
P E T E R S B U R G
V O I C E S O F C I V I L R I G H T S :
T H E O R A L H I S T O R Y

INTERVIEW OF EDWARD B. FARLEY

conducted by

Hermanze Fauntleroy

Petersburg, Virginia

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BY MR. FAUNTLEROY:

Q I am Hermanze Fauntleroy and today I'm interviewing Mr. Edward B. Farley, who is a Petersburg, member of a family that has some real history in the City of Petersburg. Mr. Farley is a veteran from World War II, in particular, and Korean War, but he was a member of the armed forces that invaded Omaha Beach and had quite a time in terms of being a part of that.

Mr. Farley, in terms of your recollection of the segregated Petersburg, what is your opinion in reference to the difference that you see today as related to what was then?

A Well, I see so vast differences, sometimes it boggles the mind. Being 82 years old, I lived through so many changes, and I recall -- I was raised on the Avenue. And during that time the Avenue was the commercial center for black businessmen. And when I go down there now, I feel like crying sometimes, because when I went on the Avenue in 1933, all the people now that were on the Avenue in 1933, all of them gone. The last one to

1 go was a fellow by the name of -- they called him
2 Tater Pie. He worked in Bob Lee's shoe shop.

3 But going back to your question,
4 everything has changed. The whole culture has
5 changed, seemingly. And there's a different way of
6 living now, different set of values. And I don't
7 want to criticize anybody at all. I go through
8 neighborhoods, I see the vast changes. I come up on
9 this campus for the first time in a long time, see
10 all these new buildings up here I never seen before.
11 Some of these buildings are named after some of my
12 teachers. I mean, one of the buildings now was
13 named after the wife of one of my teachers, Dr.
14 Harris.

15 So Petersburg back in the thirties,
16 living in a segregated area, segregated time, the
17 blacks kept to themselves and the whites kept to
18 themselves, of course. And you wouldn't find any
19 whites living in black neighborhoods, and vice
20 versa. One over here was all white. That was off
21 limits at 7:00 o'clock, and the only people you saw
22 coming out the houses were workers, the maids, the
23 butlers, the chauffeurs.

24 But now all that changed now. The
25 city now really integrated in all phases; housing,

1 neighborhoods integrated, schools integrated. My
2 mind go back to the old 5 and 10 cent store on
3 Sycamore Street, that's all gone now. But I
4 remember a time you could go in there to buy things,
5 but you couldn't sit at the counter to eat the food.
6 You could order it, stand up and then take it out.

7 So when I ride down Sycamore Street I
8 see all the old buildings now, some of them vacant,
9 and years ago they were all filled up with the
10 clothing stores, confectionary stores. And I think
11 of one, the block above me, I think it was the
12 Globe. There used to be a clothing store way
13 downtown by the name of Soloman's Clothing Store.

14 And at one time there were three
15 theaters down there. I know one was called the
16 Century, and the Century Theater, the whites sit
17 downstairs and the blacks would sit up in the
18 balcony. The other two theaters, the blacks were
19 not allowed to go in at all. So it's a vast change.

20 And comparing the -- by using the
21 word "progress," we have made progress. We have
22 made tremendous progress, but we got so much more
23 progress to make. The job is not finished, not at
24 all.

25 But Petersburg is a beautiful city,

1 and when I go through the various neighborhoods, my
2 mind go back in time to the people that lived in
3 various houses, they all gone now. All of them
4 gone.

5 Q You mentioned the Avenue and that area, in
6 fact, that whole area that included South Avenue, if
7 you will, your family had businesses in that area,
8 didn't they?

9 A Yep. I came down on the Avenue in 1933,
10 or either '32, one of those years, and my father had
11 a pool room. And he and I lived on top of the pool
12 room. And he had the pool room in the back, and he
13 had what they call a confectionary store at the
14 front where you sold candy, pie, and milk shakes.
15 Then later on, he converted -- when I went to the
16 Army -- no -- when I went to school, I went away to
17 school, a place called St. Emma, and when I came
18 back in 1943 he had got rid of the pool room and put
19 a pool up the street, and converted the pool room
20 where it was into a restaurant, and he ran that for
21 quite a number of years, until he died.

