

A Community Remembers
Interview: Tab Mines

Tab Mines: [Indecipherable.]

Laura Browder: Ok. Tab, I'm gonna ask you, if you don't mind, let me get this untangled here. If you could just hold this and talk into. You know, kinda like it was a lollipop.

TM: Ok.

LB: That would be perfect. Why don't you start by just... saying what your name is and where you went to school.

TM: Ok. Uh, my name is Tab Mines. I, uh, went to... Weston Elementary School, um... Binford Middle School, and then George Wythe High School.

LB: And, now, could you tell me something about how you grew up and what your family was like?

TM: Well, I grew up in a very, uh, close-knit family that, uh, all the generations stayed very active within the household. My grandmother, uh, her... three siblings, two sisters and a son, his wife... um... his two kids, my mother's s--my mother... uh, sister's daughter all lived in the same household while I was, uh... attending elementary school.

LB: So did you have siblings as well?

TM: Uh, n--not on my mother's side, no. Um... I didn't really get to know my father until I was on my way to college and at that point I found out I had a--a brother.

LB: So a whole brand new family at that point [laughs].

TM: Yes. Pretty much.

LB: But when you were growing up, when you were a kid, um, tell me... what your neighborhood was like, tell me what Richmond was like, tell me something about just...

TM: Well--

LB: ... what you did as a kid.

TM: Uh... back when I was growing up, the, uh... the neighborhoods were pretty much segregated. You had a very concentration of different ethnic groups in particular sections of the city. Uh, in the West End where I grew up... uh, it was very--a very close-knit community. Um... I would say that back then it's like when communities come together during disasters now. But it's just a everyday thing. Where everybody's a part of everybody's household. It was the utmost respect for... uh, our elders, uh, whether or not they were in your house or your

neighbors. Um... everyone pretty much looked after each other. Uh... and--and their welfare. So it was, um, a community that always seemed to, uh... cared about what was going on with each other. Um, how one another was doing, um... doing whatever was needed to assist and help. Um... and, uh, that went on for generations at that time.

LB: So ho--it sounds like your grandparents grew up in the same neighborhood?

TM: Well, uh, actually... my, um... my family roots, uh, started out in Caroline County. And so, uh, my grandmother and her sister married two brothers -- I'm sorry -- married two brothers. Um, which was strange was they all had the same last name before they got married.

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: ... Don't know how that happened, but... um, they--they always were (?) in Caroline County actually where, uh, in Doswell, Virginia, where secretariat is from. So there's a lot of history there. Uh, we branched out to Richmond, um... And my grandfather had passed before I was born. And, um... my grandmother worked for a white family as a, um, housekeeper and caregiver. Um... all her life, and, uh... my mother was a dietician, um, at the hospital. And her sister pretty much kept the kids while we were... um... growing up, um. It was not a lot of daycare centers, uh... families found a way to... have someone within the family to look after the k--the children. So, um... you didn't really have to worry about outsiders influencing, um, what your kids thought or did or, um... or how they were, um, taken care of. Uh, then we--we lived in a section, uh, of the town that was close to the... one of the only black high schools that we had in the city which was Maggie Walker. And in that community it was a lot of people that were related, um... they all pretty much, uh, had some commonality. Uh, it was very very close [laughs] community, at that time also. So, um... then we, um... we moved over into the West End of the city. Which was, uh, not far, but it was in between a pretty dominant white section of the city. Um. And, uh, that's where I kind of remember everything started out in--in terms of my childhood because we kinda lived diagonal from the elementary school I started to attend. Um... and it was row houses in sort of, you know, pretty--pretty much knew your neighbors. And everybody in the block, everybody was together for years, and so, uh, we were intimate with the next families they were with us (?). And that's, uh--and it was hard to remember a time that you wasn't happy.

LB: That's nice.

TM: Um, it's, uh... was strange, we didn't *have* much. But everybody was... I don't know if it's content, but everybody was just very, uh, happy at that time. I just remember everything being fun and, uh, you could live as in--if you grew up as a child and you was a child, you didn't have to worry about growing up issues. And I think at that time, parents, the grown ups, *ensured* that kids... uh, there was a big separation, what... kids was hearing or... uh, being, um... being, uh... access to. Uh... and so therefore all you had to do was just have fun and go to school. Uh, and I think it's a big difference between now and then, um, where there's a lot of interaction with kids and their parents and going through the trials and tribulations their parents go through. And so having to grow up faster, uh, it's almost like you--you wonder whether--whether... whether you really have a childhood now. Uh, we--we were just... happy-go-lucky kids at that time. We

roller skated at night, uh... [chuckling] you know, we played, uh... all the little kid games. Uh... we just did everything that was just fun. It was just really really fun. And, uh, one of the nucleus in the community was not only the church, but was the school. Uh, and sports. Uh... most of the people either went to Maggie Walker or Armstrong at that time. The other black school, so... you had a lot of connections there. You know. Uh, and it was intense rooting for your school. And, uh, having the community just--it wasn't just the school, it was the community. I mean, the community surrounded the school, uh... um... I will say that the--at that time, the inner-city black schools, the community supported them way, I mean--maybe more than what the communities in subur--suburbs today support the schools that's in their communities. Uh... you don't see that much today, though, in the inner-city communities, uh. And maybe because they have so much to deal with, mores than before. Um... but you don't have that, uh, connection, that you had before. And I think that's connection enabled the kids to... want to succeed and go out and be something and do something and be productive. Because they know people are, uh, was behind them. And encouraged them and, um, wanted to make these people proud of you and, uh, you wanted to, uh... be successful not only for your parents, for *all* your family and your friends. Um, and the peer groups that you had, they were always very competitive about being great people. Just great people. So it was, um, a very... wow... fun time. It was just a fun time. It's kinda hard not to look back and see how much fun that we had. It's... I look back today, I just don't see how... the kids today, uh... it's any comparison during that time, I mean.... You know, the wars was over. You know, we were doing you--you--you retired (?) because, uh, right before us people were drafted. Uh... and, uh, as we grew up, uh, the draft stopped. Uh, we didn't have a war to go into so we could just bring [?? 10:05] straight up. Uh, going to school, having fun, uh, and sports.

LB: Just a--uh, give me a sense, what year were you born?

TM: I was born 1956.

LB: Ok.

TM: Yeah.

LB: So... you grew up at a time when Richmond was really changing. A lot.

TM: Oh yeah.

LB: Did--tell me what you remember about Richmond as a child.

