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RAYAH LEVY: I am Rayah Levy here with Vivian Hungerford to talk with her for an oral history project titled "Voices From the African Diaspora: The Black Experience of Bethlehem Pennsylvania," as part of the Lehigh Valley Engaged Humanities Consortium. We are here at my home in Bethlehem on Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Vivian Hungerford, thank you for your willingness to speak with me today. Can you please spell and state your full name?

VIVIAN HUNGERFORD: Vivian T. Hungerford. V-I-V-I-A-N, T as in Thomas, H-U-N-G-E-R-F-O-R-D.

RL: And can you please tell me your date of birth?

VH: November the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1938. [00:01:00]

RL: Vivian, could you tell me what day your family moved to Bethlehem? Roughly?

VH: My grandfather moved them up from Wilson, North Carolina, and my dad in 1923, my dad was nine years old, and he was born in 1914, and they came in from Wilson, North Carolina.

RL: What's your father's name?

VH: Bert. B-E-R-T. Tarboro. T-A-R-B-O-R-O. Junior.

RL: And your grandfather's name?

VH: Birk. Reverend Birk Tarboro. And that is B-I-R-K T-A-R-B-O-R-O.

RL: And your mom. Where is your mom from? Your mother.

VH: My mom was born in Albany, New York. And [00:02:00] her name is Louise Lillian [Edmondson?] was her maiden name. And mommy was born in March the 15<sup>th</sup> of 1918.

RL: And --

VH: And her mother died at a very young age and my grandmother Brown took my mom and her other three siblings and they moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania. Now my mom was a young girl but I don't know the year, how old she was when they moved from Albany, New York to Scranton.

RL: Okay. And you have an idea how your parents met?

VH: Yes my (laughs) my mom came from Scranton, she was 18 years old, and she came here to Bethlehem, and my [00:03:00] dad and Mr. [Sambotella?] met her at the train station, and they started dating from there.

RL: Do you have siblings?

VH: Yes I do. I have a sister Mary Ellen, myself, then my brother Johnny, and then my brother Burt, and then my mom and dad became guardians over my cousin [Elsie?] and her brother Ricardo, we call him Buster. Because my mom's sister took sick and my dad and my mom took Elsie and Buster in and we were raised together from kids, and that was in 1945, when [Willy?] took sick.

RL: Do you have an idea why you think your parents moved [00:04:00] to Bethlehem with you guys as opposed to a

bigger city?

VH: No. My grandpa wanted -- he had seven single children and he wanted them to have a better life, and he thought they would have a better life up north than down in the south.

RL: Mm-hmm. And why do you think they selected Bethlehem? It's a small town.

VH: I have no idea.

RL: Mm-hmm. Where in Bethlehem did they move to?

VH: On East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, they moved in. Now my dad always mentioned about Carver Street, but they were like apartments. There was so many apartments in this one big building, but just where they were raised at I know it was on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, but I don't know if it was in the 1600 [00:05:00] block or where Carver Street is, it couldn't have been -- it was in that area. And they were raised --

RL: Is that on the south side?

VH: That's on the south side, yes.

RL: Mm-hmm. And did you guys, did you live on the south side all --

VH: All our life, yes.

RL: All of your life?

VH: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

RL: And adult life?

VH: Yep.

RL: So tell me. Describe -- actually, tell me about your father. What did your father do for a living?

VH: My dad -- well after he went to Lincoln Tech. which was on 4<sup>th</sup> and [Poll?] Street, my grandfather pulled him out of school and my dad started working on cars at Chevrolet which was on Broad Street. And then from there he went into the Bethlehem Steel.

RL: Oh he worked at the Bethlehem --

VH: He worked at the Bethlehem Steel, yes.

RL: Did he [00:06:00] share stories about working at the Bethlehem Steel? What was it like working there with the --

VH: It was hard work, my dad was a burner. He melted steel, and he had a good rapport with the workers but it was -- back then, no one knew anything about racism, but back then it was imminent. They treated him differently, but my dad was the type of person he got along with everybody, and he knew everybody. And they made -- he worked as a burner for -- daddy was in the steel for 44 years and that's all he did. And he worked swing shift. One week days, one week middles, and [00:07:00] one week third, and he did that for years, all the years he was in the steel.

RL: There was a strike, your father might have experienced that strike --

VH: Oh yeah there was -- oh there was quite a few strikes. We

were little and we lived at 1624 and a half East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street when the steel went on strike. And they had a blackout, and they were locked in in the steel because my dad was at the [Embry?] Street gate. See in the area where we lived in, there was two entrances into the steel, the [Anthem?] Side Street gate and the Embry Street gate, and my dad was locked in with the other steel workers at the Embry Street gate. And my mom had to take food up to him, you know, in the evening time. [00:08:00] And then the guards that were on duty they went through everything to check that there was no weapons and everything that was packed in the food, you know.

RL: How long was he locked in for? Why was he locked in?

VH: Oh my gosh. Now I'm trying to think. Let's see, I was like four.

