

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to blanders@odu.edu.

Tidewater Voices Oral History Project  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, Virginia  
For Research Purposes Only

	Sex	Ethnicity	Age	City of Birth	City of Habitation
Speaker 1:	F	B	28	Norfolk, VA	Norfolk, VA
Speaker 2:	M	B	69	Norfolk, VA	Norfolk, VA

Speaker 2: Ready

Speaker 1: my name is [WORDS REMOVED] and i'm here interviewing [WORDS REMOVED] so Mr [WORD REMOVED] please tell me about yourself.

<NOISE>

Speaker 2: well let me see it goes back i'm born in Norfolk Virginia way back then in the olden days i don't have to tell you but uh i went to milt\_i got\_graduated from high school <NOISE> went to Ruffner Junior High School Booker T Washington High School went in the military stayed in the military for what twenty two years loved every year i loved it i wish i could stay in there forever

Speaker 1: what was the military like during tho\_ that time period

Speaker 2: rough especially for the black people

Speaker 1: can you tell me a little bit more about it

Speaker 2: yep we were\_the white people of course had more pr-privileges then we had we had do the seconds and take the first and all that other stuff from 'em but ya had to put up with it and suck it up 'cuz you knew when you went in how it was going to be so i had already siked myself out it was going to be rough but i think i can handle it and i'm glad i did and <SMACKS> i made a career out of it i get a check every month <LAUGHS> well now i'm start working at the post office in nineteen ninety two now think God i've retired from the post office i'm doing pretty good thank God for that and everything just turned out right for me all you have to do is live right and things will look out for ya [Speaker 1: hmm] that's my motto right there believe in the man upstairs and it'll come through for ya

Speaker 1: um'kay can you tell me what it was like for you growing up in in Norfolk

[Speaker 2: in Norf] Virginia.

Speaker 2: oh boy now that's way back there

Speaker 1: I would like to hear some stories about that

Speaker 2: really

Speaker 1: yeah

Speaker 2: it it was rough especially growing up poor didn't have anything daddy provided for the family that's bout all he could do food on the table every day and clothes on ya back and we didn't expect any more from that because of what he was doing he was doing it all by hisself and i respected that man very much he worked every day every day every day bought food home put it on the table.

Speaker 1: what did he do

Speaker 2: he worked at the Naval Base [Speaker 1: Naval Base] yeah Hampton Blvd Naval Base

[Speaker 1: hmm] <CLEARS THROAT> <SMACKS LIPS> He worked there for bout I guess daddy worked there for what thirty something years <P: 03> retired i guess after he retired he

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

live about five years then he passed [Speaker 1: hmm] so i must be living right the good lord lookin out for me <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: what did um your mother do

Speaker 2: housewife she stay home with the kids back in the days that's all they did stay home with the children yep daddy say you stay home and i do the work but she had the hardest job raising a knuckle head like me <LAUGHS> i have ta- a sister got a brother i'm the baby they all older than i am but my brothers passed my sister still here so it's just me and my sister left

Speaker 1: hmm so how did your parents meet

Speaker 2: now that's a good question because my mothers from North Carolina my fathers from South Carolina and how they met i do not know but what they were saying they met a sch-school's soft-baseball game cuz my daddy was a catcher he played ball and i guess they met then

[Speaker 1: oh okay] hm-hmph

Speaker 1: and so how did they move to Norfolk Virginia

Speaker 2: they packed up and left North Carolina and came to Norfolk Virginia and been here ever since [Speaker 1: oh okay] yep

Speaker 1: so let's go back to your \_your childhood growing up in Norfolk [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] please like tell me some stories

Speaker 2: oh i was a rough guy back in the day i loved doing things loved baseball football everything i was out there in the street in it but back then <CLEARs THROAT> we didn't have no recreation that bought uniforms for the kids and let'em play ball so what we did we just played with our regular sck-clothes clothes on use to get my butt beat every day come home with my tore j\_tore jeans and grass stains in my pants and all that but it was fun we made our own stuff made our own skateboards we didn't have none of stuff fancy stuff like the kids got now didn't know what a computer was and that's why i am so illiterate on computers because I never had a chance to work with'em yep but it was fun i enjoyed my life my life is great, it's nice i enjoyed it i'm happy i accomplished what i wanted to accomplish [Speaker 1: hmm] i got that much because i did all this by myself [Speaker 1: yeah] but it was worth it it was worth it keep a clean nose and believe in Jesus Christ and do your job and you'll make it

(5) Speaker 1: so you were saying that you were very into church when you [Speaker 2: <SNIFFS>] were younger or as you got older

Speaker 2: when i was younger [Speaker 1: yeah] when i was younger [Speaker 1: hmm] see back in the day grandmama you goin to church with grandmama every Sunday so that was me i mean i was fighting cry didn't want to go to church but i'm glad i did now she made me go [Speaker 1: hmm] <RUBS COUCH> it was worth it it was definitely worth it <SNIFFS>

Speaker 1: now why did you choose to join the military versus going to college

Speaker 2: back in my day college won't even thought of cuz you know you couldn't afford it couldn't nobody afford no college back in the day so thing

Speaker 1: so are you talking about just African Americans couldn't afford to go to college or just

