

Transcription of OH-00012

Joseph Hungerford Morton, Havannah S. Morton

Interviewed by John Wearmouth

on

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Typographic Note

- [Inaudible] is used when a word cannot be understood.
- Brackets are used when the transcriber is not sure about a word or part of a word, to add a note indicating a non-verbal sound and to add clarifying information.
- Em Dash — is used to indicate an interruption or false start.
- Ellipses ... is used to indicate a natural extended pause in speech

Subjects

School integration
Education
Teaching
Vocational education
State departments of education
Industrial arts
African American teachers

Tags

K-12 education
Music teacher

Religion

Transcript

John Wearmouth [JW]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hungerford Morton and I want to say right at the very beginning his wife's name is Havannah S. Morton. She's a native of Norfolk, Virginia and Joseph is a native of this here neighborhood right here. We're about halfway between Bryans Road and Marshall Hall wouldn't you say at this point about?

Joseph Hungerford Morton [JM]: That's correct. About two miles to—.

JW: About two miles from each place? And he was born and raised in Fenwick I would guess? Within walking distance of Marshall Hall and I guess in Bryans Road. You once in a while walked to Bryans Road?

JM: Oh we went to church there every Sunday up in Pomona.

JW: Okay. And your father was John Robert Morton?

Havannah S. Morton [HM]: Reverend. He was a minister.

JW: Oh was he? What church?

JM: Yes Macedonia Baptist Church right up on the hill.

JW: Good! Nice little bit of additional history.

JM: Should I put the Reverend on the—.

JW: Yes, please do. And they met at college Maryland State at Salisbury

HM: Princess Anne.

JW: Princess Anne. What's the largest—that is the town isn't it?

JM: Salisbury's the largest town.

JW: Okay.

HM: But Princess Anne is the town.

JM: Princess Anne is the little town.

JW: Oh I see.

JM: The Eastern Shore has several little townships. There's several little La Plata's all over the Eastern Shore. They have a fill up station and a stop light and then the post office—.

JW: Maybe even a bar once in a while.

JM: And a bar and a school, drug store, you know that kind of a situation. That still exists there like the old La Plata did.

JW: Okay. Any way this is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program and it's another in a now rather long series of interviews with retired black school teachers which to my way of thinking and the college agrees gives us one of the finest views of black society in Charles County or Southern Maryland in this century. It's been a very exciting experience for me because when you take a look at black society through the eyes of its best educated most articulate sensitive people you've got a lot of history. A lot. And on down the road it's going to be I think deeply appreciated by your grandchildren and their grandchildren on down as long as those tapes are in existence. Let's see this is July 21st 1992. I sometimes overlook that. And so we've located the interview, it's in the Morton home and one of the interesting aspects of the Morton family is that it is sort of part and parcel of another family called the Marbury family and would you explain the two family situation for the tape?

JM: Okay well—.

JW: How did this come about?

JM: This came about as result of—. My mother was married to a Richard Marbury. And they—. Out of that union there were eight children. She lost her husband. My father moved over here from Virginia and began working at Indian Head and while here his wife died from diabetes and they were both [inaudible] out of that union they four children were born. And as a result of that their meeting there was a marriage between [Reverend] Morton and my mother Eliza Morton. Eliza Marbury and then she became Eliza Morton and then of that union I was born. So of the two families and the union between my mother and my father making a third family there were thirteen of us.

JW: That's amazing.

JM: Very, very harmoniously and well-loved family. With a lot of respect and love and caring all down the line for each other.

JW: That's marvelous. What part did your parent's play in that family situation?

JM: Well they again, they were very, very family oriented, they were very, very loving and shared a lot of genuine what you call old time, I guess, mothering. My mother was a very, very strong disciplinarian but a loving person. My dad was a very, very strong person but again a loving person.

JW: I see, I see.

JM: As a result of that, we knew love and each other and we were very, very we were church oriented. My dad was a Baptist minister. He was a son of the Pleasant Grove Baptist church in

Mulberry Maryland and he then took over this church up here at Macedonia on Bryans Road. He was pastor at that church I would guess some twenty years.

JW: What part did religion play at home?

JM: Oh very much.

JW: It carried over from the church? You didn't just leave it there on Sunday morning.

JM: Oh no. We definitely didn't. We carried it home from the church it went into our relationships with each other, our relationships with people in the community, our relationships with people who were sick in the community, people who were well. I mean, neighbors of both racial—. I mean we had neighbors the [Narishes] were our neighbors. The only reason we knew there were differences in races is we went to different schools. We grew up together, we played together, we ate together, we were whipped together, and disciplined together by both parents and it was just, you know. Just a wonderful wholesome—. But the religion played a great part. It was the nucleus of the family rearing and it still remains that way.

JW: Sounds like you were a member of a family that didn't spend any time crying about what things were like or had been.

JM: Oh no. We were too busy. We always had—. My mother had a farm and we all came up doing our share of the chores, farm chores, and we all knew what worked well because we all knew what saving was. We all knew what owning something was. We all knew what caring and taking care of things was.

JW: Who was the oldest male child in the combined family?

JM: Harold.

JW: Now, for the record I'll say I have interviewed Mr. Harold Marbury in March of 1991 just a matter of weeks before he passed.

JM: I'll be darned.

JW: It's a good interview. It's available for you to listen to. Order one from the college. The family ought to have one. A remarkable fellow. So he told me pretty much what you've been telling me. So I'm getting it from the younger.

JM: That's right, I'm the youngest.

JW: Pretty much as I got it from your oldest brother. That's remarkable. Okay now, your wife, Havannah, you graduated from high school in Virginia, Norfolk?

HM: Yes.

JW: And what year did you finish high school?

HM: 1947.

JW: Okay alright. And for the record, how did you happen to end up going to school in Maryland?

HM: Well I attended Norfolk State. I was always interested in music. I was a music major there. Then I got a scholarship from Norfolk State to go to Maryland State College in Princess Anne. And that's how I went to Princess Anne, Maryland.

JW: And Joseph were you in the same class there?

JM: No, I was a year ahead of her.

HM: When I got to Maryland State Joe was there.

JM: And we both—. Both having church backgrounds, both of us, we were songsters and she being a music major was in the choir and I also was a member of the college choir. And we met and as a result of being in the college choir traveled and were touring all over the country.

JW: Nice way to meet. Right away you find you have a powerful united element: music and church.

JM: Yeah, right. Music and church and strong family.

JW: That's wonderful. Did you ever go back to Virginia to live for any period of time?

HM: When I finished Maryland State I went back to Norfolk and taught a year and a half. That time, Joe was in the Korea and I went back and I taught a year and a half and he came out of the service. We got married in 1954. Then I came here—we came here. And I came here in 55 and I continued to teach there one year. And I came here in 55.

JW: What did the two families think of this union? Did you have any problems at home?

JM: Oh no, no. She again, she came from a very religious family and then she was welcomed into our family just like she was a sister. So she—.

JW: What's another member for a family of—.

JM: Oh yeah she's loved by all my family.

JW: What did you think of Southern Maryland? Any surprises—?

HM: I thought I was coming into [the dead country], frankly speaking.

JW: It's different.

HM: oh yeah and—.

JW: What year did you first visit Fenwick?

JM: Probably 53? Or was it 51 when I graduated from college?

HM: Remember the year we took that trip? [Inaudible]. That was 51.

JM: That was 51.

HM: 51 maybe 51.

JM: Yeah the year I graduated.

HM: And his Mom [inaudible].

JM: 1951. That's when she met my family.

HM: And his Mom being a good cooker had the table spread and everything. It was a joyous occasion.

JW: That's great. Now you had lived right in the city of Norfolk?

HM: Yes.

JW: So you were coming from—.

HM: From the city.

JW: A metropolitan— quite a good size metropolitan area and to a very rural situation. And it still is, for the most part.

JM: That's right, we joke about it and it's actually the truth I tell all her friends and who we were again very closely knitted, her friends and I became just like a member of that family. I told them I brought my wife to four rooms and a [pat]. And they never knew what I was talking about. At that time when we first married and moved into this old school house didn't have a bathroom inside or indoor plumbing. So I put the first—.

JW: So you lived in [Sam's Hill] school.

JM: That's right. I put the first bathroom in it.

JW: Is that right? In the fifties of course?

HM: It was.

JM: Yeah the fifties.

JW: Had you gone to elementary school there?

JM: No, no I went to elementary school at Pomonkey.

JW: What was the last year that [Sam's Hill] functioned as a black elementary school? Did your brother Harold go there?

