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Charles Aurand

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ORAL HISTORY

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Charles W. Auband  
(Signature - Interviewee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

DATE 3/18/86

Bruce A. Thompson  
(Signature - Witness)

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MARSHALL UNIVERSITY HISTORY

MUH-10

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Charles Aurand, Rev.

CONDUCTED BY: Bruce A. Thompson

DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 18, 1986

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Gina Kehali Kates



Bruce: This is Bruce Thompson, I'm interviewing Reverend/Dr. Charles Aurand. He is a part-time professor in history, and a part-time professor in religious studies as well as a minister of St. Paul's here in Huntington, that's a Lutheran church. Uh, what address is that?

Charles: 12th Avenue, 721 12th Avenue.

Bruce: 721 12th Avenue. Uh...Dr. Aurand was a student here at Marshall in the early '60's, he's a white male, he was involved in some of the Civil Rights activities that took place as related to Marshall students' during that time. And this interview is being conducted in correlation with my thesis project dealing with Black students' history here at Marshall during the first 20 years or so. Okay, the time is 12:30, we're in my office, 778-B, Smith Hall, it's lunch time, there is some background noise, I hope it doesn't come over. And ...the date is March the 18th, 1986. That's stuff I forgot to throw in earlier. Tell me where you were born.

Charles: I was born in Wheeling. (West Virginia?) West Virginia. (what year?) 1923. (1923) A long time ago.

Bruce: Who were your parents?

Charles: Charles G. Aurand and Maude F. Aurand. They were both Pennsylvanians.

Bruce: Okay. And why did you move to Wheeling?

Charles: Well, my father was a pastor and he was called to a church there, a Lutheran church there. (Lutheran?) Mmm-hmm.

Bruce: So, that explains your heritage! (laughs) (Probably) Uh...your family is Germanic?

Charles: Well, actually I'm French, the name is French. But the original auRand's, small a-u-capital R-a-n-d, you see, left France after the \_\_\_\_\_ you may remember (mmm-hmm), and so it looked pretty bad for the protestants of France, so many of them fled. And my ancestors fled to Germany. And so they were connected with the Germans from then on, and came to this country with the other German protestants, Lutherans. But originally, they were French.

Bruce: So, did they speak French, then?

Charles: They spoke French, they were French, the coat-of-arms is French, given by the French king; everything's French.

Bruce: Okay.

Charles: Once they went over in to Germany and came over to this country with the Germans, why, then of course, there began to be a lot of intermarriage and intermixture and eventually because there

was so many more Germans, why they were more known as Germans than French. But actually the line goes back to France.

Bruce: Okay. Uh...where'd you go to school in Wheeling?

Charles: Went to Wheeling High School, which is no more. You know, they put all their high schools together now up there, and the whole county goes to one school now. I think they call it Park, or Wheeling Park High School now. And then I went to Gettysburg College, then Gettysburg Seminary, and got a master's here at Marshall. (in what?) In history.

Bruce: What did you get your degree in, in Gettysburg?

Charles: Well, that would have been several degrees. That would have been theology and divinity, they call it. (This was after...?) M. Div, Master of Divinity. (before or after you came to Marshall?) After, one would have been after, and one would have been before. (Okay) You see, the post-graduate work is undergraduate, post-graduate and post-graduate, post graduate, you see what I'm getting at? (okay) So, the undergraduate vocational degree of masters divinity, and then later on an honorary doctor of divinity or sometimes you get a doctor of theology, or sometimes you can doctorate of ministry and there are all kinds of doctorates that are you know, post graduate, so to speak.

Bruce: So, what years were you here at Marshall?

Charles: As a student I was here '60 to '63 (working on your masters in history?) mmm-hmm, right.

Bruce: Okay. And how old were you then, approximately?

Charles: Well, figure it out. That would have been 37 to 40. (37 to 40).

Bruce: What was your view of black men at that time?

Charles: Well, I was born and raised in Wheeling, and I really never came across black people much because there was separations, separated schools in those days in West Virginia (mmh). So, the grade schools were separate, the high schools were separate. When I went to Gettysburg College I really didn't meet any blacks. We didn't have any blacks at college, at Gettysburg especially. Where they should have had some they didn't. Because after all, historically, Gettysburg stands for something in the civil war. They never caught on quite at Gettysburg College, so in those days there weren't blacks. But I guess I had been taught and you know, began to reason for myself, and figure out they were people just like we were, and deserved equal rights. And somehow without really coming in contact with too many black people, why I became very sympathetic for their cause. And I guess where it came to a head was in seminary, why, we had some visitors, some lectures and speakers and visitors who used to come to seminary and speak to

us, and I got to know them very well there. And then I did some summer work in Baltimore, and came across blacks very heavily in Baltimore.

Bruce: When would this have been?

Charles: This would have been '45, '45. (were you in the service?) I was signed up to go in the Navy and uh, the Navy you know, the Army and Navy had two different ways. The Army took you as a chaplain, they took you out of theological school, out of seminary, and put you into their own theological school and finished you up and made you a chaplain. The Navy said finish the theological school where you're in, then we'll take you and give you a quick 6 week course and make you a Navy chaplain. So, because of that, I signed with the Navy, so I could finish up where I was, in the school where I was. But in the interim, the war ended, in Europe, in '45, you remember, and so they immediately said well, don't bother, we don't need any more chaplains, so they canceled, so I really never got into the service per se.