Speaker 2: majority of African Americans yeah yeah that's majority you know the other people they gone make their way cuz everything is open for them already [Speaker 1: hmm] but i knew daddy and them couldn't afford no college so instead of puttin' a burden on them i said i'm going in the military and that's what i did [Speaker 1: hmm] got out the military i stayed out i stayed out seven years then i went back into the military and that's when i did my whole twenty two years

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

[Speaker 1: oh okay] . . . yep knock on wood [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] you hear this <KNOCKS ON WOOD> that's knocking on wood <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: so tell me some hurdles that you've gone through and [Speaker 2: jobs] yeah

Speaker 2: that was the hurdle the jobs trying to find a decent job [Speaker 1: hmm] i worked on concrete i worked on the city i did i did everything just to keep me out of trouble [Speaker 1: hmph] cuz back in the day that's all \_it\_ it was easy to get in trouble then but i turned my face and said i got to go the other way i can't be like the rest of the guys [Speaker 1: hmph] going to jail and stayin in jail naw <RUBS COUCH> i couldn't do that to my mother um-hm now you got me thinking <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: what do think\_ <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: <LAUGHS> well i could have did a lot more if i da had my attention on going to school i could have did a hell of a lot more but back in those days school just wont in my portfolio to go to school i didn't want it [Speaker 1: hmph] so i got out in made my money did what i had to do

[Speaker 1: m'kay] yep <SMACKS> got married it lasted for a while but

Speaker 1: so tell me how you and your ex-wife met

Speaker 2: i was in the military she was in Columbia South Carolina <EMERGENCY SIRENS>

I was stationed in Fort Jackson South Carolina which is right there and we met at a picnic at a park that's when i met my wife we started talkin started dating and this that that and this this this this and that was it <EMERGENCY SIRENS >

Speaker 1: there had to be some type of courting ritual that you were bought up to kind of

Speaker 2: well not really cuz i hadn't i didn't stay in South Carolina that long we were i guess we were together bout eight months and that's when i got out early and came on back home to Norfolk about year a year and a half later i come home and my mother entertaining two ladies in the living room <P: 04> i kept wal\_ spoke kept walking through the kitchen came back my mother say you don't know who that is, lord lord have mercy i said no cuz my wife had long hair all the way down her back [Speaker 1: oh okay] she had cut it off short and i didn't recognize her and so that's when we started dating again she came left South Carolina got a job in Lawrenceville Virginia bout what ninety miles from here hm-hmph <RUBS COUCH> and we would commuting every weekend

Speaker 1: so how did she find your mom

Speaker 2: that's a good question

Speaker 1: you didn't think to <LAUGHS> [Speaker 2: i i see] put two and two together

Speaker 2: no cuz i was thinking did I give her my home address . . . i don' k- i really don't i think she would have gotten it from the telephone [Speaker 1: hmm] she knew my name and that's so she started investigating from there

Speaker 1: so so

Speaker 2: so we started commuting back and forth ninety miles and all this stuff ya know

Speaker 1: she was going to get you <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: yeah she got me <LAUGHS> yes she did yes she did it was fun yep it was fun

Speaker 1: so what was fun about the relationship

Speaker 2: we use to travel all the time always traveling always traveling her South Carolina home then i go to North Carolina \_we\_ Las Vegas we had a good time we just had traveling we just had a good <SNIFFS> time it was fun it was fun but things had to change so

Speaker 1: tell me how y'all how you proposed to her and what is her name <LAUGHS>

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

Speaker 2: oh her name is [WORD REMOVED]

(10) Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: it was [WORD REMOVED] before we got married

Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: hm-hmph

Speaker 1: oh okay

Speaker 2: now this is gonna be strange. . .you asked about proposing [Speaker 1: hmph] she proposed to me

Speaker 1: oh

Speaker 2: she came up let's get married i was young dumb i say i can't have no marriage so i got weak i guess and we got married right there on a house on Wood Street won't no big wedding or nothin' like that <RUBS COUCH> so we got married and lived together what i think it was nineteen years then things started to change and so i had to get out of that relationship but i made it [Speaker 1: <CLEARS THROAT>] i'm still here

Speaker 1: that's good so <Speaker 2 SNIFFS> how many kids did you have during this relationship with your ex-wife

Speaker 2: none <P: 04> she had a kid when i married her [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] but i had [WORD REMOVED] is the only kid we had together [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] that was the only one just one <SNIFFS> yep

<P: 04> <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: so tell me about parenthood and what type of values you wanted to instill in [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: okay <CLEARS THROAT> now remember now i was in the military so being home i won't home that much cuz i was always in the field going here going there went to Germany she didn't want to go to Germany to far from her mother. . . but i was married to her so i say well what the heck got to do what i gotta do i'm in the military i got to take care of my career now b-but with the last eighteen years that was enough marriage for me to find out what it was about anyway young and dumb didn't care, oh boy but it was over with

Speaker 1: hm-hmph so i know you said you were in the military [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] so you weren't always around [Speaker 2: right] but when you were around how were you as a father

Speaker 2: well other people said i was great as a father the from our friends hm-hmph cuz i always had [WORD REMOVED] with me everywhere i went so won't no big with the child i loved the child cuz it was my child [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] so we did what we had to do

