

Storer College Oral History Project
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
Interview with Dewitt Jacobs by Steve Warrick
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
July 30, 2013

Steve Warwick: Okay, this is Steve Warrick. Today's date is July 30, 2013, and I'm here with Mr. Dewitt Jacobs in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Today we'll be interviewing Mr. Jacobs about Storer College, and this is part of the Harpers Ferry Park oral history project, and this is recording HAFEHOH-Jacobs.1.2013. And Mr. Jacobs, could you state your full name for me?

[00:00:45.11] Dewitt Jacobs: Dewitt Joseph Jacobs.

SW: And where did you originally grow up?

[00:00:52.07] DJ: I grew up in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

SW: And what year were you born?

[00:00:59.07] DJ: I was born in 1928, and I attended school in Shepherdstown. I was in the public school, Shadyside Elementary School with Mr. John W. Harris, principal. I was in the sixth grade, and I took a test, and I passed the test, and they promoted me to high school.

SW: That's quite a feat.

[00:01:23.26] DJ: Yes. That's why I was always the youngest one in the class in the group, and they always called me "Junior." I finished elementary school in Shepherdstown. I went to high school in Charles Town, West Virginia. I graduated four years later in 1944, and from there, I was lost. I didn't know what to do.

[00:01:51.03] So, I decided to go to school, and I went to Storer College. It was the closest college in town. I'm a mother's boy, a mama's boy. So, I didn't want to go too far from home. So, I went to Storer College for some more education. I finished Storer College in 1948, June the 3rd.

[00:02:11.18] And during my term in Storer College, the boys were short. Five or six veterans, most of them were veterans, and others came from Washington, DC and in the area. It was more like a family, a big family than a school, and that was it.

SW: So, now, were you sixteen when you entered Storer?

[00:02:41.26] DJ: When I started Storer, I was sixteen. Yes, I was sixteen, and I graduated when I was twenty.

SW: Did you give any thought about going to any other schools?

[00:02:55.23] DJ: No, no thoughts. I just wanted to get close to home, that's all.

SW: Did you have an idea of what you wanted to major in when you went to Storer?

[00:03:09.11] DJ: Yes, I did. I always wanted to be a teacher. I liked doing things. So, I end up with a bachelor's degree in elementary—it was secondary education, but I taught elementary school all the time after I finished. I never did any high school teaching because—because I was teaching in high school, I was doing my basic training, my sister and some friends in town were in the high school, and they didn't respect me as a teacher. They gave me a whole lot of trouble. So, I had them removed from my class so I could finish my class with teacher's work, and then I just decided to do elementary kids so I could handle them better.

SW: How long was it after you graduated that you found a job?

[00:04:00.19] DJ: That fall, my cousin was the principal of the Eastside Elementary School in Shepherdstown, and he had me as a substitute teacher, and I had substitute jobs until Uncle Sam got me and took me to service in 1950.

SW: How many years were you working at being a teacher?

[00:04:33.00] DJ: I substituted all my life, but I never had a steady job until I finished, I left town and came back home. And then I started with the Department of Education in Martinsburg and Shepherdstown, Berkeley County, as a Head Start teacher-instructor.

SW: And how long were you doing that?

DJ: About four or five years.

SW: And you mentioned earlier that you did some other things? What else have you done?

[00:05:08.01] DJ: After I got out of the service in November '52, I got married in February '53 and moved to Washington, DC and worked in the government for a year and substituted on the side. And I was sometimes in school. When I was doing my volunteer, I was substitute teaching in Washington, DC, one of the ladies liked me so well, she had me come in three or four days a week working in the office. So, I got a break there.

[00:05:45.19] But I worked in the government about six years. Then I went to the railroad department and worked for Norfolk Southern. I worked for the Southern Railway, and they merged with Northwestern and became Norfolk Southern.

[00:06:02.07] So, then I moved to Roanoke, Virginia with the train rail. I worked there seven or eight years. Then I retired early to come home to my mother because she was

sick, she aged lots. [00:06:19.24] And that's why I ended up with the Head Start program, and I worked there for five or six years. I was working there as an aide with a teacher. The teacher got sick and quit, and I took over her job, but the school wouldn't pay me teacher's pay because I signed a contract for aide.

[00:06:45.21] So, I said, "Well, I'm going to be back next week," and I quit and retired, the third time. That's about it.

SW: Now, getting back to Storer, were there any procedures that you remember following to get admission into the college?

[00:07:08.10] DJ: No, I had no problem. Just a certificate, birth, a graduation, I don't know what we called it, yes. That's about it. Of course, financially, my daddy was able to pay. I don't know how much he paid or what he paid.