JM: Yep. Oh yes Harold went there. Lorenzo went there. James went there. I think James—Delroy went there. That was about it. Three of us went to Accokeek because we lived with our grandmother. Richard—I think Richard went there for a few days. Maybe one or two years. Richard's nine years older than I am.

JW: Who were some of their teachers that you may have heard them mention?

JM: Oh, Mrs. Powell, Mrs. [Hedgey], [Lanyard], Mrs. [Lanyard] Manson.

JW: I think she taught at every other black elementary school. That's over a fifty year period.

JM: Those were the all that I can recall right off.

JW: What did the little school building look like inside when you two moved in? What did you have to do to make it heaven?

JM: Well you see my brother bought the place. Lorenzo. And he had put an upstairs in it. And he had put on two bedrooms. So it was like four rooms and a large upstairs where his children stayed.

JW: Did he change the roof configuration?

JM: No he never changed the roof configuration. Just finished it off upstairs and put a loft light and you know put a ceiling in and he put in two bedrooms off to the—.

JW: So there must have been quite a bit of room?

JM: Yeah it was a pretty good size.

JW: What would you say the dimensions were? Of the building itself?

JM: Of the building itself? I'd say the building itself was probably about 28 by say, I'd say 28 by 24 [feet].

JW: And it was a one room—?

JM: A one room schoolhouse.

JW: Was it [sheathed] outside?

JM: Oh no, no it had the old plaster and what they call interior wainscoting and vertical—.

JW: One by three [inaudible]—.

JM: One by three [inaudible] right, yeah [fur].

JW: [Inaudible phrase].

JM: [Inaudible]. And the floors were the old [bar floors].

JW: No paint on them?

JM: No paint on them just [inaudible] floors.

JW: Electric— Electricity during your last years? No?

JM: No, no, no. That was school, outdoor facilities.

JW: And did it have its own well?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Okay.

HM: [Did it have its own well?]

JM: Yeah, it did have its own well.

HM: It did.

JW: And that's one of the few country schools remaining. Pretty much in—well in its original site, but more importantly right on the road as it was. That hasn't changed much has it?

JM: The road?

JW: Right.

JM: Yeah the old [Sims Mill] road used to go right by the school. See now the road goes down across the branch, the stream and comes in from 227 and goes Fenwick road down goes on in.

JW: I see, I see.

JM: Now old Fenwick road was always there but it of course used to come and anybody from Fenwick coming going to Pomonkey or Bryans Road this highway was not here. They came up old [Sims Mill] road which went back a ways, way back right to our farm.

JW: Can it be traced now.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah comes right up by [Mrs. Sistons] right on— back on—.

JW: Is that where it originally came up there at [Burt Siston's] house.

JM: Right. And it comes right on out there and goes back up. It used to go on back around and wind and wind, you know, to get to Bryans Road. And they straightened it all out to make the 227.

JW: To what extent did your mother and you boys produce food for the family?

JM: Oh all of our food—.

JW: How many acres normally were—.

JM: About 85 acres.

JW: Okay. And it was all in use? All under the plow?

JM: Oh yes. Oh all under, yes sir.

JW: Do you remember—.

JM: All of the tilling. Our major crop was sweet potatoes, corn, and hay. Hay for the cattle, of course, feed corn for hogs, and the cows and horses—.

JW: Any tobacco ever?

JM: Very little tobacco.

JW: That's what I remember. You wrote it here [inaudible].

JM: Very little tobacco. I was very thankful for that. I didn't get indoctrinated in tobacco raising. But garden, oh, humongous garden. We raised all kinds of vegetables. Plenty of white potatoes, plenty [pork], plenty [beef]. We killed I'd say two or three [beefs] a year, about ten hogs a year. So we had hams galore. Smoked, [inaudible]—.

JW: So diet was no, no problem.

JM: Oh no, no, no we ate well, oh yeah.

JW: The Morton family ate well and I suppose the Marbury family ate well too.

JM: Oh yeah.

JW: Was cash money a problem?

JM: No we had—well my mother again one of her big produce was sweet potatoes and everybody bought sweet potatoes from my mother.

JW: Did Mr. Morton ever work outside of the church? Did he have another job?

JM: Yeah he worked as a water tender at the Powder Factory.

JW: I see and I guess Mr. Marbury also had two—.

JM: [Inaudible]. No, no, he was a farmer.

JW: He was strictly—.

JM: Harold's father was a farmer. Strictly farmer.

JW: As I remember he was killed by an automobile.

JM: Killed by an automobile right by Harold's house.

JW: On that corner there, okay. And as a rather young man?

JM: Yeah. He was not—. My brother next me, Richard, was not born when his dad was killed so he never saw his dad.

JW: At about what point in your life did you began to think about teaching? How old were you?

JM: I guess—it's strange thing. I never ever thought about teaching. Even when I went to college and graduated. I—teaching was not what I wanted to do. I wanted to basically be in construction and—but I took the Industrial Arts major with an emphasis on Building Trades. So I graduated from college with a trade certificate as well as a BS degree in Industrial Arts. And I was working with Charlie Butler and building doing some work for the Superintendent—I mean president of the board, Mr. Martin.

JW: T.C.?

JM: T.C. Martin.

JW: Right here in the county.

JM: Right here in the county. And he and Wade. Wade used to be headway forward in La Plata. Frank Wade.

JW: Yep.

JM: Frank said to me one day—. For some reason we were doing some work for Frank Wade, and he said to me one day after having talked to Charlie Butler, he says, "What is that guy doing working with you, he is, somethings different about him than is about," and so, Frank, Charlie said, "Yeah well he's a college graduate. He's, he likes to work and he's been working with me because he likes carpentry." So then that time they had built the Malcolm school. 1958 I think it opened.

HM: I went to Malcolm in 1956.

JM: 1956 it opened but they had one—there was a need for a new Industrial Arts teacher there because they were going to start a Building Trades program [majoring] program in [inaudible] Pomonkey. The teacher over there was going to come to Pomonkey and they needed a new Industrial Arts teacher. So he asked me if I wanted, if I'd be interested in teaching and I said, "Well I really hadn't thought about it." I said, "because number one I really can't afford to teach." He said, "What do you mean you can't afford to teach?" I said, "Well, the salary is not you know rewarding."

JW: Not terribly attractive.

JM: "Attractive enough for me to stop what I'm doing and teach." So he said, "Well, what would it take you to be interested?" I said, "Well—" Starting salary at that time was something like 2,800 dollars.

HM: And I was already at Malcolm.

JM: And she was already teaching at Malcolm. And I said, "Well, I think I— you know there's some merit in what I've done and there's some value in what I've done to me and it should be some experience that I take to a new job. And I think that if you—we can negotiate my salary up from the basic starting salary to maybe 3,200 dollars, you know maybe we can do something.

JW: Sky's the limit eh?

JM: So he said, " Well I'll talk to the then—" I think Paul Barnhart I think was the Sup—.

JW: Probably, probably.

JM: And he came back to me and he said, "Don't you do anything till you hear from me." And he went on and negotiated the with the Barnhart and then he said to me one day, we were still working at his place, "Why don't you go up and talk with Mr. Barnhart. He's got a job for you." So I said, "Well I'll have to do it after all this because I'm going to have to work all summer you know." So I went to Malcolm that summer—that September of 58. And then I stayed there about six years I guess. Then the Dr. Brown came as the school Superintendent and they wanted to start doing trades vocational ed at the county and then began the teaching doing trades at a couple, in the new wing that they'd put on in La Plata High School. The new La Plata High School at that time. And he called me in wanted to know if I would move to La Plata as well as doing a twofold move and that was integrating the school system.

JW: Uh huh.

JM: With the—. At that time we had two years before that, 60, I guess it was around 65 that black kids were moved to La Plata.

HM: Mhm.

JM: And they wanted to move in the, move some teachers, and integrate the teaching—.

HM: Faculty. Mhm.

JM: Faculty and so he said he thought that I would be the person that would be good to make sure that they got involved with that, so. I said, "Well, you know, I was interested in the job at La Plata to begin the Building Trades program." I said, "You know. I'm not too sure you want me to be the person to integrate the school system. But it worked out very well I had a very good year with John Gee as Principal.

JW: I interviewed Mr. Gee a couple years ago.

JM: [Ed Lakes] the Vice Principal. So we had a wonderful year. I was there—. I was only there four years.

JW: How long had you been at Malcolm?

JM: I was at Malcolm from 58 to 66.

JW: And you were there for all the time? Were the two of you teaching in the same school?