TM: Well, um, early on there were still the, um, white-only establishments. Um... and there were still signs of the, you know, old segregated south where, you know, you see, uh, pretty much, uh... stayed within your confine, so to speak. Uh, and our parents pretty much instilled that in us. Um... I think the unique thing, uh, I had a great friend that, uh... uh... I worked with recently, he said, you know, um, he had went home to Greece -- Oh, I'm sorry. He had went home to Greece. And that he was out with his family. And they ran across this African American couple. And they talked and they had a lot of fun and... and he said, you know, one thing that I recognize is that you don't see a lot of African Americans traveling. And I said, well, you know,

you--what you don't understand about this historically, it wasn't *safe* for African Americans to travel. Especially throughout the U.S. Um, because in between their destination, there were... uh... a lot of opportunities for harm to come to them. So you didn't have a lot of traveling in between places. Most, uh, African Americans pretty much stayed neutral. Uh, within their communities. Uh, and even in Richmond, um, when you ventured out of your community, you didn't venture alone. Uh, there were times where, um, walking from one section of the city the other you may be chased by... uh, a group of white kids. Uh, to get home. So it wasn't, uh, all that safe at that time. Um, but I think... people understanding their boundaries, so to speak... they kinda stayed within them. Uh, and so everybody just kept moving along. Uh... and, um... we just maintained... during that process, uh, trying to get through. But I don't think it was, uh, something people concentrated on.

LB: Mm mm.

TM: You know, or even thought about, I think they just lived at that time. So, um... It was--it was interesting.

LB: What do you remember about your elementary school?

TM: ... Wow....

LB: [Chuckles.]

TM: The first word is "fun." Um... uh... *and*, um, an extension of your mother... and parents within the school. Um... it was not uncommon to hear from a teacher who kn--said, "Well I taught your mother." Or "I taught your aunt." Or "I taught your uncle." Or "I taught your cousin... I've taught everybody in your family--"

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: "... and if you do something, you know I'm going back and talk to them about it."

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: So it was... it was interesting because, I mean, you went to school to get an education and you *learned*, um... it was, uh, a memorization. Or it wasn't having to... uh... [pauses]... feel like the subject wasn't a--detached from you. The te--the subject matter always seemed to... as the teachers taught it, related to your everyday life in some kinda way. Um... mathematics and science and... uh... history, uh... it was unique for, I guess, kids in this area because, uh, hi--American history, we lived it. And it was all around us. Uh, you know, the 'give me liberty, give me death' speech, we went to the church right across town and, the Paul Revere, and... the Edgar All--Allan Poe Museum, and we went to Williamsburg and Jamestown and we went to Washington, D.C., that was regular trip. Uh, so we--we kinda *lived* our education. Which was very unique for us, um.... And so, school was something you looked forward to. Uh, you couldn't actually wait to go. Um, and, uh, what was different was they always let you know the year before, uh, when you're leaving that summer, who your homeroom teacher or teachers

gonna be -- your teachers gonna be for the next year. So everybody'd be, you know, wishing for specific teachers. And I remember, uh, in my fifth [chuckling] grade year, the... uh... I found out I was going to, uh, have Ms. Tyler for--for my teacher and I--I think I cried to my mother. Asked why would I have to [chuckling] have this hard teacher--she was... her reputation was, like, intense, and, uh... And she said, "Boy, you better just dry them tears up cuz you going to that class, and... you know, I'm not gonna... switch you out of it." I ended up going. And I'm seeing out of all of my experiences, I remember her the most. She was just incredible. I mean... It was just amazing, uh, getting through that, uh--that experience. Uh... I--I just--it's--I just can't even say how much, uh... growth... I encountered, uh, in dealing with her. But she was just magnificent, but she was a strange individual. She... I mean, she always wore, uh, a rain thing with boots and stuff and, you know, she just was odd.

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: She's just... just not your normal person. But you... if you would--in her class... you tend to fell for her because you could see the compassion and... and determination that you were gonna learn something in her class. And that she wanted it for you, as much as, you know, she wanted to just show that she was a great teacher. She just wanted it for you. And so we just had a great time. Uh... I, you know, that's--I guess when I would [? 17:14]--I mean that--she was just great. She was just absolutely great. If I--and I--if I had the chance I could tell her that today, she was... absolutely magnificent. It was just a great time.

LB: She sounds like an unusual woman.

TM: Very unusual. And that's the thing, I mean w--for kids, it--it would've--it would've--it would scare anybody else.

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: That's the last person you would want to... have to go take the class from. But after you get in it... then you wouldn't trade the experience for anything. So... uh, I had a *great* elementary school experience. Uh, which--which kind of went over to my, uh, middle school. Uh, Binford. Uh... which I... I had another great teacher, I had Ms. Bradley??. Uh, she was just... I... she wasn't so much unusual. She just had a way about herself, uh, that commanded, uh... any kids, uh... girls showing that they're girls and guys showing that they're guys, and... um... and she required that you learn her material. Uh... and she was just... telling stories, you know, and that's the amazing thing about back then -- the teachers would discuss with the kids examples of life history and situations that you wouldn't get in a text book. And so you learned a lot about decision-making, what's right and wrong... you know, uh, compassion for others. Making decisions that... uh, would effect you not only someone else. Uh, and how that impacts other things, and, uh.... It was... it was a very interesting, uh, process for us.

LB: Ex.. examples from their own lives or from all around you?

TM: Uh, from their lives, from lives... or teachers that they were--that taught them. Um, examples of, uh... things that have happened to them. Uh, and stuff, so it was... it was always

something, you know, you left the day thinking about, wow, you know.... You know, how this--this in--at some point, it crops up in your own life. Uh... decision yo might have to make or how you look at a situation and determine how should I approach this, what should I do. Or how should I go forward. Uh...

LB: And this would've been, like, 1967, '68, around there?

TM: Yeah. Yeah. This was like in the '60s.

LB: So there was a lot going on then.

TM: Yeah, it was a lot going on. And, but--you know, also, too, it was a lot going on, but in the black community, kids was protected from mostly everything because that's the way they were brought up. They weren't... when--when--when the grown-ups had company or someone came to visit, the kids was not allowed to sit in the... same area where they were having their discussion or talk. Cuz the first word is, this is grown-up conversation. So, you're not allowed to sit there, so you have to go and you have to be with the other kids. Um... you know, why the internet is a great process, I think what happened, the internet exploded onto the scene before parents could get a handle of what the internet mean to their kids, and... what information is gonna be provide--sh--they're gonna be able to access. Uh, you know, we were all about this thing about access and information. But you have to wonder at times, can too much access--access for--to information actually hurt the development of a growing mind. Um... is it overwhelmed too fast before it's developed enough to understand what it is to the--looking at? Um... and the fact that, um... most of our entertainment was inter-reacting with another person. Not interacting with a computer.

LB: [Whispering] I know.