RL: You were four?

VH: Mm-hmm.

RL: Okay.

VH: And I remember because we -- my mom had to keep the shades drawn at night and no lights could be showing or anything. And when she took the food to my dad she took all four of us because my two brothers were little, and she took all four of us up and we walked up to the gate and then walked back home. And that lasted, I don't know if it was like

about a week or two weeks, you know.

RL: Mm-hmm. You said there might have been more than one strike?

VH: Oh yeah.

RL: Yeah.

VH: Oh yeah. [00:09:00] And then when we moved from 1624 and a half East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street down to 1533 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and that was in 1943. Yeah, in 1943, and my dad bought that home from Mr. [Deluvio?] who lived there but he also had another house on the upper end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and my dad still worked in the steel there and he took care of the family, he did all of the shopping, the paying of the bills, my mom never had to do anything like that. My dad took care of all of that.

RL: So your mom was a stay-at-home mom?

VH: Yep. She was a stay-at-home mom until my brother Burt and Buster went to school, then she went to work as a waitress, and then a waitress she was a domestic worker, she went and cleaned houses because my mom [00:10:00] only had a fourth grade education.

RL: Do you recall any of the families that she worked for?

VH: Oh yeah. Mrs. [Dalmian?], and Mrs. [Promabianco?], Mrs. Wagner, and Thomas, and the [Dibicks?] that's right, the Dibicks.

RL: Okay.

VH: Yeah.

RL: Let's move on to you. Tell us, what school -- what elementary school did you attend here in Bethlehem?

VH: Broadhead. Broadhead Elementary which was up on the corner from where we lived.

RL: I'm sorry, what's the name of it?

VH: Broadhead. B-R-O-A-D-H-E-A-D.

RL: Oh, and that -- I'm sorry, what year was that?

VH: I started school when I was what, six? So that would be 1944.

RL: Okay. That school is no longer in existence, right?

VH: Oh no, no. They tore that school down in 1952 I think it was. [00:11:00] Either '52 or '53.

RL: And --

VH: And then we went to Washington Junior High School which was on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and that was like five blocks from where we lived.

RL: What was it like going to the [new ski?] schools? What was it like?

VH: Fun.

RL: The experience?

VH: I mean, well we had one teacher there (laughs) she was nasty. She was mean. And she sort of like made fun of us,

especially when -- now with my sister, she was -- I don't know, she just acted differently towards us then what it was towards the other kids because I know when I started there, when I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I was the only black student in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. So I'm thinking that might -- it was the same way with my sister because she's a year [00:12:00] older than me. But we, you know, we went to school and played and had fun, you know.

RL: So you weren't treated any differently than the white kids?

VH: No, I wouldn't -- no. I couldn't say that we were. I mean we volunteered when we had programs and art stuff like that, we all participated, you know.

RL: And tell me about your -- what high school did you go to?

VH: Liberty.

RL: Liberty? That was like in the 19 -- late 1950s?

VH: 1953.

RL: 1953.

VH: I started Liberty.

RL: And what was that experience like?

VH: It was fun. I played intramural sports until I joined the Greek Club.

RL: What sport did you play?

VH: Oh, hockey, archery, and hockey, archery, and soccer.

RL: [00:13:00] What was your friendships like there when you



were in high school?

VH: All of us African Americans, we stuck together. There was only a few whites that we were friends with but we played sports together. But the rest of them, they were on the north side of the fence and we were on the south side. We stayed in our own groups.

RL: So what was social life like? Did you guys have a prom at the time?

VH: Yeah, but --

RL: Who did you go to the prom with?

VH: -- well I guess. We did go to our prom but now I don't know if my sister, I don't recall sis going to the prom, I don't know. But at our prom, we didn't want to go, but we went and there was four of us couples, and we stayed there for a little while but we left. But they didn't play any kind of music that we liked. They played all of their, whatever. [00:14:00] And so we left there and we went out to the diner, and (laughs) we were going to Jersey and there was two of us, and two cars. And we were going to go to Jersey and then we got on the other side of Easton we said, "Nope. We're not going to Jersey." So we turned around and came back home, and that was the end of the night.

RL: So tell me a little bit about your social life as a, let's

say, from 16 to 18. What did you guys do for fun?

VH: Oh, we had (laughs) -- well my mom and dad kept us busy because when we were growing up, my mom and Ms. [Madeline?] and Ms. [Elyse Watson?], she always got our kids together and taught us how to play baseball. Because we were from a sport family and after suppertime there was a vacant [00:15:00] lot in the next block from where we lived, and the 1500 and the 1600 block, and there was a steel mill, and that's where we played. And they taught us throw the ball, how to bat, and run the bases. And it was really funny because all the men that belonged at our church, they would come there and sit along the rail of the fence and be laughing. They wouldn't help any, they'd be just laughing at us, you know. And we did that, that was our evening outlet. And then Friday we had a big house and was open living room and dining room together, and the kids would come to our house and we'd put on the record player, and we'd roll the carpet back, move the chairs back, and we'd just dance. And then at 10 O'clock, okay, everybody, time to go home. And my dad had a '49 Deluxe Buick, [00:16:00] and my mom would take the kids that lived over in Penn Grove on the other side of town, she'd load that car up and take them all home, make sure they got inside the house, then she'd come back home and get the second group and take

them home. Nobody ever had to walk home from our house. And while we were there dancing and everything, she'd make her big pot of Kool-Aid, (laughs) which was the drink back then, and she'd make hamburger barbecue. And that would be our Friday or Saturday evening.

