yup

TG: yeah

JH: reading writing -rithmetic very good um and what type of educational training did most of the teachers and staff have

TG: they instilled in us anoth- another set of values be truthful uh ... be um to behave behav- behavior problems w- we had\_ they were so different from from what it is today uh w- we were getting spanked about\_ people just cros- cross over that and learn sit down and be quiet uh uh say yes ma'mam no ma'mam yes sir yeah those kind of things

JH: so behavior was a big focus

TG: huh

JH: behavior was a big focus [TG: yes] of the curriculum

TG: that that was a way of getting by

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: mkay

TG: and uh we would enjoy the the five minute recesses ...

JH: only five minutes

TG: yeah

JH: oh what would you guys do on the recesses

TG: well shoot marbles and uh .... root the pig which is definitely not allowable no

JH: what is that

TG: we had a pock- we had pocket knives and we used to play a game with the pocket knives and we could do the carving and that was one of the great things that we we would look forward to at owning our own buck knife and uh and uh the the girls were playing barbar (sic) jacks and uh what else they did ring around the roses uh may what that thing called may i Waun- Wauneta

WG: yes

TG: what was that what was the name game you could make so many steps and if you

WG: hello

EC: hi

TG: if you didn't say this is my wife Wauneta

EC: hi

JH: hi

TG: yeah

WG: good to meet you all

JH: you too

(20) TG: yeah they're doing interview [WG: mhmm] for the Rosenwald

WG: right

TG: the game [EC: mother may i] you remember the game where you ha- had to jump and uh but if you went you said may i if you didn't say may then you had to step back

WG: hopscotch

TG: hopscotch yeah

WG: and we had one that was one-two-three red light

TG: one-two-three um

WG: that you were advance and if you forgot to say may i i think that was the one

TG: yeah

WG: mhmm but hopscotch was different because [TG: yeah] we had different blocks you got this and then you go [TG: yeah] forward and you had do all that it was like it was like a balancing game

TG: incidentally at my last\_ no three class un- we have class re- reunions every two year the high school [JH: that's awesome] and they wanted to do the wrapping of the may pole <JH LAUGH> <WG LAUGH> she was the only one who remembered it and

[JH: wow] they and so she offered\_ stated i gotta i got something good on my tape you know our class reunions thing so she decided to go back and do that that was one of the things that that we used to have to call a may day [JH: mhmm] and uh we would prepare for that during the year learned to do the different kinds of exercise ... uh then we'd have game i- i was the pitcher i used to pitch for the the softball game and .... well all of us uh were real close because we had to walk over the hump [JH: mhmm] and we came and then we'd meet and we had to walk down in fact i had to come right down this street to get to my home when we came over the hump doing sometimes we could stop by there was a store on the front street [JH: mhmm] uh Jefferson's store [JH: mhmm] and we could buy a big bologna sandwich every once in a while i call went over that had one of those stores and i'd ask them you think i can get a slice that bologna sandwich cause it was a special [JH: uhuh] uh he said i would like have some of it myself <EC LAUGH><JH LAUGH>[JH: awe] but you could do a lot with fifteen cents [JH: yeah] for a meal [JH: yeah] yeah

JH: a lot different now huh <LAUGH>

TG: right

JH: alright um you said that the the school had three teachers is that correct.

TG: three teachers and a principal

JH: and a principal

TG: well the principal would have been teach too cause he did teach m- th- he taught the sixth and seventh grade and the others divided\_ um we had premier and first and second and second maybe third fourth and fifth was in th- the\_ or another teacher

JH: okay [TG: yeah] um and how what kind of educational training did the teacher's have um coming in do you know

TG: <P: 04> well i don't remember the first uh my prem- i- i don't know what kind training the first grade teacher had you have to ask somebody else they uh the second i mean th- the third fourth Ms Jones i think sh- she attended college or finished college and the principal was always a college graduate she might've been also i don't know right [JH: mkay] but she was very good a excellent teacher she gave us a good\_ we got a good start

