

**The Lemon Street Schools Oral History Collection
Marietta City Schools System, 2019-2021
James Dodd Jr. interview
Conducted by James Newberry
February 21, 2020**

Complete Transcript

Interviewer: This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Mr. James Dodd on Friday, February 21st, 2020, at the KSU Center. Kennesaw State University. Thank you for meeting with me, Mr. Dodd.

Dodd: You're more than welcome.

Interviewer: Do you agree to this interview?

Dodd: Absolutely.

Interviewer: We'll just start with the simple stuff. Could you tell me your full name?

Dodd: James Calvin Dodd Jr.

Interviewer: What's your birthdate?

Dodd: I was born May the 4th, 1939.

Interviewer: Can you tell me your parents' names?

Dodd: My father was, same as my name, really, but everybody knew him as JC Dodd, and my mother was Mary-Emma Dodd, Mary-Emma Durham Dodd.

Interviewer: Durham?

Dodd: Yeah, that was her maiden name.

Interviewer: Could you spell that?

Dodd: D-U-R-H-A-M, Durham.

Interviewer: Oh, Durham. What did you parents do for a living?

Dodd: My father was a builder, construction. Mostly residential homes. And my mother was a homemaker.

Interviewer: Did you have any siblings?

Dodd: Yes, I have 14 siblings. Six brothers and nine sisters, well, I say six brothers, five brothers and nine sisters. 15 of us.

Interviewer: Where did you fall in the lineup?

Dodd: Second one. All of us are still living.

Interviewer: All 15?

Dodd: All 15 still living. One set of triplets and two sets of twins.

Interviewer: Wow. Do they live mostly in Cobb County or elsewhere?

Dodd: There are probably eight of us living in Cobb County. I have family in South Carolina, I have family in Fort Valley. I have a sister in Houston, but most of us are local.

Interviewer: You grew up in Marietta?

Dodd: Grew up in Marietta, yes.

Interviewer: What part of the city?

Dodd: [Tower 00:02:10] Road. I was born right across the street from North Cobb High School. We moved to Fort Street in Marietta. I don't even remember, I was so young. I do remember living there, and I think we moved away from there when I was roughly five years old, I believe, to Tower Road and James Street. I still live in that same area. Matter of fact, on the same property. Not in the same house, but the same property.

Interviewer: That was, the property where you live now, that was where your parents had moved the family?

Dodd: My father purchased 10 acres of land, and, being a building contractor, he had it surveyed and cut up into lots. He sold lots and built houses. I still live on that same property.

Interviewer: Your father, a builder. What would you say your standard of living was, as a child? How did your parents do?

Dodd: My parents did very well, considering my father, there wasn't a lot of money in building contracting back in that day and time, and my daddy worked for mostly poor folk. He always had the idea of "I can't charge them, because they've got to eat too," but my daddy believed in having plenty food for us. Standard of living was probably the same as any other African American family during that particular time, the '40s and the '50s. It was tight, but we had most of the things that, I remember when we didn't have a TV. There was one TV in the

neighborhood and on the weekend, we all gathered around that house and watched TV in the evenings. But it wasn't long before we got a TV and radios. We didn't have a lot, back in that day and time. Cars, my daddy didn't drive until after, he got his license after I did. I got my license when I was 16, and he was certainly in his 30s, I guess, when he first got his driver's license. He purchased a truck, one that he used to work in, more than anything else, but it was our transportation when time come to go wherever. Our standard was about normal for African American families during that period of time.

Interviewer: Do you remember the family name that had the TV?

Dodd: Yeah, it was my daddy's brother. He was a pastor, preacher pastor. He had that TV, George Dodd, and he had a smaller family. That was good. We all got to watch TV.

Interviewer: With 15 siblings, how many bedrooms in the house? How did you-

Dodd: Well, we had, at the time, really, there were never all of us in the house at the same time. By the time that I got old enough, I was out of the house. We had four bedrooms when I was growing up, and one of them was a makeshift bedroom, but it was a bedroom. It served its purpose. It wasn't that bad. Of course, you had to have two beds in every room, so we did well.

Interviewer: For, you talked about plenty of food, that kind of thing. Were your parents mainly shopping at a grocery store or did they keep a garden? How did that work?

Dodd: Both. My father usually did most of the buying grocery, but he also had a garden. I remember it well. As a matter of fact, I purchased some sweet potatoes yesterday, the day before yesterday, I guess it was, at Kroger, and I reminded my wife, I remember my daddy had a potato hill. Matter of fact, the very lot that I'm living on right now was part of my daddy's garden, and the lots beyond me, he planted sweet potatoes. He had a potato hill, and every fall, when you gather in the food that you've grown, a potato hill was built. It's like you put potatoes in a pile, like a tented pile, and you cover it with, also, syrup cane or corn, and he would take the stalks from the cane and the corn and he would cover, you would see a mound with those stalks and then he would take dirt and cover the stalks, and leave a place down at the bottom, facing the house, and we'd just reach in there and pull potatoes out all winter long. Actually, they would last all year long, for some reason, but you bring them in the house as a matter of fact, I was noticing those potatoes that I brought in the other day, they're beginning to turn on the tips of them a little bit, just from being a warm temperature, I guess.

Interviewer: So that was a technique that worked better at that time than now.

Dodd: A lot of things worked better. You're talking about food, my daddy had hogs, and he had a couple of cows and pigs, you know, they had a lot of pigs. As a matter of fact, you mentioned Jennie Gresham. Her father and my father, he would furnish the slop, as we called it, to feed the hogs, and my daddy had the property and he had to build he bins and he had to slop the hogs, as we called it. Feed the hogs every day, two or three times a day. It was always, actually usually at Thanksgiving, the day of Thanksgiving, that was the day that dad would always kill hogs. I mean, he had so many, he would have people come by and say, "I want that one." It was like, you go in some restaurants now, and you see the live fish in there, I want that one and that one, and they would send them out and dress them, fry them, however you wanted it cooked. It was kind of the same way with my dad when it would come to, people would come by from all over the city and county. "I want that pig right there." He'd pop it. Then you've got to cut it where it would bleed. It would take a couple hours, you know, and that hog is yours.

Interviewer: Is that white people and black people?

Dodd: White, black. Yes. Absolutely.

Interviewer: What was your father's relationship with people across the community? White people and black people? The differences, the similarities, that kind of thing.

Dodd: Obviously they saw him from different viewpoints, but I don't know that there was anybody in Cobb County, any black person in Cobb County at that time that was better known than my father. There was a W.P. Stevens Lumber Company right on the corner of Church and Polk Street. The building is still there. Guy by the name of Ed Stevens was there. He thought my daddy walked on water. A.D. Little was a real estate place down Atlanta Street. That was where, daddy would go to him and say, "I need whatever," money-wise, and he was able to borrow it and bill. It was just one of those things that, and the fact that he owned land, people respected that. Somebody that's, most people are renting. I know that my father never rented anything for us to live in after I was probably four or five years of age. He built and he bought, whatever.

Interviewer: How long did he live?

Dodd: My daddy was 86 when he passed away. This is, my doctor feels like I might be following in that same trail. My dad, he was becoming a little bit senile, he didn't remember well, and I'm getting where I forget a lot too. Like the appointments I had with you, for example. You know, I just had too much going up there to remember, but he lived and as he began to grow older, he didn't remember well. I can remember we were working, after I came out of the military and started back to work building houses and what have you, my daddy, he would have to go to the lumber yard, sometimes five or six times a day, he would go for two or three items, and rather than write it down, "Oh, I'll remember it." He would get there, and he would forget it and come back, and it wasn't long, he's got to go back again. He was 86, but not because of a natural

death. In his mental capacity draining, he would forget where he was going, but he always liked to walk. He was a very slender man, tall as I am. Maybe a little taller. He left home one day and he walked from Tower Road, Kennesaw Avenue, old 41 to the new 41 where there used to be, gosh, I don't remember. There's a McDonald's right up there, on Cobb Parkway. He would turn right, and he walked all the way back to the Big Chicken. He made a left turn, I don't know where, he was confused about how to get back home or whatever, but where the Loop crosses Roswell Street, on top of the hill where the traffic lights are, I can't imagine why he wanted to cross the street, but it's a very broad street, as you know, up there. He probably did have a light to cross when he started, but when he got ready to go across the westbound traffic, the car saw he was walking and he stopped, and he started on crossing in front of the car, but the car to the right of him, it hit him and broke him up real bad. As a matter of fact, he landed on top of the car that struck him. That was probably in '95, maybe. 1995. I was on council at that time, in the city of Marietta. My wife called me and she said, "Your dad is missing." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, we don't know where he is." I said, "Okay," and I left the city council meeting, went to the police office, which is right behind City Hall, and I said to the police officer, I said, "I know we had a tough time at council meeting, but I've got a problem." He said, "What?" I said, "My dad's missing." I said, "I know you all don't do very much for 24 hours." He said, "Absolutely not. We're on it right now." This officer, I don't want to call names, but this officer, we had had, unfortunately, a difference of opinion that night, and it kind of stirred the council members. But anyway, the first thing he questioned, he said, "What was he wearing?" I said, "I don't know. I'm on my way home right here, I just wanted to tell you guys." He says, "We'll be right on it." I drove home to where you came to the other day, same house. I went in and my wife was telling me that people had seen my dad, and, as the word got around, people were calling me, telling me, "I saw your dad on this particular day and he was walking." We got to the hospital, well, I had just started backing out, and the police officer pulled up in my yard, the same individual. Thank you. He said, "I think you need to ride with me." I said, "No, I'll drive." He said, "No, I'd rather you ride with me." I said, "Okay." I got in the police vehicle and we started out, and he contacted the police officers where they had found my father, and as a matter of fact, when I got home, this police officer called and said, "We found your father." Just the way he said it, I got the feeling that my father had passed. When he came and I got in the car with him, I said, "Where's my dad?" He said, "He's alive, but he's broken up pretty badly." He said, "They're on the way in right now with him." I said, "Wow." He said, "What we're going to do is go to the hospital and wait." The hospital is just like a quarter of a mile from where I live. We pulled in, and of course I was very anxious to see my dad and what condition he was in. It was such a bad situation they had to take time to really just load him on the gurney. It was a good, probably, 30 minutes before they got there while I paced the floor. When he got there, they opened the rear door and daddy was lying in there. I said, "Dad!" He said, "Yes?" I said, "How are you feeling?" He said, "Oh, I'm really cold." I said, "Are you hurting?" He said, "No, I'm just cold." I could see the bone on one of his legs protruding through the skin, and I said, "What happened to your leg?" He said, "Well, we were out in the woods cutting trees

down, getting firewood, and the old saw kicked back and this log hit my leg." He didn't even know it was broken. I said, "Are you hurting?" He said, "No." And I'm thinking, I could see blood from his head and his arm was broken, and the leg that was broken, but he lay there talking. They said, "Okay, let us rush him in." I thought I was going to be able to go in, absolutely not. I paced the floor for another hour and a half, two hours, and they brought him out. He never really recovered from that. He stayed in rehab for quite a long time and then back to the hospital and back to rehab. He finally passed away.

