Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

Joan Groves Briscoe

Interviewed by Merideth Taylor, Janice Walthour, and Christopher Groce
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At her home
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1 hour, 22 minutes, 20 seconds

[START OF SIDE A, TAPE 1 OF 1]

Merideth Taylor: This is Merideth Taylor and I'm going to be interviewing Joan groves Briscoe -- April 10, 2004. I will also be with Chris and Billy [actually Billy did not attend] and Janice Walthour.

[TAPE STOPS AND THEN STARTS AGAIN]

MT: Okay, so I'm here at Joan Groves Briscoe's house and I'm here with her and Dr. Janice Walthour and with Christopher Groce who is a student - ninth grade student at Great Mills High School. We are going to ask her to share some of her story with us about her days at Great Mills High School and her experiences in St.

Mary's County. Yeah you can fill that out later. You can even send it to us if we get short of time. Thanks a lot for agreeing to do this interview. We want to start with-just so we can have the whole statement-if you could tell us your name starting with "My name is."

Joan Groves Briscoe: My name is Joan Groves Briscoe.

MT: Thanks very much. Feel free to ask questions. I'll just start the ball running and we'll ask questions. What brought you to St. Mary's County?

JB: My father and my mom decided to move to St. Mary's County years ago after my brother was killed in New York. He was coming out of church on a Saturday afternoon and we was coming out and he was riding a bike along with a friend who was also riding a bike. And they were laughing as they were riding home on their bikes. And another little girl who my brother didn't even know saw him and thought that he was laughing at her little dog. She was a teenager. And so she said to both of the boys, "If you get off that bike, it will be the last ride." And they though, "Oh she's being silly and, you know, just don't pay any attention. We'll just go ahead a keep on riding." And she went home, and left the dog, and got a butcher knife from her Mom's kitchen and met them on a corner as they were riding home. And where the other little boy--you know they were riding in and out on the bikes--my brother happened to be on the inside corner and she reached back with the knife and she stabbed him to death. And my Mom and my

Dad just, you know, just too taken back by that - just couldn't believe something like that could even happen. Broad daylight. Reminds me so much of them. Like it was a warning bell. See what can happen and what will happen. And we didn't even live in New York City. We lived in East Elmhurst. This was out in the suburbs. Anyway we--my mother and father explained to me what happened. They told me what happened to my brother. And they decided that they didn't want to live in New York anymore. They didn't want to live some place where something like that could just happen anytime, you know. And so my mother's father was living down in St. Mary's County and they asked him about, you know, if there was land down here or some availability of work or whatever 'cause my father was a licensed electrical contractor. And my grandfather told him "Yes," there was plenty of land and back in those days there was, you know, lots of it. And that's how we got down to St. Mary's County--was because of that. And we lived in Hollywood at first.

My father was thinking of building a house in Hollywood. And he had even excavated the land. And I was going to Phyllis Wheatly [school]. That where I met Ms. Tillman and we used to--. I'm pretty sure, I think we used to walk to school everyday. I mean that was a good little walk--wasn't too long, but a good little walk. By the time you walk over there your eyes were open [laughter] and we went to school there for a while. And then my father changed his mind and decided not to build a house in Hollywood. But he had a piece of land down on [Rte.] 235 in St. Mary's County and to build a house there. So that what he did.

And after the house was built, we moved in it. And the interesting thing about living in Hollywood was that we lived in a house that had three sides because my father was going to use the building as a garage. He wasn't going to use it after he had the house built. He wasn't going to use it for that. And so we had a big tarp that came down on the other side in the wintertime. And like I said, that's something I will never forget long as I live. [laughter] Three sided house! [laughter]

And then we moved in down Lexington Park--we called it California--California, Maryland. And I think I--I know I went to Jarboesville. I remember that. And then I remember going to Cardinal Gibbons, the black private school. Father Rock [check this] was the director of the school. And the Oblate Sisters of Providence were the ones that were doing the teaching at that time. And I remember going there and while I was going there, my mother and father were trying to get things straight in the Court so that we could do something about going to a white school. And so that we could start things where children went to school according to where they lived, not according to where somebody else wanted to send them. And then also the black schools never got all the books and the teaching that the white schools did. We always got last year's book that had been used. We always got the worst of everything that anybody had to give us. And so my father could see that--he could see that the education system was definitely different than the one we had left in New York. And he didn't want us to be stigmatized by that system. So he agreed to meet with the NAACP and their

lawyers and whatnot and at least try to get us into an integrated school. So he put in for us to go to Great Mills [High School], my brother and myself, and we waited. You know how it takes awhile for things to come to Court and whatnot and for them to hear the case and all this. And the NAACP attorneys were the ones who did the case for us. And they did a very good job. Next thing I knew is that instead of going back to Cardinal Gibbons, I was just supposed to go to Great Mills.

And I'd never been to the school before. Had never seen it or anything like that. But my mom and father got us ready for school, the bus picked us up, and we went to Great Mills. So that's how we got into the school.

MT: So that was the Great Mills school bus? The other students on the bus were white?

JB: No, no, no. We went on the regular bus over to Jarboesville and then at Jarboesville the other bus picked us up. We were the only two people on the bus. And it took us over to Great Mills.

MT: Ah. So what kind of bus was it? The bus was run by?

JB: It was run by the St. Mary's County Board of Education just like all the other buses but we were not allowed to ride the regular bus that all the other Great Mills

students were riding to come to school. We went to Jarboesville, which was the black school, and then we transferred from that bus to an empty bus.

MT: Just you and your brother?

JB: We--my brother and myself--we were the only two that were on the bus and went over to Great Mills.

MT: And this was Conrad?

JB: Yes, my brother's name was Conrad. That's right. He was in, I think, the ninth grade and I was in the twelfth grade.

MT: So you were in the twelfth grade when you transferred

JB: That's right. And see, at that time, because nobody was happy about integration what the white people had wanted to happen was for integration to take place slowly. And what they would do is they would start at kindergarten and start working the way up. So you wouldn't have any black person graduating from a white school for at least twelve years. And in twelve years, by that time, you were finished with it. Your children were grown and they were out of the way. [giggle] Somebody else's kids could, you know, could deal with it.

But my father and my mother understood that a whole generation of kids were going to be lost like that. And that that was not necessary at all. You know, if you were going to do something you could at least try, you know. And my father knew that we weren't going to bite anybody's head off. [laughs] So that all they needed to do was just give us a try.