HM: We taught—. I went the year before Joe. I started 56.

JM: You did two years before me.

HM: Yeah.

JM: Oh yeah, we were teaching in the same school.

HM: He was a little [shy and I was] [inaudible].

JW: So you were there together for what like eight years.

JM and HM: Yeah.

JW: Eight years.

HM: Under J.R. Edelen.

JW: Okay. So you came into the Charles County public school system as a career teacher of music?

HM: Yes.

JW: You were a musicologist?

HM: Vocal music teacher. General music.

JW: Okay. Did you—?

JM: No, no you came in the county as a grade school. She had to—she became certified, re-certified, to teach fifth grade.

HM: They did not have a [inaudible].

JW: Havannah, go through the first roughly ten years of your teaching experience at Charles County from the very beginning. Who hired you for example? Who interviewed you?

HM: Joseph C. Parks. Hired me.

JW: Okay. How'd you like him? What'd you think of him? What did you think of him?

HM: Mr. Park's was a very dynamic and a very clean gentleman.

JW: Okay.

HM: Yes. That was my first teaching position in the. I taught Malcolm for ten years, fifth grade. And then I went to Mount Hope and I taught two years. The reason for my movement was my children my two daughters.

JW: Ah okay. Who was the Principal at Mount Hope when you were there?

HM: Bill [inaudible].

JW: Who?

HM: Bill [Griffith]. William Griffith. Did you know him?

JW: No.

HM: He's deceased now.

JW: No I did not.

HM: Okay. And then I left Mount Hope after two years there and went back to Malcolm. This was before integration.

JW: You requested the move?

HM: No, no, no I was moved by. I was moved because of my children.

JW: Okay.

HM: Then when I went to Malcolm, Malcolm became a middle school. And then integration came and I knew I could not do middle school children. So then I—. at that time I—.

JW: What year was that now? The first year of integration? 66 or 7?

HM: 60—Oh gosh I don't know.

JM: It was for kids it was 66.

HM: 66. Yeah.

JW: And I guess that's when my son started school that year.

HM: And J. R. Eden was still the principal. And then the time of the—that same year J. C. Parks opened. And I asked for transfer. And I became a music teacher at J. C. Parks first, kindergarten through fifth grade.

JW: During that ten year period, did you observe any changes in attitudes toward the teaching of music and toward it's becoming a firm part of the curriculum?

HM: It hasn't all changed in teaching music, but I know it became a dynamic part in the lives of children. And it was one of the basic subjects in the curriculum. And then [Clarence Rogers] who then became supervisor of music.

JW: For the whole county?

HM: For the whole county.

JM: Districts [inaudible]—.

HM: And he retired this year.

JW: Did each county school have a teacher of music from elementary up through high school?

HM: Through high school. Each school had a general music teacher. Some music teachers had two schools it depended on the enrollment, the class size. And each school in Charles County from elementary through high school had instrumental music as well as vocal music.

JW: Did music teachers often have other assignments in the school other teaching assignments?

HM: I don't think so.

JW: Okay.

JM: Not after, not after about 59.

JW: So there was a movement toward making music—.

HM: Music a vital part of the curriculum.

JW: instruction a full blown fully appreciated—.

HM: Part of the curriculum.

JW: Part of the curriculum.

JM and HM: Oh yes.

JW: Okay that's what I'm trying to get on this tape because it's hardly—. The teachers who taught your generation this was a whole different ball game teaching things like music.

JM: Oh sure.

JW: It was thought to be fluff. Real, silly stuff.

HM: We had workshops, we went to workshops, we had courses of study, we went to summer schools. We were well trained. And all the music teachers in the county came together—.

JM: [Inaudible].

HM: Periodically for—.

JM: Summer workshops and to develop curriculum and packets and to probably to—.

HM: And we had instructional people coming down from Towson State or from the University of Maryland College Park to do seminars and workshops with us. On some of the days that we had that were not students days. And there we had workshops also and they were—. We were well trained.

JW: In your opinion what is the role of music instruction and participation in molding the character and the personalities and the poise of youngsters.

HM: It gives them good listening skills. It gives them articulate skills, speaking skills. It develops them full-hearted. Because children—. All children can do one thing and that's everyone can tune together when there is musical combined. If you can't do anything else. It's a universal language.

JW: So that leads to even greater respect and appreciation among themselves for each other. Okay so it's hard to beat that as an important part of [inaudible] public educated.

HM: And they were good [to hear]. Between the fifties and the sixties and the seventies. Charles County's music department was one of the finest I've ever witnessed.

JW: That's good to hear and it's good to put on the record because I have not talked to many music teachers. The Cane's, Erin of course, but you're the first who really was a full time professional music teacher so you're an important part of this whole series now. And Joseph is too because I have not interviewed a vocational science or vocational arts teacher before. You're number one and I think you're a darned good number one. You had a baccalaureate degree.

JM: That's right.

JW: In this area when it was kind of rare.

JM: That's right.

JW: Kind of rare. Did you ever have any regrets? Has this stood by you well has it done well for you?

JM: Oh no I have no regrets. My college training and the professors I had, that I was under in college became just like family to us, to me. We were a small college. In fact three weeks ago we visited one of my—. My department head, Richard Thomas, down at University of Maryland Eastern Shore. And it was just like a homecoming.

JW: Isn't that great.

JM: So we came out of there well prepared, well versed, and of course every summer I used to work with contractors doing various skills that were related to the building trades so I had a wealth of experience to carry into the classroom. And that's why I was probably tagged, you know, to start the Buildings Trades program in the county.

JW: I would think, from my point of view, doing what you did gave you a good back-up. You didn't have to feel that teaching was the only thing open to you.

JM: Oh no, no.

JW: At any time you could've said, "Well, take it. I don't need it."

HM: [Inaudible].

JW: Did you want to discuss?

HM: He's gonna go further.

JW: Go.

JM: Okay well, no, as I said, after I had worked at La Plata for about three years. Three and a half about four years. I had some problems with the request of enlarging the program and providing some more specificity in various—.

JW: Were you at the old cabinet building?

JM: Yeah I was at the old cabinet building—.

JW: Under Mr. Gee?

JM: Under John Gee.

JW: Alright, okay.

JM: And, you know, John was not the whole bag, but the county just at that time were dealing with plans for vo-tech center [Vocational Technical Center] and it just never, just never. I mean we went on and went on and went on. So I actually got a little despondent and I applied through a former supervisor in the county, Ed Turner.

JW: I knew him.

JM: Ed called me one day, he says, "We need some, we need an Industrial Arts teacher at Clinton's Surrattsville High School.

JW: Oh this was after he had gone to Prince George's.

JM: After he had gone to Prince George's. So he said, "Would you be interested?" And he said, "In fact we've got two [public] schools. I'll give you Surrattsville and I'll give you another school to go to. Well I went to the Surrattsville and Bill [Chestnut] who was a Principal there, I mean right as soon as we sat down and talked he says, "I hope you're not going [someplace else] I hope you're happy with this. And I hope you're going to be here. So I went on and took that job and was enjoying it very much and doing very well with Bill and the faculty there.

JW: In Prince George's County.

JM: In Prince George's County.

JW: What did they do here in Charles County to try and hold you? Was any real effort made to encourage you?

JM: No, no, no real effort. Well in the meantime when I was in Charles County the vo-tech center did become a reality.

JW: Get off the ground, well okay.

JM: So I applied for principalship of that school. Well I never did really know why I was not given the opportunity to take that position. As a result of not getting that position there was a lot of hassle between the board, changing officers and this that and the other. Everything but saying yes or will you. I never even went for an interview. So the NAACP and we, became interested and got involved in the case. So I do have a suit against the Board of Education of Charles County for not having been given the opportunity to be interviewed to be Principal of vo-tech Center. And it's on, it's a case before the—.

JW: It's still living? It's still alive.

JM: Still in court. Joseph Morton vs. the Board of Education of Charles County.

JW: For heaven's sake. Who did get that job? Who became the principal?

JM: The first principal was Bowling. Who—.

JW: Robert?

JM: Robert Bowling. Who of course as you well know left with the secretary and they never knew what all happened.

JW: Yep, yeah—.

JM: But he's back now and—.

JW: His mother was born in our house and so forth.

JM: Oh yeah?

JW: Yeah I understand he's back.

JM: Yeah he's back. And then—.

JW: What were his qualifications for that job?

JM: He was a [federal] secondary education training person.

JW: But no formal education in the Industrial Arts?

