

Interviewee: Barry Edwards
Interviewer: Chelsea Arseneault
Transcriber: Anne Wheeler
Auditor: Laura Spikerman
Editor: Chelsea Arseneault

4700.2508 Tape 4521
Session II
September 24, 2015

[Begin Tape 4521. Begin Session II.]

CHELSEA ARSENEAULT: Alrighty. Today is September twenty-fourth, 2015. I'm Chelsea Arseneault representing the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History with LSU [Louisiana State University] Libraries. We're working in conjunction with the Imperial Calcasieu Museum to document the history of Mossville [Louisiana]. Today we're at the Rigmaiden Recreation Center on Old Spanish Trail. I'm here today again with Mr. Barry Edwards. Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed again. This is our second interview together. Our first one was on Oral History Day in March.

BARRY EDWARDS: Right

ARSENEAULT: [00:28] So I listened to that interview, and I have some like clarification questions that I wanted to ask. You said your mother was a . . . Your mother's maiden name was Prater?

EDWARDS: Right.

ARSENEAULT: Okay. So who was your mom related to? Like that side of the family?

EDWARDS: On the Prater side of the family? The Braxton's. The Rigmaiden's. LaDoux's. I think that's it. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Does she ever talk about that side of the family?

EDWARDS: [01:05] Not really. She never really talked about them. Matter of fact, since you brought that up, about three years ago I went to a family reunion of her side of the family, the Rigmaiden's and the LaDoux's. This was in Beaumont [Texas]. And I got the chance to meet a lot of my cousins that I'd been knowing for a while, but I didn't know we were cousins about the relationship. That's how we . . .

 You know my mom didn't talk too much about it. The kinship and all. But we would always spend a little time together. Certain . . . With certain parts of the family. Especially the Braxton's, because that was her mom's last name. Yeah, her mom was [Middy?] Braxton. And her dad was a Prater. So that's how that part got together. But like the Braxton's we grew up around them. Friends, played ball, all sports together and all so we knew that part of it. But any and other part like the Rigmaiden's or whatever, we didn't get that deep. We just . . . pretty much like first cousins like yeah . . . That's the way that worked.

ARSENEAULT: What was the Braxton's side of the family like?

EDWARDS: [02:42] Wow. A lot of fun. [laughs] Yes, as far as I can remember we had a real good time. Now back in the day, now this was before I was born, on the Braxton side there was a minister. He was a Braxton at the church where we belonged right now, at the Mount Zion

Baptist Church. So if you go through that history you'll find Braxton's you know as part . . .

ARSENEAULT: Reverend Griffin? Was it Griffin Braxton?

EDWARDS: It may been. Like I said I didn't . . . I didn't know him. And I guess I was just one of them little wild kids you know. I like to have fun, whatever. But I didn't get to know them. Like I said, he was before I was born. But I never really got into like family history and all like this so. Matter of fact Kim's mom, been knowing her for years. Butch Lemelle her brother . . . Today was the first day that I put it together that they were brother and sister. And I just brought it up to them just now. After all these years of knowing them. I been knowing them all my life, but to know that they're brother and sister that's new to me . . . Finally putting it all together. So on that part of it I was . . . Other than having fun with sports and swimming and all that there's . . . We never really talked about family trees and all like this.

ARSENEAULT: Who were some of the Braxton's you played with? I'm just curious.

EDWARDS: [04:38] [Darnell?] he was around my age and he passed away right after high school. He was closest to my age, and they had James which is one of his older brothers. He would deal with my older brothers like Kenney and Sunny. Well McKeever Junior . . . But it was five of us. Darnell . . . he was the only one that was pretty . . . Around my age. His sisters and all were older and younger, so I never got a chance to know too much about the sisters and all. But they were a pretty nice sized family. We was about that same in number in the family. They might have had maybe . . . Maybe two or three more siblings than what we had in ours. It was

eight of us, and if I'm not mistaken they had like eleven or twelve in their family.

ARSENEAULT: And what are all of your sibling's names? In order?