MT: I'm curious a little bit more about the Court trial because that's something that wasn't clear to me. It had actually came to the Court and it was a decision? It went fully through a trial and a decision was handed down by the Judge?

JB: Yes. Then it went on to an Appeals Court because a lot of people in the school system, a lot of white people in the school system did not want the integration so when they lost the case that was in the regular Court they went to the Appeals Court, you know, to see if they could get it turned around. The judge at the Appeals Court upheld the decision of the regular Court. So that [the appeal] just went down the drain and they went on with it. I think it was Miss Jane Mattingly. I think that who was the principal of the school at that time. She admitted that she, you know, did not want integration. And she certainly didn't want it with her.

MT: What do you think her concerns were? Do you have any idea?

JB: It was just mostly personal. That's the way everybody had grown up all those years. And when you've grown up like that and been taught a certain way, and, you know, I don't know how old she must have been. She looked like she was a hundred. [laughter] She might have been like forty or fifty, something like that, okay. And she was "Miss Mattingly". She was not "Mrs. Mattingly". So I say no more. [laughter] But the point being that she was very indoctrinated in the local ways that everybody had. Neither she nor anybody else that was over there--there were a few teachers over there that I remember, that were not from St. Mary's County. Mrs. Slotkin [check this] was there. She taught business, you know, typing and all that type of thing. I don't remember the English teacher name; it was Jerry something or the other. But he--I don't know whether he came down with the Base and just stayed on to teach in St. Mary's County or what, but he was--I mean it didn't bother him. When we came to school here, you know he let me know that he would do anything that he could to help us. And he did. He taught me English; he was a very good teacher. Miss Slotkin was a very good teacher. I mean she could really teach, you know. Everybody was not like that. But most--two-thirds of everybody was like that because that's where they had grown up and that's all they knew. And the poor little kids, I mean that's all they had ever heard. So it was, you know--they were looking, when we first came to school, see if we had tails, you know. They had heard that. And they were looking to see if, you know, we talk peculiar and funny so that they couldn't understand anything that we were saying, you know. They were just looking us over, you know, with a fine toothed comb because of all the things that they had

heard and whatnot. I can understand, you know, why they had the problems that they had. But it didn't bother me any, I mean, I didn't have a tail. And I knew it. I didn't speak any funnier that anybody else. So we just went on and try to do our school lessons and that was it, you know. I had some friends--didn't have a lot. You never have a lot of friends anyway. But there were you know like maybe two or three kids that were my friends. And they were good friends to me. They were just as sweat as they could be. A lot of them that, you know, their parents were stationed on the Base, and they knew better than all that, you know, stuff they were hearing and whatnot. And so I enjoyed--I enjoyed going to school there. And I was very very grateful and very thankful to all the teachers that were so kind and all the kids that were kind to me, you know. And the ones that weren't, I just--I--to this day, I just feel sorry for them, you know. I have to believe that now all that's gone. I have to believe that, you know, you grow up. After a while, yeah, you grow up. You're facing everything.

Janice Walthour: Do you remember what the first day was actually like? Do you remember leaving home and waving "goodbye" to mom and dad?

JB: Yeah. I think it was like a half a day. We, I think, met at the school by Miss Mattingly and assigned to our homerooms and that type of thing. So it wasn't anything that was you know like all over the place. You didn't have no time--half-a-day you're not going to get a chance to tear around and do so much. And I think there might have been good--might have been good that we didn't have a lot

of time. And so I don't remember how many half days we had, but I remember back in those days we used to have a half-day I think to get started and after that then you had a full day. We were happy about all that.

MT: What about that night before [the first day], were you at all . . . ?

JB: Well, I was more concerned about what I was going to wear, you know, and whether my hair was like it was supposed to be, my nails and foolishness. [laughs] Kid foolishness. [laughs] I didn't have any trouble sleeping. I don't think my brother did. I don't know if he did, he didn't say anything to me about it. We were just excited, you know. You see we had gone to school before that was integrated. This was not like this was our first time to go to an integrated school. In New York, you used to go to school with everybody. Nobody ever looked at anybody and thought anything about it - one way or the other. So for that reason--that's the reason I think I wasn't, you know, really upset. 'Cause it really wasn't our first time to do that.

MT: How old were you when you moved to St. Mary's County?

JB: You know I have been thinking about that. And I'm not sure I have really come up with an age that's accurate but I remember going to parochial school in New York--elementary school. And I remember first, second, and third grade; I don't remember anything after that, so I have to think that I must have been around

eight or nine years old - something like that - when we moved here to St. Mary's County.

MT: Did you ever feel that--I mean obviously your parents were very dedicated to getting you into white schools.

JB: Um hum. [Yes]

MT: Did you ever feel the same way yourself?

JB: I was very--Yes. I was very very happy that they were trying to get me in to a better school. Yeah, I didn't have any problem with that at all. I was glad. We never had to, you know, take a stick and make me get in the morning and go to school. [laughs] It was never like that. Always got up, put my clothes on, got my homework, you know, did all I could do to do well, you know. And Great Mills was a good school. There's no two ways about it. It was definitely a good school. Had good teachers, good books, good curriculum. I was happy to be there.

JW: What were your grades like?

JB: Good. Good, the whole time I was there. My brother's were too. Whatever we, I guess, didn't get in the Banneker, Phyllis Wheatley or whatever, it didn't stop us

from doing well once we got to Great Mills. It wasn't like that at all. And I think maybe because I attended Cardinal Gibbons and it was a private school, I think the curriculum might have been a little bit better than what I might have gotten, you know, at one of the public schools. So I think that had a lot to do with it too. And I thank the Lord for all the preparations we had so that I wasn't so far behind that we couldn't do well once we transferred over to Great Mills. Yeah.

MT: So you graduated at the end of that year

JB: Graduated at the end of that year. I think I was sixteen, almost seventeen. 1959.

MT: 1959. And what about your brother? Did he stay there?

JB: No, he didn't stay there. He stayed there for a while and then he transferred over to Ryken High School.

MT: Do you know why? Can you tell us anything about why he transferred?

JB: I think my brother suffered a lot of things that I didn't suffer. I really do and I think because he was a man; he was a boy. And I think it was very difficult for him. And plus Ryken had a tremendous curriculum. They were very very good. My brother was always very good in science. And, you know over there at Ryken, they opened up the school for kids to explore the areas that they were

good in. They didn't try to hold them back or stop them or anything like that. And they were glad to have him over there. So he didn't have to go back to Cardinal Gibbons, he went on, you know, he went on with them [Ryken]. And there wasn't any problem that I remember at all over there. If there was anything going on, I don't remember it. And I think, as far as I can remember, I think he graduated from Ryken.

