



## Interview with John Franklin Moses

Under the Auspices of the  
Monmouth County Library Headquarters  
125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, N.J.  
Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

**Date of Interview:** June 20, 2000  
**Name of Interviewer:** June West  
**Premises of Interview:** Eastern Branch, Monmouth  
County Library, Shrewsbury, NJ  
**Birthdate of Subject:** December 30, 1927

**Mr. Moses:** I am John Moses, and I was born on December 30, 1927 in Cheraw, South Carolina. When I was eight years old, our family moved to Long Island, where I grew up. There were seven children. I had two older sisters and four brothers. We were actually two families, because my mom and dad both were married twice. The first three children are from my mother's first marriage, but we have all grown up as one family. I went to school in Port Washington's school system.



**John Franklin Moses,  
present day**

**Ms. West:** Port Washington, Long Island?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes. After I graduated from high school, I had no intentions of going to college. I was kind of fed up with education, so to speak. But I knew something had to be done, so I did apply to a college, under the direction of my guidance counselor. I wanted to go to a college in upstate New York for Industrial Arts teacher training. All the other children went to college in South Carolina. I am the only one that went to college in upstate New York. It was right after World War II when I graduated from high school in 1946. And my application to the college in Oswego was approved. I fulfilled the written part and passed it, but I didn't know I was to appear for a personal interview in New York City.

**Ms. West:** What was the name of the college?

**Mr. Moses:** At the time it was Oswego State Teachers College in Oswego, New York. It later became a branch of the SUNY system in New York State. There were sister colleges throughout New York State, and it became one of those colleges in 1948.

**Ms. West:** Could you tell us what SUNY represents?

**Mr. Moses:** The State University of New York is what SUNY means. They just call it SUNY.

**Ms. West:** It's their acronym for that.

**Mr. Moses:** Previous to that, those colleges were the Normal Schools. Then they became Teachers Colleges, and then they became the SUNY College. I had worked for many years at the Post Office in Port Washington as a substitute clerk/carrier. During the War, I was the first Black carrier in Port Washington. I worked there as a substitute fourteen hours a day, except at Christmas time. It was eighteen hours a day at that time. So I had money saved, because I really didn't have time to spend it. I was working at the New York Racing Association as Supervisor of Parking. My guidance counselor had gone on a sabbatical leave the year I graduated, and when she returned that fall, she inquired about her former students. She called my mother to see how I was doing in college, and my mother told her that I had not gone to college. So she called the college to find out what the story was, and that's when we found out that I had not appeared for my personal interview in New York City. I supposedly was notified about it, but I never received the notice for that interview. At this time the colleges were all filled for the year. The veterans were coming home, and that took up a lot of the space, particularly at the Industrial Arts College. So she got on the phone and called one of the other sister colleges in Oneonta, New York, which had some room left. The colleges at this time did not have dormitories. You had to live in the community in private homes. Going into upstate New York as a Black person was going to be a problem. But that didn't faze her. She made arrangements for me to live with a retired professor of the College, who was eighty-one years old, and his wife. Their son was active in the College then, as a social studies supervisor. So I had this room, and I worked for the room, actually. I did light house chores for that couple, and I had the room until Christmas time. The first year courses in New York colleges were all basically the same.

**Ms. West:** What year did you enter college?

**Mr. Moses:** In 1947, in the fall. I was out of high school one year before I went into college. Because the first year was the same, there was no problem in going to Oneonta and then planning to transfer to Oswego the following year. And that is what I did. After serving my four years at Oswego, it was time now to see about a job. I finished my college work in the middle of the year; jobs were hard to come by, actually, particularly in upstate New York because of the prejudice

that was still in existence rather vividly then. Most of my classmates all went to Philadelphia to work, and I didn't want to go there. I didn't want to go to any city. I had done my practice teaching in New York City only because it was convenient to be living at home. I did my practice teaching for ten weeks in New York City, and then ten weeks in Ithaca, New York. But I didn't want to be in a city. And at that time, I was also working as the Assistant to the Director of the New Student Union and Residence Hall at the college, so I had room and board and things of that nature, and I didn't have any need to rush out. I didn't go home, because I was getting room and board at the college. By doing that, I was able to take graduate courses while I was there at the college. I took a couple of courses that semester while I was still there. And then I started sending out applications for employment in the State. I evidently had a good resume.

**Ms. West:** What degrees do you hold?

**Mr. Moses:** I have a BS in Industrial Arts Education and a MA in Supervision. The MA is from Kean College here in New Jersey. Well, my resume must have looked good on paper. In those days, you didn't send photographs with your resume. That was against the law. So I sent the resume out, but I didn't get good answers from the resume. So I joined an agency in New York City who did the searching for me, and they sent my resume out. Then I was called to go on interviews. I can remember one town in upstate New York where I went to interview. With the name Moses, apparently, I must have shocked them. They were not expecting me to be a Black person. But I walked in and the interview went very nicely. Then the superintendent said to me, "Well, you have a nice resume and everything is fine. But we are looking for someone with a little more experience than what you have." "Well, I found that hard to digest because he knew my experience when he called me. He had my resume before him. Well, that was how he could get out of hiring me as a Black person. So I went on many interviews throughout the State, and I'd find one alibi after the other. So as the summer started dwindling down, I decided to just drop in a photograph with my resume so I would stop going on all those wild goose chases. And then they would know what they were getting and whether or not they wanted me. My older sister was living in Long Branch, New Jersey. She married a fellow from there that she had met in South Carolina when he was in the Army, and he moved her back here to Long Branch. She had been a second grade teacher down in Darlington, South Carolina. When she came to New Jersey, she sought employment at Fort Monmouth. As the holder of two Masters Degrees, she was proficient in English and French, and Fort Monmouth offered her a job as a carrier or clerk of some sort, which was a messenger, I believe. The job was to deliver messages back and forth. She took the job, and when she left Fort Monmouth, she was Editor-In-Chief of the unit, so that was a great improvement. Anyway, she was in New Jersey. I also had a brother living in Neptune. He came here after the War. I received notice from the agency that there was an opening in Red Bank, New Jersey, so I called about an appointment. My mother was told by people in Long Island that I was wasting my time coming down to Red Bank

for an interview, because of the strong element of prejudice in the area. They thought I would just be wasting my time. But being who I was, and always being in a mixed environment, I chose to come and do the interview in Red Bank. I got to Red Bank before my papers did, and the interview with the superintendent and principal was very pleasant. He wanted to hear more about me, so he called the college to get some information about my credentials. Apparently they must have told him I was strong in discipline. I didn't know that. My discipline is what my parents brought me up with, which I knew to be right. And that was the way I felt and still feel about discipline. So he also questioned me about my *high school* extracurricular activities, which kind of shocked me. I expected to have that behind me. I was active in extracurricular activities in high school, like being on the Student Council and being manager of the basketball team and the football team, because I was too small to play those sports. I also refereed basketball, and I did participate in track. So he was impressed by those activities, apparently. And he told me he was going to recommend me to the board on the next night. Then he said this, "If you are hired, not only may you not be wanted by members of the community, you also may not be wanted by some of the members of the staff." And I told him that I had never had any problems mingling with people of other races. I grew up that way in the neighborhood we lived in on Long Island. And I told him all I wanted was the chance to prove myself, and I didn't foresee any problem with the race issue. And so two days later, a telegram came to the house that the job was mine if I wanted it. And I took the job as the Industrial Arts teacher in Red Bank. They told me that I was the first Black secondary school teacher in Monmouth County. I have no facts about that, but people have said that.

