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The Silenced Generation - Growing up after massive  
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## Brandon Toney

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Colton Hanks

Morgan Wood

Jamesha Watson

Alani Battle

29 November 2015

Oral History Transcription with Brandon Toney

I removed crutch words and false starts from this transcript.

Colton Hanks: "It's November 8. We're Located in Longwood Library. And we will be interviewing..."

Brandon Toney: "Brandon Toney"

CH: "And about the school closings, the interviewers will be..."

Morgan Wood: "Morgan Wood"

Jamesha Watson: "Jamesha Watson"

Alani Battle: "Alani Battle"

CH: "And Colton Hanks"

Interviewers

JW: Where you born in the Farmville Area?

BT: "Yes"

JW: "Do you have any siblings?"

BT: "Yea, I have three brothers."

JW: "What did your mother and father do?"

BT: "My is, well he was Superintendent at Piedmont Regional Jail, and my mother is a social worker."

JW: "How was your childhood growing up?"

BT: "Wasn't bad, I actually grew up in Prospect which is five mile further from here, well like 8 miles away from here. Just kind of Grew up in the country, it was nice."

JW: "What was your favorite childhood experience, if you have one?"

BT: "Probably just, kind of vacations. We use to go to the beach every year."

JW: "Do you have like one specific beach trip that stood out more than the others?"

BT: "No, not none particular."

JW: "What elementary school did you attend?"

BT: "Prince Edward County Elementary School."

JW: "Did you attend your middle and high school there too?"

BT: "Yes."

JW: "Have you read Kristen Greens Books "Something Must be done about Prince Edward."

BT: "No, I have not read it before."

JW: "Did the school closings in Prince Edward Effect you?"

BT: "No, Didn't affect me. Nah It didn't effect me at all."

JW: "Do you know anyone it affected Personally?"

BT: "Yes, Some members of my church. I know they had to go Cumberland when it happened. And there is a women that use to work at Prince Edward, that I know she ended up having to get her degree several years late."

JW: "Did anyone ever tell you any personal stories about it or anything?"

BT: "I really can't recall any right now."

JW: "Do you think racism still exist in Farmville."

BT: "Yea, I mean it's not, probably not that prevalent. But its, I think it's still there."

JW: "Did you ever have to experience any signs of racism."

BT: "Actually, I was in Kindergarten or First Grade, I was in the cub scouts. The place we had our meetings at was a church, and some of the members didn't like myself and some of the other black children that were part of the group. They didn't want us to meet in there church, so I just ended up quitting at that point."

JW: "Is that the only life experience you have with racism?"

BT: "Yea, I think that's it actually."

JW: "So how was high school like, how was your high school like? How was it going to Prince Edward Highschool."

BT: "It was fine for me, is there anything particular that you?"

JW: "Did you have any favorite subjects? Any good or bad experiences?"

BT: "Favorite Subject was math. As far as bad experiences go, I mean the occasional bullying when I was younger but that was about it."

JW: "Have any stories you want to share?"

BT: "Like Related to the Bullying?"

JW: "Yea."

BT: "I had injured my legs when I was younger, so I spent time in a wheel chair for about a year and a half. And my kids, when I was recovering, made fun of the way I walked. But that was about it."

JW: "Do you know anything about the school closings?"

BT: "I know that Barbara Jones, she started..I think it was a march to the other school, and I know that, I believe it was 7 years that the schools were closed. It was one of the schools in the Brown v. Board of Education case."

Jw: "yeah – well you weren't directly affected by it but like if the schools didn't close what do you think would be different?"

BT: "theres kind of theres kind of for like awhile there was kind of like a brain drain in Farmville like a lot of people who were smart they either they you know left and went and did other things and went to other cities and I feel like that that played play part of the rule played a part in that happening so I don't know I guess I don't know there would be more growth in Farmville but I don't know."

Jw: "so you think that like the poverty levels would be less and there would be like a more economical growth?"

BT: "yeah."

CH: "what did you think about the beckoning of the private school?"

BT: "Fuqua?"

CT: "yeah."

BT: "like in the regard like just-"

CT: "in regards of the school closings I guess you can compare the beckoning of when the schools were closed and then how you perceived it when you were growing up?"

BT: "I don't know I just like to think the times are just different and you know its I'm not really again it doesn't really affect me much but I I could imagine it's got to be its got to be really difficult to deal with knowing that these other kids are still able to go to school and you're not just because just because of your race you know."

CT: "right."

BT: "but is that like-"

CT: "did you like have any hostility against the private school when you were going through high school in the area?"

BT: "it's a little bit of like a rivalry like that kind of in that respect but not but not in a hateful manner so those guys are like the cross town school."