[00:07:29.29] And then I did, I got bored. So, I got a job on the campus, a campus job, right, which helped out a little bit. It was working in the bookstore on the campus. It worked for a while.

[00:07:50.06] Then the next summer, I didn't get the job back. I just lollygagged. [laughs]

SW: And that was the bookstore for the college?

[00:07:58.13] DJ: Uh huh.

SW: And that's where they had most of the textbooks?

[00:08:02.17] DJ: The textbooks and sort of like a snack bar on the side.

SW: What were some of your main duties there, working at the bookstore?

[00:08:13.11] DJ: Mainly just keeping this furnace going, a coal stove and arranging books, and I worked as a salesman sometimes also.

SW: Now do you recall how many students were at Storer College when you first started?

[00:08:33.04] DJ: There were very few. I'd say around a hundred or so, more females than males because I don't know. It just happened that way. I remember in my freshman year, there's seven, eight veterans came in, and they say how young I was, and they called me "Junior." There was a preacher there, and he called me "Junior." He called me "Son." I didn't like the idea, but I got used to it. So, I had to go along with the program, and we got along well after that.

[00:09:09.08] There was no white students. We had white instructors, three I think I can remember, and that was good. One was a German teacher and the other, an

English teacher. That's about it.

SW: Okay. Would you say there was how many students when you graduated?

[00:09:35.13] DJ: I think there was about eighteen of us graduated from there.

SW: And let's see. What else?

[00:09:48.27] DJ: As far as the barn, the barn was our gym, right? We played basketball in a little red building called the barn. I wasn't built as a basketball player, but I had to play basketball to get credit in my hygiene and exercise, what you call it, in there. So, I was a guard on that basketball team with six boys, six of us on the team.

[00:10:18.12] But we played colleges in Maryland, West Virginia, Bowie, and New Jersey teams, but it was good experience.

SW: How good was the team?

[00:10:33.26] DJ: The team was good. The team was good. We had a couple of good players from Winchester, Virginia: Rowan Harper and Finley was on the team. They were actually good basketball players.

SW: Did you travel by bus?

DJ: Bus, yeah.

SW: Do you recall what the furthest trip you had to make?

[00:10:59.09] DJ: Probably it was Philadelphia.

SW: And how about, do you recall what conference you were in?

DJ: Not offhand, no. We also had a female basketball team, which really were good. They were stars because the girls were so rough. [laughs] It was nice.

SW: Do you recall who some of the players were on the—

DJ: Female team?

SW: Uh.

[00:11:38.15] DJ: Merrill Nunn [?], which was later a schoolteacher in Harpers Ferry, Bolivar. Ruth, and Jean Handy and her cousin, Helen Wilson, and that's about all I can recall right now.

SW: Which team had the bigger student body following, the male team or the

female team?

[00:12:11.10] DJ: The female team. The female team. They were really good.

SW: And you played your games in the barn.

[00:12:20.00] DJ: The barn, yes.

SW: Do you know how many people it held?

[00:12:24.28] DJ: No, it wasn't very many though. You could count them by the handful, maybe, less than fifty, maybe.

SW: And how about tuition? Do you recall what your tuition was when you entered as a freshman?

[00:12:41.09] DJ: I have no idea, no idea.

SW: How about tuition during the course of time you were there?

[00:12:56.05] DJ: No. My dad took care of everything. I was just a student. I was so close to Harpers Ferry that I could come home once a month or whatever it was, right. I didn't want to come home. I was surrounded with people there. Beyond Shepherdstown and Harpers Ferry were a bunch of people my age. It fascinated me. So, I just stayed there on weekends, come home. When my mother called and said she wanted me to do something, I had to come home: paint the walls, wrap some gifts for her, something like that.

SW: Did you have phones in the dorm or was there a single phone?

[00:13:38.10] DJ: We had a phone downstairs in the dean's room that we could use phone calls.

SW: What were some of the rules that you had to follow while you were at Storer?

[00:13:52.22] DJ: Yeah, that's it. That's it. The main, the most rule that bothered us most is that girls had to be back on campus before midnight, and we would travel to Martinsburg by train to the movies on the weekends, on Fridays we were allowed to go, and we had to be back on campus by eleven o'clock. And we'd get back at about a quarter of eleven at the station, and then we had to run up that big hill, from the station to the hill to get the girls back on time. I'll never forget that hill. That was the main thing.

[00:14:23.15] We always had that one chaperone when we go out to the movies. I think the girls were allowed out like once a month, something like that. The boys weren't that bad. It wasn't that strict, I mean.