Bruce: And after that you went to Baltimore?

Charles: So that, yeah, that summer I was working in Baltimore. I was running a streetcar, among other things. And I got to know a lot of blacks. Both, you know, all varieties, good and bad, like there are in all groups. But I became very sympathetic with some of their uh, their activities and of course, at that time, they were beginning to talk about sit-ins and things of that sort, even in Baltimore.

Bruce: In the late '40s?

Charles: Oh, yeah, sure. Sure. And so I uh, became sympathetic with that, got to know that side of the whole thing. And then, in '46, I went down to St. Augustine, Florida. I had a church down in St. Augustine, Florida for about a year or so. And in '46, things were beginning to come to a head in St. Augustine, '46 and '47. And uh, I got involved with some of the civil rights groups in St. Augustine, started working with some of the blacks there, some of the what you'd called liberal whites.

Bruce: What was...how was the uh, what were the groups you ...?

Charles: I don't remember their names. They were local groups, they weren't uh, you know, they weren't the national groups yet, like Southern Leadership Conference, or NAACP or .... NAACP of course, was in St. Augustine, they give us some guidance and help, but they weren't really behind these things; it was more local groups.

Bruce: What kind of things did you all do?

Charles: Oh, well, we picketed a little bit, and once or twice one of the blacks and a couple of us whites went in to restaurants

and things like that. It was really, very, very calm. You know, we got ejected once or twice and that's about it. There wasn't a long stick-to-itness. Nobody had a long stick-to-itness. But I myself saw it coming. And I think everybody did; it's not that I had any great insight. I think anybody who thought at all about it saw what was coming. And so at the end of '46 I guess it was, beginning of '47, why uh, I just decided I wasn't going to stick around St. Augustine. Cowardice I think is what you call it. (laughter) Because when something like that comes up I can't keep quiet about it, I can't keep my mouth shut. And the church I was serving was very, very anti-integration of any sort. And I could see lots of conflicts and antagonism and fights and call what you will ahead, and I just wasn't prepared for that. And I was hoping to get married and I didn't think it was fair to bring my wife into a situation like that. So I came back north again, where it was a little bit easier. (where at?) I came back to a place called Hanover, Pennsylvania. (you had a church there?) Had a church in Hanover, Pennsylvania. (Lutheran) Lutheran church.

Bruce: Well, then, did you get married?\

Charles: Well, I didn't get married as quickly as I thought I was going to. Actually, I didn't get married 'til '49. And by that time I was in Sunbury, Pennsylvania. But uh...I was in Hanover for a year or two in music, and I was a pastor, but I was also in charge of all the music for the church.

Bruce: How did Hanover stand....?

Charles: Hanover was no problem because there were no blacks in Hanover. I think we had one black family, in all of Hanover, so there was no tension particularly. Hanover was a very unique city, by the way. If we were going into the sociology of Hanover, it would be fascinating because Hanover was the place where the Roman Catholic immigration north from Baltimore, crossed the Lutheran immigration west from Philadelphia to the great valley of Virginia. And so right in there is where the two immigration lines crossed. And when I was there in the 1940's, why, Hanover was a town of about 12, 14,000, and I imagine the 12 or 13,000 of those were either Lutherans or Roman Catholics. There was no Methodist church, no Presbyterian church, no Baptist church, there was a reform church or two. You know, almost none of the other churches, except Lutheran and Roman Catholic. And the attitude was pretty bad between them. Pretty bad. (laughing)

Bruce: A little competition, unh? Well, what did you do in the '50's?

Charles: Well, incidentally, as a side \_\_\_\_\_ (okay), soon after I left St. Augustine, and I can't, you'd have to look this up. But soon after I left St. Augustine, I don't know whether you've read about this or not, why, they got into a big fuss one summer because some of the blacks whom I had known down there went to one of the motel pools and jumped in, (mmm-hmm) when some of the white guests were there, and they immediately jumped out and

called the police, and there was a big ....tension. And this went on for several days and you may remember the governor of Massachusetts' mother, I forget what her name was, but she had some noble founding, you know, puritan name, like Cabot or something or other. (yeah) Or Lodge, or whatever, went down there and jumped in the pool with the blacks and was arrested and put into jail, you know, all these things I could see were gonna happen, happened. And I probably would have been in the middle of it if I had stayed. But it was fascinating anyway. During the '50's I was in Sunbury, in the early part of the '50's I was in a place called Sunbury, Pennsylvania, and that was another Pennsylvania Dutch town with almost no blacks. I think we had maybe 2, 3 families in all of Sunbury. So there wasn't much on the local front. The only thing I was involved with then was writing the people, and sometimes writing letters, you know, to newspapers and things of that sort.

Bruce: Concerning civil rights?

Charles: Yeah, concerning civil rights.

Bruce: So this was a pet project of yours?

Charles: Yeah, sort of, sort of, you know, I wouldn't say it was the very top priority, but I was certainly fascinated by the need for some ...some people to speak out for it all the time. And then we had several blacks in our church. I would invite them to speak to our people, and we had some black musicians that came in and gave concerts and they would always stay at our house because there was no place around the community they really were comfortable with. Most of the hotels and motels wouldn't taken them. (mmm-hmm) So they stayed with us. So we got to know some blacks personally at that point, which was helpful, too. You know, on a straight basis, and not a situation where you were leaning over to help them, or any of that kind of feelings or psychology in it. It was just a straight, personal, friendly contact.

