

Interviewee: Virginia Joyce Freeman Howard
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Interviewer: April Wood, Historic Charleston Foundation
Videographer: Erika Hoffman, Historic Charleston Foundation
Transcriber: Home Row, Inc. [f/k/a Paul Garton, Inc.]
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BEGIN INTERVIEW

April Wood: My name is April Wood, and we are interviewing Miss Joyce Howard at New Israel Reformed Episcopal Church. Today is October 2nd at 2:15 p.m. And for the record or for the video, would you please state your full name?

Joyce Howard: Yeah, my name is Virginia Joyce Freeman Howard.

AW: And when and where were you born?

JH: I was born in Charleston, Roper Hospital, July 7th, 1943.

AW: What were your parents' names?

JH: My dad is James Freeman. My mom is Helen Gallashaw Freeman.

AW: And how long have you lived – or how long did you live on Romney Street or in this neighborhood?

JH: I lived in this neighborhood at Kyle Place since I was born really until 2011, when I moved west of the Ashley. We sold our house in the city and moved west of the Ashley. But with my comings and goings for what, over 60 years, I lived there.

AW: What was the address of that? Kyle Place?

JH: One Kyle Place. I think it's still Kyle Place there. Yeah, right across the street, right down the way.

AW: Was that the only house that you lived in when you lived--?

JH: Yes, that's the only one I remember, and then in 1960 we moved on the corner at Simons Street, 119 Simons, and that's the only places we moved.

AW: And you were at 119 Simons when you moved to West Ashley?

JH: Yes.

AW: Can you give me some background about your family, like when your family settled in the North Central Neighborhood?

JH: I believe – I know it was before my older sister was born, and she was born in '32. So, I think they moved up here after they got married in '32. They moved in this area right on the corner of Simons. They rented a house there. And then I think that house was sold, and they moved to – rented a house at One Kyle Place, and they bought that, and I was born there. I have a middle sister that was born in '34. I believe she was born right there on Simons Street. They called it 32 Simons then, but now it's like 115, something like that.

AW: Were they on Johns Island before?

JH: My father was. In fact when he came over, I don't know how – he was a young boy when he came over. And I think at that time, I don't even believe maybe the bridge wasn't built. It was – because they came over by the boat like from Johns Island over to the city. My grandmother brought them. She had six kids, and she brought them over. My daddy was the youngest. And I don't know where they lived then. But since I can remember, we were on Kyle Place and Simons Street. The whole family was.

AW: So, you didn't go visit your grandparents or relatives on Johns Island?

JH: We did. Yeah, my grandmother lived with us until she got sick at Kyle Place. Then my aunt took her to the north area right off of Meeting Street to stay with her. But we still went to visit his parents, his family on Johns Island. And my mother is from Jedburg. We visited them often also.

AW: How did you get there? Did you drive or –

JH: Yes. My father had cars periodically, but he also worked for the Long Construction Company, L.D. Long and J.C. Long. And he frequently had cars, use of the cars, and we'd always – he would always – he worked for the construction company, and they always bought him cars also. So, he would drive us when he was at home, yeah.

AW: How did you get to Johns Island when you were a kid to see – did you ride a boat?

JH: I think we went – daddy drove, yeah, when he was home. Because when I was about six years old, he got ill, and he couldn't do construction work anymore. So, he still worked with the Longs, so he moved to Atlanta, Georgia. And we stayed here, and he would come home, and then that was when we would visit other relatives. Cross that little bridge over there, a little –

AW: Which bridge was that?

JH: We would go Maybank Highway. You know I really can't remember the name of it, but I know we went – we always went Maybank Highway. We didn't have any of these I-26 places and stuff like that. But we went Maybank Highway, and that got us to Johns Island. It was a little rickety bridge, but I think it's much bigger now. But I don't remember what it was called.

AW: And how many siblings do you have – did you have?

JH: I have two sisters. I had two sisters.

AW: And are you the youngest?

JH: I'm the youngest.

AW: In the house that you grew up in on Kyle Place, did it have a bedroom for each one of your sisters?

JH: No. No, no. Because my grandmother lived downstairs, so we had the upstairs floor and a living room downstairs. So, but we had – my bigger sisters, the two older sisters had a room. And I slept in my mom and dad's room in a little iron bed. And then after my oldest sister went to college, then I had the room with my middle sister. And then when they – then we moved. After that Dad bought the house on the corner. So, when we moved, we all had our own bedrooms.

AW: Did you all have bathrooms, too?