Interviewer: Wow. That was in the mid-90s, you said?

Dodd: He passed away, yeah. He was 86, it was in the, 1998 when he passed away. February the 10th when he passed away.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that.

Dodd: Sure.

Interviewer: Before we move into your early education and starting school, I'd like to get a sense of Marietta in the '40s and '50s. I think some of what you said has illuminated that, but tell me more about the situation, the racial situation, social situation, that kind of thing.

Dodd: Well, it wasn't good, but I suppose it was what most of the people accepted because that was a way of life that they had grown up under, and their parents, of course, likewise. I can remember very well, when we were living on Fort Street in Marietta, and my mother would walk downtown. There's a building, still, well, most of the buildings are still intact, except the ones on the exact east side of the square. All of that are new buildings. There was a McClellan's five and ten cent store. Are you familiar with it?

Interviewer: I've heard a lot of things about it.

Dodd: It's right on the corner of South Park Square and Winter Street, and I remember that we would go there and shop. We would walk from Fort Street up there and shop. We would walk through the square. We could walk through, black people could walk through the square, but you couldn't sit in the square. You couldn't sit down in the square. I always challenged my mother and wanted to do, everybody sat in the square, I wanted to sit in the square as well. Of course, when that would happen shh, don't talk about it, and she would take me by the hand and rush me on with her through the square. That was just a way of life, and taking that from my mother, I knew that, when I walked through the square, you couldn't sit down and relax or whatever, and likewise, when you walk in the five and dime stores, those that had lunch counters, of course you couldn't walk up and sit down in there to get something to eat. Didn't understand it very well then, and I think that's one of the things that certainly enabled me to understand that, now that I was in the military, when I go back

home, there's got to be some change. Change was made even before I came back home. Dr. King, of course, and all that he was doing, and it was just, that was a way of life that was accepted. It wasn't a good life. Going to school, for example, right where you came to yesterday, day before yesterday, we would walk from there, incidentally, the house next door to my house was my mother's house where we grew up. We would walk to Lemon Street. We would pass schools to get to school. There were buses, school buses. I don't remember if there were school buses when I first started to school, but after that there were school buses running in the city, but we didn't get to ride the buses initially. After probably three or four years, we did have a bus that would come to pick us up. It was not one purchased by the city, but a guy by the name of Richard Roberts. He owned a service station in that day and time, a gas station. He had a taxicab service, East Side Cab, and he had been in the military. He was very frugal, and he had money, or he borrowed money and was able to do that, and he bought buses. He found drivers to drive those buses for us, and eventually they did away with that and the school buses would pick up everybody, but the ones that we did, when I was growing up, I don't think, I can tell you we never had buses that shared with everybody. It was only the African American kids that was on that bus. The school itself, we had all African American teachers. The thing that really used to bother me so badly when I was growing up was the fact that the books that we used, they would go around every year to the white schools, pick up the books that they had used. Oftentimes there were pages torn out of them, the covers torn off the backs, and they would bring them to Lemon Street on a flatbed truck. Every year. And they would just park along the side of the road and stand up on that truck and throw the books off on the ground. When they'd leave, the teachers would send us out, the boys, to gather all the books and bring them into the hallway of the old school, the one that was torn down now. The building that still stands, the old school there, before it was torn down, was first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. We would get the books, we'd take them in and stack them in the hallway against the walls. Then they would come out and sort the books. All the history books together and all the whatever, spelling books and so forth and so on together. Then they would decide what grades these are for, and that's the ones would use those books. Sometimes we had books, of course we always had homework. You get home, and you didn't have a book that had all of the pages in it, you had a real difficult time. It was a thorn in my side in my early age, but finally that went away, and when I had just completed the fifth grade, that building was torn down and in the early part of the year, we were in class then in what was the, it was the auditorium. Large room.

Interviewer: Is this at the high school, at that time?

Dodd: Yeah, at the high school. Auditorium in the high school. That's where we had class for virtually a whole year while they tore the old building down and built a new building. Basically all they did was build walls, and we were really crowded in there. This room right here would probably hold 25, 30 students, just crowded in the room. The auditorium had a very high ceiling, vaulted height. Excuse me. The walls would only be like eight feet tall, and you could hear the

teachers from the other side, on both sides. This room, and there's teachers teaching. It was a rough year, but the school year for my sixth grade, started school in '45, so probably '51, they had completed the building for my sixth grade class. That was the first class to move into that building, was that sixth grade class, and the lunchroom and the principal's office and what have you. I went to school in that building for sixth grade and seventh grade, and then the eighth grade, of course, across the street to the high school.

Interviewer: Where were your sixth and seventh grade classrooms?

Dodd: Say again?

Interviewer: Where were your sixth and seventh grade classrooms in the new building?

Dodd: In the new building, if you walk in the main door from Lemon Street, walk straight down the hall, all the way to the very end, class on the left side was my classroom. On the seventh grade, as you first walk in that same door, the first room to the right as you walk in the building. Miss Hollis was my sixth grade teacher, and Mr. Adams was my seventh grade teacher.

Interviewer: That's Aaron?

Dodd: Aaron Adams.

Interviewer: So, he was also the principal?

Dodd: He was also a principal at the time. Not at that time, but during that period of time he was, I guess, an alternate. I don't know. I don't remember really what it was. He taught classes, and I guess he was the principal also. I don't remember.

Interviewer: You said not at the very beginning. Was that Woods at the very beginning? Professor Woods?

Dodd: Professor Woods was always there. From the time I started school until the time I left that school, he was there as principal. Mr. Aaron Adams did become principal, but it was after I had started the eighth grade at least, if not even graduated from high school. That was about it for Lemon Street, man. It was a great place to go. We had a football team. Our chemistry teacher was our chemistry teacher and our football coach.

Interviewer: I know who you're talking about.

Dodd: Sullivan Ruff Jr.

Interviewer: I met him last week.

Dodd: Did you?

Interviewer: Yeah, in Chattanooga.

Dodd: Yeah, he's in Chattanooga.

Interviewer: I called him and said, "Can I come up there today?" It was very short notice, and he was wonderful.

Dodd: He is. He's a great guy. He was kind of short and chubby. He was a great guy. He drove the bus to wherever we were going. Whoever we were playing. Gainesville, Cedartown, or wherever. He was the bus driver, he was the coach, he was it. One person. You look now and you see how many coaches we got on the football field. You wonder, gosh. Now, Wilkins did come, Coach Wilkins, probably when I was in the eleventh grade. He was drafted into the military, and when he got back, football season was over for my twelfth grade, so I really didn't get to play very much under Coach Wilkins. Once he come back on leave or whatever, he would always come to school. Of course, when the integration came, he followed them, I guess, to, well, maybe not. I'm not sure that he even coached at all at Marietta High, because I was in the military, so I was away.

Interviewer: I believe he transferred over.

Dodd: Okay.

Interviewer: After coaching the Lemon Street team to a state championship.

Dodd: Yeah, he did.

Interviewer: Just before full integration.

Dodd: I know they had a state championship.

Interviewer: I wanted to ask you a couple of specific questions about the school that was torn down in '50. What had the building, what condition was it in when you were attending?

Dodd: It was a ... I'll say a square building, not necessarily a rectangle shape. It had two, four, six, eight ... I believe it had eight rooms to it, large rooms. Of course, the student population at that time was pretty heavy for a room. But I know the room was full. It was a two-story building. I believe there was four rooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs with wood burning heaters, wood and coal as a matter of fact, burning heaters. When you get there in the mornings, we had to build a fire, and get the place warm. And we had a janitor. The janitor was the one that built the fire. But I remember as early as the fourth grade, we were the one that had to stoke the heater with the wood coal or whatever. But it was, again, it was not air conditioned or anything like that. But during the winter months we did stay warm with no problems. Miss Patterson was the first grade teacher. Miss Thompson was my second grade teacher. Miss Sims was my

third grade teacher. No, Miss Sims was fourth grade teacher. Miss Watson was my third grade teacher, I believe. My fifth grade teacher was Miss Kemp. And sixth grade teacher, the lovely lady by the name of Hill. The last name was Hill. Seventh grade was Aaron Adams and then across the street-

Interviewer: Miss Patterson was I think in her final years of teaching by then.

Dodd: Miss Patterson was there a few years after I left school. She was not there when I graduated. But she was there for a long time, a long period of time. I don't know how many years.

Interviewer: How did she dress? What was her appearance?

Dodd: Miss Patterson was a small framed lady with gray hair. She wore long dresses. But very neatly dressed for the time. I don't ever remember seeing her coming or leaving the school. She taught everybody that came along. Of course that was the one first grade teacher. We had one second grade teacher, there were two Miss Edwards there. One was a second grade and I'm not sure what grade the other one taught.

Interviewer: Yeah, it was big Miss Edwards a little Miss Edwards?

Dodd: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's what I've heard.

Dodd: Yeah. Somebody had it down. All of those people dressed very nicely. As a matter of fact I can remember that many of them, if not all of them, initially except Mr. Louis Scott, of course he was not in the elementary schools. But all of our teachers came out of Atlanta every morning. And every afternoon they went back to Atlanta. My ninth grade teacher, homeroom teacher, Mrs. Brown, she was my math teacher. I can remember her coming down Lemon Street, right about where the old church is there on the corner of ... What is that, Waddell maybe? No, not Waddell. Whatever the name of the street is. She would stop. Sometimes when we'd walk to school we walked in groups. She would want to put everybody in her car and give you a ride to school. We've walked all the way from my house to where Zion Church is. She would always come along, she would stop and offer us a ride, it was amazing. "We got a ride, oh my God." We piled in her car and-

Interviewer: Tell me her name again?

Dodd: Brown, Miss Brown. I don't remember her first name. Alice. I think was Alice Brown.

Interviewer: And she taught you in high school.

Dodd: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Ninth grade.

Interviewer: I want to put together the sequence of ... Go ahead.

Dodd: I said ninth grade. She was my ninth grade homeroom teacher. And she taught a class, which was math. She was the math teacher, as a matter of fact. Then she would revolve around to the different teachers during the day for different subjects. But she was great. She was very much like my mother in some ways. She would say, oh God, they had all kind of sayings. We understand what it meant. And as we grew older we certainly got to understand those. Even today, I remember my dad, for example, he used to say, "Old Man Can't, he been dead." That means you don't say to my dad, "You can't do something." He'd say if Old Man Can't, if that was a man's name, he died. So, that you can't do something is unheard of. You can do it. It didn't make a lot of sense back in those days. But as you grew older, you can do whatever you choose to do. You've just got to try hard, work at it to get it done.

