Audrey Perry Williams
Interview Summary

Interviewee: Audrey Perry Williams
Interviewers: Rachel Ricard and Inez Asiama
Interview date: October 18th, 2021
Location: Blackboard Collaborate
Length: 1 video file, MP4 format; 1 audio file, WAV format, 1:23:12

THE INTERVIEWEE: Audrey Perry Williams was born in Warwick County, Virginia, which would later became Newport News, Virginia. Williams has spent much of her life in Hampton Roads, from childhood to adulthood. She grew up in Newsome Park, a housing development created during World War II for Black military and shipyard families, and she has fond memories of the neighborhood's interconnectedness. She attended Carver High School, Norfolk State University, and Hampton University, citing similar fond memories and long-term relationships from each. She worked as a teacher for 10 years in Hampton City Public Schools and within various roles in the federal government for 23 years. She did not get involved in the civil rights movement growing up but, after attending Norfolk State University, she developed a passion for Black history and its preservation. She currently serves on the board of Project 1619 and as the president of the Hampton Roads chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

THE INTERVIEWERS: Rachel Ricard and Inez Asiama are seniors at Christopher Newport University. They are conducting this interview as part of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project, which aims to document the impact of the civil rights movement on local residents. Roads

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: The interview was conducted in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Williams was open about her life from the beginning of the interview, recalling family and personal experiences. She shares throughout the interview that she did not see, feel, and experience a lot of direct discrimination because of the nature of her childhood and educational institutions, but heard stories from others. She describes how her positions in Project 1619 and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History have provided her with opportunities to serve the community and educate individuals on Black history. She emphasizes throughout the interview the importance of preserving Black history and counteracting incorrect narratives.

Due to the virtual format of the interview, there are various points throughout the interview where the connection freezes and the recording pauses. In some cases, these pauses caused the affected parts of the recording to speed up to catch what was said during the pauses.

Audrey Perry Williams-Edited Transcript

Interviewee: Audrey Perry Williams

Interviewers: Rachel Ricard and Inez Asiama

Interview Date: October 18th, 2021

Location: Blackboard Collaborate

Length: 1 video file, MP4 format, 1 audio file, WAV format, 1:23:12

START OF INTERVIEW

Rachel Ricard: This is Rachel Ricard and my partner, Inez Asiama. Today is October 18th 2021. We are interviewing Ms. Audrey Williams. This interview is being carried out as part of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project at Christopher Newport University. Good Afternoon, Ms. Williams. How are you?

Audrey Williams: Good afternoon. How are you today?

RR: Pretty good. Today we're going to be taking what is called a life history and we'd love to begin our interview with a few questions about your childhood. So first off, where and when were you born?

AW: Was the question where was I born?

RR: Where and when were you born?

AW: Oh, I'm gonna tell you my age, that I'm old. [laughter] I was born November the 22nd, 1945, and the day I was born was Thanksgiving Day that year. And I was born in what was called, at the time, Warwick County, Virginia. Now it is known as Newport News, Virginia. They told my mother to hurry up and have this baby so she could eat some turkey. And she told them she could eat turkey anytime, so I'm a Thanksgiving baby, but my birthday doesn't come on Thanksgiving very often.

RR: That's so fun. What did your parents do for work?

AW: Well, my dad worked in the Newport News Shipyard. Now it's called Huntington-Ingalls. And my mother was, back then they called them beauticians, because she used to do hair. Today they call them, what? Hair stylists? But back in the day they called them beauticians.

Inez Asiama: And what were race relations like in the time that you grew up in?

AW: What was what?

IA: Race relations like in the time that you grew up in?

AW: The racial climate–. Well, the problem when I grew up was, we grew up in a segregated neighborhood. We went to segregated schools. And so we didn't come across too much as far as racial climate or people not wanting to deal with you because you were Black. I think it was because–. (2:36-2:40; recording pauses) We had our own supermarket, we had a drug store, the beauty salon where my mom worked, the barber shop, the cleaners. Everything was there. So we didn't run into too many things unless–.. I remember as a little girl going with my mother over town to Washington Avenue and we went to a store and my mother was waiting there and she said–. (3:14-3:16; recording pauses) [And the clerk] saw my mom but she went and waited on this white lady, and my mother said, "Excuse me, but I was here first." And she said, "Oh, oh, I didn't see you," so she came over so–. And we went to segregated schools. So our climate was not what people are dealing with, you know, today as growing up, because we were sheltered. We were really sheltered. We didn't know too much, too many problems, when we were growing up.

RR: You grew up in Newsome Park, is that correct?

AW: Yes.

RR: Can you tell us a little bit about how that environment felt for you?

AW: It was a segregated neighborhood, and the houses were built by the federal government for military [computer sound] people who were stationed here, and for Blacks who came to this area to work in the shipyard. So I grew up in a neighborhood where it was one big family. It was like people could speak to you, they could correct you and you better [behave] (4:25-4:27; recording pauses). And my mother being a beautician, everybody knew her and they knew us. They didn't know our names but they knew we were Perry's girls and if they saw us somewhere they didn't think we were supposed to be they would call my mom and say, "Do you know Audrey so and so and so," or whatever. So, it was–. Newsome Park was–. And we did everything in Newsome Park. Our school was there, like I said our stores, the–. Everybody was– (4:58-5:01; recording pauses) [We used to hold] reunions up until COVID hit, so we may hopefully get back next year. But it was a love that, you know–. It's just like people today who grew up in Newsome Park, we're still family and I don't care–. I have traveled a lot and one day I was walking [laughter]--I was in Denver, Colorado for a conference–and I was walking down the street and who did I see but somebody I grew up with in Newsome Park. So you're all family. So it was (5:33-5:38; recording pauses) [a] fantastic neighborhood and one of the things I do remember today is that so many of our children don't have that. You know, people live in neighborhoods, they don't connect, you know. And, you know–. And so I think that was one of the great things about Newsome Park, is that everybody–. And if you needed something to eat, you were going to get it, you know.

We had nobody going hungry or needing anything because the families helped each other.

IA: That's good. And were you active in the church or religious community when you were growing up?

AW: What was that question about the church?

IA: I said were you active in the church or religious community when you were growing up?

