

Larry Gibson Interview Summary

Interviewee: Larry Gibson
Interviewers: Josh Swartz and Davis Bethke
Interview Date: October 21st, 2021
Location: Online Collaborate
Length: 1 audio file, WAV format, 1:14:50

THE INTERVIEWEE: Minister Larry Gibson was born in Lawrenceville, Virginia and grew up in Hampton and Newport News, Virginia, where he attended local schools. After graduating from Huntington High School in 1970, he spent time abroad conducting missionary work in Africa and later became a minister. He has been very involved with the local community, and has devoted particular attention to working with area youth. He has also worked to expand Black education and history through his work with Project 1619.Inc.

THE INTERVIEWERS: Josh Swartz and Davis Bethke are senior history students at Christopher Newport University. They completed this interview on behalf of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project for their class History 341: The Long Civil Rights Movement.

INTERVIEW DESCRIPTION: The interview examines Gibson's youth, his experience attending segregated schools in Hampton and Newport News, and growing up amidst the civil rights movement. He speaks about the sense of community in Newport News and at Huntington, as well as the detrimental impact of integration on Huntington, when it was converted into an intermediate school. He reflected, too, on the response of Huntington students to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, when they marched from the high school to City Hall in Newport News. The interview also explores Gibson's missionary work in Africa, his decision to become a minister, his ongoing devotion to serving his community and preserving Black history, and the current state of race relations. Because of the virtual format, there are a few instances where people start speaking at the same time, but most of the interruptions are minimal.

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START OF INTERVIEW

Davis Bethke: So, hello, Minister Gibson, I'm Davis Bethke and this is my partner, Josh Swartz. Today is October 21st, 2021. We are interviewing Minister Larry Gibson. This is for the Hampton Roads Oral History Project at Christopher Newport University. We're taking what is called a life history and would like to ask you a few questions about your childhood.

Larry Gibson: Okay.

Josh Swartz: So, to begin with, where and when were you born, Minister Gibson?

LG: I was born in Lawrenceville, Virginia, on June 11th, 1952. I lived most of my life in Hampton and Newport News.

.JS: What did your parents do for a living?

LG: My father was in the military and my mother was a housewife at that time.

JS: Okay. So, you said that you lived most of your life in Newport News. At what age did you move to Newport News?

LG: We moved to Hampton when I was around 2 years of age and moved to Newport News when I was 9 years old.

JS: I'm with that.

LG: Hampton and Newport News are one city to me.

DB: What were the relations like when it comes to race here? Do you remember how they were in comparison to Lawrenceville?

LG: We lived in downtown Hampton in an affluent Black community with a thriving Black business district. A few whites lived there but had very limited connections with us. Things were segregated, there were places we couldn't go. If we were allowed to attend a white theater, we could only sit in the balcony section. At the city beach (Buckroe Beach) in Hampton we weren't allowed. There was a chained fence separating Blacks from whites and our side was called Bay Shore Beach. It wasn't city-owned or operated. As it was in most places our movement was limited and personal relationships were hindered. We were virtually shunned as a people. I was a small child in Lawrenceville, so I don't recall much about the adult interactions between races, but I heard stories concerning the ill-treatment of my people. My siblings and cousins from other states (Northern) would gather at our grandfather's farm during the summers but never engaged white youth. As mentioned, there was high tension and hostility toward my people, so separation was necessary. I went to an all-Black elementary school in Hampton (Union Elementary) from the first to the third grades. We were FORCED from our community, they called it urban development but in truth, it was gentrification. No matter what terms were used it meant Black removal. My family moved to Newport News where I started the fourth grade in another school.

JS: What school was that?

LG: Newsome Park Elementary School from the fourth to the sixth grade. It was segregated as well. I never attended school with any whites. From the seventh to the twelfth grades, I attended Huntington High. We weren't allowed the opportunity to attend white schools where they had newer books, better educational equipment, and materials.