CT- "right."

CT: did the Washington post wrote an article I don't know if you were aware of it about Fuqua in 2011 and about how a student that transferred from Prince Edward attended what was your feelings on that article?"

BT: "I remember it ...it was uh it was a guy name Charles he played... I know he played he played football and baseball there and the principle called him ... he looked like a he looked a drug dealer the news said something like that in the article and I think that's more reflective of wouldn't say like a culture of Farmville or anything but more so the principle himself I think that was just really unprofessional and that wasn't recent of course but human being people ... people ... people are people they are going to... there going to say stupid things from time to time."

CT: "in the article it also talked about how he was considered an ambassador-"

BT: "an ambassador?"

CT: “of trying to tie the two schools together did that ever come across in that way?”

BT: “I never saw this personally.”

JW: “What College did you go to?”

BT: “Um I graduated from Longwood last year”

JW: “Did you see..did you notice how Longwood doesn’t have that much diversity?”

BT: Yea

JW: “Did you see like a divide between that”

BT: “No so much a divide, but it was really uh its something I really never thought of until I got here. You know I think I was sitting in my English class uh English 150 and uh every class Ive been in like there have been black kids I mean it was pretty diverse uh I mean every one was there. I think we were reading a play about a slave our professor asked us who wanted to read which part. And so I kinda just looked around and I was like “ah”. One of the girls... one of the other girls in front of me looked at me and just started laughing. I just never... I never had been in a class where I was the only black person there...that’s the...”

JW: “How did that make you feel on the inside?”



BT: "I'm not gonna say alone but I did feel like... not uncomfortable but a little bit out of place...just you know...just a little bit."

JW: "Did you experience anything else like that like throughout your college career or was that like the only thing?"

BT: "I was.... pretty much...I mean...I adjusted to it eventually so it wasn't that

JW: "So um were you happy with your choice of choosing Longwood or would you have chose to go to another college like maybe a historical black college or would you have still stayed at Longwood if you had the chance?"

BT: "If I had the chance I would probably stay here again"

CH: "Ok. You said that your father was in charge of the regional jail"

BT: "Yea"

CH: "And that's kind of a somewhat prestigious job like it comes...do you think...being him...Holding that position did that put you in any situations or?"

BT: "I mean"

CH: " Did the income that comes from that did anybody kind of envy you at the school or did it affect you in anything in that manor?"

BT: "Um not that I'm aware of. I wouldn't know if anyone was envious or anything or uh."

JW: "Do you see any racism while you attended Longwood?"

BT: "Two different things uh I probably stepped on this campus maybe two or three times like before attending here and then once I got here I felt kinda isolated from the town a little bit...So...The biggest thing I noticed is the use of the word towney I guess. Like its typically is used to describe you know African American people in the town. As opposed to just people who live here."

CH: "Right"

BT: "Like I know I remember a party I went to my first week here and like 10 people went in front...went in before me and like I walk up and they had...like ID me like they asked me for my Longwood ID or something like that. And so its just and I mean that's not the only time its happened...other things have happened uh similar to that but...I... I guess its like a sort of...a... its easy to be oblivious the things that go on around Farmville"

(Tape skipped no audible question, most of answer is lost as well. What is heard is below)

BT: "...if you know the police officers in town so"

CH: Do y'all have any other questions? Well, where do you currently live now?

BT: I live in Richmond.

CH: How long have you lived in Richmond?

BT: About a month now.

CH: Do you feel that some of the issues in Farmville from the closings or the hostility about the situation in Farmville are present in Richmond? Either greater or smaller?

BT: I'm not really sure. I work in Mechanicsville. So, I really haven't even gotten the chance to really see the inner city too much. you know?

CH: Trying to think of anything else.

JW: Isn't your mom a social worker, like did she tell you any stories dealing with that or was she a social worker in the Farmville area?

BT: Well she works for social services so she's... I think her actual title is like Eligibility Worker. So she works with food stamps...things of that nature.

JW: Ok, does she work in the Farmville area?

BT: Yeah, like the courthouse.

JW: Is there like any other experiences you have that you would like to share?

BT: Nothing I can really think of.

CH: As being an alumni of Fuqua, some of my friends, such as Charles, he came and other students from other counties would come to visit, but later they would turn it down because of the families had kinda held harsh feelings towards the school. Did you feel that if you had been offered the opportunity to attend or do you feel that your family would've been a little hostile towards the idea of attending the school?

BT: I don't think they would've been again- I honestly didn't know about that, but I don't think they would've been too hostile about it. Like I have family members that have went there before, so it's not a big deal for me.