JH: yeah [TG: yeah] what did they teach particularly well

TG: uh how to read and to write i- i didn't get that too well uh spelling um -rithmetic down that part and cause most of our reading guess i lear- i learned a lot of reading in Sunday school cause for being able to do [JH: mhmm] our Sunday school lesson

we had to read this card and there was just always so it helps you do well in in regular school [JH: yeah] uh but behavior was important [JH: yeah] yeah

JH: very good uh what was your favorite memory from school or the most memorable moment you have from school [TG: hmm]

JH: it's kind of a loaded question sorry <LAUGH>

TG: i gotta pass on that for a minute [JH: yeah] i can't even think there's so many good memories that i had

JH: yeah do you have any particularly bad memories that were like not great that you remember like hahhh that was so awful

(25)

TG: <P: 04> not really [JH: huh] i can't .... cause e- everything that happened to me i- i deserved <JH LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> <04 LAUGH> it- it was bad at the time you know i guess uh i- i guess one the- one of the main things i remember ... i knew that if i was late for reces- coming in for recess i had to pu- i'd get two licks on my hand so when i\_ soon as you go\_ some of us we were doing it so much that w- we knew were gonna be late so we'd walk through the door way just hold our hand out and get the two sticks and keep goin on <EC LAUGH> and this particular time i said uh i know another way so i go\_ that's why i know about this building so i go in the back and there was a\_ there's a man there\_ one of the rooms he did caning in w- we and a pair sort of like that chair right there and h- h- he did a lot of repair chairs and furniture like re- that furniture that's all been done so [JH: yeah] so i remember he was a huge guy a big guy and and i was trying to come in that window you know get in the window i'm gonna go around and not get the beating so he throws me a rope out the window and i grabbed the rope and he pulls me on <EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> up through the window and the\_ but he pulled me so fast and while i was doin it my uh m- m- my knuckles on my hands th- they were dragging up against the building and they just just knocked all the skin off and i was bleeding and i got up to the window and i said this is worse than the beating <LAUGH><EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> [JH: sounds like it] i was bleeding like like i don't know i said so much for that idea <LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> so i had enough you know uh <EC LAUGH> i remember one one one friend he was he was a cousin of mine he he was one those incorrigible people i guess and uh i remember one day he came in in the room and the we all had these sweaters and he had this compass with this saw you know how they uh spin and he say he walks in Miss Jones i been so bad i'm gone kill myself right now and he take his compass and he does this and falls on the floor <JH LAUGH> and she jumped up oh she she was she was horrified all of us was scared you know and what he had done he had added some beaver board and put under his shirt and sweater bout that thick <JH LAUGH> he and he and he came in there with the he hit that on the floor and he was a big guy and she was about five-three maybe [JH: hm] so she would she would beat him and and she had she had to lift her beat up <LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> cause he was so tall you'd beat him like this <LAUGH> [JH: awe] so i guess uh the other thing that i remember uh um uh and that

and i remember a guy that was goin goin in the attic and coming down in the closet and taking your lunch <JH LAUGH> so i mean he was just so many different and you know cause we all had different kinds of meals and we shared cause i maybe i didn't i wanted what that person had and they wanted what i had you know

JH: a little battering

TG: yeah and we and we bargained different kinds foods and all um

EC: did the boys pick on the girls

TG: oh yeah <EC LAUGH> yeah we weren't supposed to like each other but until about around the sixth grade <EC LAUGH> <LAUGH> [JH: yeah] what do actually at toward the end it wasn't but two girls in our class

JH: really

TG: mhmm from the fifth to the\_ through the seventh [EC: hm] [JH: wow] yeah

JH: and why is that

(30) TG: um ... i don't know um i- i guess .. we didn't always have the same people cau- we were like\_ we would have a lot of migrant population coming through right over in that area by\_ near the school were the um resort area is that was Hollowood farm and there were houses over there that farm- farmers that over there the farm people [JH:mhmm] and uh there was these\_ this family would come or families come every year so they would stay until the fall crop was over then they would leave so a not\_ a lot of them just didn't graduate here and then as i said we were transit people move north for a better life you know [JH: mhmm] especially after the railroad left uh .... and there wasn't much to do other than work in the field [JH: mhmm] so