Interviewer: Miss Brown, what type of car did she drive? Do you remember?

Dodd: Oh my gosh, I don't. It was probably a Chevrolet. I don't even remember the color. It seems to me that it was a brown-ish looking color that she drove. As a matter of fact, she had a problem walking, maybe with the one leg longer than the other. She kind of hopped when she'd walk. Her name was Alice, it just fits in, so I'm sure ... Alice Brown. She was kind of a short lady. Very knowledgeable. As a matter of fact that was one of my better classes, math, when I was in high school. Going through high school, you kind of like, best thing, it's ... You've got to go to school. But I really enjoyed math classes.

Interviewer: Did you have a sense of the teachers, the administrators' expectations for the students on Lemon Street.

Dodd: I can tell you, without a doubt, having served on the Board of Education of the City of Marietta, looking back and comparing the times, kids, number one, were much more interested in school than they are today. I can tell you that kids in school today are much better dressed when we were when I was growing up in school. And I think the difference is today, or even ... I can remember the first time that I ever remember a student being pregnant. But as the years passed, it was younger, and younger, and younger, kids having kids. They didn't come up in a home life like I did, where I had a mother and a father there in the house. And if it was something that I had done that my mother considered real bad, I had to wait till dad come home, you know? To be chastised for it. And I can remember as I was going through high school particularly, we had what we call latchkey kids. You get home and you've got a key tied to something, some part of your clothes or sewn into something with a ribbon that's holding it where the key wouldn't be seen. But you'd get home, you'd reach in and you'd get the key. You'd go in and you were there. We didn't have that. My mother was there waiting on us, dinner was ready when we got home. She was the last person at home that we saw in the mornings when we were leaving. And it made a

tremendous difference in the lives where a kid's parents eventually evolved to the point that the mom was not there in the morning sometimes. And the mom wasn't there in the evening when you came home. As a matter of fact, there were days when my mother would even walk toward ... Because she knew the path that we'd always come. You always follow that same path that you come when you're traveling back and forth to school. Mother would sometimes walk to meet us. She was so glad to see us, and hug us ... You know, you get used to that attention. We needed that and we got that then. Of course, in this day and time ... It reminds me, it wasn't quite as bad ... I traveled to Kenya, Uganda and some other places a couple of years ago. Not last year but year before last and the year before that. Doing missionary work. You see the kids get up in the morning. Tremendous difference. Dirt floor. In east Africa, it doesn't really get cold, cold. Like it is here this morning. They don't have that kind of cold. West Africa is totally different. But east Africa, they don't. These kids would get up off of that dirt floor, the same thing that they slept in, the same thing that they wore yesterday, and out the door they went. They would scavenge garbage cans for whatever just to find something to eat. And if they don't find anything, they didn't get anything. It's amazing. It wasn't that bad here in America. It still isn't that bad here in America. But people now, churches and different organizations now certainly provide food for family, food stamps and what have you. When I was growing up, I didn't know nothing about food stamps. It wasn't something that we had. Or, if it did exist, it didn't exist in my family. We didn't take advantage of it or whatever. But it's amazing how here in America, families had to work. As a matter of fact, when I was ... I can remember back when I, the man was always the one to go out, the breadwinner. And work. The mother was there in the household to wash the clothes, and cook the food, and make the beds and clean the house. You name it. But later in my life I began to see latchkey kids. They'd come home and you've got nothing there but an empty house. Maybe a TV. Maybe a TV. Of course, what do you do? What would a normal kid do? You would first try to find something to eat, probably. Then turn the TV on and they're locked into the TV instead of studying. When I came home, we got a chance to play with the neighboring kids. When playtime was over, you've got work to do to help ... Like, in my case, we had a well. I had to draw water for bath, for cooking, for whatever. During the fall and winter months it was my job to go out and bring the wood into the house, or the coal into the house for heating. Of course, when I got older, we had public housing. The kids didn't have to worry about things like that. We never lived in public housing. We had our chores and after that we always had to do our homework. If it didn't have homework, we had to study. We had to read something. Today there's no such thing. They may have homework, but it probably won't get done. Tremendous difference, tremendous change in lifestyles now than what it was when I was growing up.

Interviewer:

You're talking about the walk to school. That's of particular interest to me. Several folks have mentioned this. Cheryl Long mentioned, and she's sort of after you a bit. But that path to school being very rigid. You do not go off of that path. Speak a little bit more about the reasons for that. Or the idea behind that.

Dodd: You know, society is the one that makes decisions. That this is going to happen. Or that's going to happen. Of course, during that particular time you had Caucasians with businesses. And the ones making money. Look at council for example, or look at the commission, County Commission. There were no African Americans serving on those things. When decisions are made, black people were just not included. When it comes to the bus thing that I was talking about, walking to school and reminding you earlier that the bus transportation, when African-American kids first had the opportunity to ride buses, the buses belonged to a black man. He purchased them. Now, he got paid something by the county or the city for buying buses or providing transportation, I should say. But when we had two and a half miles that we had to walk to school and two and a half miles to walk back to school, even in inclement weather, as we have right now, we walked. It was freezing this morning, 32 degrees when you woke up. School time. And you've got to get out there and make it. Even if it's raining you've still got to do it. Now, I can recall a guy by the name of Lawrence Petty. He owned a beer joint right off of Roselane Street. Tower and Roselane. This man had a Lincoln automobile. And occasionally ... When I say occasionally, very rare occasionally, he would drive us to school. During that day, cars were more luxurious big cars that they made. But black people couldn't afford those, except on rare occasions. Mr. Lawrence Petty, he would carry us to school, I mean, with our muddy shoes, Tower Road that you drove down was dirt. It wasn't paved. And when it rained it was a mess. Exactly. But you walked in the mud. And we would get in his car with our muddy shoes. I'll be very honest with you ... Our clothing was wet because it had been raining. It didn't make him a difference. He didn't do this very often. But there were occasions when he did. I don't remember how or why he would come or drive to Marietta that early in the morning except knowing that, "Hey, these kids out here have got to walk to school. So, I'm going to go out this morning and give them a ride." I'll tell you, it was one of the greatest things that could ever happen. Then my father's brother bought a car. On occasions when it was raining he would take us to school. The thing that really, really got you is here's a school, right there in the neighborhood. As a matter of fact, right there ... I don't know if you know it, I think it's called Gin, it was Gin Street. If you go to the hospital and make a left turn, about two blocks there was an old school there.

Interviewer: Which one was that?

Dodd: It was a county school during that time. I don't remember the name of it. Then, finally, the alternate route, if you're traveling north you get to the traffic light there at the hospital and just go straight. It becomes Canton Road, the bypass. The school's a little small school. County school. In that area I can remember right now exactly where the footprint of it was. And of course, that's three quarters of a mile from where I lived. But I've got to walk that two and a half miles to Lemon Street. You pass by the schools there right now where ... Right across the street from Old Zion Church, there was a school. I can't remember the name of it. I think by the same name the street was. I'm not sure. You walk by that-

Interviewer: Not Waterman?

Dodd: Maybe. It may have been. You see buses there, white kids unloading.

Interviewer: The Richard Roberts who drove the bus, you said he was reimbursed by the city school system.

Dodd: City and county I suppose. Because the kids from Powder Springs came to Marietta. Smyrna came to Marietta. And I don't know what the financial arrangement was. But I'm sure he was compensated by the county and the city.

Interviewer: Do you remember what age you were when you started being able to ride that bus, Mr. Roberts' bus?

Dodd: Probably the fifth or sixth grade.

Interviewer: Okay. Right about the time the new school was built. What did that bus look like? Was it a normal sort of school looking bus? Or a different type of bus?

Dodd: No, it was a normal school looking bus. As a matter of fact, the buses, you would not have known the difference except by maybe some buses were larger or longer. But they were all yellow. There was not any difference that I can recall in the resemblance of those buses.

Interviewer: So, finally, a bus had become available. But, like everything else, it was segregated.

Dodd: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: And Mr. Robert ran this sort of unit of buses for black students.

Dodd: Absolutely.

Interviewer: And he had multiple drivers.

Dodd: He had multiple drivers, yes. I don't know if anybody has mentioned Pastor Moss. Just before you made the left turn to drive onto James Street there was a church. Did you notice that church?

Interviewer: I believe so, yes.

Dodd: The church would have been on the left side as you were coming in from the hospital. It would have been on the left side of the street. That individual, Pastor Moss was very young at that time. He drove one of the buses that we were, that carried us to school from the area that we were. Herbert ... And I don't recall his last name right now. Guy the name of Herbert. The reason I know, in my late teens I worked for Richard Roberts. I drove cab. I worked with my dad during

the day and I drove cab at night until about midnight. And he would shut down. Maybe it was 11:00 when he would shut down. I remember Herbert because Herbert was an employee working for Mr. Roberts as well. Mr. Roberts lived ... He had some property ... Gosh, I'm having a senior moment this morning. I can't remember very well. I remember exactly where he lived. He was a very astute businessman. I can tell you, in that day and time, there were two or three service stations owned and operated by African Americans. Mr. Roberts was one of those guys. Mr. Jackson, there on North Cole Street was one of those guys. I think there was one someplace else. The first block from the square in Marietta, along Lawrence Street, from the square to Waddell was all black businesses. Small suites that they were in, but it was an upstairs and a downstairs. Guy by the name of Holmes, Mr. Holmes was the undertaker. The last suite coming, traveling east from the square, the last suite in that building was the undertaker. And upstairs, over him, was a lady that was a beautician. And they had pool rooms, restaurants, cab stands, Dr. Weddington. I'm sure someone has called his name.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Dodd: Yeah. He was the first African American doctor that actually lived in Marietta. We had African American doctors, but they lived in Atlanta and they traveled to Marietta. As a matter of fact, Miss Gresham worked for him. You mentioned Jennie Gresham. Yeah. She worked for Dr. Weddington for a period of time. My father had opened a business, a grocery store there on the corner of Hunt and Montgomery Street. Charlie Hunter's place, you probably have heard that name before. Mr. Hunter had a nice restaurant there. The first restaurant owned and operated by an African American was ... Now, we had juke joints, I mean, little places where you can grab a sandwich and whatever. But I mean a restaurant. You could walk into Mr. Charlie Hunter's place ... It was all one building, but he had about four or maybe five suites to the building. My father leased one of those suites and opened a grocery store. I think I was probably 13 or 14 maybe when my daddy did that. When I get out of school I would walk from ... Which would take me a good 15 minutes, 10 minutes really. Walk from school to Hunt Street. I would work in the store until daddy would come, usually around 6:00 or 7:00 in the summertime. He would close at 9:00, and we would go home, and I've still got to study when I get home. But those were good days. Those were great days.