EDWARDS: [05:55] In order my siblings: Ester, Brenda . . . Brenda passed away in ninety-two. McKeever Junior, Kenny . . . Everybody called him Kenny boy. And myself. Cathy, Miranda, and Melissa. It was eight of us. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Did y'all all play sports?

EDWARDS: The boys, yes. Cathy, the one next to me, younger than me, she played tennis. Yeah. So pretty much yeah that's about it. About four of us total that played the sports.

ARSENEAULT: What kind of . . . What kind of things did y'all play?

EDWARDS: Mostly football. Football, baseball, ran track. Myself and McKeever Junior. We both ran track. Basketball . . . And that's pretty much it. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: [07:12] Did you win any awards?

EDWARDS: I don't think I did. It's kind of far back right now. Scoring titles . . . I think I won one of those. I was in competition with a young man around that time. He was a LaDoux from Sulphur [Louisiana]. Of course we were in a different category. He would play for Sulphur

High and I would play for single A School. But he and I were . . . I guess you could say in competition during the years as far as who's running the most touchdowns, or they give it to us every week as how many touchdowns we had collectively and all this. And that was all that comes to mind right there. But as far as Heisman trophies or anything like that, no. No awards; nothing like that.

ARSENEAULT: What about your brothers?

EDWARDS: [08:24] Pretty much the same. Nothing I can think of as . . . that really stands out none other than individual little accomplishments. Nothing to broadcast or anything like that.

ARSENEAULT: I think I saw an article in the paper from like 1964. It was for McKeever Edwards getting some kind of scoring something or other?

EDWARDS: Yes.

ARSENEAULT: I didn't know what it . . . I was like maybe he's related? I'm not sure.

EDWARDS: Yeah that's my brother. Matter of fact I was trying to think . . . He graduated from high school in sixty-five. So it must have been his junior year. They must have did a state championship or something like that. Yeah. That's . . . We called him Sunny but his name McKeever Junior. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: [09:22] I wanted to ask just . . .

EDWARDS: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: I just to make sure I was like this is . . . I know you said your dad's name was McKeever.

EDWARDS: Right.

ARSENEAULT: I was like it can't be his dad, because it was 1964.

EDWARDS: [09:30] Right.

ARSENEAULT: So it must be either a cousin or brother or something.

EDWARDS: Right. Now don't get me wrong, now. My dad finished night school in '65 if I'm not mistaken. He and my oldest brother McKeever Junior graduated high school the same year. Yeah. He graduated from night school, and of course my brother graduated from school.

ARSENEAULT: Where was he going to night school?

EDWARDS: [09:58] At Mossville. Here.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

EDWARDS: Yeah. They had a set up. He went to night school here. They graduated. I think they marched down the aisle together.

ARSENEAULT: That'd be a great picture to get.

EDWARDS: Yes.

ARSENEAULT: [10:08] Get a picture of that scanned in.

EDWARDS: Yes, if I . . . Don't get me wrong we may have one but I would have to . . . We would have to dig through . . .

ARSENEAULT: Right.

EDWARDS: All the stuff we have at the house. And I'm pretty sure, because Mom was real good at keeping pictures . . . Getting photographs from whoever, somebody. And my dad too. Now he loved taking pictures. He introduced me to cameras. Yeah so . . . Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: What kind of camera would he use?

EDWARDS: [10:39] I started off with a Polaroid. I don't even know if you remember

them. Oh okay! Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: It's hard to find them . . . Those now.

EDWARDS: Oh yeah, it's just a real snapshot. Wait tear it off . . . Shake and wait for it, yeah. Now my dad he always had . . . Oh, shoot. It was just a regular cameras like that. Like a thirty-five millimeter or something like that. Yeah that what he would . . . he was . . . Like I say better. He was into it. That was my dad whenever he got into something he got into it heavy. He did it just like his reading; he got his own library . . . cameras. I mean he just went all out of the way with them. His dress . . . I'm thinking like maybe twice, three times a year he would buy a suit and a pair of shoes to match. I mean he was . . . He just got into things like that. And I just got into sports. Yes, but he was pretty cool.

