

**BEYOND
BALTIMORE
STREET**

Living Lumbee Legacies

James Earl Locklear Oral History Interview

Ashley Minner Jones

October 30, 2024

Dundalk, Maryland

This oral history was recorded for *Beyond Baltimore Street: Living Lumbee Legacies*, a project of Ashley Minner Art, LLC, with support from a 2024 Library of Congress American Folklife Center Community Collections Grant.

Field Notes

Interviewee: James Earl Locklear (JEL)

Age: 82

Sex: Male

Occupation: Retired Painter

Residence: Dundalk, Maryland

Tribal Affiliation: Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

Interviewer: Ashley Minner Jones [AMJ]

Location of Interview: Dundalk, Maryland

Date of Interview: October 30, 2024

Time of Interview: 1:00 PM ET

Transcriber: Emily Minner

Key Words

Red Springs, Raeford, North Carolina, Lumbee, travel, bolos, farming, cotton, tobacco, painter, work, shipyard, aircraft carrier, sandblasting, Broadway, Orleans Street, cooking, markets, Cicero's, Moonlight, dancing, games, family, visiting, Dundalk, Bethlehem Steel, animals, education, church, music, love

Abstract

James Earl Locklear (Lumbee) is originally from Red Springs, North Carolina. He migrated to Baltimore when he was 17 years old and now considers Maryland home. He likes to wear American Indian-style bolo ties and ball caps, which sometimes spark questions from strangers. He enjoys sharing about his heritage. He is proud of his people and says it's important to represent who you are. For the last 21 years of his career as an industrial painter, James Earl owned his own successful business, Native American Painting, Inc. He attends South Broadway Baptist Church and enjoys walking Eastpoint Mall with friends. He doesn't think there will be an Indian community in Baltimore in 10 or 20 years due to a lack of support, but he hopes the community will grow and that people will return to church. He also hopes people will begin to show more love for one another.

James Earl Locklear (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina), interview by Ashley Minner Jones, October 30, 2024, for *Beyond Baltimore Street: Living Lumbee Legacies*, Community Collections Program, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. AFC 2024/002

Index

- [00:00:18] James introduces himself and shares that people call him Earl in North Carolina.
- [00:01:33] James recalls visiting Oklahoma and his experiences meeting a chief and taking a tour of their Native community.
- [00:03:03] James describes a bolo he's wearing and shares that it's a conversation piece and important to his identity.
- [00:03:57] James shares where he was born and why he came to Baltimore
- [00:04:56] James talks about the difficulties of farm life and how he began his career as a painter.
- [00:06:13] James recalls working in 16 states and visiting many different countries.
- [00:07:08] James talks about his family and what it was like working on their family farm together.
- [00:10:21] James recalls his reaction to arriving in Baltimore for the first time.
- [00:13:17] James recalls living with his uncle and early morning trips to the market.
- [00:18:13] James shares that he met his wife at a bar and asked her to dance.
- [00:19:48] James provides background on his wife's family and shares that they were accepting of him.
- [00:21:07] James recalls racial segregation he experienced in Raeford, North Carolina.
- [00:24:07] James talks about growing up with his cousins and describes a ball game they played together as children.
- [00:26:29] James talks about his job as a painter and explains the process of painting large ships.
- [00:31:18] James shares a story about a young man who died falling from scaffolding while painting.
- [00:39:15] James shares some of the famous stacks he's painted during his career.
- [00:42:44] James explains that he traveled a lot during his career and retired to spend more time with his family.
- [00:44:42] James talks about the animals around his home and feeding squirrels.
- [00:46:46] James recalls buying his current home to please his wife.

[00:53:50] James shares the differences between Baltimore and North Carolina and explains life is easier in Baltimore.

[00:55:55] James shares that his family valued education but he preferred to travel.

[00:55:29] James talks about traveling to North Carolina to visit family and friends.

[01:00:57] James describes how he makes savory hushpuppies.

[01:03:46] James talks about the ways his sense of style has changed since living in Baltimore.

[01:04:43] James recalls dancing to rock and roll and shares some of his favorite musicians.

[01:07:54] James talks about taking donations to Dakota children with his friends for Christmas.

[01:10:37] James shares that he hopes people in the world will show more love to one another.

Transcript

Ashley Minner Jones [AMJ]: [00:00:00] Hello, my name is Ashley Minner Jones. It is October 30th 2024, and I have come to interview an amazing person for Beyond Baltimore Street, our oral history and photo documentary project that celebrates the vibrant, fascinating everyday lives of Baltimore Lumbee elders. What is your name sir?

James Earl Locklear [JEL]: James Locklear. James E. Locklear.

[AMJ]: What does the E stand for?

[JEL]: Earl.

[AMJ]: And you were telling me some people call you James, and some people call you Earl?

[JEL]: Yes. Yes, they do. North Carolina, they call Earl. In Maryland, most of them call me James.

[AMJ]: How come?

[JEL]: I don't know. It's, (laughter) [00:00:40] uh, that's the difference in the two-two ways of living I guess, you know. The south is a lot different than the up north people, you know, for some reason, I don't know.

[AMJ]: So are you a-a down south person or an up north person now?

[JEL]: Well, I guess I'm up north because I came here when I was 17. Now I'm 82, so I've been here for a long time. This is, my family used to say, when you goin' come home? I say come home? I'm at home. I spent 17 years down in North Carolina (laughs) so I-I think I'm home up here.

[AMJ]: So where are you from in North Carolina?

[JEL]: Uh, Red Springs, North Carolina.

[AMJ]: And how would you explain who you are to someone who doesn't already know you?

[JEL]: [00:01:28] I don't know, not never thought about myself before. How would? (laughter) I really.

[AMJ]: Well, I know you like to visit. In your life, you have visited a lot of places. You like to travel. So when you go meet these other Indians in their communities, how do you tell them who you are?

[JEL]: Well, I tell 'em, you know, I'm a Lumbee Indian and uh, I just like to sit down and talk to them and hear more about their history, you know, what-what was going on. Like when I went to Oklahoma to Anadarko and I met the chief there and they have a replica set up of the twenty-seven tribes of Indians that was there at one time. Andrew Jackson had sent them there and uh, he took me and my wife on a tour of the, to dwellings. You know, where they, how they lived. And it took us about two hours to go to this-this thing. And when we finished up and was getting ready to leave, he said to me, he said, you know, he said I enjoyed this tour today with you and your wife. Said because uh, you were interested in what I was telling you about our people. He said, you know, a lot of people come down here and they think this is a joke. He says, this is not a joke, this is our lives, you know, and I-I really enjoyed talking to him. Yes.

[AMJ]: Are-are people ever really curious about where you come from and the communities there?

[JEL]: [00:02:51] Uh, well yes they, you know, 'cause I wear my [00:02:55] bolos and, you know, my-my Indian hat and stuff like that and it's a good conversation piece. People will stop you and ask you different things. You get to tell them about-about your tribe and what, you know what you know about 'em. It's uh, and I enjoy tellin' people, you know, I'm a-a Lumbee Indian from North Carolina, and I enjoy tellin' people that. Proud of my, proud of my people.

[AMJ]: Yeah, will you-will you tell me about the bolo you're wearing today?

[JEL]:[00:03:24] Uh, friend give me this bolo. It's an arrowhead, with a-a stone in it. Um, [00:03:32] I can't think of the name of it. Um.

[AMJ]: Turquoise?

[JEL]: Turquoise, yeah. Turquoise stone in it, yeah. But I have uh, [00:03:41] six seven, I guess six or seven bolos, different bolos that I wear.

[AMJ]: So it's important to represent who you are?

[JEL]: Yes, it is. Yes, it is. Very important. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [00:03:57] Um, will you tell me more about when and where you were born? When were you born?

[JEL]: I was born in 1942.

[AMJ]: [00:04:07] And you said Red Springs.

[JEL]: Red Springs, North Carolina.

[AMJ]: How did you grow up?

[JEL]: On the farm pickin' cotton, puttin' in tobacco. [00:04:17] A lot of work. Yes. Matter of fact, that's why I left when I was 17. [00:04:23] I got tired of pickin' cotton, [00:04:26] couldn't make no livin', just-just barely getting along and uh, I left and come to Baltimore.

[AMJ]: [00:04:35] Why Baltimore?

[JEL]: That's where uh, I had some cousins was up here and I had a sister up here and uh, an Uncle. I come up and stay with them and got me a job workin' and I knew when I was uh 15, what I was goin' to do for life. I don't know how I knew it but I did. I was goin' be a painter.

[AMJ]: [00:04:56] Did you have any experience painting at 15?

