

Richard L. Lee: Yes. That was one of the things that we did during night. We'd go to revival meetings certain times a year. The same as they do here, they have different revivals weeks. All down through the years, that have been the tradition, I say, of the Afro-American people. I would say just tradition of these revival meetings and these prayer service on certain days.

Richard L. Lee: My days now is Thursday for the prayer service and Bible study and whatnot. But at that time, you have to walk everywhere you were trying—now we have transportation. There's a lot different. Situation's a lot different.

Richard L. Lee: I think a lot depends on today is what the person would want to make out of themselves because there's a lot more opportunities that I didn't have any opportunity to do what the youngsters today, they have the opportunity to do things that they could make them their lives better. Because if some of them are not taking advantage of the opportunities they have, but during those days we didn't have any opportunities. You had to make do with whatever you would get.

Rhonda Mawhood: How did the two of you, if this isn't too personal, make your lives better? What did you do?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Well—

Rhonda Mawhood: You have a very nice house and you're back here in North Carolina now, and I'm just wondering what you did.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Everything we did together. It wasn't ever his or mine, it was ours. It was work when we paid our bills, tried to save money to use that when we had what we wanted or what we want to do. We liked to travel, we did that, and I guess you have to have just understand each other and get along. Maybe everything falls into place. I hope so.

Richard L. Lee: Well, she was talking about during those days.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Well, no, we can't go to those things.

Richard L. Lee: She said, "what did we do to make our lives better?"

Katherine Bethea Lee: For today.

Richard L. Lee: She's not talking about today.

Katherine Bethea Lee: I mean up to today.

Rhonda Mawhood: Up to today, anytime. I'm wondering what you did, how you—

Richard L. Lee: Well—

Rhonda Mawhood: —got along, made something better?

Richard L. Lee: Well, it was a little bit different when you came up, you left the South and came up here. You could get a decent, not all the time a decent job but you could make money. Wasn't no money down there at that time, see.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Well, when he came out of the service, he went to the phone company in New Jersey to get a job, he was 27 years old. They told him he was too old. If he had just [indistinct 00:03:54] across the river and came to New York, he could have got a job. But he didn't think of that at that time.

Richard L. Lee: But it shouldn't have been like it at that time.

Katherine Bethea Lee: It shouldn't have been that way. Now, they were hiring in New York but they wasn't hiring in New Jersey, and he lived like less than 10 miles from the tunnel and maybe a mile in, there was the phone company, so say 11 miles he could have traveled a day.

Katherine Bethea Lee: I had a cousin in Detroit. She went to the phone company and she couldn't get a job. She came to New York, she got a job. She went back in two years and broke the [indistinct 00:04:34]. But they made her sit for a whole week. They wouldn't even give her a job. So she would call her boss in New York and he told her, "Sit there until they give you a job. You're going to get paid because you qualified for the job."

Katherine Bethea Lee: So one day someone showed up who was high up I guess in the phone company and he tried to try her out to see what she knew. And everything he tried her out on, she could do it. So maybe put her on to be in an operator and she had a very pleasant voice, a very nice educated lady. She worked there until she decided to come back, and then she went into the post office and you know.

Katherine Bethea Lee: But things was hard to move up, even in the northern states. They used discriminatory techniques to keep you back. If you didn't know it or you didn't feel it, you know it was there. It was always there.

Katherine Bethea Lee: One thing I hate to say so, it was in the education. If you ask questions and it wasn't what they wanted you to talk about, they never wanted to talk about when we had Black History Week, they didn't ever wanted to talk about but a few people in slavery, and I would rebel against it. They didn't like that, because I would bring different books with me and they didn't enjoy that very much either.

Rhonda Mawhood: Were your teachers African American or White?

Katherine Bethea Lee: No, they was all Jewish.

Rhonda Mawhood: They were Jewish.

Katherine Bethea Lee: All Jewish, at that time, which is now, the top echelon in New York is all Jewish, the principles and everything are mostly Jewish. There is some Blacks here but mostly, the majority of them are still Jewish. The education system has always been running in New York since I knew of by the Jewish.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mr. Lee, I'd like to ask you a little bit, since you mentioned it earlier, about your time in the service. You were mentioning, you said that there were Black soldiers and White officers. Can you tell me a little bit about what you did and what it was like?