DB: SO, when you moved to the Hampton, Newport News area, what school did you attend first?

LG: In Hampton, Union Elementary. The school was named after the occupation of the Union army in the city. The enslaved contraband people who came out of the “Freedom Fortress” (present day, Fort Monroe) rebuilt HAMPTON. Lincoln, Lee, Grant, and Union streets were named to, or during the Civil War era which became vital homestead streets.

DB: Excellent, we appreciate that. What was it like for your earliest memories of attending a segregated school?

LG: Ha ha!! What was it like? Well, as a child you didn't realize that there were differences until you became older. In the neighborhood, I played with two white kids, never thinking about why they didn't attend my school or me theirs. In youthism you think, speak, and act like a child. So, you know, those things that were negative, we didn't experience or know about because all we did was schoolwork, housework, and play.

DB: Can you speak to any of the specific differences or compare any conditions that you would have received in your school versus a white school?

LG: If I'm hearing correctly the question, I think that treatment toward me would be focused on my academics, personality, and behavior and not my skin color.

DB: Do you remember any teachers at that time who were especially influential?

LG: Yes, many of my teachers during my growth years gave more than academics. We belonged to them, family. What was taught alongside regular course studies was character and leadership development. Respect for elders and others.

JS: Yeah, so just continuing off of that so I know you said earlier that you started Huntington High in the 7th grade. Is that what you said?

LG: Yes sir, yes sir.

JS: What grades did Huntington High School entail? I didn't realize that high schools could go that long.

LG: Then elementary schools went from 1st to 7th grades, high school from 8th to 12th grades. Due to a shift in city government, they allowed Huntington High to adopt an annex that housed the 7th graders.

JS: Did you think anything of that when you were a 7th, or 8th grader at that time? Or was it just kind of going through the process?

LG: In my culture, you are taught to respect and obey parents and authorities most times without question. Newport News (1st to 7th grades and then 8th to 12th grades) had no Junior high schools like Hampton (1st to 5th / 6th to 8th / 9th to 12th). They had elementary, junior high, and senior high.

JS: How do you think that affected the community by having such a large school like that just encompassed so many different age groups and everything?

LG: Well truth be told; it wasn't an issue. Our youth came from different areas. Our schools were also structured. Our principals were disciplinarians. And I'm not talking about hands-on. He had a voice that demanded your respect. It demanded obedience. That was a part of our slogan: "All Huntington students will act like young Ladies and Gentlemen." And that's what we did, even the bad children. EVERYBODY.

JS: So it created a sense of --. I was going to say it sounds like it generated a sense of community then, that even you guys all kind of --.

LG: Oh, very much so.

JS: Okay.

LG: You would call it a village.

JS: Okay.

LG: You know, yeah.

JS: And just continuing off that--. Well, I'd like to hear about more of your educational experiences. Did you have any favorite subjects that you liked to study or any teachers that really guided you, like the future of your life and like where you ended up going?

LG: I disliked school but loved knowledge. The school didn't offer what I needed to grow.

Let me say this and not place blame on my teachers. I do exceptional work in areas that hold my interest. They taught what was required of them but school subject matters did not teach the truth. Even as a child, I saw racism, assimilation, indoctrination, and submission to false patriotism.

JS: Just kind of changing the pace real quick, were you part of any clubs or team sports while attending Huntington High School? Were those available to the high school?

LG: Oh yeah, it was. I belonged to the Student Council Association (SCA), Pep Club, and School News Paper, also played baseball for a while.

JS: Did you get to see the desegregation at all of Huntington High School while you were there, or did you graduate by the time that started to happen?

LG: [laughter] Well, the system knew when they wanted to shift gears. They integrated a couple of schools in the city but not Huntington High. They brought in some Caucasian teachers my junior year but no students. In my neighborhood in the so-called white section a young white kid who came out to the court and played basketball with us said that he wanted to go to our school, but his parents wouldn't allow it. He was the only one that I knew who showed interest, not even his brother. They integrated 3 white schools with some hand-picked

Blacks but didn't zone Huntington High for White youth attendance. They chose students from my class to attend Newport News High in 1968 but Huntington High remained all Black until it changed into a middle school in 1972. I graduated in 1970 and the last class to graduate was in 1971.