TM: So, um, the one thing that I see mostly today compared to back then is a lack of interpersonal skills. And, uh, being able to hold a legitimate conversation. Uh, with someone. Um, but... the fact that we had to become creative to entertain ourself... uh, also lead to a whole lotta other things... uh, that helps you develop. Uh... um... as you grow. Um... within your world, so, um... It was a lot going--a lot of changes going on in the... in the world at that time. The one thing that I'm no--I noticed, uh... was when I was in middle school and I was, um... the reason why at that point... we had to--the family that I was living with kind of split up. My mother and her sister moved here. And their mother came with them. They brought their mother. And their brother and his wife, and two sons moved to another house. Well, you know, it was at that time that I did--was the first time that I'd even thought about a family unit. Cuz, I just--everybody was family. And then that was the time that I realized that my uncle wasn't my father, that was my uncle. Well it was kinda really strange t--because I was at that time a teenager. And, um... that was the first time I then start thinking about my father. And I was not a person that asked a lot of questions, my mother was a very meek and mild individual... uh, with a big heart, very compassionate, do anything for everybody... loved everybody... So, I don't know if I had so much going on, I was just so happy that I thought about it but then I just though bout it in passing. Um, and, uh... so I just didn't really ask questions about it. But we moved here and it was just--it was me and my cousin... who was the daughter of my mother's sister. Uh, all

of us lived here.

LB: In this house?

TM: In this house. And it was, uh... it's--it's interesting, uh, as you live... because you know, we look at immigrants and foreigners, uh, very strangely. Because they usually have more than one family unit in the house. But that's the way our community grew up. We all had family... different family units in the same house at that time. And that was a regular thing. You know, and we were very happy with that. But now, um... [pauses] it--it seems like that was the most... ff--far--fetched thing that you can even... think about at this time. But yet the reason why you're in the situation you are, is because you don't have the big family units anymore. Uh, that's why daycare has taken over. Um... and I--I think you--you have a lot of disconnect. Uh, because of that. But, you know, um... people become more independent and... but I--I just think, uh, for me, what I saw was, uh, a transformation in the principles of the black community how you raise kids. Which was, uh, we came up--there was, like, the Johnson & Johnson book on childrearing and their principles and... and then we started becoming more educated and we was going to college and, uh, reading more and expanding more and we got away from, uh, what we were grew up on. Um, you, for my generation, you heard people say, 'Well, I'm not gonna do things my parents did.' You know, I'm not--you know, cuz they were very strict parents. I mean, they... they meant business. [Laughs.] And the ones that, you know, they started saying, 'Well, I'm not gonna do that.' But what they didn't--what they--what they didn't do was reinforce the unity and the respect that goes with, um, childrearing. You know, you--you have to respect something. Uh, and the kids today, and you can see in the way they go about business, a lot of them don't even understand what the word respect means. They always come out with the, you know, 'you're not gonna disrespect me.' [Pause.] It just blows my mind. [Chuckling] Because you haven't earned anything yet. Um... and, uh, I learned the most from, uh, the seniors, uh... that was in my family and, um... the elders, uh... I was talking with one one day, and he says, "Let me tell you one thing. You'll never be wiser than I." [Pause, laughs.] So, I was like, you know, "What do you mean by that?" "You just--it's impossible for you to be wiser than I." And I was like, "Well, why--"

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: "... how's that--I mean... that doesn't make sense." You know. If I read more books, if I learn more stuff and do... and he said, "It's not in a book, it's... it's--it's the fact that I've lived longer than you. I've *seen* more than you. I've *experienced* more than you. You'll never be wiser than I." And that just kinda stuck with me. Uh, for a long time. And, uh, as I got older I kinda started realizing what... he was saying by that. Because these--they didn't go to school, they didn't have schools then, you know. They, um... pretty much worked on the farm or took... hard jobs and did everything they could. Uh, so they weren't the--the... scholastic educated people that, uh... uh, we're talking about now, but, you know, they were wise beyond their years. So the things that they would say to you or tell you, um... and so you have to pay attention to that. And young kids don't pay attention to elders at all today. They don't listen--they're not list--they... they're listening, looking for the wrong thing. And they think all the information that they kinda gather through the internet or access or whatever, reading blogs or whatever... is, uh... shaping who they should come--who--who they should become. But they don't know who they are once

they get there. Because there's no basis to it. So, I mean, you got a lotta, um, confused people. Uh, and they do confuse things that you can see. But for me during that time, it looked like their were a lot of projects... uh, capital projects going on across the nation.... that, um, I--and I don't know, you can look at the statistics, but in most your major cities, most of these projects went to black communities. And so this was the first time we had to move out of our communities and into communities we weren't familiar with.

LB: So was that before you went to Binford?

TM: That was a year after I went to Binford. I was in Binford in the sixth and seventh... and I got bused--we had to move when I was in the... s--around the seventh grade.

LB: And was Bindord s--basically a white school then?

TM: Yeah, it was.... it was a white community and it was kinda mixed. But it was a lot of black kids bef--at that time. It was kinda... moving over. Uh, but it wasn't busing or anything, it was just, uh... logistics of where the school was. Um, but the black--the predominant black element--I mean middle school was Randolph. Which was in a black community. Uh... Binford was kinda closer to me. Um, so, a lot of the kids--it was split, a lotta kids went to Randolph and a lot of kids went to Binford.

LB: So were you around kinda the Byrd Park Area?

TM: Yeah, Byrd Park. Uh... I was up off of Meadow and Idlewood there--

LB: Oh yeah.

TM: ... close to Cary. Um... so... most of the people up that way--now, the Byrd... Park area -- most of them went to Randolph. Cuz they was down by Randolph and Clarksburg (?). And the others went to Binford. And we went to Binford. And so... um... we moved but I kept... I--I caught the bus over to Binford. Cuz I didn't wanna really [indecipherable, chuckles 31:15]... the people I knew. And then, um... the next year when I was going into the eighth grade, I decided I would go to Wythe in the eighth grade. Cuz at that time, Wythe had eighth through the twelfth. And I said, "Well I'll go to Wythe for one year... and then I'll tra--I'll go over to Maggie Walker, which was the blacker school." Um--

LB: So--

TM: ... for the rest of the time.

LB: ... was this like, '69?

TM: ... Mmm... yeah, it's around '69, '70.

LB: So right when busing was beginning.

TM: Right around '70, '72, yeah.

LB: Ok, so that's right when busing is, right?

TM: Yeah, right before--cuz that was the year before busing.

LB: Ok.

TM: When I went to Wythe in the eighth, that was the year before busing.

LB: Ok, so that's '69.

TM: Right. So, it was, like I said, Wythe was like, uh... a culture shock for me. Because [chuckles], you could go into the classroom and I would be the only black person in the classroom.

LB: That must've been so... *striking* for you after a lifetime of living--it sounds like you had a pretty much all-black life, before that.

TM: Yeah. It was. It w--it really was.

LB: Except at Binford, maybe.