SW: Now, who was typically a chaperone?

[00:14:45.23] DJ: A senior would be the chaperone, one of the seniors of the group.

SW: What was discipline like at the college?

[00:14:54.18] DJ: Very strict. Discipline was very strict. It was just sort of like a religious school, too, because we had to go to church at least—we couldn't miss more than two or three times a year, a semester, at the school, at the church [inaudible] [00:15:11.28], which was nice because it would give me something to do on Sunday mornings, right?

SW: What do you recall about the services at the church?

[00:15:21.00] DJ: Service was nice. It was nice. The service was very strict, very short and strict and nice, but they must have had a regular preacher at that time of the year.

SW: Do you recall any problems that the college might have experienced while you were there as a student?

[00:15:53.17] DJ: No problems, the only problem I figure was really bad was from Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, a couple of kids would come up to the campus, get on the campus, and they would come up in the dormitory when we were in class, something like that, and try to get in the room, something like that. They'd [inaudible] [00:16:17.08] and they'd come out and even play ball and things with us, but it was just that you had to be careful and keep things locked up.

[00:16:25.15] They wouldn't take things, but they'd come in your room and act like they were home, right? Just one of the family, right?

SW: So, they would just make themselves at home and sit there.

[00:16:34.01] DJ: Uh huh. And if the doors were locked, they would be sitting on the porch, waiting for us to come out of class and come in.

SW: So, speaking of class, what was your favorite subject and why?

[00:16:50.29] DJ: I'm a math, I like math. I like math, and my worst subject was literature. I think I made a bad grade in literature, and I had to take it over one summer. So, that was a good reason why I couldn't come home that summer. [laughs] I had to go to summer school, right?

[00:17:05.22] But I like math, and I like chemistry, too, yeah.

SW: And who was your favorite instructor?

[00:17:16.11] DJ: I'd say Dean Johnson. Dean Johnson was my favorite.

SW: Why?

[00:17:24.00] DJ: He was strict, and I knew his wife. I think that's why I liked him because she taught me in high school, go to Kent Johnson, yeah, and we had a good time together. I could depend on him to help me out if I need help.

SW: Did you know him before you got to Storer College?

[00:17:54.06] DJ: No. And then after I got there, I met one of his daughters at college at the same time I was there. So, that made it easy too.

SW: What would you say was the most outstanding class that you attended?

[00:18:20.08] DJ: What do you mean, outstanding? Perhaps, perhaps, I couldn't answer that question. [laughs] Maybe my French class. We had a course in French and took a course in German, but I had a German teacher, that was—I liked her the best.

SW: And do you recall what courses that all the students were required to take?

[00:18:57.08] DJ: Just the normal courses. It depends on the field you were going in, the degree you were working towards. Most of them had to take English, math, and a science class, and physical ed. That's why I played basketball so I could get a mark in physical ed. I never played basketball again.

SW: And what was, say, some of the difficult classes? Or were there any difficult classes for you?

[00:19:29.15] DJ: Not for me, no. Just the literature. I just, I didn't like to read, and I think the teacher and I had a little disagreement one time. I just didn't feel, I didn't do what I was supposed to do. I had to take it over again.

SW: And how about your friends? What did they feel were some of the tougher courses on campus?

[00:19:56.07] DJ: They never complained. I'd never hear any of them complain except they didn't want to go to chemistry. That's all. I'd say, "We got to go to chemistry. We've got to go."

[00:20:05.23] But they all knew we had to, we only took courses that we knew we had to have. So, we knew we had to plum the line and do what was expected.

SW: And how about instructors? Which ones did you like the least or were there any?

[00:20:32.18] DJ: No, I liked all of my instructors. They were educated instructors. Some teachers teach, but they don't teach, teach, right? They're just there for the job, but most of the instructors that I had were serviceable. I could learn from them. I learned something from all of them.

SW: And would you be able to say how high the drop-out rate at Storer was? Did you see a lot of dropouts?

[00:21:08.02] DJ: There were a few in the four-year period, maybe only because of physical conditions, pregnancy mostly. They'd come back after Christmas, or they'd go home for the holiday term but no really bad dropouts besides that [00:21:29.13].

SW: And what about dorm parents or chaperones?

[00:21:38.04] DJ: Dormitory parents, there was one in each dormitory. They were down on the first floor, if you need it, if somebody needed it. There weren't that many [laughs] that caused too much trouble.

SW: And did most of the students live in the dorms?