AW: Oh, yes, yes. I had no choice. [laughter] At my age–I am 75–and we grew up in church. We spent every Sunday in church unless you were sick or dead. And we were there all day, (6:43-6:47; recording pauses) [11] o'clock service, then we would go home and eat dinner, come back at 5 o'clock. We had what they call Baptist Training Union, BTU, now they call it youth church. But we would come back at 5 for that. And at 7 we would have night service. And sometimes we would have music or somebody would preach. So yes, I grew up in the church, every Sunday. I had no choice. My two sisters and I–I had one that was younger and she and I were very close. (7:19-7:21; recording pauses) But my older sister (7:22; recording pauses) didn't actually associate with us. So it was the two of us–-my younger sister and I–together all the time. And my mom sang in the choir. And on the Sundays she sang in the choir, my younger sister, Louise, and I would sit on the front pew. And if she had to come out, she used to say, "If I have to come out of that choir stand for any foolishness, I'm going to take both of you downstairs, beat you to death, bring you back up here, and dare you to cry." So we didn't act up. [laughter].

RR: Moving–

AW: I loved going to church it was really a– (7:59; recording pauses) [good experience].

RR: Yeah, moving–

AW: And I have been at that same church all my life.

RR: That's amazing. Moving up a little bit, what schools did you attend? I know you went to Carver High School. What other schools?

AW: Well, we went to elementary school in Newsome Park and it was from one to six, grades one to six. And the year I went into the sixth grade, they moved the sixth graders all to Carver Elementary School, except for my class. So my class was the only sixth grade class at Newsome Park. And they moved us next to the principal's office. I don't know why. Maybe they thought we would be some trouble, I don't know. Then I went to Carver High School, grades eighth through twelfth. I went to Norfolk State University from '63 to '67 and I got a Bachelor of Arts in History [and Social Sciences.] (9:00-9:04; recording pauses] [I also earned my M.A. in History Education] from Hampton University 1972 and I been doing like–. I have studied at University of Virginia, places like that. But my highest degree is a masters because, when I retired, I figured I didn't want to study anymore. [laughter] So I don't have a Ph.D. but those are the schools I went to.

IA: And what was it like attending desegregated schools?

AW: Well, when– (9:36-9:40; recording pauses) And then they moved–. Desegregation did not start in Newport News until, when they closed the schools in '71 and then that's when they moved to the desegregated schools. They go where they're all mixed. So I didn't have an opportunity to do that. I did teach when they were desegregating and that was interesting [computer sound].

IA: Oh, I am sorry, I meant what was it like to attend these segregated schools.

AW: Oh, okay, I am sorry.

IA: What was the experience like?

AW: I think that–. (10:18; recording pauses) Yeah, because one of the things that we found attending the segregated schools were the fact that our teachers used to tell us we had to know twice as much. So when we graduated, I am telling you, I didn't realize how smart I was–because I didn't think I was that smart–but I didn't realize how smart I was until I went into the work world. When I graduated college and went to work and (10:51-10:55; recording pauses) [had white supervisors]. They had degrees, but they couldn't spell, they couldn't write, they did not understand subject-verb agreement, it was very interesting. But I mean it was like a family environment. And your teachers–we had some teachers that lived in Newsome Park with us. And everybody knew my mom because, as I said, she was a beautician. So I didn't act up. Only problem I had was that I talked a lot. [laughter]

RR: That's okay.

AW: And they didn't bother us. They didn't bother us when we wanted to take trips and stuff. I played in the orchestra and, at the time, Carver was the only school in the city with an orchestra. That included Black or white. So whenever Mrs. Davis wanted to take us somewhere, the school board didn't care as long as they didn't ask them for any money. So we would go somewhere every year. We would go on trips. And she would also–. Our parents [paid] (11:59-12:03; recording pauses) because we were a Black school. But we traveled and Mrs. Davis exposed us to so much. When we went to Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home, and the University of Virginia, we were the only

Blacks on campus. And this was in the sixties. But we were exposed. Every time any musician or play or program came to Hampton University, she made sure that we went. So we got (12:34-12:37; recording pauses) [a lot of exposure]. And I think that our teachers, too. And one of the things we realized, too, is that our Black teachers had to have degrees, but the white teachers only had certificates. They didn't have degrees until later on, when they sued the city for, you know, equal pay. Because they [Black teachers] had degrees and they got less money than they [the white teachers] did. But I graduated in 1963. (13:08-13:12; recording pauses) [My class is still] in touch with each other to this day. We know when somebody dies, somebody's child does something great. But we still communicate because we had that camaraderie. I mean, and even the very people who were well to do, and those that didn't have too much, we're still connected. I think that was one of the things, that we had to stick together, because, you know, we only had each other.

RR: Kind of going off of what you were saying about the teachers suing for equal pay, did you notice–. Like were you aware of how the conditions were different at your schools compared to those of local white schools?

AW: Definitely, because we used to get–. We never got new books. If we did, they were few and far between. All the books that came to us had the white schools' names on them. And sometimes they would arrive with the pages torn out. (14:19-14:23; recording pauses) Also, so we never–. Very seldom had new books. And I took chemistry. We had very few microscopes because they didn't, the school, the city, didn't furnish them to us. So we had limited resources. But our teachers made them work. So it wasn't like, you know, we didn't get because we didn't have. They did and [for] some of the things, they

would use their own money. And teachers still do that today. To buy things that would, you know, assist us. (14:56-14:59; recording pauses). It was like you don't realize that until you grow up and you look back because we really didn't feel left out, you know, or neglected, because we had so much going on at our school.

IA: Do you remember any teachers who had a special influence over you?

AW: Yes, and that was my teacher in the seventh–. (15:31-15:33; recording pauses) (Mrs. Nottingham? 15:34). It was just something about her that she cared so much for us and she would always take time with us. And so much so that when I graduated from high school, I went to college, [and] I became an AKA because of her. That was the reason why. I mean, first of all, I didn't know anything about Greeks, you know, because I'm the first college graduate in my family, on both sides. (16:04-16:08; recording pauses) And so– But Mrs. Nottingham was just, I mean–. You know, she never raised her voice. But she was my favorite. I still remember her and, like I said, that is why I became an AKA.

RR: So what were your favorite subjects to study in school?

AW: Believe it or not, I really didn't– (16:38-16:43; recording pauses) I did like Spanish a little bit, but I don't think I had a favorite subject. But I did like Spanish. But over a period of time, you know, as I started college and everything, my favorite subject is history. Especially Black history. I love history, that is my passion. But in school, I don't think I had a favorite. I didn't like science [laughter]. I didn't like that. And I didn't care too much for math because our– (17:12-17:16; recording pauses) With the geometry and trigonometry, things like that. That was very difficult. But I didn't have a favorite subject in high school.

IA: Were you involved in any things like extracurricular activities outside of school?