JH: Yes. When we lived at Kyle Place, we had the upper floor, and then we would come down the back steps, and our bathroom was a regular bathroom, but it was under the steps. And I can remember whenever I had to go, my mom would have the flashlight and bring me downstairs. You had to go to the bathroom. And you come downstairs, and she would stand there, and I'd be chatting away. But you used – they'd call them slop buckets. You used those at the house before we had bathrooms. Because I remember my sister was so glad when she came home from school, and we had our bathroom set in the house. I don't remember the year that was, but she went to South Carolina State in the '50s, 1950. So, it must've been around then that we got our indoor plumbing.

AW: So, previously you went to the bathroom, and you had a slop bucket, and then somebody carried it outside to get rid of it –

JH: Yes, yes, yeah.

AW: – in a privy or something, or what?

JH: Yeah, and the – we had a – I don't remember. I remember some people down the street. You could see their privy on the outside. But I believe there was always a commode-type thing. It wasn't like the ones in the country with the wooden things, and they had the wooden seat that you would go on. And you had to be very careful because you had to beat in there to see if any animals were in there before you went in, snakes or rabbits or raccoons or something. Because I used to hate to spend time in the country because of that. But I don't think I'd trade those days for anything.

AW: So, you remember when you got plumbing?

JH: Yes.

AW: And then you guys got bathrooms –

JH: Yes.

AW: – like regular bathrooms?

JH: Bathrooms inside, yeah, indoors.

AW: That must've been really nice.

JH: Oh, yes, goodness. And then we would – my mother would always wash clothing, clothes, outside with a – I can remember these. You had the big boiler, the pots where you would boil clothing, clothes, to get them clean, and then she would wash outdoors. And then all of a sudden after a while when we got the bathroom, we got a washing machine, and that was great, yeah.

AW: I imagine.

JH: Before that we had the boards, those scrub boards you'd use. But a lot of people took in washing as a job. So, it was drying your clothes outside in the sunlight, and there was a special way you had to hang them for my mom. You just couldn't do it haphazardly. It had to be the sheets here and the something other then. It had to be in some kind of order. Yeah, but –

AW: Did your mom have a job, or was she –

JH: My dad didn't want her to work for a time, but she did do housework for a while. And then she – when I got older, she worked at the cafeteria at Charleston High School. And then she worked for a family up here on Darlington Avenue, but he didn't want her – he really wanted her to be at home when we got there. So, she didn't do a lot of it, but it was housework when she did.

AW: Well, I imagine she was really busy if she had to do all that laundry by hand.

JH: Oh, yes, yes, yes. But she always had everything for us. In the morning when we got up for school, Your shoes were there polished on a chair. She was real organized..

AW: She sounds like a hard worker.

JH: Now – yeah, it was. But I think people back then considered it a – I don't know. Being a good housekeeper was top priority, top on your list. Because mostly they were stay-at-home parents, had big families.

AW: Was your family small compared to a lot of your friends' families?

JH: Yes, yes, yes. My – the people that lived down the street, there were about nine or ten of them, and people that lived in the area, five, six, seven, eight. So, ours was fairly small, because

my mom lived at Number One Kyle Place. My aunt lived at number three. She had one son, my mom's sister. And we had three, so it was kind of – that was small for that time.

AW: Did you have a lot of other relatives in the neighborhood when you were a kid that you could go, female cousins and stuff?

JH: Pretty much, yes, yes. They had – we had cousins in the neighborhood. We had – my aunt lived next door. We had a cousin that lived above her. In fact in the beginning, they all kind of lived in this – When they moved to Charleston, they all kind of lived in the same neighborhood. And I had another aunt on Congress Street. But initially we all stayed in the same neighborhood.

AW: That must've been nice.

JH: Yeah. It was, yeah.

AW: These are questions more about the neighborhood. When you were growing up, what was this neighborhood called?

JH: You know, I don't really know.

AW: Where did you say –

JH: I don't really think we had a name for it, but it started getting that way as progress came, and they started. We lived – in fact, we were the – only Black families were like – from King Street, across Rutledge, and to the end of Rutledge, there were Black families. But that was the only area where we had Black families. The rest of the families, like Darlington Avenue and all of those, they're White families. And I think it was only – a lot of the kids – a lot of the Black families lived down like Sumter Street, Fishburne Street, Nunan, and that area. But there were – a lot of people didn't hear about this area. We had the park there, but we were kind of – that's why I started at New Israel because it was walking distance from my house. So, when we wanted to go to Sunday School and church, we could just walk up here, and we didn't have to worry about catching a bus or how to get to any other place. And so life was just essentially right here in this area. And –