ARSENEAULT: [11:59] What was it like being a pastor's child?

EDWARDS: To me it was fun . . . Entertaining because I would follow him everywhere he would go. Like on Sundays whenever he would go preach I would follow him as far as Vinton, Jennings, [cities in Louisiana] and surrounding areas Lake Charles [Louisiana] and all that. He pretty much was kind of like my idol. We got along real good and got a chance to meet a lot of folks. I guess that's why my personality is like it is because he exposed me to people and I really got in to that. Even today I'm the same way. That's about all I can say about that. But it was fun. Real experiencing . . . I had a good time shall I say growing with him. And of course between each ride there was always a conversation he kept me with my mind open towards

things. That's why I don't jump to harsh decisions . . . I don't make quick decisions or anything like that. Pretty much very patient.

ARSENEAULT: Where did he preach?

EDWARDS: [13:35] I know it was Saint James Baptist Church. That was in Vinton. I don't know the . . . Remember the name of the church in Jennings. Evergreen Baptist Church in Lake Charles. But I think the only church that he pastored at was in Vinton. And he was like, I guess you could say like a fill-in pastor at Evergreen in Lake Charles. He wasn't the appointed pastor or anything like that; he wasn't voted in or anything like that. He just . . . When the regular pastor couldn't be there or was sick or whatever, he would go and fill-in.

ARSENEAULT: Did he ever tell y'all about how he got his calling? Or when?

EDWARDS: [14:39] He may have, to be honest with you, but I couldn't tell you. I don't think it was something that was interesting to me at that particular time. Because we . . . Before he became a minister every Sunday morning we would have a prayer at the house before we even went to Sunday school or went to church. So that was just a routine for us. Come to think of it . . . Now that I'm thinking about it I always thought he was a minister. But I know he got his calling like . . . I think it was like '62. 1962 or '63 or something like that. Yeah but shoot think about it right now . . . I'm thinking he always was a minister. Yeah but that's all I knew him from. Like I say religion's been in our household even when we were small we would have prayer every Sunday morning before we went to Sunday school.

ARSENEAULT: What is Sunday school?

EDWARDS: [15:52] That's where you go and . . . It's like a Bible study. You go in and have a devotion. You have Sunday school class where you have teachers; they teach us the Bible. Then after the lessons we give high points as to what we learned for that day. And that's right before the regular 11 AM services started and that was every Sunday we'd go through that. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Were you expected to behave any differently because you were . . . Your dad was . . . ?

EDWARDS: Oh of course [laughs].

ARSENEAULT: How were you expected to behave around adults and . . . ?

EDWARDS: [16:36] You're supposed to be . . . You not supposed to even be heard of unless spoken to. So yeah we were well mannered; behaved. We didn't give no trouble, no nothing. We just did what we were supposed to do and that was it and that was the norm. And otherwise we would really get it if not mainly from him, but Mom would see to it. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Who did . . . Who took care of the discipline in the family?

EDWARDS: They both did. Once my mom would chastise us whatever, she leaves it

open for Dad when he got home from work. He heard about it, and if he felt that disciplinary action should be taken on his part also, he would do that. But yeah they both shared with it.

Yeah, I can tell you plenty of stories about them. Don't get me wrong, I was a mischievous child; yes, I got my share. Yes indeed. I guess today you would call it abuse.

ARSENEAULT: What kind of things would you do to get in trouble?

EDWARDS: [18:07] My big thing was throwing. I'd pick up rocks and throw . . . Bust windows on cars. Me and my brother Kenney we would war especially when they come and grade the roads. We used to have these shells and when you throw them they go off straight they'll rise and curve or something like that. So we would take and war against each other. We'd be like maybe fifty yards from each other in ditches or whatever and behind trees. But we take our collection and throw it and we'd try to time it to where we'd know he going to peep out and throw, so we would throw those shells like I was telling you about. And you can tell which one is going to go low and come up and curve. So we time it. Yes. Very mischievous. We used to have a lot of fun. And when they find out about that yes they would, "Come on in." And you know you're in trouble when they call you, "Barry Wayne. Come on in here it's your turn!" [laughs].