[00:21:58.20] DJ: Yes, yeah. There was a few that come from Harpers Ferry. They lived in Harpers Ferry at their parents' regular home. As far as students, they had one house for students to live on the campus, but most of them stayed on campus in big buildings. They never was full. [laughs] Campus was never full. The dormitories were never full.

SW: So, with students living in Harpers Ferry and—

DJ: Bolivar, yeah.

SW: Were other students allowed to live off campus as well?

DJ: Uh huh.

SW: But there weren't many.

[00:22:41.12] DJ: No, not many, maybe about five or six attended, roughly.

SW: And those were mostly from the local.

[00:22:48.27] DJ: Yeah, and back then, you know, fifty or forty years ago, there weren't that many students that had [inaudible] [00:22:54.12]. There's a big difference now.

SW: Did any students drive to campus?

[00:23:03.01] DJ: Maybe three or four had cars coming, yeah. I remember one guy from Shepherdstown had a car that came.

SW: Do you have any idea how many instructors were at Storer College?

[00:23:24.12] DJ: About ten or twelve.

SW: And how about male versus female instructors?

[00:23:31.28] DJ: There were more male instructors than female instructors.

SW: And you mentioned earlier there were a few white instructors as well. How many white instructors?

[00:23:48.08] DJ: I'd say three out of the ten or twelve.

SW: Do you remember who they were?

[00:23:57.16] DJ: Honestly, I can't remember, Mr. Wolfe. He taught German. I had a book. [train whistle] I was looking for the book. It was way too late to look for a book, and I think it's down in the basement so I'll forget about it [train whistle].

SW: And was Dr. McDonald at the college?

[00:24:23.27] DJ: He left the year I came, and McKinney came after that year. But the house, obviously, McDonald's house, for a long time, I don't know even know why they called it his house. [laughs] But it was his house, yes.

SW: And did you hear of any stories or anything about Dr. McDonald?

[00:24:46.21] DJ: Yeah. Nothing that I remember. Just the mention of his name. I know who they were talking about. And the same thing with Dr. McKinney. [train whistle] He came in from Washington and took over. He was nice.

SW: What was your opinion of him as president of the college?

[00:25:09.19] DJ: Well, I admired him because, I guess because he was a black man. I don't know why, but he was important to me because he was a doctor. He had a doctor's degree.

SW: That was a big deal?

DJ: At that time, yeah.

SW: And how about the women's dean and the men's dean? Do you remember who they were?

[00:25:36.28] DJ: Miss Bird was house mother in the girls' dormitory. I forgot the man's name.

SW: And how about any of the maintenance staff? Do you remember any maintenance staff taking care of campus?

[00:25:58.15] DJ: Unh unh. The only person I can remember very well was the cook that cooked in the dining room. It was in the bottom of the girls' dormitory. He was a good man. I think he was deaf or had problems hearing. We worked with him. I was so amazed how he could do any work. Briscoe was his name.

SW: Briscoe?

DJ: Uh huh.

SW: And that was in the bottom of the girls' dorm?

DJ: Uh huh.

SW: What was life in a dorm like?

DJ: It was good because the guys depended on me to do all of the cooking. [laughs] They had a hotplate, right, in one room, and the parents would send boxes of food and things, "Come on, De, come on, you've got to fix something."

[00:26:53.26] So, I was head cook. I told you, I was Mama's boy. So, I liked to cook. So, we would go up, and we'd eat the rest of the night and play cards. We liked to play spades at night.

[00:27:09.20] We played and studied. While someone was playing, others were studying. We'd take a break and [inaudible] [00:27:16.18].

SW: What was the type of food you cooked, if you just had a hotplate?

[00:27:25.01] DJ: It was macaroni and cheese and hot dogs and salads, hard boiled eggs.

SW: How about different school clubs? Do you remember, was there a glee club?

[00:27:43.18] DJ: Yes, there was a glee club. My first year, Miss Tatten was the music director. And she said, "Oh, you can't sing. Your voice hasn't finished developing," and she wouldn't let me sing with the group.

[00:27:56.29] So, maybe my second or third year, we had a new music instructor, and I joined the Glee Club. We sang a capella all year. But instead of singing tenor, he had me singing bass. [laughs] I could keep in tune more singing the bass than I could tenor, right? But we made trips, too, with the Glee Club. It was nice.

SW: Where all would you go with the Glee Club?

[00:28:22.22] DJ: Different churches in the area in Washington and Baltimore.

SW: Was there any one place that stands out in your memory or performance?

[00:28:36.16] DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And how about drama club? Was there a drama club?

[00:28:42.18] DJ: Yes, I was a member, acting, one of the main actors because I just liked doing things. [laughs] We put on acts, shows, twice a year. It was good.