JH: .... well uh how students were in your class most of the\_ most of the time on average

TG: probably twenty o- or so

JH: ok and that was just one grade or the couple grades

TG: uh it would be uh two or three grades i can't remember all in in the same class

JH: okay

TG: yeah [JH: huh] so it it was class anyway um yo- we could do a lot in five minutes you know you were talking the recess you'd be surprised at how much you can get done

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: why's that

TG: yeah you could go down the street down there go down through the woods <EC: huh> cut across and go in the field and get a watermelon and come back <EC LAUGH> and all that

JH: a whole watermelon

TG: yeah

JH: in five minutes

TG: yeah you could do that <LAUGH>

JH: oh man

TG: well everything was close by you know we were fast

JH: i was going to say you have to be fast carrying that

TG: well we were <JH LAUGH> we were a kind of team we would\_ we would\_ we were a good team

JH: you had your knives too right

TG: we had everything

JH: you could cut it up pretty small to carry it on the way back

TG: eat on the fly <JH LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> i mean you had you don't have to be a surgeon to get into a watermelon <EC LAUGH> [JH: wow] you drop on a\_ on a big stone it's gone it's open [JH: yeah very cool] but uh .... it was a very serious thing if you got caught you really had to be you <LAUGH> you got be the times that we got whipped for the- no body could sit down through that so

JH: yeah

TG: yes

JH: i can imagine

TG: a little bit after that

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: did you have a particular group of friends that you hung out with most of time

TG: <P: 04> not really cause we was small\_ we had different ideas\_ i guess it com- went according to our age [JH: mhmm] and the- the and the grade level so those in the seventh well wouldn't have to much to do with those in the uh third or something like that you know

JH: yeah

TG: so

JH: well did you have like a particularly best friend that you spent most your time with in or out of the school during that time or just kind of hung out with the whole group of people

TG: no in fact you know what ... i don't a best friend now everybody my friend

JH: yeah

TG: matter of fact i have the ability to just love i can do that i can decided that i- i make my own decisions that sometime i go and i choose a person [JH:yeah] i say i'll decide that i'm going to love you and i don't care what the situation is and to tell somebody that you love 'em causes a lot of emotions [JH: yeah] you don't understand what i'm you don't understand why i saying it in the first place [JH: mhmm] so you got all kind of thoughts and i remember telling the uh the superintendent of schools Dawn Goldstein [LS: uhuh] i walked up to her and tell 'er and said i love you paralyzed her <EC LAUGH>

LS: sure Dawn

TG: yeah i mean but i really do and i decided now she\_ i guess everything went on in her mind [JH: yeah] but it it came from the heart [JH: yeah] and i and now when she sees me if i don't say it first she'll say it she'll say i love you don't care if her husbands there or who i love you [JH: awe] and i do that every once in a while i go around in church or a person because it does put you on uh uh in a precarious position you know [JH: mm] somebody walk up to you and say that you don't you don't know what i'm thinkin

JH: yeah that's cool

TG: but it does uh and you know i tell\_ i tell people don't\_ don't tell me anything cause i don't want\_ i don't want to know anything i don't want to know anything about anybody [JH: yeah] that's a wide open door i got tell you this <EC LAUGH> <LAUGH> you got to know this no i don't

JH: no i don't i don't need to know it that's alright i do the same

TG: i'll try to get back to the- keep to the school

(35) JH: no it's okay i love hearing it

TG: just just wipe it on out you know

JH: it's good

TG: a lot of that

JH: so i only have one really big last question um about the school is uh what the impact um on the school of the closing of the North Hampton County Consolidated School in 1966 well how did that impact your school