JS: So I'm interested in, So does that mean when you were growing up you did have a good amount of interactions with the white neighborhood children in your neighborhood then?

LG: You asking did we have that?

JS: Yes, since it sounds like you were friends with them.

LG: For the most part in truth, NO!! During those times some neighborhoods had white sections and Black sections. Basketball, tennis courts baseball fields, and access to swimming areas were on the white side. To utilize those facilities sometimes we would have to fight. Only a few brave hearts would come out to play. It was truly a different time. Things are more acceptable now as opposed to then but please don't get it twisted it's still somewhat suspect in the acceptance of us into various communities. Nothing has really changed; the covering may be a little different.

DB: So, if I may, Minister Gibson, I know you mentioned that it started to desegregate as you were graduating. So Minister Gibson, in light of that how do you feel about Huntington being downgraded to a middle school in light of one of the white schools being the integrated high school, as an alumni?

LG: Well, it was a sad day because it told us again how the system cared very little about our traditions, our spiritual connection with our ancestors, and our commitment to the village concepts. Many great souls have passed through the thresholds of our beloved institution. The

winning seasons in multiple sports, the camaraderie, the relationships developed, and the tender memories.

JS: Interesting.

DB: So in light of that, do you really think as a Huntington alumni that affected the identity of the school and by extension that community?

LG: Sure, sure. The staff, the students, and the community had much Viking pride. Everyone for miles around listened every morning for our marching band to crank up for their morning practice before school started. One of the sweetest bands around. The school and all that it represented brought students and the community together.

JS: Yeah.

DB: So, to sort of transition to this, when the schools were becoming desegregated, were you in the community when busing started?

LG: Yes, [laughter] busing wasn't so much an issue when I was in school. Buses were used in communities that were not on public transportation routes and had some distance from local schools. Bussing became an issue when Blacks were bused into white communities and to white schools. Blacks were the only ones affected by bussing.

DB: So, you sort of elaborated on this. But how do you feel that the community responded to busing? Do you remember any protests to it, any counter-protests?

LG: Sure, my younger sister who graduated 2 years after me, the same year that Huntington was transformed into a middle school was bused into a white community miles from our community. There was much racial tension resulting in fights, constant turmoil, and racial conflicts. I can't speak on any counter-protest because our youth were transported so far

away but I can imagine that there was pushback by some whites. I truly believe that if they had tried that move with my generation things would have been so much worse.

JS: Interesting. Do you think there's any reason why you say that?

LG: Yeah. My generation was just stepping into Black awareness. You are talking about social disharmony in the country in the late fifties, and early sixties (really since we were brought here) so when is enough enough? We have been taught American history but never our own. America has never accepted us as a part of the fabric of this nation.

JS: So, this is, (28:18), oh sorry you want to go Davis?

DB: That makes a wonderful transition, so we were just about to ask you about your community involvement. Both Josh and I really admire your community involvement, particularly within the church, without the church, and within local organizations. So, during that time where you stayed with that sort of consciousness and resistance, were you engaged with local civil rights organizations when you were a teenager?

LG: There were organizations such as NAACP, The Black Unity Congress (BUC), and a few others that stood for social and civil injustice. I wasn't a member as a teen of any group but when called upon for worthy causes, I would make my presence known. I've always been a proponent for the disenfranchised.

JS: I'm curious, do you remember what your first interaction, like helping the community is? Being such a hands-on, like going after person.

LG: I've done so much in my not too many years of living that I can't remember. I was never good at keeping records of the doing of rightness. Feeding and clothing the homeless or needy, praying for those who are ill or experiencing hardships, and visiting those who are incarcerated (juveniles and adults). I've served people in many countries abroad, in Afrika,

the Caribbean Islands, Europe, and many states in this country. Mentoring in the school systems in Hampton and Newport News.

