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Interviewer: Mr. Bond, we're with Crossroads to Freedom and we just want to talk to you today about your story. First of all if you just say your name for the camera.

Noah Bond: I am Noah Webster Bond. What else do I need to –

Interviewer: I'm Zach Harpole and do you introduce yourself.

Interviewer: I'm Grace Hicks.

Noah Bond: Hello Grace Hicks and Zach.

Interviewer: Say your name.

Interviewer: I'm Earlize Taylor.

Noah Bond: All right. It's good to know all of you.

Interviewer: It's good to have you here. Could you tell us what year you were born and where you were born?

Noah Bond: I was born April 27, 1930 in Crittenden County, Arkansas across the river. You want to know how I got to Memphis. They used to have floods over there every year. It was my –

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grandparents, my maternal grandparents were born over there into slavery. My mother was a first generation out of slavery. So they had a small farm over there, 80 acres that they owned. Arkansas was one of those states that gave like 40 acres and a mule. I don't know whether they got the mule or not but they did get some land. As a community that's over done now – well the people are still occupying that property that was deeded to them after the Civil War, the community just south of West Memphis, Arkansas. You probably heard of Edmonson and around in that area, haven't you? But it's a group of black people who have those farms.

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It's a small group that's right across that river that the land was deeded to them when the war – I think that were Arkansas, Alabama, some parts of Mississippi were the people who received that property after the Civil War. This is where you find these

African-American communities sometimes scattered in Mississippi and Arkansas. Interesting enough they keep very quiet and most people don't realize that it's there but it's about 15 miles from here, not very far. But anyway, it used to flood over there every year. So my parents got tired of moving back and forth so they came here and stayed in 1937. So that's how –

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or maybe that's why I'm not over there now but I do have relatives that are still there. I go back and forth there to keep connections. That's it.

Interviewer: So where did you go to school here at Memphis?

Noah Bond: My father was from Haywood County up in Brownsville, Tennessee. Of course I went to Grant like that elementary. We lived on Lewis Street and the _____ named for the person who the street was also named for. Lewis Street is about four blocks southwest of here right across that expressway. Do you know where Lewis Street is? I lived on Lewis, 1080 Lewis. The house is still there very close to –

[0:04:00]

where the expressway runs. Of course the expressway took our backyard and I moved from there to Seymour where I live now. But I lived on Lewis Street and interestingly enough at that time the system was segregated. We had to walk from Lewis to what is now Oakshun on Jackson there to elementary schools. That meant we had to pass those that lived on the side of the street that I lived on had to pass Guthrie Hills. Interestingly enough we'd have to prepare ourselves for war because as we passed those schools the children who attended those schools would be waiting for –

[0:05:00]

us every morning and every night, every evening when we'd leave. So we'd have to get rocks and bricks and fight our way through those school zones to get to where we were going. Afternoon it would almost be the same thing over even when they would delay the opening of and closing to keep us from clashing because we had to walk. They'd wait for us. The fight would be on until we'd get out of the area. But that is the way we –

Interviewer: Who were you fighting with?

Noah Bond: The white kids that went to Guthrie Hills, Gordon. There were no black schools in that area until the late '50s. They put the eighth grade at Klondike.

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Interviewer: So from the first grade you went to Grant and then tell us about your schooling from there on.

Noah Bond: My paternal grandmother lived in Brownsville, Tennessee and she became ill and I was the only grandchild that could come. So I went at the time to Haywood County Training School. It's now called George Washington Carver. Roy Bond, a relative was the principal of that school. A very good school I thought.

Interviewer: Who was Roy Bond?

Noah Bond: He was a long time principal in Haywood County and when integration came he became the first director of education in that area for blacks.

Interviewer: So you have the same name but you're not kin?

Noah Bond: He was a –

[0:07:00]

relative of my father's. They were I think – he was probably about what you call it, third cousin once removed or whatever they – he was about a third cousin because he was first cousin to my dad.

Interviewer: So how'd you end up back in Memphis and when was that?