TG: uh just and just welcomed it [JH: yeah] to go just uh go to a better school because you know we- we could\_ we had already made a comparison we knew that uh i i don't know if we'd of gotten any better teachers in fact we didn't get better teachers

JH: no

EC: huh that's good to know

TG: but were learned very\_ a a lot um we came we were more prepared but ... it was never really integrated

JH: no

TG: they they just took us in

EC: huh

JH: okay

TG: because they had too integration would of\_ they was\_ they would not have gotten together and made decisions before we came but so they made they ma- they set the- the the standards they set whatever they wanted to do [JH: uhuh] it's all it was always in place they made all the new laws and prepare cause we're not going to let these people come in take over they gonna dance to our tune since we have to

do it this is the way it's going to be [JH: yeah] and they had the superintendent behind 'em and this\_ different people so it was very\_ we couldn't 've\_ we- we were kind of helpless in that respect [JH: mhmm] um given the fact we don't\_ we- we didn't know anybody we didn't know thei the powers to be [JH: mhmm] uh personally you didn't know [JH: mhmm] you didn't know the superintendent from supervisor you didn't hardly know maybe people in the office people around you you just didn't know what they did [JH: yeah] because we we were kinda um it was a barrier there matter of fact even now i hear people that they're mad cause superintendent doesn't live here we're talkin about right today [JH: yeah] certain teachers don't live here [EC: huh][JH: uh] they should be living here [JH: yeah] the whole time i was in ele- from elementary school to high school i didn't know where the superintendent lived they didn't know where the teachers lived didn't make any difference [JH: m'm'] why would i need that and even more now when i got on the school board we would travel to other areas [JH: mhmm] and so there wasn't enough teachers so they had this one school that could teach three or four schools you know on the on the on the computer on the uh what would what would they they call that like its called Skype now i guess

JH: the distance learning [EC: uhuh]

TG: yeah

JH: yeah

TG: so why would yo- why would why does it matter why they where they got to live [JH: mhmm] they- they just got another ulter- ulterior mo- idea [JH: mhmm] anyway [EC: hm] [JH: yeah] see i i i could go to the i been to the conferences i have to go to the conferences that is my business [JH: mhmm] so we we do it on line or we do anyways learning's going to be learning [JH: mhmm] we just forming excuses for not learning that's all there is to it [EC: hm] [JH: yeah] go back and get my three teachers [JH: yeah] <LAUGH>

JH: sounds like they did a great job

TG: yeah they i'd go again

EC: now they have emphasis on where the teachers live

TG: well that was just something i i read the paper about [EC: oh] that they kind of look\_ they down on the\_ on the student and a whole lot of things [EC: huh] you know [JH: mhmm] you either got it or you don't you know all the schools have problems [EC: mhmm] well [JH: yeah] anyway

EC: so your parents went to this school and your children went to this school you would have been right in the middle

TG: no no my mother went to Tidewater Institute it was another sc- kind of\_ like a private school

EC: and it's in Norfolk

TG: and no Chesapeake

EC: oh

TG: or around there she now not it's still not in Norfolk it was a place [EC: hm] just about seven miles north of here [EC: okay] the whole school private school

EC: but it was also a part of this school system

TG: no

EC: no i'm so sorry

TG: no it was uh it was all\_ they had to go out and [EC: hm] get it the- they came under the uh uh churches more than us [EC: oh] you know [EC: okay] yeah

JH: very cool and your children went to the schools here your children went to school here as well

TG: uh yeah mhmm

(40)

JH: yeah

TG: some of 'em went to uh uh school out there in the county because they transition was a little slow so um i think my oldest son he might of spent one year out there out the other two two children they they stayed here [EC: hm] [JH: okay] yeah