DB: So, sort of building on about that-, So with those organizations, you mentioned you weren't a part of them. But do you believe that they influenced or helped the community in any way?

LG: I have to say yes, attempting to do something is better than doing nothing. Many people talk talk but have no implementation. There's an Afrikan proverb that says, "Jump for the Moon, you may not touch the moon, but at least you will be off the ground".

JS: So just curious, do you recall hearing about any key moments in civil rights history like DR (Martin Luther) King (Jr) "I Have a Dream" speech, or maybe Dr. King's assassination? Do you recall living those moments at all?

LG: Do I recall any of those moments?

JS: Like remember where you were at, or like how you felt when you heard it for the first time?

LG: Oh yeah, well, when Dr. King was assassinated, I was in class at Huntington High School. We shut the school down. Emotions were all over the place. The students decided we were going to march from the school to the City Hall in Newport News in remembrance of and in protest to the injustice and the cause of his demise. In solidarity, we marched. And there was anger, there was sadness. What was hardly mentioned is the fact that many of the foot soldiers were young people, children of elementary schools, high schools, and universities.

JS: So, if you don't mind just backtracking a little bit because we were talking about when you were back in high school, when did you attend the Virginia Union Theological Seminary? Did I say that right?

LG: (37:00) Virginia Union Theological Seminary, uh huh. What about it?

JS: When did you attend there?

LG: I'm bad with years, and timing. This was in (the) eighties, latter eighties, early nineties.

JS: Well, let me ask you this then. Was it before or after you did your missionary work in Africa?

LG: Let me see, before. Yeah. Before.

JS: What made you want to attend the Virginia Union [Theological Seminary]?

LG: Because I thought that it was necessary. When I got there, I found out that it wasn't. I told you; I learn on a different curve than many. We're taught that we need to have society's stamp of approval on who we are. "To be highly educated doesn't make one intelligent nor does age make one mature." I've learned that degreeism doesn't necessarily "ready" an individual to walk in purpose. It's good in its place, but it wasn't good for me. I see education as being at times indoctrinating.

JS: So, continuing off that, what made you want to decide to do missionary work in Africa specifically?

LG: Because I saw the--, Well, there was always an innate desire in me to want to know who my people were and where they came from. To learn our story and to be a source of help to my people that needed help.

DB: If I may, Minister Gibson, just to elaborate on your time in Africa. So, you touched on this a bit, but do you believe that your travels brought you any benefit or did you gain any

perspective in your experience in America versus what values you've learned in doing missionary work in Africa.

LG: Yes sir, yes sir. It was a heart-opener for me. I went over empty to receive whatever I was supposed to and more than anything to be a help to my people. Even in places where needs were great, they were the givers. Always appreciative and whenever I would share that I was a brother who came home it would set us on a course of oneness. Never have I ever felt a true belonging in America, and neither was it ever presented that we were a part of the fabric of the building of this place. Values learned; the true state of peace (no constant guardedness), sharing and receiving with no hidden agendas, and the ability to be oneself and to be accepted in it.

JS: Interesting.

LG: Oh, very much so crazy but crazier than that is when other cultures move into this country, they are told not to associate with Blacks here. Being there allowed me to breathe easily.

DB: So, we're really fascinated and interested in your ministry. So, at what point did you get into ministry?

LG: When I realized that there was purpose in me. We were created to do more than be career oriented. It was revealed to me that my charge was to build strong youth culturally and spiritually. We had our youth on a weekend retreat in Surry, Virginia. We were engaged in a circle prayer (50 to 60 young people) and I began to cry. A young boy beside me was startled and shouted Brother Gibson is crying (boys are taught that men don't do that). When I finally composed myself, I shared that I wasn't crying for me but I was crying for them because they

didn't have a clue about really living life. Many adults ask me what books I read to relate so well with the young, and my response is none. I just remember being a child.