AW: So, the people around you were White and Black, or were –

JH: Yeah, the people around me mostly were White families. We didn't communicate that much. There were some that we'd wave and say hello. But in the '60s when integration started, the White families moved out. And there were still a few of them left, older families, but as they got ill and older, the families made them move with them all. But for the most part, it was just – until the '60s with integration, it was just that little row of Black families, those two courts, Kyle Place and Middleton Place. And Rutledge Avenue, we were there. But I don't remember what we would call it. But that area back there at the end of Simons Street, that was just Water, Little Water, and we would go and play back there. And I think W – one of those radio stations was back there, WTMA, W-something. But we would walk a little trestle across the water and go to

that other side. And then it started being built up back there, and then we couldn't hang out there anymore. Because my grandmother used to plant crops down there in Middleton Place, because I remember as a little girl walking with her. And I don't know who owned the property, but she would plant peanuts and benne seeds, sesame seeds. And I would always – she would keep me when my mom worked. And we would go back there, and nobody bothered you, and I don't know whose property it was, but we just – she just planted back there. And I remember that real well, made peanut candy when we got home. Good life, good life. But as it – I know people will probably call it a good life now, but I know we were all poor and everything, but you didn't really know it, because I guess everybody was.

AW: Was that area, if you go down Simons, and it's still kind of got that tower there?

JH: Yes, that's where it was. Yeah, that was a radio station back there. And a lot of the kids learned to swim back there. The boys did. Because we didn't have access to any beaches.

AW: Did you feel like Rutledge, it was more African American on this side, the east side, and White families on the –

JH: Of Rutledge?

AW: Yeah. Was that a divider or not?

JH: Yeah, I think it was all White families on the Rutledge Street area, that initial main drag of Rutledge. And then the Black families were more, like I told you, on that side of Simons Street all the way down to the end of Simons and that Romney Street area. That's where the Black families lived, but other than that they were White families.

AW: So, the area to the north of the church was mostly White –

JH: Yes, yes.

AW: – like South Enston Street and --?

JH: Yes, all of that was. Enston Avenue, all of that was White section. We had a – when we first – before we built this church, I think, in '77, we had a little wooden white church. That's where I got married, yeah. But there weren't many Black families in this area.

AW: When you were a kid or when you were young, how did you define Downtown Charleston? Did you feel like you lived in Downtown Charleston up here?

JH: No. When we talked about going downtown, that's when my mom would take us shopping. I don't know. People would say uptown. This area was uptown. But we would have – I think if there were any stores that were with Blacks, they stopped at about Morris Street, Morris Street to this way uptown. But further downtown was stores like Condon's, family stores, Kerrison's. We didn't go down that way when I was little. We would shop more at stores up this way like Altman's Furniture Store. They had – that wasn't Kress. That was – there was a store

right there, Edwards 5 & 10. People shopped that way. We had some other stores. We did shop at grocery stores up this way, like Rodenberg and C&S.

AW: Where were those? Was everything on King Street mostly?

JH: Yes. You know right where that temple is right out there now on King and Romney? That was a store. That was – Addlestone had that store. And then we had some other store – they had another one down near, I think, King and maybe Sumter area down in that way, because mama – they would take us down there to shop sometimes. But mostly we were up this way with Mr. Addlestone at that store right there. And then we had little neighborhood stores. Like right on the corner of Maple and Rutledge, the Grangers had a store. That was not as big as Addlestone. And when you wanted little stuff, you went there. My mom used to – there was a – right where our school is right on this corner, that used to be a grocery store also. Then it changed into a store that sold material and thread and that sewing kind of thing. But they had – the butchers and stuff were up here, and when you wanted certain cuts of meat and stuff, right on the corner here. Everything you could walk to.

AW: So, right – you're talking about the corner of Sim- – I'm doing this also for the camera. But at the corner of Simons and King, there was a grocery store there –

JH: Uh-huh.

AW: – and there were butcher shops to the north of that?

JH: Yes. Yep, yep. And I forgot the name of it, but I know it was Mr. Addlestone and his family that had the bigger store on that corner of Romney and King. And I can't remember. I know that that housing area right there, they call it something Commons now, that was – there were White families there. But then there were Black families that lived in the bottom of Romney Street. They were larger families. We all attended this church. I think we were here before Gethsemane. And lots of families came to this church, meeting place, you know.

AW: Were you able to – were both White and Black people shopping at those stores on King Street, or really the White people went down south of Morris and then –

JH: Some did. Those that lived up this way, they shopped there and at that corner store. And I remember Rutledge Avenue, the guys would be out there rolling papers, the little newspaper guys. And we would walk down there during the summer and go to Granger's. Like she knew all the families. That was – and then the Longs would shop there also. So, it was – when you come to think of it, it was always integrated in a way. Maybe not like it is now, but it always was. Certain families, we used to shop – White and Black families shopped there and –

AW: Were the businesses owned by Black families or White families or a mix?