ARSENAULT: They just lined y'all up?

EDWARDS: [19:36] Yes. Yes. But it was . . . Like I said, to us it was sort of like fun. Even catching a spanking you knew you did something wrong and you sorry for it but that was just part of growing up. You kind of like look forward to a spanking because I guess we don't

know that we could never do everything right or all things right so we expect you know what we weren't sure of, "Well yeah we probably get a spanking for this but we try it anyway." Yes.

ARSENEAULT: What other kinds of things would y'all do for fun?

EDWARDS: Well we had a little games. This was before I got into girls or whatever. We used to like marbles; used to play marbles. We had spinning tops. I don't know if y'all are familiar with them? Yeah. Yeah, yeah. You take them tie them up on a string and yeah . . . We used to play that. We would get together as neighborhoods like where you are right now, this would be the east side of Mossville. Okay, on the other side of Prater Road where I grew up, that was the west side. And we would meet up on the weekends . . . Yeah right behind here where the park is. Before they had baseball we used to play football in that little park. And we used to meet there . . . Call it sandlot football and just play football. The east against the west.

ARSENEAULT: Who would win?

EDWARDS: [21:27] I'm going to say this side we usually win, because they had the bigger guys. Like, matter of fact right across this street almost here had the family called the [Dellafosses?] and they were some big guys. All of them. Even the baby . . . The one younger than me was about ten [feet] two [inches]. Weighed about five-hundred pounds. [laughs]

So every time they would come out you'd say, "Oh Lord" you know. But we never stopped playing; we played our hearts out. But they would pretty much win the majority of the times. Now unless the Dellafosse boys went on a trip or something, then they couldn't make it,

then we'd have a lot of fun. Matter of fact one of the other guys I was talking to Payne. Yeah Blackie . . . That's what we called him, Eddie. I don't know what y'all call him, but he was here earlier.

ARSENEAULT: Oh Mr. Joseph Payne?

EDWARDS: [22:28] Yeah. Joseph.

ARSENEAULT: Yeah.

EDWARDS: And he and his brothers . . . He has quite a few brothers too. Yeah, and there was another group. See all of them was on the same teams. See we didn't have that many but we had a lot of people, but we didn't have nobody big. All ours was mixed around speed and we did pretty good. We kind of like have our own . . . But that was some of the things we did to pass our times.

We did a lot of swimming at the swimming pool right here. I think that was the thing to do. Our biggest pastime would be swimming, because everybody got involved. The lifeguards and the director over the swimming pool and all. They used to set it up to where we'd have swim meets and stuff like this. At that time lifeguards taught swimming. You didn't have to go get certified at the Red Cross or anything like that. Well the lifeguards had to get certified but they didn't have to get certified to teach swimming so we learned . . . The basic crawl swim stroke was the American crawl. So everybody learned that and . . .

ARENSEAULT: [23:53] Is that like a breaststroke?

EDWARDS: It was just stroke over hand. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Okay. Yeah.

EDWARDS: And after we learned that we picked up . . . I guess you could say on our own breaststroke, backstroke, stuff like that. But at the age of six years old you could figure I was swimming. And say I was just starting school and we were swimming . . . Diving off the boards. And that's why I say on my Braxton's when I was early Darnell he and I were like I said around the same age, but we were one of the first two at the age of fifteen that became lifeguards at the pool here. And he could dive so he would teach me diving. And of course he could swim. I mean fast competition style. So and then he knew that I could swim so we would go on these swim meets together in DeRidder, DeQuincy [Louisiana cities]. And I guess you can say that's pretty much it.

But we had . . . Riding bicycles was another one. Swimming and riding bicycles. The sports that we had like I said, it was mainly football. And after school they had recreation league were we played you baseball; had uniforms and everything. And by that time fifteen, sixteen years old would take a little nip every once and a while [laughs]. So that would be the fun . . . You get in there and try to hit the ball.