[JEL]: No, I didn't. Friend of mine was paintin' a water tank in Red Springs, North Carolina, at that time. He had got a job with a company out of Ohio, build water tank, and they were painting

and he got a job with them. He's making three dollars an hour. [00:05:15] I'm working in the cotton field all day long for two dollars and a half a day. [00:05:20] And that's not eight hours, that's from sun to sun. So I, when I heard what he was makin'. I said that's what I'm goin' do. And I came to Baltimore when I was 17 and my first job was paintin', got a job paintin'. I worked for a contractor 36 years and then uh, 1997, [00:05:40] I started my own business and I had that for 21 years.

[AMJ]: [00:05:45] What was the name of your business?

[JEL]: Native American Painting Inc. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [00:05:51] Were you real successful?

[JEL]: Yes, I think so. I think I was. Uh, [00:05:57] I mean, uh, I'm not rich but I-I-I got enough to get along and I've been, I got to, I got to do the visitin', I always like to visit people. I've been to, I don't know how many different states. I worked in 16 States. [00:06:13] Uh, I always wanted to go to Israel. Lord allowed me to go to Israel, Egypt, Jordan, [00:06:18] Canada, California, islands. I've been to 4 or 5 of the different islands, you know, so, the Lord's been good.

[AMJ]: Do you have any trips planned?

[JEL]: [00:06:30] Uh, not right now I don't since my wife passed away, I really ain't had much heart to. I mean I go down to North Carolina or go to Tennessee and visit my granddaughter, but that's about as far as I go now.

[AMJ]: When you go, do you drive?

[JEL]: Yeah. Yes, I do. Yeah.

[AMJ]: [00:06:47] Um, will you tell me a little bit more about when you were growing up? Do you have? You said you had a sister. Do you have? How many siblings in your family?

[JEL]: I had uh three girls and uh four girls and three boys.

[AMJ]: And where were you in the line up? Were you oldest? Middle?

[JEL]: I was-I was uh, [00:07:08] the fourth oldest and I got two sisters and a brother older than me. And then I got two sisters and a brother younger than me. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [00:07:19] And you all work the farm together?

[JEL]: Yeah. Yes, we did.

[AMJ]: What was that like?

[JEL]: [00:07:26] It was just hard work. It didn't uh, [00:07:30] when I was a kid you worked. I mean you didn't get up and go out in the yard and sit around and play all day. My mom would find somethin' for you to do. You-you just didn't sit around. She'd make work for you if you didn't have nothin' to do on the farm. She'd have somethin', she'd make up something for you to do, keep you busy. It was a hard life but a good life. People enjoyed life back then, seem like, you know, people get along so much better.

[AMJ]: [00:07:57] And uh, where was your sister living in Baltimore?

[JEL]: She'd livin' on Linwood Avenue.

[AMJ]: By the park?

[JEL]: Yeah, two what, she's two blocks from the park.

[AMJ]: [00:08:09] And uh, what brought her to Baltimore?

[JEL]: [00:08:14] Uh, work. Lookin' for a job, her and her husband.

[AMJ]: And she-she found one of course.

[JEL]: Yeah. Oh yeah. [00:08:22] Uh, do packin' company I believe it was, she worked at.

[AMJ]: [00:08:27] And did she get you a job?

[JEL]: Oh no. No, I got-I got, well, the guy that was workin' on the water tank in North Carolina, his brother was workin' on a job over by city jail. And uh, he got me a job with him.

[AMJ]: [00:08:43] So you started painting right away?

[JEL]: Started paintin' right away and that's-that's pretty much all I've ever done since I left the farm, is paint.

[AMJ]: [00:08:52] Were your parents upset you left?

[JEL]: [00:08:55] Uh, I don't think so. I-I think, I mean, they miss me, just like I miss them, but uh, they wanted me to do better, you know, have a better life than what I was, what I was having then.

[AMJ]: How did you get here when you came for the first time?

[JEL]: Uh, on the bus.

[AMJ]: What was that like?

[JEL]: (laughter) It was, it was an experience (laughter) [00:09:17] but uh, yeah, I-I uh, [00:09:21] I came here and on the bus. [00:09:26] The job I was doin', we finished up the job when I first started on that job, we finished that up in about three or four weeks. And uh, then, they asked me if I wanted to go to Boston, they had the job going in Boston. At S.O Standard Oil company, paintin' tanks. I said, sure, I'd love to go. So uh, I said, I'm goin' home cause I had a girlfriend down North Carolina, I was goin' back to see her and then I was goin' leave from there and go to Boston. And I caught the bus out of Raeford, North Carolina to Boston. I rode all night and all day the next day to about 4:00 o'clock when I got to Boston, the bus. And uh, [00:10:04] after that uh, [00:10:08] I didn't get a car. [00:10:11] I didn't get it-I didn't get a car til like 62, I believe. And I came up here in 59, mhm.

[AMJ]: Um, [00:10:21] do you remember? Did you have any big reaction when you saw Baltimore for the first time?

[JEL]: Oh yeah, I just couldn't believe it. Comin' into the city, see all them lights, you know. So my gosh, it's amazin'.

[AMJ]: Was it at night when you got here?

[JEL]: Yeah, mhm. [00:10:39] I think it must've been around 8:00 o'clock in the evening. It was- it was dark, you could see the lights shining, you know, the city was, it was amazing.

[AMJ]: What, uh, what time of year was it?

[JEL]: I got out of school June the 6th. [00:10:55] No, June the 7th, and uh, June the 14th I was in Baltimore.

[AMJ]: [00:11:00] So you had a plan, you knew what you were doing?

[JEL]: Mhm. Yeah.

[AMJ]: Did you come up all by yourself?

[JEL]: Yeah. Mhm. [00:11:09] But I had family up here. Yeah.

[AMJ]: [00:11:12] What uh, where did you stay the first night?

[JEL]: With my Uncle Cliff on Broadway.

[AMJ]: How was that?

[JEL]: (laughter) [00:11:21] That was-that was another experience. [00:11:24] I lived with him uh, [00:11:28] till I went home for Christmas in 60. Then I stayed home for about eight months and uh, then I come back to Baltimore after that and I've been here ever since.

[AMJ]: Were-that's a long stay, were you like trying to make up your mind if you were going to stay home or come back?

[JEL]: Well, yeah. I had this girlfriend down there. Did I? You know, I went back to see, which we have a son together. And uh, I went back to, went down to see her, but things didn't, things didn't work out.

[AMJ]: [00:12:03] Were there a lot of Indians living in Baltimore when you got here?

[JEL]: Yeah, it's quite a few. Yeah, because some of them come up in the 50s, you know, I mean in the early fifties, like in 52, 53, 54. People were leaving, North Carolina, they was goin' to Baltimore, New York, or Detroit. That's where the work was at.

[AMJ]: What were people doing in New York? I never hear that one.

[JEL]: Uh, I'm not sure exactly what they were doin' up there, but it's quite a few people up-up there. New York, yeah.

[AMJ]: Buffalo or New York City?

[JEL]: I think New York City. Yeah, New York City.

[AMJ]: So, tell me about Uncle Cliff's house.

[JEL]: Well, it was a row home and they was rentin'. Nobody owned their homes back then but the landlords owned all the apartments. And uh, he was renting from-from a lady there and uh, it was uh, three bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen. [00:13:00] And uh, me and my sister and him and his wife uh-uh lived there.

[AMJ]: Well, that's not too bad, it wasn't like a million people.

[JEL]: No, no. Uh, no, we had-we had plenty of room. And he was a cook, boy he worked at uh, Bethlehem Steel [00:13:17] uh, but he still, he loved to cook. And what he would do on Saturday, he would get things ready on Saturday for Sunday and he would cook and go out and sit out on the steps after he'd cook and all the Indians would come by and visit and everything. He'd tell

them to go in the house and get somethin' to eat. You gotta get in there. Oh my gosh, he fed so many people. It's unbelievable.

[AMJ]: [00:13:39] What was he cookin'?

[JEL]: All kinds of down-home food. (laughter) Collards and cornbread, you know, and pork, you name it, he-he-he cooked it. Fish, yes, uh everything.

[AMJ]: Was he um, gettin' groceries from North Carolina somehow or could he find the cornmeal?

[JEL]: He'd get his share at the market, goin' out to the market. They had-they had places for vegetables. You could get pork, you could get chicken, you'd go out to the market and pick up the chicken, you wanted, they'd kill it and dress it, and you know. They don't do that no more. (laughter).

[AMJ]: [00:14:14] What is this um, Broadway Market or up on Lombard Street?