Bruce: Who did you marry, by the way?

Charles: A person called Elinore Tyson, T-y-s-o-n.

Bruce: Still married to her?

Charles: (laughing) Still married to her. Yeah, one of those. Still married to her.

Bruce: What was the position of the Lutheran church on civil rights in the '50's?

Charles: I think on the whole any public pronouncements were always pro-civil rights. Now, I can't say that that meant that the majority of the common person in the Lutheran church favored civil rights, by any means. But the public pronouncements at the church always were pro-civil rights. And toward the end of the

'50's and of course, the beginning of the '60s' especially, why, the church in convention would come out for several civil rights statements on behalf of integration and equality and so on.

Bruce: Even though most of the members were ....

Charles: ....it's a uh, it's a republican form of government in the church, just like in the United States, so what happens is, we elect delegates, and the delegates maybe in turn elect, state delegates elect delegates to a federal group or a national group. And then the national group makes the pronouncement of one sort or another. And so the national group represents ...I would suppose in most cases the uh, the cream of the crop, the intellectually, who are probably far ahead of many of the common people, and probably represents sort of a liberal leaning group, too, more than the common people in the Lutheran church.

Bruce: But there's not a whole lot of blacks in the Lutheran faith, I don't imagine.

Charles: Blacks are not very Lutheran, or Lutherans are not very black, or whatever! (laughs) Or whatever you want to put it.

Bruce: Usually, the....

Charles: The background of Lutherans are German and Scandinavian. And they have not had too much success administering or evangelizing the blacks in this country.

Bruce: Back to your personal life a little bit. Did you have any kids in the '50's?

Charles: Yeah. Yeah, in let's see, '53 we had a son, he was born in Pennsylvania (okay), Charles, different uh, middle initials, so he's not a junior; uh, '55 we had a daughter, Ann, uh, also born in Pennsylvania, and then just a jump ahead, so you don't have to catch up with it, in '63 here in Huntington, we had a second daughter. (that's the one that's getting married) She was born the day that I received my masters degree from Marshall. And I did not attend the graduation ceremony because of that. (laughs)

Bruce: I wonder why.

Charles: So that's how that happened.

Bruce: What's her name?

Charles: Her name is Susan.

Bruce: Susan, okay. Did you stay in Pennsylvania all through the '50's?

Charles: Yes, I was in Hanover a couple of years, and Sunbury for 4 or 5 years, at a place called Gallitzin out near Johnstown, Pennsylvania.



Bruce: How do you spell that?

Charles: G-a-l-l-i-t-z-i-n.

Bruce: Okay.

Charles: ....Pennsylvania for a few years, and then moved to Huntington in 1958.

Bruce: Why did you move to Huntington?

Charles: Well, uh, I guess mostly ecclesiastical, not for any other reason. We'd been in small towns up to that point. I had started out in West Virginia, sort of hoping to get back to West Virginia, and we were hoping, now that the youngsters were beginning to get...now they were 5 years old and 3 years old, and we were looking for school, and we thought maybe there would be better schools in a larger town than there were in the small communities we'd been in. The last community of Gallitzin we'd been in you'd be somewhat interested to know it was 98% Roman Catholic. And the public schools were definitely parochial schools, you know; just operated that way. And we didn't mind. We got along very well. It was an openness about it, so I never had any tension. But I just felt it might be better to bring up our youngsters in a community that was a little less Roman Catholic. And for all those reasons, and the church down here was looking for a pastor. So we got together. (St. Paul?) I came to St. Paul church. (okay) Spring of '58, so that'll be what this year? 28 years. Next month.

Bruce: That's pretty good. What made you decide to come to Marshall and pick up a history minor?

Charles: Well, I'd always been interested in history. History was one of my minors in undergraduate work. I had a double major in German and philosophy, but I had minored in history. My Dad was always interested in history, you can't stay for 7 or 8 years in Gettysburg, which is where I went to both seminary and college, without picking up some history, you know, (inaudible)...if no other reason. And that's probably where I became a civil war buff. So I just was very fascinated and an amateur on history; very fascinated by all historical things. Read an awful lot about history. And uh, when I went to seminary I majored in Christian history. So when I got to a place where Marshall was, where the university was located, although it was a college then, why, I just decided to do something about it and take a few history courses. Well, that's all I did at first. I just took a history course here and a history course there. And then the dean of Liberal Arts in those days, who was Harris, of which Harris Hall is named, (just one second) yeah....

tape begins again

Bruce: I had to stop the tape recorder for a telephone call. Okay, now, you were telling me about your history courses and the dean.

