

Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative
Oral History Interview November 15, 2013

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Vivian Dent (Interviewee)
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Sex/Age/City of Birth/City of Habitation

JC: F; Norfolk, VA
VD: F; 74; Cape Charles, VA; Cape Charles, VA
LS: F; Cape Charles, VA

(0) JC: this is Jennifer Cagle interviewing Ms.. Vivian Dent age 74 of Cape Charles...hi
how are you today

VD: i'm good how are you doing

JC: good, good, good um, as you know, we're trying to collect, ah, stories, uh, having to
do with Cape Charles School, um, so, i would like to start by asking you, um, what is
your favorite memory of going to school

VD: ...oh, gee, i would say, just the, togetherness, of the students that went

JC: mm-hm

VD: along with the teachers, you know, we were, we were a large family, and, uh, we_
the teachers were willing to teach us, and, we, as youngsters, were going to learn, and
'course we had many annual activities, where, uh, we met together, and met with other
schools in the county, and uh, it was a very good time

JC: can you tell me about one of those annual events

VD: well, we used to have, uh, May Day was a big event

JC: mm-hm

VD: uh, and it was always in, May, uh, first week of May anyway, and that's when we
would have uh, a big outdoor activity uh, wrapping the May pole, that was one of my
favorites, square dancing, and, uh, we would have, uh, a softball game, and, uh, schools

from the, uh, out of the county would come [JC: mm-hmm], and they would participate, and uh, tch, after that, the night, and that_ i guess that was a big affair too we would have our annual dance, and that was all_ that was in one of the classrooms, we had no gym or anything, and we pushed the seats back, and uh, parents would come, which is a little bit different today

JC: mm-hm

VD: and, uh, they would join in, and, uh, as i said, we would just have a gala affair [JC: <Laugh>] [VD: <Laugh>]

JC: sounds really nice um, how involved_ you said the parents would come to these_ to this May Day, how involved were the parents and the community with the school at large

VD: well they were_ whenever there was something to be had, they were there

JC: mm-hm

VD: um, we would have, uh, programs during the course of the year, which involved the students, such as plays and things of that sort, uh, they would come in and they would assist the, uh, teachers, in, uh, our puf- performances, uh, they would, tuh, a- uh, provide a repast more or less after, where they would bring food and uh, things of that nature, and after the event, they would serve us, and many times we had the opportunity to go to other places [JC: mm-hm] uh, other schools, churches, whatever, and, uh, they would always, uh, join us, and, uh, served as chaperones, in many cases

JC: you said, uh, you said the school would put on plays, can you tell me about one performance in particular that may have been your favorite or that you particularly enjoyed

VD: there was one, and i couldn't tell you the name of it, uh, i think i was about sixth grade i guess, and i played uh, a little, a little girl, and, Mabel Mitchell was the mother, but she can't remember it i don't know why, but i remember distinctly, uhm, and it was, uh, something like, uh, she played a host of a mother, uh, and, uh, this was uh, ah summer, and we went to the city of course, being a little country girl, didn't know bout_ anything about it and, uh, w-with all the rides, and the good food, and all that, and, above all that we rode the train [JC: mm-hm] we rode the train to the city and, we spent the time there, we spent time in hotels uh, along with going to the various areas and this was a, uh, to me, was a big thing, a big play, a big thing

JC: wow um, how often did uh, how often did you get to do these excursions where you would go to the city

VD: oh, maybe once a year [JC: ok] maybe, yeah, holidays, uh, most of the time if i recall maybe Christmas or it may something like, today something like spring break [JC: mm-hm] uh, maybe uh, March, april, after the uh, cold weather passed then, uh, we may do so if not, we would go across the bay, and riding the ferries was a big thing, then, as well

JC: yeah

VD: mm-hm

JC: um, now, the community was involved with the school how was the school involved with the community...