22 Well, since you mentioned that
23 Avenue, all the buildings, there were so many
24 buildings and I think of so many names: Ms. Virgil
25 Spark, now Wilkinson; a lady by the name of

1 Ms. Lottie, Ms. Lottie had a small restaurant beside
2 Wilkinson; then they had Johnny Morgan Barber Shop;
3 then they had Snap Thompson, snap Thompson was an
4 old man, he had a shoe shop; that where Bob Lee
5 worked. That was where he got his first job. Snap
6 Johnson taught him to how to fix shoes. And then
7 later on Tater Pie came in there. This was during
8 the late thirties and early forties.

9 Then I remember Dr. Darden, and there
10 was a dentist in that same building. I'm trying to
11 think of his name, but I can't think of it right
12 away. Then there was a funeral home on the Avenue.
13 There were two funeral homes. One was Wilkinson,
14 the one I just indicated. And it was -- there was a
15 funeral home, I can't think of that man's name, but
16 he wasn't there too long. I wish I could think of
17 it, but just so -- since I'm thinking about it, this
18 man who owned the pool room -- I mean the funeral
19 home, his son and I were in World War II together,
20 up in a place called Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania,
21 and he knew my whole family. And I remember one
22 time he took me to New York, because they had moved
23 and I went and met his mother and his sisters there
24 in New York City. I wish I could remember his name
25 now, but I can't.

1 Then Mr. Hurt, he first came down
2 there, opened up a confectionary store near my
3 daddy's restaurant. And then he was a very
4 remarkable man, Mr. Hurt, very intelligent, very
5 well informed. He may have certain peculiarities,
6 but we all have them. Then later on he moved up the
7 street near my -- near the pool room that my daddy
8 move up the street that I ran.

9 And I'm trying to think of some more.
10 Then I remember's Ann's Beauty -- Ann's Beauty
11 Parlor. Ms. Ann had a beauty parlor in the Mutual
12 Building. That's torn down now. The Mutual
13 Building had about three floors on it. And Dr.
14 Shields had an office there, and Dr. Williams had an
15 office there, and on the top floor it was the
16 north -- it was the North Carolina Insurance
17 Company. I remember that very, very well. And of
18 course, there were some more barbershops up the
19 street, and got to put in place the time.

20 Then there were a few small buildings
21 that were -- we called them dice houses. People
22 would play dice. There were gamblers playing. The
23 gamblers hang out there. They played cards and they
24 played dice.

25 And I look back at all the old people

1 there, I think about them because they were so nice
2 to me. I was the only little boy living on that
3 street during that time. I didn't have any
4 playmates on that street. And later on, a fellow by
5 name of Lewis, Commodore Lewis. Commodore Lewis a
6 barber. He had a son named Benny Lewis. Benny just
7 turned 80 years old a couple of months ago, and he
8 would come down to see his father, and then at that
9 time we became friends, and we still remain friends
10 to this day. I go see him every week. And he's
11 still the same fellow. He's very tall. He was a
12 very happy boy, but he lived by himself, of course.
13 And his momma passed -- his mother lived to be 90
14 years old, and she passed away a few years ago, so
15 Benny lives by himself now.

16 Q If you compare the Avenue area, which as
17 you've indicated was full of black businesses at
18 that time, and as I recall I think there was a
19 market there --

20 A I forget that part.

21 Q -- but in comparing that to Sycamore
22 Street, which was segregated, what would you say
23 about the black businesses in terms of their
24 operation and the number of black businesses,
25 whether or not it was an area that was quite

1 productive?