RL: You mentioned church, what church did you guys attend?

VH: Saint Paul Baptist Church.

RL: Saint Paul?

VH: Mm-hmm.

RL: Was that also a staple in social life for the family? Was that the -- I should say what role [00:17:00] did the church play as far as socialization --

VH: All of us that were there, we were in Sunday School, we were in the Junior Choir. And as a matter of fact, I'm doing a memory history on the church and all of us kids that were in the heights we all belong to Saint Paul Baptist Church. And like I said, we were in the Sunday School, we were in the Junior Choir, and that was just a ritual thing for us.

RL: Mm-hmm. Did you guys have like functions? Like balls and galas, and things like that at the church?

VH: Oh yeah. Well we had for the church building fund, the Junior Choir, our money raising thing was we had a block party, and then we had bingo at our [00:18:00] house where

we lived at, and my dad had a big, humongous train [puts?], and he would use that platform. Because every Christmas he had the train puts up and they took up our living room and dining room. But we used that platform for the bingo, and we binged off food, meat, and canned goods, stuff like that. And that was the Junior Choir's part of making money towards the building fund.

RL: Were you in the Junior Choir?

VH: Huh?

RL: Were you in the Junior Choir?

VH: Oh yes. My mom had all four of us in there. She taught us how to sing before we could talk (laughs) and she called us the Tarboro Four. And every time they got company, we'd be out playing, she would call us in. And we would come in and then we had to sing for them. [00:19:00] And the two songs that she taught us was *Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name* and *Do Lord*.

RL: And what? I'm sorry.

VH: *Do Lord*.

RL: *Do Lord*.

VH: Mm-hmm. And my sister was a soprano, and I was the alto, and then she taught my two brothers. And we had to sing for them. And [*Stillway?*] that was the other song. (laughs) And then after we get done singing, then we can go

out and play because when they had company, kids, we were not in the room with them. You were among the missing.

RL: Right. So the kids were the entertainment but the adults -  
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VH: Yeah. But she, like I said, she had us singing before we could talk because I was in the Glee Club from the time I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, until I graduated. And then I sang with the Municipal Opera Company for two years, under direction of Dr. [00:20:00] [O.K.?] Peters, and that was in '57, '58, and yeah, right before I got married in '59.

RL: So when you graduated from Liberty where did you go?

VH: I went to work. I was the first black hire for the city of Bethlehem. And I started there December 31<sup>st</sup> of 1956. And I worked in the Earned Income Wage Staffs Department.

RL: Could you explain that to me please, what did you do?  
Earned income tax.

VH: That was when they pulled the wage tax that people had to pay, businesses had to pay. It was called the Earned Wage Tax Income, and you paid so much on your revenue that you made on the paycheck, yeah.

RL: Mm-hmm. How long were you doing that?

VH: I was there until [00:21:00] I got married in '59.

RL: And when you got married you stopped working? Is that it?

VH: Mm-hmm.

RL: (laughs) Did you -- who did you get married to?

VH: Oh dear Jesus. Frederick H. [Mar?], Jr. The worst mistake of my life.

RL: Okay. And how many kids did you have?

VH: Two. Frederick the third and Regina.

RL: And so tell me a little bit about --

VH: It was rough.

RL: -- as a mom --

VH: It was rough --

RL: -- as a wife.

VH: -- because I left Freddy in February the 6<sup>th</sup> of '62. And I moved back home and I was only home for a year and then I got my own place. And I went through [00:22:00] quite a few years of sickness. I had three nervous breakdowns, and in and out of the hospital, and then I started work -- I'm trying to think of psychia -- Dr. Anders, he was my psychiatrist. And I admire him until this day. And he was tall, thin, riveted and he got me to talk with Dr. [Geller?] who was in charge out at Western Electric, the medical department, and he talked with them and told them he had a young girl, and thought that she needed a job, and he thinks that I would be -- it would be feasible for me to go to work and so they called me and I went on the interview and I didn't have any money for car fare, so

[00:23:00] we had to pick soda bottles which, when you turn them in to the store you got a nickel for them. So I went to different houses and collected the soda bottles, turned them in so I could have car fare to get to Western Electric which was on Union Boulevard and then to get back home. And that was on a Thursday when I went for the interview and after I got home the phone rang, and I don't even think I was in the house ten minutes and Mr. [Bernie Winkler?] from Western Electric, from the personnel department called and asked me could I be there that Friday which was the 31<sup>st</sup>. And that's when I went back and went in on another interview and I was hired. And that was December the [00:24:00] 31<sup>st</sup> of '63.

