

UNIFIED COMMITTEE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS
Oral History Project

Bernard W. Thompson
Interviewed by Janice Walthour
May 14, 2022

at the USCT Interpretive Center in Lexington Park

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1 hour, 6 minutes, 27 seconds

Janice Walthour (00:00:00):

Is that other mic close enough? Good morning, Bernard.

Bernard W Thompson (00:00:03):

Good morning, Mrs. Walthour.

Janice Walthour (00:00:04):

My name is Janice Walthour. Today is May 14, 2022. I live at 20493 Partins Lane, Lexington Park, Maryland. Our committee, the Unified Committee for Afro American Contributions, is in the process of collecting oral histories from local citizens to enhance the historical account of life in St. Mary's County. We particularly focus on African American stories and history. We are most appreciative and really thank you for consenting to be interviewed today.

(00:00:45):

Could you state your full name for the record and the date for the record, please?

Bernard W Thompson (00:00:51):

My name is Bernard W. Thompson. The date is-

Janice Walthour (00:01:00):

May-

Bernard W Thompson (00:01:00):

May-

Janice Walthour (00:01:00):

14th.

Bernard W Thompson (00:01:01):

14, 2022.

Janice Walthour ([00:01:04](#)):

Okay. Thank you, Bernard. We just want to relax and talk about things. I know you're a great talker. We're going to talk about family life, and schooling, and things like that. Then hopefully, we will be able to schedule another if we run out of time. We have about an hour, but if we run out of time, we hope you can come back so we can continue our conversation.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:01:29](#)):

Okay.

Janice Walthour ([00:01:30](#)):

Okay. So with family life, your childhood, your schooling, your teenage years. Where were you born and where did you live during your childhood?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:01:41](#)):

I was born in Valley Lee, Maryland back in 1946 on December 25 to Turner Thompson and Roberta Campbell Thompson.

Janice Walthour ([00:01:54](#)):

Okay.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:02:00](#)):

My schooling started at St. Peter Claver in Ridge, Maryland, I guess at the age of six then. It wasn't such thing as kindergarten, all like that. I continued on to high school at Cardinal Gibbons in Ridge, Maryland. From there, I went on to join, well, I got drafted back then by the Selective Service System. Then I didn't like the draft. I didn't want to go to the Army, so I was a dummy and signed up for the Marine Corps.

([00:02:44](#)):

From there, I went on and did four years in the Marine Corps and two inactive years in the Marine Corps. In that time, I went overseas with the Vietnam era. Then back to Okinawa, then back home.

Janice Walthour ([00:03:11](#)):

Wow. Did a lot of traveling.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:03:13](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Janice Walthour ([00:03:14](#)):

Yeah. What's the earliest memory that you have?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:03:25](#)):

Earliest memory? Like a childhood?

Janice Walthour (00:03:27):

Yeah, childhood memory. Mm-hmm.

Bernard W Thompson (00:03:31):

My mother passed way back there in 1950 and, I believe. I was raised by my aunt, Jeannette Thompson Talbert and I then went back and stayed in the house with my aunt for maybe about three or four years. Then I went back and stayed with my grandmother and my other aunt, Aunt Elizabeth Thompson and dad, my father, Turner T. Thompson.

(00:04:14):

From there, that's where I was raised on the farm with the family. It was family life with my grandfather and grandmother, in Valley Lee, on the old home place of the Thompson farm, part of Parish Beetle. Parish Beetle was the name of the area that they called the land that we lived on.

Janice Walthour (00:04:37):

What was it called?

Bernard W Thompson (00:04:38):

Parish Beetle.

Janice Walthour (00:04:40):

Oh, okay. Okay. So tell me. What kind of work did your family, what kind of work did your dad do? You said your mother passed.

Bernard W Thompson (00:04:54):

Yeah, my mother passed on. Then my father would have to raise the family. Then my grandfather was very into raising tobacco, and corn, and soy beans, and I believe they made liquor, too, and did everything to make ends meet. My father worked for the state road commission, part-time farming and doing other odds and ends in the community. But in the community, we had a lot of people helping one another, like they don't do today, as farmers. I remember Mr. Howard Lawrence, and Mr. Paul Lawrence, and Mr. Dennis Lawrence, and all them people that would come and help one another with this, and that, and the other.

(00:05:30):

The ladies did the same thing in the community. When hog killing time come, always in the fall, everybody would have a great big meeting, and this, that, and the other, and killing hogs, and scraping the chitlins, and scraping intestines, and the linings to stuff the sausage, and all like that. They'd always put on a big pot of soup for everybody to have something to eat and have a little drink before dinner, which wasn't government whiskey, but it was all right. So, we had all that in family life. So many things happened there with my grandmother, Lord knows.

(00:06:09):

I can remember one day, my grandmother was cooking, was getting ready to put the pot on the stove. We weren't really rich people, but we were like making all ends meet for everything. You made do with what you had. I can remember one time, my grandmother, we were getting ready to have a big dinner that day. We always had greens and everything from the garden. My grandmother put the great big pot and the poor pot was mended so many times until the pot had got a big hole into it.

[\(00:06:43\)](#):

So, Grandma said, "What am I going to do?" So my grandfather decided. He said, "We got to do something." So he took the, we had a jimmy pot, a slop jar pot that we used every night and somebody had to dump it in the morning. So they dumped it in the morning and Grandma said, "Get that jimmy pot and wash it out real good. Put some bleach into it. We'll have to use that." That was the community pot upstairs we had. Everybody used that.

[\(00:07:07\)](#):

So, Grandma got dinner on in that pot and cooked us our dinner. Then, that day, we were so nose turned up and just like that crying, but we had to eat out of that pot. The stuff came from the pot, but the pot wasn't on the table. She put the stuff in bowls, but we knew she used that pot, putting the hog head in there and the collard greens in there, but it really did taste good and everybody got along all right with that. Then it really made us feel good that we know we got to do things we got to do that we don't want to do, but still, it worked and everybody had a good meal.

Janice Walthour [\(00:07:40\)](#):

Okay. All right. What about your siblings? Did you have a good relationship with your brothers and sisters?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:07:49\)](#):

Sure. I had a real good relationship with my sisters and brothers, but we all fight all the time, like any other how siblings do, about this and about that, and about the other. One's pouting about the work he had to do, and this one wasn't doing enough work, that one wasn't doing enough work. But we all came together. We had a real good life, all my siblings, really good, love them all.