JM: Oh no, not in the Industrial Arts or vocational education. Well he just wasn't—. I always thought, it just wasn't the time, you know. In fact they figured I'd made the first and one big step and that was moving and integrating the schools and they felt I probably wasn't able to handle two or three accomplishments.

JW: Even though it must've hurt like the devil at the time. I wonder if it wasn't the best thing that could've happened?

JM: Well it did—.

JW: As far as your overall career's concerned.

JM: It did—. It was—. It eventually ended up being the best thing in the world that ever happened to me. As a result of working in—.

JW: Ed Turner's move was a good one too.

JM: Yeah, Ed Turner's was—.

JW: They did the same thing to him.

JM: Ed Turner's move was and my relationship with Ed were, not to brag, but very positive when we did meet at meetings and we respected each other highly. He respected me I respected him. As a result of that and also as a result of state involvement with Vocational Ed program. Two years, three years after I was in PG County. I came home one afternoon and my wife says, "There's a Jim Reed on the phone for you." And Jim Reed at that time was the Assistant State Superintendent of Vocational Education. So I wasn't here, so she took the number and—.

JW: About what year are we at now?

JM: Now we talking 68. Late 68.

JW: Where were you living now?

JM: Summer of 68. We were living right here.

JW: Okay.

JM: Living right here. So I called Jim Reed back and Jim says to me, he says, "I got a job for you." I said, "A job for me?" He says, "Yes a state level job for you. Super—State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education."

HM: "Bring your family up." Remember we went up.

JM: And I said, "Well I got a job." He says, "I know you got a job. I know," well he literally almost said, "I know all about you."

JW: And he did.

JM: And he did. And so he—so I said, so he said, "What are you doing?" It was the summer so I said, "I'm presently running a job for Charlie Butler. I've got [inaudible] under construction." I said, "I work five days a week." And he says, "Well, I'll tell you what. How about could you set aside a Saturday morning that you could bring your family up, meet at my house, meet my wife, and I'll interview you in my backyard. Right on some hamburgers and whatever. Would you like

that? What do you think of that?" I said, "Okay." And at the present time also I was bout finished a master's degree in Vocational Education at the University of Maryland and the [inaudible]. And so I went up and had the interview. And on the way back home my wife said, "Well what do you think?" I said, "Well, I don't know, it's state wide responsibilities. Moving to Baltimore to work and driving up there every day and riding all those [state highways]—.

JW: What did you think? What did you think of this?

HM: I was elated. I pushed him on the job, sure.

JW: I would think so.

JM: And so she said, "What are you going to summer school for? What are you going and getting graduate degrees for? And what are you doing all this for? You're not going to get the job at the vo-tech center. What're you going to do with it? I think you ought to take it." So I pondered for about two weeks. Got right on the phone and called Jim and I said, "Jim, I'll take the job." He said, "Well, when can you report to work?" I said, "Well I'd like to work all summer and run this job." And I said, "The earliest I could report would be September. Like I were going back to teaching." He said, "Okay, how about September 3rd? We'll set it up for then." September 3rd of 69 I reported then to the State Department.

JW: Great, now how many children did you have at this time?

HM: Two girls.

JM: We had two girls.

HM: My two daughters.

JM: We only had the two girls. We had all of our kids by then.

JW: Okay, and how old were they?

HM: In 69 our oldest was nine. And Marcia was—.

JM: Six.

HM: Yeah.

JW: So that's quite a decision to [inaudible].

HM: And then we did, we did travel to Baltimore and looked at different places trying to decide if we were going to move from here and take a house there. And we looked around but everything finally came right back to Charles County.

JW: So your office was in Baltimore—.

JM: Oh yeah. It was on 600 [Wyndhurst] Avenue in north west Baltimore. I drove 68 miles every day to that office. That's to the office.

JW: That's quite a way.

JM: I had responsibility for vocational supervision of Western Maryland, all the counties in Western Maryland and Baltimore and Harford and Anne Arundel Counties. My partner, at that time there were two of us, he had the shore, the nine counties on the shore and Southern Maryland.

JW: What was his name?

JM: Bob Learid.

JW: Lear? L-E-A?

JM: Yes, L-E-A-R-I-D. Learid. Robert Learid. They used to call us the salt and pepper twins.

JW: He was white?

JM: He was [inaudible] white yeah.

JW: [Laughs]. What sort of staff did they give you up there?

JM: What staff?

JW: Office personnel?

JM: Oh I had a secretary. He and I had a secretary. We shared a secretary with Glenn Lewis who was the supervisor, state supervisor [inaudible]. So that we had, three of us had a secretary to do our personal stuff and office stuff. And then we had a pool secretary who did overflow stuff for writing letters, for getting ready for conferences, and doing workshops, and stuff like that.

JW: Now was the entire state board of education located in this one?

JM: No, no we were at [Wyndhurst] Avenue the main building was down at the state building right there at Preston Street at that time. They were on the tenth floor of Preston Street. Then I think, ITV was out in Orange Mills where they are still. And [Vote rehab] was some place and it was pretty well—. I think instruction and possibly vocational ed, and library science was up at [Wyndhurst] with us and the rest of the people were down at Preston.

JW: What was the state level attitude toward vocational ed [inaudible]?

JM: State level attitude was, because of Jim Reed's impact was becoming into its own at that point.

JW: Okay so again you were kind of pioneering weren't you?

JM: Staff, oh yes, staff increased. We had—. We grew from, I guess, we grew from about nine specialists to about fifteen in about four and a half, five years.

JW: Do you remember what those fifteen specialists were specialists in? What topics, what subject, what skills are we talking about?

JM: We talking about business ed. We talking, um—. We're talking, two of us breaking off in trade and industrial ed, industrial arts, home economics, food servicing, which was a new adding to home economics because it became the vocational type of—.

JW: Did that include catering? Catering services?

JM: No, no catering services came much later.

JW: Okay.

JM: Much later in Maryland. [Inaudible] and then we had distributive education, cooperative education, cooperative education.

JW: You mean co-op?

JM: Co-op yeah—.

JW: Management and—.

JM: They called it cooperative vocational education. And cosmetology, barbering, but mainly those were in the city, Baltimore city and didn't have any barbering outside. Auto mechanics and those, those [things].

JW: Pretty progressive [program].

JM: Yeah, yeah we were right pretty—. Maryland was right among the states, right up there with the top states and it's expanding its vocational education program. And of course Don [Bailey] at Maryland jumped right on the ball game with that and he began to then—. We were instrumental Bob Learid and I in developing a program where we took the craftsmen who had five years of experience and wanted to because of change in job maybe wanted to a new avocat—new avocation, or whatever, to go take methods. Take eighteen hours of methods. That was some teaching, testing, evaluating, and [partial] management, and would be called an eighteen hour program and we had one heck of a time getting that approved by the credentials committee, you know. But, so, a lot of our work was developing that and also taking that and getting it accepted by the credentials committee to make sure that we had certification, full certification, for that program.

JW: While you were up there were you able to keep an eye on what was going on down here?

JM: Oh yeah.

JW: In Southern Maryland through your buddy there?

JM: Oh yeah. Definitely.

JW: And he knew your background?

JM: Oh sure.

JW: Okay. Okay must've been a very rewarding—.

JM: Oh it was very rewarding. And again—.

JW: One does not want to be vengeful but it's nice to be able to just laugh and say, you know.

JM: No, no, it was, it was a great move. And again as a result of that. I ended up my seventeen years there as the Assistant Director for the State's [inaudible] Ed Program. So I moved out of voc-ed [vocational education] after I'd been there I guess ten years. I moved out of voc-ed.

JW: And where else would you have had that opportunity?

JM: I wouldn't, wouldn't have had it. And I became what they call a regional, regional coordinator. Where I coordinated all of the educational programs from the state department to Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Harford, and Anne Arundel. I was the liaison person from the State Department to those superintendents of those five counties. Those were the big ones.

JW: Now what years were you doing all this commuting? From 69—.

JM: 69 until 86.

JW: Wow, How'd you put up—. How'd you put up with it?

JM: Well, 8—. At 80 I had a heart attack.

JW: So, how did your husband's working in Baltimore—. How did that affect your life style. What did that do to the family?

HM: [Inaudible]. After his heart attack—.

JW: In, in 80.

HM: Joe no longer, yeah, Joe no longer commuted everyday back and forth. He stayed—.

[End Tape 1]

JW: So, after Joseph had his heart attack what happened to the Morton household down here in Charles County that was different? A few changes had to be made?

HM: Definitely.

JW: Affecting who most?