Charles: Yeah, I took a couple, and Dean Harris called me over and he said, you've just been taking a couple, what is your track? What are you going to do? And I said, nothing, I'm just taking these for my own interest. He said that's not the right way to go about things. You should have a goal. He said your goal should be a master's degree. I said, I'm really not interested in degrees, they don't mean that much to me. I said I just as soon take a course here and there. You will not work as hard, you will not learn as much, you will not get anywhere unless you are working toward a degree. I don't know... maybe the more people they had sign up for a degree, the better it was for their record. (laughing) But anyway, he talked me into it. So I signed up for a degree, and from that point on worked toward a degree. (okay) Incidentally, a Doctor Toole was head of the department and I don't know whether you've heard of Dr. Toole (oh, yeah), yeah, well..famous name around here for many years. And uh, Dr. Moffat, one of his assistants at that time, one of the assisting professors. And uh, Heath, Dr. Heath, there were only three in the department in the beginning. And then Dr. Comnety came on board, Elizabeth Comnety. She was the token woman in the history department in those days. (laughing) So it was under them that I got my masters degree in '5 .

Bruce: Okay. While you were going to school here, you were also full-time minister at St. Paul's (right, right), why...how did you get involved with the civil rights activities here in Huntington? Or how did you hear about it?

Charles: Well, I just read about some of their activities (newspapers?) newspaper uh, ran into a few, I attended one or two council meetings at the beginning, city council meetings, and ran into a few people like Bunche Gray, and uh, talked to them a little bit. The student, the Campus Christian Center was just getting off the ground in those days. We had built a building around 1960, I guess it was, '61. And I was just beginning to get involved over there, and uh, we had several people over there at that time who was interested in civil rights movement and I got ...got in with them. And later I think it was a couple years later, Courtney King...did you ever hear about Courtney? (mmm-hmm) Well, he had led a great big sort of a revolt on campus at the University of Georgia. And he came in here as the Presbyterian minister, and I got with Corky a lot and heard a lot about it and sympathized with it.

Bruce: Were you the Lutheran minister at the...? (yes, Campus Christian Center and have been) okay.

Charles: I guess all of those things, plus my former interest in this whole thing was sort of resurrected and just became very fascinated with it as a historical movement and very morally involved in it as a necessity for our country.



Charles: And as far as it went it was very successful, but you know, that's limited, too, because (mmm-hmm) you just have a few people who take part in programs of that sort. And you're not going to change a community very much when you only have maybe 30 families that are taking part in this, and none of them are the real shakers maybe and movers of the community.

Bruce: This the early '70's?

Charles: I would say probably the early '70's. Maybe, maybe very late '60's.

Bruce: It was kind of ran through the churches.

Charles: Yeah, through some of the pastors in the churches and through others.

Bruce: Were they more open to civil rights and blacks by this time?

Charles: Oh, yes. Yeah, of course, some of the crudest I guess, of the changes, that's not quite the right word, but the definite changes had been made. And the civil rights you know, rules and laws had been passed by this time in the '60's, and there was more feeling that this was the way that we should be going and more of a feeling that well, now maybe we're more in the majority, so it's safer to go. (laughing) (Yeah) It was the thing a little bit more by that time. So there was, you got more support by that time than you did earlier.

Bruce: Okay. Well, I'd like to....

Charles: And by that time of course, you had a lot more people in the community that I began to know a little bit more. I began to know Dr. Taylor, Elinore Taylor, but she wasn't a doctor then. Elinore was very active and then she was, she used to work at the Presbyterian church at Beverly Hills by this time, as a Christian Ed leader or something like that.

Bruce: Was she...working down here at Marshall at that time, also?

Charles: Well, she, not at the beginning. Maybe she was part-time and then finally full time. Made the transition to English. She got a doctorate. And people like Ray Woodruff down at the First Congregational, moved in, who was very much of an activist, the Reverend Raymond Woodruff.

Bruce: That sounds...now he wasn't involved with the SDS was he?

Charles: I don't think he was here at that time.

Bruce: That must have been Tom Woodruff. Okay.

Charles: Incidentally, when it comes to SDS, we allowed them to meet in our church several times. (oh, well) And that was a real hassle with the board, too.

Bruce: Let's talk about SDS. I have a friend who would be interested in this.

Charles: Well, first of all, they were asked if they ...they asked if they could meet, I don't know where they were meeting, I have no idea, but they asked if they could meet at the Christian Center. And there was a huge hassle about that. (this late '60's? '68 or so?) Yeah, late '60's. And as I remember, the final decision was that they could meet but it didn't last long. It lasted for only a year or so, and then I guess you'd call it the opposition, overwhelmingly kicked them out. They just felt that they were not...didn't fit into the scheme program of the Christian Center. But for a while I think they were allowed to meet there. Then when they were not any more, why, they asked if they could meet in our church. (they asked you?) Yes, because they knew I was interested and so on, that I sympathized with some of their ideas, not all, but sympathized with some. And at least I thought they should have the freedom to meet, and the freedom of speech and so on. Even if I didn't, you know, it's the old story. You should allow people to meet and speak, even if you don't agree with them. So they did, they met out at the church. I...I finally (St. Paul's) yeah, I finally managed to get the council to go along for about 6 months I think they met, and then they voluntarily found some other place. So it didn't come to a head at all.

Bruce: Didn't cause any problems in the church.

Charles: No, it kept continually causing problems you know, not what they did at the church, but what they planned at the church and then went out and did and said, you know, so yeah....

Bruce: Now, these were Marshall students?

Charles: Marshall students, most of them.

Bruce: Can you remember any of their names?

Charles: No. (okay) I'm a poor....(put you on the spot)...yeah, I'm a poor oral historian for you because it's so long ago. I'm not like these 90 year olds who remember everything, you know, every name and time and date and everything, when they were 20. I just can't do it.