Speaker 1: yea so what\_ what things did you guys use to do together

Speaker 2: oh bowling we use we out bout uh we got\_ had trophies of the yang yang oh did i say that we had trophy bowling\_ we bowled fishin and lots and see lots of traveling lot of traveling on the weekend <RUBS COUCH> [Speaker 1: hmph] we been all to west Virginia Tennessee all the mountains everywhere it was fun <P:05> <LAUGHS> <RUBS COUCH>

Speaker 1: so you said went to Germany [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] what year did you go

Speaker 2: <RUBS COUCH> oh man what year did i go to Germany <HISSING> seventy four

Speaker 1: seventy four what was Germany like

Speaker 2: seventy four five yeah seventy four

Speaker 1: what was Germany like in the seventies

Speaker 2: I loved it

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

Speaker 1: and how long were you there

Speaker 2: . . . ah totally of six years [Speaker 1: six years] not all not straight consecutive six years

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] i go for two come back 'nother year go 'nother after two whenever they wanted me to go to Germany <RUBS COUCH> but it was fun i enjoyed Germany i really enjoyed it

Speaker 1: so can you\_ just tell me stories about Germany during the seventies [Speaker 2: <RUBS COUCH>]

Speaker 2: learning to get along with the people for one thing cuz back then everybody wasn't speaking English so you meet a family and they didn't speak English so you had to improvise you know make things work but they were nice people

Speaker 1: hm-hmph so how did they treat you as African American

Speaker 2: great that's\_ they loved African Americans love'em to death

Speaker 1: so when they saw wh- other Americans [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] they didn't they didn't like the other Americans or they just preferred African Americans over everybody else

Speaker 2: I think they\_ well\_ they\_ everybody can tell you they preferred African Americans over the white people because i guess we treated them different cuz we done been through poverty and stuff like that the white people hadn't that's why they didn't get along with them that good

[Speaker 1: hmph] plus we were different black we were different color <RUBS COUCH> they've never see no that many black people

Speaker 1: so it was fascinating to them

Speaker 2: oh yeah it was very fascinating [Speaker 1: hmph] meet people you don't even know them they speak give you a beer drink beer with ya have a good time

Speaker 1: so did you find yourself learning German while you were there

Speaker 2: very little very little plus majority well it depends on where you went to if you going to town with GIs are most those people in that town knew English but if you go out like the (15) monasteries where the monks and all them sleep they didn't under\_ didn't speak English but we still got along

Speaker 1: so you went to monasteries

Speaker 2: hm hmph

Speaker 1: ohh please tell me something

Speaker 2: ohh man it was beautiful

Speaker 1: tell me a story

Speaker 2: and you talkin about the beer [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] you know they make their own beer

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] and we as Americans weren't use to that beer you drink one beer you drunk <LAUGHS> [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] and they loved it too plus you had to walk up a mountain to get to the monastery by the time you got there you wanted to take a quick break cuz you were tired but once you got there and started messing with the monks and seeing how they make the beer and all that stuff it was wonderful i loved it i loved it and i'm going back again before i leave this world i got to go back

Speaker 1: where\_ where would you go

Speaker 2: what part

Speaker 1: yeah

Speaker 2: Berlin\_ Berlin is the big place now but i don't go to Berlin too many Americans and

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

GIs there <CLEARS THROAT> i want to go where we not there Americans and ye\_ yeah \_it's a lot more fun doing it that way swimming oh man it was beautiful, [Speaker 1: hmph] i got to go back just to see how its changed since they tore the\_ the wall down [Speaker 1: hmph] i think that's messed up a lot of the German areas they didn't want that either

Speaker 1: they didn't want the wall to be torn down

Speaker 2: naw cuz you got the bad guys all over the place now [Speaker 1: hm] see when they had the wall my opinion now you could monitor it better and keep it better no crime and all that stuff like now it's \_they over there the crime of the world worrying about the gay people they beating the gay people up and its terrible over there now but that wall did it

Speaker 1: so that's actually fascinating you were [Speaker 2: hmph] there when the wall was [Speaker 2: right right <RUBS COUCH>]so did you take a picture of it

Speaker 2: my name is on it too <LAUGHS> [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] i wrote my name on it

Speaker 1: what did you \_you just wrote your name on the wall

Speaker 2: yeah i just wrote my name the year the date and all that other stuff <RUBS COUCH> and i had a piece of the wall but i don't know where the heck that is now it's been so long [Speaker 1: oh] <SNIFFS> but i\_ i enjoyed it i could say i've been living the good life really it enjoyed it

Speaker 1: so while you were stationed in Germany did you go outside to like any other countries

Speaker 2: Australia

Speaker 1: you went to Australia

Speaker 2: i loved it too i gotta go back there too

Speaker 1: where did you go in Australia

Speaker 2: uhh what's the capital of Australia

Speaker 1: is it is it Sydney

Speaker 2: was it Sydney

Speaker 1: I don't know

Speaker 2: i think its Sydney

Speaker 1: want me google it

Speaker 2: i think its Sydney Australia but it's too busy now when you traveling overseas like that try to go to places that too many Americans don't go to and you'll enjoy it much better cuz i know i did <SNIFFS> i really did it was nice

Speaker 1: well you know Mr [WORD REMOVED] [Speaker 2: it was nice] like i never go where the Americans go

Speaker 2: right don't do it

Speaker 1: i'm not even [Speaker 2: i found out the hard way] American when i go overseas though they don't think i'm American