[JEL]: Uh, well one on Broadway and another one on uh, um, [00:14:25] oh my Lord, I done forgot the name of the street. Orleans street. Down at the market down there, down there on, off Orleans street. [00:14:32] So there was-there was two markets where my uncle would go and uh, every Saturday morning that was the thing. We had to get up and go to the market.

[AMJ]: Did you like going?

[JEL]: Nuh-uh, no didn't. (laughter) [00:14:46] But he said, if you wanna eat, you got to go to the market. So, we'd walk down Broadway to the market. And everybody knew him and when you come in, this little short fella he's uh, he might have been about 5'2 or something like that. But when he come in the front door they would start hollering, look out shorty's here, shorty's here and he never paid them what they was askin'. He always got them down, if it wasn't but a nickel

or dime, he got his price out of 'em. But it was uh, it was fun. It was-it was uh, really fun with him.

[AMJ]: Why didn't you want to go? What didn't, what was bad about it?

[JEL]: Cause I had been out most of the night. (laughs) Come in at 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the morning and I gotta get up at 6:30, 7:00 o'clock to go to the market.

[AMJ]: Where were you on Friday?

[JEL]: (laughs) Down in Cicero's.

[AMJ]: Tell me about Cicero's.

[JEL]: Cicero's was a bar where the Indians hung out. We had an Indian group there called the Chavis brothers, and uh, that's where everybody would be on the weekends, at night. The bar was closed. I mean, the place would close up at 2:00 o'clock and time you get back to the Moonlight, everybody spend the rest of the night at Moonlight cause the Moonlight was open all night.

[AMJ]: What was the Moonlight?

[JEL]: That was a restaurant. The restaurant, they sold beer and you can go in there and-and uh sit and drink. And that's uh, where most of 'em would be at on the weekends was the Moonlight.

[AMJ]: Where was Cicero's?

[JEL]: Cicero's is off Orlean Street.

[AMJ]: [00:16:15] Do you remember Orleans and what? [00:16:18] Uh, do you remember the cross street, Orleans and another street?

[JEL]: [00:16:24] Uh, Orlean and uh, [00:16:28] gosh, what is the street? [00:16:31] It was right by the market. [00:16:34] I can't remember the name of the street, but it's right next door to the- to the market off of Orlean street. Little bar they called Cicero's.

[AMJ]: I'll find it.

[JEL]: It's-it's gone, the markets even tore down now. All of that, all of it's gone now.

[AMJ]: I can't even, I didn't know there was a market on there. Is it like walking distance?

[JEL]: It was about four or five blocks, I guess down Orlean Street.

[AMJ]: Okay, that would have made it a not fun trip because you got to buy all this stuff and carry it back.

[JEL]: Yeah. Yeah. It was, it was uh, most of the time we got what we wanted on Broadway. Now, you go down Lombard Street. That's where he go down there and get him a chicken down, Lombard Street, cause you go 'round and pick out the one you wanted, the kid dress it, you know. Yeah.

[AMJ]: So I know Lombard Street was mostly Jewish people and Broadway probably at that time was mostly Polish?

[JEL]: Uh, [00:17:28] yeah there was lot of Polish there but most of the Polish was up in Highlandtown. They had some-some down Broadway, you know, Italians. Love some of the

Italians because right down Lombard Street there is Little Italy. And then the Indians started moving in.

[AMJ]: How did people react to all the Indians?

[JEL]: Uh, they got along. [00:17:48] They got along pretty good. We did. The Indians had more trouble with each other than did with the other people (laughs) because I don't know they just love to, they just love to raise-raise cain.

[AMJ]: You weren't raisin' cain, were you?

[JEL]: No, no, I was a lover. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [00:18:09] You got any good Cicero's or Moonlight stories?

[JEL]: (laughs) [00:18:13] Well the only thing I'd go down there, I would drink and dance a little bit. Love to dance, you know, we-we drink and did a lot of dancing. Matter of fact, when the first time when I met my wife, that's where she was there and her, and her girlfriend, and me, and my buddy named Ernie Oxendine. [00:18:31] Uh, we were sitting at the bar and they had a table sitting off to the side. So they start playin' music and I said to Earnie, let's go ask these girls to dance. So we went up and asked them, you want to dance? Yeah. We got up and danced. And, uh, [00:18:46] the next song come up, we got up and went over and yeah, we danced again. This was the third time and I said, hey look, we're sitting over here at the bar, you-you girls, he got a table here for four, why don't we sit with you all. Said, well it's okay, come on, sit down. (laughs) [00:19:01] So uh, we went over to sit down and was talkin' and talkin' and I said to my girlfriend Marta, girl. That I'd met, wasn't, we'd just met through a four weeks before that and I said to her, you know somethin'? I said I love that shade of lipstick you're wearing. She said you do? I said, yeah, I said you think maybe I could taste it? (laughs) [00:19:23] She says, well, I don't-I don't guess it would hurt anything. I knew right then that was my wife.

[AMJ]: And she wasn't Native American, right?

[JEL]: No. She was uh, she's uh white lady, white girl. She was born in Suffolk, Virginia and came to Baltimore when she was three. Her parents and they moved to Baltimore when she was three.

[AMJ]: Did they come for work too?

[JEL]: Yeah. Yeah. They worked at Bethlehem Steel. Mhm. [00:19:48] Yeah, my father-in-law drove a crane down there and uh, the tin mill.

[AMJ]: [00:19:54] And uh, did anybody think anything of an Indian guy getting with a white girl?

[JEL]: Not up here they didn't seem to be, no. [00:20:04] Now, been down there in North Carolina, they'd took you out there somewhere and hung you. (laughs)

[AMJ]: Did you ever take her home?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah, uh, my family loved her and her family did. I was surprised how her family treated me. When we went to Norfolk to or to Suffolk to visit her cousins and all. They treated me, just like I was one of the family. I was really surprised, I was. And her dad, now her, they didn't, she didn't have no brother. She had three sisters and uh, [00:20:34] her dad took me like a son. [00:20:38] If he went to the store and he saw somethin' the store, he thought I might like it or somethin', he'd get it and bring it to the house. Yeah, he was uh, he was a good man. Really good-good man.

[AMJ]: Did you ever experience racism in Baltimore?

[JEL]: No.

[AMJ]: So you were just fine the whole time you were here?

[JEL]: Oh, yeah, yeah. I didn't have, no place I went after I left Red Springs, and Red-Red Springs and Raeford, didn't have no trouble.

[AMJ]: [00:21:07] What about Red Springs and Raeford?

[JEL]: [00:21:10] Red Springs, I could go to the drugstore and I could buy, I could get a cup of icecream but I had to take it outside and eat it. And uh, I couldn't buy a cone. I couldn't, the cones was for the white kids. So the Indians and blacks, we couldn't get, we couldn't buy cone of icecream there in the drugstore.

[AMJ]: [00:21:32] Was this just known? Like everybody understood this?

[JEL]: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, everybody-everybody understood that. The theater had three separate places for the-for the blacks, the Indians, and the whites. They're separated when you-when you went into the theater.

[AMJ]: Why?

[JEL]: It just didn't mix. It was so stupid. We worked in the farm together. The Indians, whites and uh, the blacks, we all worked the farm together, like one big happy family. And then when you go to town everybody split and went their separate ways. It was just, uh, I mean. I couldn't understand it. I-I couldn't. You go, go to town, you had three bathrooms, you couldn't even get a place of where you drink water, you know. It was, uh, but that's just the way that people were back then. Still have a lot of racists down there.

[AMJ]: Were you surprised when you got to Baltimore that it wasn't that way?

[JEL]: Yeah. [00:22:28] I ain't never been asked to leave no place in Baltimore.

[AMJ]: [00:22:33] Do you know of any Indian person that ever was?

[JEL]: No, I don't. [00:22:38] If he was asked to leave it was because he was doing something he had no business. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [00:22:45] What would people be doin' in the Moonlight?

[JEL]: [00:22:48] Just sittin' and drinkin' and talkin' [00:22:52] and fightin'. A lot of fights went on in the Moonlight, yeah. (laughs)

[AMJ]: What was good to eat there?

[JEL]: Uh, [00:23:02] well, my thing, the thing I most liked at Moonlight was breakfast. I go there and get scrapple and eggs and stuff like that, you know, and uh, uh, home fries, potatoes. Mostly, I ate breakfast there. I didn't eat too much. I eat-eat, I eat with my uncle up at the house for dinner.

[AMJ]: Yeah, I would too.

[JEL]: Yeah. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [00:23:23] Did he, when did Uncle Cliff pass away?