JW: . . . [inaudible]. . . your dad and mom pushed real hard for you all to . . .

JB: Yes.

JW: How were they involved while you were I school? What were some of the things your mom did to help you and your brother?

JB: Well, my mom and dad were always interested in our homework. They wanted to know what we were doing in school. So whatever it was that we were about, if there was anything that they could help with, then they were right there to help. They were involved with PTA. You know, going to the PTA meetings and whatnot so--. They did all the things that they did over at the regular school. They just did it over at Great Mills. And that helped tremendously. You know once parents met them and knew that they, you know, weren't odd and--. I don't know. Maybe we were just an odd family. I don't know. My father--my father looked like he was white. My mother obviously looked very very colored. You

know, so--I don't know what folks thought about us. [laughter] I really don't. But I just know they went on and did everything that they knew how to do to help us and encourage us, you know, made sure we had transportation to schools, made sure we had our lunches or we were able to get lunch at school. Made sure that if there was anything that we wanted to be involved in at the school, that we had a chance, you know, to go and be involved. And I remember--one thing I do remember--it was the school dance. I don't know whether it was Valentine's Day or what? I don't remember the occasion but it was a--it was a special occasion and my husband now went to that dance. And he felt very uncomfortable. They talking about letting air out of your tires and they were going to get you and all this kind of thing. But see this--this again was something that he experienced more than I did. You know, I don't know how to explain it but back in those days the man was the--that was the one they went after more than the woman. And so he really had a fit, I mean, he didn't feel comfortable at all. [laughs] You know. Didn't bother me. I--they wouldn't do anything to me. But they were saying all these things to you.

MT: But he wasn't a student there?

JB: No. Um um. [No] He graduated from Cardinal Gibbons.

MT: And he was working in the area or?

JB: You know what? I got to believe that he was out of school by that time. He's three years older than I am so I have to believe that he was out. But he had a very vary hard time adjusting to that dance. That I will never forget. [laughs]

MT: Could you tell us a little bit more about your brother's treatment and what--? Because that's really important for the students to know.

JB: Yeah.

MT: I know you are a very positive person but we also want to know more about what it was really like--the experience.

JB: Well, he umm--he was made to feel uncomfortable. The kids, the boys, students that were at the school, just said and did a lot of things that made him feel very very inferior. I know this because he used to talk about it when he came home, you know, what somebody said to him or somebody did to him; what he had to put up with during the day. So I know that that was not pleasant for him at all. It really really wasn't. I don't know whether maybe people were doing, saying the same thing to me and I was too stupid or something to pay any attention to it. I really mean that. I don't pay attention to a lot of things that a lot of people, you know, really have a fit about. I don't have a fit about those things. I just say, "Well, that's true, I'll see you later," and go on and do whatever I'm going to do. But everybody's not like that. Everybody's different. And so, integration has

affected many people in many different ways. But I do know that it did affect--it did affect people. It really really did.

MT: Were there any examples of things that were not kind that you would share?

JB: I don't know the kids names nor would I mention them, I guess, now even if I did remember them but I just know that--well. I just know that, you know, it was a lot of--if he was, you know, if he was going to his locker or as he bent over to pick up something, you know, that somebody was pushing him or kicking him or doing something to him. That was very very uncomfortable. People calling him names and things like that--that bothered him. Like I say, he was just different than I am. I'm just not like that. I just really don't pay much attention to a lot of things. They just--. Somebody asked me did I see it or did I experience it, I have to say, "Well, yes I did." And they ask me, "Well did it bother you?" And I said, "As a matter of fact, I had never thought about it." And now that I'm thinking about it, the answer is no 'cause after we advance we only halfway remember it all, you know. So he had a lot--he had a lot of experiences that either I didn't have or if I had them, they didn't bother me the way they bothered him.

MT: We've talked to some other people that we have interviewed and who have talked about some of the treatment that they felt, you know, that you and your brother received and we never know, you know, if that--

JB: That's right.

MT: --if that's a legend or--were there any slurs written on lockers or even--? I heard that there were--

JB: Oh yeah, there was a whole lot of that.

MT: --something written on your house? Did that actually happen?

JB: Um, I'm not sure whether it was written on the house or whether it was on the front lawn or something like that. But yes. I know there was a lot of that. I mean that's just the--that's just the way with things like that go. I didn't pay a lot of attention to it, you know, I see it and keep going. Like I said, I think it affected my brother much more.

My mother and father were not that much affected. Whatever they saw they washed it off and kept going, [giggle] you know. I'm thankful for that. I'll be honest here, if everything affected me the way that I know other people saw it affected me, I would have dropped out. I would not have stayed there all that year and graduated from Great Mills. There's no way in the world I would have let anything bother me like that. Plus my studies, plus all the social things you're doing at that age and everything, you know. No way in the world that I could have dealt with all of that at one time. I know I couldn't have.

MT: It sounds like your parents have prepared you well, [inaudible]--

JB: Yes they did. Yes they did. I must say that. My mother and father really did. They experienced a lot of things and taught us about a lot of things that most kids would have had no knowledge of at all. My life is just different. And I know that it was the Lord that had me to grow up the way that I did. Because I could not have done the things that I'm doing now had I not had that experience. No way in the world. Same thing with my husband. If he had not grown up the way he grew up, hard like he grew up, there is no way in the world that he could be doing the wonderful things that he is doing now.

MT: Would you talk a little bit more about that? About how your experiences have helped you do what you do now?