Speaker 2: right don't\_ leav leave America back here [Speaker 1: hmph] enjoy yourself it was nice i enjoyed i really did <SNIFFS>

Speaker 1: you say you enjoy it but tell me some stories

Speaker 2: i gu <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: tell me about some stories

Speaker 2: well one for like traveling [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] you got to learn to travel\_ i got lost about how many times going to Paris you know cuz those trains they leave \_see you got a train leaving at nine o'clock ain't no nine oh one nine oh two or nothing it leaves exactly at nine

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

o'clock and if you don't make it you just lost

Speaker 1: Canberra is the capital of Australia

Speaker 2: i thought it was Sydney

Speaker 1: no no it's not Sydney

Speaker 2: Can-Canberry

Speaker 1: yeah Canberra

Speaker 2: okay if you ever get the chance you should go it's beautiful

Speaker 1: to Canberra

Speaker 2: the \_the Australia itself

Speaker 1: I went

Speaker 2: Australia

Speaker 1: yes didn't i tell you i went to Australia in April

Speaker 2: no you went to\_ i thought you were in Korea

Speaker 1: I was in Korea but then i went to Australia after that i went to Sydney

Speaker 2: oh man did you enjoy it

Speaker 1: yes

Speaker 2: i told ya

Speaker 1: but it's not about me <LAUGHS> it's about you

Speaker 2: oh that right this my interview not yours <LAUGHS> but it was beautiful baby i loved it

Speaker 1: i went to uh Coogee beach and then i went to Blue Mountain and i\_i got lost

Speaker 2: what i tell ya

Speaker 1: i got lost because i couldn't figure out which way to go so i found uh like a group of Korean women [Speaker 2: hmph] who were in their hiking gear and i just followed them

Speaker 2: oh yeah

Speaker 1: yes yes

Speaker 2: that's great so how did you stay in Australia

Speaker 1: for like a good maybe a week it's not that long

Speaker 2: oh man that's great i got to get out of here [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] <HUMS> yep but that's me see i did all that what less than an hour when it

Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>

(20) Speaker 2: see there it was fun though i enjoyed it every bit of it every bit of it

[Speaker 1: <SMACKS LAP>]

Speaker 1: so Mr [WORD REMOVED] [Speaker 2: hmph] you're a grandfather [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] so what is that like

<P: 05>

Speaker 2: hmm being a grandfather is wonderful it's the . . . people you have to deal with being a grandfather [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] kids don't raise kids like that do when i was growing up

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] the parents don't raise them that way it's too much free for the kids

Speaker 1: hm-hmph well just tell [Speaker 2: i got to get use to it i guess] tell me your experience as just being a grandfather to two beautiful children [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] [WORD REMOVED] and . . .

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED]

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: the kids are wonderful

Speaker 1: hm-hmph so

Speaker 2: it's the parents you got to deal with

Speaker 1: so when um [WORD REMOVED] told you she was pregnant for the first time with her,

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED] her son her oldest son

Speaker 1: with [WORD REMOVED] her oldest child what \_what thoughts went through your mind

Speaker 2: marriage

Speaker 1: marriage

Speaker 2: hm-hmph

Speaker 1: what else

Speaker 2: but young kids don't play the marriage role no more . . . and thank god i'm he \_i'm here to help take care of my grandkids <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: hm-hmph so okay so since you said young kids don't think [Speaker 2: <RUBS COUCH>] about marriage anymore [Speaker 2: right] what \_what are your philosophies when it comes to dating and then you know marriage

Speaker 2: i think when <CLEARS THROAT> there's a child involved i think there should be marriage [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] that puts stability into the child too now cuz you got the daddy here and the momma there you see the daddy once in a while you <RUBS HANDS

TOGETHER> know you know they messin the kids head up

Speaker 1: so is that what your parents taught you when you were younger

Speaker 2: yeah we were family when i was growing up but back in the day you didn't have no choice you get a girl pregnant that's automatically you get married [Speaker 1: hmph] but nowadays

Speaker 1: would you say that that's more of a North Carolina South Carolina blend or a Virginia

Speaker 2: no that's back in the day Virginia \_ a life blend really [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] you know back in the day you when you get somebody pregnant boy you betta gon on in marry that girl that's it you get married it's not being in love with the woman [Speaker 1: hmph] it's just being responsible and being a family that's all it was about back in the day being a family but now the mo-moors nowadays don't care about no family it's not like it use to be when i was growing up <SNIFFS> totally different <RUBS COUCH> everybody out there for they self and i blame most of that on women's lib too well i don't need no man i don't need no man which is true

Speaker 1: now you say

Speaker 2: they make just as much as man make now that's the problem i'm serious that's \_'member i told you a mom use to stay at home [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] a mom wife take care of the kid that \_that was their job man go out and make the money if it was a real man he would but you had slackers too that won't worth a dern people get kids don't need kids can't take care of their damn self how you gonna take care of a kid but what the heck make the best of what you can do that's what i've been doing all of my life yes <RUBS COUCH> <SMACKS LIPS> yes sir buddy

Speaker 1: now when you found out she was pregnant for the second time with [WORD REMOVED]