RL: It's remarkable that you remember a lot of these dates.

VH: I remember a lot of -- there's things that really happen through life and different people and that. I have like a photostatic upstairs here, and I reminisce a lot. You know, I think about a lot of things that happen. Good things and bad things.

RL: Right. Tell me, what did you do at Western Electric?

VH: When I first started there I went into what they called their record clerk department. I worked in the machine - the shop area. And Mr. Steve [Hickle?] was my boss. And I kept record of all the production output for that day that

each employee did. Because they got paid a [00:25:00] percentage. And as a group they got a certain percentage if everybody met their quota. And I was the record clerk, that was my title, and that was -- I worked there for, it was a little better than a year, and then I went as a secretary into the medical department. Then from the medical department to the merchandise department, and these were upgrades.

RL: And these in all Western Electric?

VH: Yes. It was all Western Electric. And then when it turned to AT&T, I was in material ordering, and then I got another upgrade, I went into purchasing which was in '85, and they had just built out on Cedar Crest Boulevard, and I was there for the last 17 years of my tenure. I worked there 37 years. [00:26:00]

RL: 37 years.

VH: Yeah.

RL: And what was it like working there as a woman of color? An African American?

VH: Oh, it was hard but then by the raising of my mom and dad I was able to cope. I knew how to ignore, and if I had to step up to the plate, I did so. Put them in their place whether they liked it or not, I didn't care. And but all because of the way mom and dad raised us, and they



instilled in our minds that we were all God's children, and this did not matter. And they, I mean, they pound us with that. And that's how we grew up. And I mean now, when you look back, [00:27:00] you could see that there was racism back then, because when my mom and dad bought the house, the people, the white people got a petition up to keep my mom and dad from buying that house, and they had to go to Easton Courthouse. And Mr. Deluvio who sold my dad the house went with him, and he made it eminent that Mr. [Burke?] bought the house from me. And when we moved in, I mean, Mr. [Budoro?] who had a store, he wouldn't even let us in the store. And people would be in the store, which was right next door to our house, was our house, then our alley way, then his yard, and then the store, and we'd go to the store and they'd lock the door.

RL: What kind of store was it?

VH: It was a general store.

RL: A general store.

VH: Mm-hmm.

RL: Mm-hmm. So where did you guys go to buy items and --

VH: We went to IGA. [00:28:00] To Mr. [Ann?] and [John?] on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and then Mr. John had A&P Market on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and we went to those two.

RL: Mm-hmm. So in the 1960s, you know, you were working at

General Electric and in the 1960s --

VH: No, Western Electric.

RL: -- Western, sorry, Western Electric. And during that time it was a tumultuous time in history in the 1960s. What was it like in Bethlehem during that period?

VH: I'm trying to think because in 1961 was when my dad started the baseball team. But there was a couple neighbors that wouldn't let their kids play with [00:29:00] us because of our color. But we just ignored them, you know, we didn't -- there was no fighting or anything like that. We just didn't worry about them. But our doors was always open to everybody, and one woman across the street, she always said to my mom, "You let anybody come to your house." And my mom says, "Why not?" Ms. [Sophie?] was her name. And my mom says, "Why not? My door's open to everybody." And when we be praying, my mom had a whistle and she went out to the back yard and to the front, and she put out that whistle and we better be in here in instant, and believe me our feet was hitting the sidewalk heading home. And there was six of us but there was nothing like having four other kids at our supper table when my mom [00:30:00] called us over to eating.

RL: Did you guys have to be home when the lights went out?

VH: Oh, yes (laughs) we better be. We had to be on that front

porch when the sun went down. Now my dad, he didn't chastise us that much, but when he had to and he spoke, hey, we listened. But my mom, he gave my mom that job because she was with us 24/7, and I'll never forget when my dad come in from work because we always waited till he come home to sit down and have dinner. And all six of us would be at the kitchen table and my mom and dad and Uncle Robert would be at the dining room table, and my dad always said, "Louise, how'd it go today?" and then she said, "Well, Johnny did this. Mary Ellen did this. Vivian did this. And I told them to wait till your dad comes home."

[00:31:00]

RL: Okay, so we were talking about the 1960s, and I'm particularly interested in, again, the country was, you know, Civil Rights Movement and so forth, and so I wanted to get a bird's eye view of what was it like here in Bethlehem during that tumultuous period during the Civil Rights Movement?

