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Interviewee: LaVerne Byrd Smith

Interviewer: Brian Ward

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W: This is Brian Ward on February 27, 2003. This is an interview with LaVerne Byrd Smith in Richmond, Virginia for the University of Florida Oral History Program Southern Regional Council Project. Thank you ever so much for sparing me some time to talk this afternoon.

S: I'm delighted to do this.

W: What I would like to do is just to start by perhaps telling a little bit about your background prior to getting involved with the Richmond Council on Human Relations. Just tell me a little bit about where you were born and where you were raised.

S: I was born in Richmond, Virginia south of the James, which was formerly a town called Manchester. They consolidated with Richmond, so I think I was born in Richmond. It had become Richmond by that time.

W: Were you educated in the public school system?

S: I was educated in the public school and went to college here at Virginia Union University. I got a masters at Virginia State University and a doctorate at the University of Maryland.

W: Tell me about what did you major in as an undergraduate.

S: As an undergraduate I majored in history and education, but not history education. When I finished I taught at elementary school first, but I have taught at all levels of education.

W: When you went on to do your masters what was that in?

S: It was in reading and educational psychology. At each level I had two majors. Then, I went on to get my doctorate in education curriculum and instruction.

W: This was at the University of Maryland, was it the College Park?

S: Yes.

W: Just tell me a little bit about your parents and sort of where you were in the social world of Manchester and Richmond.

S: I was very active in human relations or civil rights or very concerned about it. When I was four years old we had to ride the street car to come over from South Richmond to Richmond. When I was very young, four or five, I set beside a white lady and she jumped up as if I were poison or something and screamed Mr. conductor, Mr. conductor, get this little black child from beside me. That was my first experience with prejudice that I recognized. I really didn't understand it at all because I knew that we had a very strong family. My mother was a writer and I have one or her poems that she wrote in 1918 right here on a screen.

W: What is the poem called.

S: It's called a "Plea for Justice" and she wrote it in 1918. It's very expressive of things that were going on at the end of WWI. She read to us, we enjoyed literature. My father was a head waiter at Commonwealth Club, which is the club that the senators and governors all belong to. Anyhow, we had a good rearing. Everyone was always interested in education. In fact my mother want to, it's Virginia State now but it was Virginia Industrial something.

W: So you came from actually a pretty well educated family.

S: Yes.

W: Your experiences at the university, when you got to do the doctorate, did you do these in rapid succession or was there a gap?

S: No, a very wide gap. I finished high school in 1944 and I finished college in 1948, that was four years. Then I didn't get my masters until 1964 because my mother was ill along that time. I didn't get my doctorate until 1984.

W: Wow, that's good spacing. Tell me a little bit about your high school, early college years growing up in Richmond or its environs. Were the war years particularly decisive do you think in the African American Community?

S: As a writer I've done books and so forth and I have a poem "These Are the Decades of Our Lives." I've taken the opportunity to look at our lives through the 1930s and the 1940s, 1950s; decade by decade, there are six decades. We used it at my class reunion, and what I recall that's interesting about it is that when we were born we were colored. We asked our class, we said look at your birth certificate. You're listed as a colored boy or a colored girl. By the forties we were Negroes, and then we got to be black. Then, we got to be African Americans, Afro Americans and then African Americans. Each of those periods brought with it certain attitudes and so forth. You're asking about the 1940s, but we were very happy. We enjoyed high school. We did not have stress and strife and what have you. I think it's unfortunate that since the Civil Rights Movement

youngsters don't enjoy school anymore. School was important to us.

W: What was the name of the school that you went to?

S: High school?

W: Yeah.

S: Well I'll say even elementary school, we went to **Pomonts Dunbar Elementary**, which means we were in touch with literature in the school. We went to **Armstrong High School**, which is a major high school in Richmond now.

W: Although you seem as though you had a good education and a well-rounded education and say you were happy there, you must have been aware of the fact that you were still having a segregated education.

S: Yes, we always knew that because we had to go up the street and the other people had to come down the street. We lived in the same neighborhood with white kids. We lived on this street and we shared an alley, and after school we played together. But when we were going back and forth to school, walking this way, sometime somebody wanted you to get off the sidewalk, that of course may have started a little skirmish but nothing serious.

W: When you became an educator, did you see sort of the down side of the segregated system working as an educator yourself.

S: They say the wrong thing because I don't see all of the ills of segregated education. I think the part that has been presented was negative, but there were some positives. I have kind of an operetta that I wrote in 1959 after the Supreme Court Decision. It's a book I have in press now called *Poetry for Growing*. *Poetry for Growing* was kindergarten through college because I taught kindergarten through college, and at each level I was writing things. That's section five in that book, "A Panorama of Science," which was written in 1959 and was presented the same night that Alan Shepherd went in space. Anyway, I don't believe people have dealt with the wonderful things that were going on in some black school. Everything was not negative about segregation. You get the Prince Edward story; they had poorer facilities, and so did most rural counties. We had good schooling and we were one of the first to have Negro history in our schools. So we felt good about ourselves.

W: So in a well-resourced school, even within segregation, there were certain virtues for the community.

S: There were excellent things that went on. I guess we didn't think of whites as

getting a superior education to us. They may have, but one of the things that you recognize is that we said well we must be terribly intelligent because we only had eleven years and they had to go twelve years. We thought that was because they were too dumb to get out. Yet, the eleven years were supposed to limit us, but we said we go to college and have to do the same things that they do and it took them twelve years. Why did it take them twelve years to do that? We were supposed to be inferior because we had only had eleven years. It was that kind of thing, but as we try to reflect on "These Are the Decades of Our Lives," yeah we felt pretty good about the experience. We went to colored theaters to see colored actors on colored screens. That didn't seem negative. We didn't sit around and cry about it. Now, some people tell me how they had to sit up in the balcony. Well, we didn't. We had our own theaters. At some level people may have had to sit up in balconies, but we didn't. We were in the 1940s and the war was going on, or coming on, or getting there. So, our guys had to go to the army. I am very positive about the education that we had, which is one of the things. Sometimes you have negatives that turn out to be positives. Because we could not go to the University of Virginia, eventually because of a suit Virginia agreed rather than to let us into the University of Virginia they would pay for you to go to some other college out of the state. Our teachers went to the University of California, went to Columbia, went to Harvard, went to everywhere.

W: Presumably, you came with much broader horizons.