JB: Well, just the experience itself was you know like chapter one in a book. But later on growing up I became a mortgage banker. At that time [I] had a chance to help my people to get homes and get mortgages and do all kinds of things. I'll bet we would have never been able to do [that]. My husband and I both worked in mortgage banking. After that we worked in real estate. And then after that, I remember there was a portion of his life where he worked in the government. Then there was another time when I worked with, oh I can't even remember, it was a [inaudible] planning organization. They are still around. [I] worked for the

archdiocese of Washington. Then my husband started his own profit-making business touch-of-care to contracting. He retired from that some years ago. He retired from that to work fulltime in the mission that we have now. And we've been working at that mission for the last twenty-some years. For years we had the mission right here in the house downstairs in the basement. When the Lord was telling us to move it, I didn't want to move it and my husband didn't want to move it and we weren't going to move and we thought everybody was being unfair to us. But no matter what we did we had to move. So we found a place. My husband found a place. And we are still in that place right now. And I look at the mission now and what it was downstairs in my basement and I say, "Oh Lord, why in the world did I ever think of going on and staying in the basement?" [laughs] For anything? [more laughter]

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My life years ago--all of the things that happened, the positive things, the negative things--all of those things, all of those different jobs helped us to be able to do what we do right now. My husband for many years worked on a van line where every inch of space counted. And so now he is able to take a little bit of space and just do wonders with it in terms of storing food, in terms of putting it up and rotating it, and all that type of thing. I mean it's just unbelievable what the Lord

will let you go through. He [husband] grew up very very poor in Tall Timbers, Maryland. Had very very little. And he'd been working and going to school ever since he was about eight or nine years old--at the corner store that was down there. And all of those things about how to rotate the food, how to keep everything clean, how to move the shelves--*all* that stuff. I guess that's *unbelievable* the way we learned how to have a mission without actually, you know, going to work at Giant or Safeway or something like that.

With the kids, I guess I was older when the Lord spoke to me and I was able to work with them and do things with them that I would never have done when I was younger. Wouldn't have done it. But, the Lord showed me that, you know, there's just lots of kids that just have needs that I never had, you know, and that He wanted us to share what He had given us with other children. He wanted us to give what we had, not to just be on the taking, you know, all the time. So we were able to do all these things at the same time: take care of the kids and had the mission--. I don't know what we were doing for a living at that time. I can't even believe it. Instead of spending our money like everybody else was spending it, He told us to get out of debt. And so we began to. I said, "Well I don't know? We've got so much debt." 'Cause that all everybody was doing was, you know, taking the charge plate back in those days--oh my goodness, I mean, everybody was having a ball. And I couldn't figure out how in the world we were ever going to pay all that off. [laughs] My husband told me--he said, "Now," he said, "I know how one way we can do it." He said, "Instead of paying ten dollars for this

one [charge account], five dollars for this one." He said, "No," he said, "what we're going to do is when I get my paycheck we're going to take whatever it is and pick a bill and take all the money and put it on that bill. And then when I get paid the next time, we'll take all the money and put it on that bill 'til we get it paid. And we will write to everybody else and tell them that we'll--ask them to please just be patient with us, that we're getting out of debt, and we need them to help us by just waiting in line until we are able to pay them." So that's how we got out of debt years ago before any of this was popular. And it was a good thing that we did because now that the economy is falling apart, it doesn't make any difference. I mean the house is paid off. Everything's paid off. That's all I can say.

MT: Wonderful.

JW: That's a blessing.

JB: It is. I mean it is so much of a blessing that I can really shout, "Hallelujah." [laughter] I'm so glad now. I was so mad at the time. I said, "Why do we got to be the ones to pay our bills off? I don't care anything about that!" My husband just encouraged me, he said, "Oh yeah, I can see why the Lord would tell us to do it." And then he said, "It's crazy to", you know, "go around owing everybody anyway". And so, you know, we went on and paid everything off and I just thank God because we ended up with five children - three of them natural and two

adopted. If we had not paid everything off, we could not run the mission and take more children in and do all the things we had been able to do. No way in the world if you got a whole bunch of debt. You just couldn't do it. And people got all these houses out here, you know, I don't know how many bedrooms I've got - maybe six something like that. But the point of it is - is that most of them have just themselves living in the house. That's it. And the rest of the house just sits there. It's just--when you think about a lot of things and needs that we have and you think about how different things would be. Both of the kids that I had were just wonderful children - that we adopted. They are absolutely wonderful. Both of them had parents that were either in prison or they were on drugs or something of that nature. And so I'm learning now about all of the horrible things that happened to the next generation. When you can see them and bring them into the whole like that. Never--[I] never would have guessed it. I don't know I thought. I watched my son that's eight years old and I watched him go through withdrawal when he was a little baby. I've had him ever since he was about three months old. I've learned a lot. Let me tell you, I have learned--I've really learned a lot. I really have.

MT: Speaking of the next generation, maybe we should ask Chris, as a current Great Mills High School student who is studying this desegregation process, do you have some questions for Mrs. Briscoe? About your experience?

JB: How is school really now? There's something I'd really like to know?

Christopher Groce: High School there, I'll describe it as like a routine: like get up every morning, get on the bus, another boring day sort of like--kind of tired or whatever, the day gets a little interesting maybe during lunchtime, and then by--after lunchtime you have class again. And that's gets kind of [inaudible] you can't wait to get home.

JB: Are there any black teachers there now or is everybody there teaches still white or what?

CG: The majority of the teachers are white. The thing about a couple of teachers that there is really more behavioral like SDC (?) which is sort of like children who need like a little help during the school days. Then they have like hall monitors that also could be supervisory between the classes. But the majority of the teachers there are Caucasian.

MT: What about your principal?

CG: Our principal is black--Ms. Lymas, Dr. Lymas is black.

JB: Ohh, okay. It is something. It's really different. When I was there, everybody, all the teachers were white. No talk of even interviewing anybody. You know. [laughter]

MT: Not until ’66.

JB: ’66 that’s when the first--

MT ’The year ’66 - ’67, there were three or four African American teachers that came in.

JB: Praise the Lord. Isn’t that something?

MT: More than now, maybe?

JW: From Carver--some came from George Washington Carver.

JB: That’s good. That’s wonderful.

MT: Chris though, don’t you have some questions? What have you wondered about as we have been talking a little bit about the process and we did look at documentaries of some of the violent confrontations like Little Rock in 1957.

JB: Yes, that’s right. Um huh. [yes]

MT: And we know that kind of thing didn't happen but we have heard descriptions of some treatment that made people feel less than welcome, like throwing open the windows when they came into the classroom, like sort of treating them like they were a disease or something, backing away from them--

JB: That's true.

MT: A couple of people who were boys reported some--being beaten up or threatened with being beaten up. That kind of thing.

JB: Right. There was no doubt about it.

MT: That was much later than when you were there.