Richard L. Lee: Well, I was, a lines for a telephone. They taught us the line work for communication, because they started open wire, the open wire on telephone poles and whatnot. That's what I did when I was in the service in New Guinea, Philippines. But that's all I had when I was in the service for [indistinct 00:07:35], telephone and communication and whatnot. We had to strain water for the Air force. But that was taught to us after I went into the service, because before I went in the service, I was working a dry cleaning shop in Preston.

Rhonda Mawhood: In Minnesota?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, the time I was there. But people there were much different.

Rhonda Mawhood: The people in the Philippines and New Guinea, when you were there, did you meet the people who lived in the Philippines and New Guinea when you were there, sir?

Richard L. Lee: Oh you mean when I was overseas?

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm-hmm.

Richard L. Lee: Oh yeah, we met different people but it's not a lot. See, we wasn't in no city. I wasn't in no city or anything like that. When I was on New Guinea, we was on the Jones but we didn't have too much contact with the people on the island and whatnot, because they always would warn us about that. See the people on the New Guinea, most of them couldn't understand English.

Richard L. Lee: But mostly you're just able to see the natives, they would come around but you wouldn't have that much dealing. You didn't have to have that much dealing with them, because the Army had everything all laid out for you, what you supposed to do and things like that. The only time we had a chance to meet people, you go to places like Manila and places.

Richard L. Lee: I never was in Manila or a place like Manila, Luzon, places like that but in a big city. So Manila was a big city, even during that time. Some fellows went up that high. I didn't get that high. So the Army had everything all laid out for us anyway. We didn't have to do anything, just follow orders.

Rhonda Mawhood: How did the African American soldiers feel about taking orders from these White men?

Richard L. Lee: Well, we believe it or not, let me see, my commanding officer was from New York, he was from, some of them say New York. What happened, a lot of Black units was treated sort of roughly when they were by the White officers. So when they were sent overseas. when they got to the port of debarkation, they would transfer to other units. They would want to go over to one day they had to training him [indistinct 00:11:05].

Richard L. Lee: But our commanding officer, we never had that problem. We never had that kind of problem too. He went over with us all the time, because they give you a lot of ammunition when you go over there. Everybody had their rifles with them and a lot of ammunition, you know it.

Katherine Bethea Lee: We had a lot of [indistinct 00:11:52] going on.

Richard L. Lee: We had one incident where some officer—a lot of times was walking and was blown up by a grenade. A lot of them treated the fellas not so good, even in the Army. See then when they was going to be shipped overseas, they didn't want to be shipped with the ones that they had trained with, because they would know they would run into trouble when they got overseas.

Richard L. Lee: But it was all the same. When you came back, you couldn't get a job. You spent your young life, your young days over there and spent, let's see. When I went over I was 21, spent two years in the South Pacific. Then, when you came back, let's see, Ford Motor Company was giving everyone a job, all the soldiers in Detroit. All the soldiers come, they would always make a job for us. It wasn't there all the companies doing that. But that was the parts that they had, but we still had it rough after we got back, and long after we got back, a lot of us had it rough.

Katherine Bethea Lee: I think that was a lot of the turning point too. People went over and fought for other people freedom and you came back home and you had no freedom in your own country.

Richard L. Lee: Yeah.

Katherine Bethea Lee: I think that started a lot of bitterness too. So I think that was one thing they laid up to the civil rights movement.

Richard L. Lee: Well, you say you from Canada, right?

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, sir.

Richard L. Lee: I know you read about a lot of what's happening in the United States, didn't you?

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, yes.

Richard L. Lee: Now, how's the situation in Canada?

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, excuse me, a pretty small proportion of the Canadian population is not White, about 10%. That includes Native Canadians, Black Canadians, African Canadians, people of Asian background and so forth, so it's a little smaller—

Katherine Bethea Lee: So they lump everybody together?

Rhonda Mawhood: Sometimes, yes. So it's a pretty White country. But in our cities there are definitely, Montreal for example, has—

Katherine Bethea Lee: A lot of problems.