- (5) VD: well, i would say, um, in the situation where, uh, there was something going on in the community, uh, if it were a parade, or, uh, something happened in in one of the, uh, s-churches schools whatever we often would, uh, we would be in the parade as well as maybe putting on a performance at the church [JC: mm-hm] so it was, uh, it was a thing that, uh, it was a great thing to do as far as we were concerned, because there wasn't too much else to do [JC: mm] and, uh, and in most cases we both enjoyed the church, the community, as well as, uh, we as students

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JC: um, what was your favorite subject in school

VD: well, i would have to_ well my favorite subject was physical education [JC: hm] however, i didn't end up going into physical education i went into social studies, which was my second and i guess the reason i didn't go into uh, physical education was because i could not stand the trampoline now if i could have gone into physical ed without performing on it, then fine but, i just couldn't handle that so, uh, i went into social studies, and that became my favorite

JC: hm alright, um, you said that uh, you really enjoyed learning from the teachers um, how do you feel that the teachers were, um, qualified compared to the teachers in the white school do you think it was equal and separate or...

VD: well, um, there was a little bit difference and you could expect it, because of the background i would say um <PHONE RINGS> um, i remember Ms. Amos who was the <PHONE RINGS>

LS: Can we, can we stop while that's-

JC: yeah

LS: just while it's ringing, cause we can't <PHONE RINGS>

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VD: i just lost my train of thought

JC: um, i was asking the difference in qualification for [VD: mm] the teachers between the Cape Charles school and the white school

VD: mm-hm um, as i said, there was a little difference, in that, the cultural background was was different [JC: mm-hm] um, if you think back, many years ago, with our foreparents or what have you, the way they came up with, uh, uh, slavery, and these type of things, uh, the white teachers didn't know a great deal about it [JC: mm-hm] but the black teachers were familiar with it, so, they sorta geared their teaching along those lines however for the betterment of the student but otherwise, um, as far as, uh, uh... the academic part, and what have you, didn't see a whole lot of difference

JC: ok

VD: yeah

LS: c-can i ask

JC: please do

LS: for you to expand on that, h- how then, did the um, black teachers, um, use their understanding of the cultural history of their stu- of their students at the school do you think, because that's really interesting, nobody's yet said [VD: mm] that, before [VD: Laugh>

VD: well one thing, uh, the black, negro at that time, were noted for their, spiritual background [LS: mm-hm] they were noted for their singing, their songs, because a lot of that uh, was in gear to uh, their upbringing, as far as working as they_ as is concerned uh, when they pick cotton or whatever the tobacco, whatever the crop may have been, their singing was along with what they were doing and then, uh, they became, uh, as we call em, negro spirituals and then, ah, when the teacher, uh, taught the kid, then they would bring in the sign_ singing of the various songs, and many of the plays and things were acting out some of these songs and so forth [JC: mm] so those were some things, that, uh, uh, that happened with the black student, and teacher in comparison to the white [LS: mm-hm] okay but like i said, academic wise, and social wise, otherwise, not a real difference

JC: that's good to hear um, have you been to see the building lately

(10) VD: um, in fact, i passed by it last night <LAUGH> but i haven't been in it, well you can't go but so [JC: right] far, but uh, i'm occasionally going by it and i always look at it, and reminisce, and think about the days, uh, i look at the classrooms which_ and the teachers it would_ that was in that class uh room, when i was there, and uh, i look at the grounds, and i can remember uh, where we played softball, there remember when when we had basketball uh, goals, and things that were there, and y'know it just bring back memories and then out front of course, uh, that's where we used to do, uh, the little games, the ring around the roses, and, uh hide and seek, and all that so it does bring back memories

JC: i was going to ask_ my next question was going to be how does the ground compare then to now how do the grounds compare, are they still the same, or...

VD: it's it's just about the same practically [JC: okay] mm-hm uh, in fact i don't see a whole lot of difference [JC: okay] because they had the, uh, the area where the softball games were played, that's still there, out front near the road, uh, that's where the basketball uh, cour- uh, court was, that's still there, and out front of the building, there was a couple of big trees, and i know one of them is still there so, so the grounds are_ haven't changed that much

JC: um, i heard earlier that there was a farm near the school do you have any stories about the farm or...