TM: Yeah, a--a few, but it was still majority black at that time that I went. Um, and--but Wythe was a--a completely different experience. The teachers was... you--I--I was always the kid that liked to connect with the teacher. And I couldn't connect with the teacher there. I mean, at that time. It just seemed like you were lost in the--in the shuffle, but this was like... [pauses] and I'm not saying that they were m--mean or dispirited or anything like that. It's just a different way of relating. You know, it's a... a--it... [pauses] they--the--the... the way they communicate, the... uh, the--the choice of words. Uh, what they find entertaining. It was just a disconnect. I mean, they had their own thing, which was nothing wrong. And we had, you know, the way we did things. And at that time, um... I didn't have a lot of friends over here, uh, at that time, so go on up there... uh... and at that time I wasn't playing sports. I was just actually going to class, so, I didn't really get involved with a lot, cuz in the eighth grade, you're still in a high school, and you still got your teenage--you know, you got your... your... your people, you know, in the... your sophomore, juniors, and seniors, that feel like they own the school, so you know, you're pretty much just going there. Uh, I didn't have any problems there, though. Uh, no one really picked on me or did anything. But, um, it was--more observation, just looking, and you know, trying to get through there.

LB: What sports were you playing, were you on the team at school?

TM: Well, I didn't start playing sports until I... until they bused me to the other middle school out here in the county. It was close to the county.

LB: So wait a second. So you're at Binford, sixth, seventh.

TM: Right.

LB: Wythe--

TM: In the eighth.

LB: For eighth.

TM: And then they bused me to Elkhardt--

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: ... in the ninth. Which was--Wythe was right there.

LB: Yeah, I know!

TM: But they--if you were--and I don't know what their thinking was... [laughs] but... they bused us... up to Elkhardt. Which was down the street from Manchester High School. Which was, uh... [pauses] a very... unusual--I--it was... [pauses] more happened at Elkhardt during the first year than happened at Wythe. Because we were in the news every week...

LB: Tell me about it.

TM: ... for something. Um... first of all, we were bused through a neighborhood that they looked at us like they'd never seen black kids before. [Laughs] so... so, we--we couldn't walk there, we had to--we all came on buses.

LB: And were they school buses or did you--

TM: They were school buses.

LB: Ok.

TM: Uh... or did we ride city buses at that time? Cuz it was--we caught the bus right over here at the plaza... Uh, it might've been city bu... I--I'm confuse--I--I don't--I--I can't say... for sure whether... at time we did ride on city buses, but um... we--we were bused there and they had a mix of teachers. And, uh... we had a--a principal who... was just--it was a disconnect. He... he didn't want to... interact with anybody at our school. You know, or... all I can remember is, uh... every time you turn around there was a fight here or a fight there and mostly anything was racially charged and, um, uh... some of the teachers couldn't relate to the kids that they had. And, uh, what would happen was the predominantly white high school, uh, one day, they, uh... they--all the white kids had left the school. And then the next thing we know, they had all marched down and they were standing out on the street in front of the school. And we were the only ones in the school. We--all the black kids were still in school because... we had to wait of the buses to come. So all the high school--all the white kids from the high school had... kinda

marched down with sticks and whatever and all of that, uh, and they were standing out in front of the school. And so someone said, you know, we can't sit in this school this way. We got to leave some kinda way. So, uh, we walked out the back way through the community. And as we were walking through the community, there were people peeking out their door and just looking at us like we were... just *strange*. But we would try to make our way back to our part of the, uh--back to the plaza. Because that's where black communities started. Um, but every day, uh, it was something, um... that happened that was--seemed to be racially charged. By the end of the year, it had kinda calmed down... quite a bit. But, you know, we were... that whole thing was just really weird. I mean, I've never had a problem with anybody with any race but, uh... there were--were k--were times where there--we had people that--that had those types of confrontation...

LB: Can you think of a couple of incidents from that year that really stick out in your mind? Kinda moments where everything kinda changed for you one way or the other.

TM: Well.... I was really never involved with that type of conflict. Um... but if you... were in a french class one day... um... and the teacher... I don't know if she came--became frustrated with, uh, a student or not, but she kinda slipped and said something about, 'Well, you know you should be... have--you should have learned this much and you should be able to speak this language, uh, much better than this' or something. 'Look at... ' and she was trying to use someone else as an example, which was a white student. And she was white. And, uh... I think the kid said, 'well, you don't... you don't take time and come to us like you go to them and talk to them and you're over at their desk thirty minutes at a time we in your class.' And it just became, you know, back and forth. And at that time I think she lost the class cuz then everybody kinda chimed in. And then she went to the [chuckles] principal's office. Uh... and, uh, I think, uh, one... one guy stood up, you know, he was, like, um... expressing himself. And his hand kinda hit the girl next to him. And I think he was sorry about it but they--she went--she called the principal. And I think the teacher made more out of it than the students did... at that time. But then things like that then trans--just *blows up* into something that it shouldn't be. And then you have, uh, the whole school just being--cuz you had some teachers that... they just never... seemed to... be able to either cope with having the minority kids in their classroom or, uh, just felt that this just wasn't a place for them to be or something.... I think the kids felt the disconnect. And, uh, I think that's where you had so much issues when we were at--at that stage cuz, um, we in a group that, um... when busing started would be the first graduating class for the four years that you go to high school. Um, and no one wanted to be there at that school. First of all. Because we were going to the ninth grade and we all thought we would be going to either the schools that we were in, or to one of the black high schools that we all--our parents went to. Uh, we had allegiance to these schools. I mean, uh... it was tradition. It wasn't just... uh, 'I just wanna go here,' but it was tradition. My uncle, my uncle, my dad... everybody went to that school, they played sports. You know, we behind that school (?) all our life. We... it was... and I think that kinda played into it a little bit. Uh... for when we were at, um, Binford, but we had some good teachers, for sure. Uh, but I got into sports at that time and I started meeting more people. And, uh... it became, um, a wonderful experience to do sports. Um... and so we were just kinda glad the year was up.

LB: [Whispers] yeah.

TM: [Laughs.]

LB: And you could go back to Wythe at that point, right?