Janice Walthour [\(00:08:10\)](#):

How many?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:08:11\)](#):

It was seven of us. I'm sorry, eight of us. It was eight of us. I can remember, I was real young and my sister, Imelda, always followed me around the farm all the time, getting in trouble and everything. So, I liked to throw rocks. We had a great big barn down there. I used to throw rocks up in the barn and the rocks would fall off the pole boom, boom, boom, like a pinball machine. One rock hit my sister in the head, bam. By goodness gracious, went home. Went in the house and told Grandma.

[\(00:08:45\)](#):

She said, "What'd he do?" She said, "Come here, boy." Boy, she wore me out and said, "You just do it again. You just do it again. You just do it again. You just do that again." So, I told sister, "Come on, we got to do it again." I went on down there and tore her head up again and the same thing happened. I'll never forget that. It wasn't meaning to do it again like that, but she was telling me that was going to be the punishment. I always got punished all the time. That was a good life.

[\(00:09:14\)](#):

I can remember all the times when cousin Paul Lawrence and cousin Howard Lawrence would come to the house. Paul, he loved to chew that tobacco. He spit that juice everywhere he could. At the house, they would all sit beside the big house there on a bench. Mr. Paul was in there drinking that corn liquor with Pop. Then when he wouldn't have something to spit his juice in, he would spit his juice out the

door. Open the door, and spit and when the door opened, your head automatically turned, and he spit right in my face. I'll tell you, I cussed Cousin Paul out. Boy, my Aunt Elizabeth tore my hind parts up. You know what I mean.

(00:09:49):

That was a whole lot of activity. There was a whole lot of scenery going on back in the days in our childhood. All part of life.

Janice Walthour (00:09:57):

Mm-hmm. Interesting. But tell me, you talked about your family situation when you were growing up. Tell me about your schooling. You talked a little bit about that. You said you went to Cardinal Gibbons. Did you attend, was that a segregated school?

Bernard W Thompson (00:10:21):

It was a segregated school, but we had a man, Mr. O'Connor. He was a white man and he was in charge of drum and bugle corps there. Then they had the man, Sam, was the man that load the bread in the truck and deliver the bread to the school for the hours the cafeteria had. We used to steal the food. Sam run and take the bread downstairs in the cafeteria and we used to raid the truck, get them donuts off the truck, and hide them in the bushes. In the evening, we would divide them up. But yeah, schooling was like I say. They had a man, Mr. Early. He was like a shop engineer down there at the school that'd teach you this, that, and the other. We had nuns, them nuns teaching us down at school there. They're Oblate Sisters of Providence from Baltimore and they taught us all kinds of things. We had a priest there named Father Rock, which was the administrator of everything, I reckon. He taught us all like that. It was real nice. I got to graduate in 1965. That was a big day down there. I think it was about 14 kids in the class. A lot of them had dropped out. I think we started with 25 and the rest of them had dropped out. We had about 14 or 15 kids that graduated from Cardinal Gibbons.

Janice Walthour (00:11:49):

What did you like most about school?

Bernard W Thompson (00:11:52):

Lunch time. I really enjoyed lunch. I really looked forward to, they always had beans and hot dogs or something crazy that the ladies would fix in the cafeteria. But always on Tuesday, they had beans and hot dogs. Sometimes kids turn their nose up at beans and hot dogs, then shoot, I eat two lunches. They bought it and gave it to me, so that was really nice. They had chocolate milk. That was nice.

(00:12:15):

Christmas time, they had the Base [Patuxent River Naval Base] come down and give us, we were really poverty kids, give us nice things, and presents and things. The least fortunate ones got big prizes. The ones that could do a little better got little minimum prizes, gifts from the Base doing that.

(00:12:36):

But schooling was, we didn't even have a football. One of the parents gave us a football to play with in the beginning. But they got some money raised and got a football, and got a baseball and bats, and things to play with. We used to go out there at lunchtime, on the playground. All we could do is have little gangs in the school and used to fight each other because all we had to do in school was school.

(00:13:01):

It wasn't that bad. Everybody got along in the end. But it was real nice. It really was a great experience for everybody. They had a teacher there that taught music. I hated piano. I wish I took the piano lessons. But it was really nice for the teacher. Teachers did real good. We had some, kids didn't know what to do, how fortunate we were to have that.

Janice Walthour ([00:13:23](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:13:23](#)):

It all came back to them. Every Friday, we had to go to church at nine o'clock in the morning. You couldn't eat anything on Friday morning. You had to take your lunch with you. Boy, the kids would bring them biscuits to school for lunch, I mean for breakfast, after Mass because there would be three hours before you could receive Holy Communion. Man, I couldn't wait. I got in them biscuits, I mean sandwiches before church. What did I do that for? I thought I'd have killed somebody or something, the way she wore me out for eating before I went to Holy Communion. You can't go to Holy Communion if you already ate because I had ruined it for that day, but it was nice.

([00:14:09](#)):

Then like you said, segregated schools, I didn't know a lot about segregation then, but I know they had other schools, and this, that, and the other. We were bused down there, about what, 30 miles down there. It wasn't that bad, I don't think. It was things to work with. We had to pay a tuition, of course. Thank God Pop and them had money enough to send us down there, which cost money. I thought \$10 was a lot of money, my goodness gracious, like whoo! An arm and a leg. Then for all the kids to go, too, and then we had to buy lunch. We had to buy tickets for lunch, but it wasn't that bad.

([00:14:48](#)):

I learned a lot down at St. Peter, I learned discipline and like I say, church, how to treat people, how to be, get the Catholic education. It still stands today that I'm still a Catholic. I'm still a Catholic.

Janice Walthour ([00:15:04](#)):

Mm-hmm. So what was your favorite subject?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:15:10](#)):

Favorite subject? I told you, lunch. My favorite subject was really, I liked English, I think more than anything. I really did. Because always, them prepositions and nouns, when you're talking, you don't say it this way, you say it that way. I had a real strict teacher teaching English. She was very good at teaching English. She expressed things better, and slowed down, and took you by the hand, make sure you spoke the best kind of English, and making sentences, and all like that, and punctuation marks, and all like that. English was my best thing.

Janice Walthour ([00:15:47](#)):

Okay. What was the county like when you were a child? St. Mary's County.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:15:57](#)):

In the county then, the roads were bad back then. To me, the roads were terrible. The county, it was real rural back then. The roads were [beehive?] up there, the roads were no houses and had plenty of

places to hunt and fish and do things. Boy, you could go out there in the woods and hunt squirrels. Now everything is growed up in the county. Life was good back then. Didn't know how good we had it back then, didn't think it would be like this.

(00:16:34):

Then we had smell the nice air in the morning time, and hunting in so many seasons, coon hunting, and squirrel hunting, and rabbit hunting, and all like that. I really was enjoying. Then, plus, it was illegal to use a rabbit gun or a rabbit box to catch rabbits and things, but we did that, too. But the county life, I think that so many things changed, it's hard to explain how it really was. Just riding to school on the bus and see so many different things going on. Now, it's passed us all by, so I can't really keep up with all that.