2 A They were very productive. On the Avenue,
3 all the businesses flourished. My daddy's
4 restaurant, oh, well, especially on weekends. And
5 you mentioned the market across the street from my
6 daddy's place, the farmers would come in on Saturday
7 and set up their booths. I know you could rent a
8 booth for 15 cents and get a permit. And farmers
9 from Dinwiddie, Chesterfield and Prince George would
10 come in there.

11 And I look back in time, I can look
12 up from my window, because I lived on the second,
13 floor I could look out from my window at 5:00
14 o'clock on Saturday morning and see the farmers
15 coming in with horse-drawn wagons. Very few farmers
16 had cars. If you had a car, you were very
17 prosperous. But most of them had mules and wagons,
18 and I met many of them.

19 And going back on the other side of
20 the Avenue, I recall an event, and you don't see
21 that nowadays, Halloween was a big day in
22 Petersburg, a big day. Around about 6:00 o'clock
23 they would shut off -- they would shut off South
24 Avenue. No cars were allowed on South Avenue. And
25 by 8:00 o'clock you see four and five hundred people

1 coming down there celebrating Halloween, the people
2 dressed in all their Halloween regalia, and it was
3 magnificent. Oh, it was joyous, but that's been
4 gone. That's been gone.

5 Q You indicated that you attended St. Emma
6 Military Academy. Were you in elementary school in
7 Petersburg?

8 A No. I left -- well, I -- well, I don't
9 mind saying now, when I was small, I was what the
10 old folk call "a little devil," using that term, and
11 I was mischievous, and really, I didn't start really
12 paying any attention to school until I was in the
13 eighth grade. They had no ninth grade then, I don't
14 think. And I had some wonderful teachers, but I
15 didn't respond too well to what they tried to teach
16 me.

17 It wasn't until I got into first year
18 of high school that a man by the name of Mr. Samuel
19 Griffin, taught science, and I don't know why but
20 that was the first subject that I liked. And that's
21 when I first start studying, science. I loved
22 science.

23 And then later on, Mr. Griffin had a
24 great part in my right. He was the one that told my
25 father to take me out of the public school and put

1 me in a private school because growing up on the
2 Avenue, and I was entering my teens, that would be
3 the best environment for me, which was a very, very
4 wise decision, and I'm so thankful for that.

5 But going to St. Emma was a brand new
6 world for me, a beautiful world, a wonderful world.
7 And I loved it. I was never homesick, because then
8 I went into a religious community, plus it was a
9 military school where I learned discipline, which I
10 needed very, very badly. And I stayed there until I
11 went to the Army. And at St. Emma you would stay
12 there nine months and only come home in the
13 summertime. But I loved it. It was just like one
14 big, beautiful family.

15 We had all priests for teachers, and
16 a few black instructors. We had a trade building.
17 The first year I took up electricity. The second
18 year I took up brick laying. And I look back now, I
19 wonder how in the world I got the brick laying,
20 pushing a wheelbarrow full of mortar but it was
21 beautiful when I look back in time. Really
22 wonderful. And St. Emma really changed my life. It
23 gave me a different focus on my life. It gave me
24 values I didn't have. Even today I still have some
25 of those values.

1 And since you mentioned St. Emma,
2 coincidentally, two weeks ago a young man called me
3 from Michigan by the name of Roberts, and he
4 identified himself, and he was in the class of 1963,
5 because I left St. Emma in 1943. And he wrote a
6 book about St. Emma, and he sent it to me. And
7 Lord, when I opened that -- saw that book, I felt
8 like crying. The book got -- he did some wonderful
9 research on St. Emma from the time it was instituted
10 until 1963, and I still have that book at home now.

11 Plus, since you mentioned St. Emma, I
12 met some wonderful friends there. And some -- one
13 boy by the name of William Clark. We remained
14 friends until he died. Clark came from Lexington,
15 Virginia. He was a very smart boy, wonderful mind,
16 and he went into the Army, he went to the Pacific,
17 and we kept in contact. When he came out of the
18 Army, he finished college, and then ironically,
19 Clark went back to St. Emma as a coach. I used to
20 visit him there. And he met a young girl who lived
21 in a place called Belle Meade that was close to St.
22 Emma, and he married, and I was the first -- I was
23 the best man at the wedding.

