

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
African-American Migration to Youngstown

Personal Experiences

O.H. 1918

REVEREND LONNIE SIMON

Interviewed

On

February 15, 1999

By

Michael A. Beverly

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This is an interview with Reverend Lonnie Simon for the Youngstown State Oral History Program for a history project on the black migration to Youngstown, Ohio by Michael Beverly on 320 Porter Street, Campbell, Ohio on February 15, 1999.

B: Okay we can get started, can you tell me your age or what year you were born?

S: I was born on March 23, 1925 in a place called East Mulga, Alabama. It's in Jefferson County near Birmingham.

B: Okay what did your family do for a living?

S: Well my father was a pastor and he also worked in the coal mine, and we migrated from Alabama to the southwestern part of Pennsylvania. It was about forty-seven miles southwest of Pittsburgh. Uniontown was the county seat but we stayed in a small town called Cardale and my father pastored the congregation Mt. Ararat Baptist Church there for quite a number of years.

B: So what year did your family come to Youngstown?

S: Well I came to Youngstown in 1946 after I came out of the service. I was in the navy for two years and three months during the Second World War. I was discharged in February of 1946. Before I went into the navy in 1943, I worked a week in the coalmines, but that wasn't for me so one of the men who used to work in the mines, he used to work for H.C. Flick Coal Company which was a subsidiary of U.S. steel. He called me and he said that there was work in Youngstown in the steel mill. So my purpose for coming to Youngstown in 1946 was to make enough money to go to college. I wanted to go to West Virginia State College because I thought I wanted to be a French teacher. So that was my purpose for coming to Youngstown. That was in 1946, this is 1999, so that was 53 years ago. But it didn't turn out that way. I worked at U. S. Steel for nine years and then I worked for the post office. I carried mail for ten years, and then I was called to the ministry while I was carrying mail in 1951. Then in 1954 I was called to Pastor my first church, Elizabeth Baptist in Youngstown. I stayed there for five years and then resigned and accepted a church in Canton, Jerusalem Baptist, and stayed there two years and then I came back to Youngstown after I was called to the church at New Bethel where I served for 33 years.

B: What year was that when you became the pastor at New Bethel?

S: It was in 1962, and then I retired in 1995, so I stayed there for thirty-three years. I gave up my job at the post office in 1965 so that I could give full time to the church.

B: Usually pastors don't last that long at one church.

S: Yes that's right. There's an advantage in serving a congregation for that number of years. It has its advantages, you know.

B: You can tell that you were loved by that congregation.

S: Oh yes the ties are still there even though my son is the new pastor. He took over in 1996; he has been there for three years.

B: Yeah he's good. So you were a young man when you came here?

S: I was about, well let's see, I went into the service at 18, and I was discharged at 21, so I came to Youngstown when I was 21.

B: So what did your mother do for a living, did she work?

S: My mother was a housewife. My mother and father separated and divorced when I was just a teenager. She stayed in Pennsylvania, and when I moved to Youngstown in 1946 later on I got married in 1949. I had a younger brother who was in the coast guard, he went to Cleveland and got a job with the coast guard, and then my mother went with him to Cleveland. She passed about five years ago she was 94. My father also passed. He was 90. There were six of us in the family, four boys and two girls. My two oldest brothers have passed.

B: When you were growing up with your brothers and sisters did you work out of the home when you were teenagers?

S: Well we were young and my father did a little farming, he raised chickens and pigs and we had a garden with vegetables and sweet potatoes and all of that type of thing. We lived in sort of a rural area, farm country.

B: So you graduated from high school then?

S: Yes, it was called Redstone Township High School in Republic PA in 1943. In that particular area it was predominantly white and out of 247 in the graduating class we had seven blacks or minorities that graduated. When we talk about racism and that sort of thing, at that time I wasn't as aware of it as I am now, but I do know that for us blacks,

our advisor never pushed us to take the academic course. We were always steered towards commercial or the general course. The reason being, they would say that there would be no reason for us to take an academic course, because there would be no place in the job market for our skills.

B: You didn't accept that though did you?

S: No, I didn't. I think I could have been college material, but I didn't get the basics, so I graduated in 1943 and I came to Youngstown not knowing that I was going into the ministry. I attended Youngstown College at that time majoring in philosophy and religion.

B: You said you worked at U.S. Steel, how was it there?

