Calvin Washington Oral History Interview

January 21, 2018

Julia Brock 00:00
There we go. I'm going to put that there and turn this on. You ready? Okay. So I start every interview by saying the date, which is January 21, 2018. I'm Julia Brock from University of West Georgia. I'm interviewing Mr. Calvin Washington, a lifetime member of Antioch A.M.E. Church today and we're at the church. Calvin, will you tell me for starters when and where you were born.

Calvin Washington 00:30
I was born at Harris Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. My parents lived in Decatur. But that's where I was born.

Julia Brock 00:40
Tell us a little bit about who your parents were. We've already got some of this from Elayne, but tell us about your parents.

Calvin Washington 00:48
My father was a chef, but I do remember when he was not a chef. I remember some things about him that ... but his career, he was a chef. My mother, for the most part that I can remember, was a homemaker. And then she went to work for the county. She worked for the Dekalb County as a maid.

Julia Brock 01:12
Where did she work? Where did like where did they place her?

Calvin Washington 01:16
In the DeKalb County government building, that's where she worked. And it wasn't that far from home so she walked to work. She does not have to ride to work.

Julia Brock 01:28
What year were you born?

Calvin Washington 01:30
1944.

Julia Brock 01:32
And what do you remember about your childhood in Beacon Hill and in Decatur.

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Calvin Washington 01:40
We lived on White Street in Decatur and most of my friends that I had lived on White Street. We didn't go over into where Beacon Hill was and the projects until we moved there We did not go down there a lot, you know and stuff. A couple of friends that I had lived on my street. I went to the Catholic school, went to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic school. So therefore, my interaction with people in Beacon Hill was not much, just for those people who went to church with me at Antioch.

Julia Brock 02:23
So for those who are listening who might not know what what are the boundaries of Beacon Hill? White Street was not included in that larger community?

Elayne Hunter Washington 02:34
I thought it was.

Calvin Washington 02:36
I think you ran from Robin Street to Trinity, which may not be it, but it was not that wide. Because when they talk about Beacon Hill, from you know, from the school ... when I finally went to public school, Beacon Hill was the school name and that was just an area name to us more so than anything else. You know, there was not a whole lot of emphasis on Beacon Hill. You know, we lived in Decatur. That was it.

Julia Brock 03:11
Where would you go with your friends? What would y'all do?

Calvin Washington 03:16
As a kid, not much of anything. Everything was centered around the church. You know, we went to church 2, 3, 4 days a week. I can remember going there not with my father but with my grandfather, who was a Trustee at Antioch. And the Trustees took care of the physical plant, the church, the grounds, any repairs that were needed, that that's what they did. And those men were always there. There was always something to do at the church in addition to the meetings that they had. We were just there, I mean, I have no idea what they talked about.

Julia Brock 03:57
What would you do when you would go with him?

Calvin Washington 04:01
If we go back all the way to Marshall Street ...it's funny, you know, I started thinking about it. The church had an upstairs and in the downstairs there was a kitchen and there was a large room. And then there was a door that had dirt on each side of it where the furnace was. And we would go down in there run around the furnace and play down there. They would be in meetings, you know, and stuff and I have

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no idea what they would be talking about as a kid. Now this was before I was 10 years old. The only memories I have of that is just that, just being there. I can remember Easter Sunday. I can remember Christmas, both of those with speeches that we had to learn. I can remember having to stand up there and say speeches that we practiced for two months.

Robin Morris 05:03
Do you remember any of them?

Calvin Washington 05:04
No. But, you know, just doing. I can I can remember ... one of the memories I had, you know in doing this was I can remember one year that I had got for Easter, a pair of blue suede shoes. That's right, blue suede shoes. And I can remember Easter Sunday, that Sunday, how proud I was walking around. I had a suit. My father, during this time, was working downtown and he worked right across the street from George Muse. So that's where my suit came from. ...And things like that, you know and stuff, and as a teenager, you know, when we finally moved from White Street, which we stayed with my grandparents, and moved into the projects, then my associates became different because I was, you know, with them. I still went to the Catholic school.

Julia Brock 06:08
You took the streetcar down or drove down?

Calvin Washington 06:11
No, they didn't take us; we rode the streetcar and in the bus. You know, we had wear ties to school, and things like that. I can remember riding the streetcar. And I remember when they changed over to buses, you know, we rode the bus. We'll see we got on the bus.