Rhonda Mawhood: Has a lot of problems, yes. It has several African Canadian communities. There's a group of people who are from the Caribbean, many of whom have been there since the 1920s, so a long time, longer than my family. That's only since 1940 that they've been there. There are new African immigrants from since 1980s, community of about 5,000 people, French speaking, from Africa. There's a Haitian community so they speak French. That's since the 1970s.

Rhonda Mawhood: There are a lot of problems, especially in the last few years. White supremacist groups have been growing and groups to fight them have been growing as well so both sides. Native Canadians are starting to fight a lot now for their rights for self government, and there are a lot of White Canadians who are very racist against them. But there are some White Canadians who support them.

Rhonda Mawhood: There are also there are young African Canadians who are starting to speak out a lot now too. There are organizations, people who protest, for example, police brutality. There are quite a number of shootings of young Black men in the cities in Canada. We don't have murders on the same rate at all as the United States. But still, if someone gets killed by police in Canada, it is most often an African Canadian man or a Native man or woman.

Katherine Bethea Lee: This would be the Indians and the Eskimos?

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, ma'am, and so there are a lot of problems and some of us are trying to fight that. But there are a lot of problems. In Montreal and Toronto and Vancouver are cities that are very multicultural and very diverse, and so that's very good in some ways. But there are some people still who don't want it to be multicultural and diverse and so they create problems.

Rhonda Mawhood: But then there are other areas of the country that are still pretty White and a lot of

people like it that way. There's a very old African Canadian community in Nova Scotia and the Maritimes, which I didn't mention, descendants of people who were enslaved—

Katherine Bethea Lee: Enslaved [indistinct 00:17:05].

Rhonda Mawhood: —who managed to escape and also people who fought for the British during the American Revolution. So they fought against the American Revolution because the British said they would get freedom and they did and they went there and got land, mostly in Nova Scotia and in Ontario. So they're one of the older communities in Canada for sure.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Oh, where did your family come from?

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, I said my family, my mother's family is from Scotland. They were farmworkers in Scotland, and my mother moved when she was six years old with her family to Canada, because my grandfather thought he could get a better job there. It was a bit better. He was still a farmworker in Canada, didn't own land but worked for other people. Then my father's family were originally from France, but that was 300 years ago and they moved over to Canada when it was still a French colony.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Colony.

Rhonda Mawhood: And just stayed there, and so I grew up in a family that was English and French, bicultural.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Well, that's what Canada ended up mostly being anyway, those two groups. I think now we having trouble all over the world. I don't think it's just one country. Germany is having problems, [indistinct 00:18:32] problems now.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Ireland I guess will go on forever with their problem. So everybody has problems but we all going have to learn that we are living in one small world together, and we're going to have to learn how to get along, be what color you are, what nationality. And I think when God made the world, he had a beautiful mosaic they called a flower God and we are not all the same colors. Even a White race, you can't look, they are not all the same color. They're different. Now, we have to stop and think, He must have wanted us this way since He made us this way.

Katherine Bethea Lee: My husband didn't tell you another thing. He worked for the Navy for a while and he did a lot of field work for them. Traveled all over the country. He went to Italy for them and set up some equipment there.

Rhonda Mawhood: And when was that?

Richard L. Lee: Well, that was in '68 and '69.

Katherine Bethea Lee: What'd you do over there? She's waiting for you, what'd you do over there when you went to Italy?

Richard L. Lee: Well, I was working for the Federal Pacific Electric coming out of Newark at that time, and I was doing a few service work for them on the guided missile ships. They built the switchboard for the system and then they sent people over to service something and I spent, let's see, I spent part of 68 and part of 69 in near Italy. Oh I forgot about that.

Rhonda Mawhood: That's pretty different from living in the United States I think.

Richard L. Lee: The people are a lot different there thought. Just imagine, I was in Naples and everybody's speaking Italian and just imagine you be going for days and days, I don't have nobody to speak to because that was—

Katherine Bethea Lee: Definitely. You know enough to get you some pasta though. I mean they get you some spaghetti.