HM: Affecting Havannah and the girls. Because—.

JM: It had a profound effect on me because you know, I never used to stay in the city. I ended up staying in Baltimore—.

JW: [After being helpless] more or less.

JM: And, you know, I was at that point in time, when I went back to work there were—there were all these precautions I had and "Don't do this, don't do that." And the people I stayed with were family up there and if I did something [inaudible] or was late coming in and she thought I'd driven too much. She would either tell Havannah or threaten to tell Havannah.

JW: Oh boy. You couldn't win.

JM: And so, you know, I couldn't win. It wasn't all peaches and cream for me to be able to go to the office and go right down the street in Baltimore and relax. And plus I worried about them and so I ended up coming home some nights some weeks when—.

JW: One nice thing about your family being here was that they were in the arms of a large [inaudible].

JM: Oh yeah, they [inaudible].

HM: And let me tell you—.

JW: Family group.

JM: [Inaudible] I didn't have—. I didn't have—. That's one thing I knew and I didn't [inaudible].

JW: You were so blessed by the location.

HM: His brothers, his brothers Earl, his brothers Harold, would come over and say, "Havannah whatever you need."

JM: They were all by—.

HM: If the weather heard—. If I was in work and it might be the weather on a nice day and then the weather or temperature would go down and we had a wood stove and I'd come home if it was chilly, I can see the smoke coming from the chimney. Harold or Earl had been here, made a fire, and my house was cozy and toasty.

JW: Isn't that wonderful.

HM: It was remarkable. Anything I wanted, they did. Yes they did. Good men.

JW: That's that old Morton or Marbury attitude toward family.

JM: Yeah.

HM: Good men.

JW: Toward extended family.

HM: If my car wouldn't start. He had a brother who was a mechanic, Jim. Somebody who could do everything.

JW: That's great.

HM: They were great.

JW: But I suppose you missed him anyway.

HM: Sure, sure. But the girls and I—. Girls scouts and volleyball teams and.

JW: Where did your girls go to elementary school?

HM: They went to [inaudible] school. Same [inaudible].

JW: Oh, alright. And where to high school?

HM: Lackey High School.

JW: How did they do academically if I may ask?

HM: Fantastic.

JW: Sure, look at the parents.

HM: They did very well.

JW: And the parents of the parents. This doesn't all happen with one generation.

JM: Oh, no, no.

HM: They did very well.

JW: It builds.

HM: They did very well.

JW: It builds.

HM: And they both went to college. My oldest went to Hampton University, Hampton Virginia.

JW: That's great.

HM: And she is now—.

JW: J.C. Parks, alum, or alumnus was there.

HM: Yes, yes. And she is in retailing and merchandising and she's manager of a store [tech] company.

JW: Wow.

HM: Yes.

JW: That's marvelous.

HM: Personnel. She's doing very well and my youngest went to Salisbury State.

JW: You know I guess it's corny but I like to say it and I think you folks will agree. The opportunities are still out there for the right kind of folks.

JM: Sure they're.

HM: Yes they are.

JW: We're not all the right kind of folks. And it is, does, not all have to do with family or color, or church, or whatever. There's something deep inside. Hard to explain.

JM: If the old work ethic is there. [inaudible] there. If the desire and the willingness to get along with people is there, there are endless opportunities.

JW: Yeah, there are.

HM: Mhm.

JW: Do you feel in your area of education, your area of expertise, that you perhaps had an opportunity to do a little bit more for the disadvantaged young men of this state?

JM: Yes.

JW: This must have occurred to you.

JM: Yeah.

JW: That here I am. I'm pulling my weight and I am making opportunities here for people that might otherwise not amount to anything.

JW: Mhm. Yep.

JW: Can't all go to college. We can't all become writers, or dentists, or doctors or whatever, but boy I still feel that there's, there's opportunities out there for good plumbers, electricians, mechanics, painters, and joiners, carpenters, coopers, whatever. Those guys are making better money today than the professionals of ten years ago.

JM: And have been for some time—.

JW: Living well. That's true. They're living well.

JM: Yeah I've said those very words almost verbatim so many, many times.

JW: Well I'm glad because I dare not say that to young black kids. I dare not. Because they say to me, "What do you know." Well, true, what do I know? But I just feel deeply that the opportunities are there.

HM: [Inaudible].

JW: No question about it. Anyways, so how on earth did the two of you cope that? For what period of time did you not commute?

JM: From first I went to the department 69 until 80. I did not. I mean I did—.

JW: You did, you did commute for eleven years?

JM: I did commute for eleven years.

JW: Then for how many years did you remain up there.

JM: About—. I was in Baltimore—.

HM: It was 80, 6 years.

JM: Maybe, 6 years longer—.

HM: You retired 85.

JM: But I retired—. But the last two years I was cheating very badly I was here most of the time.

HM: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Okay. And how were you feeling by that time? Five years after the heart attack.

JM: Much better. Much better.

JW: Okay, and some of your strength was coming back [inaudible]—.

JM: My strength was back. [Inaudible]. The medication they kicked in. The restructuring of the body itself my weight maintained. I was doing exercises.

JW: Were you a little overweight at the time?

JM: Oh yeah, I was 240, like 240 pounds.

JW: And what was your normal? 55 less than that?

JM: About 45 pounds less than that, yeah.

JW: You're holding it now pretty well?

JM: Oh yeah, I'm down now, I'm down—. I'm a little heavy now, 218 is about where I am now. But my doctors say you know, "As long as you aren't having any problems, you know. You look well and you look good at 218. Stay that way." When I'd gotten down to 209 and 205 everybody said, "What is this? Were you sick? Are you ill?" You know, worry me to death. So I just went on and gained about five six or eight more pounds.

JW: Anyway you can cope with it.

JM: And I can deal with it.

JW: How many years teaching—. How many years in education all together?

JM: All together—.

JW: Teaching and your secondary position.

JM: 30 years.

JW: 30 years. Do you feel good about it?

JM: Oh, wonderful.

JW: That's marvelous that's the big thing.

HM: [Inaudible]—.

JW: Havannah how many years did you teach? Now let's get back to you a little bit.

HM: I've taught 32 years.

JW: 32. What was your last year.

HM: I retired in 85.

JW: 85. You beat him by one or two?

JM: She beat me by one year.

HM: One year. I retired in 85. But it's—. It's a joyous thing now. I saw some of my students today and they know me. They stop and talk to you and, "Mrs. Morton this and Mrs. Morton this, and I'm doing this and I'm doing this." It's a pleasure.

JM: And I'm hiring a lot of her former students.

HM: It's a pleasure.

JW: Is that so?

JM: "Oh you're Mrs. Morton's husband."

HM: They good kids. The kids were good.

JW: That's great.

HM: It was a joyous, a joyous time in teaching.

JW: What was your last school?

HM: J.C. Parks.

JW: J.C. Parks right and you were there nine?

HM: 20 some years.

JW: 20 some years at J.C. Parks. Okay. Let's get into this, this integration thing a little bit. Was there any unpleasantness at all for either one of you in transitioning from segregation to integration? I still think it was a miracle—.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah.

JW: That it went off as it did.

JM: Yeah, it, it was—. Well in my case I was in La Plata.

HM: That's right you were in La Plata. You were in high school.

JM: There was 60 teachers there. The morning we started school that day John said, "Well I guess everybody's here." Well I just personally took my look around and [said], "Well everybody's here." Well I'd been interviewed with [Claire] Marshall who just retired this year by the way. And she went to the middle school there. So I thought was gonna be at my school. She thought I was gonna be at her school. So we're at the, you know, we're at the faculty meeting waiting to see—. Waiting for each other to come cuz we knew we were gonna be together, you know. Two, they wouldn't put one single person in a school we didn't think. So I, no one ever showed and so John introduced everybody. Everybody was introduced and then he says, told them who I was.

JW: This is the beginning of the first school year.

JM: The beginning of, and the school was a brand new school, they had diploma buses and faculty and grading machines and whatever. New highway in front of the place hadn't been built. It was a mess. But anyway, there were a couple of teachers there and one of which became my daughter's counselor. And my—. Who were basically southern people, I mean truly southern people. And Mrs. Greenfield, I mean was adamant about, against the—she was English teacher at the time—about integration of course. And I've seen myself, I've seen her turn around, coming down the stairwell and turn around and go back up because a number of black kids or myself would be going to that [one]. But guess what? About third year when I announced I was leaving there she and Mrs. [Hovaneck] who was the secretary there who was always a very fine person, were the ones who wanted to give me a little something for Joe Morton, you know, because I was leaving. And there were a couple of fellows at the school there were, black, you know. I guess the reason I made without any very great difficulty because I had knew who I was and I was sure of myself.