[JEL]: [00:23:27] Uh, Uncle Cliff move from here and went back home. [00:23:31] And he was [00:23:34] uh, I guess he passed away about five or six years after he moved back home. I can't remember exactly the date. When he was.

[AMJ]: Was he an older guy, then?

[JEL]: Uh, he was in his uh, probably 60s early 60s.

[AMJ]: [00:23:49] Yeah, sounds like he was a really important person in your life.

[JEL]: Oh, yeah. He was. Yeah. He was.

[AMJ]: Do you think about him often?

[JEL]: Yeah, I think it, what, well. When I was a kid, me and my cousins and we all grew up together in-in uh, [00:24:07] it was like one, like we were brothers and sisters not instead of cousins, we were like brothers and sisters. Cause on Sunday evenin' enough church, everybody went to my grandmother and grandfather's and there might be 15 to 20 kids. And I used to ask them why I asked some of them to come to Baltimore said did you guy, you ever, play when you was a kid, did you ever play wheelover? [00:24:28] Man what's wheelover? I said, I thought everybody played wheelover. Said, no, no, I don't know what, what is that? I said now on Sunday evening, from when we go to my grandmother and grandfather's, he lived in a big house. [00:24:41] I said, we'd take separate the group would take two teams, you know, however many kids do I should put, divide them up equally, and one team would go to the back of the house and the other team would be at the front. And they'd take the ball and they'd throw the ball over the house, the other team would catch it, then you switch sides. [00:25:01] And everyone got tagged with the ball when you're switching sides had to sit down till everybody on that team, you know, was put out, sat out. That's what we use to do every Sunday. Said I never hear tell of such games, we had to make, make up, make, make up stuff to do, you know?

[AMJ]: They didn't get mad at you for throwing a ball over the house?

[JEL]: Oh no, no, no. Everybody was just one big happy family and it was fun. You tryin' to run somebody down to tag them with the ball, they're tryin' to get away from, you know. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [00:25:32] Were you the wheelover King?

[JEL]: Well, we'd switch, we'd switch around, you know. You might throw it over this time when the next time, somebody else would do it, you know, just rotate it around. But well we enjoyed it, had a lot of fun there.

[AMJ]: What kind of ball were you playing with?

[JEL]: Just a regular rubber ball.

[AMJ]: [00:25:52] So like the size of a baseball?

[JEL]: Yeah. Yeah, 'bout the size of a baseball.

[AMJ]: Was it hard rubber?

[JEL]: Uh, no, no, it would bounce. You can really, it would bounce the ball but wasn't really hard.

[AMJ]: What would you say if somebody asked you to play wheelover now?

[JEL]: (laughs) [00:26:09] I'd tell him to get me a wheelchair so they could take me 'round. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [00:26:13] You seem like you get around pretty good.

[JEL]: Yeah I, yeah I do. I-I was just joking. I-I get around pretty good. Thank the Lord.

[AMJ]: [00:26:22] Since this is the first time I ever got to interview you, will you tell me more about what your job was like?

[JEL]: [00:26:29] My job. [00:26:31] Uh, well we-we painted a little bit of everything, I guess. When I went to the company back in 59, there uh, was like five or six people workin' there. And back in the 90s, we had 500 people employed. [00:26:48] We had offices in Tennessee, two offices in Pennsylvania, two offices in Florida, one in Texas.

[AMJ]: So this was the company before your company.

[JEL]: Yeah.

[AMJ]: What was the company?

[JEL]: Uh, Maryland Paint Company. MP Industry they called it MP Industry. And uh, I-I traveled most of the time I was I work with them 36 years probably 25 years that I was in another state workin' and they'd ship me back and forth, you know. Come home on the weekends and stuff. Or they'd send me, take my, send my wife down to where I was at. You know, like that.

[AMJ]: And um, we're not talking about painting houses, right? This is like big projects?

[JEL]: Yeah. These are, these were plants like Union Oil and Dupont and then we started doin' ships back in the 80s. Paintin' a lot of, did a lot of ship paintin' uh, up in uh-uh, Pennsylvania at the [00:27:43]uh, uh, Navy Yard in Pennsylvania. In the Navy Yard in Pennsylvania, I worked on

the USS Saratoga, which was an aircraft carrier. [00:27:53] Uh, and uh, another battleship I can't think of the name. We-we did a lot of ship work and we did 'em for like for uh, the oil companies, Gulf oil. We'd sandblast and paint the tanks on the ships, you know, stuff like that. And maybe on one ship, we might have 50 people paint workin' with the crew she had. At one time, I know one time was doing five ships at one time, had ships in Norfolk, ship in Texas, and had two ships at Sparrows Point.

[AMJ]: [00:28:25] And uh, you just said, 50 people at one time. I don't know, maybe everybody who will hear this, won't have an idea how massive these ships are. Can you explain how big like, how was this dangerous?

[JEL]: The aircraft carrier, the Saratoga, I worked on the Saratoga and the American. [00:28:45] It was about eleven hundred some feet long, but when he was in dry dock, you could go underneath it and you couldn't see tell where the end of it was at.

[JEL]: It was doing the USS America when Reagan bombed Gaddafi's house. [00:29:01] The planes they use was on the USS America to bomb the house. And after that, they brought it back to Navy, to the shipyard to do a makeover, go over, to checkin' it out and make sure everything was still good. And uh, I painted on, we painted some tanks on the-on the USS, America. We started on that job, we changed from uh, Black Beauty which is a coal by-product and sand would change to a steel grit. My boss had bought his new equipment they was comin' out with and uh, we changed over to steel shot. [00:29:37] Steel shot, [00:29:41] uh, you recycle it, just keep using it, use it till it wears out. But what, uh, [00:29:48] uh, sand and black beauty, you gotta dispose of it. It's all hazardous material. But with the steel grot, you don't have that dispose of it much, it's a disposal problem. Only thing actually, you'll-you'll, only dust you'll get that's coming off the walls where you're blast him from the paint chips, that's all you have. But if you're using sand, you might have 25 or 30 tons of sand in the ship, when you're sandblasting, you got maybe have eight people sandblasting. [00:30:16] And uh, you have a lot of sand. So they brought the guys down from the Pentagon, a busload of people come down from the Pentagon and we demonstrate to 'em on a-a tank. What-what we could do when they saw it, said that they loved it. Yep. They changed to, the spec had never been changed since 1947 [00:30:35] and they changed the spec. to use steel grit.

[AMJ]: So, when you sand blast, that means you're taking off paint before you paint?

[JEL]: Yeah. He's takin' off paint and rust, any kind of heavy rusty, takin' that off down to, they call, like a white metal, which it's look like that when you finish. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [00:30:52] You told me a story, a really good story. A crazy story, that's true. One time about working on a ship and a young man died? [00:31:04] You said you had a dream?

[JEL]: Oh, that was on the bridge.

[AMJ]: Okay.

[JEL]: Was working on a bridge up Susquehanna River. [00:31:11] Yeah.

[AMJ]: What happened?

[JEL]: Uh, hm. [00:31:18] This young-young boy's name was uh, Bob. He's 23 years old, me and him was about the same age at that time, I guess. And uh, we's workin' on the bridge paintin' that railroad bridge across the Susquehanna River. And uh, sometimes the superintendent's wife would be on the tugboat with the captain drivin' the tugboat pulling the barges out on the bridge where we was working. Sometimes she'd be on there with him. And I had this dream that night. [00:31:46] That we-we was all in the water naked, didn't have no clothes on with everybody in the water naked and was looking for something. And that next day that-that morning was going to work. I was telling the guys that I was ridin' with, I was tellin' him, I said I had this crazy dream that we was all in the water naked and the captain comes up. Merle's wife standin' on the bow of the boat and were all in the water naked. So we laughed it off, went on to work. About 9:45 the foreman up on the railroad, up on the track. Hollered man overboard, man overboard. We snatched our clothes off, jumped into the water where he had fell in. And about 10 minutes or so later, the captain comes around the bend and Merle's wife standin' on the bow of the boat. And we was lookin' for Bob, a scaffold had broken. He had fell and that's, I didn't see that in the dream, I didn't know what we was lookin' for but that's what we were lookin' for, was looking for him, he had fell and he got killed. He fell about 35 feet across uh, the on some pilings. And then off the pylons, he fell into the water about eight feet below the piling there. And we was

tryin' to find him and when the boat, the captain comes up, there's his wife standin' on the bow of the boat and we're all naked. And the guys, I was riding with, had told that story to, I could feel them looking at me and I felt so, I don't know how I felt so funny. Yes.

[AMJ]: You still think about that a lot?