SW: And you performed those right on campus.

DJ: On campus, yes.

SW: And where would you perform that?

[00:29:09.24] DJ: They had—in the main building, they had an auditorium. That's where the office is now.

SW: And who was in charge of the drama club?

[00:29:26.21] DJ: The English teacher. I forgot her name. I should have looked at some paper and found some names for you, but I didn't. I ain't going to do all that. I'll just say I don't remember. [laughs]

SW: And then did she decide on what to do?

[00:29:50.08] DJ: She picked out the plays, one act plays mostly, and she—we tried out for parts in the plays. It was nice, real nice. I think maybe two years, three years, in the actors' guild.

SW: And were the plays free or was there a charge of admission?

[00:30:13.04] DJ: Well, I think for the students they were free. At that time, they couldn't afford, didn't have that kind of money to buy tickets to go to show. They were on the campus, too.

SW: Did other people come to them from the town?

DJ: Yes, yes, yes, and parents, relatives, people that were invited, yeah.

SW: And how about fraternities or sororities? Do you remember which ones were

on the campus?

[00:30:44.11] DJ: I don't think they had any one the campus at the time.

SW: And outside of the plays, what other types of social events were held at the college for the students?

[00:30:57.02] DJ: I want to say, I remember, it was May Day, but they had, all the high schools came up and had their May Day out on the campus and had different exhibitions.

SW: Was it spread out over the entire campus?

[00:31:16.07] DJ: Uh huh.

SW: Was there a main ceremony or event?

[00:31:22.28] DJ: Yes, it had a big lot right there at the bottom, between the building and the barn, there was a big football field.

SW: And how about outside of coming to campus, I think you mentioned earlier some field trips. Where were some of the field trips that you went on?

[00:31:49.09] DJ: We went to different, Bowie College and another college in Maryland. We'd just go for exhibitions or something. I don't know, but no exhibition trips.

SW: So, were most of them class related?

DJ: School related, transferred.

SW: Uh huh. And then you talked a little bit about attending the services at the Free Will Baptist Church.

DJ: Yes.

SW: Do you recall who the pastor was at the time?

[00:32:30.28] DJ: Dean—no, no, I don't recall his name.

SW: How about the service? How many people attended the service?

[00:32:43.15] DJ: The whole school. We had to go there. We were only allowed two cuts a semester. So, we had to go every Sunday morning regardless whether we wanted to or not. So the whole school was out there, unless you picked a Sunday not to go.

SW: And did any folks outside of the school go to the church?

DJ: No.

SW: Okay. And how about John Brown Days? How would you describe those?

[00:33:15.15] DJ: We would go down there once in a while, maybe on a weekend, on a Saturday, a trip down to John Brown Fort, just to look around, but nothing special happened then. My favorite place in Harpers Ferry was the rock, Jefferson Rock. I used to like to go there. And the cemetery up above the rock, we used to lay out there in the cemetery and watch the cars go through the mountains at nights. [laughs] That was every... When we'd get bored and get homesick, we'd go down to the cemetery, lay on the ground in the cemetery and watch the cars go through the mountains. That was really fascinating.

SW: How many people would do that?

[00:34:03.22] DJ: Oh, four or five of us would go down at a time.

SW: What else would you remember doing in your spare time?

DJ: That's it. That's it. We always planned to go to Martinsburg to the movies every Saturday, two or three Saturdays out of the month when we had the money to go to the theater. That's all.

SW: Now did you do anything on Sunday afternoons after church service?

DJ: No.

SW: Or is it back to studying?

[00:34:39.20] DJ: Studying and cards. We played cards and spades.

SW: And do you recall anyone coming in, say another professor, to do guest lectures or anything on campus there?

[00:34:58.27] DJ: We did have guests come in. I wouldn't remember their names now. Most of them, some preachers would come up from DC once in a while. Most of them were DC people. I think most of the students came from DC. I reckon they came by the trainload because the train come right out.

SW: And how did you all decorate your room at the dorm? How many people were in the room?

[00:35:31.27] DJ: Very few. We had two to a room. Every year, we'd only get the same roommate—when they had more than two, had to put another in the room, we had problems with that. [laughs] Yeah, but, of course, they had two floors in the

dormitory. There's two floors. We had the washer room down in the basement. We washed clothes in the basement.

SW: And who was your roommate?

[00:36:04.21] DJ: Harry Bolden [?]. I'll never forget him. He was a twin. He had a twin sister.

SW: And she went to the college as well?