Interviewer: What are your memories ... I know you were still fairly young. But what are your memories of people in the black community, their response to the news of the bond money for a new elementary school and then the construction of it. And it being such ... So, different from the old school that was torn down.

Dodd: Actually, I don't know that I can really provide much information on that. Now, in that being as young as I was, I was probably 11, 12 years old.

Interviewer: Right.

Dodd: We didn't even, I didn't even know that a school was going to be built. I'm sure it was probably, the statement was probably made by Mr. Woods or somebody when we moved into the gymnasium, auditorium. But I don't recall. But let's look at it from this perspective. Even this day and time, we don't have ... If you look at it from a percentage point ... An awful lot of African Americans that subscribe to newspapers or magazines. We had no African Americans on council or on the County Commission. So, consequently, when those things were being done, if we were not there to hear or see what was being done, we probably didn't know it until it was being done when we see it happening. Then, you know, we know. I have to also tell you that many ... There wasn't an awful lot of black families that had transportation to get you from point A to point B. So, the meetings that were held in the evening, after you worked probably 10 hours, 12 hours a day, get home, get showered. Well, back in that day it was get a bath. Because you showers weren't really as prevalent as they are now. You get in the bathtub. Then change clothes and go to a meeting. And you get back at, say, 9:00 at night. You've got to walk there, walk back. I can remember so well that not having transportation, we just didn't go a lot of places at night. Typically, when my dad came home from work ... And doing construction work, I'll tell you, especially 10, 12 hours a day, you don't relish going to a meeting after you get home at night. You're going to get in there, get some food, relax, not long before you go to bed and go to sleep. So, I'm not sure that they knew really what was going on very much in terms of keeping up with what was going on in the city, or what was happening in the city. If you don't read it in the paper, you don't see it in a magazine. As I mentioned earlier, there were very, very few people in the community that had TVs. I mean, very little of importance happened in Marietta right now that you don't get covered by at least two or three of the television stations. And you know what's going on. For the most part, I would think that our parents were sort of sitting in the dark until time comes to go to school.

Interviewer: You mentioned the paper. Did your family take either of the papers? The Daily Journal or the Cobb County Times?

Dodd: In my earlier years, no. Not only that, not having a telephone until I was probably in my early teens, I would guess. As a matter of fact, I remember very distinctly ... I worked for four people, even when I was going to school. Cutting grass, raking leaves in the yards of white folk. And the little that I was getting paid for it. And I remember First United Methodist Church, right now at the corner of Whitlock and the loop. In the north of that, in the back of that building is a large parking lot. There used to be knitting mills, what they call knitting mills, cloth mills, all in that area. And there was a little restaurant in there and I'm not sure how I came about that job, but I knew I was cutting grass for a family regularly the lady wouldn't let nobody else cut that grass but me. And the last name was [Murray 01:06:31], there on [Kennesaw 01:06:33] Avenue. But anyway, for some reason, somehow I was hired to work at this restaurant also, I think I was 11 years old and I didn't work there every day, but it was two or three days a week I would work there. And my first transportation was, her son had an old bicycle and I think she sold it to me for \$11. And that was just one of

the best things that could have happened, man. And even then we still didn't have, in my family, we didn't have an automobile. And when I've got to be 16 years old, of course I drove, but I drove my neighbor's car on the weekend, drive her around where she needed to go. A house that we built for a preacher, a pastor by the name of Jordan living next door to us now. That's one of the first houses, the first house that my father built on property that he had owned. He sold a lot, built a house for this family. He worked at Lockheed during the night and he painted during the day. And this is another thing, so many of those people in the black community worked two jobs to make ends meet. Not because they desire to do it, but to provide for the family. They had to do it. The money wasn't there and particularly, when Lockheed came and it was in full bloom, Lockheed hired a considerable number of African Americans and of course they made a reasonably good paid, compared to somebody out here that was carpentry or plumbing or electrical or whatever. So that should give you some understanding of why it's all laborious, to carpentry, wiring, plumbing or whatever, those trades were needed, but it's hard work. It would take something out of here in the run of a day. I still do it today but it's one of those things that I've done all my life and of course it doesn't bother me to get out here and do it. And I recall even when I was in the military, I would pick up a part time job and I was coaching softball and basketball and football for the kids in the neighborhood. It was just a full time thing for me to keep going. And I guess that's one reason I'm still doing it today is I've always just had to do something and I busy myself doing that. Finally, after being drafted into the Army. Of course I didn't know very much about the Army, I know what the Army is, but to have genuine details of what the Army is really like, what serving in the military is really like, I didn't know. My father didn't have to go, well he was drafted, but I can remember I was maybe three or four because I can barely remember. We walked him to [inaudible 01:10:26], went to Fort Benning and he stayed about a week and they turned him down because of eyes, he didn't see well or something. But I was drafted and I ran to the Air Force and having no idea that they would do this, but I had conjured up in my mind that, if I can talk these Air Force people, and I don't know why the Air Force, except I do know that at that time there were an awful lot of African American airman that would, assigned at Dobbins that would come to what we used to call Baptist town and especially on the weekends. And I remember seeing those guys in those blue uniforms in the creases in the pants and the shoes shined and I thought that was great. And I think more than anything, that's why I chose to come to the Air Force. And when I went to the recruiting station and I said to the recruiter, "I'm being drafted and I don't want to go to the Army, I want to come to the Air Force." Not knowing that he would say yes or no. I knew he could say no, but I didn't have any idea that he would. And he said, "Yeah, I'll take you, but you got to pass a test." I said, "Okay, no problem." I said, "I need to study for what?" He said, "You don't, just come." Okay. And he gave me a test date. We came... The now Marietta Cobb Museum there in Atlanta, that was an old post office. I don't know if you this is not home for you, I guess.

Interviewer:

No, Macon.

Dodd: Macon. Well anyway, it was an old post office and when they moved out the building stayed vacant for a while and different people occupied it for whatever reason. And I walked into the post office, they had a big sign out front and these signs have faded away. You may have seen one in your lifetime or pictures of it and it says, "Uncle Sam needs you." You remember?

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Dodd: I walked in there not knowing nothing about nothing in the military. And I went to the recruiting office and I told this guy, I said, "I'm being drafted. I want to be in the Air Force." He said, "Well, take the test got to pass." I took the test and did very well on the test. And he says, "Now you've got to go," on a given date. It was two or three days after we had passed the exam. And I said, "Oh no, no, no, I can't do that." I said, "Because Christmas is coming up." And I said, "I want to spend Christmas with my family and if I go to the Army, it's sometimes in January." So we haggard around in conversation a little bit. And finally he said, "Well, I'll tell you what, the day after Christmas be here." So then I start shooting for the new year. I wanted to get the new year, I want to be at home during Christmas and the new year. He said, "No, absolutely not. You either be here or you don't."

Interviewer: On the 26th?

Dodd: Yeah, on the 26th. I thought oh gosh, and I said, "Okay." Pearl's husband, Pearl Freeman-

Interviewer: Mr. Oscar Freeman.

Dodd: Oscar Freeman. Oscar, my cousin said, "James, I hear you're going to the Air Force." And once guy tells you he'll take you, the word, you see your buddies and you say it to them, and the word just spread. And Oscar says, "I heard you going to the Air Force." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Can I go with you?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "Yeah if you want to, but we got to take a test." And test day came, same day and we tested and we both did well and the 26th of December, '61 we were out of here. We had a bus to come by. It was more like a van now, a utility vehicle, sports utility vehicle, but it was Army made van, not nearly as a dressy as the SUVs are today. And picked us up, drove us to Atlanta street. As a matter of fact, one of my neighbors and I, we were talking one day and he says, "Well, you know where that building is now?" And I said, "Man, all I remember was this big building in Atlanta at a recruiting station." And he drove me over there and we looked at that building and it brought back a lot of memories. But anyway, we went there and got a physical, after we got there. They picked us up at 8:00, we got there, I guess it was around 9:00 or shortly before 9:00 and man, probably 11:00 we had our, your physical exam is strip down. And you strip down and he would take his hand and put it to your testicles and say, "Cough." Okay. And then the other-

Interviewer: And this is a big room, big open room?

Dodd: Yep. Yep.

Interviewer: Oh, that's great.

Dodd: It is great big room and a lot of doctors in there. And he would place his hand on the other side of your scrotum and, "Cough." And you'd have turn your head, because he's in front of you, turn your head and cough and yeah. And he would take a stethoscope and check your heart out, front and your back and your lungs and, "Okay, you move in that line over there." And you put your clothes back on. And so then we were carried to the airport. Well, actually we were carried to Peachtree street and we will stand there and catch a ride to the airport and they put us on this aircraft and we went to Houston, I believe. We got off and they put us on the little, what we call puddle jumpers, a little light aircraft, Cessna. Probably about, I would say a dozen of us military people. Oscar and I from here, from Marietta. But when we got to Atlanta, it was about 12 of us left the induction station to go up on Peachtree street and wait. And like mischievous guys will do, one of the white guys had a lot of little old little bitty old balls. And he just threw them out on the street and people walking by and they step on it and they'd go, "Bang!" And this one lady, a little white lady was walking and she would just tooting along and she stepped on one of these things and it went, "Bang!" She did a little dance out there and we would laugh and she cursed us out. And so that was, the bus came by, picked us up and carried us to the airport. We got to the airport, in the terminal and straight on over to the aircraft and we landed, I think it was Houston. It was storming that night like you won't believe, lightning. And we were up there and it wasn't so bad in this big plane, but when we got on these little Cessna type aircraft and that thing was bouncing all over, flying us from, from Houston to our base there in Texas, training base. And we got there 2:00 in the morning, tired and sleepy and the bus pulls up to this airplane and we got off the airplane and right onto the bus. And all of us got in probably, and we picked up more people at the airport. So it was probably like I said, a dozen, 15, 18 people on that little puddle jumper and it was bouncing around and when finally landed and the bus rolls up, and we got on and this guy, first words out of his mouth was, I won't say the words but, G.D. you EMFs and dah, dah, dah. "Shut up. Don't say a G.D. word." And I'm thinking, my God, I came from a very religious home. My parents never ever heard anything even close to that. And I made up in my mind right then, I will overcome this, I won't put up with it, but I'll overcome it. And we drove over to a building. That time of the morning and they issued us a duffel bag, three pair pants, three shirts, and I don't remember what else it was, and a haircut. Everybody got every hair on your head shaved off, it wasn't shaved, it's cut off. And then we got to bed probably around 3:30 in the morning. 6:00 the TI came through and it was the same language, get you a blank out of bed and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Get dressed and that was the beginning and I thought... And I recall one time we were standing all waiting. In the military during that day, you always ran, you didn't walk, you ran to wherever you was going. And you heard the expression, you hurry up and wait and after running from point A to