This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

[Speaker 2: hm-hmph] what thoughts went through your mind

Speaker 2: what is wrong with this girl that's what went through my mind what is wrong with her and the other thing i can't say <LAUGHS> <RUBS COUCH> but my daughter was not ready she won't even ready for the first kid [Speaker 1: hmph] uh <SMACKS HANDS TOGETHER> <SINGS> you want something to drink break time time out

Speaker 1: there is no breaks <LAUGHS> you just gotta keep going

Speaker 2: <LAUGHS> you said an hour it's been an hour

Speaker 1: it hasn't been an hour

Speaker 2: forty-five minutes

Speaker 1: it hasn't even been forty-five minutes

Speaker 2: yes it has

Speaker 1: no it hasn't

Speaker 2: cuz it's\_ it's okay what else you got to ask me <SNIFFS>

Speaker 1: it's not really asks [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] it's just like a conversation

Speaker 2: oh okay

Speaker 1: so Mr [WORD REMOVED] i want to get back to like [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] back in the sixties and the fifties and just [Speaker 2: that was the good times] i really want to get back to the schools

[Speaker 2: hm-hmph] you know because education was different back in those days so

Speaker 2: now school since you mentioned when i was in the military i went uh college for two years <RUBS COUCH> i did have my part in schooling i did it for two years

Speaker 1: oh okay

Speaker 2: plus then you go to school you get promoted [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] so that was my push to get promoted by going to school for two years i went to Central Texas College

(25) yep got my two years in bach\_ and that\_ it was great <SNIFFS> help me get promoted and everything else and i left the guys that didn't go to school cuz i didn't want to go to school old man what i'm going to school for well that's if i want to move forward in the military get more education they'll promote me qua-quicker and i get promoted

Speaker 1: i like the idea

Speaker 2: hm-hmph

Speaker 1: but lets'\_ lets' bring it back to Norfolk [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] and then how\_ cuz i\_ i know a little history about the segregation in the Hampton Roads Area [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] and like how Norfolk was predominately a white neighborhood [Speaker 2: yep] a white city back in those times and then of course when people had to

Speaker 2: see back in those days the white people <CLEAR S THROAT> had it all they had buses to pick them up take them to school we had to walk to school every day snow rain sleet we walked to school and i was going to a Booker T every morning i walked to school come back walk to school people\_ white folks ridin' by waving at us in the bus while we walking\_ walking across the railroad tracks and takin' the short cuts to get home [Speaker 1: hmph] it was rough but <RUBS COUCH> you had to be\_ stick wit it you had to stick wit it momma made sure i stuck it boy you aint you\_ goin\_ you going to school

Speaker 1: wasn't there a period where Norfolk shut their schools down because they didn't want to integrate the schools

Speaker 2: oh that was way back in the day [Speaker 1: way back in the day] way back in the day

Speaker 1: do you know anything about that

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to blanders@odu.edu.

Speaker 2: naw i wasn't in that one baby i'm glad I wasn't [Speaker 1: hmph] that was terrible back in the day <SNIFFS> probably do anything to keep us from going to school wit'em [Speaker 1: hmph] honestly i wished they had left it alone i really do [Speaker 1: yeah] cuz the thing\_ especially the crime the black people doing now we ain't never think about that before [Speaker 1: hmph] killin' people killin' your momma and daddy and all that we didn't think about none of that then integration started hanging around the reg\_ regular people that really did that stuff so we started doing [Speaker 1: hmph] and it's terrible the world is terrible now

Speaker 1: so you think back in those times African Americans had like a sense of pride that they don't have now

Speaker 2: yep very true why we \_we don't want the white people now they don't care no more that don't care but when was on our own we had our own family we had\_ the block took care of the block

Speaker 1: so let's talk

Speaker 2: that's what it is

Speaker 1: let's talk about that too because when i grew up it was\_ i grew up in Park Place [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] you know Park Place [Speaker 2: yeah <SNIFFS>] but the street that i lived on it was like a\_ a old times streets so a lot like\_ old\_ elderly people lived on that street [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] so it was a lot like a neighborhood looking out

Speaker 2: that's exactly what it was

Speaker 1 : for each other for each other now we couldn't go around the corner <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: i loved it

Speaker 1: but my best friends were my \_my elderly neighbors <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: we had this one lady on Wood Street she would sit up there in her front window that's all she did all day long older lady and look out the window and everything we did our mothers knew about it <LAUGHS> we'll come in the house and what i do now momma lady across the street she done called and told her your son was up there on that roof and he done fall\_ fell he could have killed hisself they tell everything but they take care of you Wood Street was a Wood Street everybody took care of everybody [Speaker 1: hmph] no fighting and cussing and all that junk cuz it was a family leave your doors open you hadn't lock no door you try that now <RUBS COUCH> yeah baby it was rough but i done enjoyed it i'm glad it was rough for me taught me a lot being rough anything you get too easy <CLAPS HANDS> you just look over it you don't think how much pride you took to put in it now they don't give a damn . . . women don't take care of their kids right <BLOWS AIR> i don't know it's terrible terrible terrible terrible terrible now you got me thinking this interview\_ get out of here <Speaker 1 LAUGHS> <LAUGHS> yea\_ what i what i could have done [Speaker 1: differently in life] differently yeah