AW: Well, other than the things with the church–and my sister and I took piano lessons. And– (17:47-17:50; recording pauses) The community of the arts, they would teach us. We had tap, and they taught us ballet, and we would have music appreciation. We would go to different, you know, from different places doing that. Our mother involved us in–. Every time somebody had something that she thought we needed to go to, we went. And I even went to New York with a group out of Hampton because they were going up there. (18:21-18:25; recording pauses). (And my sister ended up in Europe? 18:26). You know, so, we had stuff outside of our schools but probably not what the other schools–white schools–had. But we didn't miss anything. We had places to go, community center, the YWCA, and the Newport News Phyllis Wheatley YWCA. And there were always things for us. And Girl Scouts. My sister and I belonged to the Girl Scouts. And we sold–. Every time it came time to sell cookies, my sister and I sold the most cookies. But listen to this– (19:02-19:05; recording pauses) [My dad–.] He didn't want us out there selling them, so he sold all of our cookies and we always got an award. But today they don't allow them to do that in the shipyard. They can't sell stuff like that. But they supported one another there. So if somebody else had something, my dad would buy from them. But my sister and I always won and any tickets we had, we never sold anything, because my dad sold them .

RR: So you graduated from Carver in 1963, almost a decade after the *Brown v. Board* ruling. So I know you went to segregated schools, but were you aware of any desegregation happening in Virginia or anywhere else, and what were your thoughts on that if you did?

AW: Well, from what I was aware of, is the one where they closed the school to keep them from desegregating. They wanted to integrate. But never–. You would hear– (20:10-20:13; recording pauses) We were so sheltered, it just never crossed our minds until it happened. And when they closed those schools in 1971, it was like a bombshell because many of those students who were in the schools, of Huntington and Carver in Newport News, they didn't even know they were not going back. They closed the schools. But many of them had purchased their rings and everything. So they didn't even know they weren't going back to those schools. So that was, I think, the biggest thing. (20:44-20:47; recording pauses). I never talked about it. It was just one of those things.

IA: So after you graduated from Carver, you attended Norf[olk] State University. How was your experience at an HBCU compared to an integrated or predominately white school or university?

AW: Well, you know, once again, I think, back during that time–. I still believe in HBCUs, I really do. And I think that what I found there, once again, the same thing that we have in– (21:21-21:25; recording pauses. [They] cared about me. And they wanted to ensure that you'd be successful. And their doors were always open, if you wanted to go, if you had a problem. I was taking this class, it was political theory. And it was just, it was not my favorite subject. I was having such a hard time, but every–at least twice a week–I would go to my professor's office and he would assist me. Ao I ended up passing with a C instead of a D. (21:56-22:00; recording pauses) I think they cared about us and they provided us an opportunity to be educated. Because, even though there were some, you know, white schools that, you know, accepted Blacks–. But you know, I went there because I was the only–. Some people did go other places, but I'm glad I went to a

HBCU, because I think the camaraderie that we had, even today–. Like I said, I graduated from there in ‘67, but I’m still connected to people that graduated with me. I’m involved in the alumni association. (22:32-22:35; recording pauses) I really think there’s a need for them today, because they’re–. I think they provided us an opportunity for a second chance. Because at Norfolk State, one thing that Dr. Brooks wanted when that school was founded is for everybody to have an opportunity. So you could come to Norfolk State, even if you barely graduated, but you had to get your grades. You didn’t graduate if you didn’t become successful. But they worked with you. They had remedial programs, all kinds of– (23:08-23:12; recording pauses) I tell students all the time that if you don’t graduate in four years, don’t worry about that because some people don’t get everything they need in four years. So just do the best you can and come out when you can. But I’m definitely–. I’m an advocate of HBCUs, even today.

RR: Yeah, so you were attending Norfolk State University not too long after your son Johnie was born. So what was it like to be raising a young child and attending school?

AW: (23:43-23:47; recording pauses) My mom took care of everything. Took care of him. All I did was go to school. My mom took care of him because, see, what happened was my dad died 22 days before my son was born. So therefore we were in, you know, our whole family just were in shock. Because he died the day my sister, my younger sister, was supposed to graduate from high school. So therefore, because he was supposed to be the babysitter–. He was supposed to be my babysitter while I was in school (24:16-24:20; recording pauses). My mom–. I said, “Well, what are we gonna do?” And she said, “We’re gonna make it work.” So she took him to work with her on Tuesday and Wednesday–because on Monday they were closed. But Tuesday and Wednesday, she

took my son with her and had a little bassinet, a playpen at the shop. And on Thursday and Friday, my aunt kept him. So I tell people all the time that I was very, very fortunate. I didn't miss not one class, and when I went to work I never missed anything. (24:50-24:55; recording pauses) I never had to worry about my son or if he needed anything. Never had to worry about that.

IA: So, when you did choose to become a history teacher, what made you choose to–specifically–to be a history teacher?

AW: Well, after a while, you know, I had this professor at Norfolk State, a Dr. Simmons. And I– (25:24-25:28; recording pauses) [He made Black] history so meaningful. And I remember growing up, we had all those magazines–the *Jet*, the *Ebony*. Anything dealing with Black history, we always had it. So I was around it but I always thought it was boring [laughter]. But after I got in his class, and I developed an interest for it–. Because I said, "We as a people, we have a fascinating story that is still–." There's still so much to be told that each and every day I learn something different, and I am–. I think because of my love for history, you know, I have a desire more to learn more, to ensure that– (26:18-26:22; recording pauses) I contacted the state board of education in Virginia about those SOLs, because I said they are–. First of all, they are not accurate. And there are other things we need to be teaching. And they have changed them some but, you know, I still think there's more to be done. But I love it. And my granddaughter, who went to a predominately white school–college–and she came home. And so she went back home and this guy, they had a contest going. And then she called me and said, "Gran Audrey, I just got nine out of ten right and the man asked me why I was so smart." I said, "Nine out of ten what?" She said "Black history questions." [And she said,] "And I told the man

because my grandma talks all the time and she thinks I'm not listening [laughter], but I'm listening to her." And she won some kind of prize–I don't know if it was a gift card or what–for $10.00, because she knew nine out of ten answers. And I talk about it all the time. You know, I try not to, so don't get me started on something because then I got to talk about it [laughter].

RR: Okay, I know you said you taught during integration. What years did you teach in Hampton Public Schools?