S: We had the better teachers, we did. Our teachers were extremely talented and gifted, and they worked with us. One of the things about our schools, we had a lot of participation, plays, dramas; and I think maybe we don't like to say we have specific characteristics, but we do. We're action oriented. When I taught I had plays all the time. Children learned things by being that thing. I have a young lady now who's a minister. She said I was in the panorama of science and I was an oak tree, sturdy and strong. She said I am that way. I am sturdy and strong, and I am a minister. That sort of thing, you have moonbeam and somebody was a star and they'd become [that object]. We tried to provide positive experiences. I think our generation, free of integration, was fortunate.

W: I want to encourage you to flesh that out a bit more. You mentioned sort of the theaters and the sort of cultural life of the community. What sort of venues were there, what sorts of cultural and creative activities were going on within the black community that presumably white weren't privy to at this time?

S: Well, sometimes we were doing the same things. I remember we introduced debutantes. We worked in the same place. They were wherever they were, but they were introduced young people later at a place called Gregory's. We had **Gingiss Center** and we had state land, we had an arena. I know that my father was a Mason and my mother was a **Daughter of Isis**, which was sort of those...

W: Fraternal and Sororital organizations.

S: Even as youngsters, when I was just fourteen, fifteen, sixteen; there were three of us; I was the younger; we all were put into evening gowns and went to formals. There was a place called **Market Inn** that we went when we were dating and when we had special activities. I think the white community just don't know how positive things were in the black community. Everything wasn't negative. We see that we lost black businesses when integration came. I'm going to say there are the positive sides of integration, but there also were positive things in the black community. I believe that we're going to have learn more about some positive things that were going on. I think we had to flush out the negative in order to get change in that I could be in a water aerobics program up at Hillside, or I'm in a ____ program at _____. We could not have done some of those things. I ended my career after teaching in elementary school and teaching in college for the most part. The last fourteen years of my career I was in the State Department of Education. They had blacks in there, but when it began the blacks had to stay in a separate building and could not eat lunch together and so forth. When I got there in the 1970s they were just beginning to eat together, travel together...

W: Do you remember the impact in the African American community of the *Brown* decision and it's aftermath, particularly in Virginia where the forces of massive resistance rallied so quickly and so dynamically?

S: That's right, I don't know we felt sorry for those people. I've done a lot of writing about that period. I was saying to Hilda, I said instead of taking about what we did I'm thinking that I have a set of material on the reactions to what was happening, some things that we did to counter that. We weren't as desperate as they think, because somehow we really just thought white people were stupid because they did so many odd things.

W: Was it sort of like frustration almost with the question of why are they doing this.

S: Well, not to me. I guess it depended on your family and how you looked at it, and then the church. You cannot underestimate the influence of the church, which was just like a fortress to protect you from whatever was going on out there in the world. I said people who could not get a job, you saw those very strong trustees in the Baptist and the deacons, and you saw those people were very adequate and they were role models for us. Those same people perhaps could not use all of their positive attributes, characteristics, or skills; but in church they could be leaders.

W: That was their arena.

S: Yes, and we had very strong pastors.

W: Can you name some of those pastors, tell me the ones that were very influential and impressive to you.

S: Well in my church there was **Dr. W. L. Ranson**.

W: This is First Baptist?

S: This is First Baptist and he baptized me. Then of course he was on the faculty at Virginia Union, and therefore sometimes he taught us in church. He taught from a pulpit as well as the classes we had in college. So we had a double shot of his wisdom. He was a very amazing person in terms of his knowledge and wisdom.

W: Is he someone who you would describe as sort of an activist preacher, a civil rights activist?

S: There's a section in here and I have tried to put out some pages because I thought there would be the opportunity for you to sort of look at some of this. Yes, he was. He started the Negro City Council. I may have gotten the name wrong, but anyway he organized it and he was the first president. We had extra reports of his work in here. Yes, he did some unusual things. He ran for the Senate of Virginia forty-five years before the first black representative was elected in 1969. He came to us in 1920, and in the 1940s and 1950s he was running for office. [He was] making the people who were running for office come and speak to his organization. It was an organization that had two representatives from each of about 100 organizations. Therefore, it was a very strong organization. Like I was saying, he spoke to the general assembly. That was not usual, but he asked that black history would be taught in the schools. They were saying what manner of man is this. First of all, they couldn't believe it was there and then he was very articulate. They said they would be very happy to put the Negro history in the schools, but you know they didn't. They did not have anyone to teach it. It wasn't qualified. It amazes me what people don't know about us, positives. He told him well he had a son who had just majored in history at Columbia. I think he had gotten a masters. He gave him his credentials and his Negro history instructor was he, and he was a doctor then too. There were doctors during that period. I saw the Mays papers in the Virginia Historical Society. Have you come across those?

W: Benjamin Mays papers?

S: No, not that Mays, this is another Mays who was a part of the Byrd machine. He

donated his papers to the historical society and said they should not be opened in twenty-five years. I guess he thought when he did that in the 1960s that things would be different, but they opened them in the 1990s or something like that . . . He was saying during the time there were only illiterate Negroes around, and it was different now because we had more intelligent Negroes to interact with. Well, he evidently didn't know anything about Virginia Union University, Howard University, all of the universities throughout the South. The only people they had to interface with were illiterate Negroes. Well, that may have been the people who lived near them. That means that their own segregation rules made them disadvantaged because they didn't have the advantage of knowing me.

W: Right, they didn't have access to all this expertise and wisdom.

S: That's right, and there was a wonderfully strong black community. I want to say that this didn't wait until way up here in the 1940s. In 1865, just after the Civil War ended, this person here, **Governor Wells**, was our first pastor . . .

W: What was his first name?

S: **Richard Wells**, and he was our pastor just five years, the first five years after the Civil War. Then, he went to another church and stayed there thirty-nine years, but this one was only there five years. During that time he led a group of seven church members to Washington to visit Andrew Johnson. They took him a petition explaining how blacks were being treated in Richmond. Now, I will say to the people I am speaking with that they were talking about Georgian, and in Mississippi we know a lot about that, and Louisiana and what have you; but very little is said or known about Richmond. We had a very ugly period of reconstruction because we had a large, free black population and they had been free . . . We have family trees in here that show my family was freed back in the 1700s. We have several families that could trace their family back to free members in the 1700s.

W: I think one of the things that tells historians or that it reminds historians is that there's a long lineage of African American freedom struggle. It doesn't suddenly get invented in the mid 1950s.