JB: Oh yeah. That's what I'm saying see this was just whatever I remember or whatever happened with me. It was just something that the Lord, I guess for whatever reason, it was time to change and He made a way for me to stay there. [laughs] You know, and take it. But a lot of the kids that went there after that I'm sure they, you know, were subjected to harsh treatment. I remember at one point the police, you know, [were] riding with us to school in their cars to make sure that everything was orderly. You know, there were a lot of things that could have happened, believe you me, that did not happen. And some of the things that did happen I just praise God that I was able to, you know, to just deal with it, go

through it, and stay there and graduate. I really am. 'Cause it didn't have to be that way.

MT: Do you think, was it just at the beginning that the police rode with you just out of precaution or was there something that happened or?

JB: No, they were waiting for anything to happen. No, no, no, no. They went right along to begin with from the first day of school. I praise God for the wisdom of whoever ordered the police to, you know, to be there and to help us. This didn't have to be that way. We could have just gone to school and after something happen then hear from the police, you know. But it didn't happen that way. Not at all.

MT: Do you think it was someone in the school system that--?

JB: I'm sure [it was] somebody on the Board of Education. I certain somebody did. I don't know who it was, whether it was the NAACP or some white group or whoever.

MT: The lawyers--you said in the court case where--did they come down from Washington--the NAACP?

JB: Yes, yes indeed.

MT: Do you remember who--?

JB: Clarence Mitchell. Yeah.

MT: Oh, Clarence Mitchell.

JB: Yep. And his wife, Juanita.

MT: So because really that was just four years. Well actually the court case you must have started in '56 or '57?

JB: I have no idea now as you're asking me.

MT: 'Cause that usually takes awhile.

JB: I know that it had to have.

MT: It wasn't very long after *Brown versus Board of Ed*.

JB: Umm huh. [Yes]

MT: That was 1954, so it was shortly after that.

JB: Right. Umm huh. Yeah.

MT: Did you have a sense of pride at all in being--you were pioneers, you know? [JW giggles] How did you feel about that?

JB: I was just very grateful to the Lord for letting me go and letting me graduate and get out of there. [robust laughter] I--One thing that did help me was the fact that I only had one year. See that was another thing that, I think, that bothered my brother. My brother came there in ninth grade. So he had *all* the rest of is high school to have to deal with that kind of mess. That's difficult.

MT: We have that finite--you know think, "Okay, I've got to go from here to here. I can do it." Huh?

JB: That's the way I did it. I said, "You know, that's all I got to do, one year and I'm out of here." [laughs] And I said, "Praise the Lord." [laughter]

MT: What about extra-curricular activities? Did you get involved? Were you able to?

JB: I didn't do any extra-curricular activities like basketball, playing on a team, or anything like that. I don't remember now if I did anything else. I just have no memory of it, if I did.

MT: Clubs or?

JB: If I did, I just don't remember it right now. I really don't.

MT: Do you remember being invited to join any extra-curricular activities?

JB: Oh I am sure that I wasn't invited to join anything that I can remember right now. My memory might be faulty but I don't remember staying after school or staying late at night or coming back to school at night for meeting or to help with anything like that. Not right now.

MT: But you did say that some of the student as well as teachers were welcoming.

JB: Oh yes, absolutely, absolutely. They were--they were very very nice to me. They really were.

MT: Thank goodness for a few.

JB: Yeah.

MT: [To Christopher] Think of anything yet?

CG: Yes, I was wondering did your brother like ever communicate with other white children?

MT: Oh yes. No doubt about it. There were a lot of kids that were very kind to him, very good to him, while he was over there. There weren't a whole lot of them that were really nasty. But it's just hard when your in the ninth grade and know that you are going to have to deal with this ALL the way through the twelfth grade. I mean if I had been in the ninth grade and had to deal with some of the things I had to deal with, I'm sure I would have never graduated. [laughs] It's just hard. I'm just being honest. It very very hard and it was just easier for me to do one year than it was for me to do three or four years. And I know that.

CG: So after your brother graduated--you say he possibly graduated from Ryken?

JB: Ryken, umm huh. [yes]

CG: What did he do after he graduated?

JB: I was married then and I think we were living in Texas and he went to school down in Texas--Texas Western College. Yeah, but he didn't stay in St. Mary's County though.

MT: And did you leave? When did you leave St. Mary's County?

JB: Umm huh. As soon as I could after I graduated. [robust laughter] Yeah, I did not stay there.

MT: What about your folks? Did they stay?

JB: They did for a while. Yeah, they did for a while. There were no more children after my brother graduated. See my brother didn't graduate the same year as I did so they were still there with him the next three years to finish high school. But after he finished high school

[END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1 OF 1]

[START OF SIDE B, TAPE 1 OF 1]

JB: . . . a period of time. My father as I remember it when we were little kids that always wanted to go to Monrovia, Liberia, the president of Monrovia had visited us in New York and in fact almost every time he was in the country he'd come over. We would fix dinner for him and he'd see all the things going on in America and all the things that were missing there. Monrovia back in those days

was the most advanced African nation. And so my father at that time had wanted to go to Monrovia. But after what happened with my brother being stabbed to death and whatnot he decided not to. He decided to wait. He decided not to bring the rest of us children up in Monrovia. If he was concerned about what happened with my brother, the way to solve that was not by taking us to Liberia. I'm glad that he--. I'm glad that he felt that way 'cause I don't think it was either especially with the stuff that's going on now in Liberia. Things have just changed and it would--that was--believe you and me, that was not the way to do it. So after my brother got out of school they were still after him to come to Liberia. And so since he had his own license and everything with his business they wanted him to come over there and be in charge of the infrastructure of the, you know, getting everything together and getting new things and making sure they were up to code and, you know, this kind of thing. So my father did. He went over there and shortly thereafter my mother went over. And they had a house there. They stayed there for years. And then I don't remember where they went. I know one place that they ended up in before they came back here was Cayman Islands. They lived there for a while, had a house over there. Then they asked if they could come back here and live with us and that's why we put the wing on the back of the house. We really enjoyed them. They were--they were really good to be around and always had something interesting that they could share with us.

MT: Did your father ever have any discrimination problems in his employment in St. Mary's County?

JB: I really don't know. I'm sure he did. But my father was not one to complain; he would talk with my mother about things--a lot of things that I'm sure he never--he never shared with us or never let us hear. I know that my father had a good business. And he did business with black people as well as with white people. So he did very well. That I do know.

MT: Did he have an independent business?