VD: ...no, [JC: okay] i remember, i guess, there was farmland there [JC: mm-hm] but, uh, nothing out of the ordinary other than just raising crops

JC: okay... hm

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LS: um, i have a thought, a question, um, you talked about, um, the teachers and their understanding of the the cultural history of the students, um, what about the um, teaching materials that you that you had, what what kinds of textbooks and um, you know, other materials that students always have when they're in school, what what were those like
VD: ...textbook wise, as they told me, were mainly hand-me-downs [LS: hm] they were <COUGH> used books that had been used by the whites, the material was there but they were older books [LS: mm-hm] um, as far extra curricular, then most of the things were made by the teachers um, various, uh, games, activities, uh... for the most part were made the teachers because i can remember, uh, making uh, paper dolls and dresses and things of that sort this was in second, third, fourth grades, and then, uh, as the years uh, grew, then uh a lot of things that we used otherwise, uh, storybooks and coloring books and all kind of that stuff uh, were made by the teachers and in some cases, the student's parents would come in [LS: mm-hm] and, uh, it was amazing, you know, how they could come up with different little, projects and uh, all we needed was a piece of crayon and we could color, we could draw, we could do whatever, and you know, we were happy there were no uh, videos and all this kind of stuff [LS: LAUGH> [JC: LAUGH>] we have today you know [LS: LAUGH> yeah, so it is a big difference

LS: yeah um, so just one, one other question back on the um, on the textbooks and that kinda thing um, so if you inherited basically, the um, older textbooks, that were ha- that were handed off to you from [VD: mm-hm] the the white schools, i would assume <SIGH> that all the photo- all the pictures in [JC: mm] those books were, basically, um, you know white faces, and, um, you know, a lot of white history, and so on [VD: mm-hm] so di- do you have particular memories of that or any_ did y- did you notice it when you were a kid

VD: well, ninety-nine percent were uh, white features, you're right about that but, small kids at that time, and living in an environment of desegregation (sic) we didn't really think about it we were just happy to get the book , you know and, uh, we accepted that way it wasn't until the later years, high school and what have you, that you begin to look at black white and why [LS: mm-hm] but up until then, no uh, we got the books and uh, we accepted them, we learned, we used them and uh, that was it

<P: 06>

JC: so what was a typical day like for you at class, what were the subjects you took

VD: um, typical day, uh, we usually started with english, and math, and uh, course we would have our recesses, and uh, physical education, and, little social studies also and that was a, that was a day by day thing...uh, in the morning, Monday mornings, that is, (15) we would all go to the auditorium and we'd have devotional service and this goes back to this religious thing [JC: mm-hm] i was speaking of um w- everybody would have to have a bible verse

VD: uh... and in many cases we would have a little session where uh, you would talk about the weekend and if anything exciting you would tell, and uh, the principal whatever, they would give their little speech and what have you, and then send us off for the day, for the week [JC: hm] but that was eve- that was every Monday morning you had to have a bible verse and if it even_ wasn't but three words "Jesus wept", you know as long as you said something and of course you can imagine how the fellows were, they had a three word, four word <LAUGH> [JC: LAUGH] [LS: LAUGH] bible verse, compared to some others but it was a_ it was an enjoyable it was an enjoyable thing yeah

JC: um what were the types of activities that you liked to do with your friends during recess, [VD: at recess] or what have you

VD: we would always play games, like i said before, and some of the best ones were ring around the roses, uh, hide and seek, oh, what else, mm, <P: 04> and of course we would love playing games, uh, softball, things of that sort i, being kinda tomboyish [LS: LAUGH>] i guess you would say, i loved my softball and course we had track back during that time, we had our little areas where you ran from one area to the other, and that carried on into the May Day that came in spring and, uh, <P: 04> uh, marbles, the girls shot marbles just like the boys shot marbles, and of course we would win each other's marbles, and sometimes we'd get little, outta hand, the teachers would get on us, but uh we'd all come back as friends again the next five minutes it's funny, uh, it was one game we used to play, and i don't recall the name of it, but, it was_ in it was "shake it to the east shake it to the west" uh, and of course, uh, it was a thing where you went around in circles and you'd stop and then you would uh come up with uh "shake it to the east" and of course we used what we shakin', "shake it to the west shake it to the one you love the best", and everytime we'd do that, the teacher, Mrs Ames, she would get on us, "don't say shake it to the east shake it to the west, say turn to the east, turn to the west", [JC: LAUGH>] okay Mrs Ames soon as she would come back into the building we'd go again "shake it to the east, shake it to the west" and she was noted for her yardstick, [JC: uh oh] and she would come out with her yardstick, she would tap us across a time_ across the butt, but we never did stop and uh, we did that from day to day [JC: mm kay] yeah but they were the good ol years they were the good ol years