S: That's the whole thing. We think Martin Luther King invented freedom or whatever. I look at Martin Luther King, I look at his period; I look at my mother's period when she was writing about a plea to the _____. She said, like when freedom from her mountain heights unfurled her _____ to the end, told that men must have a right, and men must be men everywhere _____ to thee is given the right to set the Negro free. If he's not hovering the smoked water away the battle _____ and beat your banner shine afar or land like an unhidden star. Each dying Negro man I see looked at once to heaven and thee and smiled to see _____ fly,

the flag of a country for which he dies. Land of the free, to thee we cry shall our fond hopes forever die? Shall our stripes of celestial white be dipped in blood and [tape interrupted]. When Negroes and I had burst its prison and I would admire the black man's wisdom. When deeds are done no tongue can tell these that were shamed extremist hell. Flag of the free, does though still wave in the land of the free and home of the brave? Then she says, no flag of the free, though dost not still wave o'er the land of the free, but the home of the brave. You say the Negro man is free and yet drag him to a tree. I could go on, but anyway.

W: That's written at the tale end of WWI, 1918.

S: 1918 right, she was a student over at Virginia State there.

W: I've asked you for a copy of that poem, that's very powerful.

S: Yeah, it is, it really is. I have a think called "This is Your Life Virginia." It could tell you all that you need to know about Virginia from 1619 on.

W: Having established that there is this long lineage and a constant struggle, I think it's still true to say that it has peaks and troughs, or at least that there are distinctive phases to that struggle. I guess what I want to do is move us on to the late 1950s and early 1960s, and to ask you about when you became and how you became involved in what we might think of as civil rights activism for want of a bigger umbrella phrase.

S: As I have said to people concerned with this, I have no idea how I just moved to it. I was teaching at Virginia Union University. I had been teaching at Virginia State University in the 1960s. When I finished my masters there in 1964 I was driving back and forth to Petersburg. Therefore, it took me out of the community, but when I came home in 1968, came to Virginia Union, right away I just began working in the community again. In 1958 I was president of my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, 200 women. I had just come out of school in 1948, so I was president very young. That was during the time we were marching around and picketing.

W: You were involved in that sort of direct action protest.

S: I was involved in that direct action, yes.

W: Who organized those protests, which organization? It wasn't NAACP was it?

S: It was this organization, I'm losing names of things, that **Dr. Ranson** organized earlier. They did the human relations part while up to the 1950s. They were

doing these during the 1940s and so forth because we had a boycott of the street cars, of the transportation system her just like they did later. But it's how you promote it in the media. They closed down the whole company, the transportation company because blacks just decided not to ride the street cars and the buses. That was a very successful action. When it came to the picketing and so forth I think the children in North Carolina, all these young people in North Carolina, Greensborough, started and it just came on up here. I know that some of these strong ministers, I remember over this side of town, the pastor of Fifth Baptist Church; I know the students would meet there, and some of it came out of Virginia Union's Students.

W: This is a time when this is happening all over the South. They were right behind Greenville. Well, here's an organization of which I was president and we would have these marvelous balls, formal balls, and that was just a great thing because we are very social being. Each year you had this marvelous, beautiful thing. What we did was to put our invitation in the paper and write cancelled across it, because we gave the money we were going to use for this social activity to get the kids out of jail. Everyone was rounded. Then, we had things like rags for rights. Something came up right around Easter time and we decided that we weren't going to buy any clothes for Easter. We were just going to wear rags for rights. We wore buttons and we decided not to buy any Easter clothes because that costs [money]. So, we like to dress up and we were the merchants best customers for Easter, and when we did that it had an impact. We decided we were only going shop black. Here's an awakening sort of for me, because we are going to shop only in black stores. We are going to find a list of the black stores and we didn't have any. At least I looked, where are they. This is when you really became aware that we were not in the retail here. We were dealing with _____ and _____, that's those two huge department stores, and Woolworth's. But blacks owned stores and businesses but not clothing stores.

W: Did that stimulate interest among the well to do in the black community to try to establish these sorts of places, retail stores, clothing stores?

S: It was kind of a shock. You kind of thought they must be there somewhere. You were so used to following this particular line. In fact I **Lorraine James** did open a store downtown. I know that I worked with her. I use to narrate her shows and we traveled even to Washington [and] to Connecticut. She's in Bridgeport now.

W: What's her name?

S: Her name is **Lorraine James**. She has been in the city council in Bridgeport after going back home. I think I may have gotten off track from what you asked in terms of how I got in, but understand I had been out there.

W: Right, and you had some background in movement activities.

S: In movement activities and then working with the **Crusade for Voters**, I was on that board. I got very busy with what I was doing at Virginia State, because reading for me became a part of the Civil Rights Movement because there was so much of a determination not to let our kids learn to read. We had a reading center on the campus and I worked in that reading center before I graduated. As soon as I finished they took me on staff because I had children reading who had not read before. That's a line of civil rights activity that I consider to be important. People didn't realize the extent to which keeping blacks from reading, even though we think they've left that back in slavery times, but there have been so many laws and rules. Going into the state department I learned a lot about the kinds of things that go on to actually keep people from reading. I was still on the battle field when I was at Virginia State, but as soon as I came back home I began to just go into whatever was going on in the community, which was natural. The only reason I hadn't been there straight along was because I was commuting.

W: I want to ask you a question before we get to your return to the 1968 period, the late 1960s. In any of these activities in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the movement activities you took part in, were there elements within the white community of Richmond who were sympathetic and supportive?

S: Let me see, I'm getting ready to go back up to the 1960s, but during the period.

W: I'm talking about that period, really the heart of the massive resistance movement in Virginia, were there elements within white Richmond that said whoa, we don't approve of the way the state government is operating?

S: Oh yes, because that's what the human relations council was about, and we were one of the few states that during the King days did not have an uprising. Am I getting the periods mixed up? During the King period when other states were coming together and having riots, but we never had riots because we kept putting out brush fires. Even when a lot was going on that was very ugly there was a lot of things going on that was good. When you mentioned somebody that you met named Fairfax.

W: Jean Fairfax

S: Right, you have to keep these periods straight and sometimes they get mixed up in there. I was in 1958 when the sit-ins were going on. I definitely set up the marching around _____ and my organization was one of the group. We made signs and we made sure that there were enough people marching all the time. Then, there was a _____ on South Richmond, south of the James, and I picketed

by myself. People were getting on the bus and coming over here and still going to _____. They had to go to _____, and when they got off the bus they saw me right here. Four policemen and four police dogs monitored me while I walked around _____ over there. They kept telling these people over here they needed to go to South Richmond and do that, but they were so busy going downtown that they didn't listen; but when they got off the bus and saw me they got back on the bus and went back home. Anyhow, those were just things that very few people know about.