JW: Yeah.

JM: And I had a very strong religion, religious background—.

JW: You had never gone around feeling sorry for yourself.

JM: And I had never felt inadequate—.

JW: Proud.

JM: And I was never, I was never—. And I just felt like I was, you know, the greatest. As good as they were, as any of them. Or greater. So I had no deficiencies you see. So that's why I felt—. And I—. Cuz I noticed them, but it didn't involve them. So I guess that's why it worked so well. So the frustrations that would've normally been normal people's frustrations they weren't mine

because I had a strong belief in people. I've always loved people and my wife can tell you. I mean I'm probably writing my joy right now I'm talking. I love talking.

JW: It comes through. That's great. Yeah your own personality and character have been your best friends. All your life.

JM: Always have been my, yeah.

HM: Yeah, but you know—.

JW: What have you appreciated most about Joseph? As a wife, you know.... You're still head over heels in love with him obviously.

HM: Um—.

JW: But, but, but what is there about this man?

HM: This man and his family, I would say. Because I am a very quiet person. I'm a very reserved person. I never talk much. But through Joe who was, who likes to talk, who has a deep love of people, I found myself getting involved with people.

JW: Now that's, that's complimentary in two ways.

HM: But I have to.

JW: Now that's right.

HM: Yeah.

JW: Marvelous. And why did you marry this woman? What was there about her that appealed to you? I've never asked this question before.

JM: She, she had a pretty deep self-assurance.

JW: Okay. This you understood.

JM: Oh yeah. And she was a hard person to.

HM: Get to know.

JM: Get to know. It was a challenge to me and I love a challenge you know. And of course when I thought I had you know won her I said, "Hey you know this is a pretty good accomplishment." So you know we've, we have a—. I think we've been very complimentary to each other.

JW: I would say so.

HM: She has a lot of good talents. She's—.

JW: You were proud to bring her home weren't you?

JM: Oh definitely.

JW: I would think and vice versa.

HM: 38 years.

JW: Wow, that's very good. You're looking at 48. You have to work at it a little bit.

JM: Oh yeah, it just doesn't happen.

JW: And you have to—.

JW: It doesn't just fall into place easily—.

JM: And you have to do a lot of maintenance and you have to constantly do maintenance.

JW: Yeah, that's right. It can be tough and rewarding, in turn.

HM: If you work together you build it. Through church and—.

JW: That's right. Well I can, I can say for the record that you Morton's have a marvelous home here. Physically, and in the outlook and the attitude of the family and it just comes through.

JM: And then the two girls.

JW: [There are two girls up here—].

HM: You know it's nothing that we have sat down and said we work on it's just with the help of the Lord and through his guidance it just happened.

JM: It just happened.

JW: And let us put the names of your children on this tape. The oldest is?

JM: Ava.

JW: A-V-A?

JM: A-V-A.

HM: Jo.

JW: Ava?

JM: Ava hyphen J-O. Ava-Jo.

JW: Ava-Jo. Okay.

JM: The youngest is Marcia Elaine.

JW: And how is that first name spelled?

JM: M-A-R-C-I-A.

JW: Okay.

JM: And Marcia is married of course. With a daughter Adriana.

JW: And how old is that child?

JM: Adriana is eight, uh eight months one week.

JW: Okay. [Inaudible] her little voice may appear somewhere on this tape.

JM: Yeah right.

JW: I thought we better explain her right.

JM: And of course we have a lovely son in law, Bobby Gutrick.

JW: Is he a local?

JM: Local boy.

JW: Okay.

JM: Graduated. Marcia and he went to high school together. She went off to college in Carolina.

JW: [Ringing noise] Okay let me turn this off. Havannah, when you started teaching in Charles County, what did you observe about the academic standards in the Charles County public schools? Mediocre, high, indifferent?

HM: I started at Malcolm Elementary School. And the children came to Malcolm I thought rural background.

JW: Yeah, definitely.

HM: Mhm. I had a hard time trying to—and I worked at it—trying to get the kids to come up to par. And, but we had a wonderful dynamic Principal J.R. Edelen, who gave us all the help and encouragement anyone could want.

JM: And support.

JW: Did you get the feeling that the parents of some of these children were not as supportive at home as they should have been?

HM: No. During the fifties when we started at Malcolm, those parents were interested, they worked for those children, anything that we told them that we thought the children needed they were very supportive.

JW: That's great.

HM: The PTA was the largest PTA we have ever seen because the parents were there. They would invite the faculty members to their homes for dinners. We visited every family of the children we had. It was a rewarding experience.

JW: That's great. Now when you said you visited the families, did you do this on your own volition?

HM: Yes we did.

JW: Okay, that's marvelous.

JM: And at that point in time it was basically one of the old carry overs of the black school system. You—. We were taught in college. We were taught by our supervisors you can't teach a kid unless you know the kid.

HM: Unless you know their background.

JM: Unless you know where that kid comes from. You know the turmoils or the hardships or the conditions under which that youngster has to go home to every night. You can't teach a kid if you don't know why he's sitting in your class asleep. If you don't know that he sleeps with five kids, five sisters or brothers, and he may not get breakfast before he comes to school.

JW: You're saying again what I've heard so many times from teachers that taught you. Ms. Edna Simmons. Bless her heart. Now she's got to be 92 and she said many a nights she couldn't sleep wondering how she could get through to one child who just didn't seem to be with it, didn't seem to be improving, and she said, "I found out why, you know, what life was like for them at home." And many came to school with no shoes in warm weather. And many a times the only meal a child had was one she prepared on the stove,

JM: At school.

JW: At McConchie black elementary school. Marvelous story let me tell you, and I especially understood in talking to you two because you are another generation.

HM: Well we did the visitation. [We visited those families]—.

JW: Boy that is and this is the story I had. So it continued right on up through your early tenure. That's great.

HM: Our early teaching period. Really good.

JW: What percentage of the parents of the children you taught had high school diplomas? This is a tough one, but in your opinion how many of those parents had been able to go through high school?

HM: [Inaudible] went to high school. Didn't they Joe?

JM: At Malcolm it varied. At Malcolm I would say about 75 percent.

HM: Mhm, high school.

JW: Well that's great. That's very high.

JM: Had the opportunity. Had the opportunity. They may not have had high school diplomas now. You take—. They were, they were interested people. They had good jobs and had acquired something. So, and we may be a little off because they were so interested in educating their kids. They had a work ethic. Heavy strong work ethic. Catholic root background.

HM: Yes.

JM: High Catholicism [basically in Hughesville] [inaudible phrase].

HM: In that area. It was very catholic. There were Catholics in that area, yes there were.

JW: Well that makes a difference doesn't it?

JM: Yeah, and they, so, maybe we may be saying it high. It may have been around 50 percent.

JW: What was the major Catholic church in that neighborhood?

HM: St. Peter's.

JW: St. Peter's.

JM: Yeah and Bryantown.

HM: And Bryantown.

JM: Yeah St. Peter's and Bryantown.

JW: Oh, okay.

HM: Mhm. [Inaudible].

JM: A very strong Catholic church.

JW: How many miles was that? Five or six to [one of them].

JM: Bryantown I would imagine around the back way would've probably about eight miles. St. Peter's—.

HM: St. Peter's was right here.

JM: Is right up the road which was like about three miles.

JW: My wife and I visited all those schools recently. Talking local history checking on their history instruction resource materials. They had practically nothing but they do have now. They do have now. Okay, that's interesting. During your teaching career did you observe changing attitudes on the part of parents toward discipline in the schools? Did parents continue to back the teachers equally well all the way through your teaching career?

HM: They have to—. You have to remember now I was in elementary.

JW: Mhm.

HM: And I left Malcolm to come to J.C. Parks. It was, um, integration. But believe it or not, I don't know what it was about Mrs. Morton in the music department, but I had some of the most loyal and some of the most interested parents to work for. I had no problems. I've received letters from my parents thanking me. Haven't I Joe? Thanking me for showing such interest—.

JM: And these are youngsters—.

HM: In their children.

JM: Who are college education, college degrees now and who are doing—. Or some of them are professional [inaudible phrase]—.

HM: Some have went into education, some—.

JM: and have said, "Mrs. Morton you made a profound effect and had a profound effect on my son."

JW: Isn't that great to hear?

HM: Yes.