Janice Walthour (00:17:24):

How did you learn how to hunt, and fish, and do all those things, and go out there and shoot rabbits? Who showed you that?

Bernard W Thompson (00:17:29):

I had an uncle, Uncle Milton Thompson, he'd always have a coon in his car, or a hog head in his car, or a rabbit, or something in there to eat. I said, "My goodness gracious." Everything he caught, we ate it. I don't care, but they said, "Don't be killing it if you're not going to eat it." So that was my theory of killing the ducks and killing geese, illegal or legal. I'd bring them home. My Aunt Lizzie would say, "Oh, my God. You brought me a duck." That little boy. She would clean that duck and cook that duck.

(00:17:57):

It was so bad sometimes, my sister and I used to kill chickens when they would go to the store. We would cook chicken. We loved some chicken. We just got it on Sunday most of the time. But it was something to think about, to get a possum and the rabbit gun, but Lord have mercy, don't put your hand in there. Folks try to get a rabbit, but you couldn't see what was in there, couldn't see through the cage into a box and knew something was in there, but didn't know what it was. So most of the time a rabbit, you could put your hand in there and pull a rabbit out. He wouldn't bother you. Smack him upside the head and kill him. But a daggone possum, put your hand in there, my goodness, it'll tear you up. That happened a couple of times, too.

(00:18:44):

But anyway, that was just something to eat. It still stands today. If you can catch a good coon, you got a good meal. A good meal. Or shoot rabbits, all that, ducks, all of it's good. Nowadays, it is 2022, but now, I get a rabbit from the store now. I still kill a rabbit now and then, but a fresh rabbit or a muskrat, that's some good eating, I'll tell you. Make your tongue smack your brains out your head, it really does taste that good.

Janice Walthour (00:19:21):

I was interested about, you said your Uncle Milton taught you how to shoot. Were you safe with the guns? Did they put them away? How did they use to do?

Bernard W Thompson (00:19:30):

No. No, the guns are right out. The guns stayed in the corner of the house. Grandpop had, everybody had a rifle. I got a rifle when I was real young. I think I was 12 years my first rifle. I was proud of that

rifle. They taught you not to kill people, but most of the time at Happyland, at Happyland, almost everybody had a gun, or a knife, or something, but the guns used to stay in the corner all the time. He taught me a lot about guns and the safety of guns. Wasn't no safety class, but we used to go out there and try them out. You got a rifle? Always had a rifle. You used a rifle to kill hogs with. We didn't have no beef, but you used a rifle to kill hogs. Not no beef to eat, but just a cow for the milk. We couldn't keep beef at that time, but we killed hogs with the rifle. Sometimes, if my uncle got upset with the rifle, he'd take a hammer and knock them in the head. He would do that.

[\(00:20:28\)](#):

But anyway, that was the life of things and teaching young ones. Then come along, I taught my boys how to hunt. We lived down there in Drayden then and boy, I'll tell you, they caught some nice food down there, anything. I'll tell you, talking about hunting, sometimes when the kids go off to school, I used to kill a couple deer and skin them out and ground them up. They love some ground beef. They didn't like no deer, but I ground that thing up. Boy, they got home and I had that deer fixed up for the wife and them. They loved ground beef.

[\(00:20:59\)](#):

One day, my youngest son, he was home one day and seen me kill that deer. He's just watching. He was home sick from school and watching and watching. He seen me kill that deer and ground it up into hamburger. He told the rest of them when they come home, said, "That ain't no beef. That's ground deer. Dad killed that right there. No more hamburger. No more ground this." So every time I cook something, everybody'd be scared to eat it. They didn't know if it was coon, rabbit, if it was muskrat, or beaver, what it was, but it tastes good. Even my sister, she didn't like no coon, but I fixed it so she ate it. She didn't know what it was. She said it really was good. I told her it was beef. It taste good. That's life. It's called survivor. You've seen Survivor. So you know how that goes.

Janice Walthour [\(00:21:48\)](#):

So what other chores did you have to do?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:21:51\)](#):

In the early times, we had an old cow. I had to milk the cow, and slop the hogs, and feed the cat and the dogs before you went to school and get the wash water because she had to wash the clothes. Then we had to go out there and get the wood in. We had a wood pile. Oh, my goodness gracious, it went high as the monument. We had to cut the kindling wood and pick up the chips, and all that, to keep things going in the house.

[\(00:22:19\)](#):

But that wasn't that bad. It was what life then was like. We had the hog pen. We had the chicken coop. We had the cow in the barn. It was all rural life. That's what life we had to do. And then when kids come over, less fortunate, say, "You've got to do all this work before you go to school?" Indeed, you had to get things going. You didn't, you got someone tearing on your behind. Them old people didn't play. They would tear your hind parts up. I tell you. They call it discipline, but it was all good.

Janice Walthour [\(00:22:57\)](#):

Okay. What about play? You talk a lot about work. What kind of fun did you guys have? Games and the kinds of things you did?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:23:04\)](#):

Yeah, they play a little bit of hide and go seek, a little bit of, had a little ball, played a little ball in the yard. We had a little rubber ball that was beat up and banged up. We had a ball and someone would knock it down in the woods. Someone would hit the ball so hard. We played a little baseball in the yard, between the barns. Played hide and go seek and all that kind of stuff. We didn't have a lot of games to play back them in them days. And now you worked so damn hard, you didn't have time to play nothing noway. By the time you got your work done, you're ready to go to that table, and grub on down, and go to bed.

[\(00:23:35\)](#):

We played some games, had little fun games. We played checkers, little games like that. Checkers. They loved to play checkerboard and things like that and talk stories. Most of the time, they told stories about this, about that, and old times and this, that, and the other. I used to love to hear them tell stories about this and so forth. It was probably more lies in the stories, because sometimes that stuff wasn't true, but they told it anyway.

[\(00:23:59\)](#):

Then it was all nice to come down and see uncles come to visit. Uncle Leroy come visit and Uncle Leroy Milton come visit and the ones from the city come visit. Oh boy, we had a good time then. I tell you so. It was real nice.

Janice Walthour [\(00:24:13\)](#):

So you enjoyed that?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:24:14\)](#):

Really enjoyed the family. Still enjoy the family.