**Ms. West:** The Board of Education records show that you were the first African American high school teacher, so you must be.

**Mr. Moses:** Well, I don't know where they got their information, really. I knew there were elementary school teachers, but I didn't know of any high school teachers when I came into the area. So perhaps I am the first Afro-American high school teacher in Monmouth County.

**Ms. West:** You'll have to check a little further just to make sure where the information came from. But it is our understanding that you are the first Black, or African American...

**Mr. Moses:** Whatever the term is now. (laughter)

**Ms. West:** From what I understand, not just in Red Bank but in Monmouth County.

**Mr. Moses:** Yes. I know I was in Red Bank, and I understand it was in Monmouth County as well.

**Ms. West:** What memories do you have of high school?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, I have fond memories of high school.

**Ms. West:** Share them with us.

**Mr. Moses:** I was very active in high school, and I enjoyed going to school. As a matter of fact, I didn't miss a day of school until I was in the ninth grade when they sent me home with a fever of 103 degrees. I cried all the way home, because I felt I should be in school. That was when my tonsils went bad. From that time, I missed a day here and there. But I was always in school and enjoyed being there. I was not a high academic student, by no means. I was just an average student, if that. But I seemed to have a personality that worked in my favor. So I just was active in many things.

**Ms. West:** When you were a youngster, did you like to read?

**Mr. Moses:** No, not particularly. I did not like to read very much. Now that you mention it, I remember when we had book reports. I would go to the librarian, and I would tell her I wanted the smallest, thinnest book with the largest print they had. And she would normally find something she thought I would be interested in. And she was right. She found some books that I managed to read and like.

**Ms. West:** Of the books that you read, was there any particular author that you liked?

**Mr. Moses:** No.

**Ms. West:** So you read because it was compulsory reading?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, I did not like reading. I didn't like literature until I got in college and started getting the play writers, etc. Then I became interested in literature. Also in high school, I remember one history class. It was a World History class. I could not see any need for World History. They were talking about the Babylonians and all the ancient people and things, and I just couldn't relate with that. And I couldn't get with it. But I had one history teacher who had the habit of calling on people in the class. She asked a question, and then she would call on someone for the answer. I had figured her out. If you raised your hand, you didn't get called on. And so one day, I decided to raise my hand. I raised my hand, and right away she called on me for the answer. And I told her the answer just slipped my mind. Of course, I didn't know the answer. After class I went up to her desk and said, "Can you tell me, after all my time figuring out your system, why you changed today and called on me? You don't call on anyone who raises his hand, you call on someone who doesn't raise their hand. Today I raised my hand and you called on me." And she said, "Well, so many days you didn't seem to know the answer, and today you seemed as if you knew the answer. I thought I was

going to let you shine before the class." (laughter) So you couldn't figure out the teachers, even though you thought you had. But also World History became interesting to me when I became more interested in the Bible. I was brought up in church. I began to notice in high school, that my peers, when the invitation to receive Christ and join the church was given, they would go up and be baptized, etc. At school they lived worse than I did, and I was supposed to be the sinner. They partied on the weekends and were worse than I was. And I said, "Lord, there has got to be more to this thing than what I am seeing. Please don't let me make that mistake." And He didn't. People would say, "When are you going to join the church?" And I would say, "When I understand more of what it is all about." Well, they were interested in me joining the church, the local church. But what they really were saying was when was I going to join God's church. When was my name going to go, not on the local church roster, but when was it going to go into Heaven's book? I didn't understand that exactly, because no one ever told me. It was the same when I went to college. Mother threw the Bible in the suitcase, because we always had a Bible with us whether we read it or not. So I had the Bible. Then one day, within two weeks of beginning college, a young man asked me to go to a Bible Study at lunchtime! And I thought he was crazy/ He'd be lucky if I went to a Bible Study at nighttime. But I went, because my life was geared more toward the things of God than it was in other things. So I figured I had nothing to lose. So I went to the Bible Study, and I found that group was the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. They were working out of England and had come to the States, and they were on college campuses. And that's the group that I was working with. And I studied the Scriptures and looked at the Gospel of Saint John, and I saw Nicodemus being born again. We always learned Bible verses in the church as youngsters, so any time we had to do Bible verses, I was quick to raise my hand. But everyone was, really. We wanted to get the shortest verse in so we didn't have to do a long one. One said, "Jesus wept." And then we had to go to another verse. Then John 3:16 became one of the next verses that was used, "For God so loved the world..." And that was like a piece of poetry, so I knew it. Well, in studying the Scriptures and being ministered to by the Lord, I found that Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship. Religion means a belief in something. And Christianity is more than that. It is a relationship between a person and Jesus Christ. And I used the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John to be that relationship. I transferred it to read this way, "For God so loved John Moses...." And I included my name in that verse. I had the head knowledge, but I didn't always have the heart knowledge. So I had to move the head knowledge into my heart. And that's what I did at that time. When I went home for Thanksgiving, we had service at the church on Thanksgiving morning. I went that day and let the local body know what I had done. I went forward on the Invitation, and the Pastor and I were both crying in the front of the church. He knew what I was intending to do. I said, "When I come to the Lord, I want to serve Him the rest of my life." And that's what the Lord has enabled me to do.