Elayne Hunter Washington 06:29
Are you talking about me, too?

Calvin Washington 06:30
No, not you. We got on the bus. Oh, well, I had a couple .. there were two. I had a classmate and his sister; they went to the Catholic school also. And we caught the bus, or the streetcar, and when we got off the bus, we were half a block from school. So see, we didn't have to change buses or anything like that.

Julia Brock 06:55
Because it probably went right down Dekalb [Ave.].

Calvin Washington 07:00

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Yeah. That's where the bus went. And the Catholic school was right off of Edgewood, between Edgewood and Auburn Avenue where the [Martin Luther] King Center is. That's where Our Lady of Lourdes was.

Julia Brock 07:15
Was there any, I don't know, tension between you and the other kids because you didn't go to school on the community?

Calvin Washington 07:23
Sometime. But it wasn't much because I didn't know them. My only interaction with the people was from church, those that went to church with me, the kids who went to church with me.

Julia Brock 07:38
What do you remember about the congregation of Antioch from your younger years?

Calvin Washington 07:43
It's funny how you know, listening to one of the other interviews. I remember how they talked about the sophistication. These ladies, they were always dressed. They always wore hats and ... how they came to church. And then that was another segment of those women who have always cooked. There was always cooking going on, you know, and that's how they raised money. And then when we moved from ... I remember Marshall Street ... because one of the other interviews talked about ... we go to Sunday school, and between Sunday school and church, the little 15 minutes, we went to this other cafe that was not the one for the people who went to church with us. But there was another cafe we used to call it "up on the hill." When you came out of Marshall Street, it was right there. And it was downstairs, and the people liveed upstairs over it were members of Antioch. And we would go over there and they would open up after Sunday school. We would go there and we could get candy and have ice cream and soda and then they would close because 11 o'clock came. They did not have any service, doing anything like that, during church service. They closed during church but they would open up and have food for the day. And we would go in and you know we couldn't play the jukebox, we could do none of that. All we could get was candy, you know, an ice cream and a soda, something like that. And then they would close until church services were over and they would open. But see we didn't go back there because we went home or we stayed at church.

Julia Brock 09:28
On this 1950 Sanborn [insurance] map ... is it on there? So I think that's the Marshall Street Church.

Calvin Washington 09:34
Let me see where I am. It would have been right there.

Julia Brock 09:51

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Okay, so now there's a parking back there, right?

Calvin Washington 09:53
Yeah, there's parking deck where it was.

Julia Brock 09:56
So that was Herring Street.

Calvin Washington 09:58
Herring Street ran this way, and Cooper Street ran out and crossed over Herring Street. And that was a very short street. It wasn't very long that they were on. And that's what we did. And then we go back to church. You asked someone how the church looked. Marshall Street Church ... Elayne talked about it, about Sunday school. The Sunday school classes were held in the sanctuary over here, over here, you know, over here, you know [pointing to an interior shot of the church], and we did we did have a quote unquote, balcony, so to speak, because you went up one side, and it was this thing in the middle and they had classes on that side and classes on this side because in the middle was where the bell tower was. That's where they rang the bell in the old church and outside in the vestibule there were only two rooms to the side. One belonged to the ushers and one belong to the choir. And one of those they use as a counting room. I remember a desk being in there and things like that.

Julia Brock 11:06
Were the Sunday schools divided by age?

Calvin Washington 11:08
Yeah, Sunday school was divided by age. As a kid, we didn't have books, we had these little cards that they would give out every Sunday that had a picture on it, the Scripture, and the lesson was on the back. It was been a three by five card, but it would have been this way, and not that way. And I remember that. One of the things I remember about church, that's where I learned how to tie my shoes, sitting next to my father. When I wouldn't stay still, he taught me how to tie my shoes sitting in church. I'll always remember that. I'll always remember that.

Julia Brock 11:47
Were you also involved in the YPD or any other organizations? Why not?

Calvin Washington 11:51
I mean, because I was a boy and stuff, I guess. I guess I went to some meetings but it wasn't a whole lot. I don't remember much about the YPD. I remember more about Sunday school, Sunday School Convention, because we always went. And it was always a treat to go to the Sunday School Convention, because you met other people; you met other A.M.E. kids. When it happened at Morris Brown it was ... you know, you were from town. Everybody else was from out of town, you know, from the country, so

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to speak of. I remember those, I can remember going to those and I can remember those kinds of things. And then once I became a teenager, I left parochial school, Catholic school, and I went to public school.