24 Then a few years later Clark moved to
25 Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he became

1 principal of a school there. And then later on he
2 became superintendent in Williamstown. And, oh,
3 about -- oh, when he retired, his wife came to my
4 house and stayed about five days. And this is very
5 emotional. I went to North Carolina to do some --
6 to visit, and I was away for about four days. When
7 I came back, Clark had died and buried. And his
8 wife, she died a year later up in Williamstown,
9 Massachusetts.

10 When I was married and had three
11 children, way before he died, when he was working up
12 there, before he retired, we went to visit Clark.
13 We had a whole week up there with him. I miss him.
14 Oh, I miss him.

15 Q You spent several years in the Army, I
16 know, and of course you were there during World War
17 II. And as I indicated when we first began you were
18 a part of the invasion, and participated in the
19 Omaha Beach situation. When you returned to
20 Petersburg and having been in the Army during the
21 time that you were there, and at that point in time
22 the Army was segregated also, how did you envision
23 Petersburg from what you left when you went into the
24 Army?

25 A Well, when I came back, it was so

1 surprising. When I left Petersburg, there was a
2 train station in Ettrick, the first one, the first
3 building. I will never forget, when I got on the
4 train and came down to Petersburg, and the conductor
5 said "Petersburg," like they holler the names of
6 places off, I looked out the window and saw a
7 building that I had never recognized, and I said
8 this is not Petersburg.

9 So the conductor said, yes, it is.
10 You better hurry up and get off.

11 I said, are you sure that's
12 Petersburg?

13 And he said, sure.

14 So when I got off the train, I didn't
15 look at the building at all, because that was put
16 there during the war and the first -- the old
17 building, they closed that down, and the only time I
18 realized I was in Petersburg, when I saw the cab
19 stand, when I saw the cabs out there. The cabs
20 would come to pick up the passengers. When I saw
21 Richmond Cab Company, and Manhattan Cab Company
22 that's when I knew it was Petersburg.

23 And it was nightttime. And my father
24 didn't know when I was coming in. He didn't know.
25 I got on the Avenue around about 11:30. And when I

1 saw my father the first time, we hugged, and he cry,
2 and I cry, because both of us were happy.

3 During the next day I found out that
4 a lot of the people there who I knew, some of them
5 had died. My father still had the pool room, and up
6 the street he had the -- I mean he still had the
7 restaurant. Up the street he had the pool room.
8 And the Avenue was still the same because there was
9 still segregation. The market was still there. And
10 I just -- my daddy gave me the pool room to run, so
11 I ran the pool for a number of years. I ran the
12 pool room for about 35, 40 years, way past when he
13 die.

14 But time done change, as we all know,
15 until 1954, and it's very ironic, when they passed
16 down the Supreme Court decision on Brown, the Brown
17 case, that was in, I think in May of '54. And my
18 first child was born April the 15th of 1954. Now
19 she's 52 years old now. She'll be 53 this coming
20 April.

21 And that's when -- things didn't
22 change over night now. They took a long time to
23 change. The schools didn't integrate right away,
24 not at all. Then I went to college, and I got
25 married. That was after I came out of the Korean

1 War. I went back to the Korean War in 1950. I only
2 stayed there nine months. When I came out, I got
3 married. Then I got my life together. My mind was
4 much more stable. And then I came up here and
5 finished college.

6 And then time began to change very
7 gradually. I first started working, and I worked
8 there for 31 years in Dinwiddie and that was still
9 segregated. I think Dinwiddie they integrated about
10 19 -- about 1970. So for about 12 years it was
11 still segregated when I went there. And that was a
12 joyous experience for me, when I worked for 31 years
13 in Dinwiddie being a school teacher. And I look
14 back in time and to really laugh, and I look at it
15 in such a jolly way, very few people in Petersburg
16 thought that I would ever even go to college, much
17 less finish, and on top of that be a school teacher.