LS: they went to Cape Charles Elementary

TG: mhmm

EC: oh

LS: which is the Rosenwald

EC: yeah okay

TG: yeah

JH: mhmm

EC: that's pretty cool [TG: yeah] how all the generations in the school

JH: really cool

TG: yeah

JH: amazing that's amazing

TG: the school prepared us for a lot of things

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: very cool

TG: i'm proud of the people that that that uh went to school we would we would learn all we could you you didn't have much to give us you know compared to the other school [JH: yeah] you know uh [EC: hm] my child we had a lot of pride that was instilled in us [JH: yeah] pride in our work and whatever we did

JH: very cool very cool um what was it like um outside the school growing up here in Cape Charles

TG: uh i guess it was a lot different for me because my my parents uh were blessed to have uh a lot work to do and good jobs and uh so we found ourselves looking out for a lot of others who cou- who weren't\_ who were a little less fortunate [JH: yeah] uh when they new folk came in town here uh they look in my back yard and say you got a junky yard you got all those cars out there and all those run down houses and all so they began to challenge me and say you gotta b- you gotta clean that up [JH: yeah] little did they know that they were t- that they taking people's houses people who had left and all all through my childhood those people some of 'em were c-hobos catch train they come and uh they spend the night so they go get the preacher preacher sent 'em over to ask or you got a place where they can crash for the night we'll take them to one of those little shacks we had in the back then later on it was old cars some there there and even even up to now there peop- there are homeless people who are laying around in different bui- buildings you know [JH: mhmm] uh they just they're all all our lives we were we were always looking out and handing out other people [JH: yeah] yeah

JH: well and um was just you and your parents or do you have other brothers and sisters

TG: huh

JH: do you have any brothers and sisters

TG: one sister

JH: one sister

TG: yeah yeah she did okay hopefully i mention her um she moved away she she taught school here for a while [JH: yeah] in fact she taught with my wife [JH: okay] in fact they taught in the same classroom at the same time

JH: yeah what'd they teach

TG: i can't remember well they taught everything because they y- they you just whatever the superintendent or the uh principal say you you go like i said it wasn't a planned thing when they integrated [JH: mhmm] they just picked this persons they was picking the persons who was more capable of doing something [JH: mhmm] see so a lot of things in the school system what they call the junction five already had the people family they go\_ they would be teaching this class and then and this said to qualify [JH: uhuh] for it

JH: huh wow a little bit different than today huh

TG: yeah it was a lot different

JH: yeah very cool and um once you were going to the integrated schools um did that change your outlook on schooling or the way you felt about schooling

TG: i didn't go to integrated school

JH: no not at all

TG: not until college

JH: wow interesting

TG: well i i always had a good relation-

LS: tell her why

JH: yeah

TG: uh

LS: because you i think you need to give the time frame that you were in

TG: oh yeah the time frame yeah in the fifties i graduated in fifty-five

JH: okay

TG: so they they didn't integrated till

WG: was he able to recall everything

(45)

JH: we're almost done yeah

TG: yeah

WG: oh some was they took

TG: yeah i thought she might need help

JH: that's okay no problem

TG: now we i met her in high school [JH: uhuh] at fourteen

JH: okay

TG: yeah so

WG: fourteen <JH LAUGH> <LAUGH> <TG LAUGH>

JH: that's amazing

TG: and i decided to rescue her <LAUGH> <JH LAUGH>

WG: <LAUGH> he said that first date you know he thought he would marry me <TG LAUGH> he was all talk

TG: yeah

JH: wow at fourteen

TG: yeah

JH: wow

EC: wow

TG: yeah

JH: that's amazing

TG: it's like i got a brick in there to one one of the schools that wa- see some of the schools i went to it i got they tore them down after i right after i left [JH: uhuh] the high take the high school they t - they they took they took that down [JH: okay] so i did go get we got a couple bricks and we took pictures of the water would turn it down you know