Noah Bond: Well as I was going on my basic home was always here from the time I was six years old when the '37 flood happened. I was just up there to attend my grandmother until she passed. She happened to pass through my senior year but I was there for three years, three and a half years. I was back and forth but she had a type of at that time a kind of cancer that went into remission and so forth.

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I was there just to be there to inform relatives as to her condition and the like. My grandfather was dead. Interestingly enough, my father died from work – he was a river worker. The Core of

Engineers was just beginning I imagine here at the time and he was injured in the Core of Engineers. It must have been about 1934, '35. He died in '36 before my sixth birthday from an injury he had received while working as a dock worker or something on the river.

Interviewer: So your education starts from – what schooling did you do here in Memphis?

Noah Bond: Just Grant.

Interviewer: Just Grant. So what all this history you know comes from –

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the church. Where did you go to church?

Noah Bond: I went to Middle Baptist, at that time was located on Lane Avenue. A small church. The building is still there. Zero lot, Lane and Lee. It's a zero lot. People walked at that time.

Interviewer: What'd you call that neighborhood then? What do you call it now? A lane and that's –

Noah Bond: It was Lane and Lee. Well the only name that's stuck in my mind from that area is there's a place down there that they call Crematory Alley. That name stuck. But in 1962 St. Mary's –

[0:10:00]

Cathedral partnered with our church to organize and form a daycare that was called The Lee Street Daycare Center.

Interviewer: Who was the minister of the church?

Noah Bond: Ben Hooks was our minister. Dominick was the priest at St. Mary's so we still carry the name Hooks Dimic. Hooks Dimic Daycare Group is still in operation even up on night owl where the church eventually moved. Dimic was the –

Interviewer: Catholic –

Noah Bond: No. It was Episcopalian. Of course the area then was called the – well a smart – they'd be a – what would you call it? An acronym was –

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smart. They was smart but I can't exactly –

Interviewer: They're still an organization over _____ called Smart from that church on that corner right there in Alabama _____ _____.

[Crosstalk]

Noah Bond: Right. You see Middle Baptist, the church that I'm referring to was actually the offspring of First Baptist that's on Poplar. It was a slave church of First Baptist on Poplar. There are several other congregations that wished to claim that as being the first African-American Baptist church in the city but we have the documentation that proves that our church was the offspring of First Baptist on Poplar and we were located very close to where Collins' Chapel is still located. Those churches were created at the same time in 1841-

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as separate churches for blacks and whites to worship. Collins' Chapel is actually older than the see of the faith that it's a part of. Collins' was an offspring of First Methodist and we were called the Middle Church from First Baptist because we were a slave church. We were just called Middle Church because we were the slaves. They only listed the people as members who were free. We had 21 free persons and those were the persons that were listed as members of the congregation but we had a very large slave congregation. They were numbered. I imagine the same was true with Collins' but I know that was true with us.

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Of course interestingly enough first Baptist had kept that documentation. Well they kept records. This was how we were able to really determine or authenticate what I'm telling you about. They kept those records.

[2nd Cut @ 00:13:23]

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Interviewer: So how'd you get the Middle Baptist you all do?

[Crosstalk]

Noah Bond: They were a Baptist congregation but we were – well the Baptist part for the black congregation. We were the Middle Church

because we were slaves and they had created another Second Baptist Church as the population had grown by 1841. Another church was created and we were the middle church. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: Yeah but I'm trying to figure when did you take on the name Middle Baptist, –

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the actual name?

Noah Bond: Well the Baptist part was in parenthesis to identify us as Baptist.

Interviewer: Okay. All right. _____.

Noah Bond: All right. So when you look at the old records it's the Middle Church, parenthesis Baptist. Now you got it?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Noah Bond: The Middle Church. Of course even now well – but the other part became – well that's not really the real name because I mean the greater part was added when Reverend Hooks became the minister. Of course it's not the official name. We're still just Middle Church. That's our actual name, Middle Church with Baptist in parenthesis. That's the name that's on the records. You understand what I'm trying to explain?

Interviewer: So can we fast forward now to –

[0:15:00]

where you were after the name – somewhere, how'd you get that name? How'd he get into the politics and all the stuff with church and stuff?