point B and you get there and you've got to wait. And when you leave there, you've got to run to wherever. But it became a way of life quickly for me. And that was a good thing but it was probably halfway through my basic training, it was a little brown bar, Lieutenant walked up and says, "I want you to boys to deliver this to building, whatever, whatever, whatever." Lackland is a huge, huge, huge base. How would I know what number, what building numbers what? He gave us this folder and two or three of us, I don't remember now, had to find the building and deliver it to people there. And I'm thinking, this is crazy. I don't want no more of this, you're being treated like a stepchild and to tell me to take this to building 42, building 401, or whatever. Which way do I start? Which way do I go? And the only way we made it, is to stop and you ask somebody, some of the people, some of the TI's and they would look at you like you're crazy and they needed to belt something out and turn and forget about you that quickly but it was interesting. And finally, after a few days TI come out and said, "I'm going to to pick me a dorm chief." And I was pretty tall, so he says, "You." And that you can be two or three different people, everybody's looking at him and so I thought, "Okay." And I walked on up that slowly and he says, "What's your name?" I told him, he says, "Report to me," and I had learned how to do that. You salute him and tell him what your name is and you drop your salute and you stand at attention. "You my dorm chief." I think, "Oh my God, okay." My heart is pounding. A dorm chief is the one that's in charge of the group of guys that you're with. Usually about 50 it's usually 50 not about, but it's usually 50 people. And if anything goes wrong you better answer up to the TI. You can, they had a squawk box in every dormitory and you could hear people over there and if something is wrong you press a button and you talk to the squawk box and it transmits over to a center where they've got some Lieutenants. Of course they can come over and see what the problem is. But it got to be pretty good being a dorm chief, you had a few liberties that other people didn't have and I did that for six weeks and that's the first phase. And your second phase, you go to a different area to a different training instructor, TI's as we called them, and I'm all new. And you go through the same thing and this guy looks at me and he says, "Step forward." "Yes sir." You walk up to him. "Salute." You salute him, report to me and you salute him and, "You my dorm chief." I'm thinking, my God. Okay. It worked out pretty well first and we had two or three more weeks of training and then we were out to our first, we call it PCS, permanent change of station, which was Brookley Air Force Base Mobile, Alabama. And I went there in March and stopped at a service station to gas up and the guy doesn't come out. So I walked, it's quite a ways from the pumps to the station, more than normal. And the guy met me at the door, he says, "I don't sell gas to niggas." And my anger rose, but thank God for my better thinking. I turned and walked away and I thought this ain't going to make it, I'm not going to make it. And I went on to find the base with no real problems. We didn't have technology to say, "Turn here and turn there, go here, go there." We just didn't have a GPS but finding the base was not a problem. Got to the gate. I told them, I'm just coming to sign in and no problems. He directed me personnel and then from there to the barracks and got to know the base. And they said, "You're going to be a police officer." I'm thinking this is not what I came in the military for, but it worked out okay.

Interviewer: An M.P.?

Dodd: M.P. Military police.

Interviewer: Checking my time.

Dodd: Are you running out of time and I'm just rambling.

Interviewer: Well in just a second I'll need to stop it and upload that to start again.

Dodd: Well anyway, it went very well, the military.

Interviewer: How long were you in the military?

Dodd: 20 years.

Interviewer: So I wanted to quickly, since you went in '61 you graduated in '57 from Lemon Street High, what happened in that interim? That four years?

Dodd: I worked for my father building houses and what have you. And when I got drafted that was behind me. As a matter of fact, I had been telling my father, I really wanted to be an attorney. And my father said, "Son, I just don't have the money to send you to school." So my sister was, I had a sister older, was in school and of course two people in college, it's just going to be too tough and I didn't get to do it.

Interviewer: May I ask, is this your sister Lois?

Dodd: Lois, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. She was a teacher at Lemon Street.

Dodd: Yeah. She taught, the whole time she taught was in the Marietta school system. Yeah. And as a result of that, the military went well, particularly after my assignment to Mobile, Alabama. I went from there to Greece, spent a year up on a mountain and I came back and I was so close to my four years being up. They said, "Okay, you can sign up now for four more years or you can, when you land in the United States, we're going to discharge you right there." And I thought this ain't going to work man, I got a family. I got a baby boy and a wife and going back and no job. So I thought this don't make sense. So I reenlisted in Greece and I think I had about three years and three or four months in at that time, and I reenlisted. And I came from there to Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. Did exceedingly well there. The only problem is it was back during the Bay of Pigs. You've heard of it, you don't remember it of course, but all the black guys got outside jobs. Standing out there with the car being on your shoulder, and at night it was cold, right on the water. And so you can imagine how cold it gets there in Mobile, and all the white guys got the inside jobs where it was

warm and lighted. That was another one of the things that really rubbed me. So I challenged my supervisor and he told me, "I run this Air Force, you don't." I'll tell you, at that time in Mobile, Alabama, all around the base they had water hydrants on the outside of the building against the building wall, and over that water fountain was white only. And where you found water fountains where there was no sign, that was where I could go in and drank from the fountain.

Interviewer: This is on the base?

Dodd: On the base, on the military installation. Thank God there was a guy, assigned there by the name of Cassidy. [Emmett 01:30:54] B. Cassidy and that's been a long time ago. He came in and obviously he was briefed on the base before he got there, and when he got there right directly across the street from his office was a cafeteria on base. And in that it was a long, just say this table is a room and the serving area is down there where all the papers are going and that's the serving area. So you walk in, everybody walk in, you've got to walk in and walk around and you order what you want. The ladies are there to take whatever you want and then the cash register is the last one, you pay and you walk back. And then African Americans here, and there was a partition right down the middle, about eight feet tall. The building, obviously the ceiling was high in that, but about eight feet tall. So the African Americans on this side and whites on that side. John Cassidy walked in there about two days after he had been there in the evening and he's ordered his food. He paid the lady, they didn't know who he was, he was in civilian clothes and he purposely, he didn't tell me this, but I mean logical sense tells you he walks in civilian clothes, nobody know who he is. So he gets his food and he comes back and he sat down over here where the black people are. Well the people back there in the serving line can see everybody in there, because that little wall is about four inches wide. And other than that, they can see everybody in there. So this lady bounces over there and she said, "Sir, you'll have to eat on the other side." He ignored her, kept eating. And when she touched him, he said, for that lady. "Where's your supervisor?" "She's back here." So she goes back and this lady comes out and he continues to eat. "Sir, you must get up and go to the other side." He said, "Where's your supervisor? I am the supervisor, I am General Cassidy. You tell your boss that I was here, and when I come in here tomorrow morning, that blankedy blank wall better be torn out of here."

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Dodd: I mean when the word spread around the base, man, I can tell you we were a bunch of, I mean happy people, that at least somebody coming and all of those signs white only can drink from this fountain were painted over.

Interviewer: Took General Cassidy. Here let's pause here. Wow.

Interviewer: This is James Newberry. I'm still here with Mr. James Dodd and we'll continue on. You said you were in the military for about 20 years total?

Dodd: 21 years almost. 20 years, 10 months.

Interviewer: And when did you come out of the military?

Dodd: Got out of the military... '83, 1983.

Interviewer: And where were you at that point in the military or where were you based?

Dodd: I left off at Air Force Base, Nebraska. Prior to that I was in Greece again and prior to that I was in Korea, prior to that I was with the presidential unit for seven years, prior to that I was Moody Air Force Base in Georgia, prior to that I was in Greece and prior to that I was at Brookley Air Force Base.

Interviewer: What's the presidential unit?

Dodd: It's a unit that is, at the time it was the 89th military air lift wing. Basically our job was to furnish transportation for the President of the United States, his cabinet and the leaders of Foreign States, meaning the President of any other nation that the President direct that we go and get them and bring them or take them or whatever the case may be.

Interviewer: I'm thinking of the time period is this Johnson, Nixon?

Dodd: I went there just a few days before MLK was assassinated. I think less than a month before, I arrived there a month before, I think it was, I arrived there in December of '67 I think it was.

Interviewer: Yeah. So he'd be, April '68.

Dodd: Okay.

Interviewer: And this was D.C.?

Dodd: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: And so you were there seven years?

Dodd: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Did you have any interaction with anyone notable?

Dodd: Yes, I did. Johnson was president when I first arrived there, and I didn't fly during his tenure. He decided not to run again in, I guess it was '68 I don't remember the years, but it was a little over a year, maybe close to two years I don't know, that I was under during the Johnson administration. And Nixon came on and I was, at that time, just working around there in, on the base off. I said often, not off, oh my gosh. I'll tell you the name in a minute, it'll come.

Interviewer: Sure.

Dodd: Yeah. But anyhow-

Interviewer: Andrews?

Dodd: Andrews. Andrews Air Force Base. Yes.

Interviewer: I was going racking my brain too. But yeah, Andrew's, of course.

Dodd: Well, I'll tell you what, when you get 81 I'm not quite 81 yet, but when you get 80 years old, you'll get, reach back and try to struggle and think. But anyway, Colonel [Bahr 01:38:01] was, I'm still in security, well, I started out telling you I was AP, military police, MP, AP. I did change my career fields, but still in the police career field, security police, not law enforcement. I got there, I remember it was December, I think of '67 and processed. And like I said, I was just working on the base there, securing Air Force One and the other aircraft. Air Force One at that time was 26,000. That was the tail number, 26,000. And we had the second aircraft, which was a backup airplane. I was a nine, seven, zero. Those two were the primary aircraft to do service the President, either one of them could have gone. Most of the time it was 26,000 that he flew on. If it was in... Those aircraft are really, really taken care of maintenance wise, we would take them up to New York for maintenance. And if one was in New York then the other one had to serve this purpose. And there are times when Dr. [Kissinger 01:39:40] didn't fly or couldn't fly with the President. So he would probably be on nine, seven, zero, the backup aircraft and the rest, the others would be the President on 26,000 and typically didn't go together. One would go and maybe the next day the second one would go and things like this, but always before the President goes anywhere out of the States for sure, we would go and do the leg work for preparing for him to come and then fly back to Andrews. And a few days later we'd all go back on the mission, wherever he was going.

Interviewer: So would you be on the flight with the President?

Dodd: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Okay. And these, we often see the military service people, at the top and bottom of the steps, is this the unit you're referring to?