Bruce: Do you know why they voluntarily left?

Charles: I think they got another place that they felt a little bit more at home with to meet, and I forget where it was.

Bruce: Were they getting pressure from your congregation to leave?

Charles: Oh, yes (individual pressure?) yes, I'm sure they were, yeah. And they knew I was getting a lot of pressure, too, and so after they had met there for about 6 months, they moved on.

Bruce: What, they'd come in Tuesday evenings or...?

Charles: They'd come in about once a week, I forget when it was. Came in about once a week.

Bruce: They used the main auditorium or one of your Sunday school rooms?

Charles: No, no, they would use one of the church school rooms. And if they got a big crowd, which they almost never did, why, they'd meet downstairs in what we called the \_\_\_\_\_, the social hall.

Bruce: Well, that's interesting.

Charles: Yeah, I hadn't even thought of that until you just mentioned SDS there a few minutes ago.

Bruce: Well, (inaudible)... Well, I'd like to thank you for your time. (sure) It's been a great interview. If you ever run into anything else you want to tell me, just let me know.

Charles: One more thing, and that is, and I don't want to put him on the spot at all, but because I was so interested in this, Dr. Moffat, soon after I began teaching part-time in the history department in sixty, I don't remember when it was, maybe '66, '67, somewhere around there, why uh, Dr. Moffat asked if I'd be interested in putting a course together on black history (mmm-hmm), and he said there's ...there's a lot of pressure. I won't say what I was gonna say, but anyway, there's a lot of pressure to teach black history here. And he said I know you've been interested in it, and none of the regular professors want to teach this, or has their schedule so full they can't teach it, so would you be interested in putting a course together, and I said, yes, I would be very much interested in that. So I ordered quite a few textbooks and began to read them and putting some outlines together and trying to get some ideas as to how we might put this course together. And then finally, Dr. Moffat said, "you know the more I think about it," and that's the way he put it, whether he had gotten pressure from others I don't know.

Bruce: Who would this pressure have been from?

Charles: I imagine from blacks, black students and other blacks.

Bruce: Ones wanting the course?

Charles: Yes.

Bruce: What about the ones not wanting the course?

Charles: I don't know that there was all that much pressure on, because that was the time when it was popular everywhere to have black history courses. And colleges all over the place, universities, were going to black history. So I don't think there was a lot of pressure, that I was ever aware of not to have it. But there was a lot of pressure to have it on the part of black students and blacks in the community. Whether he was getting pressure from that or what, but he finally came to me and he said, do you know, I think it would be a better idea if we had a black teach it, than you. I appreciate the work you've done on it, but he said, I think maybe we're just gonna have to go with a black professor. And of course they did ask Malcom Henderson, you know, to do that. (when was this?) Oh, I suppose it got started about 1968, '69, it was until just 2 or 3 years ago. They offered a black history course here. And Henderson did teach it. He's the lawyer in town that was also president of ....(was it Herbert Henderson?) Herbert. Did I say Malcom? I meant Herb. (Herbert Henderson).

Bruce: And he taught it in '68 or '69, the first black history course?

Charles: Yeah, but you'll have to get in touch with him. He taught the first black history course, and taught it clear to the end. I don't think they have one now or do they?

Bruce: Well, it's on the curriculum \_\_\_\_\_. Dr. Duke teaches it occasionally (okay) Well, no, I take that back. David Harris. (oh) Who was a black student here in the '70's, teaches it part-time.

Charles: Well, Herb Henderson taught it for I'd say probably 15 years, I'm not sure, something like that. A long, long time.

Bruce: Was this an official part of the curriculum?

Charles: Oh, yeah, he was a part-time instructor, and he always had, he always taught the same time, I think it was Wednesday night, black history, every Wednesday night for semester after semester, year after year.

Bruce: What other black literature courses or black history...what other courses were set up that you can think of?

Charles: Well, I'm sure at the same time there were black literature courses. Whether the Sociology Department ever set up a course on Sociology, you know, Black Sociology, or whatever you call it, I don't know.

Bruce: There's nothing you're sure about?

Charles: Nothing that I'm sure about, but I do know that black history course, and Dr. Hoffat helped set it up, and like I say, it started off with me, and rightly so probably, ended up with Herb Henderson.

Bruce: What was Dr. Moffat's position on blacks and so on?

Charles: That's what I wasn't gonna say, and I'm not sure I want to say that on....(laughs)....

Bruce: Okay, I don't want to put you on the spot.

Charles: No, well, you know, I don't know...if this goes back to Dr. Moffat, but I always felt that Dr. Moffat said some things about integration or any of those things. But I felt that Dr. Moffat personally could never quite get away from his background. The Mississippi background that he had. (yeah) He never could quite personally bring himself, and I just felt that he was overwhelmed by teaching a black history course either in the department, and he felt that he almost had to do it. Now, I've said it, and I hope that Dr. Moffat you know,...maybe I just, maybe I didn't interpret him the right way. Because we never talked about directly whether he was in favor of it or not. He just you know, he just wanted to have a history course.

Bruce: But publicly he did the right thing.

Charles: Publicly he did the right thing, always, always!

Bruce: What was President Stewart Smith's position? In your opinion?