Noah Bond: Middle Baptist has always been since its inception a rather political – that's why it remains so small. W.E. Brinkley, William E. Brinkley was the first black minister we had. We had four white ministers prior to him. 1841. Of course we knew at that time the law was that ~~s that were~~ you could not have an assembly of ten or more black people without a white person being there. Of course when we became a church the ministers were appointed. The white ministers were appointed –

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to serve the congregation because I told you we had 21 free people but the other people were slaves and the owners were in the white congregation but they gave us a separate congregation with a minister. They gave us the minister. So they were white. There were four white ministers that served that congregation. At the end of the Civil War they appointed a black one but he was what they called an Octoroon. He was more white than black in color. But mentally he identified with the black. The black congregation where we live know exactly why people would have taken on the color but he did. He aligned himself with Ida B. Wells.

[0:17:00]

In 1892 when they forced Ida B. Wells out of town Brinkley also had to leave. Instead of going north he went west to Stockton, California and carried most of the congregation with him. He carried all but six people. It was from that six that the present congregation sprang. Did that answer your question?

Interviewer: About Ben Hooks?

Noah Bond: All right, interestingly enough three people out of that six lived from 1892 till Ben Hooks became minister but they were always identified with a radical group.

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Of course we had also – see, Brinkley had been instrumental in also organizing a school that the Klan burned in 1866. Of course when you get that kind of identification it's difficult for people to erase it from their minds as to whether or not this is a – but we've been identified as a radical group of people. The people were always socially, politically concerned who were members. When Ben Hooks came I will never forget. There were two ladies that, "He's just like the first one," getting up with those first one. I was young. I didn't know what they were talking about but they were trying to compare him with Brinkley. See, Brinkley had been –

[0:19:00]

very aggressive and very involved with the political situation here. So was Ben Hooks and they had lived long enough to see just like we have lived long enough to see Barack Obama become President. Do you understand what I'm trying to – they were

overjoyed because he was there. That's what sparked my interest in delving into the history of our church to discover what they meant. I interviewed them and they told me some of the things I'm telling you now about the difficulties that were had and how they met from house to house with those six people and how finally around the turn of the century they were able to get a building over there were St. Mary's is now on Hill and Alabama Street where they remained until 1936 when the urban renewal came through there.

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Bought the property and they were able to move down on Lane in that small building that was just a little bit bigger than this room here that is still standing there and we still own that building. But it was a small building and it's still there. E.W. Williams' son became the minister and added the educational building behind us. Then when Ben Hooks came we exploded into – the building could no longer contain us. We moved to Lamar in 1962 where we remained until we moved out on _____ here.

[3rd Cut @ 00:20:52]

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Interviewer: So what kind of work were you doing by that time, all this time in between? How'd you end up being a teacher and what happened?

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Noah Bond: I went to National Baptist Convention. The Church would send me and I used to sing. Then I must have had an exceptional voice. I didn't think it was but I was just doing what I had been doing all my life. I sang for one of the sessions and I was immediately offered scholarships to Baptist – of course at that time we were still segregated – to Baptist schools. I could have chosen to go to Morehouse, a Baptist college; Bishop. But they let me go to the campuses to choose. So I chose a school that I thought fitted my economic condition and I wouldn't be so conspicuous because if I had gone to Morehouse where all those rich folks were – I felt a little bit insecure –

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on that campus. Of course I chose Bishop College which was good for me or at least it was the first time I'd seen African-Americans who were of another level in large numbers and I still felt intimidated when I got there because my experience had been nowhere but here in this area. But it worked out just fine. Of

course the Korean War had begun and they allowed me to graduate but three weeks after I came out of college I was in the Army. I came back –

[0:23:00]

there were opportunities where I possible could have gone – not possibly, I could have gone and been involved with other activities but I felt that it would be better if I stayed here and tried to touch the lives of children, where I could possibly give them some incentive to grow and develop. So that's why I taught school. It was more than a job; it was a way of life for me. I knew I wasn't going to make a lot of money but I enjoyed doing it.

Interviewer: So tell us about the politics of the church and what about Lieutenant Lee? How did he fit in there? How does those politics work with the churches and the ministers and the politicians?