Dodd: Exactly, exactly. There's only one, well, there's two units. There's an Air Force unit that handle the aircraft, other than helicopters, we don't have helicopters. We didn't have helicopters. I don't know what has happened over the years but the time that I was there during my timeframe, they had the large airplanes. The Marines has the helicopters and when you see the, which is Marine One, if the President is on it. I don't know the numbers, but like 26,000 it's just another airplane that's really the most expensive, the most... The airplane of the United States.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dodd: It isn't called Air Force One unless the President is on it. But anytime the President and any other aircraft, I've never known him to be on another aircraft except the choppers but out of my tenure there, he never flew on anything but his airplanes, the President's airplanes. If he should happen to get on another airplane, then he would put over the, whatever the aircraft is, it would become, if it was the Air Force, that'd be his Air Force for that that he's on there. And if it was the Marines carrying him around on a chopper, then it would be Marine One.

Interviewer: So let's move on to your, I guess retirement? Or what would you call it? Discharge.

Dodd: Well it was a retirement. Yes you are discharged.

Interviewer: This is '82, '83. You had left in '61, that's really when a lot of the effort to integrate the schools ramped up. What did you know about that? Considering you had many younger siblings who were in school at the time, what did you know about that issue? I won't call it a fight, that issue?

Dodd: The integration part?

Interviewer: Right.

Dodd: Actually very little. When I was overseas, of course I did communicate with my family regularly, but I don't recall specifically having long discussions about the integration. I remember it, but there was so many other things that would be integrated during that period of time. It was just something in my mind that just fell in line with what this is for the time being, this is what's happening. There's a lot of, for example, the lunch counters, there was often when during those days, earlier days then integration was when, African Americans would go into a cafe or to a five and dime store or whatever, and the lunch counters, you couldn't sit down. This is the parts that you know really I kept up with very well. Even if I was over see someplace and I did spend a lot of time overseas during that period of time. After I went to the 89th military left wing. I was gone a lot because eventually, surely I don't want to say eventually, it was a short period of time after I was selected to the fly on those airplanes, I was gone. Dr. Kissinger, it was my first flight as a flight chief, which means that security was mine of that aircraft, when it land, wherever, it was my baby and I had a team of two, three, four depending on where we're going, how long were we going to be gone. That was my baby and make sure that everything went right. Contacting foreigners and making sure that their information was the same as ours, that we knew we were going. If there were any elements of the radicals there that we should be concerned about, you name it, the whole security picture, just to make sure that the President his group, whatever, whoever was with him and that airplane was safe. That was my baby for the time that I was

there flying. And it just so happened my first trip that I was out on my own as a flight chief, Dr. Kissinger came up the aisle and I was sitting there in the hot seat. The hot seat is where you sit and you're prepared to, you can see that door, that picture there hanging on the wall. That's the door, I'm sitting, where I can, I would probably be sitting over here and look down the aisle and make sure that who goes in and out that door, because that's the cockpit just behind that door. And Dr. Kissinger walked up and he sat here and I looked down and I saw his shoes. I knew who he was, laid the book down and got up. And I reported to him, he says, "What are you doing on my airplane?" I didn't take that well. I was the only African American on that airplane. And I kind of got the sense that he didn't understand why I was there and I bit my tongue for a minute and I started talking to him. And I talked for about 15 minutes about why and what I was doing, and I let him know that I'm the flight chief and you are my number one, the Air Force One is my number two project just making sure that we get you there and back safely. And we even talked about some other things that I don't need to talk about here, the capabilities of the airplane and what have you. Some of the things. And anyway, he listened very intently and he said a few kind words to me and started, and I said, "Sir are you going to the cockpit?" He said, "Yes." I said, "I'll escort you there." He looked at me strangely, and I said, "I have to do this." And I got back there and there was a way that we know how to get in that door and open the door and told the AC, aircraft commander, the Dr. Kissinger would like to come enter," and he came out of his seat and of course you've got another pilot sitting over here flying the airplane. It wasn't really, it was on automatic pilot. So he invited Dr. Kissinger to sit down and he refused. He didn't want to. And he insisted, basically he insisted and he sat down for a couple of minutes and looked around, outside. He got up and they talk for about 10 minutes or so, and that was the end of that.

- Interviewer: So he was skeptical that you were the flight, I mean that was the case. There was no misunderstanding or anything when he said, "What are you doing on this flight?"
- Dodd: My airplane? No, when I told him, he was absolutely, he just soaked it in just like a sponge.
- Interviewer: He's started that way.
- Dodd: He started and when he started out. He was like, what he said was, "What are you doing on my airplane?" Well, anyway.
- Interviewer: He's still going.
- Dodd: Yeah.
- Interviewer: 96?
- Dodd: Again?

Interviewer: He's still going.

Dodd: Yeah.

Interviewer: Today.

Dodd: Yeah. Yeah. He's still alive. He's still alive. But you know, the thing of it is, I don't even know where we went, it's been so long ago. I don't know where we carried him, but it was always that. You've got three or four stops at least out there before that's the longest thing, and we got back finally a couple of weeks later. And I went on crew rest, which means that out there you work long hours. I've flown a trip where I didn't sleep for seven days, man. Was just going, that was between the war between Greece and Turkey, no Greece and Cyprus. I don't know if you heard of that war or not. Seven Day War think it was. Anyway, I was on crew rest and the phone rang. I answered it and one of the guys there, guy by the name of Dwight Edgehill. He said, "Sargent Dodd?" "Yes?" "Colonel wants to see you." "For what?" "I don't know, but if I were you, I'd come on in." "Tell him I'm on crew rest." And he just kind of hesitated, and I said, "I tell you what I'll be in." I got a shower and put on my uniform and off to the base I go. And I get there and everybody's all tensed. I couldn't figure out why and I'm thinking, I just came in off of a trip. So what does this Colonel want? But this Colonel is one of the best people I've ever worked for. He was hard, but he was fair, and he certainly respected me in a way that no other military individual had. And finally I get to his office and then knock on the door, "Come in Jim." "Yes sir." Locked me in. I'm standing at attention and he says, "Have a seat." He just smiling. I said, "No thank you." His whole demeanor changed and he said, "Jim, have a seat." I said, "No, thank you Colonel." And you don't want to hear what followed, but using explicit easy. I said, "Sit down." So I sat down at attention, meaning you've talking earlier about how professor Woods usually sit at attention. He started, he says, he talked a few minutes and then he says, "Tell me about-"

Interviewer: [phone rings] Feel free to answer.

Dodd: [Dodd answers phone] Hey, I'm in a meeting. Can I call you back?

Person on phone: Sure, sorry about that.

Dodd: No problem.

Person on phone: Bye.

Dodd: He says, I don't know, he says, "Tell me about your trip, Jim." I said, "Well what do you want to know, sir? I submitted you a trip report." "I know you did. Now you tell me about it." I'm thinking, "God, what does this man want?" And I said, "Well, I did my prepping before we left, I got all the information I needed on everywhere we were going. And I was prepared for whatever. I mean, we

always were prepared for whatever you encounter once you arrive." And I said, "We departed. It was at night, around 11:00 at night, I think it was. And we arrived at wherever," and I said, and then it hit me, Dr. Kissinger. And I'm thinking, "Well, Dr. Kissinger wouldn't." So I went on and gave him, "Well, I was sitting there reading a book. I was in the hot seat, which means that I was armed," and I said, "Dr. Kissinger came up and wanted to know what was I doing on his airplane?" I said, "Colonel, you know me well enough to know that didn't set well." He laughed and he said, "Well, tell me about it." And I went through all the details of what he asked me and what I told him. And then I got to thinking, well maybe I told him too much, but I just spilled it. And what I told him, I told him my Colonel and he started laughing. I mean this guy started laughing and I really got angry because I didn't know what he's laughing at. He said, "Okay Jim." He says, "From now on," and I'm thinking, "Oh my God." He said, "The news get it before we generally get it, that he's going to go here, there and yonder." He said, "But from this day forward, when you hear it on the news, pack your bags. Dr. Kissinger, you wants you to hit up his team, his security team."

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Dodd: And I'm thinking, wow, about half a minute. And then I thought, "Colonel, I didn't come here to fly with Dr. Kissinger." He said, "Jim." "Yes sir?" "You're going to fly with Dr. Kissinger." "Yes sir." But it turned out to be one of the most wonderful things that could've ever happened to me and I stayed with them. I was trying to leave there because I had been gone all the time, being married it brought about family problems and my family is always number one. And I said, "Colonel," and I broke it down and told Colonel, "This is what's going on. And on and on." I said, "I just really, really, really need to go." I said, "You remember the Easter prior to... maybe two years back, Easter morning?" Easter Sunday morning I was in Palm Springs with Agnew, Vice-President. I call home, say happy Easter to my wife and young baby, and she was just crying. I mean loud, just balling her eyeballs out and I said, "What's wrong?" And she just kept crying and crying and crying and I couldn't get her to tell me what was wrong. So I just slammed the phone down and called Colonel. I said, "Man, look, I'm coming home." And I said [inaudible 01:57:00]. "Jim, I know who you are." I said, "Well I'm coming home, I called my wife and she's crying, the baby's crying and I don't know what to do." He said, "Well Jim, you know you got a time difference." And he said, "But I'm still in bed." And he said, "I'll be up and I'm going to your house soon as I can get my wife up and get her ready and I'll call you back." And I bought an hour went by and I'm still walking on pins and needles, man, and trying to figure out what's wrong with my family. And my phone rang and it was Colonel calling me. He said, "Jim?" "Yes sir." He said, "You're going to be leaving there tomorrow so you just stay where you are. Your wife is fine." He said, "She just lonely." He said, "We sat down with her and we talked to and she's fine and she's okay, your baby's okay." And he said, "I'll see you when you land." And I came home and I was trying to explain to him, "This seven years, in and out, in and out." We have had missions where I would call my wife, we had planes on the phone, we would call from anywhere, even a trip to China when President