**Ms. West:** Well, this is what you are doing now with your ministry in the prisons. Was it in Freehold?

**Mr. Moses:** In the County Jail, yes.

**Ms. West:** How long have you been doing that?

**Mr. Moses:** Since I retired. No, actually I have been going to the Juvenile Center for years as a teacher. As an interest of my students, I would go there. When someone would get into difficulties and be there, I would go see them. It wasn't necessarily to minister to them, but just to show an interest in them. And when they reached the age of eighteen, that's when they started going to the County Jail. And that's when I started going to the County Jail. As a Vice-Principal and a teacher in school, I would have access to the jail. They gave me full access to the inmates, to see them. But as I got ready to retire, I wondered if they would still let me in. And I liked to keep in touch with my students as much as I could. I knew the Chaplain of the jail, it was Reverend C. P. Williams, who was the Minister of the Second Baptist Church in Long Branch. I had known him for years, so he knew what my feeling was. So I called him and told him I was going to retire, and I asked what I could do to gain access to the jail to see my former students. I didn't know that this was going to lead into a ministry. I just wanted to have access to go see an inmate if I wanted to. He told me to have my pastor send him a letter, and then he would then send me a pass, which he did. I had the pass, then I went to the warden. I told him I wanted to be able to see my former students, but I asked him how I was going to know who was in the jail. And he told me it was no problem. They did a printout of who is there every day, and they would let me see it whenever I came in. Well, being a disciplinarian over the last twenty years or so at school, many of the fellows I had were in the jail. So I wasn't sure how I was going to be received by them, being that I represented authority. Well, I decided it wasn't me at all that they didn't like, it was what I represented, the authority figure that they were displeased with. So I started going. The first fellow I remember, it was fall at eleven o'clock in the morning. He came down, saw me, and said, "Are you working for the State now?" And I said, "No, I retired." And he said, "Oh, I didn't know that. Why are you coming here?" And I said, "When I told you I cared about you, I meant it. And that's why I am here, to see if there is anything I can do for you, except for giving you money." So that was him. Then another one came and said, "If I listened to you, I wouldn't be here." And I said, "You're saying that, I'm not. I wouldn't tell you that, but that is what you are saying." And then the third one was most interesting. His name was the same as a person that I had in school, but it wasn't him. When he appeared I said, "I don't know you and you don't know me." And he said, "I know you. You're that retired Principal from Red Bank." And I said, "No, Vice-Principal." And he said, "Yeah, and your name is Mr. Moses." And I asked him how he knew all this. And he said he had heard the guys from Red Bank talking. And I asked him how he could hear them talking when they were scattered in cells all over the jail. And he said, "In the yard." And I said, "What do they say?" And I expected to get shot

down, with them all talking about me behind my back. And to this day, he doesn't realize how much what he said next meant. He said, "They don't know why you come, but they are glad that you do." And that gave me the incentive to continue and go on. And then it became not just seeing them, but it developed into a ministry. So I will see anyone out there that wants to see me.

**Ms. West:** What year was it that you retired and began this ministry at the prisons?

**Mr. Moses:** I retired in 1989, and I started the ministry in 1990, almost immediately.

**Ms. West:** And you are doing it to this day.

**Mr. Moses:** Yes.

**Ms. West:** So you never know what people are thinking and how valuable you can be to other people.

**Mr. Moses:** I guess. One thing I was concerned about...my dad was a real hustler. Every morning at 4:30 or 5:00 he was out and on the job. I remember my dad being sick just one day in the whole time that I knew him. Just one day he was home sick. On that day he was sick, he didn't go into work until 8:30 that day. (Laughter) That was his sick day. But my dad worked as a custodian for some building in Port Washington, and then he was the custodian in the Post Office. That's how I got into the Post Office, as a matter of fact. I started relieving him in the summer. He became sixty-five and retired, and he couldn't take retirement. He went back to work and worked until they made him retire at seventy. At that time, he developed a leaking heart valve. He was in the hospital a very short time, and I went to see him. They had to decide whether they were going to replace the valve or let him go on, because the chances were only fifty-fifty at that time of his life. So they decided to let it go. And I remember again the way the Lord worked. It was Thanksgiving Day, and I worked with the band at the high school. I was the "Assistant" to the Band Director, not in music but with the other activities of the band. (I loved music: John Philip Sousa came from Port Washington, and the "Stars and Stripes Forever" is my favorite march.) We always had a football game on Thanksgiving morning down here in New Jersey, and we played Long Branch every Thanksgiving. This particular year, my wife took my daughter and went to the Macy's Parade in New York, and I was going to go to the game later in the morning. It was raining that day, and it got worse and worse. This was the one and only game, that I know of, that they called off on Thanksgiving. Now here I was alone for the day, and I wondered what I would do. So I thought I would drive over to Long Island and see my folks and then return in time for dinner when my wife and daughter got back. That was my intent. So I left and went to Long Island. I did not know that the day before, my father had come home from the hospital. He had spent the day with my mother,

and they had eaten supper together and watched television that night. (Usually they could never get together on what to watch because he always wanted to watch a ballgame or something and she wanted to watch a sitcom.) So he was there. She had a stroke five years before, and she was paralyzed on one side. And he had been taking care of her for those years. She was upstairs, and they had a bed downstairs for him in the sun porch. I didn't even know they had done that. So I walked up on the porch and looked in, and I saw the bed. And I saw the body of my father kind of lying on the bed. And I rang the bell. My younger brother came running to the door trying to quiet me, and I said, "What's the matter?" And he said, "Pop just passed." And I said, "Who is that in there? What do you mean Pop just passed?" They had just found him; he died in his sleep that night. He told my brother something the week before, when he went to see him in the hospital. He said, "I'm going home next week." We thought he was going home to Port Washington, but he meant he was going Home to Glory. And no one knew that then. When my brother brought him home from the hospital, he said, "Ride me through town." And he went down through town that one last time. And no one knew any of this until later. My mother, having had a stroke, was eating breakfast at the kitchen table when they found him. There was a hallway leading from the kitchen right out to the front door, and you could see that distance. They had just told her, and they were concerned about how this would effect her. Sure enough, she said, "Here comes my John." All her children were always "my this" or "my that." Then they became concerned, because no one had told me anything and I was not expected. And they said, "It's ok, John will be here soon." They told her, "We're on the phone to New Jersey now, and he'll be here soon." She told them, "My John is coming up the front walk right now." And I was. So that is the miraculous way that the Lord worked.

**Ms. West:** You mentioned your wife. Were you married when you came to New Jersey?

**Mr. Moses:** I met my wife in college at the Intersarsity Christian Fellowship. Out of that group of Christian people there, we became quite close. Many, many of us intermarried within the group. We got married on June 23, 1956, and I brought her to New Jersey. She didn't want to come to New Jersey. She was a pianist in a church in Liverpool, New York, while she was teaching in Syracuse. She taught two years up there. She was behind me. I had been out of college four years already. The people at the church went and found a job in a school outside of Syracuse, a job for me and for her. And they told me they wanted me to come there, because they didn't want to lose her. But I told them no, that she had to go where I went. So in 1956 we were married and came here where she taught kindergarten in Eatontown over forty years. My daughter now has three young children. She has a boy named John Moses Cross, and that's the oldest boy, who is eleven years old. He is a singer, pianist, and trumpet player and sportsman. The younger one is four years old, and then there is a three-month old girl now at this time. We've been married since 1956, and she is retiring this

year from Eatontown Schools, where she is a kindergarten teacher. She taught there over forty-some years.

**Ms. West:** So she was an elementary school teacher?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, she would only teach kindergarten. Nothing but kindergarten. And she can remember all her children today, if she sees them. Actually we had a little thing going on. Some of the Eatontown students went to Red Bank for high school, so I said she started them off, and I finished them.

**Ms. West:** Kindergarten makes me think of play. What games did you play as a youngster?

**Mr. Moses:** All the games that youngsters played. Often in the evening, in front of the house, we had little sessions of sitting around and playing games. During the day we played hide and seek, hide and switch, and all different kinds of games. We had like a little softball league in the neighborhood. Every afternoon after supper, when it got cool, we'd all go outside. There were kids of all ages, and they would choose up sides. And then we'd have a softball game in the sandlot, almost every afternoon/evening.