S: Well at that time in the steel mill, you could get jobs but they had menial jobs, you know, working in the service department, working on the track gang, working in the scrap yard, but as far as skill positions, we weren't able to get those jobs, until some of the fellows who were in the union said that they didn't think that was fair, that blacks were discriminated against when it came down to promotion and getting better jobs.

B: So your education and ability didn't help?

S: No, that didn't matter.

B: How about the unions were they of any help?

S: The union has helped in some regard, but at the same time, after all the union officers were white. When it came down to trying to advance Civil Rights with blacks, the unions generally were cooperative but then there were some holdbacks. I suppose because the community wasn't ready for blacks to be moving in to these kinds of positions.

B: How about the post office?

S: That's one of the Federal Government positions. I think that was one of the places where blacks were accepted, because if you went into service and you took the test, I think you got ten points. I thought it was good that you got an additional ten points, so quite a number of blacks, that is black males, were able to get into the post office at that time.

B: What year was this?

S: I started working at the post office in 1955.

B: So there were quite a few black Americans?

S: Oh yes. Later on they moved up to supervisors and some became postmasters. So that was good because it was run by the Federal Government. There were non-discriminatory laws that were set by the government.

B: But at U.S. Steel the blacks usually worked the worse job?

S: Yes, the menial job, the worst job.

B: The dangerous and dirty job?

S: Yes, that's right.

B: Okay you said you worked on a track gang?

S: I worked on the track gang at the mill.

B: What is that? What did you do?

S: Well we laid rails on the tracks and that sort of thing.

B: U.S. Steel wasn't that...

S: In fact I think that Lawson Booker, I don't know if he was a motor man or what but he had one of those positions that I think he advanced from just a regular laborer into

some type of supervisor job. If I'm not mistaken, things started getting better when they started listening to the union. +Things started opening up.

B: The union started backing the African-American workers?

S: Yeah

B: The U.S. Steel that wasn't your first job was it? You were in the navy?

S: Yeah, then when I came out of the navy working in the steel mill was my first job. Then I went to the post office. Then I used to work extra when the steel mills would go on strike. I'd work and clean up a bar.

B: Were you active in the union?

S: No, I wasn't active in the union; but I paid my union dues.

B: Okay the workers that you worked with, was it diverse? Was it like whites and blacks?

S: In the track gang we were mixed and in the service department there was a mixture. We got along very well, you know. I suppose that when you come down to individuals, you didn't experience racism as much as you did where the institutions were concerned. There was a lot of institutional racism existing at that time.

B: Oh yeah, here in Youngstown.

S: And the same thing happened where I came from, in Pennsylvania, in the neighborhood that I grew up in we had different nationalities, Slovaks, Italians, Germans, what have you, and we played together, ate together, we stayed at each others' houses. That type of thing. Within the school system, there were organizations that we could belong to, such as the glee club or participate in sports, football, basketball, but not in the others like Hi Y or Tri-Hi-Y.

B: Now when you first came to Youngstown, where did you live?

S: When I first came to Youngstown I stayed with a couple that had left Pennsylvania to live here, I stayed on the Sharon line.

B: Okay so these were friends of yours?

S: Yes they were like family. Then a young man, J.B. Carter befriended me when I came to Youngstown. So I stayed with his family for a while. They accepted me as a member of the family. So I got to know the people here, but it was not my intentions to live here, but here I am. I got married in '49, and this coming May, May 14, 1999 my wife and I will have been married for fifty years.

B: Oh well congratulations that is great. So what year were you called to the ministry?

S: I was called in 1951; I was working at U.S. Steel at that time. I knew then that if I was going to be successful in the ministry, then that was going to be my full time calling. I needed to prepare myself, so I enrolled at Youngstown College, at that time it was ideal. Yeah I started college in 1951. I didn't complete college in the four years because I was only going part time, but I did complete my major, which was philosophy and religion. At that time you could graduate with 125 hours. So I had at least 65 hours in by the time.

B: Did you encounter any racism at Youngstown College?

S: No, I didn't encounter any racism at that time, no.

B: So the first church that you became pastor of was Elizabeth Baptist Church?

S: Yes, that was in Hazelton on the east side. I was there five years. Then we moved up and bought a church on South Forest Avenue.



B: As a pastor Sir, this is dealing with migration, do you recall any people coming up from the south during this period?

S: Well I think they were coming but I think before I came here in '46 they were beginning to migrate to Youngstown area because of the job openings. At the time there was U.S. Steel, or Carnegie Steel, there was Republic Steel and there was Youngstown Sheet and Tube.