Janice Walthour [\(00:24:18\)](#):

Now your grandparents were fully retired when you were living with them. Do you recall what they did before they retired?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:24:29\)](#):

What they did? My grandfather, I don't remember him doing anything but telling me what to do, telling us what to do all the time. But he was a farmer and he a schoolteacher. He was really, I got to say, a lot of people came by there, Black and White, and asked him for advice or how to do this and how to do that, and what would you do with this, what would you do with that. You know he was a wise man because his shoes never wore out. He used to switch his shoes. Back then, his shoes, the heels wore down on the right hand side. He would take the shoes and switch them over and put the right shoe on the left foot and the left shoe on the right foot and be like cow feet. He was a really wise man and doing things like that. Then he always made do with what he had. He would make you twist tobacco, tobacco twisted all around, make it twist. Boy, he used to chew that quite a bit. He was mostly, I don't remember him working, but he was a school teacher also. My grandmother was a school teacher also. She worked there and was a school teacher and she was wise. Ladies come around and asked her for advice, how to do this, how to do that, canning things. I remember a lot of ladies coming by. And too, I can remember they always like a tardy, a little taste. They made wine, and whiskey, and things like that. It was called a home brew. And that's what that was all about.

[\(00:25:57\)](#):

They were really good at that. When they retired, they didn't do any work when they got old. They got weak and couldn't do work. Then my father and my aunt would take care of things like that for them. She used to like to go out a little bit, it wasn't Happyland then, and play a little slot machines. It all worked out relative.

Janice Walthour (00:26:17):

What about religion? I know you said you're Catholic. Did your family attend church?

Bernard W Thompson (00:26:24):

Yes, they did attend church. My grandmother was really fine about that. You had to get out of that bed and go to church every Sunday morning. Had to be there 8:00. She'd be standing up in her apartment ready to get in that car and go to church. Then she'd look around and miss somebody. She'd say, "Go get them. He'd better get in here. We're going to church this morning." We'd go to church. And then when a storm came, and get down on our knees and pray, and pray that lightning didn't hit the house I reckon. We had to burn the palm and different things. We all went to church on Sunday morning.

(00:26:55):

My grandfather, he wasn't a Catholic. He was a Methodist. So my father had to drag him to church on Sunday morning. I never went to the Methodist church. I didn't think the Methodist church was a right church because Grandma said this is the church and what Grandma said goes. She was like the boss around there, so we all went to church with her. She would pray her little rosary beads all the time, all the time praying. Praying, praying, praying. Somebody asked Grandma, "What are you praying for, Grandma?" She said, "I'm praying for you, boy." I said, "Thank you, Grandma." So, everything worked out real good. She was really strict about her religion. She really loved it and she had one little old black hat she used to wear to church. It was like a little bird's nest hat because a bird had sat in it. But she put on that hat and she was going on to church. She had a special pew. Back then, it was still like I say, segregated in the church, in the Catholic church. The Blacks sat in the back and the Whites sat in the front. But then again, they had them in the back. There was a pew marked "Ella Martha Thompson". That was her pew. So we'd get in there with her and sit in that pew. I guess if more went to church, it wasn't much room. You had to stand up in the back of the church and all like that. Then my brother, my brother, Charles, and a boy named Vincent Briscoe one time got tired of sitting in the back of the church. They marched up to the front of the church and sat down. Oh, my goodness gracious, the church got to, "What you think? What they doing? What they doing? What's going on? What's going on here?" That's when they broke segregation in St. George Church, way before, what desegregation, 1966, so that had to be back in the early '50s when this happened, when they desegregated St. George Catholic Church. Then we sat where we wanted to sit a lot of time.

Janice Walthour (00:28:45):

That's a great story. I never heard that one.

Bernard W Thompson (00:28:50):

It's so. You don't think I would be telling you the wrong thing, do you?

Janice Walthour (00:28:58):

No. Okay. Thinking about illnesses and your health, what major illnesses or health problems do you remember having? How were you treated for those? Any tonics or special things to help you?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:29:13](#)):

Back then, you're talking about back then, illnesses and things back then in life. Them old people always had some kind of remedy for things. I know my father hit his leg with an ax and busted it open. He didn't go to no doctor. Instead he [inaudible]. He got the cobweb, spider cobweb, put it into the wound, stop the bleeding, and turpentine all around it. I said, "Goodness gracious," and it worked. Those old remedies work. I was surprised. I had to go and get the turpentine from the tree. Turpentine come out of trees. Then we put the turpentine in a bottle and save it for things like that.

([00:29:55](#)):

Then most of the time, at that time, it was a thing called sassafras tea. People didn't have that. They used to know where those old trees were and they would dig up the roots and everything. Every spring, you know how in spring, you got to flush out things. They flushed us out, too, the kids. We had to drink Epsom salts. Nine mornings, every morning, had to get a bottle, I mean a nice big glass of Epsom salts. You put two teaspoons of Epsom salts, put it in some warm water, and drink it all down. That was as bad as quinine. But anyway, we drink that every morning for nine mornings. Then you get you some good old sassafras sweet tea. Oh, that was good. It wasn't bad. Like I said, in the spring of the year, it wasn't bad drinking the tea and doing that kind of thing, but you had to go to school. You had a problem in school, every time I turn around, going to the bathroom, going to the bathroom.

([00:30:46](#)):

So, they cleaned me out them nine days and I was good to go for the rest of the season. My grandmother said that was to keep you cleaned out and to keep you going boy, to keep you this, that, and the other. You're not sick, but you don't want to get sick. And that's what they use to do with that.

([00:31:01](#)):

But anyway, as far as doctors back then, it was only one doctor. That was Dr. Bean. He was way over there on the road. Everybody went to him for your illness, this, that, and the other. But when it was illness around the house, Grandma had something or they had some kind of remedy they gave you for everything, unless you got really, really sick. That's how that was.

Janice Walthour ([00:31:24](#)):

Now, as we talk about health problems, family, is there anything we've missed that you want to expand on. We talked about your father and your mom, those kinds of things. Is there anything you want to talk about in terms of?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:31:46](#)):

You're talking about health. I think a person, as you get older, is like anything else. You weigh out things about what the doctors can't fix. Right now, I noticed that age comes with that. You got to face reality of life, how aches and pains come. I got problems with arthritis and this, that, and the other and everybody got an answer for it, "Take this, take that, take this, take that." I look up on the shelf. Then I said, "Well, I'll take this and I'll take that, this kind of alcohol, this kind of alcohol, do this." Some of it works. Some of it doesn't work. It makes you feel good for a while, but nothing cures anything from my point of view. Not even the doctors have it right. You know what I mean?

([00:32:29](#)):

So what I do sometimes, I take me a good swig of VO or Seagram's extra dry gin. It keeps me going. It makes me feel good. They say that's bad for you. This is bad for you. Anyway, it makes me feel good. At my age today, I'm going to keep on doing what I'm doing now while I'm able to do it.