**Ms. West:** I ask all the people I interview about a game that we played during the War, and no one has ever mentioned it. Did you have any special games that you played as a child relating to the War?

**Mr. Moses:** No, I don't think so. I can't think of any. We played cops and robbers, and things like that. There were sandbanks and things to play in.

**Ms. West:** But this wasn't relating to the War. Since this is your interview, I won't elaborate on the game. But when the tape is off, I'll tell you about the game that we played in my neighborhood. And I've interviewed people who are probably in the same age bracket, and no one else has played this game.

**Mr. Moses:** Well, maybe I did or didn't. But I can't think of which game you mean.

**Ms. West:** It was a circle game that you played in the street. And the game was called War.

**Mr. Moses:** No, but we played dodge ball in a circle.

**Ms. West:** The game was called War, and it was one of the things that we played during the War. Of all the people I have interviewed, and most in our age bracket, nobody has ever mentioned that game. No one has mentioned playing kick the can, either. Did you ever play kick the can?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh sure, all the time.

**Ms. West:** Nobody ever mentioned playing kick the can.

**Mr. Moses:** Kick the can is one game that we played in the evening. It was dusk then, so it was easy to do that one. Sure, we played kick the can. We played Red Rover, and we played jump rope.

**Ms. West:** What favorite radio programs did you listen to?

**Mr. Moses:** I really didn't have any favorites. I remember coming home for lunch, and there would be a program on, but I can't think of the name of it. A certain time of day the radio would be on, and I'd hear certain programs like a soap opera type, I guess.

**Ms. West:** Did you ever listen to Jack Armstrong?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, yes, the All-American Boy. I belonged to the fan club and had his ring and all his codes. And I listened to the Lone Ranger.

**Ms. West:** Did you have his decoder ring?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, yes. And Stella Dallas used to be on in the evening. I remember hearing her a bit.

**Ms. West:** Well, that was a soap opera, right. Do you remember Uncle Don?

**Mr. Moses:** No, I don't remember.

**Ms. West:** Uncle Don taught the children manners like "Don't be a goop and slurp your soup."

**Mr. Moses:** I don't remember that. We were taught that stuff, but I don't remember learning it from Uncle Don. I was thinking of another game we played, but I lost my train of thought. It may come back to me.

**Ms. West:** Did you have any heroes?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't think so. Well, I looked at teachers as heroes. All through elementary school, especially, I was very fond of my teachers. I was what you would call the teacher's pet, maybe. I always liked to do things for them, and I would correct papers and things after school. But I didn't have any set heroes that I know of.

**Ms. West:** What were the medical practices at that time?

**Mr. Moses:** The physicians made house calls in those days. The hospitals were there, also.

**Ms. West:** Anyone could go to any and all of the hospitals?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't know about any and all, but I only know of certain ones. And they accepted everybody, yes.

**Ms. West:** What were the dress fads of your day?

**Mr. Moses:** The clothes that my older brother had. (laughter) Hair was the thing in those days. The males would have a rooster comb in the front of their hair.

**Ms. West:** The what?

**Mr. Moses:** They called it the rooster comb, because the front of your hair would be up. You would leave it longer than the rest, and it would stick up. And there were all those greases that you used to slick your hair down with the stocking caps. I don't know how they did that, but that was the thing then. The slicker it was the better you were.

**Ms. West:** Well, that's what they were doing.

**Mr. Moses:** That's right. As far as clothes, we just wore the clothes of the day. I can remember knickers and those things, and wearing out the knees.

**Ms. West:** Did you wear peg pants?

**Mr. Moses:** Nope. I would not wear peg pants. I don't think my mother would ever have let me have them in the first place.

**Ms. West:** What type of music did you like?

**Mr. Moses:** I liked all kinds of music.

**Ms. West:** When you were a young rebel rouser, what kind of music did you buy?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, I wasn't a rebel rouser, I was a gospel person.

**Ms. West:** You weren't into big bands?

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, yes, I went to hear big bands. We went to the Apollo many times, but it didn't really faze me that much.

**Ms. West:** You didn't go to the Savoy?

**Mr. Moses:** No, I don't remember going there. They would take us to the Apollo. And we went to the ballgames and things of that sort.

**Ms. West:** You like sports then, right?

**Mr. Moses:** I like sports, but I have to have a definite interest in the teams that are playing in order to get wrapped up in it. In high school I could get into their game, but I didn't care about the other sports that much. In the house my older brother was a Yankee fan, my dad was a Giant fan, and there was a Dodger fan. And there was always a fuss to get the radio. So when dad was home, he got it. We had those little rivals in the house about the different ballgames and things of that sort.

**Ms. West:** Who was the first President that you remember?

**Mr. Moses:** Roosevelt.

**Ms. West:** What do you remember about him?

**Mr. Moses:** I remember when he died. And I remember some of his sayings. I was not a political person at all, but I remember he said, "I hate war. Eleanor hates war. And Fala hates war, too." That was the dog. (Laughter)

**Ms. West:** They hated war, right?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, they hated war. And I remember when he died, I was working in a poultry market.

**Ms. West:** You were just a kid at that time.

**Mr. Moses:** I don't know what year he died, but I think I was in high school.

**Ms. West:** You are the same age as one of my brothers, so you were not a little kid. Is there any particular newspaper headline that might stand out in your mind?

**Mr. Moses:** No. I remember Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning. And the news came trickling in. Hours later, we got the news. I look today and see the cameras on the scene, and we get it instantly now. But I remember Pearl Harbor. I was never in the War, by the way. I am the only one of the boys who wasn't in the Service. I missed that because when I was eighteen, they were drafting still. I went up for my physical the spring of my senior year in high school. I passed everything with a 1A, as they called it. And I was deferred until graduation. So that's why I hadn't planned to go to college, because I thought I was going to be in the Army. A week before graduation, they declared a draft holiday. As much as I loved my country, if they didn't need me, I wasn't going. So I didn't go. Then that

summer, I contracted Bell's Palsy. It's a temporary paralysis of the facial nerves on one side. And I've had it ever since. You may notice my eye, that's Bell's Palsy.

**Ms. West:** Yes.

**Mr. Moses:** And that kept me out of the rest of the War. They would call me every six months for a recheck, because Bell's Palsy is supposed to be temporary. It comes and goes. But mine only improved to the state it's in now. But every six months they would call me for a physical. I was in college one time they called me for a recheck. And I told them to transfer me from Long Island to Oswego. But by the time the transfer was made, I was back on Long Island for the summer. So we played tag like that for awhile until one winter when they caught me in Syracuse. I was examined again, and then I didn't hear anymore. And I lost my draft card, but I didn't want to get a new one, because I think they thought I had been killed in Korea. I didn't want to stir them up, so I didn't bother getting another draft card.

**Ms. West:** I'm going to go back now to your days as a teacher. You were an Industrial Arts teacher?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes.