LS: so

JH: yeah

TG: cause uh

LS: the high school you went to was

TG: was in the Mathew's Farmville

LS: was segregated

TG: yes uhuh

JH: yeah, so you graduated from high school in fifty-five you said

TG: fifty-five

JH: and integration didn't happened until the sixties

TG: yes

JH: so

EC: wow

TG: yeah

JH: wow so um what was it like then attending college

TG: well i i had never left and it it was just amazing to me cause i i'd never been anywhere well i think about it i did go uh with with my mother some time to go pick up a body in in in the city [JH: mhmm] you know because of people when they died they had\_ i'd go but we'd only spent that night or that day and then came back so uh i was in and out of the places i didn't really get to see but then i uh i got to see other people and i was uh i was astonished i was grown seventeen years old i was a grown man i would do what i wanna do and all on my own [JH: yeah] and it was uh it <LAUGH> it was a thing it was something

JH: wow and you said you

TG: but i pretty much i pretty much been grown every since i was 'bout fifteen

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: and you said you went to the University of Virginia

TG: no

JH: no

TG: <LAUGH> uh

JH: i miss heard that sorry

TG: uh you couldn't go there at that time to that school Virginia Union Univerisity

JH: Virginia University sorry

LS: Virginia Union

TG: Virginia Union that's in Richmond

JH: okay <P:04> all right

TG: University of Virginia is isn't that still in Richmond or is that

JH: yeah

TG: okay

JH: yeah okay Virginia Union University

EC: so did you get drafted first and then did the V-A help you get through

TG: no no i didn't

EC: college

TG: i didn't go into the military

EC: oh okay alright

TG: um getting married caused me not to go

EC: oh

TG: and then they then they called me a second time [EC: mhmm] i by that time i had my first child i said well okay you you can stay

EC: oh good

JH: that's really good

TG: but later on i for- i did get on the draft board sat there on the draft boards for about thirty years

JH: wowo

EC: mmm

JH: wow that's amazing so how old were you when you got married

TG: twenty-one or two or something like that

EC: so you held out that long

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

JH: after fourteen

TG: well she went to school and i went to school <JH LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> you know and all that yeah

EC: so

JH: very good very interesting

TG: like i said we ain't having a whole lot of cars she was twenty miles from me

EC: uhuh

JH: that's far away without cars

TG: that's a long way

JH: long way without a car <LAUGH> <EC LAUGH>

TG: yes i'd hitch i'd hitch hike sometime or i would uh you know i used to clean cars for different people [JH: mhmm] clean 'em up clean my parents car that was one of my jobs i sneaked the car on up now i might ride up there real quick and come back <EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> <LAUGH> [JH: oh yeah] but i i can never do anything in this town because uh everything i did somebody would call and say you know your son's doing this he's over there he's doing that you know [EC: mhmm] yeah i saw him over there and uh they wasn't telling on hey i saw your son out there and didn't ask why how you get in the car <LAUGH> <JH LAUGH>

JH: yeah and then of course they'd ask right <LAUGH>

TG: oh yeah yeah but

JH: yeah

TG: pretty much i i i i guess i enjoyed the school i i think about some of the dangerous things that we did though [JH: mhmm] because the Hump is not like it is now [EC: hmm] and it had a little um wall [EC: hmm] and the wall was about and top part was like that and it was kind of oval [JH: uhuh] and we'd walk on it sometimes

JH: really

TG: yeah we'd walk and you could look down and see the tracks [JH: whistle] [EC: ohh]

JH: that's dangerous

TG: do that as a challenge

EC: normal kid stuff

TG: yeah we just did that you know

JH: yeah

(50)

TG: showing off you know [JH: yeah] <JH LAUGH> when there's a few of you on the other side with the cat walk you know [JH: yeah] come on down there on the cat walk side of the bridge so you supposed [JH: cross that] and all that some time we get on\_ we come down where the to get caught [JH: yeah] it de- it depends on there you was trying to beat out cause some times he was walking that he walked to school too [JH: uhuh] sometimes and then he finally got caught we had about three different principals up there or over there but the the other teachers they just stayed they didn't move

JH: yeah very consistency [TG: yeah] is nice i'm sure [TG: yeah] how long did it usually take you to get to school