Janice Walthour ([00:32:49](#)):

Okay. All right. Let's talk about, again, anything we missed about family. I'm going to talk a little bit about your career now.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:32:59](#)):

Family, yeah. I say I love family and I love to see people's other families come together. We've got a lot of corruption in all families now for some reason or another, but somebody got to come to the middle and make things right. But family, I enjoy family and I really do love family. I learned from my brother, Franklin Thompson, and my father was really good with family. All the time, family always came together. Most of the family lived away. They always come. Well, Uncle Lawrence will be down this weekend. Oh, glad to see him. We always loved family. Family is, you can't beat family. You know yourself, and we all know how it is today. Families are really corrupted and things are really not like they used to be. So, I've got to say, and like I say, I'm no cousin Paul Lawrence or cousin Howard Lawrence or Arthur Lawrence, wasn't kin or not. They always call them cousin, so I call them cousin, too. Just like myself. I'm not them kids' uncle. They call me Uncle Bernard. I ain't no kin to them children, I tell you, but they call you Uncle, so that's family. It makes them feel good. I'm fine with that. I love family.

Janice Walthour ([00:34:06](#)):

About your career path, let's talk about that and your adulthood. Did you get married? If so, who did you marry? Tell us about your military life, your kids.

Bernard W Thompson ([00:34:21](#)):

I was tooling around there and I had a couple little girlfriends here. I went to the prom back in the day, got Pop's car and had a old car of my own. I said, "I'm going to take this girl to the prom. I'm going to go back there and take this girl to the prom." Then, like I said, I went to a segregated school. I was at Cardinal Gibbons. Then they had Carver High School. Great Mills wasn't integrated then. So, I had to go to my prom. I had to go to the other prom. So, I promised to take all these girls to the prom. So, I had to get somebody to shift this one off and shift this one off. I'm going to take this girl so everybody'll be happy.

([00:34:57](#)):

So we all went to the prom. I still had to borrow my uncle's station wagon. He had a station wagon. Had to borrow his station wagon. Them guys had no transportation. I had to pick them up. They picked that girl up. They thinking, the girl still thinks she's with me, but she's with them. So we all go to prom and had a good time, danced and everything, so it all worked all right. In the end, it was, "You take that one home first and then take me home." Anyway, I unloaded the girls before I unloaded the guys, so nobody knew what was going on until the end. But that was a nice life coming out of school.

([00:35:38](#)):

But you said career. I think career, I thought career was going to be a farmer, but like I said, I got drafted and everything. From then on, I got drafted and I joined the Marine Corps. My girlfriend then was Thomasine, Thomasine Saxon. We dated and everything. Come up there, I was stationed in, I think Memphis, Tennessee at the time. I came home on leave around Christmastime. Anyway, she ended up pregnant. She's going to have a baby. Oh boy. Goodness gracious, that was something to think about.

([00:36:29](#)):

So I left home, went on back down to Tennessee and I came back again. This time, I'm getting ready to go overseas. I decided we're going to get married. We got married and everything, boy. Then I went overseas. I came back, then we got married. Then we moved on down in Georgia, for my life there. It worked out real good and then I got my time up. Then I didn't want to reenlist because it was hot over there, over in Southeast Asia then. I didn't want to go back over there, so I got out of the service.

[\(00:37:09\)](#):

I came home and I joined, I got me a job working at the Seafarers Union, for Seafarers Union down in Piney Point there. I was a chauffeur there, driving back and forth to New York and Baltimore, Washington, carrying the people. I guess they were really surprised then that they had to be at airports and different things. That was pretty good there. I liked that.

[\(00:37:38\)](#):

Anyway, down there, they had so much. In the meantime, I wasn't chauffeuring. I had to pick the trash at the hotels. I picked up the trash and stuff. Then sometime, like I say, now I had three kids, maybe four kids. They had all this milk they was throwing away. I'd go in the kitchen and get the trash out the kitchen to haul to the dump, the dumpster out the road there. It had hams on the table, and beef and turkeys all cooked up there sometimes. Oh, my goodness, it had everything. So, I took the milk, took the food and throw it in the trash bag, and brought it out there, and throw the meat and stuff in my car, and took everything else with the trash. I brought the meat home and fed my family. They weren't eating no more coons, and rabbits, and deer. They were eating high on the hog then. They really enjoyed that.

[\(00:38:31\)](#):

So then I started carrying, going back and forth to, like I said, I was chauffeuring other parts of time, going back and forth to New York and places like that. As I came from New York one day, I stopped in Waldorf and picked up a hitchhiker and I got back to the school. The boss pointed to me and said, "Don't you ever pick up no hitchhikers in these cars and do anything with them."

[\(00:38:58\)](#):

Now, I went to New York on a Saturday and came back to the school on Tuesday. Tuesday was payday down at the school. So I'm wondering how in the world, he see me, wasn't no doggone cell phones back then. How did he know I picked up a hitchhiker in Waldorf and dropped them off in Leonardtown? Now I'm starting to think. I know I had the payroll in this great big bus's car, made like a bus. I'm wondering, how did he know I picked up a hitchhiker? Who told him I did this here at the school? So then I said, no, I got to get out of this school. Then they're talking about drowning people and throwing people overboard, then I was scared.

[\(00:39:32\)](#):

So I left the school and got a job on the base, on the Navy Air Station. I got over there. I started off as a janitor, cleaning the base, cleaning the buildings and everything. I said, "Boy, this is rough life here." Then I went to school again and got to be a water plant operator. I treated water, and ran swimming pools, and took care of the water on the base, took care of all that, and had to run the water towers. I worked at night time, most of the time, and farmed in the daytime, did all the domestic work in the neighborhood in the daytime.

[\(00:40:04\)](#):

So I ran the water towers. I was tired at night. Then one night, I filled up the daggone water tower and ran the water tower. It was January. It was cold. Ice all over the place. It never snowed or anything because the water towers spread the water out and I flooded the whole base, just about - well Cedar

Point Road that curves on down into the base. They said, "How in the world?" They called for salt trucks that morning to salt the ice down.

(00:40:34):

So they said, "We never had no snow last night." Nope, that's somebody that ran the water towers. So, that was me. I ran the water towers over and had to get trucks out there to salt the whatacallit down. I just had to tell a lie. I said, "Daggone the switch was stuck and I couldn't cut the pumps. I thought the pumps were off but they were on."

(00:40:51):

So, I stayed there and worked until I got transferred then. The base was, it was [inaudible] over there. Then decided to go try my luck at the fire department. I worked at the fire department for about ten, twelve years I reckon. I stayed on the air field running crash. Had to go to school again and run crash. I went to University of Maryland to be a firefighter and stayed on the base and did that until sometime had to take a test every year, had to take a physical, be fit for a firefighter, be pulling the hose and all that kind of thing.