TM: Exactly. Then we were--we were destined to go to Wythe, because... you know, of busing, at that time. But I think it got, uh... it was during that time where a lot of white kids started going to private school. Um... but, um, the year I went to Wythe, uh, believe it or not, most other white kids wasn't leaving yet. They--they were still there. Uh, their families still was keeping 'em because the neighborhood still was white. I mean, it wasn't like, a lotta, uh, blacks moving into their neighborhoods. And they liked where they lived, so they stayed and they just had no reason to leave the school cuz they were still pretty much, um, in control of it. Um and at that point when I went back to Wythe and being in sports, uh, I met a lot of white kids I became friends with. Um, and so... I kinda went to a couple of their parties and, you know, uh... became friends with a couple of, uh, the girls and guys and, you know... we--we had a... Wythe was a really... I don't know, different school, it... um, we had some great young teachers come in. Um... and being as young as they were, they could relate to us, uh, real well. Especially on the sports side. Uh, as well as, you know, our history and... and, uh... and our government teachers and... uh, the social sciences and... we just had great teachers at that time. They were all teachers that were--wanted to be involved. Uh, I know they looked at it as--was a challenge. You know. So, um, we all developed this close-knit... family, so to speak. All of us, I mean, not just the black kids but the white kids, too. Um, and, uh, Coach Robert Booker, who was the basketball coach... uh, he had came in... and, um... his spirit and the way he approached things, it kinda brought the whole community in support of the school. Uh... and Coach Frank Butts, and you know, all this was young, young guys who just got outta college, and they were trying to make career themselves--for themselves. And we all kinda came together at the same time. And so, uh... it was such a unique thing to be at a place where everybody was so close. You know. And, uh, one thing that coach booker did was, uh... he made us think that the south of the city needed, you know, some strengthening and coming together and, uh, we need to win some championships to show everybody else that... you know, there's talent over this side of the city. And you know, we can do it... just as well as the others, and so forth, so it became--and I think at all the schools, one thing about it, um... because we had the tradition of the black s--two black schools? All the kids and how our parents were supporting their school, and... all of that. I think we went into our high school the same way. And plus, you have to remember all of us experienced the segregation ["desegregation" or "the segregation?" 45:36] thing at the same time. So we all became, you know, like... just... *very* close, close-knit group. We were a very close-knit group. Very close...

LB: What do you think was different whereas at Elkhardt, there was so much racial tension -- what do you think happened at Wythe that it was really--it sounds very, very different?

TM: Well, I think the immaturity of the--of the--the age group. Cuz... the--the highest grade at Elkhardt was nine. Um, and whereas Wythe, you had, uh... 18-, to 17-year-olds, 16-year-olds who had--they pretty much about a lot [? 46: 15]--plus, um, at Wythe, I don' think the volume or the transformation was as dramatic... as it was at Elkhardt. You know, maybe, and plus, uh, Wythe, um... but I think the neighborhood setting we was at at Elkhardt because it still was a white community. And here we were coming into a white community. And they did not want us

there. Uh... as compared to here where it was pretty much mutual.

LB: That's so interesting that by 1968, this would be... pretty integrated here.

TM: Yes. Yes.

LB: Cuz... I mean, I remember Robin telling me a story about when her family moved to a white neighborhood in 1964--

TM: Right down the street.

LB: ... ok!

TM: I'm Robin's cousin.

LB: I know you are. That's why I said that.

TM: Well, it was very interesting because, uh... uh... they moved not five minutes away from here--actually it's just right... right around the street, I could show you the house, but, uh... This was pretty much a--a predominant white neighborhood. When he--when she moved in. And, uh... the last place that you would've thought that something like that would happen... would be right here, cuz it's not that far out. So, her... her dad and mother, uh, and her--her mother's mother moved next door. Her grandmother lived next door. And, uh, they burned a cross in their yard, and, um, they shot through the window of Robins bedroom and they had, uh... they have, uh, FBI agents stay at the house for while.

LB: Oh, she didn't tell me about the FBI agents.

TM: Yeah, she had--they had agents stay at their house, uh, to try to solve the case. Uh, for a while. But it was, uh, a really scary time at that f--for [indecipherable 48:14]. And that's before we even went to segregation. That's before... that's--that's way before that, uh, that's--

LB: I know, cuz what--what Robin said was... her family moved into this all-white neighborhood. She--she had the cross burning and her house shot up. And then the neighborhood became black.

TM: Yeah, pretty much. And--and that's what--I mean, um... uh, at that point a lot of white families moved out. And, uh, a lot of black families started moving in. Uh, again, you have to understand, it was right after that or during that time, a lot of projects--capital projects was displacing black communities.

LB: Yeah.

TM: Uh, the downtown expressway...

LB: Absolutely, the whole--

TM: Straight through the heart of the black community.

LB: ...Carver community, Jackson Ward.

TM: Right. It could've been moved over but it came straight through... uh... through the black community. And as I talk to people from other states and other cities, it seemed like they had similar types of projects out there.

LB: Very similar.

TM: And that seems like it was considered after to that, to break up those communities. And it's weird because there was a not a lot of crime in the black community then. Um... so it makes you wonder why, um... they felt it was necessary to do that.

LB: Well sometimes I wonder whether it's just that they felt like the black neighborhoods weren't important enough to preserve, whereas white neighborhoods, people would make more of a--

TM: Of a noise (?) [indecipherable 49:39]. They didn't have as--a voice.

LB: They didn't have a voice.

TM: They didn't have a voice.

LB: And so it wasn't even about, like, 'let's destroy this community,' it's like, 'well, this community will fight back and that community won't' [laughs].

TM: Exactly. Exactly! Which is... pretty much how does--things done today.... pretty much. So you're right, um... you're right. Uh, most of the capital projects went through black communities and whenever they want done is easier to displace people in the black community or low-income communities... than, um, any other communities where you had neighborhood associations back then, too. And you know, you had, uh... a lot of representation, political representation, as well as everything else, and we didn't have any of that. So... uh, it was easy to move us sorta--at that point, that's when, like, we moved here cuz Robin was right down the street, that's how we came.

LB: Are you first cousins?

TM: Yes, we're first cousins. He--her father and my mother are sister and brother.... So, uh, yeah, we [laughs]--we're first cousins. And, uh... we kinda... my mother--this is my mother and her sister's first house. You know. And so they branched out and did that. And, uh... it was interesting, cuz I guess the only reason I'm back here cuz I know how hard my mother then worked for this house. And I didn't want it to just go away cuz the housing market's crazy. So I was like, ok, I can't just let it go away, so I just go ahead and move back. And, uh... take care of it at this time, because, you know, I didn't ever think I would be back in Richmond after I got [out of?] school, but... I came back because of work--

LB: So--so where did you move after high school?

TM: Uh, I lived, uh... Well, first I moved back here with my mother then for a while because I was on the road, uh... while I was still just trying to get on my feet, I guess. And then I got a job where I kinda traveled for the state. And so I was gone so much I didn't see a point in getting a place, but then after a while, I--I just moved out and I got a townhouse up Forest Hills. And, um, I lived up there for a while. And, uh... then my mother, she passed, and my aunt got sick, and... you know... things just happened. And you just--just, uh... ok, I'll just... I'll just move back here. And take care of things. But, um... Wythe... it was almost like a family. Uh, I think everybody cried at graduation. Uh... it was... like... I don't know, something like you never really... you know, you just... I--you look back on it, you're like, oh my God, it's just--I mean... It--it was like historic--it was like a historical moment of some type, cuz--

LB: Were you aware of that when you were there? That it was just this big historical moment? Cuz I--I agree, it was.