**Ms. West:** I was reading an article in the paper that was written about you. It mentioned about clubs and things that you had started in the school. Apparently the girls were omitted, but you changed that. Could you tell us a little something about how you did that in Red Bank?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, that's long and involved. I wanted to have an Industrial Arts Club, but I didn't want it to be just the same as a class. I wanted it to be something special. We had needs around the school, and our club started as a Stage Craft Club. We did staging. They were handpicked boys, and there were four from each grade, I believe. When I say handpicked, it wasn't like picking the cream of the crop. The reason they were in the Club was because the Club needed them, or they needed the Club. And only I knew which reason fit the individual. So I had a working nucleus, and I was working people into this Club. Once they came into the Club, they were in for life, really. Each year as they got older, they knew what activity was next, because they had done it before. So it made it very easy for me to do certain things. After the tenth year, we had a reunion every five years of Club members. We had Club reunions up to the twentieth year, which was my twenty-fifth year teaching. I can remember that night. It was a rainy night, but we had over two hundred people there, the members who came back. As I looked out over the room, it looked like one class to me. But as I think about it, many of them didn't know each other because they were from all different eras. But it was very nice. The motto of the club was "Be of service to the school and the community." The Club was all boys, because of the

requirement that they had to have the course Journal Shop I, which I taught. That's where I got to know the boys. That worked until I went into the office as a Vice-Principal. I insisted on keeping the Club when I went into the office, it was called the Industrial Arts Club. After awhile in the office, they said I wasn't Industrial Arts anymore. So we changed the name. I wanted to keep the initials the same, because we always referred to it as the IA Club. So I looked in the dictionary, and the only thing I could find that would come close to that was Instant Action. So it ended up as the Instant Action Club. Now because there was no longer a requirement of taking shop first, there was no way of keeping girls out. They had the same access to the Club as the boys did, and that's how girls came into the Club. Our Club was very instrumental in forming the National Clubs during a conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1964. They gave me a ring on the twentieth anniversary of the Club. That anniversary was more like a Roast Moses dinner, rather than the Club. They had gone and purchased this ring for me. I usually sent a letter every year to the Club members. And I told them it was the last reunion I would call because it was too big, they were moving all over the place, and I could no longer keep up with them.

**Ms. West:** That's very nice.

**Mr. Moses:** So I still hear from them and see them from time to time.

**Ms. West:** I understand that you also received some recognition from the State?

**Mr. Moses:** I received a lot of awards.

**Ms. West:** Tell us about the awards as far as your teaching is concerned. You helped to make a big difference in the County as an educator.

**Mr. Moses:** The first award of importance that I got was the Jaycee Award, which is for Distinguished Service or something like that. It was awarded to an outstanding young man in the community and voted upon by the members.

**Ms. West:** I see the book *Outstanding Young Men in America*.

**Mr. Moses:** That was an outcome of the Jaycee Award.

**Ms. West:** And you are in this book.

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, this is the one in 1965. And that is an outcome of the Distinguished Service Award that I got from the Jaycees.

**Ms. West:** For the work that you have done in the community.

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, for my overall work in the school, community, and so forth. Most of my awards are all tied in with the community; I was active in the

community. I started teaching Arts and Crafts in the summer on the playgrounds, and I taught that for about a year. And then I became the Supervisor of all the playgrounds for a few years. The Recreation Directors always told me they wanted me to come and be their fulltime Assistant. They were political jobs, and I told them they had to be kidding. I told them if they thought I was going to quit my job and become a political assistant, they were wrong. But on at least two occasions, I was the Acting Director of the Parks and Recreation of Red Bank for a year at a time. I was a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment in Red Bank for many years, and there were so many different little clubs I belonged to. I was on the Halloween Parade and Carnival Committee and all kinds of things like that. I have been a member of the Red Bank Juvenile Conference Committee since the mid 1950s. The Board of Adjustment is an interesting committee. I was appointed by the mayor.

**Ms. West:** Who was the mayor at that time?

**Mr. Moses:** I can't remember, but there were several. I was appointed by several mayors, and that's what I am going to tell you. The committee appointment is by the mayor. What they intended, I learned later, is to school you for the council, to be a council member in their party. But I'm not a party person. I would always do what I felt was best for the people in the community, and that's the way I have been and will always be. I remember one day when we had a primary election. After school I went to the Recreation Office. The secretary worked during the day, and I would come and join her after school. One day I came in after school, and she asked me if I had voted yet. She said they came over from the "other building" and told her to go vote, and to be sure to vote the right way. I said, "Oh, did they? I wish they'd come and tell me that." So no one bothered me, because I wasn't about to be moved around to do what someone else wanted me to do. I was appointed by a Republican mayor and a Democratic mayor, as an alternate member of the Zoning Board. Well, after a few years, I started seeing people coming and going, and I was making every meeting, and they weren't. So I told them either I got appointed to a full seat on the Zoning Board or not to bother appointing me at all. So I got a full seat. I wouldn't be moved to the political aspect that people wanted, and I wasn't moving fast enough in that respect. I never wanted to be on the Borough Council, and I didn't want to have anything to do with politics of that nature. So one year I looked in the paper at the appointees, and I noticed I wasn't appointed anymore. So I called the mayor and told him he could have at least told me he wasn't going to reappoint me. And he said, "Well, you know politics." As a matter of fact, he's on the back of this paper that I'm on now. (Laughter)

**Ms. West:** I'll have to go home and read it.

**Mr. Moses:** He is on the back page, and he retired from a government position. Anyway, he said, "You know how politics are." They get the idea that people are representing people, as such. And I was never representing so-called Black

people, I was representing all the people, and I happened to be Black. But they thought I should be representing the Blacks. So they got another man who was going to go into the political area, and he was a Black man, and they put him in my seat. They told me that he made no meetings at all, and he just fizzled out and didn't do anything. But I was not going to be moved by politics to do something I didn't want to do.

**Ms. West:** Yes, you have your principles.

**Mr. Moses:** Absolutely! And I would always go out and check the areas; I wasn't just a committee member. If there was going to be zoning and your property was a residential property, I would go and talk to you. I would ask you what we could do to make you more comfortable in your setting. And that's the kind of person I was.

**Ms. West:** What were some of your other awards?

**Mr. Moses:** I received the National Recreation Committee's Award for Outstanding Contributions; it was interesting to note that the same year I received the individual award, my Industrial Arts Club received the club or group award. In 1970, I received Princeton University's Award as the Outstanding Secondary Teacher of the Year for the State of New Jersey. Then I received the Jewish Veteran's Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Community. All of these awards, I am sure, were because of the contributions my Industrial Arts Club made to the school and community.