B: Was your church active with helping those who were coming, get adjusted

S: Yes, the church always played a major role to help those who were coming from the south. They tried to locate in an area where they would be accepted. Now there were certain areas in the community where blacks couldn't live. One of the places where New Bethel was located, was a place called monkey's nest, I don't know if you've heard of it, the river bend area.

B: That's where most of the blacks migrated?

S: Yeah, they're used to living near the Briar Hill area or the monkey's nest, there were very few at that time that lived on the south side. On the east side there was a few, also on the Sharon line.

B: There was the Sharon Line on the east side?

S: Yeah, blacks began to buy homes because of urban renewal, and the whites began to move out and into the suburbs and then blacks began to take over those homes that the whites moved out of.

B: So this was like during the '50s?

S: Yeah, well when I pastored at New Bethel in '62, everybody knew what was coming from that area, what we called the river bend area. They kind of wiped things out

there, so that meant that blacks had to be assimilated so they moved to the north side or the upper north side and the south side. This is when many of them came to the south side and the whites began to move out and that's how we came to locate as far as the church is concerned. We've got the former highway tavern echo church, which is located on Hillman Street at that time.

B: My grandparents lived on Marvel Street.

S: Oh Marvel Street, yeah.

B: So they were kind of close there. They were right around in that area.

S: I was told there was a circus in town one time and the monkeys somehow got out of the box or whatever and that's where the name –Monkey's nest came from.

B: So was the church active in trying to locate these people into these neighborhoods, like showing them where to live?

S: Yeah, they had someone before I came to New Bethel, those who worked in the Urban Department were able to, in fact they directed us to build, they didn't give us the kind of money that we needed to build. We felt that what they did give us we could put that as a down payment on a church that a white congregation was willing to sell. At that time the Highway Tabernacle Church was willing to sell because they could see that blacks were migrating to the south side and most of their people were moving out.

B: So New Bethel was active in helping the poor around there?

S: Yeah, well when I came there I didn't merely start a social action program because at that time until about '65 or 67, I was sort of passive, as I think most black ministers were, when it came down to the civil rights movement. In other words I wasn't really turned on at that time to King and the Civil Rights Movement, but I did march with

him in 1965 in Montgomery. A lot of us pastors went to Montgomery and we participated in the Montgomery March. But it wasn't until 1967 when I went to Chicago and was given a grant by the Ford Foundation to attend the Urban Training Center; we had to deal with urban problems and social problems in depth. This is what I have come to call a new conversion experience, where I felt that my role as a pastor was not just behind the pulpit, it wasn't all preaching. Prior to that time the traditional pastor was always taught to tell your people to be patient, and wait on the Lord and pray, and things would turn out all right. But I discovered while I was going through urban training that unless you got up off your knees and started doing something, challenging the institution nothing would happen. If you keep putting people in impoverished conditions then nothing was going to get done. And that is why I became an activist at that time and even up to now, although I am kind of battle fatigued, I leave it up to the young fellows like you, and my son. That is what got me on board and forced me to look at these institutions that put people in these sorts of situations and challenge the institution, because it has always been my belief while I was going to school that if I were being taught that this country is a democracy, of the people by the people and for the people, not just some of them, we need to live out this creed you know?

B: Right.

S: You have to protest. I have discovered that too. If there is going to be any progress when there are minorities, there are only two things that you have at your disposal and that is there has to be a protest and a vote, you can't just sit down and wait and have people hand things to you. You have to challenge the system. Along the way you will find that you have friends too, then the fact that you petition, the government

officials, and I know that some say that too much government isn't good, but I know that if it wasn't for the federal government working on our behalf we wouldn't have made the strides that we have made today.

B: So during the 1950's how would you say the Youngstown area was with the blacks?

S: Well there was a lot of segregation, as you know. Blacks couldn't swim in the city pools, I think they built the pool on the north side near West Federal Street and they called it Chase Pool, which meant that all blacks had to go there, they couldn't swim in any other pool in the city. Nathaniel Lee was head of the NAACP at that time and he was a strong union man and he and some of his colleagues supported him. There were segregated swimming pools as well as the theatres where you had to sit in a certain section, what they called the colored section. Some of the stores downtown, you couldn't get a job in some of the stores, and you couldn't eat in some of the restaurants.

B: I've heard stories about the I.S. League.

S: That was over on Glenwood, I don't know what you mean, you mean as far as the club was concerned?

B: I've heard that blacks were really not allowed; well they were discriminated against, and mainly this was in the years, maybe in the forties.