Richard L. Lee: But it was a naval base there. But we was in the city of Castellammare, I can't pronounce it now anyway.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Castellammare.

Richard L. Lee: And the base was in Naples, that's where the base was, in Naples, and the ships was in down Castellammare, that's where it was by Mount Vesuvius. You heard talking about Vesuvius, whatever, it was close to that. There's another, oh boy, I can't even think of it now. But anyway, that was a pleasant experience. People over there was different. I was treated well over there. I mean there in those days and I don't know how everything is know how it would be today.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Most of the people you knew there now is in Australia.

Richard L. Lee: Hmm?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Most of the people you know now, they went to Australia to do their business. Isn't that where Charlene go to visit those people?

Richard L. Lee: Oh yeah. Well, a lot of people that I know that went to Australia, but that's just only a handful that's over there. I was just talking about the people in general that when I was there, they treated you well anyway in Italy.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Would you like something cold to drink?

Rhonda Mawhood: If you have something, that would be lovely.

Katherine Bethea Lee: I have some lemonade.

Rhonda Mawhood: I don't want to keep you too much longer, but I wanted to ask you a couple more questions, Mrs. Lee.

Richard L. Lee: Go ahead.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'll wait until Mrs. Lee comes back.

Katherine Bethea Lee: No, go ahead and talk.

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, what I was going to ask you together, but I can ask you and then I can ask Mrs. Lee, I was going to ask how you met.

Richard L. Lee: We met after I came back from Italy, and it was '70, '70 we met, in '70. Well, she was living in Queens, New York, and I had a cousin that lived over there and that's where we met over there. But I was divorced, I stayed married for 16 years. My wife left me, so I didn't get married no more until seven years later until I could find somebody that's suitable. But a lot of things happen that you don't intend to happen.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you very much, Mrs. Lee.

Katherine Bethea Lee: You want something, hon?

Richard L. Lee: No, thank you. She was asking how we met.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Have you told her?

Richard L. Lee: I told we met in '70. Was it '70?

Katherine Bethea Lee: No, we met in '69 [indistinct 00:24:44]. We met through his cousin. His cousin was a friend of my cousin. They was church members, and she came around one Sunday and they had all gone to Brooklyn. We were living in Queens then, in Hollis, Queens, and I had came back from church and she says to me, "I have a cousin, he's divorced and he's in Italy. When he come home, would you like to meet him?" I said okay.

Katherine Bethea Lee: About a month later she called me and said her cousin was up in Bath, Maine. He was working there. He was back, and would I talk to him, would I like to meet him? I said, "Well, I would talk to him," I said, "but you still would have to introduce us." So he called me and we spoke about an hour and then he said he was coming down that next week and he was going to come over, and my dog got sick.

Katherine Bethea Lee: So I took my dog to the veterinarian and he was sitting, and his cousin was sitting

there waiting for me to come home. When I came home, that's how we met, and then we started going out together. We got married two years later in '71.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you have any children?

Katherine Bethea Lee: No. We don't have any kids.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'd like to finish up by asking you how it was that you decided to come to North Carolina to live. You came last year?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Oh no.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh no. Oh, I'm sorry.

Katherine Bethea Lee: He's been here for six years. We came down to a wedding, one of my stepmother's cousins got married, and her mother asked me to please come to the wedding. He had never wanted to come South. So he hadn't been south since he left the service.

Katherine Bethea Lee: We drove down and we went to the wedding, and he liked it and we started coming back to my stepmother's place. Well, she gave us a little piece of land, and we came down when we came down one weekend, going to go and looked for some trailers and we just messed around the whole day, looked like it was late in the evening.

Katherine Bethea Lee: One of her cousins came over to his brother's house and asked us what we were going to do, and we said we're going up to Rocky Mountain to look at trailers. So he says, "I have two farms, you want to buy one?" So I says, "Where are they?" He said, "One on the road, one on the river." I said, "Let's see the road," and that's how we got down here.

Katherine Bethea Lee: We bought this place with him, and we had a lot of work to do with it. Oh, this is new. We had this put on last year. This is new and two-car garage. We had to put a roof on. The kitchen was, oh it was so bad. [indistinct 00:27:47] pictures over there. I did something with them. So we had to redo the whole place [indistinct 00:28:00]. It was so, so bad.