**Ms. West:** If you were to describe your life as a roadmap, how would you describe it?

**Mr. Moses:** I'd describe it like a book that I thought about writing. As a matter of fact, there were two books that I thought about writing. One is about my life, and I may still do it if I live long enough. And the title I have for that would be similar to *Rags to Riches*. But that name is too common, so I have to find something that means the same thing. But that is my life. My oldest brother, who was a musician, stayed in a South teaching. He was a Vice-Principal in a Southern school even when they integrated. He was integrated into the schools down there. When he retired, I wasn't at his dinner, but someone said that he and a friend of his that he grew up with said, "You know, when we were growing up, we were poor. But nobody told us, and we never knew. By the standards of the day, we were poor. But we always had clean clothes, food, a clean bed, and we never knew we were poor." Mother used to change our clothes twice a day. And in those days, you starched and ironed things. Mother did that for all the boys every day; she kept us all neat and clean. But we were poor. And I'm still poor, by the way. I just enjoy life.

**Ms. West:** What would you say has been your greatest achievement?

**Mr. Moses:** (Laughter)

**Ms. West:** Nothing comes to mind? That's ok. Well what is the most unusual thing about yourself?

**Mr. Moses:** Perhaps my ability to get along with people. That's true. I make friends very easily.

**Ms. West:** In what way is your life different today than what you thought it might have been when you were a youngster?

**Mr. Moses:** I had no idea as to what life was going to be. I often say when I went into teaching, all I wanted was to make enough money to live on comfortably. And I haven't done that yet.

**Ms. West:** Oh gosh! (Laughter)

**Mr. Moses:** It's always a struggle, but I never intended to be rich.

**Ms. West:** Is there anything that you would like to accomplish that you feel you haven't yet?

**Mr. Moses:** There are two things that I would like to do, but I probably won't. I would like to write those two books. One would be on my life, which I think would be rather interesting. And I guess I daydream about that now. I go into my past a lot now, and I saw someplace that it is one sign of old age. But I reminisce with myself. I play piano by ear, and it's Christian music usually. And that's amusement for myself. The other book I wanted to write is about how we are letting our kids down. This subject has been written about a lot lately, and may have been worn out. It would be based on the interviews that I had with my various students down through the years. It would be how we, as adults, are letting them down, and don't know it. And that is what I would like to have done. It's a hard one to do, because I've got to do it. But I just haven't had the time to really sit down and do it. I don't sit down and do things like that very often.

**Ms. West:** Thinking along those lines, if you could chose a symbol to represent your life, what would that symbol be?

**Mr. Moses:** I guess a cross would be my symbol. My life has been pretty much geared around the things of the Lord.

**Ms. West:** Does the state of the world today bother you?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't let it bother me, I don't think. I live each day at a time, as they come. And that's what I try to do. I take them as they come.

**Ms. West:** Dealing with youngsters and young adults, if someone came to you for advice, what would you tell them?

**Mr. Moses:** It depends what they wanted, or what they needed. Every individual is different. It depends upon certain things as to what advice you could give. That is what I used to say in school. I had slogans on the wall in the back of my desk like, "My mind is not made up, confuse me only with the facts." I would tell them they had to give me the facts before I could give them advice. My advice would have no bearing and wouldn't work if they didn't. So it depends on what the facts are as to what advice would be given, as I see it.

**Ms. West:** When you look back and see how things were in the past, how would you like to see things now?

**Mr. Moses:** Look at the schools, for example. The way the children are today bothers me.

**Ms. West:** How do you find the children today?

**Mr. Moses:** Basically horrible. I could not be in my job today. They would have fired me or locked me up long ago. Much of the time, I blame this current situation on the home. If the children are not taught to respect their home, don't expect them to respect anybody else. And many of them are not made to respect home. They call their parents by their first name, and there are children having children. And that's another thing that doesn't help at all. But the attitude of the young people really bothers me. Now again, I am not speaking about all young people. Since I have been retired, if something happens, they say, "If Mr. Moses was here, that wouldn't be happening." And you can't say that if I was there things wouldn't happen, but that's the way they felt. I meant what I said, and I said what I meant, usually. And they knew that. The former administrator said that I meant business, but it was fun. There is a time and a place for everything, as in Ecclesiastes. I say that to my grandson a lot. All I have to say is, "Ecclesiastes," and he knows what that means.

**Ms. West:** Is there any place in Monmouth County that has any historical significance to you? Maybe besides Red Bank?

**Mr. Moses:** Let's take a look at the County a minute. When I first started teaching in Red Bank, they built the first cafeteria in the high school. I was on lunch duty, and they gave me this because I could do such a good job with them. And I enjoyed being on lunch duty. And sometimes I would sit down and have a sandwich with them. I always trained my classes not to do something because I am present, but to do it because it is the thing to do. And so I made myself absent a lot so that they would go on as though I were there. Too often we think we can fool around when the boss is gone. I didn't want to train them that way. In the cafeteria, in the 1950s, all the Black students would be grouped together on

one side. And only I could do this, because I was Black. I walked up and said to them, "You know, if I put a sign on this table that said 'Colored Only,' you would be up in arms. But look at yourselves." I just let them know that I wanted them to look at themselves. When they complain about prejudice and integration, I wanted them to look at how they were behaving. Toward the end of the year, the Superintendent walked in and said to me, "Tell me, John, where did we go wrong?" And I said, "Dr. Hibbs, we didn't go wrong. We've done nothing wrong, and we do nothing wrong." He said, "John, what have we done wrong?" And I said, "Nothing. What we have here is lunchtime, which is free time. When you are on free time, you spend that time with the people you associate with in your own neighborhood. Until the living and housing conditions change in the Borough, you will have this problem." Well, we decided we wanted to do something more about it, so the following year we started seating them alphabetically. And the students didn't know why we were doing this. But that mixed it up, and they all became friends with each other, even more so than they would have. And that has worked out very nicely. And the housing has also somewhat changed in the Borough, which gave some improvement to that, too.

**Ms. West:** Can you explain how housing has changed?

**Mr. Moses:** At the time, there were two basic areas that the Black people lived in. There was the west side and a section on the extreme east side. Those were the only areas where you had Black people. That has changed, and people have spread out. But before that, I wanted to find another house. My little bungalow was getting too small, and I wanted to get another place. I wanted to stay in Red Bank because my activities and things were in Red Bank. So I would look in the paper and find a house, and if I saw something I liked, I would drive by and see if I liked the outside. There was no sense going inside if I didn't like the outside. I found one house that I wanted to look further at. I called the number, and the person called me back. After he found out that I was Black, he told me the house was no longer on the market. And I told him that was kind of strange. And he happened to be a Councilman, and that made it even worse to me. So I moved out of the Borough eventually, to Tinton Falls. There was no place that I could find that I wanted in the Borough. And I had another episode with race in the Borough, and it was on the First Aid Squad. In the 1960s you had to be a fireman first in order to be a first aid man. And I was interested in becoming a first aid person. I had a receiving radio in my car that somebody made for me when I was the Supervisor of the playgrounds, so I would know if anything was going on when I went from playground to playground. I would often hear the ambulance calls. They had eventually separated the firemen from the first aid, and you could be a first aid person without first being a fireman. So I thought I might like to try that and be of assistance in the Borough. I set out to do that, and I found out that I was Blackballed from getting on the first aid squad. Well that disturbed me, because I was often telling the young men at school how they should become active in the community and not just hang on the street corner, etc. So I went to the Council. If I had known then what I learned that night, I wouldn't have gone. I