Nixon went to China, sit down on the ground in China, call home. Only problem is we had to do this at that time, technology wasn't what it is today. When I was like, I'm talking to you and I finished saying what I'm going to say, and it's just a sentence of two or three sentences or whatever. And I got to say over, and then they would flip a switch Walker Lighthouse Communications, would flip a switch. And my wife could talk and I could hear her and she always would forget to say, "Over." And it got to be but anyway, it was great. We came back and I flew until almost time and I didn't even realize I had an assignment coming, but I just told the Colonel, "I've had it man. I just got, the flying part, I got quit, got to come off of it." He said, "Jim, go home and think about it and come back and we'll talk about it tomorrow. Okay." Got back. And he said, "Well, I'll tell you what you take your long leave, take your family with you and you come on back." He said, "I can't afford to lose you." I said, "Colonel, I can work around here like I did when I first started." And he says, "No Jim, I need you flying." And took the short lead. And my wife said, "Honey," she says, "I've been thinking and I realize what you are up against. You go back to flying, I'll be fine." Man, I tell you, that was a great day for me to be able to go back because I enjoyed doing what I was doing, and I was good at what I was doing. And now I can go back and do that. I went back and flew until I got ready to get out. I tried to get assignments and it'll kick it down, kick it back. And finally we were in Hawaii with Dr. Kissinger to Egypt and I went to the Colonel and I said, "Colonel, this will be my last flight." And he laughed and made a joke out of it. "Go on, I'll see you when you get back." And while we were away we had an incident occur, we had several of them in the run of the mill, but this particular one, one of the weapons went off in the airplane, wasn't one of mine or my crew. But you've got some other groups there. And when the suitcase landed, it landed just like you would sit it down and the bullet went off and went up and out. And a guy came up and I knew something was wrong. The guy, one of the stewards came up and he stopped and looked at me like he was going to say something and then he just turned around and headed on down to the cockpit. And he came back, AC was with him and he said, "Jim, we've been fired upon." And I mean, "What?" We were ready to take off and... I got my guys and we went down to the belly of the aircraft and onto the ground and walked around, looked could see nowhere and anything. Couldn't hear nothing, didn't see nobody could look way back to the terminal. And I hollered up to the AC, his window back and told him, I says, "Everything's clean." We got back on the airplane up to the, we used to call it the old 40. Hole about so big and you unlatch and let the door flap down and you jump down onto the ground. And I went back to the back and I said, "There's the problem." And that thing went off. Anyway, we went up from there to Germany and that was when I could sit down and have a few beers after a leg but we went to a bar. And this bartender kept saying, "James Dodd telephone." Bars are noisy as you know. I would imagine you can understand. And he can't be talking about, I'm here in Germany and nobody knows I'm here. Maybe it's my boss, it was the Colonel, "Jim tell me what the blank blank blank is going on." And I said, "Well sir, we've been stonewalled." And he said, "You don't stonewall when you're talking to me." "Sir, I'll be happy to go back to the aircraft and I'll call you." On aircraft when you call somebody it's coded. If you were ease dropping or you'd picked up some line you wouldn't know what I was

saying anyway because it automatically goes into codes. And told them what had happened. And I said, "Colonel," AC said, he said, "I'll handle it on this end." And I said, 'Well, Colonel I told you before I left, this will be my last mission.' "Hey, we'll talk about that when you get back." "Yeah, sure." When I got back and he couldn't talk me into staying. A few days later an assignment came and I was out of there. Well not then, and I wasn't glad to leave. I was just tired. You get tired of being away from home and being, doing what you're doing. You enjoy it. But at the same time there's just something inside of you that tells you it's time to go. And I left off and I went to Korea.

Interviewer: Your whole family go with you?

Dodd: No. Again, whole year. Well actually it was six months. I came home after six months and stayed for 25, 30 days. Went back for another six months.

Interviewer: Tell me your wife's name.

Dodd: Geraldine. We call her Gerri. Gerri. G-E-R-R-I.

Interviewer: Is she from Marietta?

Dodd: Cartersville.

Interviewer: And how many children do you have?

Dodd: Two boys.

Interviewer: So for the last part of the interview, I want to look at your public life. In the years after you returned to Marietta. I know that Professor Woods was on the school board. He was the first African American to serve, starting in the '60s I believe. Were there others that served during, or while he was on, or after him, before you and-

Dodd: The only others that I am aware of is a guy by the name of Ralph [Russall 00:27:59]. He was an Air Force trooper that was at Dobbins and he married a lady, Francis James. He married and Ralph passed away. His wife passed away and a few months later Ralph passed away behind her. The next person, African-American that's served on that board was Ms. Carter. I think it's [Janette 02:07:41] Carter, coach Carter's wife.

Interviewer: Starting in about '93 I believe is when she went on.

Dodd: Yeah.

Interviewer: She was on there 16 years.

Dodd: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: So she went on before you came on?

Dodd: No, after I came on.

Interviewer: Okay. When did you, well tell me about what drew you to running?

Dodd: Well, I mentioned earlier to you that I felt like turning the city upside down when I get out and to go back home. That was my full intention is to change those segregated situations and what have you, and what have you, and what have you. And I did. I went back home and one of the first things is, and my mother and father always talking about, "Take care of home first, take care of home first." I thought I saw things in my own community that just needed to be done. So we started a little community development. The portion or side, the part that I live in is call Elizabeth, E-L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H. As a matter of fact, Elizabeth was going to be, was programmed to become a city, but it was never ever completed and it was just a neighborhood, a large neighborhood. And with dirt streets that needed to be paved and you name it. And had an organization that we pulled together called Elizabeth Community, whatever it was, I don't even recall now. It's been 30 almost 40 years that I've been out. But I came home and we got this little development, this little group of people together and we decided, we are going to do some things. I said, "Number one, it's our streets, we need sidewalks, we need street lights, we need a lot of attention." Actually we were in the county, we were not in the city limits, where you came yesterday and knocked on the door. The day before yesterday, whenever, knocked on the door that was county. So I knew that I wanted to work with kids. I even thought about teaching and I decided that's not for me. I went back to work doing construction work with my father and I stayed busy. In the evenings I was walking and talking to people in the community about change, change, change, change. And I was fortunate enough to decide one day I'm going to do a little barbecue and I'm going to have the entire community there and I'm going to have the mayor there and I decided that will be a good time to with to try to get us annexed into the city. The city council, the black businessmen in Marietta. It turned out extremely well. The mayor came, Vicki Chastain, the first female mayor in the city of Marietta. And then Angela Meadows followed her during my tenure on the city council. But anyway, she came and she said, "James, what inspired you to do this?" And I went back to my military days. And I could just sit and think about when I get back home, some changes that we can make, changes that can be made. And I made it clear to her that, this is what we were going to do, street life- streetlights, annexation, paving dirt roads, fixing the roads, the parts that were paved, you name it. And she was excited about it. I didn't even really know the lady. I mean, I knew she was the mayor, but for her to get excited about something that I'm talking about? Mind boggling. And when I finished talking she said, "You're great. That's great. That's great, that is great." And she says, "So what are you going to do in the whole community?" I said, "Well, one of the things I want to do is serve on the Board of Education." I said, "I look at all the kids and I see all the kids falling by the wayside," and talked about the test scores, and we talked about, everybody back in that day were buying boom boxes. Radios that you carry around with you everywhere

you go, and it's playing as loud as you can go. I don't know if you're familiar with that or not, but let me tell you, here in Marietta, everybody had a boombox. When I say everybody, I mean youngsters, kids. I hate it. I mean, disturbing everybody else with your music or your news or whatever's on. Anyway, the mayor said, "Well James, if you're really serious about the school board, we'll do everything we can to help you." And I mean, man, this was music to my ears. Sweet music to my ear. And I don't remember what year I came on, '85, '86? Because I got home in '83. It was probably '85 or '86. God blessed me.

Interviewer: What ward did you represent at that time?

Dodd: Ward five.

Interviewer: And were you the only African American on the board at that time?

Dodd: Only African American that was on that board at the time I served. The only African American other than [Ralph Russo 00:02:14:38]. You had Professor Woods and then you had Ralph Russo, and then myself. And after me came Ms. Carter.

Interviewer: But you were not serving at the same time as Russo or Carter.

Dodd: No, no, no, no. Absolutely not. Fortunately, Mr. Russo won and did well, he was enjoying it and he would like to have stayed, but unfortunately it didn't work out that way. And I went on a school board at three tenures. I served the first three years and fortunately got the second three years and right close to the end of the sixth year well, I'll say halfway through the sixth year, Georgia state representative, mandated that I stay with the board for another year. That was not pleasant initially, but it turned out to be very well. During that last year, that seventh year that is. During that seventh year I had already decided I'm going to run for council and I remember, it was a new year's, what they call watch night, I don't know if you familiar with that or not, but it's people go to church. We go to church on the Eve of a New Year and we have a church service starting a little late, 11 o'clock and go right into the New Year. Well anyway, [Gweneth 02:16:14] and Pastor allowed me to get up and I told people, "I'm running for city council and I will be starting immediately for the election in November." And it turned out very well.

Interviewer: Were you the first African American to go on the city council?

Dodd: No, there was an individual that preceded me by the name of Hugh Grogan.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Dodd: That was on council, he's the only other person that had preceded me on council.

Interviewer: His wife was Betty.

Dodd: Betty.

Interviewer: Who's married to Mr. [Gober 00:04:53].

Dodd: Right.

Interviewer: So who did you run against?

Dodd: Interesting. Interesting. Interesting. Ms. DeAnne [Bona 00:02:17:03], Whom you know, and a guy by the name of... he lives... Do you know what we call Indian village in Marietta?

Interviewer: I don't.

Dodd: There's an area of town, Southeast of Kennestone Hospital and all of the streets, [inaudible 02:17:38] have Indian names, Indian tribe name. And it's relatively known as Indian village. I mean that little community, where I was it was Elizabeth and they lived in Indian village. And it's quite a large, any of those Indian names, I'll tell you what, they just built a new building right at the corner of Cherokee street where the road splits, Kennestone Hospital sits here, it's a one way street coming up and there's a service station sit right in this forks of the road-

Interviewer: I know it.

Dodd: Come on back to that traffic light, before you get to this forks at the road, there's a traffic light, the street that runs down through there, that's one of the streets that's in that. It's named after an Indian tribe, Indian village. I can't remember the guy's name, but that's where he lived on that street. He was a New York police officer who had been in Marietta for quite sometime. I don't know what drew him to Marietta, but I know he was a retired police officer. God, I can't think of his name right now, but the two of them, and I think the election went down and I think I had 48 point something percent, Ms. Bona had 25 no, the police officer had 25 point something and Ms. Bona had 24 or 23% something. So it was a runoff. So I had, go back out and campaign again, running against the police officer, white guy. And I think I had 80 something percent of the vote the second go around. And so I went on council, came off the school board and three days later I was sworn in on council. I served the first four years and one of the things, and when I go at something, I mean I go at it with all forces I have, I've put everything, I've got into it. And we had lost several individuals, you didn't hear about these things in Marietta because it didn't happen in Marietta until this period of drugs came along and guys being killed right there in, what we used to call Baptist town. I don't know if, you've heard that expiration?

Interviewer: Yes, definitely.

Dodd: Well that that was a big deal and particularly the Marietta housing, public housing that was in that area is no longer there. They tore them all down and built very nice homes in there. Hunt street, Montgomery street... Used to be a [Cuthbert 02:21:05] street that was eliminated when they started the houses and Avery street in that area was a terrible drug problem. I'm on council now, and my desire was to rid the city of this problem, it's a black community and it's being eaten up with drug habits, drug dealers, you name it. Even a drive by shooting. I remember it very well. And Roosevelt circle, that was, I don't know if you're familiar?

Interviewer: I know Roosevelt circle. Yeah. Done some interviews on Roosevelt circle.