18 I think of an old school teacher whom
19 I knew so well, was very well known, Ms. Roberts.
20 And I never forget when I got my job teaching, I
21 used to go visit her. And I think about her -- she
22 know my whole family because I was born on Regard
23 Street, and I never forget her, when I walked in the
24 door, and we were in the kitchen sitting there, she
25 looked at me and shook her head, she said, I don't

1 believe it. Said, I don't believe it. You are a
2 school teacher. I don't believe it. She said, I
3 hope before I die that I will come out there and
4 visit you in the classroom, but that never did
5 happen.

6 Q You think you might want to take a break?

7 A Yeah, I think I need a break.

8 Q Okay, let's take a break and then we'll
9 come back and talk some more.

10 A All right.

11 Q Okay.

12 A Yeah.

13 (Recess)

14 Q When you came back from the Army, of
15 course, and as we said, segregation was still
16 rampant, then about 1960 things began to change
17 somewhat in Petersburg in terms of the picketing,
18 and the sit-ins and schools of course were as you
19 indicated were still segregated. What's your
20 opinion in terms of how that period of time might
21 have affected Petersburg?

22 A Well, looking back, I think it affected
23 Petersburg in a very positive way. I remember when
24 they first started. I never forget the name of a
25 man by the name of James Mayfield. He really

1 started the movement, he and a fellow by the name of
2 Mr. Gunther. Mr. Gunther worked on the campus of
3 Virginia State College. I remember they started
4 with a small core of children. They would meet in
5 front of Hurt Confectionary Store, and that was next
6 door to my pool room. And Mayfield started the
7 movement.

8 He started going to the 5 and 10
9 cents store, sit-ins, and there were only one
10 incident of violence. Just one incident. There was
11 a confrontation that Mayfield had with a white
12 person and Mayfield was arrested. And this was a
13 very historic event. I never forget that day.

14 We went to the courthouse; oh, it was
15 packed, right on Bank Street, the old courthouse.
16 It was really packed. And what happened in that
17 courtroom was really history. It was history.

18 At that time, I don't know whether it
19 was the SCLA or the NAACP, but one of those
20 organizations sent down a lawyer. I never forget
21 his name. Little, short fellow. His name was Len
22 Holt. And Len Holt magnified that courtroom. I
23 compare him to Charles -- Clarence Darrow. He was
24 really a black Clarence Darrow. I never in my life
25 seen a man articulate himself in a courtroom the way

1 he did. He was -- he summoned the entire city
2 council to testify, which were all white, and when
3 he would ask them questions it was astounding. And
4 the prosecutor kept objection -- kept objecting. And
5 Len Holt would rattle off certain case verbatim,
6 without any notes, to support his arguments.

7 He was magnificent. I compare him to
8 Clarence Darrow. And at one point the prosecutor
9 kept objecting. And I never forget the judge, he
10 stopped the prosecutor at one point and said, listen,
11 that -- stop objecting. There's no need now,
12 because Len would support his cases by previous
13 cases, verbatim. And of course they found him not
14 guilty.

15 But that scene, that was a place in
16 history. And I think about Len Holt now. I wonder
17 where he is. He had a brilliant mind. I mean,
18 everybody applauded him. Even the judge respected
19 him, his knowledge of law, and the way he
20 articulated in that courtroom. It was a scene from
21 Clarence Darrow's Scopes case. I compare it to that
22 in Tennessee, I really do, because -- this may be
23 very, very not relevant, but there was a Broadway
24 show in New York, and I saw it advertised in the
25 paper, called "Inherit the Wind," and it was about

1 Clarence Darrow and the Scopes case, so I got on the
2 train and went up there just to see that
3 performance.

4 And Paul Mooney, which very, very
5 young people don't know, Paul Mooney was a very,
6 very famous movie star during the twenties and the
7 thirties. And that my first live play I ever seen
8 in my life. And that was magnificent. And I seen
9 two or three other plays by "Inherit the Wind," and
10 the last one I saw, and this was very, very ironical
11 and I say historical, too, they had a play at the
12 Landmark Theater in Richmond some years back,
13 "Inherit the Wind," and the person who represented
14 Clarence Darrow in that play was a black man, and
15 that was something, because during the intermission
16 I was talking to him, and I was talking to the
17 producer, and I mentioned to the producer about the
18 first play I saw in New York with Paul Mooney, and
19 he took me to the -- said come here, I got something
20 to show you.