thought the firehouses were owned by the Borough, and that the Council had some jurisdiction over them. Well, I came to find out that the firehouses were basically owned by the firemen associations, and the Borough had nothing much to say about them, except they gave them contributions. So that attempt didn't work. And I told them that it was a shame, because I had certification as a Red Cross teacher. And at that time, the people on the squad had to have a refresher course each year given by a person certified to give that, which I could do. Being the person that I am, and knowing a lot of people, this refusal tore up families because they were in dispute over whether or not I should be allowed to join. One man asked his friend, "How would you like to go to a clam bake and have your wife dancing with him?" Little did they know that I wasn't interested in clam bakes or any of the socials, because I had no time for those things. I was just interested in serving as a first aid person. But I was not chosen. But now they have come a long way, and they have Black men on the fire department and first aid squad.

**Ms. West:** Do they have their own?

**Mr. Moses:** No. They are mixed in with the others.

**Ms. West:** They are mixed in, very good.

**Mr. Moses:** After I tried to join and could not, I was at once a football game and heard the first aid squad over the radio. I heard, "Red Bank first aid squad, first call." Then I heard the second and third calls, but they couldn't get anybody to respond. And sometimes they would have to call people from another district, and all because they refused to let those who wanted to serve, serve. So I guess they got pressured, more or less, by lack of manpower to allow Blacks to participate. And now they do.

**Ms. West:** It's just a shame what things had to come to.

**Mr. Moses:** As far as being accepted in the school, I never... The Superintendent again came by the end of my first year there, and he said, "Thanks for a fine job well done." And I told him that if there was anyone who didn't want me there, he did a fine job of concealing it. I didn't go looking for trouble, and sometimes if you don't look for it, you don't see it.

**Ms. West:** Before they built the new high school in Red Bank, what was the ratio of whites to Black in your high school?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't know what the ratio was, but it is the same as now. It hasn't changed. Red Bank supplies a large number of Black students, and as a matter of fact, at the time there were no Black students in either Shrewsbury or Little Silver. Maybe there was one family, and that was all. And that has also changed. Blacks are living in those areas as well.

**Ms. West:** What else would you like to tell us?

**Mr. Moses:** One thing was interesting to me. The students had sit-ins, and people were demanding different things. Some of the Blacks wanted to have some demands, as well. So one day, they walked out of the school. I remember being near the door when they were walking out. And one said to me, "Are you with us, Mr. Moses?" And I said, "I'm with you when you are right. But I represent all the children of all the people. I can't just side with one group because they decide they want to do something." I told them if they would just let me know what they wanted, we could go about it a different way, instead of making demands. When demands are made on some people, they just freeze up. And you can get the same thing without making demands. So they started working that route, pretty much.

**Ms. West:** What are some of the major changes that you have seen in this country over the years?

**Mr. Moses:** I have seen the integration take place in the South. And another thing that would be interesting to note is that I am the only member of my family who went to school in the North. Everyone kids me about that, because I didn't want to go in the South. The reason they went to school in the South originally was because my grandmother lived in the college town. They could go and establish residence with her and save on tuition. By the time I came along, my grandmother had passed on. So there was no need for me to follow that route. So I went up North. But everyone talks about the prejudice of the South, and how you can't do this or that. In the North, I found the prejudice is worse, in many instances, because it is hidden. It is under cover, and it shows up at different times and in different ways. If I went to a hotel and walked up to the desk to get a room, I would not get a room. This was in New York State, and it was because I was Black. So what I had to do all through the years was to prearrange, pre-register, and pre-pay. Then, when I walked in with a reservation, they couldn't deny me a room. And that was the case in the early days, but that no longer happens. As a matter of fact, they cater to me. I used to take boys up to a conference in my college town in upstate New York once a year. The boys were amazed that I would pull up, after driving 400 miles or so, at the motel. But I had already made the reservations. And the person would say, "How are you, Mr. Moses? Did you have a good trip?" And the boys couldn't understand how I could be called by my name that far away. But they didn't like high school kids in hotels, because they would break things or take things. But I told them that I was with the students I brought, and I guaranteed them that there would be nothing taken out of that room, because I was staying in the room with them. So after the first time, I had full access to the facilities. They then knew we would take care of their facilities. Again, I don't look at color. I was Black and bringing Black people with me, but we were accepted.

**Ms. West:** You have to be realistic.

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, right.

**Ms. West:** You were the first Black, or African-American teacher in the County and in Red Bank High School. How many Black teachers are there now?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't know. Let me say this to you about being the first Black school teacher. I was shortly elected as the Vice President of the Teacher's Association for Red Bank. Within a month of my serving as Vice President, the President died. And then I was made the President, and I served as President over seven years.

**Ms. West:** So you were the first Black President of the Association, as well.

**Mr. Moses:** Oh, yes. I only got out when my doctor told me about my health, and I was getting into too many things. And my doctor was a Black board member. So I resigned as President, and they put me on the Welfare Committee. It is a negotiating team, and it was more work than being the President. But I didn't notice any prejudice towards me as a person or towards Black people. I know the Superintendent of Schools in Long Branch now. He was my student. And I can remember some of the guidance counselors thinking that person wasn't going to make it, and there was no sense in him going to college. And they did that with a lot of people. But things didn't always work out the way they thought they were going to work out. I was talking to him just a few weeks ago about that. He is Argentinean, but he was of a different background and did well.

**Ms. West:** So you never know. Lots of times when people try to discourage you, they are really encouraging you.

**Mr. Moses:** And I told my students that I was often considered being prejudiced towards the Black students. And I said maybe I was harder on them than I was on the white students, without knowing it. I told them they had to be better than the other person in order to get the best job. I told them to work to capacity and do the best that they could.

**Ms. West:** What is your greatest strength?

**Mr. Moses:** The Lord is my greatest strength.

**Ms. West:** What are your greatest values?

**Mr. Moses:** I don't think along those lines. I don't look at strength as such, I just do what needs to be done. I know I am learning to say no. I always tried to help whenever I could. But I have learned to be a little more prudent with my yes's and nos. And I have had some health problems, too, down through the years. So I have to be a little more careful. Here's another change. Years ago, our band started having exchange concerts with another band. We would go to their

school for two or three days, and they would do the same. When they did this, the students lived with the other students. That's the only way we could afford to do this. The students lived with other students, and the chaperones stayed in a motel. They only went North to Pennsylvania, New England, and places like that. I often wanted to have an exchange concert with my brother's band in South Carolina. And of course that was an all Black situation, and that was almost impossible to even think about. By the time we started going to the South, he was gone. He wasn't dead yet, but he was in another position.