AW: I taught from 1971 to 1981. I taught at Kecoughtan and Bethel High School. And so when I taught at Kecoughtan in 1971–I went in in December of '71–there were six Black teachers on the faculty, that's all. And three of them, or four of us, were in the history department [laughter]. And the other two, one was in business and one was industrial arts.

RR: What were the relations–

AW: But it was interesting.

RR: What were the relationships between white and Black faculty members and administrators?

AW: Well, you know, we had a good relationship, really, you know, because some of it–. You know, I didn't experience any negativity from the faculty. And we would go to like football games and then have like after parties and stuff together. And meet each other. So, I didn't experience anything. There might have been some, but I didn't experience any. As matter of fact, one of my best friends just died a couple years ago and she was teaching history with me. And I hadn't seen or heard from her in a long time because she moved away. And then her son lives here so he brought her home. But we, you know, I

didn't experience anything. Now as far as the students were concerned, I had one class that I was the only Black person in the class, teaching history, so that was interesting. I had a few issues there, but, you know, nothing serious that I couldn't handle [laughter].

IA: So how did would you describe–. I know you were talking about the students and you had one class where you were just the only Black person in the room, how would–

AW: Yes.

IA: How would you describe the relationships between the white and Black students at these desegregated schools? Did you ever get to see them interact?

AW: Yeah, but at the time there wasn't many. There were not many Black students there. And, like I said, I didn't witness anything. It might have been something there. But the relationship that I had in my class with the students when I had a mixture–still the whites outnumbered the Blacks–I didn't have a problem. But I'm not saying it didn't exist. The one thing I realized that– (30:27-30:31; recording pauses) And therefore, I didn't see that in the students, you know. I did, like I said, I did run into one incident where we were supposed to have a test one day. And so when I went in there, in the class, a student, this young man, said, "Ms. Williams, we still having the test today?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, why can't we vote?" And I said, "Well, the majority's already ruled." And he said, "But we didn't vote." I said, "But I did, and in this room I am the majority." So he looked at me, and he didn't say anything and we went on but, you know–. I guess it depends on what– (31:07-31:12; recording pauses) (31:16) And they used to say, "Ms. Williams, you the smartest thing in here. What are you going to do?" And I used to laugh with them, but I never had any real problem with them. I left teaching because I got tired of the, I guess, the other part. As far as the students, I could deal with them. But when they started, you

know, like believing that students had certain rights and certain things you couldn't do and no discipline–lack of discipline–that was, you know, that was coming during that time–. (31:50-31:56; recording pauses) [I had a problem with one student] in class and they called him to the office and the principal said, "Well, Mrs. Williams, we don't have anywhere to send him during that period" and I said, "Well, he can't come back in here, so you got to find somewhere for him." So and they always try to, you know–. It got to the point where it was always you. You know and, so I said, "Well–." And then I was, I had had enough [laughter]. So I just quit. I quit in 1981 and I walked away.

RR: How would you say the sch--

AW: It wasn't all bad.

RR: How would you say the school board handled integration and all of those issues?

AW: WellI, you know, in Hampton, I don't think it was that bad, or that noticeable, let's put it like that. I imagine it was. I didn't know. And, you know, we were not exposed to that, at least I was not. I imagine somebody else may have been. But in Hampton–. I think Hampton was more receptive to integration than Newport News, so we didn't have the major problems. I'm not saying they didn't happen. They had problems, but they handled them differently, I think.

IA: Do you know much about how–the role of busing played in school desegregation in the area?

AW: Well, for us, if you lived close enough to the school you had to walk. But we were bused. And if you were a–. Our buses were crowded–. (33:47-33:51; recording pauses) But the school, if you lived close to Carver, then you walked. But as far as when they started really integrating, I imagine they did have some problems on the buses. But, once

again, I did not experience them and so therefore, you know, I cannot say that I know of any specific problems. But I'm quite sure they did, because once again, you know, there are always gonna be people that don't want things to go smoothly. But I don't think it was really as bad as maybe some other places.

RR: You mentioned that Hampton seemed to handle integration a little bit better than Newport News. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

AW: Well, I think for the fact that, in Hampton, they had more integrated neighborhoods, whereas in Newport News you had predominantly Black areas and predominantly white areas. So in Hampton, the students, you know, kinda– (35:03-35:07; recording pauses) You know, being in Newport News. And I think also, the biggest problem was they were told that if you don't integrate, then federal funds would be shut off. So that makes a difference because the states can't do a lot by themselves. And they get federal funding and they get money from the federal government. So I think Hampton saw that it's probably best that we go ahead and do this because it's not going to get any better, it's a long time coming. And in some places in the country, schools were already integrated because they had so few people in the town that, you know, the Black and white kids went together. So it depended on where you were.

IA: And so, as a graduate of Carver High School, how did you feel when it was converted into an intermediate school as part of the integration process?

AW: Well, of course it bothered me because of the fact that they only made the Black schools middle schools. And they came and took what we had and made them middle schools. So we didn't– (36:31-36:35; recording pauses) It didn't matter, they did what they wanted to do. And now that, you know, with Huntington, they closed that and the

middle school down. And at, one time, they were talking about not rebuilding it, but the alumni and the other Black people said, "No. You have to build that school. That school is old. That school has been around for a long time." And the fact is that Huntington,the money for Huntington, was provided by (37:05-37:10; recording pauses) [Collis P. Huntington] who owned the shipyard. And so his money–he felt that the Black students should have equal opportunity in Newport News. And he provided the money–. Because Huntington had a tennis court. That's what he provided. And see, Carver was in Warwick County. So, we were in two different places: Carver was in Warwick County, Huntington was in Newport News. And when they [Warwick County and Newport News] merged– (37:44-37:48; recording pause) Believe it or not, I still question it today, to this day, why they called it Newport News because Warwick County had the most land. Warwick County land went from the railroad track on 39th street all the way up to Lee Hall. And Newport News went from the railroad track to Sixth Street. So what was the logic behind them naming Newport News? I don't know [laughter]. But I think that– (38:19-38:24; recording pauses) You know, they did make it–they changed the name to Crittenden Middle School. We accept that now because of Ms. Crittenden. But we still, you know, miss that Carver. But we still have the Carver spirit. The graduates, we still are here, and we still are waving that blue and gold flag. We love Carver High School.

RR: So moving a little bit past schooling, what were your experiences and feelings surrounding the civil rights movement, locally and beyond?