JW: It'll fuel you for the rest of your life. That's great. Who were some of the teachers at J.C. Parks your first year who became friends and who you respected?... Are any of them still teaching? Well they must be.

HM: Mrs. Pullen was my Principal. [Margaret] Pullen was the Principal.

JM: [Inaudible] was teaching then.

HM: No they're not they're all retired.

HM: Ms. [Abdijouy] [inaudible] to be Ms. Edna Clark.

JM: And Mrs.—. Lady up in Chapel Hill. Mrs., what?

HM: Jan Colbert.

JM: Colbert.

JW: Where, where is Chapel Hill now?

JM: Up 210.

JW: Prince George's?

JM: Prince George's yeah. [Inaudible phrase.] Up there Bradley's on—. Oh not Bradley. [Peckinger's] on 210 there for Fort Washington.

JW: Oh. I've never met her.

JM: She's, she's—.

HM: Mr. [Gardener] was a principal at Parks. One of the principals for that. Mr. [Riedemann]; Kenneth [Riedemann].

JW: We know the [Riedemann's].

HM: Yeah.

JW: How do you feel now with a little bit of respect, a little bit of distance between your career and your retirement? Any changes in the quality of education in our public schools? That's a nasty one to deal with. What do you think?...

HM: It's hard to say because talking with my, some of the coworkers and some of the teachers who are still there, it's a great change. Things are not the same for Charles County Public Schools.

JW: That's what I keep hearing.

JM: I think the quality of education has improved. I think the conditions and time has [gone about] and situations with respect to relationships between parents and students has changed

from respect of parent doing and respect of teachers by students to a point where when student rights became so prevalent and when this thing of, "You have the right not to do this, or you have the right not to do that," and permissiveness on the part of the general public and freedom of youngsters has brought about a diversity of the purpose of education in school. And so, you know, I can remember when I went to Baltimore to work and I visited all the different schools around the county and state you'd walk into schools and they would be—. When classes were convened the teacher was the center. Even if it was an activity the student involved kinds of activities—they were doing group work or whatever—the teacher's still in charge. I dare say that now. You walk into schools now and you don't know who's in charge.

JW: That's sad. It's hurt the teaching profession.

JM: It's hurt the teaching profession. So what you have now—.

JW: Who wants to put up with that?

JM: See what you have now is you have people who were excellent people in education who have said, "Hey I don't need this. Not only do I not need it, I'm not gonna tolerate it."

JW: You wouldn't today if you were to start out—.

JM: I've said to a number of people, "Joe Morton couldn't be a classroom teacher today because I would've been fired." See because even when I went to La Plata and was the only black teacher in that whole school when I said, "Son, or young man, or young lady no, no we don't do that at La Plata." They immediately ceased doing whatever it was they were doing. But now you don't dare question a kid as to what they doing. You see? Unless you want a confrontation. And you know, and there are too many opportunities out here now so you were losing a lot of good people. The National Education Association convened in here in Bal- in Washington not too long ago. One of the biggest cries they had: "We need young black and white male images in the classroom."

JW: Who are tough.

JM: Who are—.

JW: Durable.

JM: Durable and you know have purpose. But you see the system is of such now that I don't know what its been accommodated to the whims of public. But you know you don't—. I mean, I mean, and I'm not saying that touching kids was advantageous to them or helped us but, you don't touch a kid now. Can't. I mean I have sat kids down. And I said, "Wait a minute. This is my room. I'm in charge here." You see? You don't do that now.

JW: You couldn't do that now—.

JM: You can't even verbally do set a kid down now too much, too strongly. So—.

JW: What's the worst that could happen to a young teacher today if he did that? If he grabbed a youngster who was a discipline problem by the shoulders and forced him into a chair, forced him to listen? What is the worst that could happen?

JM: Okay a good example of what could happen to him just happened at J.C. Parks.

JW: That's right

JM: The principal was removed from the school because supposedly allocated that she threw a kid up against the wall. I, she has denied it to this point. I do not believe she did.

JW: My wife and I can't believe she did it either.

JM: [Inaudible phrase] teacher who had been moved there from a school that where she had some problems before. Got the parent to finally say, who were good friends of the principal, to go against her and begin to complain. And here is an administrative person out of the central office supporting the fac- supporting the parent not having had a confrontation or a meeting with the principal giving her administrative leave.

JW: This was covered in the newspaper pretty well. [I was] reading it.

JM: Yeah, yeah. See so that's—. Right there's a good example of what would happen if a person did that. Teacher [inaudible] your job would be gone.

JW: Well I'm pretty sure—. I've interviewed enough retired, a fair number of retired black and white teachers. Some of the finest teachers in the Charles County Public Schools in this century would not put up, could not survive, with the conditions that are in the classrooms today. How long would an Ed turner, or a Milton Somers, or a [inaudible]—.

JM: Or John Prince. I don't know if you know John.

JW: No.

JM: However, he was an industrial arts teacher at La Plata High when I was there—.

JW: Oh, oh yeah. Now I know. My son had him as a matter of fact. That's right.

JM: Okay. Oh no wouldn't have last—. You know, they wouldn't last.

JW: So society is paying a terrible price for this.

JM: That's sure.

JW: When are we going to—.

JM: I don't know who is listening to who but it's sad. It's sad.

JW: Yeah. It really is.

JM: And the permissive—. I got a—. I got a, nephew who's a vice principal at Frederick High School and he said, "It's just life and death, you know?" You know they're in that sector where they've got to deal with the young men who set out in the [Jags] and set out in the BMWs and deal with telephone messages up and pass the time they're supposed to be in school. And you don't go out and tell a kid—. You know, you can't say that he is doing a drug deal. You can't say he's doing anything. You can say he's just out there on telephone because if you do you can be accused of, you know, false accusation. You see? Parents support kids. This one kid he had and was in a jag and when the mother was confronted she wasn't aware he had a jag. That's what—. This is what she says. Can you believe that?

JW: Now when you say jag, you mean?

JM: A jaguar car.

JW: A 70,000 dollar—.

JM: Yeah.

JM: Did he have a newspaper out or something? A jag.

JM: Yeah well BMW is nothing you know nothing, 35, you know, 35,000 dollars [inaudible]. And that little 180, 190 Mercedes they tell me that's just like [kid got in school with a Model A that day]. You know, Model A when I was growing. A whole, a whole society values are just poof. They're just so distorted [inaudible] the same.

JW: Is there anything the churches can do today?

HM: That's another part because our churches today and our Sunday school attendance is very low. We try now to build Sunday school and [the adults]. They're not there.

JM: Yeah. You see it's a whole issue. It's the institutions too. You see we came up under these institutions: The school, the church, and the home. The triangular institutional network. That triangular institution network it no longer exists.

HM: We went to Sunday school. Our girls.

JM: We, the schools have for example, I remember when I was an old [inaudible] salesman. We had the kid 1/8th of his time. School does. He's got 7/8th's that community and [courage] and home and wherever has him, you see. And in those institutions now don't sort of, they don't do too much networking anymore.

JW: Well, when you talk about a breakdown of society, that's exactly what we're facing.

JM: Yeah, sure.

JW: That's exactly what we're facing. You think what, what your parents and what your parents would say today, [inaudible] they would not be able to comprehend—.

JM: They, they couldn't deal with it. They couldn't deal with it. They would—. My dad would be of such [or] frustration until his excitement would give him a heart attack, you know?

JW: Havannah what was one of the most satisfying experiences you ever had as a teacher? What pleased you most? What was the most gratifying of all your experiences as a teacher?... How about that first day—.

JM: She, she, had lots of them.

JW: In an integrated school? What did that do to you? How did you feel that day?

HM: I told you what I—. When integration first started I was at Malcolm and Malcolm had become a middle school. I could not cope with junior high students.

JW: Why?

JM: Not integration. Junior high school students.

HM: The older.

JM: Yeah. Not integration.

JW: Oh, okay.

HM: The older students. I like.

JW: Up through what? 12.

HM: No, no, fifth grade, 10. And that's what, that's what I did at Parks my whole 20 years there. I cannot work with older children.

JW: What's the problem there?

HM: Personality.

JW: The beginning mindset development of a mindset.

JM: It's that point in time when you actually begin to think—. They, they begin to think about what they want to do over that of what teachers want them to do. They begin to be peer dominated versus that of adults or persons in charge dominated. Havannah doesn't do well with that.

JW: It's just no longer a pleasure.