VH: Well in the '60s Sister Esther Lee, she is president of the NAACP and her and reverend Jerry Hargroves, they would have meetings with the blacks, and also Sister Lee was on the school board, and they were trying to get issues straightened out among blacks and Caucasians. I don't like using the term [00:32:00] black because I always say I'm

not black, and I always say you're not white, and I always use the term Caucasian because years ago that's what was on the income tax, Caucasian. But anyway, and they tried to keep many of the blacks here informed of what was going on, what was happening, what can be done, what you should do, and what we shouldn't do. But you know, not all the people fell in line with it. And it takes my mind back to when the steel bought the heights, the whole area of the heights, and the white people that owned their homes, they got offered higher money than what the blacks did. And when my dad got wind of that, [00:33:00] my dad got all of the homeowners that were black, had a meeting at our house and he was telling them don't accept the first price that's given to you. He says the white folks were getting offered more than what we are, and he walked my dad through all of that, and that was Mr. [Willy Gunn?] Sr., Mr. Ike Smith, Mr. Samuel Lewis, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Sambotella, and Ms. [Ruth?], and Ms. [Mamy?] [00:34:00] they were single. And he was getting all of the families together and letting them know what to accept and what not to accept. And then after that my dad met with the steel, Mr. Eugene Grace, who was at that time, was the president of the steel and let him know what was going on and told him that it was not right.

RL: How did your father find out that the whites were being offered --

VH: Through word-of-mouth. Because see, like I said, my dad knew a lot of people. And just in general talking, and he picked up on a lot of unfairness that was going on. And he brought it back and got the people together and let them know.

RL: And so this happened during the 1960s?

VH: Yeah.

RL: Mm-hmm. Tell me something, where were you? Do you recall where you were [00:35:00] when they found out the news that King was assassinated in 1968?

VH: I was home, I lived at 1723 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street. I was home, stretched out on a couch watching a boxing match when it came across the TV that Martin Luther King was assassinated. And I jumped up and ran to my girlfriend next door, to Mary, and asked her did she hear the news, and then I told her to turn on the TV, but that's where I was.

RL: Mm-hmm. What was the household like when that news --

VH: Well my kids were little, my kids were in bed.

RL: Mm-hmm. But your parents were still alive and --

VH: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

RL: -- so forth. So did they have a discussion because I can

remember seeing a newspaper article and actually some old photographs that there was a march at the library in [00:36:00] 1968 I believe.

VH: And that was because of Sister Lee and Reverend Hargroves. And they had a march there for oh, every year I think they had that march, and then they have a Martin Luther King march from Broadhead Avenue up to Carlton Avenue to where the park is at.

RL: Right. So they were instrumental in getting that because the march at the library?

VH: Mm-hmm. Yes.

RL: Okay. I want to go back to your dad for a second because I understand that he started a baseball team. Could you shed some light on that part of your father's life and the baseball team that he created here in Bethlehem?

VH: Well we're from a sport family. And my dad and Mr. [Ed Dennis?] [00:37:00], they got together talking about getting a baseball team together and they started out with all-black team, and some of the guys were very good players that wanted to play ball, and some of them took it here or there, they did it one way or the other, but we started out in the spring season of '61 at Washington Field, which was our home field. And we would be down there getting the field straight for the game for Saturday or Sunday and a

lot of them, they were young, I mean 18, 19 years old, they would go out on the weekend and they'd come dress in their baseball uniform high as a kite, and my [00:38:00] dad put up with it for a while and then we he got fed up with it he said no more. And that's when he went and recruited. It was like five or six of the guys from Moravian College, that's when the team became intermingled, white and blacks. And the boys, they were good, they called my dad Mr. T or my mom Ms. T, and at the games when we had double-headers, we had the first double-header at Washington Field and we played the Indianapolis Crowns, and my dad did that to bring in, you know, to bring in people. And my mom and I we cooked, we made potato salad, we made fried chicken, my dad bought the beer, and we had the bread and different food for [00:39:00] after the first game was over to feed the players. And if there was anything left, then whoever wanted to eat, you know, came and got something to eat. And then we had the double-header. And ever since then, we always had a meal when we had a double-header. And that was either Washington Field or [Pikeville?] Field, which was on Broad Street. And we had a lot of different people taunting, you know, not like in the fact of being ignorant is the best way I can put it. And when we played at Pikeville Field, and we were home team, the people that

were there when it was time for collection, and I always did the collection [00:40:00] for the Giants, they would put in nickels, dimes, stuff like that. But when the white teams, when they were the home team, they would put in dollars, two dollars, five dollars, and stuff like that. And my dad and Mr. Dennis, and my dad never got angry, and me, I would tell them people just how I felt, you know. And (laughs) my dad would always have a hard time telling me to keep my mouth shut because I would just explode. And my dad and Mr. Dennis took it very gently, and we had a couple umpires who were very unfair to the Giants team. And even when it was in the Church League, because he started out in the Church League and then when he went to the Blue Mountain League he [00:41:00] changed it to the Bethlehem Giants. In the Church League we were Saint John's, but in the Blue Mountain League we were Bethlehem Giants.

RL: So your father started two leagues?

VH: No, no, no. It was the same team but he entered two leagues.

RL: Oh, okay.

VH: Mm-hmm. We played in the Church League, we played for like, oh my gosh, five years in the Church League. And then we went into Blue Mountain League, and then that's



where we ended up was in the Blue Mountain League.