Julia Brock 12:51
Where did you go?

Calvin Washington 12:53
It was then Trinity. Well, no, it was Beacon Elementary because I went in the eighth grade and then I went to Trinity, which was the high school.

Julia Brock 13:04
What year did you graduate?

Calvin Washington 13:06
'63.

Julia Brock 13:07
So before integration, before desegregation?

Calvin Washington 13:10
Yeah. Before, yeah.

Robin Morris 13:12
Why did your parents send you to a private school?

Calvin Washington 13:16
When I was president of the Catholic School Alumni Association, I was asked that question on an interview. The only thing I can think of is they wanted us to have a good education. That's all. I can't think of any other reasons. Because we did not become Catholics. We just went to the Catholic school. I don't know whether Elayne could say any more about that than I could, you know, about why they sent us there, except for to get us the kind of education that they wanted us to have and to start us out, right. I was a little different than Elayne; Elayne went to kindergarten and things like that. I just remember going to elementary school. I don't remember any kindergarten. I don't know whether I did or not, but I don't remember that. And then, you know, getting into high school, I was in a band. I played basketball and I ran track. And that was it. Once I started driving ... see, here we go again ... once I started driving, then Sunday's were spent trying to get away and get the car to go ride, you know.

Julia Brock 14:28
So, after church?

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Calvin Washington 14:31
Yeah, after church, after church, everything was centered around church. I tell people that as a 16, 17, 18 years old when I was driving, you went to church, you had go to church and my mother didn't get up and say, "You need to get out of their bed and go to church." No, you got up and you went to church; well, church service was at 11 o'clock. After graduating from high school, you know. and living at home, you know, Mama didn't tell me to get up; I could come in at five o'clock in the morning, I went to church, you know, and stuff. There was no making me go to church--we went to church. And then some of the activities around the church that I can remember is something like the fundraisers that they had. I can remember in the old church and the first church on Marshall Street, how those ladies used to cook and raise money for things that they had. You know, Blacks didn't have a whole lot of money so that's what they did. I can remember, they had this bucket, and in this bucket was coals and they will put the skillet on top of it, and fry the fish.

Julia Brock 15:47
Outside?

Calvin Washington 15:48
Outside, outside. I can remember Homecomings, you know, and stuff like that. But, you know, just like I say, the only thing I remember about Homecomings until I got to be an adult, was the food and what kind of fun we had as kids.

Julia Brock 16:03
What food? Do you remember?

Calvin Washington 16:06
I do remember the fried chicken and the collard greens and the potato salad and the fried pies that this lady would go with ... had these fried pies. And they were not like the Varsity's are with nothing in them. They were full. And just all kind of ... the tables. The table were so long and there was no place to put anything on the table. I can remember the iced tea and lemonade. You know, by then we didn't drink a whole lot of sodas; there were cokes, but, you know, the iced tea and lemonade and, you know, just the food. Homecomings was really a big deal. Families who had older children, they would come back for Homecoming. If they had left, like, been moved away or even lived across town in Atlanta, they would come back to Antioch if they were not going, you know, to Antioch coming back to Antioch. But just like I say, from the time I can remember was these ladies and how they dressed and how sharp they were. I mean, you know, and just like I say, you talking about the people. One of my high school English teachers went to Antioch, that was Mrs. Brooks. Mrs. Brooks made hats. Every lady had hats; she made hats from my mother.

Julia Brock 17:34
Do you remember her first name?

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Calvin Washington 17:36
Georgia, Georgia Brooks...

Elayne Hunter Washington 17:39
And she sponsored me as a debutante.

Calvin Washington 17:48
Just how they were and the things they did. And, just like I say, as a male, you know, my involvement in church was not like my sister's was.

Julia Brock 17:58
So YPD was mostly yong women?

Calvin Washington 18:01
No, there were some guys there; they were there. I mean we took part in it because ... "It's time for YPD. You got to go." Whether I paid any attention or ... when they hit activities I participated.

Julia Brock 18:19
Were there any other groups or organizations you were involved in as a young man?