JH: Most of the businesses were owned by White families. You had a few things like barber shops. You had nightclubs. There was one nightclub. I think it was down on King near Spring, that area. Like I told you, everything was before you got to Morris Street. After Morris Street,

no. But they always had nightclubs like in the north area, and here you had a few – I know we had a few restaurants. We had – I know we had the barber shops. But things like when you want to buy bicycles and stuff, you went down to Robinson's. That was down on King Street, too. You see where that bicycle is up there? Now it's a restaurant, but it used to be a store that sold bicycles.

AW: Basil Restaurant?

JH: That's the name of it, yeah. Okay.

AW: What landmarks were in this neighborhood when you were growing up and that are still here now that were important to you or –

JH: I really can't think of any. I can't remember any landmarks that were here, not really. All I remember is down on the – the statues and stuff down on Marion Square down there. We would walk down there sometimes. Those I remember. And then we would walk to the – but we had a library. Dart Hall Library was located then on Kracke Street downtown, big old building, and I think it was a school at one time, too. But we would go there, do research for school before they moved up here and bought this building up here. That I remember. Then I remember the museum because we would go there on field trips. And then I remember they got a planetarium in there. We'd get to go down there to see that. The only thing left of that now, though, is the columns down there on Calhoun Street.

AW: Did you guys ride buses to get there on field trips when you were a kid?

JH: We didn't have – I remember school buses. We went on field trips mostly like walking field trips. Now we could catch the city bus, but most of us walked to school. And when we wanted to do trips, like I remember one year we had a field trip. That was the last year that the train was running from down on – well, there's a store down there now. It's on Meeting and – . There's a service station [00:24:07 unintelligible], and down by the post office there was a train station right there, and it was going to be closed. So, a teacher took us on a trip. That was our field trip from here to Summerville and back. And I think the train stopped being in the inner city after that.

AW: That is so – I didn't know that. That is so fascinating!

JH: Yeah, yeah, it ran down. You see the –

AW: So, where the trolley barn is where –

JH: Yes, yes. That's where the barn is, because the bus barn was right here on – for the city buses was right here on King near – hmm – not far from – is that Meeting or King? No, that's Meeting. The barn was on Meeting Street, the bus barn. And all the buses sat there, but we never had school buses in the inner city. We always either rode – your parents didn't take you, but most of us walked. Because we went to – I started out – my sisters went to Simonton. But then

when I was coming up, they built A. B. Rhett. We were the first group in there. That's what I was –

AW: Where was that?

JH: That – it's still there. It's a part of Burke now. It's on Sumter, between Sumter and Fishburne right where Burke is, but Burke uses it. But it was just – A. B. Rhett was the elementary school. Then in eighth grade, then we – after we graduated from there in seventh grade, we went to – we didn't have middle school, so we went to Burke High School in eighth grade right across the street. But we were that first group over there, so that should've been – that was probably built in '49, '49 or '50, that A. B. Rhett.

AW: Was that school integrated, or was it –

JH: No, no. Integration, our high school wasn't, and neither were our elementary schools. But then they had Avery, which was more of a private school. And then we had ICS, which was Immaculate Conception, which was the Catholic school. I don't know if those – I don't think those were integrated either, the Catholic schools. But I don't think there was – I remember in the – in 1960, I believe, before I graduated from high school, we decided – that was the start of demonstrations, and we decided not to go to school for one whole day. And it was after that then I went away to – in '61, I went away to college. And I think that was when all of the hospital sit-ins and all of those things were happening. I was in Alabama. And we were doing the integrating thing in Alabama, too, the sit-ins and that kind of thing. So, it was kind of spreading, you know what I mean, from South Carolina. From what I hear though, Charleston didn't have – we didn't have much of a problem in going from segregation to integration that some other places had. You know the burnings and the fights and all of that, it was a little smoother, yeah.

AW: Did it just happen?

JH: It just happened. I think – now, I can't say they didn't have their sit-ins and stuff, they did, because I wasn't here then. But a cousin of mine was in the sit-ins when those guys were killed at South Carolina State. I wasn't here then. But I think essentially Charleston kind of went into it – they accepted it and went into it smoothly. But we still had – I think we still had areas where if you lived – zoning-wise, you still had the Black schools in the city because there weren't that – the Whites had moved out. And you had – some of the other areas were integrated, maybe like Mount Pleasant, but they still had the – it was – they called it integration, but you still had your Black schools and your White schools. Laing and those schools over there were Black, and they were integrated later. I would say maybe total integration started maybe in the – more like the '70s, way up in the '70s or '80s, when it wasn't a big thing anymore. You'd go where you wanted.

AW: Did you feel like – when you went away to college and then you came back, did Charleston seem like a different [place] because it became more integrated while you were gone?