RL: You're holding a book in your hand. Could you tell us, I understand, tell us about Jackie Robinson and --

VH: Well this was, this book here, is all of the clippings from the games of the Saint John's to the Bethlehem Giants from the time it started, from the Bethlehem Globe Times. And the first banquet [00:42:00] that the Bethlehem Giants had was at the Moose, which was on Hanover Avenue, and he had Jackie Robinson and Dawn Newcombe were the guest speakers. And no one knew that they were coming until that night. And when we were set up and people were coming in for the event, and when they found out that Jackie Robinson and Dawn Newcombe were there, the baseball team just went crazy. They could not believe. "Mr. T, how did you do that? How did you get them?" And all my dad did was make one phone call.

RL: What year was this?

VH: In '64, '65. And now see, what my dad did when we were kids, twice [00:43:00] a year he had a bus trip to Ebbets Field, which was the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants were rivals, and twice a year in the summer, he had two buses, and the bus line back that was [Kipple?] Bus Line. And he had a bus for the kids and a bus for the grownups. And my mom and my sister and I, we made potato

salad, and fried chicken, and we baked ham. And we made chicken and ham sandwiches for both buses. And there was kids there that wanted to go but didn't have the money, and they come to my dad, Mr. Tarboro, I want to go to the game but I'd ask them be down at the church at 7 O'clock. He never turned any child away and [00:44:00] after we would load the buses up and my mom, like I said, she was a trooper. She was on the bus with the kids.

RL: Mm-hmm. What was the name of the bus company? And was it a local bus company?

VH: Yeah, it was Kipple.

RL: Kipple.

VH: Kipple Bus Line. Now that was back. That's going back. (laughs) And then he did that twice a year, and the tickets, the kids only had to pay like three dollars, and the adults paid ten. And those that, like I said, that didn't have the money, my dad would just tell them, be down at the church at 7 O'clock, and they were there. And they didn't have to pay for the food. Now the grownups, they gave monetary donations for the sandwiches and sodas and whatnot, but the kids didn't have to pay anything.

RL: Oh, okay. So I want to go back, I know [00:45:00] we spoke about the church when you were younger and so forth. So now as an adult, I know you do play a role in Saint Paul's

Church currently. Could you give us a little bit of background about the church, looking at it now as an adult, what it --

VH: What it was different?

RL: Yeah. How has it grown?

VH: Oh, now that's hard. To me, it hasn't grown. It has recessed because when we were coming up the men of the church, now I'm going back to my childhood, they were men. They were deacons and they were trustees. And anything at the church that had to be done, my dad was the chairman of the trustee board. And anything [00:46:00] in that church that had to be done, my dad got the men together and told the issues, what has to be done, they talked about it, they came to a decision and a conclusion of what has to be done and what will be done. The women of the church they were dynamic. And that was Ms. Beulah Grimes, Ms. Gertrude Lewis, Ms. Lucretia [Mercer?], Ms. Francis [Gunn?], and I don't want to miss anybody, there's Francis Gunn, Ms. [Lucy Moore?], and my mom, and they were in the kitchen committee. And any program [00:47:00] or anything that went on at the church, the women got together, they got the meal together, they did the cooking. We're at the service, everybody went down in the lower auditorium and had their repast congregated or drownd and talked and everything.

But they were church oriented back then.

RL: So the church, when was that particular church built? Where exactly is the church actually? Could you tell us.

VH: Well right now we're at 925 East Goepp Street.

RL: Has it always been there?

VH: No, no.

RL: Where was it --

VH: It was in the 1600 block of East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. But I don't know the address, I know where we lived at, 1624 and a half when we were kids, the church was in the same block, but across the street on the corner. So it had to be in the 1600 number, but what [00:48:00] the number was I don't know.

RL: And that's okay. So when did you guys move to Goepp Street? Do you have an idea? Were you --

VH: Let's see. I was -- Eric was born in '69. Now I gotta get my numbers --

RL: That's okay. That's okay.

VH: In 1970, 1971.

RL: 1970s. Okay.

VH: Yeah.

RL: And your parents -- your father, and parents, and grandparents, were they instrumental in starting Saint Paul's Church?

VH: My grandfather was, and under Reverend Williams he was the founder of Saint Paul. Reverend Williams, yeah.

RL: And your grandfather?

VH: My grandfather was like an associate. Like an associate pastor, but he wasn't ordained as a pastor.

RL: Mm-hmm. How about your father?

VH: My dad [00:49:00] became involved in the church, let's see, I was four years old. Now they went to Sunday School and that there. But when my dad really became involved in the church, I was four. Because my mom would take all four of us to Sunday School and my dad would be home, and then all of a sudden he just started coming into church, and we always went to church as a family. But we were living at 1624 and a half and my dad started becoming -- and that was when -- in now see I was four years old, so that was in '42.

RL: Right. So you said the church has declined over the years?