Calvin Washington 18:23
There at the church we had ... that's where the Boy Scouts troop was. It was there.

Julia Brock 18:29
Who was the leader?

Calvin Washington 18:31
His name was George Henderson. He was the Scoutmaster. And he had a farm in Lithonia and we would go down and spend the night there, weekends there. We built huts to sleep in. All this was centered around church because we went in and we met at the church. When we went we went from the church, all the guys ... we had to come to the church and everything was centered around the church at that time.

Julia Brock 19:02
Do you remember pastors?

Calvin Washington 19:04
Yeah. I guess maybe the first one that I really, really remember ... maybe Reverend Gay when I paid attention. And then I remember Dr. Flanagan. I Remember Reverend Few, Reverend Jones, L.J. Jones. Because I grew up with his kids and we are still friends. S

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Julia Brock 19:34
So Rev. Gay was pastor when you were young.

Calvin Washington 19:37
Yeah.

Julia Brock 19:37
And then and then Rev. Flanagan?

Calvin Washington 19:40
Yeah. I think so.

Elayne Hunter Washington 19:43
Reverend Jones was before Flanagan.

Calvin Washington 19:46
Okay. I don't I don't remember the order, okay, I just remember them. And I remember Reverend Maddox, Frank Maddox, I remember Reverend Adams, and these guys were toward my older years in the church. I remember Reverend Gay, and the only thing I can remember about him is he was a big man. That's all I remember; he was a big man. They lived in a parsonage. They had a daughter who ... she was younger than I was so that, you know ... and Reverend Maddox was for my first encounter with a pastor. No. Dr. Flanagan was the first pastor that I had any action with as a young adult, who ... we had lots of problems trying to have a voice. I was president of the John and Jackie Kennedy Club and we were trying to have a voice and I wanted to meet with him and he would not meet with me at church. I had to meet him in a public place. Whether he thought I was going to do something or not ... because we had to meet at the Y on Butler Street. That's where I had to meet him at. And he had these other people present and nothing came out of the meeting. They told us that we couldn't do this and all the things that ....

Julia Brock 21:18
What were you trying to do?

Calvin Washington 21:19
Just have a voice in a church, because the church ... that's during the time....

Julia Brock 21:24
When was this? The 1960s?

Calvin Washington 21:26

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Yes. Early 60s, because this was ... I guess I maybe was on the verge of graduating from high school. And, you know, I was driving, you know, and stuff and just trying to have a voice because things were changing. Segregation was something that I paid very little attention to; didn't have time. I was having too much fun. That was something that those other people were doing, you know and stuff.

Julia Brock 22:11
Was the Kennedy Club ... was it political in a sense that you're trying to have conversations about segregation?

Calvin Washington 22:18
Not really political. The name was just that he was the president and she was his wife and Dr. Flanagan, who kind of started that with us was, you know, he was all in for Kennedy and what he was trying to do. I guess ... here we go again, paying attention at some of the meetings where we had that discussion, I don't remember.

Elayne Hunter Washington 22:40
He was a well known orator.

Julia Brock 22:43
Dr. Flanagan?

Elayne Hunter Washington 22:45
And artist.

Calvin Washington 22:46
And an artist.

Robin Morris 22:49
So the Kennedy club was after Kennedy was President?

Calvin Washington 22:52
Washington: Mm-hmm.

Robin Morris 22:53
What happened after Kennedy was assassinated? Were y'all still going?

Calvin Washington 23:00
I don't really remember. I don't remember whether the name changed or what they called it after that. I just don't remember.

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Robin Morris 23:10
It was for young adults?

Calvin Washington 23:13
Well, we were teenagers going into young adulthood, you know, and stuff. They named us Junior Trustees and Stewards in the church. And see that's where our involvement came, because we started to ... one of the things that they did for us was by making us Junior Trustees and Stewards was to train us on how the church was run--what it took to, you know, maintain a church. And when we got in there, especially after we started working, you know, we felt that we were putting money in the church, and we had no voice and we wanted a voice. We wanted to say, "No, you don't need to buy this. You need to buy that" and they didn't like that. I tell the story all the time about my mother. When I used to meetings I always had this thingsa about sitting up front. No, I will sit in the back, I will sit in the back. And my mother would be sitting up front. And when I raised my hand and started to talk, my mother would turn around and give me the look and I would sit down. Because that was ... you don't talk about that. You don't say anything about that. That's the look I got. But then it turned around; I took care of it. I started sitting on the front row, so she couldn't turn around and see me. And that's when you know, I got boisterous and, you know, was able to say things and speak up.