DB: Can you state where you minister?

LG: [laughter] First Baptist Church, Hampton, is where I fellowship but The Most High's ministry in me has a WORLD perspective.

DB: We appreciate you sharing that story with us, about your experience with your children. It's very powerful. I appreciated that. In what ways does your ministry, you think, extend with your work with civil rights?

LG: What ways? Well, civil rights-, I think I've learned to go beyond the scope of dealing with just my people. You and Josh are my people too. Feel me? So is everyone on the planet. If only we could all see and get to that place.

JS: Yes sir. So just to kind of change pace really quick, what was your experience like with Project 1619 and how did it start? How'd you become a part of it?

LG: [laughter] Well, initially it began with Calvin Pearson (founder), having a conversation with others and then researching to find validity to what was shared. He began to reach out to historians and other noted people to expose some discrepancies. They rejected his findings. You live a lie for so long so that when truth reveals itself people tend to call that the lie. Many intended to fabricate the real story, then and now. In 2008 he started a gathering to commemorate the Ancestors who were stolen from their homeland (Afrika) and the millions who died during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. From its inception until now we acknowledge and commemorate the event while sharing the true narrative. HIS-story states that Jamestown, Virginia was the beginning of so-called America when it was here in Hampton, Virginia (Point Comfort now called Fort Monroe). My involvement began when I

was asked to perform Afrikan drumming at the second coming-together and from that moment I have been an active board member. The Commemoration is acknowledged in August of each year at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Hampton, Virginia is the Oldest English-Speaking Settlement in so-called America.

JS: I didn't know that.

LG: Oh yeah. That's where my Ancestors were first dropped off as enslaved people in the English occupation.

JS. Did you ever get to meet President Obama?

LG. No. I don't do crowds nor need foto opts.

JS. So, I'm curious. When did the 1619 Project begin for you? [*sic* the 1619 Project is another organization altogether. Project 1619 is the project in which Gibson is involved] And then is it still an ongoing thing for y'all?

LG. Oh yeah. Well, Project 1619 started being developed in the 1990s but became a functioning organization around 2008. We are still growing strong with intentions of becoming a national and international entity.

JS. Okay. So-,

LG. America, excuse me, go ahead.

JS. Oh, I was going to say how do you compare Project 1619 that you worked on to the 1619 Project of *The New York Times*? Do you think it assisted or hurt the work that you were doing?

LG. The 1619 narrative does not belong to any one organization. Project 1619 was first in CORRECTING the story about the embarking of our people and where they were first dropped off as enslaved people onto what is now so-called America. 1619 Project's goal is to

establish how slavery is the foundation on which the United States of America is built. The names are similar (though somewhat confusing) but the groups are opposite. “I” see both organizations being extremely necessary.

DB. So sort of wrap this all up. What do you view as some of the most important accomplishments of the civil rights movement and some of the more pressing problems that you think are faced by the African American community today?

LG. Truth? Do you want the truth?

JS. Of course.

DB. That's what we are here for, sir.

LG. I'm not impressed. If those of my Ancestors and others who were freedom fighters could speak, they would be utterly dismayed. NOTHING has changed. Hocus-Pocus!!! Another face but the same trick. Even this conversation is older than me, your parents, and people of old. This is not new and those who pretend or think that it is must be living under a rock. It's still about racism and the racial divide. Though the opportunities for access to education, health care, employment, fair housing, dealing with an unjust judicial system, and other atrocities it's a wonder that we are still holding on firm.

JS. Do you think there's any way that we can start changing that? Or is it kind of a snowball effect that's starting to get too big?

LG. You brothers are too young, there are none so blind as those who refuse to see. The so-called powers have established this system to be as it is. If it weren't true, then it would be more than easy to stop. Executive Orders go into full effect immediately. Frederick Douglass said, “It is far greater to build strong young people than it is to rebuild broken adults.” Dr. Carter Woodson stated, “The imparting of information isn't education unless it teaches you to

think and do for yourself.” IF change is to come, it will be through you young!!! “DOUBT IT”!!!