W: I was just thinking about perhaps that's one of the functions that the Human Relations Council played was actually keeping a dialogue going.

S: We had some of the most wonderful people who worked together.

W: Tell me about some of the characters there.

S: There was **Wally Bliss** who was president when I went in. That's why I wanted to know if this half inebriated person who's in the state council, was he just before **Curtis Harris**?

W: No, there are a few people. I think **Frank Adams** is immediately before him.

S: I have been trying to think of Frank. Frank was the person in the state office.

W: Okay, he's immediately before **Curtis**.

S: [He was there] when I went into the council. They had just integrated **John Marshall Hotel**. This girl I mentioned whose name is **Lorraine James**. I remember when they told me they had been down to the **John Marshall** and tried to make arrangements for a convention, a Human Relations Conventional Conference. She was one of the persons that said well would you like to find 100 Negroes lying in your lobby? I think they decided they'd rather not have that, and they opened that facility to this conference. Now, I don't know how I got in the organization and got to be vice-president. I don't remember being in the organization. I went in and **Wally** was president and I was working with him, and I got to be vice-president. By the time they said they had to plan this conference, so as vice-president I did the planning of the conference. When we got through with that, and it was great. Then, when I went into office as president we carried the organization which had brought the whole community together with workshops and so forth on certain topics. That's when **Hilga** was on. You had the group that was doing civic affairs, somebody was doing legal affairs, and somebody was doing community affairs which led to that thing you asked about media relations.

W: Right, the Black Broadcasters Coalition. I'll get back to that I'm very interested in that, as you know. This is like the late 1960s, 1968 and 1969, all this is coming together. The mood in the African American community in the late 1960s is very different from the mood in the early 1960s or even the late 1950s. This is emotionally Black Power era. There's a lot more assertiveness. How did the whites within the Human Relations Council deal with this, in a sense this upsurge of black pride, black consciousness?

S: Well, those who worked with us were such wonderful people. I went to Harvard during that period, and that was 1969. **John Whiting** was at Virginia Union and he was in history. His name goes on back to England, but he was sort of one generation here. He was a very interesting person to work with and he was in Human Relations Council. This guy **Wally Bliss**, whom certainly you'll here, but he was president as I say, when I went into the council. **Wally** had been a businessman. I think he was in real estate in uptown. We'd simply say he was from up town. He was really a business person. I can't really say that I'm saying the right business. He closed his office and bought a restaurant down on Main Street, down there where the floods are going on right now, 18th and Main. That got to be a meeting place.

[phone interruption]

W: We were talking about **Wally Bliss**' restaurant.

S: Yeah, he bought that restaurant down there. It became a meeting place. It actually grew into an international meeting place, because the ships would come in at the dock and the personnel on the ship might get off and be looking for something to eat and people would send them up there because there was always a group. Then, the people from uptown who loved **Wally** dearly would come downtown. They'd come down there to eat lunch, and therefore you'd have a strange mix of blacks. They were more or less professional people who were at least able to go to lunch, free to go to lunch if they worked downtown or worked at the universities or whatever. These people were from businesses, secretaries and so forth. Anyhow, [from] this thrust of people from the ships it had gotten to be kind of an international place where you talked about things. We started having meetings down there. **Wally** had a lot of important friends, I guess we'd call them. So there was a good section of the community who were active with us. That's why I was turning this book, because it's described in here, and also I needed to get to it to remind me because I lose periods.

W: You were working as vice-president under **Wally Bliss** for a while and then when was it that you took over as president?

S: I'm thinking it's 1970, because I was away at Harvard during 1969.

W: What was foremost on your agenda as you took over this position. What were the things you needed to get done and you tried to get done during your term?

S: Well, first of all we were trying to build a community, people, that could talk with each other and opportunity for form so citizens could discuss problems in a non-threatening atmosphere. We did that. We invited the city manager to come and speak with us and tell us why we didn't have black people working in the stores downtown. We may have still been Negroes, but I don't know for sure. [laughing] I have a lot of fun with those different things that we were. At one time we were one thing and then we were another. Anyway, we were concerned about the city in this conference that we had had at the John Marshall. Every area in which we had workshops we carried the leadership of those workshops into my year, my term of office. Those people provided a lot of leadership. I will say, when I talk about this a lot of times I wasn't doing these things. I put in place in which a circumstance in which a lot of things could happen.

W: How did you do that?

S: Well, just by organizing. Sometimes you are appointing committees, but you don't give people on the committees a real leadership. We called these action teams.

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S: The action team leaders were fully in charge of their action team. Some of those actions teams would meet two or three times a week. They were really serious. Now, you hear of a lady named **Marie Hosagowa** who also was in charge. She was a little Japanese lady, and she was in charge of some peace movement here. She worked very hard. This **Hilda Warden** that you talked with earlier, I don't know if **Hilda** told you all that she did but she was a wonderful leader. She was concerned. I wasn't concerned about the jailers I didn't know anything about, but she went to work. She was a social worker and she was concerned about the situation at the jail. I know that she had us meeting in the jail and we heard the door slam behind us.

W: She tells a story about a banquet that was held to encourage people to actual go to a jail and see the conditions.

S: It was a dinner. I wouldn't call it a banquet because you had to get your food on a tray like the inmates.

W: That was the point. It was a banquet in inverted ____.

S: Right, but we had a film and it helped us to know what was going on with the inmates. She was determined to clean that up. The outcome of that help which interests me is that we got rid of the sheriff. I don't know whether she called his name or not, but I'm saying that the new sheriff ended up on our board and brought people together who could make a difference. When the city manager came and we asked about why couldn't we get downtown we ended up with salespeople for the first time in those stores that had been segregated. You couldn't try on things in the stores. It didn't destroy me. Mainly we just thought it was really stupid that you couldn't try on some things. Anyhow, he helped with that. Marie was working with housing to some extent. The group of those people came together and we actually started working with the group. We tried to find out what was already going on and work with groups that were already working. People were looking at housing opportunities made equal in home business. Out of those initial activities in they which sent couples to try to get a home or rent a home, and they would send a black couple and a white couple and would find out that they got different information and so forth; that was about twenty organizations working together, but we were a strong portion of it; out of it came housing opportunities made equal.

W: So its like you identified lots of sort of social injustice issues and you set up these little committees to run with them and to cooperate with other organizations with similar interests.