Noah Bond: Do you want me to go along first with Lieutenant Lee? Lieutenant Lee had been an Army veteran –

[0:24:00]

from World War I and he had gained the rank of Lieutenant which was very, very difficult for a man of color at that time to obtain regardless of what your qualifications were. They just didn't want black Army officers. We had what a flipper that had gone to West Point and several others but down South here to become and ——— ———[inaudible] to say if you were black regardless of what your qualifications were that just wasn't acceptable. He's looking at me with such wide eyed surprise. Because it had always been –

[0:25:00]

believed that our best was not as good as the other race's mediocre even if we had a piece – well a good example of what I'm talking about happened here just last week that I felt was unfair, regardless of whether or not we agreed with the person personally. They should have looked at the qualifications. They fired – what was the superintendent of the school. What was her name? Cash?

Interviewer: Cash.

Noah Bond: But he was the person who had the doctorate degree. The County Superintendent does not have a doctorate degree? Do you understand what I'm trying to explain? Do you understand it now

young man? If it had been a just situation they both should have been –

[0:26:00]

eliminated and let them both apply and look at their qualifications. Do you see what I'm saying now?

[4th Cut @ 00:26:07]

Now that is why Lieutenant Lee decided to keep his –

Interviewer: Rank name?

Noah Bond: - his rank name for all of his life because it was a badge of respect. He wrote several best--seller books for that time and he was quite a successful person and he aligned himself with Dr. Brewster in his religious affiliation. Another thing that I'd like to also point out is that the only way that black men could get to a level of respectability that they warranted –

[0:27:00]

was through the church and it's almost like that now. Country clubs were not open to us. All the facilities were completely segregated and the Chamber of Commerce was just something that we maybe read about and didn't understand but because there was no way they were going to let a black man into any of these organizations and political groupings. There was just no way that you were going to get in there. If you've acquired a certain amount of wealth especially when Mr. Crump became the mayor or the boss of Memphis and Shelby County he was going to find a way to make sure –

[0:28:00]

that you either buckled under or got out of town. This is what he did with those churches. They were wealthy. So I'm told that he withheld their tax statements so that their properties would go into default. If you don't know what you're going to pay and they won't let you pay it it's impossible for you to maintain what you're supposed to own. They ran them out of town.

Interviewer: So how did Lieutenant Lee and the ministers come into play? How did Lieutenant Lee get to be the politician that he was and what Saturn or political group was _____?

[Crosstalk]

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Noah Bond: Well most blacks who voted at that time were Republican. It's just a recent thing that black people have become Democrats.

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They were Republican. I still I guess am a registered Republican. So there was _____ but I've become Democratic. I should be especially saying that now but that happened after the Kennedy administration for most of us. But we were Republican as far as blacks are concerned because Abraham Lincoln was a Republican. We associated Republicanism with the party freedom. Of course Lieutenant Lee was very powerful among registered voters, among blacks. Interestingly enough blacks that voted here for a long time ever since – I don't think they had a ban when I voted but Mr. Crump controlled it.

[0:30:00]

That was controlled by him and his followers all up until the next position by the – the press _____ exposed how unfair and threatened the people with legal action back in – what was that – I think it was about '68 or '69. They could buy or would buy votes. Of course some place in the county, the principal had picked up a lot of people to vote. One of the reporters were out there in the voting booth and they gave them whatever token they were going to give him and told him says, "Well I ain't worried about that because they know how to vote for."

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Each person got – I don't know - $5.00 or whatever it was.

Interviewer: That voted?

Noah Bond: That voted. They was glad to get that $5.00 and they – you must also, young man, understand that people didn't make but $15.00, $20.00 a week. So $5.00 was quite a lot of money for them to have just on hand.

[5th Cut @ 00:31:26]

Interviewer: So Lieutenant Lee, I'm still trying to understand how does he get his power and how does he get hooked with the ministers.

Noah Bond: Lieutenant Lee controlled Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Of course insurance companies were very important for us because

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white insurance companies did not insure black people. What was it, National?

Interviewer: Metropolitan?