JH: I think Alabama was less – Alabama's really rural and out of the – they still had those houses, and we were trying to get people to vote and all of that. So, when I came back home, it

seemed more upbeat than some of the places where – than Alabama was. Because we had people who – like the Black families, the Brooks families. They had restaurant, hotels down in Morris Street area. And we had things like the Shriners and the Masons. And then the NAACP was big then. In fact, my girlfriend's family, they're Gants. You know Harvey Gant that integrated Clemson? They're – they had a family of five, and all those kids went to college. But I don't think we had a problem with being kicked out of any places. In fact, in some of the Black nightclubs, you had some White young couples coming in, and it just started from there. Maybe a few came in, and after that they were integrated. We could go to certain clubs, but I don't think – you didn't feel comfortable doing it until maybe the '80s, early '90s maybe. And we still lived in the same area. After the people started moving out, you had some Black families move in with a mixture of White and Black families. And I think we just – we went into it rather smoothly, I felt anyway, in comparison to some of the other places, because there were, ugh, fires and all that kind of – burnings and all of that kind of stuff. We didn't have that. But I know we had – at the college we – they said "instigators," but there were people from the North that would come in to tell us how to do sit-ins and that kind of thing. And I remember some of the kids graduated and had to go back to court because they were – we were jailed for part of the time. And it wasn't bad, though. I think we – as young people, I think you found it exciting more than anything. But here, Charleston, I think, has always been a kind of place where people weren't so explosive. We were always kind of low key.

AW: And we still kind of are.

JH: Yeah, yeah, we are. Yeah.

AW: Where did your family – well, you said you went shopping down on King Street. It was like –

JH: Uh-huh. But, I mean, we would go shopping at some of the bigger stores like Kerrison's, Condon's. I remember getting my shoes from there. I think a lot of – we could – a lot of people who were like – the Black people who were teachers or something like that, they were able to shop in some of the bigger stores, but they would have to go either after hours or – Like Condon's, I always remember going there in the '50s, getting shoes from there. And they had places like Jack Krawcheck, those nicer stores, and you would shop in those, if you had the money. I think they were owned by a lot of Jewish families, like Abraham Menswear, the stores where we got our furnishings and stuff, Altman, Kerrison's, the shoe stores, Ellison. And maybe if you had the money, you would always go there, but they would know you when you came in, especially if you shopped there a lot.

AW: We were going to do an interview with Morton Ellison.

JH: Oh, you were?

AW: Yeah.

JH: Oh, yes.

AW: He declined because his memory's starting to [00:33:19 unintelligible].

JH: Oh, yeah, because I remember his mom had this little shoe store, and I think it was called Gloria's Shoe Store. And then across the street, that was before they had Bob Ellis. And I think Jack Krawcheck had a shoe store in the area down there. But mostly we went to Condon's before they started with all of these stores that were just for kids, children's stores. But I wish he would have. I saw Miss Sottile the other day. I took a friend to the doctor, and she came in with a walker with a lady with her. And the lady mispronounced the name, and I said, oh. She said, no, Sottile. And she said, well, I'm 94. And she looked wonderful. And I remember because they own the theaters in town, like the Gloria, the Riviera, and we could go to those theaters, but we had to sit upstairs. And we had a side door we would go through and go upstairs. And then we had theaters called the Palace, and there was one that was strictly Black, the Lincoln Theater. And the Palace Theater was on – right now it's called the American Theater now right there on King. Used to be the Palace. We would go on Saturdays. They had – like ten cents or something like that, we could go see cowboys and shoot-em-ups and – seven cents or ten cents, something. But I remember we went there. And the Lincoln Theater, our parents didn't allow us in there too much because that was kind of rambunctious. But I didn't know. She said not many people are living now that remember the Sottiles because I think the theater now is a part of College of Charleston. Sottile, I think.

AW: It is.

JH: Yeah, it is.

AW: How about New Israel, was this a big church when you were a kid?

JH: Oh, no. In fact, people in the Reformed Episcopal denomination, we don't have very many big churches. This one and maybe one in Monck's Corner. But the rest of our churches are very small. The one that – there's one down on Bull Street. That's where Anthony, Myra Thompson's husband, Myra that was killed at Emanuel, that's where her husband is the vicar down there. But we've always had very small churches. And this one, I think when Bishop Rembert was here, we built this one. But before that they were really small churches, still are most of them.

AW: This church has been here for?

JH: Oh, it's been here since 18- – when they give the history of it, maybe 18- – they used to have church in one of the – [00:36:25 Pa Harmons?] house. And then they built this church, and then it was burned in – it burned down in – can't remember the year. But then after that we built a small, little wooden thing, sort of looking like the one, if you see the church down there where Anthony is on Bull Street, it's called Trinity. Sort of looked like that.