(00:41:30):

So, I got that straightened out and was climbing up, you had to climb this ladder so many minutes and go into these burning buildings. It was really hot in those things, no training. So, I stayed in there and did that for a while. Then, I got so I couldn't pull a hose anymore, so I went to the safety department, working for safety of the base and write safety things for this, that, and the other. That's where I retired from. I retired from the three jobs and retired there from that.

(00:42:01):

But I was still doing a little farming, farming tobacco and corn, and raising some hogs, and killing the hogs, and doing other things out there in the life of that. It's really been an experience, life.

Janice Walthour (00:42:19):

You had children, I know. What are their names?

Bernard W Thompson (00:42:21):

Kids. I had Yvette, she was the oldest. Then Marcella and William, they were twins. There's poor little Paul. He was the baby boy. It was an exciting thing to say. William was named after my grandfather, William Bunton Thompson, on the paternal side. Paul was named after his great great grandfather on his mother's side, which was Paul Lawrence. Then she had the chance to name the girls, so that took care of it. She called Yvette and Marcella.

Janice Walthour (00:43:01):

Okay. Do you remember any funny things that they did or said?

Bernard W Thompson (00:43:04):

The kids?

Janice Walthour (00:43:05):

Yeah. Kids are-

Bernard W Thompson ([00:43:08](#)):

Yeah, kids do a lot of funny things. I remember a lot of funny things they did and a lot of funny things they said and things they did. It was fun growing up, because I come home. I'm tired most of the time. I used to get the kids to pull my boots off for me. I had my boots on. The kids loved to pull my boots off. It was really nice. They would pull my boots off. Then they would say it was hard. I would lock my feet into the boots so they couldn't pull them off. I said, "You're very weak." Then I'd let my foot go, they're so happy. You'd give them a little kiss, tuck them into bed. I'd take care of the boys, she'd take care of the girls.

([00:43:42](#)):

Then in lifetime, every time you go up on the farm, because I had the farm down in Drayden, too. I'd always have to take the boys. My wife would say, "You take them hardheaded boys with you. Don't leave them around here with me." So the boys always go with me and they'd start learning how to do the farm, like cutting tobacco, working with the corn, driving the tractor and doing various things.

([00:44:02](#)):

One day, Paul, he had the tractor out there. I remember, I was too tight, I wouldn't say tight. Times was hard. I didn't put no brakes on the tractor. I always stopped the tractor with the clutch, or with the bucket, I'd drop it down. He had the tractor over the bank and it was just in the field. I went away and ate my dinner, left him just in the field. Someone called down there and said, "Paul's over the bank with the tractor, going to turn over." I got up there. Boy, he had done messed on himself and had the tractor all over across the bank. So I had to get the big tractor and pull the little tractor off the bank. Paul said, "Daddy, I got enough." He did that and that was an exciting thing he did, as far as growing up.

([00:44:39](#)):

Like I said, I always made wine, and whiskey, and stuff. I'd come home and everybody was as drunk as they could be. The kids was all drunk. I think she was hot with the kids and that was something to think about. But it was really good. They learned about how to make things and how to do things, what you put in things. But I started that because every time I make wine, I always had to taste it in the evening. They're watching me and they would try to taste it, too.

([00:45:06](#)):

I had one of them 25 gallon jugs on the porch there making wine and ended up having to bottle it up. Wasn't nothing to bottle cause they drank it all up. There's a guy named Edward Adams and he was into it, and Paul was into it, William was into it. All the kids were drinking that wine. So, I looked it over, fill the jug up and thought it might of had a hole in it, maybe leaked out, but no, they drank that wine. Everybody enjoyed wine. Would come up here and drink the wine. You make wine with the grapes from the farm and the land. So it was a really good experience.

([00:45:33](#)):

Then one time, down up the road there, at the farm, the woods caught a fire down there. The boys out there playing with matches, had the chickens. I came home, the fire trucks was all over the place. It was terrible down there in Drayden. We had excitement in Drayden. The chickens, I was worried about the chickens. They got the fire before the thing happened, but the chickens were all burnt up feathers and burnt tails, eyes all full of smut and everything. Somebody got the chickens out the firehouse, the chicken house rather.

([00:46:09](#)):

So, we went in the house and we had a meeting. Them boys still talk about it today, the punishment they got for playing with matches and trying to burn the woods down. That was something to think about in life. Over time, they learned a lot about gardening and things like that. It was really nice. Nowadays, I never thought my son, Paul, would plant a garden, but now he's planting a garden. The way he hated that garden stuff, but everybody loves fresh things in the garden. Kids like that, so that was good.

Janice Walthour ([00:46:39](#)):

You talk a lot about wine making. Have you ever written your recipes down for making your wine? I know you make sausages. Are those written down anywhere to pass on?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:46:53](#)):

Well, yeah. Then again, no. It is written down, but the wine making came from Aunt Lizzie. She used to make wine and I did her like the kids did me. We all did wine. We passed by the meat house and we would drink the wine. I know I got it written down how to make wine, how to make the good wine out of grapes, blackberries, any kind of thing. Any kind of thing that'll ferment will make wine, potato wine, anything.

([00:47:19](#)):

So it tells you. But now, you've got everything on YouTube. You don't need to know because that makes it better than I can tell you. But still, nice to have the old recipe. I know one thing about the sausage making, never get that one because that one you really got to do it right. It's not the idea of making sausage, the idea of how you smoke sausage. You've got to smoke them so long to make a good sausage, make a country sausage. You might make Mr. Adams's sausage, Mr. Springer's sausage, but this is Mr. Thompson's sausage. Mine are not like theirs.

([00:47:51](#)):

I remember one time, my Aunt Jeanette, my Aunt Ella, Aunt Catherine Thompson wanted some sausage. I gave them to them. I tried to make a shortcut of making sausage. They said, "Bernard Thompson, these are not the right way to do sausage." I said, "What's wrong with them." They said, "They don't taste right. They ain't been smoked." From then on, it wasn't no shortcut for me to do that, no smoked sausage. So now, they're smoked sausage, so that's what I make. I make smoked sausage. So, it's a good quality sausage.

Janice Walthour ([00:48:19](#)):

All right, thank you. Bernard, I just want to ask you, when you talk about life changes, what do you think was the most important event that has happened during your lifetime?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:48:39](#)):

The important event in my lifetime is when, my thing in life is when, I had so many problems of working, of getting a job. I'm always fighting for something in life and trying to make things right. My thing of it is, when I first got employed over at the base there, it was real hard to get in there on that Base. I thought it was so smart in order to talk to people. Back then, there wasn't no computers and this, that, and the other. In order to speak around to get a job, a real good job, and I think a water plant operator was a real good job. I was proud of myself. Over there, you start up a wage grade three. I ended up being a wage grade nine in a very short time. I talked to ones, this, that, and the other.