JB: Yes, he was an electrical contractor and he was licensed. All the time that he worked in St. Mary's County, he tried to--he tried to hire black people to work with him. Because he knew that he was getting older and he knew that, you know, there wasn't going to be a whole lot more for him to be able to do there. But one of the things that really blessed him or he would have been blessed is if he could have trained somebody in the business so that they could, you know, just go ahead and they could take the business after he finished - when he wasn't interested in it, you know. But it was difficult. It's difficult getting older people to change. Just like it's difficult to have white people change overnight. It's just difficult to get black people to change to. And so it was difficult for him to find somebody that wanted to do this and was interested in doing it. But he did all he could with whomever he could do it with. He had to leave it like that.

JW: What about this efficiency - your efficiency apartment?

JB: Well, when he left, he sold his house and the efficiencies are still down there and somebody's still got them. The house is just going to pieces.

JW: Now when you say he could have been the first African American--

JB: Oh I don't know.

JW: --to build a set of efficiency apartments--

JB: Oh he was. There is no doubt about that.

JW: Right there is Lexington Park?

JB: No doubt about it. Yeah, no doubt about it. No doubt about it, absolutely. But he knew one good reason why a lot of people black, you know, black people didn't stay or they didn't like to staying in the county was because, you know, a lot of times they come there and except for rooming in somebody else's house, you couldn't handle the place if you owned--to get started, you know. And so he had the idea that if he built these efficiencies that new teachers coming in, people who were new on the Base - contract wise not in the service but hired by the service to do something--they would all have a place, a little place to stay. And something very very nice, you didn't have to worry about furniture or anything. It was all

furnished. You know, It was--. It was good. It was the best--best idea he'd had. It really was.

MT: Now a lot of young people don't really--might not know why that was. You said that there wasn't really any place to stay.

JB: No there wasn't.

MT: Why was that?

JB: Well, when you live in the South and it was definitely a Southern community the only thing that perked us up was the Base. Other than that there wasn't anything thing there.

MT: So hotels or motels?

CG: Well today, that's the same world. That's how I feel. Like, there's not much out, like out here in the area in St. Mary's County. When you go on Base there's the drill hall. I like going there shooting hoops and stuff.

JB: Now there still isn't a lot down here. It still isn't. My father couldn't make St. Mary's County what he wanted it to be. But he did what he could do to make it better than what it was. I'll put it that way.

MT: So he was very much an activist it sounds like?

JB: My father was very active. He was not one to sit back and see something a certain way and not do something about it if he could. And even if he wasn't successful, he'd still try. That's just the way he was.

MT: Did they participate in the PTA?

JB: Yes.

MT Or ever run for office or--?

JB: Yes. He was on the Board of Education at one point. And yeah, he went to the PTA meetings. Yeah, he did all that stuff. That's just his way.

MT: He was on the Board of Education for one term?

JB: Yeah, one. Yes.

MT: So during that time there were changes he was trying to make still, you think, on the Board of Ed?

JB: Oh yes.

MT: Was that after you had--?

JB: You know I don't remember whether that was before or after. I don't think he was on the Board of Education at the time I was at Great Mills. That's my remembrance. But I do know that he was a member of the Board but it was probably after I--probably after I graduated. I can't imagine anybody in St. Mary's County letting a black person be on the Board of Education. With no integration in the schools, why would they integrate the Board of Education? [laughs] You know.

MT: Well, there was--actually Clarence Young was on the Board of Education. He was appointed in '55 and he started serving in '56. So he actually was on the Board and I think he felt like he participated in the preparations for your--you and your brother to attend Great Mills.

JB: Yeah, he probably did.

MT: And he had very good things to say about your father.

JB: Yeah, my Dad really tried hard. He really did. But he wasn't a person to just sit around, you know, and just talk about what he heard somebody else said happened. If he heard something that had happened, he would go and talk to the person and find out more about it and whatnot. If it had really happened, you know, he would do what he could do. But he knew that a lot of the problems that black people had at that time had to do with education. I mean, I don't care whether somebody should have said this to you or they shouldn't have done this to you or not. He knew that education had a lot to do with it. If you're not well educated, if you don't have the ties that you should have to the community, if you're not there participating like you should be, then a lot of things are, you're just out of it. You're really just out of it. And he knew. That's the reason why I think that a lot of his attack was with the school system because he felt that if he could get a group of black kids coming out of school that were well educated and into it and get them to stay down there and get them to work down there, that the place would change. And it has. I have, I mean, *so much* that I have seen and so much that I hear about is so different that it was forty or fifty years ago. I know it has changed. I know it's changed. And a lot of that has to do with education. At least I think it does.

MT: You know he actually made a statement that was quoted in the article in *The Enterprise* that it wasn't just that he thought, anyway I can't remember it verbatim

but, not just going to better schools because--. You know as you said actually say [at] Cardinal Gibbons you had good education and you didn't feel behind. But that he wanted his children to experience integration because they would be in that kind of situation after they graduated, in business.

JB: That's right.

MT: So it was more just wanting them--it sounded like to have some kind--a kind of interaction not just that it was a better school.

JB: He did but you can't have that without education first. There's nothing to interact with. I mean who wants to hire you or use you in a business or any kind of a setting if you don't have some education? And that was just a good--I don't care whether you wanted to be a secretary or whether you wanted to be a barber or you know, what you wanted to do, what you wanted to be--a good basic education was a good start. It was a finish but it was a good start.

JW: Do you remember suspensions and expulsions and things like that?

JB: Yes. I do. I remember--

JW: In your time?

JB: Yes.

JW: What were some of the things that were going on along that line?

JB: I don't remember specifically what these suspensions were for, but I do remember suspensions and things of that nature taking place while I was--during that one year that I was at Great Mills. And I feel sad--I feel sadly about a lot of it. I really really do. I think a lot of it just happened. I don't know whether it was because some of the kids were kind to us, the white kids. Somebody was just looking for something to pin on them or something to do to them or what but, yes, I do remember suspensions. Yes I do. And I do remember teachers and kids just telling me to just go on and do the very best that I could do under the circumstances and not get caught up in what they were caught up in. I really do.

JW: I have a question. Have you heard of this achievement gap that's going on across our country now, where we look at our African American and minority students and you look at test scores and the test scores for the African American, maybe Hispanic, and in some cases are so much lower then white students and even Asian students. And the discipline, behavior management, social--just the whole social environment that--. For instance, when you were there, all that was going on because of the integration had--you were forging ahead. Now it's all integrated and opportunities are there--

JB: --but the gap still there.