AW: So, really little?

JH: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

AW: Why did the other one burn, just by accident?

JH: I think so. I do. I believe. I don't know. They said it burned down, I think, by accident. Hopefully by accident.

AW: Yeah, well, there's been so many fires –

JH: Yeah.

AW: – these last couple years, too.

JH: Yeah. Oh, yes. You see that – I know you can edit this out, but that biggest shooting thing in Las Vegas, oh, that was horrible.

AW: I know.

JH: Yes.

AW: I can't believe.

JH: Mmm.

AW: It was like one bad thing [00:37:17 unintelligible].

JH: Yeah, one bad thing after the other. I think the people who are really in a church kind of thing, they say, must be the end of the world.

AW: Yeah.

JH: There'll be wars and rumors of wars. Yeah. But fear not, the end is not near.

AW: Yeah.

JH: Mmm.

AW: Where did you go to vote when you were younger?

JH: I remember when we first started when I got out of school, we went to – right then it was on Hutson Street. It was the old Citadel Building. And we would go there to register downstairs, because I remember. You had to read the first paragraph of part of the – I guess one – amendments or something. We had to read that, a part of the Constitution. And if you couldn't read that, then you didn't get to vote. I mean, you didn't get registered. And that was down there at the old Citadel Building, it was called. We would register there, and I think we would vote there. And then it started voting at the schools, like Rhett School. They had polling places. I think that was in the '60s where we had to do that reading, and a lot of people just could not read. So, they wouldn't even go to try to register. But we would register there, and then we

would vote down there also, and then they had other polling places. But I don't know about the people that lived in other areas, like Johns Island, James Island. Maybe they had places over there. But I know they would – a lot of them would – Jenkins and stuff would come and bring them into certain areas to vote. But I think they were among the last to do it. But inner-city people, I think we got the opportunity ahead of others.

AW: Last week I just learned about the C.O. Credit Union on Spring Street, the Esau Jenkins [00:39:31 unintelligible].

JH: Yes, yes, yeah, he did. I think his bus is at the African American Museum.

AW: Oh, in D.C.?

JH: Yes, yes, yes.

AW: Okay.

JH: I know there's some things there for him, but I think part of the bus is there. Because they said they would teach them as they were bringing them from Johns Island, and they would be going over the Constitution and things and teaching them about voting. And so when they got to the inner city – because a lot of people that they didn't have high schools in certain areas, so they would come into Burke. And so on the way to drive in – or some of them live with relatives here. In fact, a classmate of mine was from Wadmalaw, and he would come in and live with his aunt during the summer and maybe go – during the school year and maybe go home during the summer. But then they started building schools like Baptist Hill and some other high schools. But prior to that the high school, I think it went to eleventh grade in fact. My girlfriend's mother went to eleventh grade because that was the final grade. But after – I think when we went over there, twelfth grade was it in the '60s.

AW: So, it sounds like those people, I mean, they must've been really dedicated to come all the way from Johns Island [00:40:57 unintelligible].

JH: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I think so. I mean, not all people could do it. Some families a little bit more able to spend more money on their kids and would send them in. Not all families could. But I think when we were coming up, education meant a whole lot more than it does now.

AW: Did all of your sisters go to college, too?

JH: Yes. Uh-huh. My two sisters went to South Carolina State, and I went to Talladega in Alabama.

AW: Was that a big deal to go out of state?

JH: You know maybe it was because they would come to the – the people from the colleges would come to the different high schools, and they'd offer scholarships to the top ten percent of the senior class. And several, maybe about 14 of us, went from here to Talladega. Some went – a

few went to Hampton, A&T in North Carolina. So, I think those years it was the start of kind of branching out for us in the '60s.

AW: How do you feel like things have changed since the shooting at AME [Emanuel A.M.E. Church], more recent history?

JH: Yes. You mean things have changed like in our community maybe?

AW: Yeah.

JH: Well, now you know our community is mostly – it's a mixed community now. So, I think all people – I think we have – you have people who despise what happened, and I don't know that it brought us any closer together, but it made people in other places see that there's another way to handle things. Like when I grew up, we would – Dr. King would visit the different schools and always preached nonviolence. And I think the people here kind of took that to heart. So, when that happened at Emanuel, I remember I was at home, and I was looking at television, and they said that there was a shooting downtown by the church. And I said, my God, somebody's shooting somebody right by the church. I had no idea it was in the church. Because Emanuel was one of the places where when we were younger, we would have – that was one of the bigger churches. We would use that church for things like our Girl Scouts presentations or graduation exercises and that kind of thing. So, when that happened there, first of all, it was unbelievable, and then after we found out that nine people had died, and I knew a lot of them. And I don't think it – it changed people's perspective a little bit, but then after that I think I saw more people moving here from other places. That's when I saw more people coming in following that. That and after the College of Charleston, they would – a lot of the people would come to visit their children, and then they'd stay here. And after that happened and our – the way we handled it, I think it made people feel like this was a place that someone would want to live and rear families. I think it showed people that maybe places aren't so bad. Because when we were younger, people always thought that the South was, ugh, no opportunities, no this, no that. But I think in the South more of us own homes, than Northerners did. I think we were more up-and-coming than some of them were. And I think people are seeing more Southern hospitality than they have in the past. And there are just so many more places to go now. You see like I'm inundated with restaurants and hotels and, oh, where before you could go and see some greenery and sit on a park. Now it's like everything is stone and mortar. But I guess that's the price of progress, huh.