**Ms. West:** And the school sponsored this program?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes.

**Ms. West:** That's interesting. That's nice.

**Mr. Moses:** I don't know if they still do it or not. But the band was invited to go to Disney World three times, and to several World Fairs. And they went to the Yankee Stadium. I remember when I went with the band the first time we went South over land. I had flown over Carolina; I flew to Disney World with my daughter, when she was about five years old. When I was about seventeen years old, my younger brother and I were going to go South to visit my sister and brother. We were going to go down by train. They put us in the Jim Crow car in Penn Station, New York, so we would not have to make any changes at Washington. Years ago you rode in any car you wanted to from New York to Washington. But when you got to the Mason Dixon Line, you had to change to the segregated cars. So we were in the segregated car already, so we wouldn't have to make the change in Washington. I didn't notice much difference, really, except that the coal from the train would come in that car. That's why it's the first car. The car behind the engine is the one that the Blacks rode in. We went down fine, and then we had some time in a town. And the station had signs all over that said "Colored" and "White." We went to get a bus ticket at a drugstore, and the drugstore was on a corner. We went in the main door of the drugstore, and we walked through the store to the back of the store where they had the bus tickets. We got there, and the man said, "You are from up North, aren't you?" And we asked how he knew that. And he said, "Because you are supposed to come in that door right there." You were supposed to come in the side door so you didn't walk through the store and bother anything. So I thought we had better get out of there. And then we went to a movie, and we were put in a balcony. And I thought that was strange, because normally you would have to pay more to get in the balcony. I thought that was strange that all the Blacks were put in the balcony, and I thought it would be easy to hurt somebody and just throw some bricks over and get a few of them. But then I figured that wouldn't work because they would kill everybody up in the balcony. (laughter) Then we went to the station to take a train, and the train came in. There was practically no room in the Black car. To my surprise, they moved the people out of the second car back further, and opened the second car to the Blacks. We got into that car, and then I noticed the

difference. The seats in that car were plush, like you would have on a touring bus. But the seats in the Black car were leather seats, like you have in a school bus. That was the difference in the seating on the train. Then we came back, and I thought I better get out of there before they found something I did wrong and lynch me. My daughter was in college in Lynchburg when I took her one time I decided to go on down to South Carolina to see my brother. I told him to tie everything down because I was coming like a tornado to South Carolina. So I spent the weekend with him, and there were no problems. When our band went to Durham, North Carolina, the students stayed with different people. They tried to group as much as they could, but you couldn't always group them into Black and white.

**Ms. West:** How did the students react to separating the Blacks from the whites in the South?

**Mr. Moses:** They only separated some of them where they were living, to make them more comfortable. The place where my daughter and another girl was, was not a good house at all. They stayed one night there, and then we didn't let them go back there. We took them to the motel with us. We told them to tell the people they were sick, and they were sick...sick of the mess they were in. After that, they went down to Orlando.

**Ms. West:** The white youngsters, never experiencing something like that before, did they have any reaction of any kind?

**Mr. Moses:** It wasn't really that bad, and there weren't that many of them, anyway. I don't recall any problems.

**Ms. West:** Well hearing about something is one thing, and seeing it is another. So I just wondered what their reaction was when they saw it firsthand.

**Mr. Moses:** There was nothing they could do. They felt terrible about it, and sometimes we wouldn't go to a place where they had segregation. Well, it worked out well and was a good education for all of them to see what happens. There are places where a Black person goes to a restaurant with a group of white people, and they won't serve the Black person, so they all leave. I never had any problems with that in my moving around.

**Ms. West:** How did you find things here in the County?

**Mr. Moses:** Only with the housing, that I told you about. I didn't notice anything else. However when I came, Long Branch had just integrated the school. It was in the 1950s, as I understand. The school on Liberty Street had just become integrated. It used to be the primary Black school because it was located in the Black section. And they had you by your district. And that's another interesting thing to know, the regionalization of the school. Red Bank became regionalized

in the high school, ninth through twelfth grade. The districts from Little Silver and Shrewsbury sent their students to Red Bank on a tuition basis. And because they were so close together, there was a great deal of talk about regionalizing on a K-12 basis, all the way, which would cut expenses down, etc. Well, the other districts weren't too keen about that, because the neighborhood kids would have to be bused to another area, just to integrate them sooner. And they wouldn't do it. As a result, they are waiting on regionalizing it in the ninth grade. The white students coming in from the other districts are made to be very fearful of the Blacks from Red Bank, because that's the way it is talked up. And so extortion can often take place because you are expecting it. If those kids were allowed to go to school together at an earlier age, they would be totally friendly with each other. Kids don't know anything about their color. And that reminds me about something else. When I was a mail carrier in Port Washington, I walked up to a door and a two year old said, "Mommy, mommy, we have a chocolate mailman today." And she was embarrassed, but the kid was only saying what she knew. I was brown, and brown was chocolate to her. I felt sorry for the mom because she was embarrassed. A few days later, the exact same thing repeated itself, except this child said, "Mommy, we got a nigger mailman today." And that's when I began to really see that children go by what they are taught. They had to be taught to say something like that. The first child was being natural, but the other was taught that Black represented "nigger."

**Ms. West:** Well, it was a sign of the times. It was unfortunate, but that was life then.

**Mr. Moses:** Some people didn't like my carrying their mail. One man called the post office and told them he didn't want any kid bringing his mail around. He said, "If that kid that brings the mail around is a day over twelve, I'll eat my hat." And the Supervisor said, "Would you like mustard, or salt and pepper on your hat? The kid who brought your mail today is an eighteen year old high school graduate." So that kind of stopped him. Is there anything else you can think of to get me started again?

**Ms. West:** I'm looking here to see if I missed anything.

**Mr. Moses:** Churches were very much, and still are, segregated. The most segregated time in America is 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning. I can remember when my wife was appointed to the Board of Education in Red Bank. She was appointed to fulfill a term. Then she decided to run for another term. We had belonged to an integrated church, and we still do. This person came up the street and said to her, "Now, if you want to win the election, you better get out and start campaigning in the churches." And my wife told her she wasn't running for the election on a popularity basis or because of color, and church was not the place to campaign for an election. The idea of the old church being used for everything by the Blacks is still very much in effect in many places. The church was the only place they had for a meeting place, so the church wasn't just a religious place.

That was the only place where they could do anything. A lot of places won't drop that. Anyway, we didn't change any of our habits, and it was very strange how the election came out. She won! But not in that district. She did not win the Black district.

**Ms. West:** Really!

**Mr. Moses:** Some people are geared toward a certain color. And if you don't do something, then you are no good. And you can do just as good for them without segregation. As a matter of fact, I hate segregation in any form. But a lot of it we do ourselves.

**Ms. West:** Is there anything else you want to say?

**Mr. Moses:** I can't think of anything.

**Ms. West:** I know the library has appreciated everything that you have told me this morning. If there is anything else that we can think of, please mention it.

**Mr. Moses:** I just can't think of everything that happens, but I hope I have discussed some of the things you might be looking for.

**Ms. West:** Thank you very much.