JM: Oh yeah. It's that, you know, the junior high school [the devil's march in]. Kids who came to school the day didn't know who they were. You know, it was a challenge to me. They'd say, "Hey, I loved junior high school. I loved it because, you know, they were different today, they were different this morning than they are gonna be this afternoon." But it was always a good challenge to me. I could deal with it. In fact I never—. I couldn't deal with the little tattle-taler's,

you know, coming, "[Inaudible] Mrs. Morton." [Inaudible] I couldn't deal with that. The little ones I couldn't deal with.

JW: Havannah did you sort of trace the academic world of some of your students? Tell us if you especially had felt especially close to and as they went up in the grades and became,

HM: Oh sure.

JW: Older you saw changes to individuals that had been a pleasure to be with?

HM: Well see I had the children—.

JW: That must have been,

HM: from kindergarten through fifth grade.

JW: a real painful thing.

HM: No because I had children because I had children from kindergarten through grade five. The whole school. So they knew me. We were a big family.

JW: And yet it reached the point as they grew older where you couldn't reach them anymore or?

HM: Well yeah, I could reach them in grade five. When they went to middle school I still—. I didn't have them as a student but I had them as a friend. You see the difference there?

JW: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HM: High school, I still had that child. They respected me, they sent me letters, they corresponded with me, but then a lot are my students.

JW: But the classroom relationship was the heart?

HM: Yeah it was. [Inaudible].

JW: So you're—. The last years of your teaching career were steady pleasant rewarding ones?

HM: My teaching career at J.C. Parks was very rewarding experience.

JW: That's marvelous. Who were some of your favorite principals? Did you have more than one? [Inaudible].

HM: Yes. I went through Margaret Pullen, Mr. Riedemann, Mr. [Bardno], Lorna Delaney.

JM: Lorna Delaney, and [Griffith].

HM: And Griff at Mt. Hope and J.R. Edelen at Malcolm. [Child noises in background].

JW: Joseph when you started teaching among your peers, let's see, you had your baccalaureate degree right, didn't you?

JM: Right.

JW: How many of your peers did not at that point?

JM: Oh not any. They all had degrees.

JW: They all had degrees at that point. And how different from what it was 50 or 60 years ago.

JM: Yeah.

JW: 70 years ago. When a high school diploma pretty much opened the door in most country schools here. Were you ever taught in public schools here by teachers with baccalaureate degrees?

JM: No. With baccalaureate degrees?

JW: Yes, with.

JM: Oh yes.

JW: Okay. Who were some of the best prepared teachers that taught you in Charles County? In your opinion.

JM: In my opinion Henry Kramer, music teacher. [Mrs. Sheers] a science teacher. Mrs. uh. Howard Field who was an industrial arts teacher and taught math.

JW: And what was his name again?

JM: Howard Field.

JW: Howard Field.

JM: He's, he's passed also. Then of course [inaudible] Paul who was—.

JW: Heard his name mentioned many times.

JM: Very well prepared very organized, structured.

JW: He still there? On the Eastern Shore?

JM: Yeah, he lives in Salisbury.

JW: That's the one.

JM: Erin Cane a science teacher. Erin Cane taught me chemistry and science and he was a band, he was a band man also at Malcolm.

JW: How do you feel about the overall quality of black education in Charles County during your lifetime as a student?

JM: I think we got a good, very good education.

JW: That's good.

JM: We had caring, qualified, concerned, and capable teachers and they took care, they took charge.

JW: That's marvelous. So when you went to college did you feel you were prepared?

JM: Oh sure.

JW: That's good. That's good.

JM: And I—. And see I went to a same kind of college that I did at high school. The staff and faculty were a caring,

JW: Same commitment.

JM: concerned, committed faculty. When I, when I went, when I applied for graduate school in the University of Maryland about three years after I finished, after I'd come out of the army, [inaudible] what to grab, you know, getting into grad school. None whatsoever.

JW: Wow, that's the proof of the pudding, you got in and you got through it.

JM: [Inaudible]. When I finished my master's and went to Nova University for a Doctor program had no problem getting into that.

JW: To which university?

JM: Nova University.

JW: Where is that?

JM: At Fort Lauderdale.

JW: Ah. Okay.

JM: No Problem getting there. And Michael Scriven who was a national renowned statistician and taught stat, [I think he prob].

JW: Do you have any comment Joseph on the attitudes and the quality and the commitment of the educators at state level in the state offices?

JM: Well, they are handpicked people mostly. They come basically with special interests and come special with special qualities and at that level a lot of times you work, you know, you have a lot down there, down their attitude in terms of how to work with people may be different. But many of them are highly qualified and amply trained. Their problems—. The problems that I detected when I was there was the lack of proper attitude to work with people existed. You know, "I'm from the State Department" was the attitude a lot of them carried. Which my job was and my [prime philosophy]—.

JW: [Inaudible] outlook.

JM: My philosophy was "I'm here to provide teachers with some expertise that will enable them do a better job with students. And I'm not here because I'm some doctor so and so," you see. And I paid my dues. I didn't have that philosophy and a lot of them they didn't have that philosophy. "I said it and you supposed to believe it."

JW: Yeah. "Because I said it."

JM: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JW: Well if you hadn't been a teacher what would you secondarily have liked to do in this life.

HM: I would've liked to have been a [concert singer]—.

JM: Oh I'm gonna say a lot of people say that.

JW: Really?

HM: Really. I was a voice major.

JW: Maybe we should [put a few notes on her] and what would you line to throw on there. How about something from Madame Butterfly?

HM: But I was a voice major and I—. I enjoyed singing. So that's what I would've liked to done.

JM: [It's good to get them get a call back baby] tell them we'll call back.

JW: Okay, so Joseph what would you have liked to do secondarily if you hadn't gone in to teaching? You probably would have been a professional in the building trades and may have ended up as a big contractor. Any regrets?

JM: Had I, had I, no.

JW: Course you could still do that.

JM: Had I not uh been sent to Korea right away as soon as I got on base I would've probably loved to pursue a career as a engineer officer. I loved the, I loved the [inaudible] of the army engineers because again it was basically construction, excavation, big equipment, erection of buildings, and figuring and estimating and all that kind of stuff.

JW: Yeah.

JM: Uh, I was an engineers. It just meant that I—. I just, I just never got the chance to do any state side duty to any degree. And of course when I came back I was [frustrated] I wanted to get out of that place.

JW: Yeah.

JM: And, uh.

JW: You were with combat engineers?

JM: Combat engineers.

JW: Well that's no fun. You're not building too much there mostly.

JM: So and I wanted to be with the regular [inaudible and yawning] but I never got a chance to switch over.

JW: Were you commissioned?

JM: Uh, no. I was uh [noncom]

JW: Well I'm surprised you weren't. You had opted for—.

JM: Well I turned it down.

JW: Oh did you?

JM: Yeah because they were—. And the reason I did that was because at the time they were gonna send me to Fort [Bay] to be an infantry officer. Those of us that qualified we immediately signed waivers. Some of us got those waivers accepted some didn't. A lot of my friends you

know went right on and [didn't defect]. They went straight to Korea and they were like, they were there less than some of them 6-8 weeks and they were gone. So.

JW: Have you been in touch with vocational training in Charles County in the past since you retired?

JM: Oh yeah. I'm on the vocational advising committee.

JW: Okay. How is it going now? What's the attitude the board ed? What's, what are the staffing [inaudible]—.

JM: The board of ed attitude is supportive. John overall has not taken the bullet.

JW: Okay. Mr. [Bloomer].

JM: Mr. [Bloomer] yeah.

JW: Okay.

JM: He has not, um, superintendent, you know. His, his big, big philosophy seems to be that he relates to us is that he, "I got the whole ball game to play. This is the parlor ball game. And I, you know, I can't put my, all my eggs in that basket." And all we say to him is, "No we don't want you put all your eggs in that basket. We just want you to be supportive of the eggs that we have in the basket and making sure that they are good quality eggs and every chance that we get we can get in some extra dollars, some extra program, some you know strong support." And, you know, so we do have board members now who are very, very strong—.

JW: What is being done—and I think something should be done—to improve the image of those youngsters in those careers that don't necessarily involve academia?

JM: Well—.

JW: Why is it so many youngsters today they don't want to be mechanics, they don't want to be plumbers, or electricians, or carpentry. What has society done to us?

JM: Well society hasn't done anything to us. I can tell you what the school system has done to it. You'll be surprised. In fact I just talked to a gentleman yesterday. Just talked to a gentleman yesterday who is a union carpenter now and who said to me, "You know nobody talked to me about vocational ed when I was in high school. Nobody talked to me about carpentry and vo-tech school. I became an apprentice through the union."

[End Tape 2]