Julia Brock 24:38
Do remember any particular issues you were concerned about voicing?

Calvin Washington 24:47
No, not during that time. It was just in general about, you know ... they had us in a meeting and they were telling us, you know, "we want you to learn how to run the church" and they would be talking about things and then we'd start asking questions. And then they wanted to keep us quiet. So those kinds of things; it wasn't anything in particular until we decided to try to move from Hibernia Street to our current location. And I was involved in that because I was an adult. I had been an the Army, and I was back home. Because when they move to Hibernia, I was not here. I was in the Army.

Julia Brock 25:25
I was gonna ask, do you remember that move, which would have been around '64?

Calvin Washington 25:28
Washington: Right. I was not here; I was in the Army. Yes. I saw pictures. They sent me a couple of snapshots from the paper but I was not involved in that move. When I left we were on Marshall Street and when I came back, we were on ...I think the address was Atlanta Avenue then.

Julia Brock 25:47
When did you come back from the Army?

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Calvin Washington 25:54
'67, close to '68.

Julia Brock 25:57
And you served in Germany.

Calvin Washington 25:58
Washington: Yeah.

Julia Brock 25:59
When you came back, did you immediately pick up involvement in the church?

Calvin Washington 26:02
Washington: No, no.

Julia Brock 26:06
What happened? I mean, did you come back to it later or why did you ...?

Calvin Washington 26:10
Well, again, I had been in Army; I had been on my own. And you know, I just ... only thing I did was went to church because Mama said I had to go to church. I didn't do anything. And then as I got older, just got involved in the church and, you know, kept going and you know, things like that, and then I left again, when I got married. I was not going to church.

Julia Brock 26:36
What year did you get married?

Calvin Washington 26:38
'71 and I was not really going to church. I went to church because Mama said you had to be at church for this or church for that, you know, and stuff. That's the only time I went. I was getting up ... after we had kids and I moved to South Dekalb, I was taking my kids to a church and I was going home. And then my mother told me, says, "If you can get up and take them to church and drop them off, then you can come to Antioch." And I just started going back and then I kept going back and then I got involved because I was a son of the church.

Julia Brock 27:20
So would that have been in the late 70s? Or the 80s? That you got back involved again?

Calvin Washington 27:25

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Yeah, the late 70s, early 80s, and then I kept going to church. I'm trying to remember, was it Frank Maddox who was the pastor then? And he was kind of a young guy, you know and stuff, and he related, to a lot of things that I was into and stuff like that. And he was a character, so to speak of. And then I didn't like some of the things he did and then that's when I got ... my involvement came in getting back into church.

Julia Brock 28:01
Can you speak to what you didn't like? Or do you want to speak to what you didn't like?

Elayne Hunter Washington 28:05
Can I say something? After church on Sundays, when he would march out, he would do the James Brown thing.

Julia Brock 28:15
With the cape?

Elayne Hunter Washington 28:16
With the cape. Yeah.

Calvin Washington 28:18
And I just didn't think those things were what you did in church here. He would show up to church on Sunday morning with his shades on and sit in the pulpit. I can remember my mother and them saying that he would get up there and wouldn't have his sermon written out. Now, nobody really thinks about that but that was a big thing back then that he didn't prepare himself. I was influenced by my mother, you know ... now I'm talking about this and I'm not saying a whole lot about my father because my father just went to church there. You know, he was active. I'm not sure whether Daddy was an officer then; I think he became an officer later on.

Julia Brock 29:03
But he was active in the church?

Calvin Washington 29:04
Right, he was active in the church; he went to church. I told you about me learning how to tie my shoes. He was at church and we went to church as a family. You know, we sat on the same pew every Sunday, you know and stuff, and then ... I don't remember whether Daddy left or not or how he worked because he was a chef. He did a lot of Sunday work. But when I got active in the church, I have been active ever since.

Julia Brock 29:36
And in what ways have you been active?