S: That's right. Here's were it came, though, _____ **the aid and restoration.**

W: Right, and I spoke to **J. Warrel** who was a player in that as well.

S: Right, see I don't know all the pieces of that, just that they were working. My husband sat on my board of supervisors. I kind of see that things happen but I'm not doing them necessarily. When it came to this Media Relations Commission I did call two meetings of that. **Ted Thorton**, that's a name you need. First of all, we had set this Media Relations Commission up trying to see if we could get more corporation from the media. We weren't intending really to challenge them from the beginning, but then this organization that you mentioned, Media Relation Commission, was formed and media management came to meet with us. We talked a couple of times about what it is they could do, but they were sort of meeting with us but not really moving. Then, this other group called.

W: Is this the Black Broadcaster Coalition?

S: That's who we're talking about. I really don't have the details on how they really moved into it actually, Ted was our liaison with that.

W: Tell me a little bit about Ted, because I've picked him up from the papers that

I've been looking at. Tell me who he was. Do you remember?

S: At that time the group had been fighting to get a Human Relations Commission in the city. Ted was the first head of the Human Relations Commission, but they finally gave us the Human Relations Commission but they had no power. They had no more power than we did because we had recognized we were working on these various things but we had no power to deal with them, so we wanted a commission. They gave us a commission; the city formed the commission. **Casad Alamean**, whose name you must hear all over the place, was at one time head of that commission; but they would not give them subpoena power. Therefore, they could not call anybody to task or act on whatever they were signing. That's the same thing we were doing, walking around dealing with whole list of things they started to write down. They were monitoring the media for the fairness, forming the Media Relations Commission, challenging the licenses of seventeen radio and television stations in the city based on discrimination and hiring practices. I learned a lot from Ted because he said do your homework, **you don't go forth**. Whatever we did we had done the homework first. I always believe that you could bring the Rocky Mountains to the east coast if everybody would pick up a brick. I've always worked with that idea. So you do this little piece and I'll do that little piece and we can all move together. So they looked at each of the stations and we had papers that showed how many blacks were on cameras, dramatists, maids, secretaries; [it was] zero all the way across. **WRVA** and **WTVR** which was Channel 6, that's the only one that had growth rates all the way across the whole page. I think looking at those charts is very impressive. Somebody may have had one janitor who worked half a day or something like that, but we've got no blacks on camera, no blacks behind the camera. We had talked about that in Media Relations and said what we needed to do was train blacks to run the cameras and so forth. This kind of moved into the Media Relations Commission. It was going to be a long hall, but we were meeting and we were working and they were getting representatives from the media to come. All of a sudden somebody got tired and they just moved the whole thing along.

W: It was a long process. There were petitions, counter-petitions, more petitions; I mean it dragged on and on and on.

S: No, I don't know. What's the group you mentioned?

W: The Black Broadcasting Coalition.

S: Right, BBC. Ours didn't take long because by the time we moved in Richmond we looked at the applications. The stations had to send applications to the . . .

W: FCC, to the Federal Communications Commission.

S: So by that time, once we got their guidelines and studied them they looked at all of the applications and, as I told you, they gathered the data concerning how they were out of line with FCC requirements. We met at the Urban League, and there was one night my husband called the police because I had never stayed out all night long in my life. We were so busy I forgot to call home and say where I was. When I got here my sisters were here and it was morning. We were working so hard I really didn't think [about it]. We read each of the stations applications and we were sitting in booths in there and everybody was working on something. It would all come to me and I would okay whatever or write up the protests that went along with it. We did that actually in one night, but some more work had gone ahead of it and what we were doing was pulling together.

W: So it was a collating sort of exercise.

S: Yes, and the deadline was the next day for getting it to FCC. I think we sent people off in the car. I think they had to be there about four o'clock that day and by about ten they were ready to leave. It was all tight and packaged and ready to go. It was the biggest surprise. The information we sent was valid. But I think the thing that did surprise me was that they didn't go off the air. It was that they were to come into compliance or their licensing would not be renewed on the following year. The FCC has changed so that they don't have the same kind of regulations. We have stations that are totally white and totally black. I guess that's because black stations came into being. I listen to a Bible broadcasting station that comes out of Charlotte, North Carolina. They are very conservative and they don't have any black voice or black ministers, and they have stations all over the world.

W: Can I just ask what were the main black oriented radio stations at this time? Do you remember the call signs of the ones that were most important to the black community in Richmond?

S: There weren't any.

W: There weren't any black owned ones, but there were a lot that were broadcasting.

S: There were not a lot. **Alan Knight** was on a white station. He was the first disc-jockey in Richmond. He was on **WKIE**, but that was a white station.

W: Right, lots of them got little smatterings of black artist programming; maybe a little bit here and a little bit here. There are no black owned stations until much later.

S: That's what I have to deal with, *when*; I have to get that straight in my head. This was in the early 1970s. I think six lawyers had to come from **WRNVA**. It was the only one that just did not have anything going. I was saying you have to choose when you win a battle and when you don't. Well, some people felt you didn't win because you didn't take them off the air. They did not close any station. The only reason you do know that stations are licensed is because they would say at the end of the night, this is **Jefferson Broadcasting Company** or something like that licensed by whatever. If they didn't say anything about it, nobody knew they were. But they were busy getting their house in order. When six lawyers from **WTVR** and **WREA** had to meet with me before we could verify with the FCC that they could get their license, that to me is winning.

W: A man called **Reverend Dwight Jones** . . .

S: You say you called him.

W: No, he seems to have been the headman of the BBC, the Black Broadcasting Coalition.

S: No he wasn't, he is my pastor. We didn't know each other then because he was at another church and he was a young man. He was president of the Baptist Ministers Conference in Richmond. The thing that we had to do as we were dealing with that was to find out who could sign this petition who would not get fired the next day. So, it finally came out that this nice young preacher had come to town. He would sign it. He didn't much know anything that was anything or much about it. He came in and we talked to him and he signed it. _____. Who said he was head of the Black Broadcasting Coalition?

W: It's in a letter from the council for a radio station called WIKI who was writing to **Henry Marsh**, who was writing some of their legalize written here, and **James Wingstead**, and he mentions that **Revered Dwight Jones** is chair of the BBC.

S: Well Reverend Dwight Jones signed the petitions that went from there to commission.

W: Yeah, it could well have been a misunderstanding if something came out with his signature.

S: Well, if it came with his signature . . .

W: If something came out with his signature they would receive that.

S: Yes, and if you ask me who was BBC [president] I don't know. I'm just saying we did the work from in here.