JC: did you walk to school

VD: yes i did

JC: who'd you walk with

VD: well, that's a crazy story i didn't live right in town [JC: okay] i lived, uh, i call it the suburbs [LS: LAUGH>] but it was about, uh, maybe a mile, mile and a half out of Cape Charles on a highway and i uh, i'd walk, to school uh, when my cousin, who lived in seaview, she'd come to town because she was working, if she came to work or whatever i would catch her, but otherwise in most cases i walked until it got real cold then my brothers would bring me to school before they, uh, went to work and, uh, course i came in on 84, but, what they call, the hump, which is down there [JC: mm-hm] but there were steps, from where the drugstore is now, that ran up the hump, then you go across the overpass and then in the afternoon i'd come back the same way, and um, there were friends of mine, uh, that lived on Mason, and i would stay there until my brothers got off work, they'd come by and get me and then, uh, the people that lived behind me uh, had_ they were white and they had a son, whose name was Harry Lee and his mother would bring him in, come around the old Cape Charles road, uh, to town,

(20) to school, sometime i would ride with her she would come around, uh, and put me out, and then come across so as i got older, becoming inquisitive, i wanted to know, why, she would bring both of us to school, but why she let me off at that little school there, and brought him to uh, in town to school so i don't know what kind of answers they gave me, but i know in talking to my mother, well that's just the way it is, you know, those was the kind of answers you got [JC: mm-hm] uh, and i was smart enough to say, well, you know, he comes over and plays with me, uh, he eats your food, you know, now why can't i go to school with him but the only thing that i could get from her was, "well, this is, this is the way uh it is, uh, they go to one school, and you go to another " and, that's that's what i did until uh, uh, i went to high school

JC: where did you go to high school

VD: i went to Northampton County high school, which was the only black high school, uh, in the county at that time, was at Machipongo [JC: okay] uh, all the black kids from the town uh, was bussed to Machipongo because there was no black high school in Cape Charles

JC: mm how far away is Machipongo

VD: Machipongo was, i guess, maybe bout, uh, fifteen miles [JC: okay] north

JC: okay...um, now you went from this school to high school, uh, do you remember the closing in 1966, and what kind of impact it may have had on the community

VD: yeah i remember the closing, and, you know, like always you you you hate to see things happen, but cha- time changes and uh, it wasn't really such a transition uh, it was more a problem with the adults than it was the kids [JC: mm] you know the kids was_ well we were already mingling together from the beginning, you know, just weren't going to school uh, so it was very few incidents where there was a problem between the kid and the and and and the kids but with the parents, especially the white parents, they were the ones that seemed to have the greater problem but after they got the understanding that this was the way it was gonna be, then uh, they fell in, and uh, i think we had one of the best transitions, uh, integrations, anywhere in the state

JC: Can you go into a little more detail on on what happened with the parents were were there_ was there an incident or was it more...

VD: no, i don't recall any incidents happening it was just the idea, of, you're not supposed to be together, [LS: mm] you're not supposed to go to school together, you're not supposed to mingle together but, uh there were no incidents, there were no incidents beyond the s- very, you know, the usual thing with kids but uh, as far as the parents were concerned, there were no incidents that i can recall [JC: okay] and in that time, of course, Prince uh Edward County, i think it was, they were having some of the greatest problems closing schools and all that but we never did that never did that

LS: so were you, were you in highschool of the ti- at the time of the transition at the time of desegregation or were you [VD: mm...no] okay

VD: no no no desegregation came in the early seventies, [LS: right] i finished high school in fifty-six [LS: right] so i'm old [LS: guess not] i'm a ol- <LAUGH> [LS: LAUGH>] i guess you might say i'm a old one off the block [LS: LAUGH>] yeah but i had no problem, uh, at that time i was working but uh, i had no problem with integration you know, it was just a thing to me, you know, your skin is uh, white, my skin is black, but the heart itself, you know, is all the same you know and that was a question when i did start um, when when integration did come, and i began to work at the integrated school there wa- uh, a lot of questions would come up, you know what do you think about uh, uh, uh, um, black and white, uh, courtship, you know, what have you i said, you know, that's their thing they want to do it, they know all the situation, which might erupt, as far as what's being said, but if that's their feelings you know, hey, don't bother me where you had some others that had that old idea, that, you know, i don't think it's gonna

work so, i've always been the person that, uh, i can deal with anything change you know if it changes, i can go along with it, as long as equality more or less, is is a factor