Speaker 1: well tell me about those things

Speaker 2: i don't i don't know what i could have done differently [Speaker 1: hmph] because i guess the good Lord led me in the right path to see what i've accomplished and all on my on my own so i guess i was on the right path and back in the day when times were hard i say naw i can't put my kids\_ i can't put myself through this i got to do better i got to do better so i started getting jobs going to school heating and air conditioning [Speaker 1: hmmm] you know so i did it thank God for

(30) that [Speaker 1: hmmm] . . . i've accomplished everything i think i wanted to accomplish so i want my own house got my own house got my own car got everything didn't worry nobody bout nothing that's what my daddy taught me [Speaker 1: okay] cuz he wasn't the one to give you everything you \_you go get yourself [Speaker 1: hmmm] you know daddy give me a dollar a

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

quarter a nickel a dime <RUBS COUCH> go out there and cut some grass yeah and i'm glad he instilled that in me i hated it then though [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] but now i see he led me in this path to get your own stuff don't depend on nobody [Speaker 1: hmm] that's me

Speaker 1: . . . so you have well your brother passed away [Speaker 2: hmph] but when you were growing up with your siblings [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] how was that i'm surprised your mom didn't have like multiple children cuz you know [Speaker 2: she had three] back in those times [Speaker 2: only three] back in those times like my mom's a \_ a child of nine there were nine of them

Speaker 2: your mom got nine children

Speaker 1: no

Speaker 2: oh oh oh her

Speaker 1: her mom had [Speaker 2: <mother father>] yeah [Speaker 2: yeah] her mom had nine kids and then my dad sa-surprisingly he \_ he only has one sibling [Speaker 2: hm-hmph <Speaker 2 SNIFFS>] but his mom came from a huge family and his dad came from a huge family

Speaker 2: all my families is small nobody had over four children [Speaker 1: oh wow] my mom and daddy had three two boys and a girl [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] her, brothers sisters she had i think \_ i think it was one cousin one female only [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] one child so won't that meaning big families that was the [WORD REMOVED] back in the day thought that won't the [WORD REMOVED] <RUBS COUCH> but you just did i \_ my sister had more kids than anybody she had four

Speaker 1: that's not a lot

Speaker 2: <BLOWS AIR> if you ain't married it's a lot

Speaker 1: oh well then yeah [Speaker 2:<RUBS COUCH>] hm-hmph

Speaker 2: yep then daddy had to raise her children i said Lord i can't do this to daddy i got to go, well that's it

Speaker 1: I want to hear more about tsk just \_ okay i asked you bout like how your relationship wer- with \_ with your siblings [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] so can you tell me about that like

Speaker 2: my sister and brother now

Speaker 1: hm-hmph

Speaker 2: we would \_ we would \_ we would hang all the time we would go out together all the time when we was grown \_ when i was of age they were older i'm the baby [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] when i got club age and all that stuff we were going out to clubs all the time on the weekend

Speaker 1: what were clubs like back in those times

Speaker 2: fun

Speaker 1: did you have to dress up like suits and stuff

Speaker 2: no just decent you didn't have to no suit and all that stuff one pair of slacks a shirt [Speaker 1: hmph] no shirt hanging out your pants and all that stuff

Speaker 1: what was the city to go to back in those times was it Portsmouth or Norfolk

Speaker 2: naw -uhhhh let me see Norfolk Norfolk had all the clubs the good clubs

[Speaker 1: Granby Street] right there on Church Street

Speaker 1: Church Street

Speaker 2: Church Street now that's when Church Street was Church Street

Speaker 1: tell me about Church Street

Speaker 2: that's when the Navy [Speaker 1: < LAUGHS >] when the Navy guy was coming into town

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] Church Street was just like New York that's why they called Norfolk little New York Church Street okay was crowded you couldn't walk down Church Street without bumping into somebody on the weekends it was loaded girl i'm telling ya it was loaded i was out there wit'em them little young guys too didn't know nothing <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: so you're telling me Church Street had more buildings than it has right now

Speaker 2: oh yeah Church Street was a\_ had a big Bonnie McEachin is the black lady she had a nice hotel right there on Church Street and when all the entertainment come down like James Brown and all them people they would stay at Bonnie McEachin's hotel

Speaker 1: what was the name of it [Speaker 2: Bon] oh okay

Speaker 2: that was the name of it Bonnie McEachin uh-huh and uh that's where i made a little change that\_ up there too getting money they want something to drink i go to bootleggers house for'em yeah i made a little change then <LAUGHS> yeah but it was fun fast moving town back in the day you could not walk on Church Street

Speaker 1: so if Church Street was the\_ the place to be what was Granby Street

Speaker 2: <LAUGHS> white folks

Speaker 1: <LAUGHS> say it a little louder

Speaker 2: <LAUGHS> Granby Street won't our cup of tea you had to have money to hang out on Granby Street now it's for everybody but Granby Street ain't nothing like it use to be we had Colonial stores groceries everything down there <RUBS COUCH> it was nice back in the day but everything modern you ain't got to do nothing no more mh-hm-mm it was some fun girl ya'll missed a lot of fun [Speaker 1: what] very much very much fun we didn't have no football games couldn't afford to go to none of them nobody had no cars for one thing <SNIFFS> [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] so everything was kept right there in the neighborhood weekends come around it was a different time had more white uniforms on Church Street than a little bit

Speaker 1: so the rumors were true <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: oh yeah <Speaker 1 LAUGHS> oh yeah