W: The **RCHR** was clearly one of it and there's the NAACP that represents the nation. There was the NAACP youth chapter, there was League of Women Voters; by the time it was a coalition it was genuinely a coalition. The stuff that was submitted to the FCC initially all came out of that media committee, the activism that Fountain was involved in in the early phases. In fact those lawsuits went on until 1976. They went on for four more years after that initial bid. There were counter-rebuttals by the station.

S: Are you talking about in Richmond.

W: Yes.

S: I'm not aware of any of that. Once we did that that's my knowledge of it. Ted was dealing with it as a commissioner, and I know the only thing Dwight knew about it because we talked about that in recent years. He's been our pastor for thirty years and one day we were talking about _____ and I said you didn't know that I'd done anything about that, and he doesn't know much about it because he was not a part of it.

W: That's really funny then.

S: He signed it because you had to sign it. Richmond was a strange place. You could be controversial, but if you did something that really made a difference and that was something that made a difference there were other things; you could lose your job. Sometimes they wouldn't go after the person who had made the move, but the next thing you know a family member had lost a job on some trumped up charge or something like that. I know that I was saying that they were trying to make me the Rosa Parks of Richmond because I was so busy out in the community. I was always sitting on the front of the bus. The people would stop the bus and say we're going to take the whole bus to jail if I didn't get off the front seat. People would get angry because they had to go home and whatever. So the bus driver would pull off, and I would say well I'll wait. Take us to jail, I want you to come, and they just would not come. I'm jumping off the subject again. But a group had asked me if I would stay on the bus and let the police pull me off the bus or drag me or something and they would get a picture of it or something. I wouldn't do it. I said if I were somewhere else other than home. My dad, I think maybe by that time he was maitre d' of the **Jefferson**.

W: What years are we talking about?

S: I don't know. It's back when he was either with **Commonwealth Club** or when he was maitre d' of the **Jefferson**. I knew that he did not need to lose his job, and my sisters were in the school system.

W: So there could have been also some retribution not just against you but elsewhere.

S: Yes exactly, they could hurt my family. They had also some opportunities to get in trouble because they had public jobs.

W: Let's talk a little bit about the relationship between the Richmond Council on Human Relations and the statewide organization and the Southern Regional Council, the over-watching organization. Give us a sense of that sort of hierarchy.

S: Yeah, I'm aware of the hierarchy. You've heard of Ruth Charity right?

W: Yes.

S: She was president of the state council. I became vice-president in some later days and **Curtis Harris** was in the state office here. I was trying to think, I don't really know why when those lawyers came I used **Harris'** office to interview them. I don't know why noone was with me because it was a big day. I remember going to the state conferences, one I especially remember was in **Danville**. I went to a Southern Regional Council meeting in Atlanta because we got snowed in down there. They had three inches of snow and they weren't used to having snow. We stayed there for two or three days longer than we were supposed to. I'm trying to think of whose _____ it was. Who was the white woman who was in the middle of the council. We stayed together after Ruth went home. Ruth was an undertaker and she had a funeral, so she called her husband and I think she could get a train into North Carolina and he went there to pick her up because they had a body and they had to get this funeral done. So I stayed another three days and I will think of maybe who it was, but we just hung out together and had a good time. There's a **Dawn Reese**. **Dawn** was director of Atlanta Center. This was a place that served tons of people. **Linda Whirley**, have you run into her?

W: No, these are on the state council.

S: No, this is back in local council board.

W: Okay, too many councils.

S: I don't know that I knew the people on the state board, the council.

W: Obviously, **Curtis Harris** ends up there and **Frank Adams** was the executive director.

- S: Yeah, they were paid staff. I'm talking about the people who were on the state council board. I do know that one of the activities we had Arthur Ashe worked with us in a fund-raising project. I have a newsletter that has his picture with all of us who worked with him.
- W: It's interesting because what that tells us is just how local local activism was in a way.
- S: Right, it depends on where you were. In all these other communities, once they had an uprising it pushed the black community together. We get compliments for keeping Richmond from exploding because we were very active in meeting a cross line. I would say, in fact I have said in this book that the cohesiveness that came in the deep South, after those days of marching and so forth, they became one community. Richmond community is very divided. There's a difference between the Negro community and the black community. Negroes may be more people who really are black but they would rather be white. The city uses this. They are very able to identify those people who will sell out the community. There's this other group who I would say was the black community who are black people who really want to be black and want to know more about their heritage and want to pull together. It was very good then; we had a very cohesive interracial mix. It came to light while his funeral. A lot of this community came back, and he was in the Unitarian church and he had nice people.
- W: Do you think most of the white who became activists or in some way supported black aspirations, do you think they came from a church background?
- S: I know the Unitarian church was very active, and all denominations were involved in some way. I know **Andrew Lee** was a treasurer for a long time and I think he was in the All Souls Presbyterian Church. All Souls was initially a white church. It became more integrated during that period. I know I've gone to those Southern Regional Council, and it's just that the funding for the Southern Regional Council came through the Rockefeller Foundation a lot, a great deal. I remember at the state council in **Danville** it was revealed that we had been working, while we weren't looking, they had cast a law that these foundations who supported groups who had an agenda that would challenge government could not be considered non-profit. Am I describing it correctly?
- W: Sort of, yeah there was a restriction on the way that the foundations were able to fund certain organizations. They had to be specifically involved in non-partisan educational work or something like that, and it was loosely defined.
- S: Right, and this came out in a speak easy in **Danville**. It was a large blow because it meant that they would be taxed. Therefore, we knew we were going

to lose the funding that had been there. A lot of the work was volunteer, a lot of it, but you had your state office to back you up. Since state was not going to have funding it was going to mean a lot to us. I remember that meeting with _____. It seems like the attention had been on lets say the Civil Rights Bill, and while we were focusing on the Civil Rights Bill they were busy getting this done and nobody knew anything about it. It really was a shock. It really was sort of the end of the councils. If you could just pull that out, this young lady right here ran for council. That's why I happen to have her picture.

W: Her name is?

S: Dolores Jones, yeah you know her. Her name has come up?

W: Not really.

S: She was Dolores Robinson at that time. Has her name come up?

W: Not to my knowledge in this research trip.

S: Well, we had a grant from the Southern Regional Council I believe. At the time that integration took place in the schools, we were able to have an office and have a service in which she could go into the schools. If parents had a complaint that wasn't being handled well by the schools her office could handle that. I was asking her what were some of the things that she did. That office was very active and supposedly very successful during the time, but we lost the funding. It was there at a crucial time to intercede for children or parents or teachers. That was the purpose of that.