TG: well as long as it take if i was to walk right now to the the Hump you know where that is have you

JH: i haven't driven there yet

TG: okay it's about

JH: from today

TG: it's a lets see one two three four four blocks and go over the bridge [EC: hmm] [JH: okay] yeah

JH: so not too long

TG: it's hard to tell cause w- we did everything fr- on our way back and on the way there [JH: uhuh] <EC LAUGH> <LAUGH> we played [EC: mhmm] all kinds of games [JH: mhmm] now if i got home by a certain time then um there would uh some- somebody would tell well he's around there he's he he's alright he's okay or something [JH: yeah] i i guess probably uh fifteen twenty minutes [JH: right] for me to get there [JH: not too bad] what makes me remember that i uh i said i told my mom and pa i said i'm leaving the house i'm never coming back <EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> and uh i'm runnin away from home and as she was she was fryin chicken at that time <LAUGH> i got i was like at the school and look like i smelled that chick <LAUGH> i was like i go back home i'm go- i'm leave home another time <LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> so i guess it took me about fifteen twenty minutes i got back faster than i then i cause i i had a well i you know how time to figure out how in the world i'm gonna approach 'em because i just said i'm never coming back <EC LAUGH> and they were they were really kind of upset but didn't nobody try to stop me <LAUGH <JH LAUGH>

JH: she knew you'd come back she was cooking your favorite meal <TG LAUGH> <LAUGH>

TG: yeah

JH: yeah

TG: all and all i did see some real talented people to co- leave our school some became great in the community despite the little education that we got some did real well became lawyers and uh professionals in all walks of life they did good

JH: that's good

EC: if you wanted to read extra or anything like that could you go to the library or would they deliver books to the school for you or

TG: uh no the libr- well we had a little so called library

EC: at the school

TG: mhmm that was

EC: oh okay

TG: that the room where i used to get the whippings they [EC: oh] go in there and shut that door and get it <JH LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> ought to tighten you up a bit with the switches that's the library i remember <EC LAUGH> well i'm sure but they had always had somebody who was a little different from me and they would they could use the books you know [EC: mhmm][JH: very cool] but it wasn't much time for us to the library [EC: oh] you know because we you know we were on a tight schedule they kept us going [JH: yeah] the whole time

JH: what what what was your like school hours um was it like like today we\_ like eight to three or or was it a few hours in the morning and then a break and then in the afternoon

TG: the only thing that i remember is the is the five minute recesses <EC LAUGH> <JH LAUGH> <LAUGH>

JH: do a little bit of reading and then go outside and play [TG: yeah]

TG: <LAUGH> and if you\_ unless you did something you didn't get to go out at all [JH: oh]<LAUGH> <EC LAUGH> that's the worst but uh he had a attended all your needs you know so we had to go outside you got to stand in line [EC: mmm] for somebody pumping that water get your water to drink it [JH: mhmm] then go to the bathroom again you had to

JH: oh do do you have

TG: they only had the one you know

JH: yeah for the whole school

TG: and they used to tell the stories cause sometimes it might be uh and in fact in fact these these things actually happen to find a snake in there in that place for peop- i mean in that in the toilette or or a scorpion or something like that [JH: uhuh] but [EC: huh] so you remember to open the door and watch there was some people who just were afraid of snakes anyways [JH: yeah] it didn't bother them

JH: you needed a long broom

(55) TG: in fact they'd bring bring them in the classroom bring them in the school if you don't watch 'em you know in fact my wife one boy that put the snake in in her class as that's uh after integration everybody had a snake in there [JH: oh man] yeah

JH: i wouldn't like that

TG: yeah

JH: but um did you guys have lunch and stuff at school or

TG: uh there were feeble attempts to to do that some people would bring sandwiches from one of the local uh confectioners i but i don't it wasn't it wasn't permanent but we we'd carried our lunch most of the time [JH: yeah] mm sometimes somebody would bring some ice cream over there [JH: oh] and uh i don't know whether it was i don't remember the s- the source but we would get a cream sickle or something like that