JW: Yes. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JB: The same thing that I said before. That my father could not make anybody be something they didn't want to be that themselves. Or if they didn't have the education background to go with the flow. And it was just very very difficult at that time as it is now to get people interested in becoming something or doing something that they don't want to do or don't want to be. I'm sure drugs has taken its toll in our race. I'm sure that alcohol has taken its toll. It--. How do I say this? Segregation and the things that have happened to black people have just done a lot with us that have never happened with anybody else. Spanish-speaking people never had to go through the problems that we did as far as segregation is concerned. They had some problems, but it was not that problem. The Indian people had problems, but they never had the problems we did with segregation. That just does something to people. I don't know how--I don't know how to explain or say it in words, but it does something that nothing else that other people have ever experienced have had to go through. There's no other group of people that are a part of this gap that we're talking about that have gone through what black people have been through. It's dangerous.

CG: This may get like a little bit off the topic. I was just curious. I mean like foreign students, like foreign exchange students, like came here. Were there any?

JB: Were there any of them that were with us?

CG: Yes.

JB: Not that I know of. No. Uh ugh. [no] I just tell you, segregation is just very dangerous. If you look at any group of people that are involved in this gap that we're talking about, black people seem to be ahead of everybody else in terms of needing help. [phone rings] And the only reason that I can see, the only thing that's different that I know is [phone rings again] different is the problem that we have with segregation.

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MT: It's the legacy of slavery.

[Tape turns off and then back on again]

MT: Separate but equal was inherently unfair.

JB: That's right.

MT: It wasn't just that the schools were worse or better.

JB: That's what I'm saying. Segregation--I don't care whether it's with the schools, whether it's in marriage, whether it's in the community, or whether it's with PTA, whether it's with your job. I don't care what it's with; it is--. It's very dangerous. It's so dangerous. It's something that can be passed on from one generation to the next generation. And where kids have lived in the South for years and years and years, and it's all they've heard as young people, it's all they've heard as adults, they just don't--. In their minds, they just don't think about becoming something. They just--. It just doesn't--it doesn't occur to them. Now with some black people it does. Some of us just don't pay any attention to whatever we had to put with or what somebody else thought or said. We just come--going--go to school and you become what you want to become and you do what you want to do. You don't pay any attention to all that. But you had to be raised different that the norm. You really really do.

MT: What about your Mom? Did she share your father's ideals and aspirations?

JB: Yes. Without a good woman, a good wife, a good homemaker in the house, a man can never become all the things that he becomes. He can't do it. She was

right there all the time. A hundred and fifty percent behind him. Three hundred percent behind him. She was always there doing whatever she could for us kids all the time. She was a super mom. Mom just died year before last. And I had her here in the house as long as I could have her here but the doctors were trying to explain to me about how your bones can deteriorate without you breaking them. I mean you can just be sitting still and if there's no calcium in your system, you know like your should have, you can just get up and break something. [chuckle] You know, it's gone. And so eventually we had to move her from here in the house to a nursing home. Momma died in the nursing home. But Momma was very very much on top of things. I'm not sure how old she was when she died because we never got a birth certificate for Momma. So she was maybe a hundred or maybe she was ninety-five or something like that. I'm not really sure. But Momma was older and Momma did all she could for all of us *all* the time. But she never tried to be out front. She never tried to promote herself or anything like that - never.

MT: Did your parents grow up in New York?

JB: My mother grew up in St. Mary's County. She went to Morgan State College in Baltimore. My father grew up in New York and my mother was in New York acting as a governess when she met him.

MT: That's right 'cause you said her father lived here [St. Mary's County].

JB: That's right.

MT: What was her maiden name?

JB: Bankins.

MT: Bankins.

JB: Right. Yeah.

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MT: Other questions?

JB: Anything else you can think of?

MT: Any of you have one?

CG: What were like some of the places that you and your brother used to like did you have like any family day like where the family would go out? Out like?

JB: Well we were very very active with our church. We were born and raised Catholic. And back in those days the church was very active in a lot of things. When we went to Cardinal Gibbons every time you turned around there was something for Valentine's day or something going on for Christmas or something going on for Thanksgiving. Every holiday the schools were involved with it too. So we were involved with everything that was going on in this community - anything the PTA had whether it was a dinner or special meeting or anything like that, kids, you know, went with that. The high school dances and stuff like that we were involved with all of that. And we enjoyed it. We really did. It was a good way to grow up. We were not by ourselves. We can say that. You know we didn't try to be by ourselves; we weren't interested in being by ourselves. I never even thought about it - being by myself, you know.

And then in the summertime, the churches used to have big church dinners. And every church had a big church dinner. Every last church. And they invited everybody whether you lived in St. Mary's County or you had lived there or you used to live there or whatever the case was. And so the summer was full church dinners. And so everybody tried to go to the church dinner. [laughs] You were always interested in what dress you were going to wear and who was going to take you whether you were going to cook something. See, because for your own church now you would do--you'd be doing some cooking. And so you would take whatever you made, you know, whatever you could do down there, you did

that. But for the other ones [church dinners], you could come as a guest, you know, and you participate. There was a lot of stuff going on down there *all the time*. It was really great.

MT: What church did you go to?

JB: Immaculate Heart of Mary.

MT: Immaculate Heart of Mary.

JB: Um hum [yes]. That's where I got married.

JW: Would you say though at that point [in time] Immaculate Heart of Mary was pretty well integrated?

JB: Um hum [yes].

JW: But the other churches were segregated?

JB: No they weren't. That's right.

JW: Would you say that the families did a lot together because the churches promoted family and the schools promoted family activities?

JB: Yes. There's no doubt about it.

JW: Yes.

JB: Everybody, teaches and all the pastors, whoever it was, I mean, that was in charge of that particular entity invited everybody and wanted to know from everybody "Well what are you going to do? What's your family going to bring?" or "What are you going to do?" You know because see there was music so some people were doing music with the band, you know. And then there was always a dance so somebody was coming to the dance that didn't come to the dinner. [laughs] Or if you went to the dinner you might not come to the dance and you might come to all of it. When we were young, we tried to go to all of it. [laughs]

JW: [interrupts] [inaudible]

JB: And you had everything. You just wanted to--whatever it was that went on down there, we were involved with it. No doubt about it. And there was plenty going on. And then there was the transition for integration in the churches because see when we first moved down there [St. Mary's County] in Hollywood, we went to St. John's Catholic Church. And that was located in Hollywood. As I remember it, families, I guess, used to buy pews or whatever. And so all the white families had all the pews up in the front of the church.