(25) JC: we talked a little bit about some of your favorite things about school do you have any less than favorite memories

VD: <SIGH> um, <LAUGH> heh

VD: one, i was in high school then, when playing basketball, i ran in the wall, and fractured my <LAUGH> collarbone [JC: mm] that was bout it <LAUGH> yeah, yes i did, but uh, otherwise, no, i loved school i loved school i looked forward to getting up in the morning and going to school, Septem- going back to school and all that and i loved i loved, it was challenging you know i loved to read, i love math, and what can i do greater than i did before ya know and i guess that's part of what made me successful, i think [LS: mm] [JC: mm-hm]

LS: so what did you do in the summertimes between s- between s- um, you know, school years

VD: mm um, my elementary years my father, uh, had a farm, and uh, of course i was the last of eight children, nine children really, had eight brothers older than me [LS: wow] [JC: LAUGH>] <LAUGH> so, and that's why i guess i was a tomboy um, and of course uh, they, they would work on the farm but uh, you know, i didn't do too much you know, if it were counting s- baskets of something i did that but as far as the real hard work i did not do uh, then of course, uh during the years of um, high school, and uh, i worked a number of years, out at the uh, in the store out at the one of the labor camps and, i did that for a number of years until i finished school

<P: 06>

JC: what was the um, the social environment like at the school

VD: well, um, as i said before, um, we had all kinds of sports, basketball, baseball, track, football, um, we had um, dances, ever so often, we had plays, that uh, the students would perform, and what else, that's, the usual things yeah

JC: okay do you think that um, there was a difference in the communities' involvement between the Cape Charles school and the white school did it seem like the African American community was more involved in Cape Charles than the white community was involved in the white school

VD: i don't think there was <COUGH> i didn't know that much about what was going on with the whites but from the outside looking i i don't think there was uh, a big difference because they were doing some of the same things we were doing, [JC: mm] as far as sports, as far as the arts, uh, music, band, and this type of thing, they were doing the same things that we were doing [JC: okay] so, i don't think there was a big difference

JC: okay

LS: um, i had a, question and it popped outta my head, oh, oh, i know um, so, after high school, you you must've gone on to college because you became a teacher

VD: yes

LS: so tell me about what what about your family life and and or your schooling before that, led you to to choose that, path

VD: well, like i said before, i have always s- loved school and then, looking at the background of coming from a farm, i promised myself, the Lord, and few other people, that i was not gonna live my life on a farm i was going to school and uh, fortunately i did, uh, i was able to uh, earn a scholarship to help me out, and uh, that got me off the farm um, however, <LAUGH> after working in the school system for a number of years, getting married and what have you, a few years before i retired, i found myself
(30) back on the farm now you may ask why how [LS: LAUGH>] my husband, uh, came from right outside of D-C Course that was farming, tobacco farming up that way [JC: mm-hm] and, uh... h-h- he came to uh, here, e- after a period of time, came here and lived and he became interested in farming, hunting,

VD: uh, fishing, he was an outdoor person and then, uh, shortly before we retired, he picked up this hobby of gardening and it started with maybe four or five gr- uh rows of vegetables, and then from there it got bigger, and we used to take, uh, uh, vegetables to D-C and Maryland and sell, and it became, uh, i think we end up with about uh, 20 acres... so, it seemed that after uh, retiring, i got back into farming again but it wasn't like when i was at home it was more as a hobby and i didn't have to do it, but i just did it, uh, mainly with my husband [LS: LAUGH>] so, [LS: mm-hm] that's what encouraged me to go, to school, [LS: mm-hm] to get off the farm and i did

LS: so, um, i'm going to go back to that, the, <SIGH> i hear that you wa- that you didn't want to stay on the farm but wha- what gave you the idea that education was a way to to be able to take that step away from the farm