[00:36:18.03] DJ: Yeah. They both were there, brother and sister. They came to the reunion—she came to the reunion quite a bit. I think he came one time, but he died early. She probably died about three years ago, four years ago.

SW: Where did they come from?

[00:36:40.27] DJ: Some kind of hill in Maryland, between here and Maryland.

SW: And how about the heating situation? How were the dorms heated?

[00:36:57.13] DJ: They had radiators. They must have been heated by a furnace in the basement. One year, I was a fireman, and one of the teacher's houses off campus, it was heated by a heat—a coal heat, a coal furnace.

SW: So, would you ever see the deliveries pulling in to do that?

DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And how about where would you shower and wash?

[00:37:38.15] DJ: They had a certain part of the dormitory on the second floor, the shower section, two on each side, four.

SW: And plenty of room.

DJ: Uh huh.

SW: And what did you like best about the campus?

[00:38:01.13] DJ: It was quiet. [laughs] Yeah, it was quiet and I liked it best because you could go sit in parts of it and look at the mountains right across, over the road or highway, and you could watch the mountains. You could go back behind the library and just go see the mountains.

SW: Was there anything you did not like about the campus?

[00:38:28.29] DJ: The only thing I didn't like was the guys off the street who would come in on

the campus. But it was just me because I was just being by myself all the time.

SW: How would you describe the auditorium there?

[00:38:53.16] DJ: I think it was good. It was nice. It was never packed, but there was plenty of room, plenty of space.

SW: What did it look like?

[00:39:06.14] DJ: A regular auditorium. [laughs] A nice stage. It just looked like an auditorium. It sounded nice. [laughs]

SW: And how about the library?

[00:39:26.03] DJ: Oh, the library was nice. It was sitting on the side of the bank. They remodeled it since I left, but it was nice and quiet. The librarian was nice, too. [inaudible] [00:39:44.13].

SW: And do you remember who the librarian was?

[00:39:50.03] DJ: It was a male. That's all I know. [laughs]

SW: Did you spend a lot of time there?

DJ: Yes. Uh huh, because I'd get bored in the room, and I'd go to the library, not to read, but to do some work.

SW: And did a lot of students use the library?

[00:40:10.16] DJ: Yes, they did. I think it's a way for the girls to come see the boys, too, right, socialize.

SW: So, it's a good meeting place.

DJ: Yeah, uh huh.

SW: How about Anthony Hall? Do you remember anything about the interior?

[00:40:29.06] DJ: The auditorium was in Anthony Hall. No, was it? Yeah. Mosher Hall was a dormitory. Anthony Hall, yeah, that's where the auditorium was, except on the second floor. The classrooms on second floor and basement.

SW: What subjects would you have—

[00:40:56.22] DJ: All the classrooms in Anthony Hall, all the classrooms were.

SW: And how about the Lockwood House? Do you remember that?

[00:41:10.05] DJ: Yeah, I remember the name. It was across the street, right?

SW: Can you describe it?

[00:41:24.10] DJ: Too far away.

SW: How about the interior of the church? How would you describe the interior of the church?

[00:41:30.06] DJ: Oh, the interior of the church was nice. It was great when they got the air-conditioning now, but the windows were beautiful, and it was a little cozy-like, right? And then they went and got the pipe organ. That made it better. [laughs] The music was good.

SW: Did they get the pipe organ while you were there?

[00:41:55.18] DJ: Yeah. They got a new one [inaudible] [00:42:01.25].

SW: Do you recall who played the organ?

[00:42:05.29] DJ: Mr. Pearsall and Miss Tatten They were music directors. So, they played music in church here. Miss Tatten was the one that told me that I couldn't sing. My voice hadn't finished developing yet.

SW: That's because you went there younger than others. (clock chiming)

[00:42:29.18] DJ: Sixteen, yeah.

SW: How about improvements on the campus or the campus buildings while you were at Storer?

[00:42:42.02] DJ: They kept them up. They kept them up, yeah.

SW: Did they do any additional work while you were there?

[00:42:51.18] DJ: No. Maybe one of the buildings, they might have put in a heating system in. The girls' dormitory, they did fix that while in the four years.

SW: And how about the location of the chapel?

[00:43:15.20] DJ: It's all right for me. [laughs] It was okay. It was good. It was good. It was right off the campus, but it was.

SW: And the location of the barn?

DJ: Yeah. It's still there though. [laughs] It's still there, yeah, the barn. I took somebody down I say.

"You couldn't believe we played basketball in that building, can you?"

"Who [inaudible]?"

"Yes, we did. That was our basketball court right in that building."