Charles: Yeah, in my opinion, of course I'm a little biased, because he was a member of my church (OH) but publicly he always did the right thing and uh, I think that he was one of those whites which many of us maybe were, who wanted the right thing done by blacks for blacks and by blacks, but who never felt that he wanted to go too far out on a limb for it. And there was thousands and thousands of thousands of people that way, and I was partly that way with the cowardice I talked about before.

Bruce: Would that have been fairly typical of the Marshall campus?

Charles: Oh, yes, I think so, oh, yes. (because...) You would have some people that were very, very definite, and uh, I think Dr. Toole certainly was one of them, who was very outspoken, against, (oh, against) against, yeah. He felt that blacks you know, had done a good job in the war, he was a 1st World War person, but that they were just too pushy, and wanted it too fast. After all, they had everything in the constitution and so on, all that kind of thing (mmm-hmm). So uh, I think we had a lot like that who were pretty openly against too much, going too fast too soon, that kind of thing. (here at Marshall) Yeah, here at Marshall. And then there were a lot who ...who did what they could to help when it didn't put themselves out too far. And then there were a few of us who put ourselves out a little bit, but never went out too far on the branch that it would be cut off behind us. And that would be the side I would be put on. I'm not

real proud of that; that's the way it was. I had a family by that time, and I admit, I was just a little bit of a coward. I didn't do as much as I could have. And then of course, there was those who were just active as through and through and didn't care what the consequences were. In some ways I admire them. (Laughs) But they were a very, very small minority among the white, very small, and even a minority among the blacks. Because as if you may know, the black community here in Huntington was not very much in favor of these young whipper-snappers who were uh, marching up and down in front of Bailey's and so on. They felt that made them look back look bad, and made it harder for them to get jobs and so there was a lot of conservative feelings among the black community here, which didn't favor a lot of things. (majority feelings?) I would think, yes, yes, I would think.

Bruce: So the black community took on the attitude of the Huntington community (very much so).

Charles: It was essentially a conservative black community. (yeah, it's interesting) And it was such a minority in Huntington, it wasn't like in Savannah, Georgia or some place, it was such a small minority in those days I would say probably 3,000 out of 25,000 or something. But they really....a lot of the older blacks, and I mean older by over 30, just didn't want to rock the boat that much. (for economic reasons) For economic reasons, right. And social. Some of them had social dealings with white people, you know, that they were on a one-to-one basis with; they might not have been equal, but they had these basis and they were afraid it would destroy that. (mum-hmm) And you know, even if you were a janitor of City Hall and talked with the mayor regularly, you didn't want things to even upset that unequal kind of relationship. They were just scared.

Bruce: On talking with Phil Carter and going through the Parthenon, different things, there's several instances where blacks have expressed a I want to make sure I get this right, covert, which is underlined, feeling of discrimination and hatred and prejudice existed and was practiced but no overt discrimination ever took place. In your opinion....

Charles: On the campus you mean?

Bruce: On the campus.

Charles: Yes. (how would you assess that statement?) I think that's a pretty correct assessment. And fits in with you know, some of the things I've said, that openly the professors and so on, with a few exceptions, didn't openly come out against integration or against black rights or against blacks on campus or anything like that. But certainly in their own personal feelings they felt they were pushing too hard...they sometimes expressed that.

Bruce: Did they ever express that to you? The student or professor?



Charles: Yeah, yeah. Especially some students. Professors were a little more careful. But a lot of students, a lot of white students, said you know, what do these blacks think they're doing, and from that point on.

Bruce: This would have been while you were a student or....?

Charles: Yeah. (or when you were part time teaching or both?)  
Both. Both. (so we can say the '60's?) That's right. (same attitude?) Yeah. (never got any better?) Well, you mean compared to when?

Bruce: Well, the...

Charles: I think through the '70's there was a gradual improvement. Nowadays, professor student relationship doesn't allow sometimes for a lot of real open exchange that students are sometimes scared to exchange when they know the professor feels a certain way. So I would suspect that underneath there's still some of it today, but nearly as much. When I get to lecturing or talking about civil rights acts of either the sixties or way back in the 1870's or something like that. Once in a while I'll see a body language that lets me know that not everybody agrees with my point or let's say they do agree with those ...those control acts, you know, black control acts that were passed, things like that. I can almost see when we talk about ...about separate but equal that some of the, especially white males....

Bruce: Why is that, why white males?

Charles: I don't know, but it's things sort of in fact, I see them whispering and once in a while I'll even pick up a little thing, well, I wish it still was like that today. (this is today, 1966) 1966.

Bruce: The feeling was much more prevalent in the '60's?

Charles: Much more prevalent, and less prevalent in the '70's than it is now. I think there's a new mood that I sort of sense. A renewed conservatism, reactionism I think. Of course, that's political bias that I think under Reagan as well as just the mood of the country is a little bit uh, going backwards.

Bruce: You feel Marshall is following that trend?

Charles: Well, the \_\_\_\_\_ are certainly following that trend. I certainly don't think the official administration or professors as a whole, no. But I think I see it among the students. A lot more conservatives and politically, racially and other ways. And a little more openness as far as letting people know that they're not, not too happy with black civil rights and things of that sort, which they would have been even if they had felt that way, scared to say I think in the '70's. Now they're coming out and saying a few of those things which they wouldn't have. And I get it in a few of my classes now that I wouldn't have gotten 10 years

ago. It's interesting. I don't think that bodes good for the country. (laughs)

Bruce: It certainly fits in with other stuff.