AW: Yes, yeah.

JH: Yeah.

AW: I don't know if we need to be the Condé Nast number one city again.

JH: Yeah, I don't think so. I don't think we'll be the calmest city anymore. Because I can tell by – I don't like to drive or stuff anymore. People drive like [makes a sound effect]. I've never seen this much traffic in my life. Because my nephew said when he was here when my sister passed away, we were driving somewhere, and this older guy was on a bicycle and kind of cut

across in front of him, and he said, "golly." Then he said, "come to think of it," he said, "there are people who still don't have means of transportation." He said, "that's an old guy riding a bicycle." It's not like a young – like a teenager or anything. They're getting around on bicycles, older people. And they tell us like, oh, "you need to leave during a storm," or "you need to get out of here." How are some of those people that live some places with two and three children, no cars, how are they going to get out anyplace? They have to sit. Well, they have places for them that they can go to, but we need to build some places that are above ground where people when storms come, we can house people. But I guess that's money, too. But I've seen a lot of – I just feel – I think I feel a lot easier west of the Ashley because inner city is just too busy for me.

AW: Well, yeah, that traffic's –

JH: Yes.

AW: Yeah, yeah.

JH: Yeah.

AW: When you were younger – this is a good segue – what kind of tourist industries were here in Charleston you remember?

JH: I don't remember because when they built that – the Visitor Center down there, that was when we could see more tourists coming in. But all of us, we didn't come this side of, like I told you, downtown too much inner city. We'd shop there but, I mean, the bulk of our lives were below Morris Street. And when you would see people come in the tourist industry, like when our relatives came in, there were no hotels and stuff for them until the Brooks Brothers built their hotels. But they would come stay with relatives for our part of it. But then we had hotels downtown like the Francis Marion. There was one – my cousin worked there. There was one right there – I don't know what it's called now – right there on the Battery, smaller one. And most of the people in there, you saw the places that these bed and breakfasts on Savannah Highway. But that was it for us. And then when we had people come in, like entertainers, they would come to County Hall. Now it's not a – now it's a residential thing with apartments, but before it was a place where we would have – James Brown would come in and some of the other singers and stuff, and that was where we would be there. And then they would live at places like the Black motels down on Morris Street or over near the – they had some Black businesses near – it was a place called Riverside Beach. And it was over near off of Mathis Ferry Road down that end. And the singers would come, because I remember mom said Cab Calloway and some of the others would come. We called it a beach, but really you couldn't go in the water because there was just too much stuff there, but it had a pier, and they would have people come in, singers and that kind of stuff. And then we would have boat rides. Or when we really wanted to go to the beach, we would go to, oh, Atlantic Beach, which was right past Myrtle Beach. Myrtle Beach was the White beach, and then we would go to this little Black beach called Atlantic Beach.

AW: So, you had to drive all the way up there to go to a Black beach?

JH: Uh-huh. Yes. Or when our church would give bus rides, and we'd leave like 6:00 in the morning on the school buses, and we would drive to Beaufort to that beach because we couldn't go to Folly Beach. And –

AW: You couldn't go to Sullivan's Island?

JH: No.

AW: Folly?

JH: No.

AW: Kiawah --?