W: Right, anything that was with SRC funding initially.

S: I think it was. It was funded through the state office, but as a local council we answered in some kind of way. I'm getting old, I forget names. I was talking to her to try to see what went on. It was a successful program because we advertised and then the parents would call her. One of the other things that went on during that time was *Birth of a Nation*. Did you get any information about *Birth of a Nation*?

W: The old film from 1915 or whatever?

S: Yes, just before the schools were finally [integrated], because the law was passed in 1955 . . .

W: The second *Brown* decision, yeah.

S: Yeah, but we didn't integrate schools until the 1970s. Actually, because of this Human Relations activity we really, even with them making all this noise about massive resistance and stuff, on the surface there was fairly good human relations in the community. There were a group of us that just interacted very well; but during the week before the schools were getting ready to open, and we didn't anticipate any problems, up came *Birth of a Nation* in one of the theaters, **The Byrd Theater**. We did our research and found out who owned the theater and found out it was the **Talhonas**.

W: The people who owned the store?

S: Well, it's a member of that family but it wasn't the [same person]. Anyhow, a group of us went to visit him and he was saying that if they called the film off that the *Times Dispatch* would not carry their ads and they could not operate the theater without the ads in the paper. Alright, we got on the telephone with Ray Boone, you've heard of him, he owns the free press. At that time he was editor of the Afro American newspaper. I also used to write for the newspaper. I had a column called let's talk about it and therefore responding to various things. That was later. I've always been for the paper, but I had that column. Anyway, we got in that office and we called all over the world trying to find the owner of that film. We found him in Europe. We actually could do international calling to ask them to tell him how much damage that would do in a city that was getting ready to integrate. It had done a lot of background work and it was getting ready to go through without any problem. With this movement coming in brought another set of ideas here. They kept claiming it was not for the content, it was for the cinematography. We knew that was a lot of bull. They finally decided to put a preview on or to have someone make a statement about the things that concerned the community and how we should look at the cinematography and not the content and item because the film had Ku Klux Klan stuff around and folks looking ignorant. It was a terrible film, but we went to see it anyway. It ran about three days and then it was pulled. I think that had to do with our national contact with the people who owned _____. But anyway, it finally went away from here. It was supposed to be like a week or so and it was gone in two or three days. Then, we also had people like Bula Heubank she was an interesting lady. Have you heard that name?

W: No.

S: [She was a] very busy lady and she could watch the papers and know more. We really didn't know that much about the community, but she could tell you when you get the letters in the paper. This is the Grand Dragon or the Ku Klux Klan, or this letter is from the White Citizens Council. She knew who all these people were and you would see that these letters were not just ordinary people writing in the paper. She had a house full of papers of when it was written, what articles

were in there, and she followed that. She's dead now so they can't hurt her, but Bula was very valuable. She also was connected with something National out in California. I'd be talking with her on the telephone and I told her she was assigned to watching me. She would be writing and she would say wait a minute you're writing too fast, how do you spell that last name. [I would say] are you writing down everything that I say. [laughing] She would say yes, I like what you're saying. Anyhow, I know that there was an organization which was also kind of human relations, but I can't think of their name. Things about us were in that magazine that they put out. Anyhow, Bula was such a dear little old black lady in _____, and she'd come around here and just bring me boxes of stuff that kept me in touch with what was going on.

W: Well, of course in the white press in Richmond the segregationists pretty much had a field day.

S: Oh they did, but just like I said, half the time she could say who they were and how it was an organized thing. [She would say] this group that was writing on this day were from this particular group and so forth.

W: Right, it's not just members of the general public.

S: [They were] not just the general public, but nobody knew that. She got around everywhere, I told her you're with the FBI. I got a notice from Bula that they were bringing *Birth of a Nation* back in one of the county theaters. They were not putting the notice in the papers, they were putting them under the windshield in the dash boards of cars in the outlying areas, so we were not supposed to know about it. We found out about that and we were able to set up a committee and deal with that. Now I didn't go to that one, but they were able to stop it from coming again.

W: When it finally came how smooth and effective was school integration in Richmond?

S: It went on very well. If it had stayed around here and left people time to see it, well I think it would have been the first time some of children would have known that they were supposed to be inferior. They just didn't know that. I mean our children were strong, and we have seen our children go backwards, absolutely backwards with integration. First of all, you had white teachers. I think the children could have made it, but the families were running our to the counties and they were changing schools every week or something. It was a mess. It was smooth; there wasn't violence or fighting or anything, it actually went fairly smoothly as I could see it. The white teachers did not understand black children. We know more about white people than they know about us because we live in their world. Our world was over there and they didn't even know we were over

there necessarily. So you got information like the kids in Prince Edward just took things in their own hands to get a decent school. The other counties, in fact a girl was talking to me today, she was an actress, they had to go twenty miles to school. In fact my husband worked out here in **Racker County**. **Racker County** runs around Richmond and you had to catch a bus. Rather than come through Richmond and go out the other side to **Virginia Randolph High School** . . . He was a coach out there and the only reason they could keep their sporting games up was that he would have to keep a bus so he could drive his players home. Since they kept them out so long, he would come by here and we would drive, I don't know how much you know about this area, but the last student we dropped off that bus was at the **Charles City** line, so that's twenty or so miles. He was sure to ride forty miles a day. Those things I'm saying were just unequal and damaging because you had to have so much travel. This girl was telling me she lived in Orangeville, Orange County, and they had to go twenty miles to school on the bus. That wasn't unusual. We got integration going here, but it was sending the white teachers into black classrooms without that much knowledge about black children. They could be the nicest people in the world; and the reason that I can say this with confidence is because I went into the State Department of Education in 1974. That's when the councils went out, we lost our funding. I was at Virginia Union University, director of a reading center. When **Governor Holton** came into office he had hearings around the state. He was an excellent governor.

W: This is **Lynwood Holton**.

S: **Lynwood**, yes, he had hearings about what people wanted and what were their needs and what were their concerns. I was invited, as president of the local council, to a hearing that was at Fort Lee. During that same time, as I said, I was President of the Richmond Area Reading Association. I told you that I don't ever think I convinced people that reading was a front line of human relations, but I just kept working at it. So, we had this hearing and I had met with each of my committee chairpersons. They had given me the concerns that their committee had found as concerns. I went to that hearing. I presented. One of the thing that I remember talking about is from the Social Concerns Committee. That had found through their research that Virginia, this Richmond area, led the way and we were first in people in the mental institutions. Are you aware of that?