([00:49:35](#)):

Then it was things where you got on the Base, registered there on the Base. They put your name down there, to go through the things, you couldn't get nothing going on. It was such things, certain case and things, or a priority thing, where you weren't hired the right way. But anyway, he told me, "Don't fool with that Base. Get on the register in Baltimore. They don't know who you are. They don't know if you're a white man or a black man." So I said, "Well." I tried that. I got on the register in Baltimore for that job, working at the water plant, a step up.

[\(00:50:05\)](#):

I was surprised. I was surprised when they sent the papers down for the interviews. I was number seven on that interview for a job. My comrades, like I say, people over there at the water plant hiring, looked around. I'll never forget Vernon Saunders and Jay Edgar over there, and Jim Langford. These were all the white guys, wasn't no black people on there. Then they had a thing called EEO on the Base, Equal Employment Opportunity, where you had to do things right way. But they sat on the interviews and some of the job hiring. They interviewed me right there. I was number seven on there. Other guys, two rejected, didn't want the job. So now I'm number five.

[\(00:50:58\)](#):

So I got interviewed and I got the job. Like I say, inside then. They all wondered, "How in the name of God did you get on the register in Baltimore?" They didn't know how it really existed. So they hired me, but a man named Charlie Peg gave me a chance to get a job on that Base. I was so happy. Matter of fact, I was so happy I went out and celebrated, to get from a wage grade three to a wage grade nine. Then I went out that night and celebrated so much, I couldn't hardly work the next day I got hired. Then it was my sister's birthday. I got hired in May, around the 18th. My sister's birthday, we were celebrating in Leonardtown Alley. I come in. I was hung over and tore up. The man said, "What have I done? This man ain't no good. This is a drunk coming in here."

[\(00:51:47\)](#):

So anyway, it worked out real good. I was so proud of myself. I passed so many more people of going like that. I always got asked by my supervisor, "How did you do that? How did you do that?" I thought they knew everything, but they didn't know everything. So, I snuck around and passed the Base over there. Back then, they called it something, CPD, Civilian People's Department. Anyway, I got hired there from Baltimore and got hired over there. I was really happy in my life with that, to be so young. I said, "Anything's possible now. I can move on."

[\(00:52:32\)](#):

It's just like killing beef, and hogs, and things. A man named Gussie Berry told me, said "Bernard Thompson, don't mess that hog up." I said, "Look, let me tell you one thing, Gussie Berry. These are my hogs and my beef. If I mess them up, it be on me." I said, "If I cut it wrong this way or that way, it be on one part or the other." So from then on, we kill our own hogs, beef, shot them, did everything. My cousin, Hardrock Thompson, Leroy Thompson, Jr., he was into the little meat business. He took a home course in meat cutting, so I followed behind him. He taught me a lot in doing that and it worked out real good in life. Just go ahead and do it. You know what I mean. They teach you that. The wine making, I'm doing this, or doing that, or doing the other.

[\(00:53:20\)](#):

Now, we lost a lot of things back then but now we've got it. When it's up here in your head, can't nobody take it out. That takes care of that.

Janice Walthour [\(00:53:32\)](#):

Mm-hmm. As you see it, Bernard, what are the biggest problems that we face in our nation today? What do you think may be some solutions?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:53:40](#)):

In our nation today, I'm going to tell you. Today's nation is drugs. Drugs is the worst I've ever seen in my lifetime. I got it in my family and you can't lie to me. Everybody's got it in their family. That hurts me more than anything, to see the opportunity the kids, and life, and who's doing this. We know what's going on out there. My biggest thing to me, today, is drugs. It's drugs, drugs, drugs. Back then, we might drink a little whiskey here and there, smoke a little this, that, and the other. Now, I think everything is gone. It's just disgusting to see how things is, but you can't give up.

([00:54:24](#)):

Now I think the biggest thing to a solution is teaching. I taught some kids that looked up to me. I tell you, a lot of them have took heed. I'm proud of those ones I did talk to and say something to about drugs, and drugs, and about this, that, and the other, do the right thing, and do the right thing. They see me as I go through life. Yes, I have been to different ones' houses in the county and the community and always ask Bernard, even the preacher's house, "You care for a little nip? You care for a little drink? You care for this? You care for that?"

([00:54:57](#)):

It's the way you conduct yourself and how you handle that stuff. I had five accidents in cars, and thank God, weren't none of them my fault in driving. The first thing come out their mouth was, "Was they drunk? Was they drinking? Was they drunk? What'd they do? Was it this? Was it that?" No, he wasn't. It was somebody else's fault. I'm proud of that. But then again, it's a thing now whereas, kids don't listen, but if you teach them, or teach people, tell people something, you might tell them. It might not stick today. It might not stick tomorrow. But sometime in life, it's going to stick before, so again, what I say or what you do with that, and how you conduct that and how you roll with that. You know what I mean.

([00:55:41](#)):

I'm proud to say that I noticed my family and most of them really try to heed by that of what you say or how you tell them what's the best thing you do. A model is better than anything else, but then again, like you say, don't do as I do, but do as I say. I think that's a good motto to pass on to the kids and community today. It might stick to someone.

Janice Walthour ([00:56:06](#)):

Sounds like you did a lot with the community and were very involved. What are some of the special community activities that you think could serve as role models?

Bernard W Thompson ([00:56:18](#)):

Like I said, I'm a Catholic. Sometimes you get tired. Like I say, I am tired. As you know now, I don't attend things. I don't even attend funerals like I should. I can't go no more. Last year, a young man asked me to help him kill, last year helped a young man kill hogs and beef in Charles County. I can't even, I can tell them, but I just can't do it no more. I don't even want to see it no more. Don't even want to kill rabbits, and squirrels, and things no more. After a while it changes.

([00:56:54](#)):

But you said, it's a way now whereas, it's just hard anymore to do things like it used to be done. But I say you can still be a good teacher, how it should be in the community. In the community, I say with the

church. I used to be very involved with things, but a lot of times, I am stop fighting. So many things would change this way and that way until I rather not be there if it's going to be this way or that way. I disqualify myself or don't show up and then you don't know what I'm thinking. If I get there raising sand about this, that, and the other, then you know how I feel, about what I'm thinking.