S: Yeah, because I know that even with the colored YMCA, where the Rescue Mission is now, that was the colored YMCA and then they had the downtown YMCA. I was much aware of that because at one time when I could no longer stay at the home where my friend had befriended me because he had his family there. So, I went to the YMCA downtown to seek accommodation and the fellow I talked to asked me if I really

wanted to come to the Downtown Y? I said yes, he said well you know that there is a colored Y up there on Federal Street. I said well I'm aware of that, and he said well why would you want to come down here? Then I said, isn't this supposed to be the Young Men's Christian Association? He said well do you think that you could stand the pressures? I said what do you mean? What pressures? Now I understood because at that time that is the way things were. There was that segregation policy, that is why they had the colored YMCA up on Federal Street and the Y downtown was white. The whole town was racist at that time because even with the Vindicator, I don't know if were aware of it, if I hadn't told you but when I came here they had a section in the newspaper, they called it colored news. Whatever happened in the black community or the colored community as they called it at that time always came under that column. They had a black reporter, I can't think of his name now, Burns Harvey. He would put everything that had to do with colored news in the Colored News Column.

B: Sounds like it would have things like...

S: Well you would know if somebody was dead or getting married, etc.

B: News about your relatives, or whatever.

S: Our girls never got on the society page if you know what I mean. That's the way it was during that particular time.

B: So which theatres, do you remember which theatres blacks were allowed to go to?

S: Well let's see, there were several theatres, there was the Warner, there was the Palace; let's see what other theatres? There were about three or four theatres down there, there was State Theatre, Warner, Palace and one more, Paramount.

B: Are these the theatres that everybody went to?

S: You sat in sections. Where I came from it didn't matter if there were empty seats in the white section and the black section was full, you had to wait until some of the blacks had moved out before you could sit down. So when we deal with racism as we do now, I think that those who are concerned with solving a problem have to listen to us who have been victims.

B: Right.

S: We as people have been victims of racism, just because of the color of our skin. Martin Luther King dreamed that the time would come that we wouldn't have to be judged by the color of our skin but the content of our character. The educational system has had a lot to do with this too, because in dealing with American History, you know, you find very little in American History as far as the contributions that blacks have made to secure the well being of this country.

B: Right.

S: They always portrayed us in a negative sense. That stigma lasted quite a while until well meaning people, most of whom were whites recognized the imbalance of the mechanized segregation policy. If they expected this country to be what it is supposed to be then we can't discriminate against any of the citizens we have, because during the wars that we fought, blacks were recruited to fight in the wars and win wars and then sometimes when they would come back they couldn't find a job or they couldn't go to a certain school or live in a certain neighborhood. That is what gave rise to the Civil Rights Movement. The battle is still going on, the struggle is still going on. You can't give up and you can't go to sleep.

B: How about if I go to the park, I saw that park down there.

S: Yeah that is the park that most of us went to. It has been quite a while, you know since it shut down. Those were good times.

B: They accepted both whites and blacks.

S: Yes, there were certain days when a church would hold a regular picnic there. It was open.

B: Hospitals, did they discriminate or anything?

S: Well, I don't know much about the hospitals, but blacks were given the same services that whites were, I think.

B: Was it like segregated?

S: Well at that time you didn't see the blacks and the whites in the same room. Now that has changed since then. I don't know what year it changed, but it has changed.

B: Did blacks have more problems with the police at that time too?

S: Well there were very few blacks in the police department and those who were there; there was no advancement for blacks for the few that were in the police department. With the size of the community, the city, we should have more black policemen. My position is in a town like this because I know of a lot of other communities where the population is not predominant black as this one is. They even have black police chiefs and we have not seen that happen in Youngstown.

B: Do you remember any cases of police brutality?

S: Oh definitely, I don't want to say that I was directly involved, somebody was always coming to me as I was part of the Interracial Clergy Dialogue. Every time someone would come to me with a case of police brutality, I would bring it up to my colleagues and they got together and petitioned the city to form a Citizens Police Review

Board. I don't know if it is operating now, but when we petitioned the mayor at the time and the council, they passed an ordinance that set up a Citizen's Police Review Board, so that people had an alternative rather than going down to the Internal Affairs Division? They could have an alternative and they could go to court with the citizen's police review board.

B: So there was a lot of police brutality back in the '50s and 60s.

S: Yeah, back in the '50s and 60s. Yeah there was quite a bit.

B: When you came here and you bought your first house, were they like diverse or were they?