Rhonda Mawhood: [indistinct 00:28:08].

Katherine Bethea Lee: No problem. I [indistinct 00:28:12] in the back. See, this was very bad. So we just had a few things and we brought them in. This has a little update on it and a little more update.

Rhonda Mawhood: So you took pictures as you went along?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Yeah, and we had put another floor in there and it kicked up because the floor wasn't even, it was just a tile blocks. This is our little refrigerator we had for when we used it on weekends, and we

came down to do some work and this was another updated one, as you can see. This was a window there and we had the table sitting there, a little TV and you see our little [indistinct 00:29:02] chair. We was really roughing it, and we got the floors done and—

Rhonda Mawhood: You really changed it.

Katherine Bethea Lee: We start moving up. This was still the same kitchen before, but other things that moved in and a refrigerator. This is the view from coming back this way. We started going, I don't think it and the bedrooms start to shape up, and this is from the outside. They came. Her and her husband came down to visit. She's there from Guyana. They had never been south. She was afraid to come down. She had heard so much about the South. So she came down and then they bought some property here too so they are moving down.

Rhonda Mawhood: You converted them.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Yeah, this is a friend of ours. She is out in Iowa, must be Tina going out to visit her. He was sleeping there. He pulled me in. He was exhausted. So we just tried to make some pictures to see how it went as we—that was when the [indistinct 00:30:17] up in Newark, as we got going. But we had a lot of work to do, a lot of work.

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, it looks lovely now, so the work has paid off. But I'm sure it was a lot.

Katherine Bethea Lee: It was a lot, it was a lot to do.

Rhonda Mawhood: I brought along some forms, which we usually fill out at the end of the interview. I hope it's not too much of a problem for you. It's biographical information and family history, just some information about things like your date of birth, your parents' names, things like that. Would that be okay if you filled that out? Just to get some information about your family as well as yourself. 'll try to make it go as quickly as possible. I'll start with you, Mr. Lee.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Richard L. Lee.

Rhonda Mawhood: Richard L. Lee, and your address, I have. It's Route 1, box 16?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: And your phone number, I have, and how would you like your name to appear on the tape, Mr. Lee? How do you want to be known to the people who use the collection? Is Richard L. Lee the way you're usually known?

Richard L. Lee: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: Excuse me, could you tell me your date of birth, please, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: January the 16th, 1921.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you, and the place? It's in Alabama but—

Richard L. Lee: Yes. You want the city or the county?

Rhonda Mawhood: Either one or both, whichever you [indistinct 00:32:05]

Richard L. Lee: It's in Hale County.

Rhonda Mawhood: Hale County.

Richard L. Lee: Hale County. Hale, H-A-L-E, Hale.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Richard L. Lee: The city is Greensboro.

Rhonda Mawhood: There's a space for spouse, so I'll only have to ask this question once. What's your date of birth, please, Mrs. Lee?

Katherine Bethea Lee: 2nd, 7, 1930.

Rhonda Mawhood: Were you born in Montgomery or?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you were a registered nurse, correct?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Could you tell me your mother's name please, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: Clasia, C-L-A-S-I-E. Her maiden name's Ryans.

Rhonda Mawhood: R-I-N-D-S?

Richard L. Lee: R-Y-A-N-S.

Rhonda Mawhood: Excuse me, and do you know what year your mother was born, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: 1892.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what year did she die?

Richard L. Lee: It's a shame. What was it?

Katherine Bethea Lee: I looked in the book, I don't have it, and I was supposed to ask Snook to find out. I think it was 1975 but I'm not sure.

Richard L. Lee: She's been dead about 10 years.

Katherine Bethea Lee: More than 10 years.

Rhonda Mawhood: I can put down 1975 with a question mark. We try to get as much information as we can, but if we can't, it's not a problem.

Richard L. Lee: Well, he died.

Katherine Bethea Lee: He died, they had his funeral the same day that we got married.