JH: mm [TG: mhmm] very cool alright um well i guess we only have few minutes left is there anything specific

LS: just if you do you remember the years that you were in the s- the Cape Charles Elementary what what year you started and what year you left .... i guess you could figure it backwards from

TG: yeah i'd have to figure it out

EC: fifty-five when you left right

TG: yeah

LS: when you left no left the high school graduated

TG: yeah so you back up the four years

JH: fifty-one

EC: so it was only first grade through seventh grade

TG: uhuh

EC: okay

JH: so

LS: so it would be

JH: nineteen-fifty

LS: so you started high school eighth grade

JH: right

TG: yeah

LS: mhmm

TG: right it was the eighth grade mhmm

JH: so forty-two to nineteen-fifty -ish is that right

TG: probably right

JH: wow

EC: that was a long time ago

TG: yeah

JH: yeah very cool

EC: were were you ready to go into high school because i don't know what they teach in grade school anymore it's been so long since i was there but were you on the same par as oh you went to uh

LS: segregated

JH: segregated high school

EC: segregated high school

TG: yeah

EC: oh

TG: the whole time

EC: oh wow

TG: yeah

EC: wow okay hm i don't know what they teach in grade school they teach what social studies and the things like that

JH: social studies science math

EC: history and all that stuff

TG: english they taught english

EC: yeah hmm

JH: yeah very good

EC: okay

LS: but you were ready for college obviously

EC: yeah obviously

TG: right

LS: so

EC: hm

TG: you know what to go to college in those days [EC: mhmm] you had to be recommended by outstanding people in the community

EC: oh okay

LS: ah

TG: so

EC: i think you still do don't you

TG: hmm

EC: i think you still have to have a recommendation

JH: yeah you still have to have a recommendation

TG: but who would recommend them <LAUGH>

JH: oh i have to write a lot of recommendation letters

TG: oh yeah okay

EC: yeah

JH: yeah

TG: yeah

EC: i don't you did to get into college but graduate school you did

TG: yeah

JH: yeah

EC: huh

JH: said you did so who recommended you

TG: a pastor and the mayor of the town

JH: wow

EC: oh

JH: very good

TG: and somebody else i can't remember yeah

JH: very good and they you went to Philadelphia [TG: yeah] for further school

TG: yeah

EC: wow

JH: very good

TG: now go- this is the way uh my elementary school paid off when i went there during this time a man if he wanted a job [JH: mhmm] he just\_ he might just walk on that job [JH: mhmm] and start working don't know whether he gonna get paid or not

JH: yeah just go right in and start working

TG: did a good job be thorough [JH: mhmm] and i remember uh i went to this funeral home and i told the man i i'm looking for a job trying to supplement so i uh ... i pretty much took that job that day cause [JH: mhmm] he he said that uh i don't need anybody and i said well you may not need anybody but i just wanted to show you what i can do [JH: mhmm] yeah and there were a lot remains around was one thing he wasn't gonna do and i said well let me do that one [JH: mhmm] and i did such a good job before i finished he had me doing work on two others [JH: mhmm] i

nailed that job [JH: that's good] yeah and that's the kind of thing that would happen\_ when my dad would\_ he was a contractor people'd come and work for him uh he said you can say anything out your mouth let me see what you can do [EC: hm]

JH: yeah

(60) LS: so how did your elementary education contribute to that

TG: be- because that was way things

LS: that was other thing

TG: people did doing um do\_ did things

LS: mhmm

TG: i'll show you what i can do [EC: huh] [JH: yup] and uh i'll work whether i get paid or not i'm just gonna do this

JH: that makes sense

TG: yeah and we and we watched the other people do things like that [JH: hm] yeah

JH: that's amazing

TG: yeah

JH: well um i think

TG: we're finished

JH: we're about done thank you very much for your time it's amazing

TG: sure

JH: wow