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Calvin Washington 29:38
I'm currently an Emeritus Steward. I was a Trustee for a while and during that time, we cut grass as the church, you know, and did things like that. Then I became a Steward and, you know, counting money and making decisions for the church. In the process of making the move to our current location we were highly involved in looking at churches that were for sale in locations where we wanted to move. Because we were, quote unquote ... even from from Marshall Street to Atlanta Avenue, we were a family church. And when I mean family, I mean, there were different families, but we all lived in the same neighborhood. You know, all of us knew each other, you know and stuff. I remember we did a survey, the furthest person drove, may have been Mrs. Brooks and Mr. Brooks, and they drove from around Hunter Street, or what do they call it now? MLK. They drove from there. We had one or two members, but everybody else was in a couple of miles of the church. I mean, when we were on Marshall Street, we'd walk to church.

Julia Brock 31:17
Because you were involved so heavily, can walk through the decision to move to this particular location?

Calvin Washington 31:25
Yeah. Yeah, highly involved in the search. Reverend Larry Hudson was our pastor. And the city of Decatur had ... we wanted to expand the church. They told us we couldn't do it and they had all these reasons why we could not expand parking spaces, all kinds of things like this. Because urban renewal had caused us to have to purchase the street in front of the church. And that's when the name change ... because that street was Atlanta Avenue. The church to the side was Hibernia. And we had to change the address to Hibernia Street, even though the church was still facing the other way. And what we wanted to do is take and move, what was now facing Atlanta Avenue as the front of the church to face Hibernia. And they said no, we couldn't build, we couldn't do anything. And that sparked for us to start looking for another church, because we will landlocked; they landlocked us in. When we interview Reverend Hudson, he can go more into detail about what the city of Decatur did to us and what we could and could not do. I think as far as the Antioch's history go, his information will be very, very helpful in understanding the kind of church that we were when we moved, because just like I said, we weren't growing, we could not grow. Membership was still family. We didn't have a whole lot of outside people. Some people came in who moved to Decatur, who were maybe A.M.E.s and they will look for an A.M.E. church and we were there. Because we were only A.M.E. church in the city of Decatur. And that's just the way that it ...when I moved out, I drove in, you know, to church, but the demographics were still a local church. That's what we were.

Julia Brock 33:34
Do you remember the year that survey was done? Or roundabout?

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Calvin Washington 33:41
It would have had to be in the 90s.

Julia Brock 33:45
And then also thinking about like placing something in time, the year the church had to purchase the street ...

Calvin Washington 33:51
I have no idea what year that was. I just know it was involved in the urban renewal project that had taken place.

Julia Brock 33:59
Why Stone Mountain?

Calvin Washington 34:03
Availability, cost. The way that the deal was struck, and what we had to do to get it in ... when we came to this location to look at this church, the congregation that had it, we came over here after service one Sunday. And we had members go into every room in every corner in this church, and we prayed. And, we ended up here. I do know, I drive past two of the churches that we looked at. One is on Flat Shoals, and it was a smaller church. The other one was on ... anyway I drive right past it and now I can't think of the name of the street ... and it's a small congregation; they look like they haven't grown. The building still looks the same as it did when we looked at it. No property with it, you know and stuff. And that was one of the decisions that we made; we did not want to be landlocked again, because we had been through that. And when we looked at space, you know, and this offered us more space than wehad.

Julia Brock 35:36
And [Antioch] own[s] this church and [Antioch] own[s] another church nearby that [they] rent?

Calvin Washington 35:43
Oh, the church on Elam Road. It backs up to us and it became available, and the pastor we had, Pastor Wicker, came to us and said, "landlocked" and we bought it. We went into a huge debt to purchase it, but it was going to keep us ... and the plan was to connect the two churches. We also had some plans to build another church and connect it to this facility on the side when you come in. That property that runs up to the traffic light? We own the property up to the traffic light. Yeah, we own all the way to the traffic light.

Julia Brock 36:27
And the senior living facility.