AW: Well I think, we– (39:05-39:10; recording pauses). I think it was necessary. And once again where we had–we didn't see too much of it here. It was only when it got on national news that we started seeing more and more of it. I think it was a long time

coming, but it's still–. We're a long way from everybody having equal rights. And I think that has a lot to do with, more than anything else, the history of over 200 years of being enslaved people and how we were treated. There are still so many people that have that mentality and really don't think that we are deserving of anything. And I know when they started the civil rights movement, the sit-ins and things like that, I had an older sister that was going to Norfolk State at the time. And my mom had told us, "Don't you go over there and sit-in," and sure enough she did [laughter]. So they didn't, you know, back then–. She was four years older than me. But I was worried about her because my mother had told her not to do it and she did it anyway. And then the students from Hampton University. So we did see some of it, but not to the extent that we know went on the national level. But we were exposed to it, and like I said, we had–. Some of my friends who went to Hampton University they talk about, you know, going to sit-in and you know, like that. And I remember what we did see first, they integrated lunch counters over town in Newport News. It was like–I think it was Woolworth that had the lunch counter. I can't remember which one it was. And we went (41:10-41:15; recording pauses) [and I ordered] chocolate ice cream and chocolate milk. And then my mother told the lady, "Don't bring her all that chocolate" [laughter]. I said, "Those are my favorites." And when we got home she told my dad, "Audrey sit up there and order all that chocolate" and I said, "Well, that's what I like." But, we didn't run into any problems there, you know, while we were there. But one of my friends, one of my sorority sisters, is from South Carolina. And she's a little older than I am, too, and she says that her father could pass for white. And she and her mother and sister got arrested for going to a lunch counter, and they put them in jail, and so her family had to go get them. And what her

dad did was the next day, he went to that same counter, ate, had a full meal and everything and just enjoyed himself, and they came by and said, "Anything else I can do for you sir?" And he said, "Well, I just wanted to thank you for this lovely meal and let you know that you served a negro today." So these are things, the stories you hear, you know. (42:26-42:30; recording pauses) In South Carolina, where she was from. And not to drown her 'cause she only weighed less than a hundred pounds. But those–. We didn't have those experiences here. Or I can't relate too much to it. But I remember the stories from people telling me.

IA: Can you think of one moment in your own life that stands out to you as a turning point for [the] civil rights movement, both for Hampton Roads and you as an individual person yourself? I know you had said you didn't experience too much, but if you could think of one turning point in your life for the civil rights movement, anything you participated in at all?

AW: Well I think that one of the turning points is when we had the opportunity to go to the library. (43:20-43:26; recording pauses) We had the opportunity to go to the library and to sit anywhere we wanted to, to check out the books. Because I remember not being able to go to the library. And when you did go, they had, you know, "white" and "colored" restrooms. And the opportunity–. And I would say going to the doctor's office, because we still had, separate [doctors], you know. We had white doctors, but there were some that treated Blacks. And even though we had a separate waiting room, I do remember that changes happened with that. At least, it wasn't as dark, you know. So I mean, these are little things that I remember as a child that I imagine the civil rights movement had an effect on, because we used to go [and] I had to sit in the "colored"

waiting room. And it'd be dark in there and just dreary, but after a while it got so we still had to sit back there, but it was bright, it had some lights back there, and it was a little bit different. So those are things I remember, you know. Just, 'cause we didn't have that exposure to like some people.

RR: After you left teaching, you became involved in the federal government as an educational specialist. How did that happen? How did that come about?

AW: Well, believe it or not, [laughter] after I quit, I went to work at a snack bar, cooking. I just, I was burnt out. I didn't want to do that no more. So I had a friend that worked for the federal government at Fort Eustis at the time, and she said "Audrey, they're getting [ready to hire] (45:23-45:28; recording pauses) interns, and they're gonna hire twenty of them." Because they were getting ready to establish a new program for education specialists, people to help them design, to help train them. So every week or so she'd bring me applications and I'd apply for everything. And so finally, I applied for that, and I got accepted. There were twenty-three of us, I think it was, and we went to work. I went there in March of 1982. And the program, as an education specialist intern, you had to have so many hours of education. Even though my degree was in history, you had to have so many hours of education, which I had because, being a teacher, you had to have–I think it was–eighteen hours in education. Like the methods of teaching, psychology of education, all that. Well, I got hired. There was twenty-three of us. And so you start out as a seven–. As a five, seven, nine, those are the grades. And when you complete the program, you have to go wherever they send you. So I ended up going to Fort Belvoir. And then I came back. I got a promotion and came back, working for the Navy, 'cause I was working for the Army at Fort Belvoir. And I came back, worked for the Navy. Then I

went to work for–after I left the Navy–the Coast Guard. I worked for the Coast Guard, and I was the first Black professional person on that base, the one in Yorktown, Virginia. And they gave me a grade of an eleven. And I was the first–the only–Black professional. All the other Black women that worked, worked in the snack bar. And one day I was walking on the base and this guy came to me, he said, “Ma’am, do you work here?” And I said, “Yes I do.” He said, “Well, I just want you to know, we are so glad to have you.” So they didn’t have anyone on–. I stayed there for about eight years. And then the Coast Guard changed. They got a lot of young Blacks. And then they began to make demands, and they pulled me in with them, and I said “I’m the oldest thing there.” But they asked me to come to their meetings. And they (47:43) began to demand certain things. They said they wanted more Black history programs. And it made a difference. But then I left there. I went to the Marine Corps, intelligence. And then I ended up, after that, I got a promotion there as a twelve. Then I went to FDIC in Northern Virginia and I got a thirteen, fourteen. So, it was just amazing, you know. But the thing is, because I had those education hours–like I said, my degree was in history–so I had that experience. And even once I became an education specialist, my mission was still educating because what we had to do was provide training for the military. And so I would be working with the subject matter specialist designing, developing, and implementing training. So we still did, you know, education.

IA: And, so I know you just described a bit of your experience there, so how would you say over the years the experience evolved? And then, also, did you ever experience any racial tensions when you were working in the federal government?

AW: What was the first part of that question?

IA: How would you say your experience evolved over the years? I know you just described that a bit though.