(35) Speaker 1: and can you tell me what those rumors were Mr [WORD REMOVED]

Speaker 2: no [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] won't put me in jail it was nice it was fast it was a fast town

[Speaker 1: fast town] very fast town very fast

Speaker 1: so how was Norfolk Shipyard back in those days was it a place that you wanted to work at

Speaker 2: hmm no cuz won't nobody making no money back in the day [Speaker 1: hmph] but now they making the money so everybody want to work down there post office is the same way post office won't paying no money then two three four dollars an hour yep but like i said i did the best thing by going back into the military really helped me out yep your father retired didn't he he stay in there long

Speaker 1: hm-hmph he retired [Speaker 2: hmph] i think he retired like two thousand nine

[Speaker 2: hmph] right before i left yeah

Speaker 2: it was fun i enjoyed it twenty something years right there in the military traveling i accomplished my traveling too yep i got to Pa\_ i want to go to Panama see i can catch those hops to go travel now <SNIFFS> ten dollars can go anywhere you want to go so i might try hooking those things up and traveling some <SNIFFS> it was fun

Speaker 1: what was Virginia Beach like

Speaker 2: white folks

Speaker 1: say it a little louder [Speaker 2: <LAUGHS>] Mr [WORD REMOVED]

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

Speaker 2: Virginia Beach has \_we\_ black folks owned Virginia Beach back in the day

Speaker 1: you guys did

Speaker 2: yeah [Speaker 1: oh that's nice] we had the land the property everything out there then the man came by and started buying up everything and kicking us out that's why they don't want us down there now we still got property down there old folks won't sell <SNIFFS>

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] but Virginia Beach is something else its was tourist trap that's all that is

[Speaker 1: yeah] and with us down there the tourist not coming so

Speaker 1: so ya'll went more like Ocean

Speaker 2: city beaches is what they called it

Speaker 1: city beach

Speaker 2: it was free <LAUGHS> [Speaker 1: oh okay <LAUGHS>] it was free it was city beach

Speaker 1: Ocean View was a city beach

Speaker 2: hm-hmph it was fun we enjoyed it we use to go there all the time but the life was something else totally different now hm-hmph i wish i done took some pictures back in the day especially Church Street you wouldn't believe it

Speaker 1: i would have loved to have seen it

Speaker 2: you wouldn't believe it

Speaker 1: you hear

Speaker 2: go to the library go to the library get some of them old newspapers that they have

[Speaker 1: hm-hmph] they got pictures of of Church Street on there Woodworth [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] five and dime store and all that stuff was down there we couldn't eat in there though

Speaker 1: hm-hmph so you know this neighborhood we live in now [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] do you remember it back in the back in the times

Speaker 2: oh yes

Speaker 1: i know it i know it used to be a park

Speaker 2: Liberty Park

Speaker 1: Liberty Park

Speaker 2: that's what they use to call it yeah Liberty Park

Speaker 1: what was Liber [Speaker 2: like projects] yeah what was that like back in those days

Speaker 2: rough

Speaker 1: like you didn't want to live in Liberty Park

Speaker 2: naw oh no that's when you start having gangs and all that stuff round here Liberty Park people fought with the Bowling Park people the what's the other project over there Young Park [Speaker 1: yeah]

Speaker 1: Don't forget

Speaker 2: it got terrible then

Speaker 1: don't forget back there

Speaker 2: yeah Grandy Park Grandy Park

Speaker 1: Grandy Park

Speaker 2: Grandy Park <SNIFFS> but this was something here baby this place here won't nothing but water it would flood up the yang yang round here [Speaker 1: hmph] well that's when you see so much over there now that floods but it's not as bad as it used to be

Speaker 1: i'm just saying it comes all the way to [Speaker 2: yeah] stairs

Speaker 2: remember when it came all the way up that one time

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to blanders@odu.edu.

Speaker 1: yes you wanted to swim in that water

Speaker 2: Yep Norfolk Virgin \_Norfolk was something else with them floods <SNIFFS>

Speaker 1: what did people use to think of your \_when you joined the military [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] when you met people from all walks of life [Speaker 2: <RUBS COUCH>] what did they think of your dialect when you spoke

Speaker 2: where you from got that southern drawl there\_ there likely here that ba-ba-back that what it was that southern drawl [Speaker 1: hmph] that's all it was and people wasn't use to hearing that so it was alright

Speaker 1: now when you met up with other African Americans or i\_ i like to call black people [Speaker 2: hm-hmph] in the military [Speaker 2: hmph] and you saw that you guys sort had like this dis

[Speaker 2: difference] disconnect when it comes to your language how did\_ how did you guys blend together almost

Speaker 2: it that\_ won't no problem really [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] you know they were from somewhere else that's why up here they say he not from Norfolk so he gon talk different anyway but we got along everything was nice [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] we had those rough guys in there too for like Chicago guys coming in the military still got that street stuff in they head they robbing <Speaker 1

(40) LAUGH> people i was in the barracks one night sleeping i take my wallet and p-put it put it in my pillow case so i was sleeping and i felt something said naw felt something again but by the time i looked up the door was open and the guy had ran out the room know what he was trying to do with a razor blade cut my pillow case and get my wallet