ARSENEAULT: Can't even make it to the plate.

EDWARDS: [25:50] Now we didn't get wasted. Just having a little . . .

ARSENEAULT: Okay. What was it? What were y'all drinking?

EDWARDS: [25:56] Wine. Morgan . . . No, not Morgan David. MD 20/20. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Never heard of it.

EDWARDS: I don't even think they make it any more. And then we used to drink Tokay, I don't think they make that anymore. Swiss-up. Yeah that's pretty much . . . Yeah. But we would have us a little taste especially before going to play baseball. Yeah. And we . . .

ARSENEAULT: Did they play football here at the Rigmaiden Center?

EDWARDS: [26:38] Once they closed the school, yes. Joseph Payne, his brother, we call him Sunny. He had a team here. It was like a little league team. They played right out here in the back. But by that time I had . . . I was either in Houston [Texas] for work . . . Yeah I'm thinking I was in Houston. Houston or Port Arthur. But I never got involved with extracurricular like that for you know with kids and all.

ARSENEAULT: I wanted to ask you about . . . You said you served in the air force?

EDWARDS: Yeah. Yes.

ARSENAULT: I wanted to ask you the year for that.

EDWARDS: [27:37] December the seventh 1970 through November twenty-fifth, 1974.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

EDWARDS: Yes.

ARSENEAULT: What do you remember about boot camp?

EDWARDS: [28:04] It was . . . I guess you could say . . .

ARSENEAULT: Where was it?

EDWARDS: In San Antonio, Texas.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

EDWARDS: [28:10] Yeah I was in the air force. It was strange. I was . . . It was myself and two other blacks was in this squadron of about sixty people. That was . . . I guess you could say that was the biggest shock that I had. Of course my sports and what I could do, especially in basic training, I mean I could run a distance. I could pretty much pass any kind of physical

fitness programs they put you through. All of that was . . . It was like fun. I really had a real good time in basic training. It was like fun; It was like P.E. [Physical Education] [laughs]

ARSENEAULT: What kind of things did they have you do?

EDWARDS: [29:13] Pretty much the basics. Actually, besides physical you had to register with a weapon. I almost achieved expert. Then you had your classes depending on which field you were in. I was in security police. That's where I went through most of my training. Then you're pretty much doing what a cop would do except for guarding airplanes. In basic training walking around with a toy gun patrolling I guess you could say I call that some kind of duty. Guard duty? Yeah. That's what our guard duty was. Looking over planes and stuff like that.

But boot camp was . . . I guess you could say it was fun. I mean then you look at it as a job. They'll be looking at you to wonder, "Can I depend on this guy?" They always knew they could depend on me, "He's going be at that goddamn plane. He's not going to take a break and go see his girlfriend without telling somebody or anything like that. He's going to be doing what he's supposed to do. And when it's time for him to knock-off he'll knock-off. But if you still need him he'll be there." I guess I got that from growing up around home. Yeah. But like I said it was fun.

ARSENEAULT: Did you get stationed anywhere out of the United States?

EDWARDS: [30:55] Yes. That was real interesting since you said that . . . My first place of duty was Barksdale air force Base in Shreveport [Louisiana], or Bossier City [Louisiana]. And I served there . . . That was my permanent station. So they usually send us

temporary duty status. I was there for about five months then they sent me TDY they called it. Temporary duty to the Philippine Islands. Stayed there three months. Then from there they sent me to Taiwan. Stayed there a few months then they sent me to Okinawa [Japan]. Stayed there a few months then back to Shreveport. Stayed there about a year then they sent me permanent station to the Philippine Islands and that's where I ended up. Then I did about fifteen months there and by the time of my separation from there, it was time for me to get out of the military. Yeah but . . .

ARSENEAULT: What base was it?

EDWARDS: [32:05] Clark Air Force Base. That was in the Philippines. Kadena [Air Base] was in Okinawa. I can't think of the one in Taiwan for nothing, but I was just there for a couple of months. Yeah that was it.