DB. (1:00:23.2) I apologize, sir.

LG. No problem.

DB. I just want to clarify, so do you think that’s one of the more pressing problems? The tail end [of] the question was, “What are the more pressing problems that you think are faced by African American communities today?” Do you believe that some of that profiling and identity are part of those problems?

LG. Yes sir and more!! I’m going to give you young brothers a pass because you haven’t lived long enough to know and probably what you have seen or read hasn’t registered yet. When you force people into survival mode laws don’t mean a thing. Treat a man like an animal then more than likely he’ll act like one. It appears that you want to lump things singularly into a basket and by no means is it coming off like that. Maybe for whites but my people are bombarded on every side all at once. We hardly have that luxury. I would like to say this because I don’t want you to think that you both can direct the entire dialogue in this interview. There is so much to be shared that it would take forever to get it all in hoping that you could comprehend it all. This is a quote by a Senator in the eighteen hundreds. He commented “We have as far as possible, closed every avenue, by which may enter a slave’s mind. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light, our work would be complete. They would be then on the level with the beast of the field, and we would be safe.” This was Senator Henry Berry in 1832. So, it was a systemic thing to keep us -, We were stripped of our Religion, our Spirituality, our Naming systems, our Morals. We were laid bare in everything. By egregious methods forced upon us, we had to reestablish ourselves. Even in

that, Dr. Carter Woodson stated, “The Miseducation of the Negro.” We weren’t taught about us; we were taught about others by others. We were indoctrinated and became assimilated, patriotic, and political, all according to how the SYSTEMS wanted us to be, So our schools of learning weren’t about teaching us how to be leaders. They taught us to conform, to be docile, how to be farmers, craftsmen, and laborers. It was never structured to develop the mind to become president, to become a neurosurgeon, or an astronaut. It was never the intention of this country to place my people in a place of belonging. NEVER were we to be a part of the fabric of this place. When you look at this country and my people, you still see, housing disparity, employment disparity, and dysfunctionality. This country and others developed their economic wealth on the backs and blood of my people. Many of the inventions, buildings and achievements were the handiwork of my folks. They would never share that in books for daily study. So, change, I don’t think so. This truth from the heart, what’s been perceived as change is not any significant change to cause us to jump and shout. I was impressed to see many young whites taking it to the streets with the Black Lives Matter Movement. I’ve read and thought about those whites who helped with the Underground Railroad. You both know about that right?

JS. Of course, of course.

LG. Of course, What hurt me was the fact that many whites were not moved by the heart to participate. I’m appreciative of those who joined the fray and helped to create and maintain the movement. Some of them were getting paid for their services and weren’t legitimately hearted to the cause. (1:04:52.9). There was plenty of hiding going on. That’s why it was called The Underground Railroad. The people should have brought it above ground to show their solidarity about the madness of it all.

DB. To speak to that, I attended, I believe it was the interfaith walk put on by Hampton City in last Juneteenth. And it was beautiful, like just an interfaith display of unity against systemic racism. And like you said sir, was really-. Made me hopeful for the future of this country.

LG. Brothers much of what's done is simply fluff. The Most High is by no means, pleased. Fighting racism is a spiritual battle fought daily not just at opportune times. I guarantee you that there weren't many people, was it? What were the demographics of people? Davis, since you went on that trek with the mixed congregations, Hampton Baptist, St. John's Episcopal, First Baptist, Queen Street Baptist, and maybe others or not, what was said that made you think in that unified moment change was on the rise?

DB. I was with my pastor at the time. We're not church affiliated.

LG. Okay, did you see the City Hall Building?

DB. Yes, yes.