21 He took me in his office and up on
22 the wall he had the old movie picture of Paul Mooney
23 playing the role of Clarence Darrow, "Inherit the
24 Wind." But it was very, very ironic that this time,
25 he selected a black man to play the role of Clarence

1 Darrow, and he was very good. Very good.

2 Q You mentioned James Mayfield, and the fact
3 that he was quite instrumental in causing the
4 movement to really, really get started in
5 Petersburg. The court case that Len Holt was
6 involved in, and others in Petersburg, because he
7 really supported the Petersburg movement quite well,
8 he, Holt, that is, I think caused the movement in
9 Petersburg to really, really gain some ground. Do
10 you think that that particular situation may have
11 caused some changes to begin to take place in terms
12 of the whole segregated environment here in
13 Petersburg?

14 A I think that case initiated some very,
15 very important changes. Now, I must make a
16 statement and give the white people credit, if I
17 call that credit -- I call that credit -- that was
18 the only incident of violence. There was no more
19 violence at all. They still continued their fight
20 for rights. They still demonstrated. And two other
21 names come to my mind, Carl Winfield, and some thing
22 about Carl Winfield and George Wells. He was also
23 instrumental in that.

24 But the movement, the movement begin
25 to escalate at a much faster pace, and they had a

1 few incidents when Wyatt Tee Walker came in, when he
2 came to preach at Gillfield, he joined the movement.
3 And I remember that time where he was arrested to
4 integrate the library. I remember that particular
5 incident.

6 And I have a document there from
7 Wyatt Tee when he was the president of the
8 organization, and I contribute some money to it, and
9 he wrote me a thank you note, and I got it in this
10 envelope, and I keep it and cherish it. Wyatt Tee.
11 He was a magnificent man when he came in.

12 He was a very, very unusual minister.
13 And when I say "unusual," he mingled with the people
14 on the Avenue, and he was the only pastor to do
15 that. He came to my pool room very, very often and
16 associated with the boys on the Avenue. And that
17 really was uplifting to their dignity that a
18 preacher would come to a pool room and play pool and
19 communicate with the people in the pool room,
20 because by custom during that time there was a
21 little class reaction concerning people on the
22 Avenue.

23 Oh, I knew, looking back in time, a
24 lot of young people, they weren't allowed to come on
25 the Avenue. When I say young people, like 15, 16,

1 17, 18 years old. If you did come on the Avenue,
2 you would go to the doctor's office or you go to
3 O.P. Hair, and you hurry up and leave the Avenue.
4 You didn't never -- a certain class did not ever
5 associate with the people on the Avenue. And I look
6 back at that and smile, because that was a time.

7 But Wyatt Tee, he really integrated
8 the Avenue socially, and he got such tremendous
9 respect, and that's why he had such a great
10 following.

11 Wyatt Tee was magnificent. He really
12 was. Down to earth. Could communicate with the
13 people. And at that time, that was much needed,
14 very much needed.

15 Q Well, as a leader in Petersburg, how do
16 you think he effected the change that took place?

17 A How he effected the change? Well, Wyatt
18 Tee was a -- came from the north. He was a young
19 fellow. And the activity began to increase. He got
20 arrested for integrating the library, then later on
21 the schools became integrated.

22 I remember Dr. Norris, when they
23 filed a petition to integrate the college out there,
24 the community college of William & Mary, when they
25 first petitioned to integrate it, they entered my

1 daughter's name and Dr. Norris daughter's name as a
2 litigant. I remember that.