TM: I don't think we thought about it until we were at--at graduation. And we were at the Mosque. And we were all just there. And at that moment, after gr--I think--it all hit us. You know. Wow. You know. How close we really were. And how much we had actually gone through. And I think at that point, um, because a lot of us from the high school... went to the same college.

LB: Where did you go to college?

TM: I went to Norfolk State University.

LB: Ok.

TM: And a lot of us from Wythe went there.

LB: Just like Valerie.

TM: Yeah.

LB: Yeah.

TM: Yeah. And then we had a couple of--of our student government association members, they went to University of Virginia. And so we had people at different places, you know. Uh... and so... it was--it just... it was just a interesting time.

LB: What stands out in your mind when you think about your time at Wythe? Like, what were those -- the big watershed moments there?

TM: Um... I would have to say, uh... I guess moments with your teachers. You know, um... like... not hav--not having a father pre--present at that time, um, the football coach and I, Frank

Butts, became very close. And we use to have... big--well... I was a thorn in his side to start it off, I guess.

LB: How is that [laughs]?

TM: Well, you know, I was a--I'm not saying mischievous, but I just... [laughs]. I--I liked to engage people, I like to engage things. I--I just keep things going. And I think he thought that I was... disrespecting him or so to speak and so we didn't start off on the right foot. So to speak, but then after we sit down, we talked and everything. We became very, very close. And, uh, sports was a... a vehicle for... most of the black males to... to excel and express themselves. Um... the one thing that I notice about the city at that time and, um... what has changed things was, uh, we had a very robust and active recreational, uh, and parks, uh, department for the city. Most of the--guys who played sports and went away and come back and worked during the summertime for the city. And the city would open up all of the playgrounds and they will be in charge of the playgrounds and you have a lot of activities, they would show movies, they would have special events, you know, popcorn night and... different things. Used to go up there, there was a meeting place for everybody in the community. And so, uh, we in the community always looked up to them as role models and, uh... we had something to look forward to when they came back and, uh, you tried to *achieve* just as much as they did. So it make you wanna excel at high--at school because, in order for you to go to do what they had to do, you have to go to school and get your work and... and do stuff, too, so... Um, it kept--it kept the community grounded. Uh, and it kept everybody, uh, aware of each other and, you know, it was a lotta... uh, *love*, uh, at that time, uh... that was going on and so when they stopped funding the recreation and parks... uh, you started seeing a big deterioration--deterioration in the city... uh, youth. Uh, and the direction--it's almost like they got lost. You know. Uh... and so I think that was a devastating thing to the kids... uh, in the city. In the inner city. At least this inner city.

LB: I remember Philip Brunson -- you must've been in school with him.

TM: Yeah. That's right.

LB: Philip talked about that *a lot*, too, and about how his parents were really involved in the fight to keep the recreation programs going.

TM: Yeah, and that--and it was devastating when they took that away. I--and it--it was almost like, I don't know what they were thinking. But what is gonna happen with the kids once all of this is gone? There's nothing for them to do. Um, because, um, we didn't have the computers at home, uh, especially that time cuz... couldn't afford them. Uh, we didn't have all of the things that, you know, our parents didn't go on summer vacations. And so forth, so the recreation and park was a way to offer all of that for the kids when they were out of school. And so... without all of that, they kinda got lost into the streets and... the bad elements. And so, uh... that's why you got so much awful things going on now. Uh, for me.

LB: So you really felt that change around the mid-seventies, it sounds like.

TM: Yeah. It was, uh... but we still were... a very... closely knit community still. And, uh,

sports was a big, big thing then, in the seventies. I don't think the changeover, uh... as far as the communities came--it was came till the eighties or so.

LB: When you think back to that time, can you remember an example of really good leadership that you experienced, and an example of leadership that wasn't so good -- and it could be anywhere from what happened in your family or school to what was happening on the national scene, I mean, all these questions are very, very open-ended.

TM: Um... [pauses]. Uh, we--Wythe, um... principals, uh... [pauses]... was very active in making sure that the teachers as well as the students understood what they wanted to happen with the school. Um... even if you got reprimanded and you went to--to the principal's office, you know, the first thing the principal'd say, well, what are you doing here in the first place? I mean, we had great guidance counselors cuz they were--be looking to see what we--they can do for you, you know, in terms of going to college and going this place or trying to do something. Um, we had a--a good support network at school. Uh... so I would say for me, far as great leadership was, the way the administration, um... uh, was very engaged in... making sure that, uh, the schools were moving forward. Uh, the teachers were--were great, too, uh.... Some of them very hard, but--I mean, the teachers were great. They were also engaged. So, uh, we had the right mix. We had the teachers who got really involved with the students. Then we had the teachers that were, uh, pretty much, uh... [pauses] hard-nose... just... educators. You know. So, uh, it was a good mix, and--and it--and it kept s... everything flowing. So for me, I think the, uh... we had great principals in the city. So I think the school board and the school administration at that time, uh, understand the dynamics of what the city was. Um... probably showed the better leadership if you look at the whole... general of what's going on. But the other thing was that, uh... an example of bad leadership for me was, uh, the fact that we didn't have any politicians willing to stand up for the city in this fight to keep recreation and parks open. Um... to me that's a major--it was a major flaw. And... it's a major thorn in the side as to why we're having what we have today. In terms of the youth.

LB: Now, when you think back... how were the changes that were going on Richmond at this point discussed in your home? Cuz I imagine at this point, you were old enough so that you wouldn't be kicked out--

TM: Yeah.

LB: ... when the grown-ups came.

TM: Well, you know, uh, for the most part, uh, um... in the black household, it was still emphasized how much you need education. Uh, you gotta understand, most of us came from homes where our parents dropped out of the sixth grade. So, education was very important to them. And they didn't care what was going on at that time, but you was gonna get your education, and get your degree, and get outta there and try to get a college education, so... the focus at that time for us and the discussions always centered around, um... education. And doing what you need to do to... to get a great job and... and maintain a... a... a adequate life. So, um... the nucleus discussion was education. Now, of course, uh, President Kennedy... there's a lot of dramatic things back then. I mean, um... uh... you had Martin Luther King, um.... So, we

had a lot of great leaders, uh, that came and they was taken away... from us, and, uh... that was... and the church was a major, uh... major hub for us. You know, I learned, uh... Sunday School was major for, uh, the black community and for me. I mean... uh... we learned--we had Sunday School teachers that were acting like they were... teachers at a high school or elementary school, so, we went to school not only to learn biblical... information. But we learned everything. Life, moral--everything, I mean, they taught us everything. We had great discussions. Uh, I had great Sunday School teachers. Uh... and so, I think that was critical, uh, in our development to, uh--the church played major roles in the--in the communities, uh... uh, so.... Now, I look--I mean... I know as--as so much today, but we didn't have all of the, uh... crazy examples that are going on today in terms of ministers now. Missteps (?) and stuff like that, uh--

LB: What church did your family belong to?