JH: No. No, no. We had a beach down in Beaufort and that one in Atlantic Beach. So, it would be like an all-day thing. We would get there. We would leave like 6:00 in the morning, get there maybe about 8:00 at the beach, and then we would leave about 5:00 and come back, back to the church, and everybody would go home and have baskets, picnic baskets. But then the kids would laugh at us when we went to school, because we had – in Alabama because we had children there from – students there from Texas, Detroit, and those areas. They say, "you mean you all had to get up to go to the beach, and you had beaches right there"? But that – we just took it as a matter of course. I didn't know anything about – I mean, I heard the names. Then we had Mosquito Beach, which was down Folly Road. We would go there. But that was not water – not water either. It was just clubs and stuff and houses. You would go there, and they'd have singers, and we would sit out there 'til 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning when we were younger. But those were our beaches, and we started – that's why most of us can't swim because we had nothing. Well, we had the pool now. We had Harmon Pool, which was over there by [Herbert] Hasel Pool, which was over there by Harmon Field right by Burke School, and a lot of kids went there. But your parents didn't always allow you because some of all kind of kids were there, and it might have been dangerous, so we didn't get to go there very much. When I was a Girl Scout, we would go there, but the other kids couldn't go. They would just have us there. And we had – the fair would come there. When the carnival came, it would be on that lot at Harmon Field over there by Burke. I don't think it's so open now. The Projects are over there now, but that's where we would go to the fair. They would have – the big carnival would be somewhere still up in the north area, and then when it was time for us to go, then they would bring some of the rides down here to Harmon Field, and we would go then. But all in all, it was a good life that I remember.

AW: Did you go roller skating in this roller skating –

JH: No. We would stand out – we would stand there and listen.

AW: Uh-huh. Because you weren't allowed to go?

JH: No, no, because it was over that building, and you could hear them going around and around. And when we were walking by, we would stand and listen. But I think I learned to roller skate maybe when my – after my daughter was born. And we would go to – we never went to

that one. I would go to the one over in Mount Pleasant, Redwing or something over there. And we learned to roller skate maybe up north, but we weren't allowed at that one. But it was right across – right in our neighborhood, though, yeah.

AW: And did you have anything you want to talk about, about like Hurricane Gracie or anything?

JH: Now Hurricane Gracie was that one – I didn't know it was as bad as it was because we didn't have televisions. We had the radio. And I remember it washed out that whole area down where I lived at the Court. Because at one time the taxis or nothing would drive in the Court because it was so small. They couldn't find a way to turn around and come out there. And so they would put us off at the corner. And when it washed all out there, you could see nothing but the cobblestones down there. So, my dad and some of the other people that lived at that area, I don't know who they went to, but not too long after that we got our place paved. And we had to give up a piece of our property from the corner in order for them to pave it, because it was so narrow. And then finally we got able to have cars come in there and taxis. That was another business Blacks had on their own. Henry Smith had the taxicab companies, Safety and some of the others. So, a lot of people here use cabs. And we didn't have buses come that way. The buses would be Rutledge Avenue, but that was what I would ride coming from school.

AW: So, we are at an hour.

JH: Oh, we are. Okay.

AW: But are there other things you really want to record for posterity?

JH: When you talk to Joe [Jefferson], he'll probably give you a lot. But I remember we didn't get very many vacations. Our vacations are – right here at the school, we would have Vacation Bible School during the summer. And then our Sundays were, we'd all dress and have our baths and come walk down this way. And that's where Joe would talk about it. He say he'd be standing in the gate as we walked by and see all the girls passing by. But we had an ice cream parlor right here on the corner, and we would all come there. We couldn't sit in there, but they would serve us ice cream, and we could leave with it. And I remember this young lady that she had a boyfriend who was from New York. And they went to get ice cream, and we were in there also, and he wanted to know why he couldn't sit down. It was a hoofrafra. I don't know. Like I say, it wasn't – we never had anything that was so big and explosive. She would just tell him, "come on, let's go. You can't sit here." And he finally left. But we never – this place was never a place that was so – took everything so [makes a sound effect] and explosive with anything, and I think we still are that way. I think it's good in a way. But you also had to have your people who were explosive, I guess, to get anything to happen.

AW: Did you grow up with Mr. Jefferson? He's older than you.

JH: Yes, a bit. He's – I think he moved here. His mom lived someplace, and he moved here to live with his aunt right next door to Miss [Gladys] Harvey's house. That was where he lived. And then further down were – 'til the end of this – now there were White families from Rutledge

to almost right next door. And then the church was here. And then Black families were like right there, to avenue], and then white families were over there to the end of Rut- – there's a place over there. No, Romney Street. I mean Simons ends right here, but there's also a Simons that goes down. I don't know if you notice a little section. There's the building there, and after you leave Simons Street, you'd kind of turn slightly, and there's a street down there at the end. That's also Simons Street. Now White families used to live there. But I think, come to think of it, we were always intermingled. We didn't go to the same churches or schools, but living sort of in this area we were.

AW: It was just your neighbor that you [00:57:47 unintelligible].

JH: Yeah, yeah. And then there was – Mr. Naylor lived in that big house on the corner. They owned businesses, too, paint companies, radiator companies. And the Longs lived down there because my aunt could walk to work. She worked for them. And I think life was just zoned. You had your areas. As we got older and people bought cars, then you were able to branch out a little more. Oh, I'm kind of thirsty.

AW: This has been --

END OF RECORDING