AW: Yeah, I did. I did run into some, some issues, but I think it was more (49:18-49:22; recording pauses) working, when I was working for the Coast Guard. And then probably being a Black woman as the education specialist, I ran into some issues there with white male officers. And that was because they thought they knew everything. Okay. But I tried to tell them, I said, “Now you are the subject matter expert, but I am the education expert.” And when I tell those subject matter experts to do something that’s educationally sound, then that’s what they should do. But we went, and he come in there, and we got to arguing. And I went in, and I told the Colonel, I said, “Colonel, I’m here to tell you this: that you need to tell him that I am the education specialist, and if I tell them something wrong and it comes back, then that’s when we have a problem.” So, I did run into issues dealing with white male officers, really, in both the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps. Not with the Army, because when I was working with the Army, everybody in my section, everybody was white but me. I was the only Black person in my section. But, those officers in the Army–I mean the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps–I had problems with them. So I did, you know–. But like I said, when I went to FDIC, I didn’t have any. I was in a new environment so– (50:58-51:02; recording pauses). But what I ran into there, any civil rights things, was the fact that in most of my jobs, except for teaching, I was usually the only woman. But when I went to work for the FDIC, my whole branch were all women. And I was the only Black professional. But (the admin’s? 51:23) [staff] sister was Black. And I was not used to being micromanaged, you know, getting to work on time, sending emails about people getting to work on time. So that was not a racial thing,

but, working in the military environment, it's a lot different than working with civilians. So I only lasted three years there before I retired. It was not–although I made good money–it was not a good environment. (51:52-51:57; recording pauses). Working in the military, they used to tell me that as long as the work was done, nobody was looking for anything, they didn't care where I was [laughter]. Or if I got there. But I always got there on time and I did my job. So, those were some of the issues that I evolved with. I think it's being Black, of course that, and then there's being a female. A smart female, I have to say. [laughter]

RR: Do you think that intersectionality of your race and gender exasperated the issues or do you think it would have been similar if you just had one or the other?

AW: I think it was–. [pause] I think it was both because being a woman, especially with the Marine Corps, was bad enough. 'Cause Marines, I don't know if you've ever had experience with them, they have a different–. Well, I don't want to talk about it now because I don't know how it is now. But they had a different mentality towards women, at the time because they used to still refer to them as women Marines. You know, they just, they would call them women. They didn't call them privates, you know, all of it. So they always had an issue. (53:09-53:13; recording pauses) [Many had a problem with] a female, and then being Black, and then the one to make that final say on what they did. And they were not used to that, and I think it made a difference.

IA: Alright, so, in the time we have left we would like to know more about your community work. So you served as the Board of Directors for Project 1619, as the secretary. The goal of the project was to preserve and honor African American history in Hampton, Virginia. Can you tell us how you got involved?

AW: Yeah, I served on the Board of Directors for Project 1619, and we are actively teaching our correct narrative about the first enslaved landing in 1619. And we spend a lot of time doing that. The President of our board, he does an awful lot of our work out there telling our story. But I also go out, you know. I haven't done too much now because of COVID, but I spend a lot of time (54:30-54:34; recording pauses) at other places teaching, you know, our history. Not only about Hampton but just anything that deals with us. And being the President of ASALH, you know,the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, in this area, we do a lot with churches, schools. I even went to a daycare. A little pre-K that, you know, age four. I went and worked with them, teaching them, because I don't think they're ever too young to learn. And so, like I said, since COVID I don't go out, you know, because I have–. I don't go out now because of that. But I'm very active in the community and I go wherever anybody needs me, or wants me to speak about Black history, because I believe it's important. If we leave it up to the other people to tell it, it's not going to be told accurately. Because you see that narrative trying to want you to– (55:40-55:45; recording pauses). They want the teachers to teach an alternative to the Holocaust. They don't want them to know–. They want them to give them an alternative to what some other people have said and not the actual truth. Well, we still, you know, have that–and same with us because, definitely, they don't want you to teach slavery. But you cannot teach American history without teaching slavery, because we are the economic backbone of this country. They would not be here if it were not for our over 200 [years of enslaved labor.] (56:14-56:18; recording pauses) We need to teach it, we need to. And you don't teach it blaming people. That's not the issue. The issue is to teach the history and then you determine if you wanna blame

somebody. But that's not what we should be doing. We should be teaching it. Teach the facts and move on. And you make your own opinion. You know, 'cause that's where you're gonna run into problems–not only history but anything else–when you try to put your opinions into it. But, so, I think that that's–. You know, I love that. And then like I said, I'll talk to anybody,I love to talk [laughter]. And especially like I said, when you're talking about our history, I'm willing to do that.

RR: Being on the Board of Directors for Project 1619, what was it like when the [*New York*] *Times* tried to create their own very problematic version of the project?

AW: The problem with that is that she–. You know, when she did her story, no one ever contacted us. And we have a website and everything. And some of the information that she is putting out is really, you know, it's not accurate. And she really didn't–. And so right now, what we get on our website, we still get a lot of hate mail from people who think we were a part of that. And our director, Calvin Pearson, has contacted the *New York Times* several times and they–you know, he has sent the corrections–and they don't want to talk to him. But we still–. Matter of fact, we got one email that was really so harsh that we sent it to the FBI in Norfolk because we considered it was a threat. So it's a lot of people out there that don't agree with what she's saying because it's not accurate. And then she's gotten so much hype and stuff like that. We have been trying but, you know–. And even though she's African American or Black, it's still not accurate, what she does, what she says. But she's getting a lot of accolades, and they wanna give her all these awards and things like that. But we have definitely been trying to avoid that, or to counteract that, but have not been too successful, on the global scale. (58:55-58:59; recording pauses) [We have] in other parts, but globally, she is still going for 1619.

IA: So how did you become president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History?

AW: You are asking me how did I become the president? Well, I didn't want to. But what happened was, we got our charter in 2012. And our president got sick and she couldn't be president anymore–because I was active as the treasurer–and when she stepped down nobody else wanted to take it or do it. And so I only did it, because I didn't want the branch to fold and because we had made so many, you know, we had made a lot of headway in this area. And we never had a branch in this area but we have branches throughout the country. So that's why I became president. And I think I have a desire to do it, although sometimes–. You know, I've got two more years to serve, and I want to step down but I don't want the branch to fold. So that's how I became president. And I love it, you know–. (1:00:24)

RR: What do you think is the most important aspect of the organization, and the most important thing that you guys do?

AW: I think the most important thing that we do is–. Dr. Woodson's mission was that we tell our story accurately. That's what his mission is, and that was why the association was formed. Because, as I said, our story is not being told accurately. And he wanted us to ensure that it was told accurately. And one of the most riveting things we talked about is the one, you know, about Juneteenth becoming a national holiday and that day was the end of slavery in the United States. But that's not true. That is not accurate. That is not accurate at all because it didn't even free all the slaves in Texas. Because you didn't have telephones, or telegraphs, so there's no way the word got to everybody in Texas just on that day. It did not include the border states. It did not include the territories that we own.