Charles: Well, it's unfortunate. I was hopin' I was wrong, but... (laughing)

Bruce: I don't think you are. Well, thank you very much.

Charles: That's it, Bruce.

END OF INTERVIEW



Bruce: Uh...how did you get to meet the civil rights activist from Marshall here? The students, or did you ever meet them?

Charles: Oh, I just met them, I never really...you know, I never was part of any group as I've said, Bruce. I met people as you know, sometimes when we were marching in front of places or sometimes when they were complaining at city council or sometimes when they were meeting here or there I would be in the group, but I did not join any of the official groups or become a member of anything, and uh, (so you just....), just sort of a loner on the whole thing. Yeah. (can we call you a concerned citizen?) A concerned citizen, that's really what it was. And later on when Vietnam came along and I fought against Vietnam, the same thing was true. I didn't join any anti-Vietnam groups. I was in on protests and things of that sort.

Bruce: What were some of the protest activities were you involved with?

Charles: Now, let's go back a minute, Bruce (yeah). One of the reasons I think was that you know, I might not have been a very brave individual, I think, as I look back. It's that old cowardice that brought me north from St. Augustine back to the north again. I just felt that probably I had to have a base to do anything. And unless you have a base, you know, a power base, or at least an economic base, there's not much you can do and if I lost my job as pastor of the church, I'd have to move somewhere and find something else.

Bruce: That was a possibility?

Charles: Well, when you take an activist role, that's always a possibility. Especially in the first few years, when they don't know you very well. (okay) And you go marching in front of the White Pantry or in front of Bailey's or whatever, I still can't think of the name there...when uh, or when they see your picture in the paper or when they've heard from somebody else that you were there, you always run that risk. So, I just thought it was better to do it as a personal individual, I could, I thought I could fight that battle better, on the church front, than if I was vice-president or secretary of some organization or something like that, which I'd have to defend. And sometimes organizations don't do everything that you approve of; they may do certain things you approve of, but it's hard to defend other things. And they put you on the spot sometimes, so I just thought it was better as an individual.

Bruce: How did your church feel about civil rights?

Charles: Not real happy (laughs), not real happy. It was during this period that I, that I really pushed a resolution to our church council that they would accept any blacks who applied for membership (and this was in the early '60's?) yes, yeah, well, actually, yeah, around '60, or '61.

Bruce: So, there weren't any blacks in your church?

Charles: No, not then, no. And there have never been many since. Because as we've said, our type of religion doesn't appeal, but we've always accepted them and we've always had them come, and we have had members since then; quite a few members off and on. You know, they would join and be there for a while, and then very often they would move off to Washington or Chicago or some place. (mm-hmm) But we've had them. And at that time, they had never had a one, never a one, and I think probably would have refused any application for membership or anything else. But we got that far, and they managed to put up with their pastor (laughs), put up with his stupidities or whatever they felt at the time, foolishness until Vietnam. And that was the second thing. And then that wasn't only stupidity, that was lack of patriotism, you see, then on top of stupidity. And so there was some very tense moments during the later part of the '60's.

Bruce: Yeah, for you personally.

Charles: For me personally, and I really felt several times that I would have to leave, there was some activities going on, some little groups in the church tried to get rid of me, and it never quite came to a full head, but it was close, it was close.

Bruce: Mmm-hmm, so we can say your church body was fairly, well, I say it's typical of Huntington?

Charles: I would think so. Yes, quite conservative, quite conservative.

Bruce: I didn't want to lead you on there, but....

Charles: Very definitely so.

Bruce: Okay. You told me earlier you were involved with Bailey's. What was, well, how did you get involved, or what did...?

Charles: Well, I remember that they were... I remember picketing, or marching up and down the front of Bailey's. And I got in on it. I made my own sign and marched with them.

Bruce: What did your sign say?

Charles: I can't remember that anymore, Bruce. It wasn't a very clever...I've never been very clever coming up with real fancy grabbers on signs. Probably something like "stop segregation", or something, you know, real original grabbies! I really don't remember. (it made the point, though) It made a point. I felt you know, that I was making a point being there more than whatever my sign said. (laughing) So I did. And then with White Pantry similarly. I was never there at a time when they went in and there was \_\_\_\_\_ or anything, so I never got arrested, anything of

that sort. But I did help march up and down you know, outside.  
(at White Pantry) At White Pantry also.

Bruce: How long did you picket either establishment?

Charles: That was a long time ago, Bruce, and my memory fails on some of these things. But it was ...it seemed to me that on neither case did we do more than several weeks, 2 or 3 weeks.

Bruce: And you were there every day or....?

Charles: Oh, no, no, I couldn't make it every day. I'd be there 2 or 3 times maybe a week. (just doing what you could) Right. Because my schedule just...you know, I had to do what I had to do at the church, or there again, I would have been out completely. So I couldn't give them any excuse for saying, "well, you're up there picketing and not doing the work you're supposed to be doing". So I just had to fit that into position. I remember being there Friday's, mostly. In fact, I usually was there Tuesdays and Fridays, because Tuesday was an easier schedule for me, and Friday was my day off, theoretically.