ARSENEAULT: What was your M.O.S. [Military Occupation Specialty]?

EDWARDS: Administrative specialist. I didn't pursue . . . I guess after I grew up a little bit I didn't think guarding airplanes was something I really wanted to do so I went in as an administrative specialist. What they call a seven-oh-two. It's just like human resources, like that. And then I also qualified under that same M.O.S. as a postal clerk. So that's where I finished up my time in the Philippines. I was postal clerk; just did the mail.

ARSENEAULT: Did you get to travel at all when you were there?

EDWARDS: [33:21] While I was in the Philippines?

ARSENEAULT: [Agrees].

EDWARDS: I went to Subic Bay once. And I went to Manilla once. And bachelor on
leave . . . We had fun and that's all I want to say about that. That's all I need to say about that.
[laughs]

ARSENEAULT: Fair enough. My brother's in the army. I understand.

EDWARDS: Right yeah. That's right. He'll be able to tell you if he . . .

ARSENEAULT: Yes.

EDWARDS: If he felt the need to.

ARSENEAULT: Right.

EDWARDS: [34:01] Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: So any vivid memories of your time in the air force? Anything stand out?

EDWARDS: No.

ARSENEAULT: That you want to share.

EDWARDS: [34:09] No. I know that for a fact. Oh I guess you could say that's where I first learned prejudice. I was in Biloxi . . . I was in Bossier City at Barksdale air force Base. And the field that I was in, in my class, I think they had maybe about two or three blacks, and the rest were white. And so I . . . My friends became white folks. And we were downtown Shreveport going to clubs and went to this first club we walked in the bar they met us at the door, "You guys can come in but you, you can't go in." They wanted to start a fight. I said, "No man. Let's just go somewhere else." Went there . . . Somewhere else and the same thing happened. So by that time I was frustrated and, "Man, just take me back to the base and y'all go party." And did that. So while I was in my room . . . Edwin Edwards, he was congressman then, and I sit and I wrote him a letter explaining what had happened. Shipped it off to him and he responded. And he sent guys from the Pentagon to the base.

[35:59] And when they came in the building you could hear down the hall, I was in the supply section, you can hear down the hall, "Squadron, attention!" indoors and everything and I . . . They hadn't gotten to my place just yet so I'm fiddling around trying to get set up and you can hear them saying, "We're looking for [Airman?] Edwards." I said, "Oh shoot." So they're looking for me. So I hurried and got around to my desk so when they came into my section . . . Call us attention. Guy came right over started talking to me and he said, "You Airman Edwards?" He said, "Anything . . . We need you to do something." They had me to go and talk to my commander. Tell him the story and to see what he did, what he's going to do. So he said he'll check back with me in a couple of weeks. No man . . . His own word.

Guy from Pentagon came back a couple of weeks say anything you want to say different

than the statement that I gave as to how I was treated and what my commander did for me. I said, "No everything happened just like it was supposed to. My commander he told me like I shouldn't have been there. Talk to me like father to son. "Ah son, you shouldn't have been going to places like this," stuff like this. And next thing we knew they sent him out to another base. The places that we visited downtown they marked them off limits to military personnel. And then when I got back on the base . . . And I felt so bad for that.

[38:01] On my duty section and in my squadron they used to ask me to do chores. And I felt so bad on that because you're given orders . . . I'm in the military you treat me just like you treat . . . You don't come ask me, "You think you can cut the yard today? You think you can wash dishes? You think you can go on K.P. duty or whatever?" They would ask me before they would . . . And I just felt bad. I started drinking and puffing, stuff like that and I guess you could say that's where I really got introduced to doing some type of drugs. I felt alienated. I felt alone. That's the only thing that stands out. And I couldn't wait for my three years to finish up so I could get out and start my life all over again. Which I had to do.

ARSENEAULT: You just wanted to be treated like everybody else?

EDWARDS: Yes. I don't want no special treatment. No, not even. I can see them putting the places that we went you know off limits to military personnel because it could have been a different type of incident. We could have went in there and fight broke out. Somebody get killed or whatever. I can see them putting it off limits like that. But to come and ask me to do something that I'm supposed to be doing? No. So that favoritism stuff, I don't like that. No.