W: No.

S: I was saying that I remember saying that Virginia like to be first in a lot of things, but I don't think you would be proud of this information that we were first in the number of people admitted to mental institutions. Since the legislature spent our funding, [they] needed to hear [and] they ought to be concerned about that because they need to know what's causing people to become mentally

deranged. There were various things we called attention to, but then when I finished that presentation from the human relations council I said while I'm here I happen also to President of the Richmond Area Reading Association and we are concerned as to why the state doesn't give more attention to reading since it's such an important part of the curriculum. We don't even have a supervisor of reading in the state department. We had language arts and they all said that reading was part of language arts, but we needed attention to reading itself. So, he stopped the hearing and in essence stopped, and therefore all of the cameras were on me. He stopped to talk with me about five minutes. What do you mean the state isn't supporting reading?

W: He was sympathetic.

S: He was sympathetic, yes. I was explaining to him that the Council on Reading in Richmond had a conference each year but we could do so much more with reading if we had support from the state. Then, he asked questions about the other reports from Human Relations. So, he thanked me and I went on to Virginia Union where I was working. The next morning I got a call from the governor's office, from the Secretary of Education. The governor's office asked me to send a copy of my presentation to each of the secretaries in his cabinet. I'm saying you don't tell me that one person cannot make a difference. I did and I was just all excited. I got it together and I sent it them. Well, the next thing I knew he decided he was going to have a statewide reading conference and he wanted me to chair it.

W: That's a result.

[Laughing.]

S: But the other thing he did with this information about the people in institutions, they just got busy and closed down most of them. I always say when I look at people who are homeless, I'm sorry. They just put these people right on out on the street. He's just a good person and I think he was trying to help, but after that it looked like homelessness just took off. So you think you're doing good and you do something wrong because they didn't have an intervening variable, they didn't have an intermediate half-way house. There, all of a sudden, you're walking across and they would come out and I would say I'm sorry. I feel responsible for homelessness.

W: We should start wrapping up now. I'm wondering if I could just ask you to conclude by characterizing the sort of work that the Council on Human Relations did, and try to just summarize its achievements during your time being actively involved and of course as president.

S: Well, I think we created a situation in which people were interacting. We learned a lot about each other. We had such things as unnecessary use of police dogs that we addressed, the insensitivity of policemen, and the absence of black policemen above the rank of sergeant. You also had the misuse of police man power arresting people for intoxication. They used to arrest about 7,000 people for being intoxicated, but we got that changed.

W: So these are very practical accomplishments.

S: Right, and wire tapping of black city officials . . .

[End of side A2]

W: What was the relationship with things like the NAACP and the SCLC?

S: All of them worked together. When Martin Luther King did not come to Virginia like he did to some of those other states, but he was supposed to come into **Northfolk** and have a march across Virginia and it was the same week that he was in Memphis; he came home from Memphis, we had a direct line, I had my line and Ms. James line, we had a line to Martin Luther King's office in Atlanta; and we were constantly trying to plan for this trip across Virginia. I can verify that by news releases. We did not release much of our public relations material because it was a question as to whether he was going to get to Virginia or go back to Memphis. We were talking with his office back and forth and we just did not know. They were to go to ____ Zion Church and there's an article in the Free Press that will tell you that he was saying that he would be tired from the march from **Petersburg** and he was going to be in this house the night he died. Isn't that something?

W: So that would have been part of the Poor People's Campaign?

S: No.

W: That was what he was working on in 1969.

S: Yeah.

W: That was a sanitation workers' strike.

S: Yeah, I know the different things he went into the help with whatever. The Poor People's March really came after he died you know.

W: Right, but that was what he was working on at the time of his death.

S: Right, throughout the whole thing.

W: That was tragic.

S: Anyway, Virginia probably needed a whole lot more than Poor People's March, but I did work with that too after he died. That was one thing that really recall, that he was expected here. I had just moved into this house during that time, so they asked if he could come here to rest and then we were going to have a rally at ____ Zion Church. He wasn't a big thing here because you had some people who were working for him and some people who didn't understand why he was ____ sanitation ____, which we could be as snotty as any day, but why is he working with the sanitation workers instead of some of the other things he had been dealing with. Black people are not one set of people. They make the great mistake of saying well what do white people, black people think. Nobody knows what black people think, they are diverse because they come from different countries, they come from backgrounds, they come from different places, they come from islands; they have come in from various places just like the white population. Just as you don't expect the white population to know everything about people, black people exist, just different. In terms of actions taken, we talked about monitoring the media for fairness. We talked about forming the Media Relations Commission. We talked about challenging the licenses of the radio stations and getting the stations unlicensed, and the result of these challenges that we did on licencing stations. I guess it sort of summarizes what we did, but we have something I'm going to mention, this book called *Traveling On*. It's a 133 year journey after the civil war, 1865 to 1998. I have used ten years of my life, from 1991 to now, on developing this book with a group in my church. Here we worked in how we unlocked a lot of history about went on in Virginia. So anybody who is interested in knowing about [our history]. We called it a reference text in American, Africamerican, and **Africhristian** history. It introduces two new words into the language: Africamerican, with the "a" America being the ending "a" in Africa; and **Africhristian** History. So it's a reference text and you can find things on whatever was going on during those 133 years.

W: That's a great accomplishment and a good legacy.

S: It's a wonderful book. This one is even more wonderful. It's *Traveling On* volume one; this is *Traveling On* volume two. This one is *Traveling On: First Baptist South Richmond, Today and the First Fifty Years*. So we started out with church as it was in the 1990s and then went back to where it came from, starting in 1821. There were laws passed in the country that blacks could not meet in certain numbers in 1819 and back in that period, and yet we have things about Jefferson and Madison trying to find land to remove blacks from the continent totally. We just wondered, we got interested. Why did we have a church? We set out to find out, and it became _____. In here we have a section, and I would just recommend that you would like to get one of these books. It

costs \$40 if you want both of them. This one costs \$25. You have in here the specifics or a good summary of what happened with RCHR and a little bit on VCHR, the Virginia Council on Human Relations. The commentary does a kind of a wrap up on that period.

W: I should invest. Well, we've covered a hell of a lot of history and a hell of a lot of time and space, and I just want to say thank you very much for your participation.

S: Well, I have appreciated the opportunity to talk about it. _____ said you're going to be interviewed just about you talking, and Hilda and I both talk a lot.

W: Well, many, many thanks. I really appreciate it.