VH: I think it has. I think it has. But I don't -- that's just me. Because to me it's not run the same, it's too many "I-isms." [00:50:00] And back then coming up, this is what we were raised up under. Each auxiliary, each club of the church helped each other. That's not the same today.

RL: Do they have auxiliary today?

VH: Oh yes. Yeah, they do. They have the same auxiliaries

existing today that we had back then, but the workmanship is different. You know, the labors are few. The work is still there but the labors are few. But when we were coming up, even as kids, we were involved.

RL: Mm-hmm. So you saw membership was growing during a certain period, and as, you know, later on, you think the membership dried off?

VH: I think it has dwindled off but I understand now, I'm not a hundred percent member of Saint Paul. I go there when they have different programs and stuff. I help out like that. But it has grown [00:51:00] some, but I went there a couple weeks ago, they had a program, and there was a lot of young kids there that I hadn't seen for a while. And a lot of them I didn't know.

RL: So I understand that you're working on the history of the church? What do you --

VH: Yes I am. This is going back to when I was a child coming up. Because in the one book they only had a few people in the Junior Choir and no, no, no, no, they missed a whole lot. In our Sunday School and the Junior Choir, and I put all the names down that I knew, that was in Sunday School and Junior Choir. I have that in my update. Yeah.

RL: So you have discovered new things?

VH: Oh, I've discovered a lot of things that were missed.

RL: Besides that, what other tidbits would you like to share with us as far as things that they missed? Did you find out anything else besides the fact that [00:52:00] it didn't have certain --

VH: Well I know with the willing workers, now I was a young adult, and with the willing workers of the old Saint Paul, if any member was sick or down in some way or another, them willing workers got together, they visited them. If they found out they needed food, or if they needed something to be done at the house, they did it. Willing workers today, no. It ain't nothing like that. And they, whatever they do, I don't know, I don't even wanna suggest because I don't know, but I know the willing workers when we were coming up, they took care, they took care of people that were in need.

RL: Have you seen like any challenges as far as [00:53:00] Saint Paul's is concerned? When it comes to women in general? Any changes? Any challenges that you have seen or experienced as a member of Saint Paul's?

VH: If you're comparing the women of the day back to the women of yesteryear, I'm going back to the women of yesteryear, because that's coming up in my prime time. A lot of things of how they feel or how they think nowadays to me, it's a lot of "I-ism." They don't support each auxiliary to me

like I think they should. But that's just me. And I feel like if they think you're doing right, then that's on them. I don't have anything to do. But I will say that the women of yesteryear, they outweigh, they outwork the [00:54:00] women of today. I mean there's no question there.

RL: Will you ever be involved in any political group? Political organization?

VH: Political?

RL: Yeah. Like in Bethlehem?

VH: Oh, no. Oh, no.

RL: No?

VH: If I'd be involved in a [politic?] I'd be in jail.

(laughs) And I told them -- and everybody laughs at me, but I'm serious. If I had a computer, honey, the FBI would come to my house, they wouldn't even knock on my door. They would come in there, confiscate my computer, me, and my dog [Herbie?] (laughs) because the way things are going, no.

RL: Do you recall any political leaders who were really instrumental as far as political leaders? I know you mentioned this Esther Lee.

VH: Esther Lee and Reverend Hargroves, they did their best [00:55:00] to keep the black community informed, updated. But like I said before, to get them all to unite, you know,



and get on one accord, that was like pulling teeth that didn't have to come out. It was hard. You had a few that were workers. You had a few that were challenging to the job. But then you had those that were sit back, oh and you ain't gonna do this, or this can't be done, or, you know, with negativism. And I give all my thoughts to Sister Lee and she really worked because she'd been in the NAACP for years. And she's still a soldier working in the NAACP. And Reverend [00:56:00] Hargroves, when he came into the Bethlehem Steel in the human relations department, he brought a lot of blacks into the steel.

RL: Reverend Hargrove, is he still alive?

VH: No, Reverend Hargroves passed away about, I'd say about five years now.

RL: Does he have family living in Bethlehem?

VH: No. He had a daughter but I don't know where she's at. He had a daughter and a son but I don't know where they're at.

RL: Mm-hmm. This has been really fascinating listening to your life and I want to wrap it up. But before we actually wrap it up, as you know, we're trying to capture the last fifty years of life here in Bethlehem as an African American, and so when you look back, let's say [00:57:00] from the 1960s to now, have you noticed like what were some of the positive impacts, and some of the negative impacts, as far

as Bethlehem and growing up here in Bethlehem that you have seen? What changes? What growth? What decline? I know you mentioned the church as far as a -- but you as an individual, what have you seen with African American community in Bethlehem over the past fifty years?

VH: Now to be honest with you, there's some blacks that have really had good jobs, some have bought homes, and some have been prosperous, but I don't see much of a change.