Noah Bond: Yeah, but if they did it was a kind of thing that was under cover.

[0:32:00]

Interviewer: It wasn't the right kind of cover.

Noah Bond: It wasn't the right coverage. If they didn't live up to the policy that you had there wasn't anything you could do about it. But Lieutenant Lee was the president of Atlanta Life here in Memphis. As I told you before we enjoyed having insurances that were going to put us away nice because we still do that. Black folks spent a lot of money on being buried. If an insurance executive was a member of your congregation then that was considered a real, real boom. So he was at Atlanta Life and the Walkers were – they created Universal. Of course at that time you didn't have to pay –

[0:33:00]

but $0.25 or $0.30 a month for a burial. As I tried to explain burials were very important in the black community. There was one time that we would like to really have a big show. This young woman is grinning. Oh yes, we wanted that beautiful burial with a lot of fanfare. It still goes on. It's still important. I talked to a woman just a few days ago that has been trying to get her burial thing going where she'll have a great big burial with a lot of people even now because that's a part of our heritage. It's a part of our mentality. Not everybody but most of our people think in terms of a decent funeral they call it.

[0:34:00]

Lieutenant Lee was the head of a big insurance company and Atlanta Life is still thriving, not here but I think they have a home office down in Atlanta.

Interviewer: Still getting to the preachers and Lieutenant Lee, how they work together.

Noah Bond: Well he was more or less identified with East Trig, Reverend Brewster who was not only a brilliant songwriter but he was a poet also. He was a brilliant man. If you had Lieutenant Lee as a

supporter then that would also increase his popularity and his church's popularity. Well he was glad to have Lieutenant Lee there. *[Audio skips]* _____ big supporters. It not only increased Lieutenant Lee's ability –

[0:35:00]

to sell insurances but with his being involved with East Trig it increased Brewster's ability to sell his music and his popularity because Lieutenant Lee was one of the most brilliant men around and he was also pretty wealthy and people liked to be associated with what is called a seemingly success.

Interviewer: Well how did Lieutenant Lee and the preacher work as far as voting for them? Reverend Brewster, did he ever talk about politics? He just whatever they did _____ -

[Crosstalk]

Noah Bond: Well as I alluded to there was a political machine that was dominated by Mr. Crump. He had his picked, -

[0:36:00]

chosen people in every community. I'm told not only among black people but he had them among white. But since Lieutenant Lee had all of this influence he was one of those chosen. Interestingly enough a person did not acquire even a decent job unless you had the endorsement of those persons that Mr. Crump had chosen regardless of what your qualifications were. You'd have to go through Lieutenant Lee and – yep.

Interviewer: So nobody could get directly through to Mr. Crump? You had to go through this person that was assigned. So you go to that person and then they go to Mr. Crump?

Noah Bond: Right.

Interviewer: Mr. Culpepper was the same way.

Noah Bond: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Noah Bond: It was in every community.

[0:37:00]

If Lieutenant Lee and another one of his henchmen didn't endorse it then you may as well forget that.

[6th Cut @ 00:37:12]

Interviewer: Let's go to you and your schooling. Didn't you go to University of Memphis for something?

Noah Bond: Yes, I did. That was right after they allowed blacks to enter. It was difficult. I managed to get through that without failing but it was the most wonderful, arduous task I'd ever wished to undertake, to have undertaken. Anger and hostility and prejudice those things are hard to die even though the Supreme Court had ruled that we had a right –

[0:38:00]

to be there. The atmosphere was not conducive for African-Americans at all to – the environment was just awful. I'm told that it would have been better for those blacks that went to – was not roped into what West –

Interviewer: Southwestern.

Noah Bond: - Southwestern. Well naturally all of them had people who were prejudice but those people who were fortunate enough to get to Southwestern. Colter Smith and Caddage and one of the north crosses did attend there and were able to matriculate without too much difficulty. We didn't hear much –

[0:39:00]

about the racial problems because he helped a different element of people as the people who went to Memphis State encountered. Strangely Arkansas State University over in Jonesboro was much more lenient and liberal.

Interviewer: So what happened to you while you were at University of Memphis?