3 So things began moving fairly fast, I
4 say. Not fast, now; fairly fast. And I must
5 reiterate, there was very, very little violence.
6 Very, very little violence, if any. That why I give
7 the white people some credit. But it wasn't -- it
8 wasn't easy. Because I remember when they proceed
9 to integrate Wilcox lake, Wilcox Lake was a public
10 owned lake, which was well known during that time,
11 but that was segregated. Only white went there.

12 And my brother was one of the
13 participants, Richard Farley. He was one of the
14 participants in boycotting Wilcox Lake. And I look
15 at it and smile, no need to crying all the time.
16 Wilcox Lake close up and never did open again.
17 Whenever I pass by there now, I think about my
18 brother. I'm all right now.

19 Q Wilcox Lake was closed rather than permit
20 blacks to use it?

21 A Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

22 Q And as you indicated never did open again.
23 You indicated that you went to, after graduating
24 from Virginia State, you began your teaching career
25 in Dinwiddie, which was still segregated.

1 A Oh, yeah.

2 Q Yeah. When Dinwiddie school system was
3 integrated, and obviously had some impact on
4 Petersburg, how was that accepted then?

5 A I say this for Dinwiddie, it was the most
6 beautiful integration I ever seen. I remember we
7 had a superintendent there, I can't recall his name,
8 but he was from South Carolina. He was a wonderful
9 man. Beautiful leadership. And I remember the
10 first day of school when they integrated, it was
11 magnificent. No type of confrontation at all. The
12 black children and the white children, I remember
13 the first class when they came in. Naturally, some
14 were very hesitant, sitting near the black, and vice
15 versa, but it wasn't too obvious.

16 The children were really, looking
17 back now, they were a little bit frightened, the
18 black and the white, but they treated each one, each
19 other very, very friendly. They would smile. They
20 were very nice. And I give that credit to the
21 superintendent because we had a lot of orientation
22 with him, with the white teachers and the black
23 teachers. And they got along very well, the white
24 teachers and the black teachers. It was a beautiful
25 integration in Dinwiddie.

1 I don't know if Petersburg schools
2 were, but -- because I wasn't in Petersburg school,
3 but Dinwiddie to me, they made high honor the way
4 they integrated, and when I look there afterwards,
5 there were no racial confrontation, not one, and
6 that was beautiful.

7 Q Did your daughter and sons attend
8 Petersburg public schools?

9 A Well, my family are Catholic.

10 Q Yeah.

11 A And they attend the private schools, St.
12 Joseph. But then later on -- oh, later on, my
13 oldest daughter, when she became a senior, she
14 wanted to go to an all-black school, and it was all
15 black there. And she convinced us, her mother and
16 me that she wanted to go to the other school. And
17 at that time I had four children in the Catholic
18 school, so I bowed my head and relented. So they
19 left, they left the Catholic school, and all of them
20 finished the public school, and at that time, of
21 course, the school -- new school on Johnson Road
22 then, so they went there.

23 Q How do you view Petersburg today?

24 A Well, looking back there were a lot of
25 positives, more positive things, a lot of

1 advancement, lot of progress, and the only thing I
2 feel sorry for, and I'm not going to the blame game,
3 I feel sorry for the children. I feel so sorry for
4 them because the crime rate is so high, family
5 dysfunction is so high. One-parent family. And I
6 see the children on the corners now, sometime I
7 communicate with them, because I knew some of their
8 fathers and mothers, and I feel sorry for those
9 kids. I really feel sorry for them.

10 I have visited some of them in jail.
11 I knew some of them who have been killed. And
12 that's the only negative thing I think about when I
13 think of Petersburg. And of course being a school
14 teacher, I look at the educational factor, which can
15 be much better than what it is. But we live in a
16 society where things are interrelated, one thing can
17 affect another, and there's no one cause, there are
18 multiple causes, and I don't want to -- the blame
19 game is -- that -- don't need to be playing the
20 blame game. That's not a positive thing at all.