And it did not include, like I said, the border states and the northern states, 'cause they had slaves in the north. So slavery did not officially end in the United States until December the 5th, 1865, when all of the necessary states ratified the 13th amendment. And see that's–. Things like that, you know, people don't know. So we make it our point to, whenever we hear, you know, hear something we tell them.

IA: So you've also served as the head of the reunion committee for Newsome Park, correct?

AW: Yes. Yep. I served on that too, because we started over twenty-some years ago. And the man that started it came to our house–'cause he knew my mom–and we started it. And like I said, up until COVID, we used to have it every year. So we're hoping, maybe, to go back next year, because people look forward to it. Because it's a camaraderie that I can't describe. It's just amazing. Even if you don't know anybody personally, if they said "I grew up in Newsome Park," the first thing you say is, "Where? Where did you live? Who did you live next to?" Because we knew someone from every part of it. We didn't know everybody, but if we meet somebody and they say, "I grew up with so and so and so." And we've got people now that–. We have families that will come out for the reunion. We have people that come out with tents, and they'd have their old address in front of the tent. And a family will be there. And so we just had people that come from all over, that come back here, for that one day event. So it's an amazing event and I'm hoping that we'll get to go back to it next year.

IA: So, you basically just went into this, but in just a few short sentences can you tell us why it was such an important experience for you?

AW: Because, I think, of the way we just stay connected. We stay connected with each other. And I think that's important because, you know, we as a people–. When I grew up in Newsome Park, we were a family. You don't see too much of that today. Not a whole community, is what I'm saying. And that's why it's important that we stay connected, and– (1:04:02-1:04:05; recording pauses) Like going to Carver, we still connect when we can. And people that I have not seen in fifty years, I still talk to them. Over fifty years! But I still email them, or call them on the phone, you know. And that's the same with the Newsome Park group. It's just–. It's important for us to keep this history alive. 'Cause we can tell stories. We had a baseball team in Newsome Park. You know, that, Mr. Enoch–. And they played. And they went all the way to North Carolina and won the championship. So we have a lot of history, you know, in that place.

RR: Besides all of your activities that aim at preserving African American history, I know you have a lot of different volunteer commitments too, through churches and different local organizations. Can you tell us a little bit about those?

AW: Well, my local organizations I'm in?

RR: Like your volunteer commitments.

AW: Wel, I volunteer–. Well, I'll tell you one of the things I do is I am a–. We have a program at our church where we work with our students. I mean, I work with our students, our youth, on the development of Black history programs. We get together, we do that. I do stuff with my–. Well, I volunteer with my sorority. And I am in charge of our history committee there. And we do a lot with the students in Newport News Public Schools. Not so much now with COVID but, prior to that, we used to go in and tutor students in the public schools. I always go by the food bank and drop off a few dollars.

(1:06:07-1:06:12; recording pauses). I drive by and give them something because I realize there's so many people that, you know, they don't have food to eat. So I'm involved in that. And one of my friends has a book club that we get together with books on African Americans. And we have–. Well, since we've been on Zoom, we do Zoom book reviews on Black history. So those are things that I volunteer. But I'm not too much on being around a lot of children, but I find that young children are funny [laughter]. And they are like "get out." They are fun to be around. And I do, like I said, I did go to that daycare. And when I went there, I took all of my African artifacts I got when I went to Ghana, and they were so amazed. I let them play the drum and they had to touch different fabrics. So, like I said, I don't mind, you know, helping people. But like with COVID, I don't do as much now. But I used to go to different churches that had Girl Scouts. You know, I'd go there. So it just depends on–. Right now, I'm not as active because of COVID. I had a reaction to my first COVID vaccine and I didn't get the second one. And so I'm still suffering eight months later from some side effects. So I don't–. If I go out, I mask up, gloved up, and I have my sanitizer [laughter].

RR: Wait, so you took a trip to Ghana. When was that and what was that like?

AW: Oh, child, child. I'm telling you, it is a dream. It was a dream for me. And I encourage anyone, especially people of color, our Black people, and anybody else who want to go. If you have not gone–and I know with COVID we can't–but it was a life-shaping event for me because as a child, like I said, we always had books on *Ebony*, and books, you know, on Black people. And I got to see a lot of the African Kings. And I always wanted to go to Africa. So I got to go in 2009. And when we stepped off of that plane in Ghana, we were greeted and they said, "Welcome home, my sister." It is a

feeling that you're home because you realize that so many of our ancestors crossed that water and they died, there in a–. Some of them jumped overboard. Some of them were thrown overboard, well, because they died on the ship. And you learn so much about your roots. But it's also an eye-opening thing, because believe it or not, Africans, true Africans and African Americans, there is a–I don't know what to say–there is a relationship. It's different because– (1:09:31-1:09:36; recording pauses). You know, all the people were welcoming and everything. When you go to some of them and they were kind of like standoffish. But we got to see so much. We went to the area where they call, "where they took their last bath," because–when they would make them march from the interior to the exterior–when they got to the shores, they had to go into this water, you know, like a lake and take a bath, wash themselves. And then they would rub them down with oil so they could go on the block to sell–on the auction block. So I had the opportunity to put my foot in that water. That was life-changing. Now, I'm not a fan of the food. I think I've been too Americanized [laughter]. But I didn't care too much for their traditional [food]. (1:10:25-1:10:34) But it was an experience. I think it's something that everybody should do because you actually get to see your home, where people came from. Although, I did my DNA and most of my roots are from Nigeria. That's where my African is usually from, Nigeria. I do have a little Ghana and Togo, but most of my African roots are in Nigeria. But I think it's so amazing, I can't describe–. I think it's something, once you go–and I wanted to go back but I don't know if I'm going to get back again–it's one of those events that you remember, always. You'll always remember that. And then when I went to Spain, there were some Africans in Spain. They wouldn't even speak to us! But that's what I'm saying about relationships. They did not speak to us. We went to a dinner

theatre– And there was about thirteen of us. We went to Spain with my niece, and we were seated at two tables. And we were the last ones to get waited on, and they never came back to ask us if we wanted anything. This was in Spain. But then there was some Africans right on the next table, and we spoke and they didn't even speak. So it's a little–. I don't know what to call it, but there is something. Africans and African Americans have a different relationship. Not everybody, but it's noticeable.

RR: What were the origins of these trips?

IA: Do you know what part of Ghana you went to? Was it in Accra?

AW: I went to Accra. Yeah Accra is–

IA: Did you stay there mostly?