S: Well when I first bought my house, I bought a house on the south side that was in 1948. Then I moved from there, I bought a house on the east side in 1956. The reason why I bought it was because there were not too many blacks living on that side of town. I heard the racial slurs like you know "Nigger you don't belong here", and that kind of stuff.

B: Really, they were really racist?

S: Yeah, but soon it became very integrated, as the whites moved out and the Puerto Ricans moved in, and I think that if you look at the east side now it is mostly blacks and Puerto Ricans.

B: So during that time, like in the '50s, you didn't really feel like you could buy a home in any certain part of the city.

S: No, there were certain restrictions as to where blacks could live.

B: Do you think it was done by the real estate people or...?

S: I don't know about that type of thing, but sure it is.



B: So they wouldn't allow you, so most blacks moved, and they lived up around the monkey's nest and the Sharon line.

S: Now in the upper north side you didn't find blacks that was mostly a Jewish community I believe. The upper south side you didn't find too many blacks.

B: How about the west side?

S: The west side, there were very few, even now, I wouldn't say that it's off limits but, it's opening up, the housing is opening up now.

B: Did you live near your job?

S: Well when I was working at U.S. Steel I was living on the south side. I was near my place of employment, when I working at U.S. Steel.

B: Do you recall how your family was treated in the south? Do you think that people up here were more tolerant of blacks than maybe you were tolerated in Alabama?

S: Well in the south blacks knew their particular place; there were segregation laws. I think one of the positive things about segregation, it brought cohesiveness on the part of blacks, where they controlled their own destiny, they had their own black businesses, and they had their own schools. But then the NAACP protested against segregation, they desegregated the schools, but I think that it had some adverse effect. As far as I'm concerned, I thought it had some effect as far as black survival, when it comes to blacks having something of their own. I know there are still those who are looking for that ideal utopia where the blacks and whites will come together and cross that color line or racial line, but it hasn't happened yet. It just seems like there is a majority of whites that have this idea of supremacy, or white supremacy or superiority. The color of one's skin just

stands out for some people. You know what I mean. It is built in in some places; you know, some people think that they are just superior.

B: When you came here did you feel accepted by the black community? The blacks already living here, did they accept you?

S: Oh yeah. They knew I was one of them and a part of the same struggle and even when I, as I said, when I knew that these changes were going on in my life, well I knew that I could no longer be passive, but I had to be up front providing leadership, to whom much is given, much is required. So I know that others that didn't have the opportunity to be exposed to this urban training like I was, they would listen and this was all across the country. There were ministers, especially black ministers that was supported by the Ford Foundation because some of us had jobs, second jobs and the only way that we could attend this training session we had to have the Ford Foundation to fund us. So they would fly us to Chicago and back, then we would come home and then that Sunday or Monday we would go back to Chicago for the ten-week extensive training. I think the program really was geared towards the idea of becoming conscious of what our role was as black churches and black ministers. That we just couldn't sit by and let things happen. We had to get out there in the fore front and then deal with a local government, with the politicians to make sure that certain laws govern all people, you know when it came down to equality and equal opportunity.

B: What about the mayors and the city council and all of that, were they easy to deal with?

S: Yeah, I think that blacks became politically conscious because we started to elect black officials, black council, and some cities elected black mayors, and school board members. You saw some differences because their leadership was made accountable to show that blacks got equal treatment. In major cities now, in inner cities you will see that blacks have political power and political control. One thing that we don't have is economic power and that is what we've really got to have. I do believe in the principle that we have to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. I do believe in the principle of self-help, self-reliance and self-determination on our part. In other words, nobody will stand in your way if you believe in yourself. I think we have to teach that to our young, that you are not inferior to anybody. So when you go to school, you go there to study. You go there to learn and regardless of what major influences that come upon you, you need to recognize that you are somebody. We have to tell our young people that, because some may feel that, "well how come I don't have the same rights as my counterpart?" You have to give them the truth about the history of this country that it hasn't changed too much as far as attitudes are concerned. I think it has to be done; if the racial problem cannot get solved institutionally, then I think it has to be solved on a one on one situation.

B: When you came here did you feel that different organizations, like the National Urban League, the NAACP, did they help you in any kind of way?

S: The NAACP was the strongest at that time.

B: It was very active in Youngstown at that time?

S: Yeah, oh definitely so. We would not have made the strides that we have, had it not been for the NAACP.

B: Okay so this was during the '50s and you mentioned Nathaniel Lee.