SW: And then we talked a little bit about some different activities you did, but what about off-campus social life in Harpers Ferry? Did you go into the town a lot?

[00:44:03.29] DJ: Yes, yes. The guys would go off regularly. There's a little store down at the bottom of the hill, about a mile and a half. We used to go there and get candy, sandwiches, cookies. And the drugstore was right there. We'd go off—but I think the girls would go off, too, but they had to get a pass and go back, sign in and sign out. The boys didn't have to sign in and sign out.

[00:44:31.09] I remember the store is still there. There was a drugstore, but it's another building now, yeah. Then I had a good friend whose father was the principal of the school down in [inaudible] [00:44:46.23], right, and I used to visit him when I was in high school. I'd go down and stay at his house. So, I'd sleep down at their house for a while. I'd stay for a day or two or something like that and come back home, go down and eat dinner or something, and come back.

SW: How about outside of a drugstore? Was there a grocery store nearby?

DJ: Yeah, uh huh.

SW: And where was that at?

[00:45:12.15] DJ: That was in Bolivar, down at the bottom of the hill, over where the precinct is. Do you know where the precinct is? On top of that little hill.

SW: Who ran the store?

DJ: I don't know who ran the store. It was owned by a family down in Bolivar.

SW: Do you recall the name of the store?

DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And how about, were there any segregation policies in place in Bolivar or Harpers Ferry while you were there?

[00:45:51.22] DJ: No, they weren't that bad, no. Even in the school, well, after I left, the schools

integrated, right? After I graduated. But before then, they were all in different schools.

SW: And so there were no places that you feel like you couldn't go to in town?

[00:46:16.07] DJ: No.

SW: And how did the people of Harpers Ferry feel about the college and the students?

[00:46:25.04] DJ: I think they liked it because it was something to do. It give them—you know, watch the people, see them come down, the traffic, right.

SW: And do you think there was any interference with the town over the college or harassment of students?

[00:46:43.14] DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And how about, did you interact with instructors outside of the classroom?

[00:46:53.04] DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And while you were attending school there, do you recall how some of the students felt and how yourself felt about some of the national issues that were going on?

[00:47:11.29] DJ: No, too young to worry about that. No, it didn't make a difference. The only thing, when Pearl Harbor, that's the only thing I can remember because right after that, when I went home the next year, I went into the service. [laughs] That's what I'm saying, [inaudible]. [00:47:30.29]

SW: And were there any student protests on campus at all while you were there?

[00:47:39.10] DJ: Unh unh.

SW: And what do you remember most about the college?

[00:47:51.14] DJ: There was, well, that it was a small school, and everybody got a chance to have an opportunity to learn or to grasp something. If it was so large, the students wouldn't be able to do it together.

SW: And how would you say Storer College has influenced your life?

[00:48:18.11] DJ: I think it was good for me. It really was good for me because it got me away from home, away from the people because I would sit right on the porch. Another house we shared at that time, I would sit right out on the porch and watch the cars

and the people walk by. I couldn't even go up the street, right? So, when I got to, went to Storer, I got away from it all. I came back. The first year, I went and picked apples. I got some money so I got some clothes. I had some extra clothes and things. But it helped me to be on my own and take care of myself instead of depending on Daddy.

SW: And you've mentioned a couple of places up on Harpers Ferry. What was your favorite spot in Harpers Ferry?

[00:49:03.23] DJ: Jefferson Rock. Jefferson Rock, that cemetery up above the hill. But Jefferson Rock was down below. I've taken my grandkids down there three or four times that they've come back in the last ten years. And you know what I also liked? I liked the river right down at the bottom of the hill of Bolivar, down at the bottom of the hill. You go back under a little bridge at the border. I go down there quite often just to meditate, sit down on a big stone and watch the water.

SW: And do you go back? You mentioned taking your grandchildren there.

[00:49:47.17] DJ: I go back sometimes yeah.

SW: Do you still go back now?

[00:49:51.21] DJ: Uh huh. I was down there a couple of months ago. But I'm a loner. [laughs] I don't have nothing to do, and I just like traveling. I travel. I go down there and watch the water and watch the cars go across the bridge. And my grandsons, when they were small, they'd love it because they'd go play in the water, right? And one of my sister-in-laws said, "Don't take my grandson down to that river."

[00:50:15.16] "What? I didn't take him down to the river."

"Yes, you did. He told me." [laughs]

And we used to go down to the Catholic Church, right, and go up that hill, and on up to Jefferson Rock. So, that was a walk. I don't know if I'd be able to do it now.

SW: And do you ever go back and walk around where the campus was?