VD: well i guess it was my teachers, mentors, um, you know y- y- you look at some individuals and it's something about them that you just admire and there were a couple teachers that, i just loved, and i said i want to be like you when i get grown and uh, i sorta followed their path, and uh, went in_ went to school went into education

LS: so they were role models

VD: role models, mm-hm

LS: can you, do you mind mentioning which teachers those were

VD: one was uh, Mrs Alice Ames, that was uh, second and third_ first second and third i think, and uh, the other one was Mrs Jan Joynes, that was fourth or fifth grade and uh, you know they were just like mothers, and you just sort of, fell in love with them and say, hey, i wanna be like you and uh, i think they're the ones that really, caused me to go the way i went

<P: 04>

LS: wow um, so, do you do you feel like_ do you think that you when you became a teacher, um, were then inspired to be a role model yourself, as well, from that experience

VD: yes, because... i call them my adopted children i think if i i couldn't count em on my fingers i have many many adopted children that seem to have come along the same way i did, in terms of looking at me as a mother, uh, a mentor, what have you [LS: mm-hm] and many of em came from re- very poor backgrounds, and, sorta i've_ sorta took them under my wing, and, uh, did things for them and so forth, and, as a result, uh, a number of them have gone to school, because of, that and, uh, course, uh, i, my husband and i, we helped a lot of them and uh, they've gone to school, they've become in ver- many different careers and they often come back and uh, say, "i appreciate what you did for me" and so forth to give you an example, i_ one that's in uh, Africa now, [LS: mm] she went into the military and, she retired last year, twenty-two years, then she went back, uh, and she's there now with another year well serving a year and a half, she'll come out in April i think and uh, she calls me once a week, uh, "anything you need, anything you want", and couple of times uh, i looked at some bills i had and i saw this minus whatever and i said now, i didn't pay this or whatever, and then lo and behold, i discover that she had taken care of it for me [LS: aw wow] and i ask her i say now why, why you do this i said i don't really need it uh, so, why this, you have a family and so forth, and she said uh "i just, you know, if it hadn't been for you, and your husband, i

(35) don't know where i woulda been and i just feel that i wanna give something back to you ”
[LS: mm-hm] so, that was one, one incident and then of course we had another one that
uh, uh, went into pro, uh, baseball, and of course

LS: and who was that

VD: that was, uh, bobby brown... and uh, when he first went in, the minor leagues, he
was down in Venezuela and of course he would call us one o'clock, two o'clock, three
o'clock at night, [LS: LAUGH>] “come to Norfolk, pick me up at the airport ” [JC:
LAUGH>] you know, you have a mother, father, uncle, call them that's what we're
thinking, you know but no, he would call us, so we'd get up, go over and pick him up,
come back, go to work the next day and of course, uh, i had one there at Virginia State,
and of course i had a number of them and of course i uh, i coached and i still coach uh,
track, and i had a number of them to uh, go to school on track scholarships so, these are
some of the people that, you know

LS: that's wonderful

JC: mm

LS: i am getting buzzed like crazy on my phone so if you could take over for [JC: sure]
um a minute [JC: sure] and i'm going to, maybe the furthest away would be out your
back door if that's okay

VD: yeah but go out this way cause this one it's locked

LS: okay

<P: 07>

JC: so who was your favorite teacher did you have one

VD: favorite teacher, favorite teacher, well uh, in elementary school was Mrs Ames [JC:
mm-hm] in high school, i guess it would be, uh, my physical <PHONE RINGS>

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VD: okay, in high school, it was probably my physical edu- education teacher Mrs uh,
what's her name, Mrs McQuadge i think her name was uh, which again going back to

sports, you know [JC: mm-hm] uh, she, and, uh, uh, english teachers, her name at that time was Miss McCulloh they were two of my favorites

JC: now, you you mentioned a story earlier where um, if you could only have taken the trampoline [VD: <LAUGH>] or if you'd only, can you tell me a little bit more about that, what didn't you like about the trampoline