Speaker 1: oh wow

Speaker 2: he was fast [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] that dude was fast by the time i got up and to the door i didn't see nobody see so evidently he had it planned <RUBS COUCH> out he probably went in the room right next to 'em <RUBS COUCH> but they were something in those days robbing people in the bathroom at the club <RUBS COUCH> Chi-Town people hoodlums well they draf\_put anybody back in the military back in the day and they came down and wanna mess things up so we had to have sergeant of arms at the club keep\_try to keep the peace cuz people from different aspects of <RUBS COUCH> the world get in there get to fighting Chi-Town this Chi-Town they get to fightin but it was fun it was fun it was fun i never say i didn't live it but i loved it <CLEAR S THROAT> taught me a lot it really did [Speaker 1: clearly] it taught me a lot about people [Speaker 1: yeah] so i know a heck of a lot about people yep

Speaker 1: what wars did you fight in

Speaker 2: uh Vietnam <CLEAR S THROAT> Vietnam [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] uh Panama know when they invaded Panama . . . [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] so that's about the only two yeah Panama and Vietnam

Speaker 1: so if you don't mind me asking what were those experience like

Speaker 2: <GRUNTS> life threatening experiences [Speaker 1: hmph] even with Panama but Panama won't nearly as bad as Vietnam no way in hell, uh-hm Vietnam was \_that's the devils den [Speaker 1: hmph] but like i said the good Lord brought me back home

Speaker 1: and now\_ that war actually messed up one of my great-uncles

Speaker 2: yep it will mess you up [Speaker 1: yep] yeah got to be strong baby and think about ev-other things whatcha doing

Speaker 1: yeah

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to blanders@odu.edu.

Speaker 2: cuz you had the junkies in one tent what you\_ they that liquor the white people drank Jim Bean in one tent

Speaker 1: what the\_ Jim Bean

Speaker 2: liquor

Speaker 1: oh liquor <LAUGHS>

Speaker 2: that the white boys drank Jim Bean and you had the marijuana tent [Speaker 1: <LAUGHS>] <LAUGHS>

Speaker 1: what tent were you in

Speaker 2: i was out there outside <LAUGHS> cuz i was trying \_too scared i mean man ya'll crazy you gettin high and you going out there and somebody kill you naw i want to see and hear everything thank God i wasn't hooked on that junk a lot of them did though [Speaker 1: hmph] a lot of did came home drug\_ fuck\_ messed all up in the head cuz that heron that stuff run people crazy, we be standing in a formation at attention . . . the first officer say dismissed and everybody leave but a couple of guys still standing at attention, messed up on that heron i say first officer you gon lea\_ leave them there let somebody run over 'em [Speaker 1: oh wow] they\_ it was terrible <SNIFFS> then the people started robbing you cuz they need money for drugs yep . . . <HOUSE PHONE RINGS>

Speaker 2: good break time . . .

Speaker 1: there is no break time

Speaker 2: i don't know Channello's

Speaker 1: hit talk and cancel

Speaker 2: you know \_ good interview right

Speaker 1: tell me about Panama

Speaker 2: <WHISTLES>

Speaker 1: you don't have to go into details

Speaker 2: oh okay Panama was beautiful [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] i loved it their ghetto is three times worse than our ghetto

Speaker 1: people wouldn't even last over there

Speaker 2: I felt sorry for those people i would give them all my money ev-buying food for 'em it's pitiful and just like here you got the black Panamanians and white Panamanians

<CELL PHONE RINGS> stayed on their side but the white Panamanians totally different like on tv here you see the newscasters you watch the Spanish channel [Speaker 1: hmph] all of them white, their ghet - man i felt sorry for 'em the ghetto was the ghetto i mean you walk\_ not even walk in

(45) everything it was always open say you sitting down rats run right across your feet moth-big rats they act they don't see them now how could you sleep cuz they slept on the floor it was terrible over there it was real terrible but now, the white man is over there taking over buying all the land [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] and Chinese too building hotels, it's totally different when i was over there when i was over there people were living like in the jungle [Speaker 1: hm-hmph] <RUBS COUCH> but now they say they got big cities and everything over there now

Speaker 1: so they got like shanty towns

Speaker 2: yeah i'm trying to think of that place the black Panamanians stayed in the ghetto oh it was the terrible, ghetto walked down there with a watch on don't take\_ take your watch and jewelry all that stuff they run right by you snatch your watch and keep going ain't that something but i get along with everybody ghetto too cuz i done been in the ghetto didn't bother

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to [blanders@odu.edu](mailto:blanders@odu.edu).

me i just felt sorry for them babies and stuff that was out there rats biting them and stuff it was terrible well now people done move over there we done sold the locks back to 'em that's why we had to move out GIs the whites folks and Chinese are taking over buying up everything <RUBS COUCH> that's why i want to go back and see\_ Colon that's what it is that's the name of the place where the black folks live [Speaker 1: okay] i want to see how it is now they improved that which i doubt every seriously <RUBS COUCH> yeah i done been there baby i done enjoyed my life accomplished everything i think i have yep <SNIFFS> i'm all right

Speaker 1: that's good

Speaker 2: interview over <NOISE>

Speaker 1: well thank you for taking this time out to uh [Speaker 2: <LAUGHS>]

Speaker 2: now you got my history

Speaker 1: talk to me

Speaker 2: but i couldn't tell you everything

Speaker 1: cuz you didn't want to

<LAUGHS>