TM: Uh, I had a lotta, uh--of my family go to First Union over on Moore Street (?) and then, uh, Saint Paul's Baptist, which was, uh... it's a big church now. Uh, but, back then it was a small church. [Laughing] So... small community church. But now it's kinda humongous.

LB: Yes it is [laughs].

TM: Cuz they gotta--that--you know, Lance Watson is a great, great individual and he's a... a great minister. He's a great guy. I... was chairman of the honor committee for them and he's--he's just a... he leads by example and--and--and that's why it's easy to support that church. Uh... but we've had good--great ministers. Uh, Reverend Lehrer (?) before him... was probably the most influential for me because I, uh... that was a time where--during my development stage, he was the minister and, uh, he was almost like a off-shoot of a Martin Luther King. You know. So he was--he was a *great*, great minister. Uh, but we had great ministers at that church, so...

LB: When you think about this whole time, what were some of your personal turning points?

TM: Um... I think getting into sports for me, uh... when I was at Elkhardt started the journey. Uh, started--I got into sports and as I started venturing to more and more sports, it, uh... [pauses]... it developed m--my social skills, too. Uh, and to, uh, you start meeting so many different people. Uh, it--that competitive edge, start expanding outside of sports into other things. Um... and, uh... one thing that I have always said that... the family that has a puppy in it--

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: ... presents the best kids. I think what we don't really understand is, having a pet develops compassion and humanity in individuals. And I think nowadays because you don't have as many families with pets... that the kids don't grow up with that compassion and humanity and that's why it's so... hard and, uh... unforgiving and, uh... you know, don't have the same amount of... I think they have it *in* 'em. I just don't think they know what it is. Because they never had to use it or see it... how a helpless thing needs you to--

LB: Oh, I think that's very true.

TM: ... to--to--to take care of it. So, I--you know, for me, our little pet (?) always [laughs] was--

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: ... uh, number one in our household, so, I think that, um... helps... the person. And pets lets you know whether or not a person is good or bad.

LB: That's true, too.

TM: Yeah.

LB: That's very true.

TM: They let you know whether person--but, um... I... I've sorta had to get off the subject, but--

LB: Go ahead!

TM: ... but the pet thing is... is critical in my development. For me, uh... I recognize that early on. Uh, I just love... dogs.

LB: So you always had a dog.

TM: Pretty much, yes. Uh...

LB: My son who's nine is--we--we've got a cat now, but he wants to also get a puppy, so...

TM: Right. Yeah. It--it's just--it--it's--it's hard, I mean, um... they make great people.

LB: They do! [Laughs.]

TM: It's weird to say, but they do. They make great people. Uh... they make great *caring* people, you know. Um...

LB: I would imagine at this point, this must have been right around where you reconnected with your father as well. When--as you're getting to college -- is that right?

TM: Yeah, well... well, I had pets before then, but, uh, yeah, I... as I was, uh, leaving high school, which, um... I got a scholarship to Norfolk State. And, uh... the way the black community treated, uh... unwed mothers and, you know, how they deal with that... uh, my father was always in life, just -- I didn't know. I mean, I knew I would get something for Christmas every year. And I would get something--something that, you know, he was keeping track of things, but... uh... I di--I didn't know. At that time. And so--

LB: Had you met him or did you just get these... presents that--

TM: I would get these presents, I mean, just--I was young and just mad or, you know, said

something, you know... I didn't really pay attention to it cuz I never saw him--you know, you--

LB: Yeah.

TM: ...when you're a kid and you don't see someone all the time, you just don't know, you know, you just think they're a friend of the family. So, um... we were downtown shopping, my mother and I, before me to go to college. And this man walked up and, uh, he started talking with her. I really didn't pay any attention cuz I... So he... she... he said some--she said something--he said, "Well, have you chose... the school you're going to," and I said, "Well, I've decided to go to Norfolk State." And he said, "Well, you're not just going there for basketball." [Laughs.] And I said, "Well..."

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: "... not exactly, no." And, uh... he said, "Ok" and so forth, so... as he walked away, you know, I was just--we were still shopping and my mother said, "Do you know who that was?" And I said, "Well not really." And she said, "Well that was your father." And I was there going, "What?!" So I try to look real quick to kinda get a glance but he had kinda walked... and I said, "Oh my God...." to myself, and, uh... by the time we got back home... he had called the house and told my grandmother that he would like to take me to school. And when I got to the school--house, I--she said, "Well, your father called and he wanna take you to school." I said, "Are you kidding me? I--I don't know--what do I say to this man for that long? ... You got to be kidding me." She was, like, "And you should do it--" you know, my grandmother... you can't say no to her. So it was a done deal.

LB: [Laughs.]

TM: When she wants something, it's a done deal. So, he came by and, uh... I had two friends who were -- I have one for you. And, uh, when we walked out, someone was sitting in the car, and he said, this is my son, (?). And I was like, oh, wow. So at that point, the--it just kinda... dawned on me... that, oh, wow.... I think I was quiet the whole time. And so we got to school, I thanked him for the ride, and, you know... I thanked him. And--and that was it. Uh... I don't think I, uh... talked to him again till I was... out of school for three years. But my brother did write me a letter. I wasn't prepared to respond though... cuz I was going through too much then, but, um... It was--it was interesting, but, my father and I are very close today.

LB: How did you make that happen after all of that time?

TM: Well, I was on, um, I was working in Northern Virginia and my mother called and she said, you know, your father is in the hospital, and you need to go by and see him. So I was, like, hmm, that's weird for my mother to ca--you know, tell me that. So I said, ok. So, um, I went to the hospital, and, uh... he was in intensive care and of course if--when your'e in intensive care, you have to be on a list to get in. So I told the nurse that, um, I here to--I'm here to see... so, and she said, "Ok, wait a minute, let me look and see." She said, "Whats your name," and I told her. And she said, "Oh, I'm sorry, your name is not on the list." I said, "Ok." and I turned around start walking back. So [laughs], she ran after me, said, "Oh, sir, I'm sorry. What--what's your

relationship to him?" I said, "I'm his son." And she said, "Oh my God, wait a minute, wait a minute." Like that. So I waited, she went in, um... then she came back, she said, "Ok, I'm sorry. Come on." You know, like that. So... I went in and, um... his wife was there. And, uh... you know, I just stayed with them, and I spoke. And he seemed to be doing better. And, uh... the only thing that was in mind at that time was... whoa, how come I wasn't told that you was, you know, until you get to intensive care. I just couldn't get that out of my mind. So I didn't stay that long, I left. And then I went back, uh, one day. But he wasn't--he was out in a room. And, uh, when I got to the room, it was like a room full of people. And I kinda got nervous and I didn't go in. I turned around and I left. So... I just said, I'll wait till you get home. And then when he got home, I went back. And that's when I talked to him. We--we talked, uh, cuz I didn't have any ill feelings toward him, like, at all. And we talked. And, um, and then I started talking to my brother, and uh, I love my brother dearly. Uh... I... life is just weird, I just have to say. Uh... My brother and I grew up never--didn't know each other growing up at all. We just... our inner spirit is the same. And everybody who meets him... that knows me... say the same thing.