Dodd: Well Roosevelt circle is where the drive by shooting took place, and that really rocked my boat. I did everything within my power to eliminate the drug use. It got so bad, there was almost 400, I think it was 380 something phone calls to the police station every month.

Interviewer: Good grief.

Dodd: Oh it'd average out to be 380 something police calls, to call the police station about the drug problem. I also chaired public safety while I was on council. So that was my baby and I was trying to rock it to eliminate, to rid ourselves of the drug problem. Had one situation where an individual had me to meet him at a place where nobody else would expect us to be and he unloaded on me, "Look, this is what's going on in this house." In public housing they shot, someone did, and he suspected to be one of the drug dealers because he had talked to them and they fit and when we start taking action, running the police officers through there, I mean very regularly through that area, that he had squealed to me and that this was our action to get rid of it. So they shot into his house. But the thing that really, it had an upstairs and a downstairs, that really helped me to understand was the time of the night that they did this. They didn't want to kill anybody, they was trying to scare the guy more than anything else. That was what I took from it. And I went to council and talked to them about it and talked to them about it. And we tried this and we tried that and we tried the other and none of it worked. So I knew a guy, I didn't know him. I knew of a guy that would come in and bring the community together, the black community together while the community black and white, but you would have very few white people participating. And because there are just as many white people out there, well actually percentage wise there's more white people do drugs than black people. But typically it come, the drug itself comes from the black community. And so after nothing was working, I tried to get council to help me bring a guy here that had tremendous success demonstrating in those drug communities in Philadelphia, in Washington D.C., in Los Angeles, you name it, the big cities. And they didn't want to pay the guy to come here. So then I worked with the Marietta housing authority to try and get fences put up in that area because even when someone called in, before the police get there, the car,

they would run, you see drug dealers were running. I personally saw drug dealers, people who had been identified as drug dealers run into their cars. And I knew then it's just a matter of fact, in another minute or a minute and a half, two minutes, you'll see the police car show up, police cars show up in force, but he's gone. And my thought is, "Okay, put up a fence, block off a road here," there's ways to get into that community other than one way. Block off a road and the county, I mean, the county, the city agreed with me to do that. And when we did that, leaders in the NAACP decided that, I am discriminating against the people that was living there. There's an attorney in the city of Marietta that was also on the board of directors of the Marietta housing authority. And two of those board members worked with me in going to every unit of public housing, there on [Cuthbert 02:26:40] and Avery streets. Cuthbert, Avery and Hunt streets. We knocked on every door and interviewed every citizen that live in every apartment, to get them to understand what our purpose was, knowing, not necessarily I knew them, but my father, as I mentioned earlier, had a grocery store in that community and everybody knew who I was. I'm an old Marietta and friendly to most of those people, very friendly, many of them was friends and they try to support me in the effort of doing it. "Yes you can do that. No, I don't mind." They had an option of three. No, I don't want it. We were talking about putting fences around that place and it just didn't work. It didn't work well because NAACP obviously had a strong arm in the community and they drew a lot of people together and they fought it. And all I had asked council was, "Let me do this for one year and if this is, if we succeed in moving these drugs out of here or reducing it to something much, much, much less than what it is right now, then we'd take the fence down. I need one year." Council agreed to do that. And at the very end of that year when the fence should have come down, was right at election time. In other words, my fourth year was, well my seventh year was, really in the seventh year and come into an end and the eighth year. And they had meetings and meetings and meetings. I attended meetings. Betty Hunter saw her other day, first time in a long time, a city council member. I went on a Friday to a place called M and J and eat catfish on Fridays, as I'll do today. But she was there, first time I had seen Betty in many, many years a white female. And we sat down and we talked about old times other day, but Betty Hunter came to some of those meetings to defend my purpose for that. And the community, the black community just didn't buy into that. And when you exaggerate some of the things that people will do in elections, my opponent chose to follow that route and he won the election. Small percentage, very small percentage, but he won the election.

Interviewer: So I know we're about to have some folks come in here.

Dodd: Okay.

Interviewer: I just realized that. I just heard them. So let's pause it here.

Dodd: Okay.

Interviewer: This is James Newberry. I'm still here with Mr. James Dodd.

Dodd: When I came on the school board, we had so many mobile units, trailers as classrooms for students. I don't think I need to waste the time to talk about how dangerous it is to put your students in a mobile unit and have a windstorm. And my thing was to eradicate, get rid of them. Fortunately we were able to build two new schools while I was chairing the Marietta city school board. Lockheed. If you know where Lockheed school is, and the other one, I can never remember the name of it. It's on the same drive. Gosh. Anyway, we built those two new schools and you probably know Pete [Waldrop 00:02:31:08]?

Interviewer: Heard the name.

Dodd: Pete was assigned to one of them because he was in the building business and I was assigned to Lockheed and every Thursday I went to Lockheed school during its building phases and worked with the people to try to make sure that we were doing what we should have been doing as a board and for them to be doing what they should have been doing as builders. And we, Pete and I was in competition. They built, Lockheed, completed it before the schedule time and under budget. And the one Pete had was, long overdue and way over budget. So it was a good thing, Pete and I still get along well. He's now the executive director of Marietta housing authority. Yeah. And we were on council together as well, we were on school board together and he came on council after I did. I think he stayed, maybe he might've done eight years. I think he did four years and he is now serving as the, well he's been serving now for probably I would say six, seven years maybe. Executive director of Marietta housing.

Interviewer: So I think the last thing I want to touch on is your involvement in the Lemon Street Heritage group and your interest in the legacy of the Lemon street schools. And just throw out the term legacy, I know that's vague, but clearly it means something. Clearly it's significant. And now we're working on an exhibit about the Lemon street schools. Why does it matter to you? Why do you think it matters to other folks in Marietta?

Dodd: Well, if one don't know about your heritage and especially those who are baby boomers now, that was not alive when integration was so prevalent, they will never know the history. If there is no written history on file somewhere, and it's critically important for my offspring and my offspring's offspring to know what happened when grandpa came along, when he was in school. What did he do? History is extremely important to everybody, I don't care who you are. And this is a black history month. It is so critically important for not just me to know and participate in black history programs, as it is when my kids are growing up. They need to understand what we went through and how did we get over to where we are today. As a matter of fact, I spoke a couple of times just mentioning that I'm a Christian. When God did something for the children of Israel, when they were in bondage and when he brought them out of bondage, the one thing he says is what you will do. Talking to the people of that day in time who were in bondage, the Israelites, "What I want you to do," when they first cross the river, got to cross on dry land, he says, "Build me a Memorial. Go back into the sea," well, the water was stopped as you know, and the dry land was there, the

miracle. "Pick up stones out of the Riverbed. Take it over and build me a Memorial. And I want you to be able to tell your kids, and your kids' kids, and their offspring down through the ages, what I've done for you." Now, back to us, history is so important that not only do I know, but my offspring and my offspring's offspring and goes on and on and on and on should know how we came up, and how we got to where we are. I think it was, and again I'm having a memory problem, but one of the presidents of one of our Atlanta schools says something to this effect. "If you don't remember your history, you make the same mistakes all over again." If I had thought about this, I could put it together like it should be and tell you who said that, but you get the point that I'm saying. You want to know how important it is to us? It is super important that our offsprings know what we went through and how we were able to handle it, how we were able to make progress and we're still along ways behind. When we see black kids being killed, somebody was telling me just the other day, "I got stopped by the police and I was afraid to, I put both hands on the steering wheel where my hands would be seen. He told me he wanted my license. I was afraid to get my license because he would think I'm reaching for a gun and shoot me and kill me." It's important that we understand that you got to be submissive, probably more than you need to be just to stay alive. And now it's not just black people, it's cops period. Being killed every day. I just saw a clip on TV a couple of nights ago, young man, and I don't even remember where it was right now. I was so irritated when I saw this, laying on his stomach with his hands cuffed behind him, you may have seen the same thing. It's been on the news several times lately. Here's another white police officer and this guy standing there, his supervisor with a gun in his hand, but he calls for assistance. And this guy jumps out of his police car when he gets there, and the first thing you do is get there and take his feet and right up to his face he goes. And him lying there on the concrete handcuffed. Their trying his case right now. I mean they actually probably closed it yesterday. I'm not sure. The first answer he gave them was, "Oh, I didn't realize he was handcuffed." How in the hell do you get there and see this guy lying on his stomach and handcuffs in view and you not know the guy's handcuffed? Now, typically history is important because we must make sure that our kids, and our kids kids, and their kids, and their kids, understand this is what we must go through with, and this is the way you must handle yourself. You must behave to live. To live and to live happy, and healthy lives till you get to be beyond my age. I hope I answered your question. I may have varied so far away, I get involved, I get really, really, I'm sensitive to the way life is.

Interviewer: Sure.

Dodd: I am not going to allow some person who is racially prejudice to cause me to be prejudice. I'm going to love you in spite of. I intend to go to heaven when I die, brother. And I believe, and I know in my heart there's a heaven and I intend to go there. But anyway, I won't go there. I'll get really involved if I start talking.

Interviewer: There's passion here.

Dodd: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, I appreciate your time today and your generosity with your story and is there anything else you'd like to add before we conclude?

Dodd: I know I've taken up a lot of your time and I'm not going to, maybe there's some other questions that's in your mind, give me a call and we can sit down and talk again. I don't mind. And I do apologize to you, man, looking back in retrospect today, I cannot even imagine how I would miss the appointment that we had set up twice but it happened, and all I can tell you is I regret it. I apologize, please forgive me for it. I just got too many irons in the fire. A guy call me early this morning, "Mr. Dodd?" "Yes, we're going to get together at," I says, "No brother, I've got an appointment that I wouldn't miss today under no circumstances."

Interviewer: Don't even think about it. Everybody's got their lives going on and we want to collect these stories when it's convenient and make it an ongoing project.

Dodd: And if there's anybody else, I called my sister and I assure you she will be available. She'll make herself available to do an interview.

Interviewer: Right, feel free to reach out with names.

Dodd: Anybody that you can think of that you are having some difficulty with, having lived here all of, I was born in like I told you, right across the street from North Cobb high and I've been with the Marietta school system for seven years, and on council for eight years, and on the board of election for, Cobb board of election for 10 years. And I mean I can go on and on and on and on. I stay involved in stuff, and as a result of that, I know a lot of folk. I often tell people, "If you've got a problem, if I can help you holler." It's not so much that I can do for you, but the people I know, somebody can help you. Working with a young lady now that was in the military and she came to my church recently, three weeks ago, a month ago and said, "This is what condition on me and I can't see military doctors and dah, dah, dah because this, that and the other." And man, I mean this is, I'll spend every waking minute of a day until we get this thing resolved. I mean, [coughs] excuse me. There are people that, and I didn't finish this, [inaudible 02:43:10].

Interviewer: Well let me conclude the recording here. Thank you, Mr. James Dodd.