JW: They rented them - pews.

JB: Or rented them, yeah. Something like that. And I was younger so I didn't really--. I'm not saying I really had the low-down on it but I knew that somehow or another I had heard about people buying or renting something - the pews. So black people, I guess, were renting--they got to rent the pews in the back because the white people got the first choice of all the pews. You know, I mean it was just--it was--. You know like I said, segregation was so institutionalized until it's just not funny. It's really--it's tragic that it's as institutionalized as it is. I mean every place. It wasn't just the schools that were segregated. I mean your church was segregated too. But the Immaculate Heart of Mary, you know, was not in bad shape like a lot of the rest of the schools and churches and things like that. And it was because the Immaculate Heart of Mary was located in Lexington Park which was just a couple of miles up from the Base. And people from all over the world were on the Base and you couldn't have any segregation at all on that base. None. None at all. So when the people came off the Base into the town and everything, they weren't looking for anything to be, you know, like it was. And that helped a *whole* lot for the church because they belonged to the church, they went to the church, or they helped with things that were at the church. Father Carr who was over there at that particular time--he wasn't like that. So, you know, all of those kind--all those kind of little things--a little bit here a little bit there is what helped St. Mary's County to come up and be more like what it was supposed to be. But

like Chris said, today there still isn't a whole lot there, you know, going on there socially. It's, you know, sort of quiet compared to a whole bunch of places.

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MT: What did you think of St. Mary's College back then? Did you know it existed?

JB: Yes, I did. I most certainly did and it was a junior college at that time. Yeah. I thought it was nice that it was there but St. Mary's College at that time never had much of a name or anything like that. I mean you never heard anybody from anyplace saying, "I want to send my child to St. Mary's College." It wasn't like that. Now I understand it is a full four-year college and the little girl that lived right across the street is going to school there. So I think it's come a long way, that's what I think. [laughs]

MT: We'll it wasn't integrated until sixty-two.

JB: Yeah. I sure it wasn't. I'm certain it wasn't. I only remember anybody--you know that was going over there. [laughs] But that's great. That's wonderful. I'm glad that it's, you know, it's coming up and it caught on to the idea and it's moving in it now. I really am. I really really am.

MT: Well, do we have any more questions?

CG: Like in the household, did you have like a--how was your relationship with your mom?

JB: It was just there. It was very good. She taught me . . .

CG: [inaudible]

JB: Yes and back in those days one of the most important things for you to learn is your etiquette. That's not now. Nobody does that anymore. But back in those days if you had a momma that really was on the ball and whatnot, one of the things that she worked with you in addition to your homework was your etiquette. She had an etiquette book and she would--every day she would teach you something or read you something out of the book. How you are supposed to set the table, how you were supposed to serve people, how you were supposed to dress for a special occasion or whatever. *It was wonderful*! I had a wonderful time with my momma--good relationship. I loved her very much. She taught me how to sew. She taught me how to cook, taught me how to clean up, taught me how to--I'm sure she's the one that helped me learn how to drive, you know. Momma just did a whole bunch of things to help my father. She was there all the time with all those kids.

CG: Seems like they were sort of trying for an effect. Like, you know, as an extra elective you have family consumer science which--where they teach you how to sew and cook--how to do like simple household things like how to set the table like you said. I remember doing that when I was like in seventh grade I think.

JB: Um hum.

CG: And my mom, I learned like before that I learned from my mom how to cook so Mom basically wasn't the only one cooking around the house.

JB: That is the way it was years ago. Kids learned how to do everything their parents knew how to do. That was it. That was the parents' job, you know, to work with you and to be there for you. If your mom did that for you, I tell you, you were really blessed because I don't know when parents stopped teaching kids etiquette. I have no idea. But I know when I was little that all the time I was growing up that was very much a part of my learning. You know?

MT: Well, do you have anything else you would like to - you have thought of you'd like to say about your experiences in St. Mary's County? Or something else?

JB: Well, I'm just glad for everything that happened to me there because it helped me to--given a time when the Lord was ready for me to give my heart to Him, give

my soul to Him, my whole life to Him. It helped me to be prepared so that I was ready to say "Yes," to Him. I was here - home. I wasn't at a regular church when I gave my heart to Him. I'm just glad for it. I'm glad for everything that happened in my life and the reason that I wasn't in a church was because of so many of the negative things that had happened to me earlier in life and things that I had seen since I have been grown that I knew weren't right, you know. Like I said before, the churches were just as much at fault as everybody was. It's bad when your leader is wrong. It really really really is. And that's one of the reasons why I guess the United States is going to go through some of the things that we are going to go through now. It's because when leadership has been poor, it's taken too many years for it to get like it's supposed to get. It does a lot of damage. It really really does. I had gone astray and I was able to hear the Lord when He spoke to me. I was able to say "Yes," to Him. And I was able to argue with Him and He told me that He wasn't going to change to suit me no matter what I thought. And I was going to have to come His way and do it His way. I was going to have to get my life straightened out. I praise God and I thank Him so much for all that because every little bit of that has helped me so much over the years. That's unbelievable. I thank Him for that. But if I had not had this particular--had these things happen in St. Mary's County, *all* of the things that happened - a little bit here, a little bit there - would never--. My life would never turned out the way it is now. So I'm grateful for every bit of it - the positive things and the negative things. They *all*, you know? Life is not just positive things. Sometimes some negative things have to come in to smooth out and not,

you know, so that you don't go too far one way or too far the other way. So I'm very very thankful for everything - thankful for you all coming up here. [laughs]

MT: Well we're very thankful to you and for sharing all this with us. It's wonderful.

JB: I had no idea that you were even in existence. [everyone laughs] All the times I've talked to the newspapers and all the times I've talked to my family and I visited down there. We go fishing down there a lot of times.

JW: Oh yeah?

JB: My husband--. Oh yeah. [laughs] Yes indeed. But never had any idea that you all were doing all the wonderful things that you're doing. I am just so very very glad because I'm sure that this is making a big difference in a lot of people's lives. I really believe that.

MT: [inaudible] . . . would be really wonderful to think that.

CG: History in the making.

JB: It really--. I know it is. I know it is. I'm sure. I'm just sure that it really is. Thank you so much for everything.

MT: Thank you.

JW: Thank you.

[TAPE IS TURNED OFF]

[END OF INTERVIEW]