S: Yeah, Nathaniel Lee was the president at that time and he was very active in the union. So he got support from his colleagues in the union.

B: Did your neighbors help you also?

S: Do you mean the white neighbors?

B: No, I meant blacks, black neighbors.

S: Yeah, well I think essentially we were all in the same boat. We all identified with a struggle and knew that, and that is why we protested and we marched. Maybe at this time the protest would not take on the same resemblance as it did during the earlier civil rights movement. You had to be out there in numbers and say to the entire community that we aren't going to take it no more. That strategy, whether it's workable now, I don't know, I think it takes another twist now. I think it has come to that point and that is why we have encouraged our people to register to vote and also to vote. The people who we select and elect into government positions in the city or whether it is the county, or the state. We have to elect people who are promoting our cause.

B: You said your father was a preacher too, right?

S: Yes.

B: Do you think he was a great influence in your life?

S: Oh yes, more then definitely he was a great influence. He was a man of wisdom, practical wisdom, I'd always quote him and he would say things like "Son, don't

let nobody do your thinking, because they can't do your living." "Don't let anybody do your living because they can't do your dying." He had homemade philosophies such as that. I would always quote him because of the influence he had on my life. I'm always saying, well my daddy said this or my father said this.

B: You make it sound like he had a lot of influence on you.

S: Yeah, other ministers loved to study under him because he knew his Bible. He knew his way around when it comes down to practical living. He had an influence on those of us who would sit and listen to him. He would say, "He who will not listen, will not learn." He would say to always listen to somebody who had something to say. He said to give people the facts and tell them the truth, they may not accept it but you give them the facts. I said, "What do you mean papa?" He would say that everybody knows that ice is cold, and fire will burn, he said if you don't believe it, "he who sits over a red hot stove will rise again."  
(Laughter), Yeah it had a lot of humor to it. He said "You know why they call that a window?" I said "No Sir", "It's the door that the wind comes through."  
(Laughter)

B: Well I should've known him.

S: He died in 1983, at age 90.

B: Do you think he did the right thing coming to Youngstown?

S: Yeah, I don't believe that anything happens by accident. I strongly believe that, I'm a spiritual person because I come from a very religious background and I have been taught Christian principles, I do believe that each of us have a purpose for our lives. We should attempt to fulfill that purpose. Some of us may not

recognize our purpose until late in life. When I graduated from high school, I thought that I wanted to be a French teacher, because my French teacher made a great impression upon me, and I liked the language. You have to ask, well as Apostle Paul says, “Lord what would you have me to do?” I say this to young couples who, when I am counseling them before they get married, I will say to them, “You really are not ready to establish a relationship with each other until you first of all establish a relationship with God. It could be that you are marrying out of the will of God. God has a certain purpose for your life. It could be that God has an overall purpose for your life, that you choose a certain vocation; you have to be careful when you are choosing a profession or occupation. You have to see if this is where God wants you, there is nothing worse than being out of the will of God. So when I got my call to the ministry, there was no doubt I knew that it was going to be my life’s work, so I knew I had to make preparations for it. Purpose is so important in life, you have to know what your purpose is and begin to prepare yourself. The saying is that it is best to be prepared for an opportunity and not have it, than to have an opportunity and not be prepared.

B: Do you feel that you have made things better for yourself?

S: By being in Youngstown?

B: Yeah

S: Yeah, I do feel that, there were times when I thought that I would be somewhere else. I was being considered for two churches in Philadelphia in the ‘70s and in

the '80s, there was a church in Erie, Pennsylvania that I was being considered for. It was always my purpose to be in the will of God and I would seek his guidance.

B: Okay so you are just talking about your purpose?

S: Yes, I think that is primary. In the life nothing comes by accident. God has a purpose for each of our lives, so I try to follow that trend, that concept since I know that this is God's will for my life. Then whatever happens in my life; it doesn't happen by accident. One of my favorite scriptures is Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things that work together for good, to those who love God and are the called to his purpose." There is a purpose for your life even though some adverse things may happen." You may say well why did this happen? I wanted to do this, I wanted to do that, but there are some things in life you can't change, it's inevitable and you need to know that, so that you won't be spinning your wheels and wasting time. You know what I mean? Those who have not decided what their profession or occupation is going to be, they need to be thinking about it, so that they can be taking those types of courses that will be leading them there. You need to take those courses that are going to prepare you for your life's work.

B: Okay this is going to close our interview I thank you for your time.

S: Well I appreciate sharing with you.

B: Well you have shared a lot, I really appreciate it.