[JEL]: Yes, I do. It was so, so uh, I don't know. [00:33:18] It wasn't funny but the scaffoldin', the scaffoldin' he was working off of, two men went through there own that same scaffold. Sandblasting, pulling up two hoses from the barge, which is about 40 feet up to where they was at. [00:33:36] It should have two inch hoses, and that was tied, that was on the scaffold and them two men. [00:33:43] They finish the blast and two men went through on the scaffold sprayin' prime and puttin' the paint on. Bob comes through on that same scaffold by himself. [00:33:53] And a hooks broke, where the welding, the welding where somebody had welded, it wasn't a good job and the welds broke. The scaffold, it didn't fall completely to the ground, but when it fell, it like wedged itself at an angle and he slid off, slid off the scaffold backwards. But uh, it was, it was worried. [00:34:14] By now, I never forget him. You know, he had a set of throwing knives. I met him, had a circle drew on the side of a tree and would, after we'd eat, we'd go over there and practice throwing them, them knives. Good, good, 23 years old. [00:34:30] Yeah, but they took that uh, had to send the divers down. And they found that piece of iron and they said, they could take it back to their shop and tell who had welded it because it's everybody has a different pattern or something. I don't understand all that. But they said they could take you back to the shop and they could tell who did the weld, the welding on that at that angle.

[AMJ]: You think whoever it was got in trouble?

[JEL]: I would think so. It should have been inspected before they put it on to something like that. And this was some scaffold that the, the uh railroad company had put up, and they give us permission to work off this. Said you won't have to rig this, this, this section here. Said we got scaffold, just work off our scaffold, so that's what we did, working off their scaffold. On rest, the rest of the scaffolding was cables, we had was cables running through. When the scaffolds was on the cables.

[AMJ]: Did that influence the way you set up your jobs later on?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Yeah, you have to be careful. You know, any time you're workin' high work like paintin' smokestacks and towers and stuff like that. You got to be-got to be careful.

[AMJ]: Sounds like you had a really dangerous job.

[JEL]: It was. It was a long time after me and my wife got married. [00:35:42] I couldn't get life insurance because of my job. [00:35:46] And then, uh. [00:35:49] When was it back in? Maybe in the 80s, it maybe the 80s. I was able to get-get uh, life insurance.

[AMJ]: [00:35:59] Would they ask you if you worked a dangerous job and you had to say yes?

[JEL]: [00:36:04] If they ask me, yeah. Well they'd ask, you know, what kind of work you do and you tell e'm, you know what you doin'. And uh, yes, soon as they heared that I was paintin' towers and smokestacks that-that was it.

[AMJ]: How come you weren't scared?

[JEL]: [00:36:20] I don't know. Uh.

[AMJ]: Wait—were you scared?

[JEL]: Well, not scared, but you're nervous. I did this for 36 years and uh, somebody tells they never get afraid there's something wrong with 'em. You get a little nervous till you get up there and get settled in. Soon as you get settled in, you okay, you calm down. Because we's workin' out of bolster chairs, hangin' with rope falls. You know.

[AMJ]: Will you explain what that is?

[JEL]: Well, that's a, uh, you got a block and a falls, block and tackle while it's like uh four ropes and it goes through the eye of two blocks and you take one rope pulls it, and pulls it up, okay? And we had a board they called uh, a chair. It was just a straight board with the ropes going through the ends of the board and hooked onto the block. And now, you'd let you wait, let yourself down. The worst part about when you're painting smokestacks, you go up the ladder, you climb up the ladder. Once you get up, then you gotta straddle the top of the stack, put one foot inside and one on the outside and work your way around and that's where you hang the scaffold, the blocks and stuff for the other painters, they hang into. And uh, once you get out of there, uh, that-that's okay, everything else is fine. Now, most of these smokestacks they-they move, they don't just stand still. They sway, some of them may be 6 foot. And when you, when you're in your chair, what you do? You look straight at the stack. If you look straight at the stack, you can't tell it's movin'. But if you look off to the side and you-you, too long, you start gettin' dizzy because you see everything is movin'.

[AMJ]: Did you ever get dizzy?

[JEL]: Uh, no, because I-I watched the stack (laughs). The old timers told me how you got, how to do it and I listen to 'em.

[AMJ]: Did you ever see anybody get dizzy and have to come down?

[JEL]: We had a guy who got froze on the stack. He got to the top and then couldn't get into his chair. [00:38:24] And me and my cousin and another-another guy was on the stack. We got a rope around him and they had to pull him off the stack to get him into his chair. And once we got him into his chair, we took him down and carried him to the ground. And he was uh, he had been paintin' for years. He was an older guy and just lost his nerve.

[AMJ]: Did he work after that or there was just an incident?

[JEL]: No more high work, couldn't do more stacks and-and uh towers and stuff like that.

[AMJ]: Man.

[JEL]: No.

[AMJ]: Was your wife worried about you working?

[JEL]: [00:39:00] Uh, well, I didn't talk too much about what I was doing when-when I was with her, especially when I was on smokestacks and in towers and stuff. I didn't-didn't talk too much about it.

[AMJ]: Any famous stacks that you painted you wanna to tell everyone?

[JEL]: Famous stacks? Yeah, you go through the tunnel, Gas and Electric that stack right there. 200 and uh, uh 220 feet. That was my first stack that I climbed and painted on. Now the ones down in the city at the zone, where them three big stacks on the roof. That's the first stack I worked on but I didn't paint. I was like a helper on them stacks. And then from the next one I went to was-was down there. We used to do all of BG&E smokestacks and all of the towers, electric towers. We used to do all that stuff, BG&E.

[AMJ]: Wow, and then you said uh, the kind of material you used to blast, that was hazardous until you switched over to something else, I guess. Did you have to be in like a spacesuit or how did you do?

[JEL]: Well you had a hood. A big hood on over you, yeah, and fresh air going into the hood for breathing.

[AMJ]: Did anybody ever have problems with um, inhaling things? Or it was pretty safe?

[JEL]: It was-it was pretty safe. I mean, later on, now, my first started out, story started when it starts, when I start first started paintin' with them uh, and we're spraying, all you had was little cotton pad over your nose and uh then after OSHA come into effect, uh they had to start buying the right stuff for you to breathe, you know. Had you had big respirators, stuff like that.

[AMJ]: Thank God for OSHA.

[JEL]: Yeah.

[AMJ]:[00:40:42] Yeah. How about like safety harnesses and-and all that? They, I guess they got better after OSHA?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. And I was working at Continental all over in Fairfield. Paintin' tanks over there where they made Benzene. Benzene is a cancer-causing agent. And we's workin' on these tanks with no protection. We didn't know it and we had been painted over there for two or three years I guess before uh, OSHA finally said, it's a cancer-causing agent, may just start wearing protection for it. Yeah.

[AMJ]: [00:41:15] Were are you worried after you found out?

[JEL]: [00:41:18] Uh, well, for a while, yeah. You is worried, wondering, you know, maybe I might had got cancer or something from it but to thank the Lord I didn't. But I did, I did get asbestos working at BG&E painting those the hot pipes coming out of the boilers and had that insulation on them and it'd be rotten and falling and dust flying. With a little cotton pad over your nose but I went uh, [00:41:43] 20, 25 years ago, maybe, now. I was tested for asbestos and I had asbestos. I think it said I had lost about 25 percent of my breathin' capacity from asbestos.

[AMJ]: Is that something you can recover from or you're just maintaining or?

[JEL]: Well there's nothing to do about it because once the particles get into your lungs they can't get them out, can't come out. But uh, I did have a case, Peter Angelo had a case for asbestos victims. And I had a case through him. Now, I just got a letter from him three days ago, four days ago. Where I guess the family, he died but the family had uh, sold their business to another law firm.

[AMJ]: [00:42:28] Yeah, read about that a little bit with the Orioles ownership.

[JEL]: Yeah.

[AMJ]: [00:42:35] Um, so you-you worked so many years for that company then you had your own company. Why did you finally stop working?

[JEL]: Uh, [00:42:44] I miss my-my daughter's growing up cause I was away all the time. In 1989, [00:42:54] I was in Texas, workin' in Texas. [00:42:57] One time I had three homes, I had a home in Texas, had a home in uh, Virginia Beach, Virginia and a home in Baltimore and, uh, [00:43:09] when my daughter's was uh-was uh my grandson was born, I told the boss I's that I'm coming home, coming to Baltimore. I said, I've been away and miss my daughter's growing up. I'm not missing my grandchildren and uh, so he said, okay, all right, come on home. So I did, left the guy in charge of that job and I come home. And uh, we bought a-a business, a plant, in uh, was a prefab plant in uh, Aurora, Pennsylvania. [00:43:37] And that's what we've painted the steel for the Orioles stadium.