[00:58:00]

RL: (inaudible)

VH: No. I mean you have to work for what you want. You're not going to get it for nothing. But a lot of them to me, now this is my personal feelings, a lot of them they had jobs and if they made it good, they elevated themselves, they put themselves among others. Above others. We were always taught, we are no better than the next man. And we never think of a person lower than you, or higher than you. And that was always my stickler of mine. And I mean I get into a lot of trouble with people because I'd tell them just how I feel. If I don't think you're right, I'm going to tell you you're not right. And if you don't like it, well that's on you. But I don't pull any punches, [00:59:00] I never did, and I never will. And I say if I live to be another 80 years old I'm gonna be the same way. And I

treat folk like I want to be treated. But I always feel like it's good when you can progress, but when you get to the point that you progress and you put yourself up above the next man that's lower than you, that's not right. Because that's not how God looks at us. We are all his children. He loves us all unconditionally. And until we instill that in our heads, we will never ever become a united family because we are all a family under God's Grace.

RL: Mm-hmm. So do you feel like there is a disconnect between --

VH: Oh, yeah. And I always said getting to racism, it's going [01:00:00] to remain that way as long as the sun rises and the sun sets. Until man within himself, like the one lady asked me, "How do you think we can get out of this racism thing?" And I looked at her, I said, "Do you really want to know?" And she says, "Yes." I said, "Well when you look in the mirror in the morning, and that vision that you see in the mirror, you talk to it, and ask that vision, why do I feel towards blacks the way I do? Why do I think I'm better than they are?" And then she just looked at me and she was an older woman, older than me, and she just looked at me and she says, "Well I just never thought." I says, "No. You think the way you were taught." I said, "Racism

is a [01:01:00] taught element. You're not born a racist. And only you can control that."

RL: And, you know, I just want to, I said we were backing up, but I, you know, I thought of your kids, and again, that was like during the 1960s too, what was it like raising them during that period? Your children?

VH: Well it was hard. I had to work. And I raised them by myself. I had to keep a roof over their heads, food in their mouth, clothing. It wasn't easy but I never gave up. I knew what I had to do and I did it. Even through sickness and all. I never gave up. And I always kept the prayer, and I always asked God for guidance. To guide my footsteps. And if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be where I am today because he's brought me through a lot.

RL: And your [01:02:00] children, where are they living now? Do they still live in Bethlehem?

VH: My daughter lives in Philadelphia. And my son's in Allentown.

RL: In Allentown.

VH: Yeah.

RL: You have two pictures. You brought some pictures. You brought a lot of things with you. Could you tell us about the pictures that's on that table?

VH: Oh, that's my mom and dad.

RL: Could you lift it up for the camera? If you don't mind.

VH: This is the picture of my mom and dad. This was their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They got married December the 25<sup>th</sup> of 1936. And this was their 50<sup>th</sup> so that would make it 1986 when this was taken. And my mom passed away on their 61<sup>st</sup>, right after their 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary, which was December the 25<sup>th</sup> of 1997. And my [01:03:00] dad passed away August the 17<sup>th</sup> of 1999.

RL: And how about the other picture? What is that one?

VH: This is my grandpa. This is my dad's dad. This was grandpa, he was a stickler. Now my grandpa did not like the white men. And when we were coming up, we had the milkman and bread man, and they delivered milk to your door early in the morning, and we had a container they put it in, and the bread man, it was [Bonn?] Bread, and if my grandpa was up and saw them coming in his yard, he went and got his, what he called his smoking gun (laughs).

RL: And this was in Bethlehem?

VH: This was in Bethlehem. We were living at 1533 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street because my grandpa and his second wife, Grandma Patty, [01:04:00] they lived with us, oh, for a couple years. And it took a long time for my dad to get my grandpa to understand that times are changing.

RL: Right because he's from the south.

VH: Yeah, he's from the South.

RL: Right, he grew up, he experienced --

VH: Yeah. And the one thing I will remember, I was 13 years old and I was talking to my grandpa, and he called me in his back room the one day, and he said to me, "Little Bit." Because he called "Little Bit" and my Aunt [Les?] called me "Little Bit." And he said, "I don't want you to think I was mean." And we do, we thought grandpa, oh, we thought grandpa was bad. (laughs) And when he took off his shirt, and you know how back the old men then wore this one piece [01:05:00] undergarment.

RL: Overalls.

VH: Overalls with the trap door. Well when he unbuttoned the top few and showed me his back, I was 13 years old, and I understood then why grandpa disliked the whites. Of the whipping on his back. And I never forgot that. And I tell the people that till today, and they just looked at me, but like I said, if my dad had a hard time getting grandpa to accept the fact that we had white people coming in our house, sitting at our table, and my grandpa will walk around the house and snort like a bull, and my dad would try to get him and, "Pop, you can't do that. You know, times are changing." [01:06:00] But in my grandpa's mind? Nothing changed.

RL: This is Vivian Hungerford and thank you, this was excellent. Thank you for your time, and thank you for sharing all these great stories, and thank you.

VH: Well I thank you for asking. (laughs)

END OF AUDIO FILE