LB: Are you around the same age?

TM: Yes, he's about, uh... well, two to three years younger than I am. But everybody who meet him... they...

LB: They connect you.

TM: They--they can't believe it. You know.

LB: Yeah.

TM: [Laughing] and so... it's just weird. It's just weird, though. But I just love him dearly, I mean, I--I--it's... it's like loving yourself almost. You know, it's a... a love both of them dearly. I love... But I--that--that was dramatic for me, at that time. But...

LB: Let me pull you back for just a moment--

TM: Sure.

LB: To some of these turning points. It sounds like you had some personal turning points. But there were also turning points for the community--

TM: Yes.

LB: ...during those years. What would you say those were? You know, just the civil rights years in general.

TM: Yeah, um... I have to go back to the capital projects that moved people out of their communities... and into these other communities. Um... so they had to reestablish themselves. Um... And you had, in some communities, you had, uh... you had white neighbors who--who just didn't move. They said they weren't gonna move, so they stayed, so... you got to get used to,

but the difference was... um... the communities you moved from -- everybody spoke to each other. But when you moved to these other communities, nobody spoke and nobody was on the streets, uh... you know, you didn't have a lot of kids playing up and down the streets, so forth, so, it was a big transformation to get used to that. Um... that whole thing. I mean, we--as you lived here, uh, you got to know the people next door. You know, and across the street, which they been here for a while. And they been here for a while. Uh, and everybody started getting to know each other after they had settled in for a while. But it was like reestablishing things. You know. Um, but it was never... it never was the community that it was. And, um, so that was a big transformation because I think it was never the same for the families that was dispersed.

LB: Especially sounds like families like yours where everyone was so interconnected.

TM: Yes. Yes. So, uh, everybody moved to a different side of the city and... you know, we kept in touch, but, you know... uh, it was completely different.

LB: Um, what do you think the big turning point was for your school?

TM: [Pauses] For Wythe, it was... the fact that we became... I think sports galvanized our school. You know, we--we were--we had a winning tradition. And, uh, everybody got behind us. Uh, the white neighborhood, the black neighborhood, everybody was together. Uh... and, uh, I think for me, I would say sports really unified our school. Uh, a lot. Uh, as well as what we had went through in our ninth--the first year. The fact that a lot of us went to the middle school, and then we came into the high school in the tenth grade. You know, we brought a whole different perspective to the school. And I think that... going to that middle school first... had a big impact on what Wythe was the next year. You know. And we still had a lot of white kids at Wythe then, too.

LB: How do you think your experiences shaped who you are today? All those experiences during those years?

TM: Well, I think it--it allowed me to be able to... to accept the fact that there are different... everything. You know, there's just... people who believe this, people who believe that, people who act this way, people who act that way. Uh... that there's... that I don't--I don't see why anybody can't get a long. To be honest with you. I mean, our--and I think that did that for a lot of--of people during our community, during our time. Um... we just didn't have any hangups about--we had compassion for people and others. And I think that allows us--allowed us to grow in a whole lot of different ways. Um... and we all just became friends--I had a lot of close white friends at Wythe. And, uh, I... is--and so even though I went to a black college after that, uh, but then when I came out and started working in the working world, I still, you know, had a lot of white friends from that. So, I--it just--it was... being able to... to understand that there are gonna be differences. And--but it's gonna be ok. You know.

LB: So you just answered my next question which is, how do you think this affected your relationships with people from different backgrounds?

TM: Ver--much more accepting.

LB: Yeah.

TM: Um... and, um... find them more intriguing actually. Uh... uh... especially more able to converse and have conversation. Um... but I--you know. I... I just never had a problem with anybody (??) [1:20:13] another race, actually.

LB: How do you think... those... eh--sorry. How do you think all of those experiences changed your family? Everything that you went through...

TM: [Pauses.] WELL, I think over time, um... at least the young kids, everybody became so independent. Um... I think that, you know, we... we meant less as a family. Uh... we, uh... I mean, we--we--we had the bond, but we didn't... we didn't act on it as much. Uh...

LB: Once every one moved? Yeah.

TM: Yeah. You know, holidays, this, that, you know. But it was just... the ol--the elder ones kept up with each other more. But the youngsters, I think, because they got into more activities, they just kinda... you know, see each other when they saw each other. In a way.

LB: Are there things you'd like the generation of kids growing up in Richmond today to know?

TM: It's life outside of Richmond. You know, it's life outside of your community. I know you are in--you know, you... you're engrossed with trying to cope with what's going on around you. But if you can maintain some self integrity and s--direction, you will be rewarded *greatly* if you can look outside of that. Because there's more to life than what's--than meets the eye, so to speak.

LB: Are there things that you feel like we as a community need to particularly remember that we're in danger of forgetting?

TM: That we all started from bigger (?) beginnings. And that, uh, there are people, uh, that just need more assistance and hol--hand-holding than others. And that we would never be the nation or country or city or state or locality or jurisdiction that we *can* be, without being accepting of those who are not only economically, uh... disadvantaged. But, that are strapped with other types of social issues... that... maybe need some more assistance. You know, we as a country always came together for one another, but we seem to be more... more self-promoting and more... uh... more unforgiving of something that's not like us. And that we need to recognize that--that it's the differences that brings us the most joy. Uh, and if we could get past whatever our hangups are, that we can see that there are great people in everything.

LB: Tab, is there anything that I haven't asked you... that you'd like to talk about?

TM: [Pauses]

LB: Cuz I know you've been thinking about so much. I know, I'm gonna ask you my bonus question.

TM: [Chuckling] Ok.

LB: If you could come up with a soundtrack for those years, because I know you love music from that time--

TM: Yeah.

LB: What would be on it? And why?

TM: Beauty's only skin deep. Uh... because... we are--we are c--we are so--we are a society now that... looks at the outside beauty and--and we don't look at... the beauty that's all around us and within us. Uh... so, I--that was a song that stuck out with me from the Temptations period, but, uh... there's so many songs that I can think of right now. But, um... there was as--this is not from that far, but it's a guy named Rome (?) and he has a song that says, "Can you hear them?" And what he's talking about is all the people that made differences during different agendas, uh... can you hear what they would be saying today if they had--they could tell you something now? Can you hear them? And to me, that just really stuck with me.

LB: Well, thank you. I'm gonna ask you to just sit quietly for thirty seconds while we record room tone (?).

TM: [Whispering] Ok.

[Pause.]

LB: You're good. Thank you so much.

TM: You're welcome.

LB: I really, really--