Noah Bond: I ran into Carol Shumney's daddy. I was a history major and he was a history teacher I'll never forget. He was teaching that world – it was something _____. But anyway, I had a class with him. He was the most prejudice person that I've ever –

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encountered in my life. I knew I could express myself in the written form. *[Cell phone rings]* Dr. Shumney –

Interviewer: Sorry. She ———— ———— ————.[inaudible].

Noah Bond: I passed every test he gave and we had a final essay to write. I wrote it. He couldn't find any grammatical mistakes. So he wanted to fail me because the sentences were not evenly divided at the edges of the paper. I had to go over his head to the head of the department –

[0:41:00]

to make him change it. But he changed it. But in order to keep the publicity from being – because I really was going to do it they gave me a membership in the West Tennessee Historical Society. I was the first one of us to be admitted as a member. Of course the bribe was good enough because I had wanted to become a member of the West Tennessee Historical Society and I had applied but they had not accepted me until after that. I attended the first meeting with him. *[Cell phone rings]* But that was one of the experiences that I had at Memphis State that was rather difficult to –

[0:42:00]

---adjust to. Are there any other things that I need to tell you about? The experience of being there at that time was almost so difficult to explain, so painful to explain that most people don't even wish to discuss it because those were some painful experiences.

[7th Cut @ 00:42:34]

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Interviewer: When did you start teaching? Where was your first teaching job?

Noah Bond: My first teaching position was at – it's now in the city – Caperville, Tennessee. Of course needless to say they had two schools at Caperville. Now the one I taught at was a little red school. The restrooms facilities were outside but you could flush them. Have you heard of those kinds?

[0:43:00]

It had a well in the yard, a great big, round well. They had one great big room that four classes met in and the little side rooms

where the other four met. We had a big stove in the middle of the – a big wood burning stove in the middle of the big room and then the winter, the cold winters they'd have to rotate the children to warm them. We had a split session, a session beginning in November and ending at the first of May and then another session beginning in July and ending the middle of September.

[0:44:00]

Well the state mandated that children had to go to school 180 days but out in the areas now that's known as Fox Meadow old plantations where they grew cotton and children chopped and picked cotton and they went to Caperville ~~———~~[inaudible] and another school after then that they called Hickory Hill that was a two room school that they consolidated before they built the Caperville. All right, they got a hint that integration had to take form. They tore down that little school I'm just finishing describing and built a fabulously beautiful school that didn't have all the necessary equipment but the school was beautiful because they felt that this would keep people from wanting to attend the other schools.

[0:45:00]

Interviewer: Is this on Shelby Drive?

Noah Bond: It's on Shelby Drive.

Interviewer: Is it the one that they just tore down a few years ago?

Noah Bond: It burned but let me explain that. The land had to be donated by those black people that lived up there. Same thing was true in Spring Hill and all that. See, most of the black schools were begun in churches, in our churches and we didn't have public education for black people and schools until the turn of the last century, 1900. You know about that, don't you?

Interviewer: What year?

Noah Bond: 1900 when they – well the state mandated it. You had to educate them. This is why they had a split session. Okay, I'll never forget a teacher who was a strict disciplinarian and she told her children –

[0:46:00]

that they better be in class or instantly for ——[inaudible] too fast for you. They had a split session till 1962. All right, then '62 the state regulated the schools where all schools in the state had to start at the same date in September, the Monday after Labor Day. She had told her children in her room that they better not be anywhere but school. She had really put the fear in them that they had to be there. So she went on to work and the children came. But interestingly enough Mr. Ross who owned a big plantation and of course all letters sitting down the streets out there and a school is named for him drove his truck to the school and –

[0:47:00]

the children that were in her room all got up in a body and ran out and got in his truck. He didn't stop at the office. That was after the built the new school. He just came right to her room. I don't know how he knew where her room was and he told her, "Teacher, I know you've got your job to do and I've got mine but when I've got cotton to pick and cotton to chop everything that's big enough to have a sack or hoe is going to be in the field." Frightened the teacher almost to the way she had almost a heart attack. She later became the president of Memphis Education Association and lobbied against a school being named for him when it was built out there on his plantation.