ARSENEAULT: [39:47] What do you remember about integration?

EDWARDS: What about it?

ARSENEAULT: Where you still in school when that happened in Mossville?

EDWARDS: No. My class was the last class . . .

ARSENEAULT: That's right. That's right you told me that.

EDWARDS: Yes. Yes, the last class.

ARSENEAULT: [40:06] So you never got to experience that until you left?

EDWARDS: Went to the military.

ARSENEAULT: I understand. Okay.

EDWARDS: Yeah. Matter of fact I went . . . Before I went in the military I did a year at Southern University in Baton Rouge. And it's just around all blacks.

ARSENEAULT: Yeah.

EDWARDS: [40:20] Yeah. Yes.

ARSENEAULT: Wow.

EDWARDS: Yes, and like I said that was something new to me very much, or I just didn't never noticed it.

ARSENEAULT: Did anything else kind of shock you about being around so many white people?

EDWARDS: [40:44] There was . . . I never really said it, but I guess coming back talking before they . . . People just like me. [laughs] They just like me, you know? Like I said, when I was in the military majority of my friends were white folks. I guess because of the . . . My branch of the military I was in, for one; the section of my duty AFC that's not appealing to you know black folks. Which my . . . I guess I scored high enough to be put in something else than regular where they would put blacks or whatever.

But a lot of folks . . . Even my roommate was white and shoot we had a ball. Tell you y'all can drink more than me. I can do a little drinking but those jokers drink a lot. And one of them was country western so, "Yee-haw!" [laughs] That was one his main little phrases. Yeah but it was very, very, very interesting. Matter of fact when I got out of the military and got different jobs around, which was no problem, I always had to decide to re-enlist again. But . . . And after about not a good six months out I landed a job with a company that I retired from just about six years ago. And . . .

ARSENEAULT: [42:58] Firestone [Tire and Rubber Company]?

EDWARDS: Yeah. How did you know?

ARSENEAULT: You mentioned it last time.

EDWARDS: [43:01] Okay. She's sharp. Yes.

ARSENEAULT: It's all coming back.

EDWARDS: Okay. Yeah. So it was a lot of fun. Like I said my sixty-four years here have been most rewarding. No complaints. No nothing. And y'all giving me the chance to look back and bring out things that I never really would have thought about and see now that I'm thankful. I'm very thankful for the way I was brought up. For . . . Like I said these folks right in here. Kim's mom and . . .

ARSENEAULT: Ms. Julia?

EDWARDS: [43:41] Yeah and her brother. I just . . . And we're related. And today was the first day that I put it together, "Hey they brother and sister." So I mean it's been a learning thing for me. You just don't know . . . I be glad when y'all say y'all coming by. Besides the good eating . . .

ARSENEAULT: Of course.

EDWARDS: Yes.

ARSENEAULT: [44:05] Well we're at forty-five minutes. Is it okay if we stop now and I'll come back?

EDWARDS: Oh . . .

ARSENEAULT: Unless you want to keep going I can keep asking questions if you want. It's up to you?

EDWARDS: Let's call it. Save it for the next time.

ARSENEAULT: Okay. Alright, because you see all the questions I have. I have a bunch to ask you so . . .

EDWARDS: Well here? In here? Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

EDWARDS: Yeah we'll do it for next time.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

EDWARDS: [44:32] And trust me good Lord says the same thing, “I will be back again.” I enjoy this. And I was just joking about the . . . Just the eating. No . . .

ARSENEAULT: Of course. Yeah.

EDWARDS: I enjoy you guys.

ARSENEAULT: That's just a bonus.

EDWARDS: Yes. You're right. You're right. I like that.

ARSENEAULT: Well thank you so much for talking with us today and I'll be in touch with you for your follow up interview.

EDWARDS: You got it.

ARSENEAULT: Sounds good.

[44:56]

[End Tape 4521. End Session II.]