LG. Where all the municipal buildings are located was Black-owned property comprised of thriving Black businesses and homes. Doctors, Attorneys, Teachers, Civil Engineers, Scientists, and everyday people lived there. I grew up in that community before ALL were kicked out in the name of URBAN Development, and GENTRIFICATION, all amounting to Black removal. African Descendants have never accrued an economic base such as that again. Sheer thievery to the worst degree. Those of our people who were considered Contraband came out of the Freedom Fortress (now Fort Monroe) and rebuilt Hampton City. Brothers I had thought at one time that all those churches downtown Hampton was a good thing, The Most High told me that that wasn't HIM, that it was contrary to HIS truth, it was division. They hardly come together if at all. I'm sure that you guys aren't that oblivious to

the truth. It's going to take more than the walk of the cross to truly change the minds of the heart.

DB. Absolutely. Yeah, it was a beautiful, beautiful experience. Is there anything else that you'd like to contribute to our project or something you think we may have missed in our interview questions here today?

LG. Today is the only day that we going to hook up. We're not doing this every week, every month. [laughter] You're not going to get more people. We're done today. This is it. Is this it?

JS. I believe so.

LG. Oh man, I'm just getting close to you brothers and now you both are kicking me to the curb. Right?

DB. [laughter] We're so sorry, sir.

LG. Well, we're being recorded right?

JS. Yes, yes sir.

LG. So are you sharing this session with many people or just your class?

JS. Oh no. It's going into a massive database, which like other students have talked to. Other people from this area about the civil rights movement and what it looked like. It's pretty much becoming like a large collective of oral history. So that way, as you said, the textbooks don't always display what occurred like the public sentiment, or how people are feeling. So this is our way of filling in those gaps in the books, by talking to people like you.

LG. Okay, Davis where are you from?

DB. I'm from Charlottesville.

LG. Charlottesville?

DB. Yes, yes sir.

LG. Okay, I have a granddaughter going to law school at UVA. She went to undergrad there as well. A couple of cousins played football for the Hoo's and graduated from there, so we are in the Ville quite a lot. Josh, where are you from?

JS. I'm from Norfolk.

LG. Oh man, get out. Are you serious?

JS. Yeah. I went to Norfolk Collegiate and Kempsville High School.

LG. Norfolk Collegiate, that's on Granby, right?

JS. Yes, it is. Right across from Granby High School.

LG. Yeah I know, my father is from Norfolk.

JS. Ok, yeah. My whole family is from Norfolk.

LG. Okay. So you are a homeboy?

JS. Yes.

LG. Yeah, because of Norfolk, Va. Beach, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Hampton, Newport News, and Chesapeake are the same, one city.

JS. Seven Cities.

LG. Seven Cities!!! Let me share this before you guys leave, I'm glad to have met you. What year are you, Josh?

JS. I'm a senior.

LG. Davis, what year are you?

DB. We are both seniors.

LG. Both seniors, well I'm sure you've heard some negativity about Afrikan descendants in so-called America. You know, the stereotyping. I'm sure some family, friends, and associates

are racist or racial on a daily. And you guys if you know these individuals you are obligated and accountable to correct them. If you don't stand up and speak out against the injustice, then you are part of the problem. When I say you it's not you singular, but you plural. Everybody. If I don't stand in the gap when I hear Blacks talking about other people groups in the negative, if I don't stand in defense of them, I'm part of the problem. I hope that you brothers hear me. Your generation may be the one more apt to create or promote the change. I think that you all are brave enough to stand up against the wrongfulness of the way we embrace and endure one another. So be at it, are you warriors or wimps?

DB. Depends on if I've had my coffee in the morning.

LG. [laughter] There you go. Well, I hope that they never stop making the stuff then.

JS. [laughter]

DB. Well, on that note, we really appreciate your time here today. And really appreciate your conversation and getting to share this oral history. So, I'm going to end the recording now, if that's okay with you sir, unless you have anything else you'd like to share.

LG. No, I'm good. You both have my number if ever there is a need.

END OF INTERVIEW

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