Interviewer: Who was she?

Noah Bond: Madame Pearl Rufus.

[0:48:00]

Interviewer: What happened when the school started integrating and the kids were getting bussed? How did that affect the kids and the schools in our neighborhoods and stuff? What happened?

Noah Bond: When the school was separated naturally we had our own levels of what we believe should be in the curriculum to ensure success. We just had a different approach to education because this is one of the reasons I imagined it seemed feasible to integrate because separate can never be equal. But the thing that we did we had to make do with all of the equipment that was possibly –

[0:49:00]

obsolete and used. Most of our books had become obsolete by the time they were passed to black students. In fact the equipment

maps and at that time typewriters and like that they only gave the black schools maybe two or three typewriters and if you were studying business in a high school or whatever you'd have to sign up weeks ahead to use a typewriter. Computers were non-existent in black schools. It was designed so we would not become competent enough to compete on an educational level. It was designed like that. This is why when you hear people from my generation who can't –

[0:50:00]

express themselves and like that that's the reason for that.

[8th Cut @ 00:50:04]

I told you about the distance we had to go to even get a grammar school education. Of course walking that distance for a five or six year old child is daunting but it happened. In the winter and the summer and all of our schools were designed to where it would be almost a disadvantage. In the city of Memphis can you imagine only two high schools in the city that was almost the size of these now. One on the ~~and~~ far north Manassas and far south ~~. Four sets~~ Booker Washington. The people who lived in areas even like this you had to make your way to either one of those schools if you wanted a high school education.

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When they got wind of integration first thing they did they started building schools. They built Hamilton. But also at the same time they built East which was at that time was a show place. East is still fabulous. But they built Hamilton and we really felt that we were moving upward bound. They built that school and they built Melrose in order to keep ~~them~~ from the pressure from wishing to be integrated. But at the same time when they built these schools they didn't put in the libraries and into the labs. I mean they didn't have any of the things –

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well many of the things that they had in the other schools that would help you to compete at a level when you came out of high school to even become competent enough to even enter into a college. Am I making sense to you? Okay, therefore a person who had experiences and who had a bit of knowledge as to what was going to be necessary – I think this is what you alluded to – those teachers would work with those children one on one and try to do everything they could to get them prepared so they'd be able to

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compete at the levels that they should because we knew that it was much more difficult than it was in our communities –

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in order to move ahead. Did I answer your question?

Interviewer: Yeah, but how did it actually affect the teachers and the students when the bussing came about? Did the community sign up for that?

Noah Bond: Well the first thing that happened when they found out they had to integrate – that's a word we used at that time – they allowed those white principals to come into the schools to observe what teachers they wanted. I don't know about any black teachers that went into white schools, any black principals that went into a white school to observe. They were choosing, "I want this one. I want that one and the other one." Then they sent the worst teachers that they had mostly –

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into our schools. There was no preparation I knew in my case, no orientation as to what to expect or even give you the knowledge, "You're being transferred." They called me at 11:30 one night, one Sunday night and told me that I had to report – I went to ~~Carterville~~ Collierville first, to Collierville~~Carterville~~ High School. I'd never been there in my life. Didn't know anything about it. It was a total hostile situation that I had walked into. In fact I knew people who physically died who have had that kind of experience. You go there and it's very difficult to really make adjustments when you go that you –

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are not wanted. You go in the lounge and everybody move out. You know what I'm saying? You sit at the table – well this was in '65 and of course people ~~_____.~~ [inaudible]. You go and sit down for lunch and nobody wishes to sit near you. The few black people that they had there you would think they would have been supportive but they were frightened also. They acted as if we didn't exist for awhile.

Interviewer: Well what about the children? How'd the kids like? Did they like it or they were excited?

[Crosstalk]

Noah Bond: Children, you never trifled with them. Children didn't seem to look at color at all unless it was one or two that had probably been – but they fell in line with the other children. Children, it –

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takes a lot to cause them to – well they see the person. They aren't looking at color. They don't look at color ~~like~~. They see whether or not Ms. Taylor is giving me what I need.~~—~~

[End of Audio]