Richard L. Lee: But he died before my mother passed, but he been dead 21—so it happened—

Katherine Bethea Lee: He's been dead 22 years or—

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, he's been there 22 years.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Coming up in August.

Richard L. Lee: So it's about 15 years, I think it is.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you, and where was your mother born, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: Alabama.

Rhonda Mawhood: Also in Hale County?

Richard L. Lee: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: And for your mother's occupation, what should I put down, sir?

Richard L. Lee: Housewife, farmer. What would you say?

Katherine Bethea Lee: [indistinct 00:34:44], after that, housewife.

Richard L. Lee: Housewife, farmer.

Katherine Bethea Lee: When she came to Detroit, she never worked any.

Richard L. Lee: No, she never worked at all, because my three brothers and I, we bought a place for her in Detroit after we in the service and brought her out of the South. I forgot what year. It's around '45, 1945. She came out of Alabama.

Rhonda Mawhood: And your father's name, sir?

Richard L. Lee: James Port Lee, put down James P.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what year was he born, Mr. Lee, do you know?

Richard L. Lee: I don't know.

Katherine Bethea Lee: How old was he than your mother? Remember we were talking about that?

Richard L. Lee: Oh, he was 20 years older than my mother.

Katherine Bethea Lee: He got like around 1879, I believe, 1878.

Richard L. Lee: Hmm?

Katherine Bethea Lee: So your mother born in 1892?

Richard L. Lee: 1892.

Katherine Bethea Lee: So he was born in 1872.

Rhonda Mawhood: '72.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Around in [indistinct 00:36:12]

Richard L. Lee: Wait a minute, 1872.

Katherine Bethea Lee: He was 20 years—

Richard L. Lee: '72.

Katherine Bethea Lee: '82, '92, so some place [indistinct 00:36:20].

Richard L. Lee: Well, somewhere in the neighborhood.

Rhonda Mawhood: And he died in the early '30s?

Richard L. Lee: Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: It just occurred to me. I was wondering if you knew your grandparents, Mr. Lee. Did you know your grandparents when you were growing up?

Richard L. Lee: No, I didn't know none of those.

Rhonda Mawhood: It just occurred to your father was born very soon after the end of slavery?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, yeah, probably was, and just by the end of slavery? End of slavery was '65, wasn't it? I almost forgot that.

Rhonda Mawhood: And was your father born in Hale County too, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: Let's see now, I'm not sure. Decatur County, Sumter County, probably so. Maybe not, I'm not sure.

Rhonda Mawhood: But probably and in Alabama?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, he was born in Alabama.

Rhonda Mawhood: And he was a farmer?

Richard L. Lee: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: Could you give me the names of your sisters and brothers, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah. One named James and then the other named Henry. That's my two brothers, older sister named Hattie, sister named Mattie and Annabel. Was she deceased? Annabel.

Rhonda Mawhood: And where were you in the birth order, Mr. Lee? Were you the oldest or the—

Richard L. Lee: Oh yeah, my birth order. My sister Annie was older than I am, and my brother Henry's next. Let's see, my sister Mattie was the next one.

Katherine Bethea Lee: And James and then Mattie?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, James was next and then Mattie and then Hattie was the baby.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you don't have children.

Katherine Bethea Lee: He has an adopted daughter.

Richard L. Lee: Hmm?

Katherine Bethea Lee: She said you didn't have any children. Tell her you have an adopted daughter.

Rhonda Mawhood: You have an adopted daughter?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Would you like to tell me her name to put down on the record?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Donna Marie Lee.

Richard L. Lee: Donna Marie.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you. And how old is she, Mr. Lee?

Richard L. Lee: Where's she at? She's in—

Katherine Bethea Lee: How old is she?

Richard L. Lee: When's she born?

Katherine Bethea Lee: '54.

Richard L. Lee: Born in '54, so she was born in '54, so '54, six—

Katherine Bethea Lee: She's going to be 40, then she's 39.

Richard L. Lee: She'll be 40, huh?

Rhonda Mawhood: That's right. You told me the places where you lived. So you lived in Alabama and then in Iowa and then Minnesota and then Detroit with a little stopover in the Philippines in between, and then to New Jersey and a little stopover in Italy also.