VD: i guess it was just, the bouncing, and the flipping... and so forth [JC: yeah] but i just, i just didn't like to do i've gotten on em, and uh it's just something about that bounce, and don't speak of flipping over and over and over [JC: LAUGH>] i guess the fear of getting hurt or whatever was concerning and uh, as far as i could get was that bouncing, and after that i said no, no more [JC: LAUGH>] and you know, if you fear a thing, it's best not to do it [JC: mm] and that's, that's what happened with the trampoline <LAUGH> [JC: LAUGH>] yeah, it's beautiful, i love it, but to do it, no Had it not been for that, then i would have gone in edu- in uh physical education [JC: mm-hm] i'm quite sure and they told me definitely, that was, in fact, uh, trampoline was almost like a semester course [JC: mm] mm-hm [JC: LAUGH>] couldn't, couldn't handle that <LAUGH>

JC: why was social studies your favorite subject

VD: i just liked the, uh, to, look at how things came about, created, or uh, the exploration of the different people and the way they, they did, uh, and especially uh, what, oh, mainly American history, when you start arguing about the different movements, uh, wars, uh, how, when you think at one time it was just forest land and uh, the struggles that they came through all these different uh, types of situations, you know, how you do it, uh, then of course the inventions that come along with it, to make things better, and uh, i just, was an adventurous type person [JC: LAUGH>]

JC: um, what was your favorite subject to teach

(40) VD: uh, out of American, well, social studies, my favorite was uh, American history and economics [JC: mm-hm] uh, well as far as American history is concerned, as i just told you but economics, uh, i was just uh, the different developments of business and uh, competition that was involved

VD: and there's so many different areas, in economics, you know, taxation and uh, and how we come up with the taxes we pay and, percentages and that kinda stuff yeah, so math, uh it wadn't my favorite but i liked math and all that's incorporated in economics and so forth

JC: um...hm

<P: 12>

VD: <LAUGH>

LS: um...hm so you, you taught during the time of, you were teaching during the time that there was a transition from segregated to desegregated schools, or did you, [VD: mm-hm] were you in a segregated school to start with and then, moved to a des- uh, you know, t- to a a an [VD: yep yes] integrated school or how's that work

VD: i was in both, uh, i started at Northampton County high, which was the black school, in sixty-one 1961 uh, full integration came in 1970 and that's when, uh, i came down to Northampton high school, uh, in Eastville and, uh, it wasn't, to me, it was just the transition of blacks coming down, whites going up because you had a high school and a middle school and there were_ one thing there were very few altercations occurring, which may have caused you to think differently uh, both groups accepted it, and uh, it was just a smooth operation uh, especially comparing it with other places [LS: mm-hm] you know you'd see what had happened, at other places, and you were a- assuming that this was gonna happen here but, it did not and after realizing it, hey, you know why did it happen there because, uh, you know, we just fell right in [LS: mm-hm] and, uh, we used to do things too um, to help to, coordinate the situation um, when first integrated uh, we used to have gatherings at the teachers' house, and uh, each week or couple weeks, uh, somebody would have a gathering at his house or her house and uh, next week it'd be at somebody else's house and all the teachers, majority of teachers, would come black white what have you, [LS: oh] and it was just uh, like i said, a get together and no problems [LS: mm-hm] so really really didn't experience it being a difference [LS: mm] so uh, little small area, but it was, uh, integration was a smooth operation i must say

LS: um do you think that the uh, um, st- this is uh, an odd question, maybe, but, um, were students, the black students and the white students, treated equally by the system, the school system during that transition period, would you say, from, you said it wa- the actual integration was 1970 [VD: seventy, uh huh] in the that first, say, ten years, do you think they were treated equally

VD: for the most part i think they were because, you had, basically, a group of teachers that were young, and, uh, they were willing to, they understood, and they were willing to accept, change [LS: mm-hm] and as a result, they played the part [LS: uh-huh] so, again,

LS: well, i mean, the reason i'm asking this is that my understanding is that during the 1990's and it may have been after you retired, [VD: mm-hm] um, the federal government had to step in, to Northampton County, to, because there was some de facto segregation, here [VD: mm] um, and that was when Don Goldstien was the (40) superintendent [VD: mm-hm] um, in terms of the way the way that the the black students were treated versus the white students in terms of where, how they were streamed [VD: mm-hm] um,

END: 45:31