[AMJ]: [00:43:41] Wow, you did that?

[JEL]: Yeah, we painted all that steel for Oriole Stadium. We take, took it up there, they would bring it up there. We had a, what they call a wheelabrator, sandblasting, their steel it was steel bit blasting where you run the steel through it and it blasts all the mill scale off, and then we would paint it and after we'd paint it they'd ship it to Baltimore and then once it got it all erected, then we'd have to go down and paint the bolts, where they had bolted it together. We had to go down and paint all the bolts and stuff once it was erected.

[AMJ]: And this is to keep it from rusting?

[JEL]: Yeah. Yeah, keep from rusting. Mhm.

[AMJ]: There's a train out your window. What train is this?

[JEL]: Uh, I don't know which one it is but it runs. Uh, but it-it sometimes it might be twice a day and then again it might not come for two or three days. All of that steel in Bethlehem Steel plant, they cut that steel up, and brought it out on the train, train cars.

[AMJ]: Yeah, where are we right now? Where do you live today?

[JEL]: [00:44:42]Uh, I live in, this is uh, part of Dundalk and I live off Cove Road.

[AMJ]: This is pretty cool. Like you can there's the train but I see lots of woods and it's pretty peaceful.

[JEL]: Yeah, animals. I'm also, I've seen everything but deer. I haven't seen no deers here but I do have uh, uh [00:45:02] coons, rabbits, and squirrels and uh, groundhogs.

[AMJ]: [00:45:09] Do you feed 'em?

[JEL]: I used to feed the squirrels but I had to quit.

[AMJ]: [00:45:13] Why'd you have to quit?

[JEL]: I started out feedin' two of 'em. And after a while I had four, then I had six, I wound up with 12. I told my wife, I said I think they're going out there hollerin' tellin' come on down to the Locklear's, he's feedin' us today and that's when I quit. Quit feeding to get too many of them and they tore the screen out of my door. Hanging on, I might if I could got a picture of him hangin' on the screen. If I wasn't out there 'bout 7:00 o'clock to give 'em some nuts, they'd be coming to the door and to the window there where my wife would be doing the dishes. They'd be out there on her screen lookin' in at her through the window.

[AMJ]: Did she tell you come get your squirrels?

[JEL]: Yeah, I had, just, I said that's it. I can't keep feeding 'em, just too many of 'em.

[AMJ]: Tell me about your family. How many kids and grandkids do you have?

[JEL]: [00:46:00] Uh, well, I have three daughters [00:46:03] in uh, Baltimore. And I have a son in North Carolina and uh, I have four grandsons [00:46:12] and uh, four granddaughters.

[AMJ]: Are you close to all of them?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Yeah.

[AMJ]: What do your grandkids call you?

[JEL]: Pop. [00:46:22] Everybody calls me pop. Mhm.

[AMJ]: Did they come see you a lot?

[JEL]: Yeah, when they're not working, they-they come over. Now, the one, my one-my one daughter lives in Cumberland, and I got, well, my one granddaughter now, she lives in Tennessee. [00:46:37] I don't get to see her as much as I used to.

[AMJ]: How did you end up living here?

[JEL]: Here? When my wife got sick, she had Alzheimer's. [00:46:46] And uh, I where we lived, we had 3-3 stories, 3-storied apartment. [00:46:52] And uh, I was afraid she was goin' fall down the stairs and get hurt. She had fell in the bathroom a couple of times and uh, [00:47:02] two of her friends, she grew up with lived up here. And they had been living here since back in the 90s, early 90s, I guess when the first started opened up this place and this place become available. And uh, matter of fact, uh, Jonesy, this used to be his place. And when his wife bought this house and put it in here, had it put in here. And uh, [00:47:25] she found this place, oh James, it's perfect. It's you know, it's just what I wanted and I said, oh, okay, okay. So we-we-we sold our house, we bought this house and the people moved out. And uh, I'm thinking, what we're going, cause she told me it was perfect, the house is perfect, you know, just what I want. I come over here [00:47:48] to see the house and she said, well, I want to get this here, painted here. Me and my guys wind up paintin' the whole house. [00:47:56] Wasn't cause I don't like that color there said well, paint the whole house white outside. Then uh she had to have these blinds put up these venetian blinds. Had to uh, [00:48:10] have uh, [00:48:12] a washing machine. She wanted a refrigerator and a stove, a saintbond refrigerator and stove, them still good. There's nothing wrong with them but she has, with this Alzheimer's you know, her mind was all messed up and uh, [00:48:28] she had been going through Alzheimers probably 10-10 12 years, slowly, slowly deteriorating, you know, over the years. And I bought this house because that's what she see'd it and she wanted it. And I bought it for her.

[AMJ]: Good job.

[JEL]: I'd rather-I'd rather of the been staying at my other place cause we was there 37 years. Everybody, our kids, you know, all of them all grew up over there together, went to school together, you know and everything.

[AMJ]: Tell me about the other place. Where was that?

[JEL]: That was at uh, Grey Haven Court, that was in Dundalk, only about five minutes away from here.

[AMJ]: Yeah, and um, how did you end up there?

[JEL]: [00:49:08] Well, we rented for [00:49:11] for five years on North Boundary. Great place on North Boundary on the corner there. And uh, then this house, the house came available and uh, I went over and looked at it, me and her and said well, let's buy this house. Well, I don't know, I don't know. [00:49:28] Uh, she was from the old-the old school or some of them. She didn't want to get in-get in debt or nothin' cause her family had always-always rented. Her father and them had rented, you know. I said, no, no, I said I'm going to buy the house. Well, I don't, I don't think I was. Okay, I'm going to buy it. You wanna live with me? You got to come live with me. If you don't, you stay here and stuff. Oh, so we bought the house and moved in. We stayed there 37 years and then we bought uh, bought this house.

[AMJ]: And what brought you to Dundalk in the first place? When did you move to Dundalk?

[JEL]: I moved out here in uh, 65 [00:50:07] Me and my wife, we met in 62, in 65, this is where she lived. She lived out here in Dundalk off a great place. Great uh, great place.

[AMJ]: And that's probably because her dad was working at Beth. steel?

[JEL]: Yeah. They all-they all, that's where they grew up in this area. Yeah. Mhm.

[AMJ] [00:50:25] What'd you think about Dundalk compared to Broadway?

[JEL]: Well, that's another reason why I moved out, to get away from Broadway. [00:50:34] Cause back then, [00:50:38] uh, I pretty much had a choice, I could lose my wife or lose Broadway and I chose her over Broadway because hanging around there with all them guys and

everything, you know, drinkin' and actin' like a bunch of idiots and I-and I-I moved away and uh, been happy ever since. [00:50:55] And then when, I uh, in-in 72, I started traveling and uh, so most of the time I was gone. If I come back to Baltimore just like for a weekend or somethin', come back for a weekend then I'd be flyin' back out where I was workin' at.

[AMJ]: Tell me more about acting like idiots on Broadway. Tell me about that.

[JEL]: (laughs) Well, that's just the way they acted sometime, when you got to drinkin. And, you know, they just couldn't handle it. They couldn't handle booze, it was always fightin'. Somebody a fightin' somewhere know them, all the time. And uh, I don't know, they just-just couldn't handle, couldn't handle the booze.

[AMJ]: So did you ever have a day where she was like James, that's it.

[JEL]: Oh yeah, she left me one time. Uh, when uh, Pam was born. That was the second girl. [00:51:43] Uh, I had been-been drunk all night that weekend, I'd come home. And uh, when I come in, she had a suitcase packed she said I'm leavin', ain't staying with you no more, gone. [00:51:56] So she left me and went to her dad mom and dad's. And he asked her said uh, where's James? She's telling me this, when she comes back. She said, uh where's James? Said I told him, I-I left him. I left you. That's what I did, I left 'em. Said you what? Said I left 'em. Said what'd you leave 'em for? Said drinking and hanging around with his buddies? Stayin' gone all the time drinking? He said, well didn't he drink before you married him? She said, well yeah. I said you thought you was goin' to stop him, huh? (laughs) [00:52:27] So uh, [00:52:29] he said to her said uh, well where you goin' stay? Said I'm going to stay at you and Mamas. You can't stay here, said you done left me and mama. Said, you can't come back and stay with us, you have to find somewhere else to stay. So in about three hours, she come huffin' and puffin' back into the front door. Said my Daddy thinks more of you than he do his own daughter. [00:52:48] That was the last time we, that the last time we had that problem. He was a good man, he was, but uh, [00:52:56] that's the way I guess we all should be. [00:53:01] Stay out of the, you know, when the kids get married and get grown and get out on their own, their own-their own, and you don't know whose side to pick. So, just best thing do is stay out of it, you know, let them work it out.