Calvin Washington 36:29

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Well, that's down this way. That's different; that came about after ... Pastor Wicker or Bishop Wicker was, you know, he forseen a lot. Some of the conversations we had that we had nowhere for our elderly people to go, that they could live very comfortably and that was what we were looking at. We were not looking at just a building, we were looking at a place where they can have everything self contained. Not to worry about security, you know, and things like that. And they have a quality place for those people who are elderly, not necessarily us. But for those people who are looking for a place to live with quality housing. We had looked at some of the places in Atlanta but we were out here. And, here we go again. He found a guy who had the property for sale; we went into a huge debt to buy the property. But, you know, with grants and those kinds of things, excuse me, we were able to purchase. But Antioch, is still doing the thing that it was founded for. You know, now we're back into social action. We are doing things now like reaching out to the world, livestreaming. We can look at numbers and tell what people are looking at us, how long they're looking. And we've not been livestreaming a year yet and the numbers tell us that we are doing better than people who've been livestreaming for five years. And it's because of the product that we produce. Bishop Wicker, he wanted to be a bishop ad he ran for bishop and we were really concerned about the kind of pastor that we would get. Because, first of all, we had huge debt; it took a lot for a person to come in with the kind of debt that we had. And we have a pastor now, Vandy Simmons, who is really, really taking care of Antioch. He's been with us a little bit over a year, almost two years, almost two years, and we have improved in all of our endeavors, in all of the social action, livestreaming, and services. And what we do is just ... it's a different church that is doing what Antioch was founded upon. We're trying to educate our people to things that are going on around them. It's a great place to be and a great time to be here. Antioch has not changed, that much; it's still ... I can't say that it's still family oriented but one of the things that we have, if you talk to some people who have recently joined, and I'm gonna say just recently, meaning the last, maybe, 10 years--it's the people. It's what the people project from Antioch, and how they are accepted. I had some of the people tell us on Sunday when we asked our visitors (we call them guests) to stand ... and all of a sudden, Antioch is all over them, shaking their hands, greeting them. Welcome. And this is what what Antioch has always done. It's always been that kind of church. And it's not just the 12 or 15 families that were there, you know, when we were on Marshall Street and Hibernia. It's the 80 to 100 families that are here now. And the people that are here now. So we're still doing the same thing. As I look back on it and I listen, and working with this history committee and looking at it, and finding out things that I didn't know about Antioch--Antioch was before its time. And the things that it encountered, and helping people to making sure people were safe and they had a place where they could worship with no problems at all. My wife is a minister at a Baptist church. They always want to know when I'm going to join, and I tell them never. I enjoy being an African Methodist. And I like it. I'm one of those people who said at one time, I thought the church was going because there were no young people in. It's not that way anymore.

Julia Brock 41:21
Would you say that's changed in the past two years, more young people being involved?

Calvin Washington 41:26

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Not two years, it's been longer than that that they are coming and they enjoy the kind of service we have. At one time when Bishop Wicker was the they call us the Holy Roller A.M.E church, because of the way our service was. And that's what you do to to draw people. It's all about marketing. And you know, we have a great product. And in addition to that, it's serving God, worshiping Him. And the way that we do it. It's amazing, I sit back and I look at it and now I'm getting older I see where it is. Being an Emeritus Seward, I'm not really involved in a lot of activities that go along at Antioch now. I don't have to attend all the meetings. I'm not a major decision maker anymore. They ask me things. The pastor that we have now called me in his office and told me he wanted me to be the Public Relations Director for Antioch and I told him no. And I went home and didn't attend a meeting because I didn't have to and then I start getting these phone calls congratulating me that I was the Public Relations Director for the Antioch Church. So I'm working on that because I had sit down; I was tired because of all the things that we had been through, and in my life changing and me seeing things differently. But I'm enjoying what I'm doing; it's a lot of work. I'm going to give it all I have. But this history committee has been a thing that really inspired me to do a lot of things I do here at Antioch because I want this church to continue. I want it to be here long after I'm gone. And if they say Calvin who? and nobody knows who I am it'll be fine.

Julia Brock 43:22
Well, thank you for your time.

Robin Morris 43:24
I just need to ask, can you show us your suspenders on film? Because they're going to remember Calvin as the man that had the tie and the suspenders. Because we've talked about the stylish women those who I wanted to be sure we got the stylish man.

Calvin Washington 43:41
[laughs] I'm glad I wore this today.

Julia Brock 43:44
Brock: And let me just say for the record that speaking off camera is Robin Morris from Agnes Scott, and Elayne Hunter is still in the room, too. So thank you. Anything else you'd like to say before I turn the camera off?

Calvin Washington 43:58
No, I think I've said enough.

Julia Brock 43:59
Okay, thank you. Thank you.

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