AW: Accra is the capitol. We stayed in Accra, but we traveled throughout Africa. And let me tell you, Africa, some of the roads, the dirt roads, we would travel from one end to the other. We went to a place that was on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, a beach town, and we went there. We went to Accra University. But there is no–well, we didn't see one– area that is for what you call, elite housing. You might have this fantastic mansion across the street and across from that mansion is a hut. Dirt roads. It is really –. And some of the roads you can't get down when it's raining. It was an experience. And they paid no attention to traffic, let me tell you. [laughter] They drive–I don't even know if they have a speed limit–because they drive like crazy. And so, it is an–. But Accra was nice. I liked Accra. One of the things I noticed most is what they call people who sell things in the street, carrying their wares. They call them hawkers. And they carry everything they sell, walking in the street, and they just come up to your car. It was really interesting. I like Accra.

IA: Okay, so let's wrap up talking about the impact of the civil rights movement. So looking back, what would you view as the most important accomplishments of the civil rights movement?

AW: I would think the most important thing would be the fact that we finally got what we deserved, basically, as far as people really seeing us for who we are: that we are people that are intelligent. We can do anything you can do. So I think that is one of the things, but it's still that stereotype that's still–. I think about Isabel Wilkerson's book, *Caste*, if you've read that. If you've never read it, it's an interesting book because it talks about [how] in America things are based on race. And no matter how much money you achieve as a Black person, how many degrees you got, how much money you make, you're still in that lower caste. So, I think that civil rights, one of the best things that came out of it is the fact that we are a people that has persevered. We can do anything and they just don't want to accept that. I think that their hatred for us–maybe I shouldn't use that word–is because we are still here, despite everything that we have been through for 400 years. We're still here. And we are thriving. But we got to start going back to asking again what they're trying to take from us. But I think that was one of the greatest things. And it also made Black people realize that they are important too 'cause so many Black people, you know, they never thought so much of them. And you don't have to be educated, you know, you don't have to be educated. But I think that was one of the great things, I think. And the fact that we are still here and we're not going anywhere. We fought for 400 years, we can fight for 400 more.

RR: Going off of the accomplishments, what do you think are some of the unfinished legacies of the movement?

AW: What are–. What was that?

RR: The unfinished legacies of the movement.

AW: I guess I would have to say there's still the same thing. That the unfinished movement is still that we are not–. There are not equal opportunities for all. I still believe in that. That is a challenge, and I doubt if I see it in my lifetime, because it is embedded in America. This suffering thing is embedded. After all those other ones, like me, are gone, you might see a difference, after the older generation die out because I tell you, younger people–. And there's still some that are being taught to hate. But I remember when my granddaughter–like I said my granddaughter went to a predominately white school–and I asked her, because she looks a mixture of something, like Asian or something, so I asked her one day, I said, "Kayla, does anybody ever ask you what you are?" She said, "No, Gran Audrey. Why?" And then I thought about it and–she's 30 now–I thought about it. I said, "because at your age, they don't notice. They don't pay attention." And I think once that group of people that grew up with me are gone, that it will be better. I won't live to see it. It's gonna come. It's gonna come. It's just that it's gonna be awhile. And we just have to keep on dealing with it, and fighting for it, and moving forward. But that's just, like I said, we're not gonna give up.

IA: So if you had to choose one issue facing African Americans today, which one do you think would be the most pressing?

AW: I think one of the most pressing issues is mass incarceration. We make up a small percentage of the population as Blacks, [but] the largest percentage in the prison system. And our prison–that is one thing that needs to be changed. And our people get the most harsh sentences for minor things and the whites don't. They imprison our children.

They've had cases where children, young people, do things and they want to imprison them for life. But when they're white they go to what they call one of those hoodlum things until they're twenty-one and then get dismissed. Mass incarceration to me is a major problem. I mean, we have other problems, but that is one that I don't see a change over a period of time, you know. Anything else, yes, you can see things change but that mass incarceration. And you see whenever–. And the way they imprison people. The way they arrest them and with how they treat us in that penal system of America. I mean, it's not the major pressing problem, but it's one I don't see too much of a change in after all these years, four hundred years we've been here. 'Cause even after slavery, we ended up still going to jail for just standing on a corner. Just standing on a corner, they'll put you in jail cause they'll say you're loitering. So, you know, we still got a whole long way to go.

RR: How do you think we start to address it?

AW: To admit it. To admit that it is real. You're not going to do anything until someone says, of the other–what I call the folks in charge of the penal system–start admitting, "Yes, we have a problem." Because we have been addressing it for years. All you have to do is look at the system. You look at the percentages of people being in jail and, you know, it's mostly us. You know, so it's us and then the brown people. So that's a major problem, I think.

IA: And is there anything else you'd like to contribute or something you feel like we missed out on speaking on during the interview?

AW: Well I, you know, my one thing I would like to say is to emphasize the fact that August the 25th, 1619, the first enslaved Africans landed at Fort Monroe, which is in

Hampton, Virginia. And here it is 2021, we're still here. We are growing every ten years, and we are– (1:21:19-1:12:23; recording pauses) We are people of endurance, resilience, and we will continue. We will continue to fight [for] what we believe is ours, because we are the reason why America is here. I said it.

RR: We want to thank you so much again for doing this interview. If you have any pictures or resources, or anything that we talked about that you want us to keep like with the oral history, we'd be more than happy to include those if you send them to us. If not that's okay too.

AW: Okay, well I got a lot of old Newsome Park reunions and stuff. Let me see what I got around here. Got a lot of pictures. Pictures of Carver. Lot of things that we did when we had our reunions and stuff like that. But we had, like I said, we have a love for that school even though–. And one of my friends–one of my classmates–lives in Buffalo, New York. And she's a retired state Supreme Court justice and her husband is an attorney. And when they first started coming to the reunions, he told her, "I have never seen so many people still in love with a school that doesn't exist anymore" [laughter]. But now he's been coming and he is one of our own. We call [him an] honorary member. And he said he had never seen anything like us. So we still have that love after all these years, for our school and for each other. But, you know, if you don't see it you don't recognize it, and it's still there.

RR: Well we would–

IA: Well thank you so much for everything.

RR: You have a great afternoon, thank you again.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Rachel Ricard and Inez Asiama, December 6, 2021

Edited by Judiclaire Kinerney, February 7, 2022

Edited by Hannah Washington, February 19, 2022

Edited by Laura Puaca, May 1, 2022

Edited by Audrey Perry Williams, May 22, 2022

Edited by Laura Puaca, June 6, 2022