[AMJ]: I'm glad you guys worked it out.

[JEL]: Yeah- yeah, I am-I am too because I had a-had a good wife.

[AMJ]: [00:53:22] How was it different livin' in Baltimore compared to where you grew up when you first got here?

[JEL]: [00:53:31] Well, first of all, where I grew up, we only had a light, maybe one or one or two lights in the house, nothin' outside. (laughs) So everything was always dark outside. But, uh, you know, we were used to that, we's used to that, that style of livin'. And uh, [00:53:48] the reason I left is because of the money, I couldn't make no money down there. Couldn't-couldn't make any money, you workin'. I work all day for two dollars and a half a day. [00:54:01] And that's from sun to sun that we didn't work by no clock, didn't have no clock to work by. You worked by the sun. And uh, that's-that's-that's the reason I left looking for job where I can make something.

[AMJ]: So in Baltimore that was easier?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Much easier.

[AMJ]: And it was still really hard work but not as hard?

[JEL]: Not as hard. [00:54:24] There ain't nothin' worse than pickin' cotton. [00:54:28] I'd bend over all day long, draggin' a sack behind you. Uh, That's, uh, that's rough. I told him now, wouldn't even pull the Aspirin out of an Aspirin bottle.

[AMJ]: [00:54:38] Oh, the cotton and the aspirin bottle?

[JEL]: (laughs) Yeah.

[AMJ]: [00:54:41] That's how much you hated it?

[JEL]: I ain't picking no more cotton. (laughs) Yes. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [00:54:48] Tell me what was the day like? So the before the sun comes up, what are you doing? And then the sun comes up and then what happens in a day on the farm in those days?

[JEL]: Well, in those days when you get a, you get up at the crack of dawn and go out and feed the horse, and the cow, your animals, you go out and feed them first. Then you come back and by the time you get back Mama have breakfast ready and you go in to sit down and eat and then you get up and go to the field, start working and that's it, day in day out.

[AMJ]: [00:55:20] And did you have a tractor?

[JEL]: [00:55:23] Uh, Yes, we did. We had a tractor. I mean, um, before I got big enough to-to uh to plow, they had mule, had a horse, and a mule. But uh, then after I got older, I started drivin' when I was about 11. [00:55:39] And I got older, we got a tractor and I would do most, I do most of the plowin' with the tractor. I had one, my older brother he uh, was in college and uh I did most of the-most of the plowin'.

[AMJ]: How come that was your job?

[JEL]: Uh, [00:55:55] because he was in college, I guess, you know and there's trying to and that's one thing my grandfather preach to us all, get school. You need to go to school. You need to learn and uh [00:56:08] he-he uh wanted all of his family to get education.

[AMJ]: Will you tell me who your grandparents were? Which grandfather are we talking about?

[JEL]: Elijah Dial and Ester Dial.

[AMJ]: And Elijah was the brother of?

[JEL]: Uh, Elijah was a brother of Noah Dial. He had a brother named know where Noah, Noah Dial and Noah was Adolf's father.

[AMJ]: [00:56:32] So Dr. Adolf Dial is related to you pretty closely?

[JEL]: Yeah. Him and my mom was first cousins. Yeah.

[AMJ]: I'm sure your family is very proud. That's-that's really a huge deal.

[JEL]: Oh yeah, yeah, he was, uh, he was a good man. He was good, good, good man. And he taught you know, there at the college there for a while. Yeah.

[AMJ]: Did you go to college?

[JEL]: No, I didn't finish high school. I couldn't wait to get out of school. I mean my body was there, but my mind was everywhere else. So my body was in school, my mind might be in California. [00:57:06] And, you know, I tell people I uh, [00:57:12] I am three years older than I should be. My mind is 3 years older than my body. [00:57:18] I never fooled around with people, kids my age, all of my friends was two, three, four years older than me. I-I don't know why, but all of my friends were older and I always had a gabby, you know, telling stories and jokes, and stuff like that. [00:57:37] Uh, yeah, I just hung with older people, older group.

[AMJ]: So you were ready to be done with school?

[JEL]: Mhm, yeah. [00:57:46] Yeah.

[AMJ]: Uh, where did you go when you were in school?

[JEL]: Hawkeye-Hawkeye High School bout in Hope County.

[AMJ]: [00:57:54] And you said some of your relatives founded that school?

[JEL]: My grandfather. Matter of fact, they got a marble stone in the yard with his picture on it, tellin' about he was the founder.

[AMJ]: This is the same Mr. Elijah Dial?

[JEL]: Yeah. [00:58:08] Mr. Elijah Dial.

[AMJ]: Is this whose house you guys were playing wheel over at?

[JEL]: Yeah, that's-that was, this is before he bought his own house. He was, he was living farming at that time and uh, living on a farm owned by the high sheriff in Raeford, he owned the farm, we's farming for him.

[AMJ]: [00:58:29] Let me ask you this. Do you still keep in touch with other Lumbee people in North Carolina?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. I try to go home every four or five weeks.

[AMJ]: Dang, that's a lot of driving.

[JEL]: Yes, it is. Well, I got a 2019 [00:58:44] Dodge Ram. I got 130 thousand miles on it. So, I've been riding a lot these six years. (laughs)

[AMJ]: What do you do when you go?

[JEL]: Just go around and visit. Visit different friends and cousins and the preachers. I usually get up with three or four of the preachers that I grew up with and maybe we go out and have lunch or something together.

[AMJ]: Where do you guys like to eat?

[JEL]: Well, a lot of times to go to Fullers and uh, back in June, July-July, I went home and I took my cousin, the girls. I took them all out to dinner. And we went up to Aberdeen to uh, the Steakhouse in Aberdeen and uh, I think there was 11 or 12 of them. I got him out to down and we just had a good time, sit and talk.

[AMJ]: I bet that was fun.

[JEL]: It was, to do them girls. I had them a rolling on the floor just about telling jokes and stuff. That they like to hear, you know, funny. I enjoyed it. Now, last year, I got them the guys together and we had that uh, at the church. [00:59:55] Yeah. At Mt. Elim Baptist Church at the fellowship hall when they had the kitchen and everything. And we had them there, I think that was 28 of us had showed up there, we cooked and ate there at the fellowship hall whole church.

[AMJ]: Do you cook?

[JEL]: Oh yeah.

[AMJ]: What do you like to cook?

[JEL]: Well, I haven't cooked a whole lot since my wife passed. It's hard to cook for one person, but I used to cook. I'll do all the cooking for uh, Christmas and Thanksgiving and I-I do a spare, a barbecued ribs. And uh, hush puppies and-and potatoes, and uh, greens, collards, or cabbage. You know some different vegetables and stuff like that. I'd fix it. And uh, them grandsons of mine, oh my God. I used to go to Sam's, I get three packs of ribs and there'd be two or three ribs to the package, and that's what I would cook. And when they leave here to go home, there ain't a whole lot take with them. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [01:00:57] Now, do you make your hushpuppy sweet or savory?

[JEL]: [01:01:01] Savory. Just I just put the cornmeal in and I put a little salt in them and uh, water.

[AMJ]: [01:01:07] Are they big or the little ones?

[JEL]: There 'bout-'bout that big around. Yeah. And they're thin, nice and crispy. Mhm.

[AMJ]: [01:01:16] Sounds good, I'm hungry now. Do you still keep in touch with other Lumbee folks in Baltimore?

[JEL]: [01:01:24] Yeah, well I see him at church. Most of the ones I see, but it not a lot of them here no more, they all passin' away to. The young people, I don't know, I know more when I see them uh, [01:01:34] and a lot of them I see and I still don't know who they are, you know because most of the older people they-they're gone, died away and some went back to North Carolina, moved back to North Carolina.

[AMJ]: Where do you go to church?

[JEL]: Uh, South Broadway Baptist.

[AMJ]: Have you been going there very long?

[JEL]: Uh, [01:01:53] three going on four years now I guess.

[AMJ]: Did you go to church before that?

[JEL]: Yeah, I went to North Point Baptist.

[AMJ]: Do you go to Bible study too?

[JEL]: Yeah.

[AMJ]: And you see folks you go and walk the mall right?

[JEL]: Yeah.

[AMJ]: When'd you start doing that?

[JEL]: [01:02:12] I started I guess about seven eight months ago but they had been woken before I started.

[AMJ]: Who invited you?

[JEL]: Uh, Jeanette and uh, Jonesy.

[AMJ]: Is it fun?