Richard L. Lee: Well, I was out there on an assignment, so I was sent there.

Rhonda Mawhood: And now you're in North Carolina. Does that cover it for the places you've lived?

Richard L. Lee: Yes, that's true of the places I lived.

Katherine Bethea Lee: You didn't get the other little island. What was its name? She got the Philippines. What other island you was in, New Guinea or whatever?

Rhonda Mawhood: It was New Guinea.

Richard L. Lee: Well, New Guinea.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'll fill that in, and do you remember the name of the school that you went to when you were growing up, Mr. Lee? Doesn't matter if you don't.

Richard L. Lee: No, uh-huh.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'll write down the place. It was in Hale County, Alabama?

Richard L. Lee: It was in Hale County, so you said [indistinct 00:41:32]. They don't know. Just say any kind of training school.

Rhonda Mawhood: Probably was something like that, and you went to grade seven there and then you said that you did two more years somewhere else?

Richard L. Lee: Yeah, I went to two more years in Minnesota, 8th and 9th. I was too old to go to school, but they let me in anyway.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'm sorry?

Richard L. Lee: I was too old to attend school, but I want to go so they said okay.

Rhonda Mawhood: Good.

Richard L. Lee: That was, the people was bad. They was nice. I was the only Afro-American in the school.

Rhonda Mawhood: Really?

Richard L. Lee: So I stood out, didn't I?

Rhonda Mawhood: I guess so.

Richard L. Lee: Like in a fly in a bowl of milk. But they were nice. Now, I don't know about the people out there now, but in the old daily days they were nice.

Katherine Bethea Lee: And the last thing I heard about them, they were having a problem with migrant workers. They were coming in and [indistinct 00:42:40].

Richard L. Lee: They've had problems in what? Minneapolis, some point in Minnesota, wasn't it? But if I would go up there now, I'm not a migrant worker. They can see I'm not a migrant worker.

Katherine Bethea Lee: You have such a big sign on your car [indistinct 00:42:53] what they accepted.

Richard L. Lee: Big sign on my car says, "I'm retired, meet me in church on Sunday." Said, "Oh, he not a migrant worker."

Rhonda Mawhood: For work history, I know that you worked in a dry, well, you farmed and then you worked in a dry cleaning shop in Minnesota, and then you went into the service and—

Richard L. Lee: Well, when I came out of service, I worked for Ford Motor Company. See, I worked for Ford Motor Company and then when I left Detroit, I came to New Jersey. I worked in dry cleaner shop in New Jersey, and then, I don't know exactly what year it was, but I started working for Federal Pacific Electric Company and a very nice White friend got that job for me.

Richard L. Lee: Then after I got laid off from there, I worked for the school system man in Newark as a security guard for a couple years. When I took the test for the job that, when I retired, I was working for the state of New Jersey as an electrician, and that's where I retired from in '86?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Mm-hmm.

Richard L. Lee: '86. I retired in '86. I've been down here since '86.

Katherine Bethea Lee: Yeah, you came down in March, I think it was.

Richard L. Lee: And now I enjoy my garden and raise the vegetables, attending church and cooking.

Rhonda Mawhood: Sounds great, lots of good things. Now, we have a section for awards and honors, and I see something lying right here.

Katherine Bethea Lee: This is one.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Richard L. Lee: What's that?

Rhonda Mawhood: An award for unselfish service, The Concerned Citizens of [indistinct 00:45:23] Tillery.

Richard L. Lee: What is it?

Katherine Bethea Lee: Lot of stuff is not, we still have packed up. I had problems with my back, so I haven't—this is when he went to [indistinct 00:45:42].

Rhonda Mawhood: Bethany Baptist Church.

Rhonda Mawhood: And the Bethany Baptist Church.

Katherine Bethea Lee: It's in Newark, New Jersey.

Rhonda Mawhood: In Newark, New Jersey.

Richard L. Lee: Newark, New Jersey.

Katherine Bethea Lee: And I think this is from the Concerned Citizen material.

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, ma'am. Sounds like a wonderful group.

Katherine Bethea Lee: It is [indistinct 00:46:50]