[00:50:38.05] DJ: Only once a year, like next week, when the people come up there because we always have a little picnic down on that Saturday when I go down there. So, once a year, yeah.

SW: Do you look forward to going to the reunion?

DJ: Uh huh. But mostly everybody I know, they're all gone. [laughs] All my co-workers and students were older than I was, so they let me because I was a little younger and didn't know what was going, what it was all about back then. I have

a couple of girls that call and remind me, "Don't forget. Are you coming?"

[00:51:22.29] "Yeah, I'll see you," but that's it.

SW: How long have you been going to the reunions?

[00:51:32.15] DJ: Regular, the last twenty years because I wasn't around when they had before. I was in Roanoke, somewhere like that, but I go every year now.

SW: How many people are still attending the reunion?

[00:51:52.09] DJ: It's dwindling down, but there's at least fifty maybe. At least fifty. Regular people come every year. They look forward to come vacation. It's like a vacation in the country, right? I usually meet them. We have Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning, church at Sunday morning. That's it, and it's good, just like a family reunion.

SW: Do you think you would describe the folks you went to school with as a part of your family?

[00:52:30.13] DJ: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Some of them, "Where were you? I didn't see you."

"I was over the other building or something like that.

Yes, we look forward to seeing the same people every year. It's just like a group, right? This one lady, family, she's gone, but her son took over because they used to come up every year, just like a vacation, right? You come up for a weekend in the country. He's the head of the reunion now. Us old folks can't do nothing now. So, we just sit back and look. [laughs]

SW: What are a few of the things? You have a picnic and a church service?

[00:53:20.07] DJ: We have—on Saturday night, we usually go to—Friday night, we go to the race track buffet, right? That's all a night right there, right? Saturday afternoon, we have a picnic and dinner and a dance at the hotel Saturday night. Sunday morning, we have church service. That's the whole thing.

SW: Do you remember about the Hayward Shepherd monument? What do you remember about that?

[00:54:04.16] DJ: No.

SW: How about your opinion of the National Park Service, what they've done?

[00:54:12.02] DJ: I think, I think they've done nicely, yeah. Nicely because they kept up the buildings and everything, right? It didn't deteriorate and just go down, right? It's a

good thing. It's a good thing. One of my friends, an acquaintance, he said that they shouldn't have closed up the school. They should have left it alone. But they couldn't get the money from the government to help run it. I can understand that, too, but you just can't hold on to all things.

[00:54:47.28] Just like Shepherdstown, right? Everything's different now. All the stores are gone. You've got to go a whole mile to get a loaf of bread and something else, right? You used to have four or five grocery stores right down on the main street. There's not a grocery store down there, can't even buy nothing. So life changes and we change and we going to change.

SW: That's true.

DJ: That's right.

SW: And then do you think with the Park Service taking over the care—

[00:55:16.05] DJ: Yeah, I think they've done a good job, yeah. Even as far as work, because I understand that some of the kids get jobs in the summertime in the Park Service, and that's a big help for some families.

SW: Do you think preserving that has also helped with Storer College alumni staying together sort of and also having the reunion?

[00:55:42.23] DJ: Well, really it helps but we, the members, we don't go there anymore. They go to motels, a weekend in motels. So, some might go up there Saturday. Some just come on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, right? But it's a good thing that they've taken it over so they can keep it up, the buildings up and the space up right. I agree with that.

SW: And how about, do you remember, are there any stories or events that really stick out in your mind when you were attending Storer?

[00:56:31.15] DJ: No, they used to have a parade, football team, a basketball team. They'd have a parade one weekend in the spring as well, but nothing special. Only thing I knew, maybe that was May Day at Storer College. That was because the high school in Charles Town would come down and have the field.

SW: Did they do a homecoming parade? Was that what it was for?

[00:57:00.05] DJ: Uh huh.

SW: And is there anything else you'd like to add to the interview?

DJ: No, thank you, and thank—I want to say “Gwenny.”

SW: Miss Roper.

DJ: Yeah, for thinking about me and to give me the opportunity to say this.

I said, "Why? I can't say anything.

She said, "Oh, yes, you can. Tell what you got."

I said, "Okay, I'll try." [laughs]

I'm not one to speak. I don't like to speak. When I have to speak, I get somebody to speak for me.

SW: Well, we've been speaking for about an hour now. So, you've done a good job.

DJ: Oh, thank you.

SW: I want to thank you for your time today as well, and this concludes the interview with Mr. Jacobs, and we're going to sign off.

DJ: All right. Thank you.

SW: Thank you.

[00:57:58.02] [End of File]