[JEL]: Oh yeah, mhm. Yeah, it's fun, enjoying it. Yeah. And then you get a lot of other people over there too, you know, to four or five other women and they sit around and talk and carry on. And uh, some time we'll see a man or something that Jonesy knows, he knows that he knows everybody in Baltimore seem like. [01:02:42] And uh, matter of fact, I was at uh, when I was getting them copies down of my grandfather's interview, I went over to uh, Merritt Boulevard to the UPS over there. He supposed parcel of what his get some copies made and when I was coming out the guy saw my hat with the Indian on it said, you know, Jonesy? [01:03:04] I said yeah I know Jonesy said well we used to, we work together on it General Motors. I said yeah, everybody knows Jones, yeah.

[AMJ]: He's Maybe the most famous Indian in Dundalk.

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Absolutely.

[AMJ]: [01:03:17] So you've been here way more time than you lived in North Carolina at this point. Can you think of anything that you picked up on as a result of having lived in Baltimore? Like, the way you dress, the way you talk, the stuff you eat things, um, things you like to do. Can you think of anything that comes from being in Baltimore?

[JEL]: Well, the way I dressed, that's one of the things cause on the farm, I wear a pair of overalls and that was about it. [01:03:46] But yeah, the way you dress but far as talking I haven't changed as I know of, you know, changed my way of talking and everything.

[AMJ]: [01:03:54] Did you get to have your own style when you get up here? You had choices and not just overalls?

[JEL]: Oh, yeah, yeah.

[AMJ]: So what do you like?

[JEL]: Well when I met my wife and we started, we started going out together and I met her. I-I used to dress up or my suit and you know ties and all that stuff which they don't do too much no more pretty much anyone. You might see the preacher wearing a tie. Everybody else is, you know, shirts open uh, [01:04:21] jewelry and stuff. Nobody wears jewelry anymore and stuff like that.

[AMJ]: I meant to ask you while ago, what what kind of music did you guys dance to?

[JEL]: Rock and Roll.

[AMJ]: Who were your favorites?

[JEL]: Uh, well [01:04:33] Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis and uh, Fats Domino and Little Richard uh all of them guys back in them days. They was, they was my favorites. Matter fact, me and my wife went to uh, and another couple went to Paradise Islands back, probably twenty years ago now. Paradise Island for a week and that Friday night, they had a luau outside, [01:04:58] food and music and dancing and uh, me and my wife uh, won first prize at the dance.

[AMJ]: What were you guys dancing?

[JEL]: (laughs) I can't remember what it was they were playing. But we won first prize, I guess she, I won a watch and she got uh, earrings and a necklace, and a bracelet.

[AMJ]: Dang, do you still dance?

[JEL]: I haven't danced in years since her passing, she passed away I haven't danced any then.

[AMJ]: But would you?

[JEL]: Would I? (laughs) If I could still move my legs. I don't know if I can move them like that anymore.

[AMJ]: I'm betting you can. I really want to have a dance.

[JEL]: Yeah, me and-me and uh, me and Jonesy was showing them some of the twist down at the church. I was thinking, hey didn't know nothin' about a Twist, me and Jonesy showed 'em a little bit about the twist.

[AMJ]: Yeah, he loves to dance.

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Mhm.

[AMJ]: I want to dance. I love to dance.

[JEL]: Yeah. (laughs)

[AMJ]: I think we should have a dance like when this is over. That's what we should do.

[JEL]: Yeah. Okay. (laughs)

[AMJ]: [01:05:59] I could be the DJ. I got all the music.

[JEL]: Oh yeah? Okay.

[AMJ]: [01:06:04] So let me ask you this. If you went home to visit in North Carolina after you were living here a while, did anybody ever say 'Oh, you picked that up in Baltimore?' Did they ever notice anything about you? That was different?

[JEL]: Hm mm. Nope.

[AMJ]: [01:06:18] And do you notice when you go to North Carolina anytime, do you ever notice things that are the way they are because people had been living in Baltimore and went back?

[JEL]: I can't see no changes that much. I think North Carolina have changed, you know, to our way of living in everything more than we have changed.

[AMJ]: Meaning, they have lights and they don't all wear overalls anymore?

[HEL]: Yeah, yeah. And, and they have good jobs, you know, now they're making making some money, got good jobs. Yeah.

[AMJ]: [01:06:48] So, what kind of things did you bring with you from North Carolina that you do in Baltimore that were different here? Like I know you said the cooking.

[JEL]: [01:06:57] That's about the only thing I know would really be different. I guess is the food. [01:07:02] Cause everybody else pretty much dressed the same, you know.

[AMJ]: Does anyone ever notice your accent?

[JEL]: Uh, [01:07:08] they never say anything to me about it, if they do.

[AMJ]: [01:07:12] It's very charming. So what do you like to do for fun these days?

[JEL]: [01:07:19] I-I like to get around with the guys, just sit and tell old stories, you know, in life and joke, have fun.

[AMJ]: [01:07:26] When do you do that?

[JEL]: Whenever I can get 'em all together. (laughs) But uh, [01:07:33] I like to sit around and talk about the old times, you know, remember the old times.

[AMJ]: Who are the guys?

[JEL]: Well Jonesy and Anthony and uh, Tony. And you know, there's for five guys around and we'll get the preacher, whether ya know, we could get him with us and we'll just sit and talk and have fun. But I'm leaving to go home. [01:07:54] the eleventh I'm going down. Take the stuff down for the Indian kids and-and the uh, the Dakotas for Christmas.

[AMJ]: Are you driving a trailer?

[JEL]: No, I'm going to take my truck. I'm going to take a load down when I go and then Jonesy is going to take a load when he go. So between the two of us, we can we can carry it all down.

[AMJ]: Will you tell, because other people don't know about this. What Indian kids in the Dakotas for Christmas? What's going on?

[JEL]: Well they do that every year, get 'em stuff for Christmas cause they don't have anything, you know, and we'll get them uh, well, right now, last year, I think I carried 39 book bags, and they were full of stuff. They put stuff in there for the kids, you know, for Christmas and I can't I don't remember how much Jonesy he carried down but that's what they get, they get book bags

and stuff like that and they fill them up with some toys and different candies and you know, stuff like that for the kids.

[AMJ]: Why do we do that?

[JEL]: Because they don't have anything, you know, they living on reservation.

[AMJ]: Of all the people in the world who don't have anything. Why did our people decide to support those people?

[JEL]: I don't know. I don't know. I don't get it.

[AMJ]: [01:09:01] Is it, like, Indians an Indian thing.

[JEL]: [01:09:06] It might be like that in other races too, probably have the same-same problems. But the Indians have they have had the worst of it in this country. [01:09:16] Yeah, but I'll be back. I'm going down to 11th and I'll be back that Saturday. I usually stay 5-6 days by go down like it for a week.

[AMJ]: Where do you stay when you go?

[JEL]: I'm with, uh, my brother.

[AMJ]: That's nice. You guys still real close?

[JEL]: Oh yeah. Yeah. He's- he's the baby-the baby boy which he's not no baby no more he's like 72, I believe? Yeah.

[AMJ]: What do you think the Indian community in Baltimore will be like in 10 or 20 years?

[JEL]: I don't think it'll be here.

[AMJ]: Why is that?

[JEL]: Can't get no support.

[AMJ]: [01:09:55] And what do you hope for the Indian community of Baltimore?

[JEL]: I hope it can expand, you know, start to grow. And what our church says the problem with the church in a lot of the people that was used to go to church or they would they moved away, they're gone and uh, we need-we need more people in church.

[AMJ]: [01:10:15] Is there anything you'd like the young people of our community to hear from you?

[JEL]: To hear from me? [01:10:23] I don't-I don't know anything. Hm. [01:10:27] That-that they would like to hear from me? (laughs) Not really.

[AMJ]: Anything else you'd like to tell the world?

[JEL]: [01:10:37] Yeah, let's show more love for one another. [01:10:41] This world is in a mess. [01:10:45] And if we don't start showing some love instead of the hatred, then none of us goin' to exist. [01:10:53] It's-it's-it's rough. [01:10:56] And it shouldn't be. The richest country in the world, got people sleeping in the woods. [01:11:02] That don't make no sense to me. [01:11:05] Hm, because of greed. [01:11:09] Yeah, shame.

[AMJ]: Well, Mr. James, I have kept you almost two hours. This was the best interview.

[01:11:18] I'm sorry to keep you so long but I [01:11:23] yeah, it's been an honor. Thank you for talking with me.

[JEL]: Sure. Any time, any time. And uh, tell your mom and dad. I said, hey.

[AMJ]: Always.