[\(00:57:50\)](#):

Then a lot of times, they say actions speak louder than words when things don't go this way or that way. A lot of you, I don't want to sit here and talk about, and point fingers at situations, but sometimes things are not like they used to be and they can't go like they used to be. Like I said, it's corruption in every place you go. I have to say it, even in the churches, and that's a true statement. We know that from what I've seen and what things have showed me.

[\(00:58:19\)](#):

A lot of times, too, as me being an elder now, I got to be a role model and teach them this, that, and the other to young people and even to the community. I know that because I've got a lot of followers, good followers that say, "Hey, man, can you do this or can you do that?" So I'm pleased with that. That's good.

[\(00:58:38\)](#):

Yes, the community, but the ones that helped in the community have passed on now, have passed on now. A lot of them have passed on. I look around, all of them is gone. So I said, "Now, I must be the big dog that's got to sit here and be a role model for the young ones and for still ones my age, and do the right thing." If you ask for something, I will still do it, even if I can't do it. I'm quite sure if I kick the bucket today or tomorrow and be gone, if you ask me, I'll probably still come. That's how it is with that.

Janice Walthour [\(00:59:15\)](#):

On that note, is there anything else you want to tell us? Or maybe other people might have a question?

Alma Jordon [\(00:59:26\)](#):

Bernard, you were talking about, when you were talking about school and how much you enjoyed English. Do you remember any of the nuns who taught you that you enjoyed the experience with?

Bernard W Thompson [\(00:59:44\)](#):

I'm going to tell you. I hate to say it like this, but there was discrimination in the Catholic school. It was discrimination, less discrimination. There was a such thing as, there was a favoritism towards some kids in the private school. There was a favoritism in the school as far as where you came from. I guess they couldn't help it. I can't mention any names or how it goes. But sometimes in school, my favorite teacher was Sister Thomas. She did teach English down there at Cardinal Gibbons.

[\(01:00:23\)](#):

But there was a thing there, someone else taught religion. It was sent home to my parents, when I was going to Cardinal Gibbons, that they thought something was wrong with my head. I needed to see a psychiatrist. Now, I went home and my father, he worked on the road, worked on the farm. I was feeding the hogs, the cat, the dogs, the chicken, got the wash water in, and did it all before I went to school in the morning. I had a couple buddies over sometime. They said, "Man, you do all this in the morning before you go to school?" I said, "That's what I got to do," so I did that.

[\(01:01:03\)](#):

But anyway, getting back to school. They said I need to see a psychiatrist, the psychiatrist in Leonardtown. So they made an appointment for me to go see this doctor. So at the time I go to go to see the doctor, I had to get someone to take me up there and go with me. It had to be a parent, my father because my aunt was saying, "Yeah, you got to take him up there. The school said take him to see the psychiatrist."

[\(01:01:31\)](#):

My father said, "Wait a minute here now. You got this here boy here working the farm, helping me here and there, and doing this, that, and the other, stripping tobacco and this, that, and he got to see a what? A psychiatrist?" My father said, "I'll tell you what. If anybody going to see a psychiatrist, they down there are going to see a psychiatrist. He is not going." I was so proud of my father for not having no more than a seventh grade education, to have figured it out and did it for me and stood up for, did it for his son. It made me feel good. [starts crying] He did it all his life. I know I had to fight and fight hard. I really did. I love my father for standing up for me then. I remember when I left home to go to the Marine Corps, my father cried like a baby. It was hard to see that. I wonder what I'd have been today if I was to go see a psychiatrist or something like that on somebody else's meanness. It didn't come from the community. It came from somebody from that school, to send me to see a psychiatrist. How I am today, 76 years old, and I think I did pretty good for myself in life among people and everything else. It was a hard pill to swallow, it really was. [stops crying] From a man and that shows us that he was a wise man in doing that for his son and I really do appreciate that. That's what it was all about in life. Some things don't need to be told and some things you've got to tell at the right time. It hurts.

Janice Walthour [\(01:03:10\)](#):

It's good to talk about it, too.

Bernard W Thompson [\(01:03:10\)](#):

Yes, it is.

Janice Walthour [\(01:03:10\)](#):

Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

Bernard W Thompson [\(01:03:15\)](#):

It's not being talked about to say this. It might help somebody else in life when you've got kids, grandkids. I already stepped up to the plate. I don't have to talk about that. You know how the community - it's already happened already. I'm stepping to the plate and did just that, and I'm proud of that, too, so I'm going to leave it at that.

Janice Walthour [\(01:03:36\)](#):

Well, Bernard, we appreciate your being here today.

Anna Moseley [\(01:03:41\)](#):

My name's Anna Moseley. Bernard, you and I did an interview about stuffed ham. Would you please enlighten the folks about your stuffed ham?

Bernard W Thompson [\(01:03:52\)](#):

Sure, you know. This day and time now, it's not like its stuffed ham. But to me, they have took all the... everybody talking about it. I know it runs \$13, \$14 a pound. But now they took all the, it's got to be a money thing, and it's really not being stuffed ham. Really good stuffed ham, stuffers have passed on now, Miss Genevieve Briscoe and a few others around that really do a good stuffed ham, Miss Mary Morgan out of Piney Point did a really good stuffed ham back in the day.

[\(01:04:36\)](#):

But now, they make this thing called, it's not stuffed ham anymore. It's dressed ham. It's a difference between stuffed ham and dressed ham. To stuff a ham, you got to have some really strong muscles, and some good timing, and score it right, and get the stuffing in right, to make it really taste like stuffed ham. But it's like anything else. Once you think about it, I think it's a mind over matter in thinking you're getting stuffed ham. And \$14 a pound, my goodness gracious. I think it's really outrageous. But then again, right now, after COVID, the hams are high now and it does cost a lot to stuff a ham.

[\(01:05:13\)](#):

But anyway, I think now, I taste a lot of it and people have bought me some this way, but I haven't tasted any good stuffed ham. I've tasted a lot of dressed ham. You sell it as dressed and you pack it over top the ham. But you've got to stuff that ham and let it sit to make a good stuffed ham. That's my knowledge of it. I know it's true, what I'm saying, because I've tried a few places, and then again, it's dressed ham. But you take somebody 25, 30 years old, maybe a little older, they still don't know what stuffed hams are like. People don't know how to stuff ham like it should be anymore. It's hard work. If you get it right, you've got a good stuffed ham. There's still a couple little young girls around here that do a pretty good job of stuffing hams, but obviously it's not, it's just dressed ham is more like they're doing now.

Janice Walthour [\(01:06:06\)](#):

All right. Well, this ends our interview. Thank you so much. It looks like we covered most of our topics, so the second interview will not be needed. So thank you, Bernard.

Bernard W Thompson [\(01:06:19\)](#):

Okay. Thank you.