21 We need to do a lot of reconstruction
22 in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our schools.
23 We got to help those children because when they
24 first integrated they weren't that way at all.
25 During the sixties, there wasn't as much crime in

1 the city as it is now, so somebody got to find a
2 solution, but my heart still go out to the children.
3 I feel so sorry for them because I do not believe,
4 and I know a few of them, they do not enjoy doing
5 what they are doing.

6 But they tell me a many time, what
7 else can I do? They don't see the alternative. And
8 that is what we have to teach them, that there are
9 alternatives. You don't have to do what you are
10 doing now. There's hope, as Reverend Jackson used
11 to say. There's hope. But we got to do something
12 that's concrete, something the children will
13 understand, something that they will comprehend to
14 change the way they are living. So that's the way I
15 look at it.

16 Q Mr. Farley, I certainly appreciate you
17 taking the time today to come and talk with us and
18 be a part of the situation that will become history,
19 if you will, in terms of the types of discussions
20 that we have, not only with you, but with other
21 persons also, something that we can file away, if
22 you will, in terms of our library, and hopefully
23 some of the young people that you are talking about
24 might want to go take a look and listen and look at
25 people like you.

1 So we're going to continue to work in
2 that direction, but certainly, I personally
3 appreciate your coming, because I know you and I
4 know everything that you've said, you mean it. And
5 I knew you -- or have known you for quite some time.
6 So thanks a lot for being here. And we'll continue
7 to work, and we may be in touch with you again to
8 talk some more, because you -- you are history.

9 A Well, if I may end on these words, I've
10 been knowing you ever since you were a little boy,
11 and nowadays old folks don't look at things and use
12 the word, is it proper to say a certain thing or not
13 proper, but at my age now, I really don't care. I
14 remember some type of award was given to somebody,
15 in the City of Petersburg for civil rights, maybe
16 you have forgotten it, but I haven't. I call you up
17 and I mentioned to you the fact that why they do not
18 honor you.

19 And you did tell me that you were
20 honored at some event, but I was very disturbed
21 because you were also in that movement. I remember
22 when you came into the movement. And you still in
23 the movement. You haven't changed. And you belong
24 on that same team along with Mayfield, and Gunther
25 and George Wells, you belong on that same team.

1 And I remember when I went to
2 Mr. Bland, Nelson Bland, Sr., I wrote it down so I
3 won't forget it, a lady by the name of Cassie
4 Walker, Herbert Coulton and Clyde Johnson, we went
5 to Reverend Dr. King's funeral, first time I ever
6 been to Atlanta, Georgia, and that was very
7 unforgettable, historic event. And the only person
8 I saw there that was not from Petersburg was a
9 fellow by the name of John Edmonds. I met him on
10 the street. And John, of course, has passed on. I
11 will never forget that event.

12 And since that time when I came back,
13 and years later, when my children grew up, left
14 school, even before they left school, I used to say
15 to them, when you grow up, the south going to be an
16 economic Mecca. Years ago, all blacks went north.
17 Now, that was history. I said economic Mecca now
18 going to be the south. The south going to improve.
19 Now go south for economic endeavor.

20 And today one of my sons lives in
21 Atlanta, Georgia. He is the president of his own
22 company, and he's doing wonderfully well. And I go
23 down there often to see him. And of course whoever
24 thought that I would ever go to Atlanta, Georgia.

25 And one more item -- so many things

1 come to old folks' mind -- and relates to this
2 college, I knew a man by the name of Mr. Singleton.
3 They have a building named after him. Mr. Singleton
4 was the lead of the Commerce Department, and
5 Mr. Singleton was born and raised in Atlanta,
6 Georgia. I remember that. That's all I want to
7 say.

8 Q Well, again, thank you very much, and
9 you've closed this session for us I think in a very
10 productive and wonderful way. So thanks again.

11 A It has been my honor.

12 Q Thank you. Thank you.

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