Bruce: Did you ever eat at either one of these establishments?

Charles: Not until after they integrated. Well, I went into Bailey's after they integrated, I can't say that I ever went into the White Pantry. You know, that would have been one of my differences I suppose one has to pick obvious sources of antagonism in order to picket. But as far as wanting to go into the White Pantry, I never could see why anybody would even want to. It should go..(why?)..well, it was to me, sort of a sleazy, joint, if you want my opinion of it. (okay) Even if they had been noble and integrated at the very beginning, I'm not sure I would have ever gone in there. (where was White Pantry located?) It was located well, where the library is now. (the new Cabell County Library?) The new Cabell County Library. It would have been about the, in the middle of the block, I'd say there.

Bruce: 9th Street and 5th avenue, somewhere around in there.

Charles: Right, right.

Bruce: And it was just a little grease....

Charles: A little greasy, greasy spoon we used to call 'em. Very narrow in between other buildings.

Bruce: Did it serve poor whites or what was its main clientele?

Charles: Well, I suppose perhaps the main clientele was business people or poor business people and luncheons, mostly. (oh) I think it was open in the evenings, but I don't think they served a whole lot of people in the evenings. It was mostly luncheons, though, business luncheons. Working people, secretaries, maybe some others from work.

Bruce: Hamburgers, hot dogs, (that kind of thing, soup and you know, ham and eggs, stuff like that.) Well, I was thinking that's a good little walk for a Marshall student, isn't it? So is Bailey's, which is uh....(yeah sure)...just a block down.

Charles: Everything's relative, so if you're used to riding, then it's a long walk. But if you don't have a car, it's not so long, once you get going. 16th street to 9th isn't all that far....

END OF SIDE 1

Bruce: Okay, you were, we were talking about Marshall students. Where did they eat at that time? If you can recall.

Charles: Well, gosh...well, of course there was a college dining room. (mm-hmm) Which is the present community, I guess the Community College, is it over there between oh, I don't know the names of these halls (Laidley and Hodges) yes, Laidley and Hodges, right. That was the place where they ate. I guess there were several restaurants, greasy spoon restaurants between here and town, on uh, on 4th avenue, that they would have eaten at. And the one on the corner over here, what's the name of that? (Wiggins?) Yeah, Wiggins was here at that time. I think those were the places. They didn't have any of the newer places. You know, the newer fast foods were a later development. But uh, of course, Marshall even then probably maybe even a higher percentage than than now was the local commuter students who probably just brought lunches at noon and then ate at home in the evening or something like that.

Bruce: Was Chili Willi's open then?

Charles: I think maybe it was, I wasn't aware of it if it was. I didn't eat at many of those places.

Bruce: Okay. You went back home.

Charles: Yeah, I was a student, I was a graduate student, and didn't have too much in common with the 18, 20 year olds that was here then.

Bruce: But you were...did you ever have the opportunity to counsel?

Charles: Oh, yeah, well, I counseled people on things that almost never did civil rights come into it. Blacks wouldn't have come to me particularly I don't think for counseling. They would have gone to their own ministers and the whites didn't have any problem; they knew what they were doing most of the time, you know. They were either very much for it and very much against it, and didn't need counseling, or felt they didn't.

Bruce: Yeah. Okay. You mentioned a theatre that you...

none of the big downtown churches, you know, on 5th Avenue.  
(okay) None of them. And very few....

Bruce: That would have been 5th Avenue Baptist and Johnson Memorial....

Charles: Yeah, none of them. Because of course, the owners of the people involved were mostly members of their churches (mm-hmm).

Bruce: The money people, in other words.

Charles: Yes. And the owners of Bailey's and the owners of, and of course, the owner of the theatre was Jewish, but...uh, none of them. It just seems to me some of the smaller churches. Some of those people. (blacks and whites?) Blacks and whites, well, the black pastors were but I can't tell you any of their names, anymore, but almost all the black pastors were. (mmmh) Very active. (and very few white pastors) Very few white pastors. Very few. And this was true for a decade to come. When Vietnam came along, the same thing was true.

Bruce: What about the early '70's? Blacks were active again in the late '60's, early '70's. You know, like FREE was a Marshall group that was active here and (yeah).

Charles: Uh, I was not very active. (mm-hmm) Uh, the group that I can remember was, that I was active in, was a group and I'm not sure that we ever had a name. It was sort of a loose group organization, trying to get black families and white families to visit in each other's homes. (religious content?) Not particularly. It was carried through some of the churches, but visiting in the homes itself didn't have religious overtones. But it was an attempt to get black people to visit white families and come for a meal and come for the evening in each other's homes. And sometimes we'd gather as a small sub-groups you know, of a larger group. We'd get two or three families together. First, there was safety in numbers. You know, instead of one white family having one black family come in, why, you'd have two or three white families entertain two or three black families in one of their homes. And then later on sort of a one-to-one basis family wise, one family to one family. And that's where I remember meeting in Bunche's house frequently and in several of the other people's homes, and I just can't remember all their names. Say two or three years we tried to carry on as a sort of a route, getting whites and blacks together so they would each one see that the other one wasn't so bad, you know, getting them so they were people too, and in each case, and blacks didn't look at whites or blacks but as people.