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[00:00:00] **Freeman:** activity for the 5th graders who study as part of their history unit, civil rights in Nashville. Uh, earlier this,

okay, like this, okay, great, and do I need to repeat what I was saying earlier? Okay. Okay. Okay. Oh, okay, good. Okay. So, the, uh, panel today, as I said, was a culminating activity from their study. Earlier in the month, they had visited the community church, art history exhibit that, uh, we had, uh, at Westwood Baptist Church University Center commemorating our 100 years.

And we have an outside mural that they visited this year. And they also visited as a part of their civil rights tour, my homestead, which is 2518 Jefferson Street. And so, Since we were on their tour, they invited me to be a part of a panel with historian, uh, Linda Wendt, for the students to just ask questions that really were helping them to complete their assignment to, uh, Do their project that would be a part of storytelling and I guess some other things.

So that's what today was

[00:01:51] **Lemley:** Well, hello there So you don't have to wear the headphones if you don't want to now it may be easier to hear me But it's completely up to you if you'd rather hear me this way or with the headphones. Okay, and Let's see before we get started. This is your Stephanie will be giving you a gift card the next time she sees you says you're having lunch soon You And, um, this is the agreement that, uh, you, you're going to receive a gift and, um, you agree to this oral history.

[00:03:54] **Freeman:** What's today's date?

[00:03:55] **Lemley:** It is the 24th, April 24th.

[00:03:57] **Freeman:** Oh, 24, 24.

[00:03:58] **Lemley:** 24, 24.

[00:04:00] **Freeman:** Thank you.

[00:04:28] **Lemley:** Okay. Thank you.

All right, so we are now recording and, um, you, you can, you can take a drink if you need to. Go ahead. And I've made sure to turn my phone off. If you have a phone, go ahead and turn that off. My name is Tasha A. F. Lemley, representing Urban Green Lab and Tennessee State University. The date today is Wednesday, April 24, 2024, and the time is approximately 1.

51 p. m. Central Time. I'm in Nashville, Tennessee, and taking a brief oral history of Ms. Eloise Freeman. Could you say and spell your name? Um,

[00:05:15] **Freeman:** my name is Eloise Freeman. Christine Harris Freeman. Elois is E L O I S. Freeman, F R E E M A N.

[00:05:26] **Lemley:** And do you consent to be recorded?

[00:05:28] **Freeman:** Yes.

[00:05:30] **Lemley:** So, let's start out with just a little bit of, um, just biographical history. When, when were you born? I was born June 10th,

[00:05:39] **Freeman:** 1949. And who were your parents? Yes. My parents are Cesar Harris Jr.

and Sarah Harris. Sarah Alberti. Sarah Alberta Cardi Harris.

[00:05:57] **Lemley:** Beautiful. And you can back off the mic just a little. Um, yeah, that'd be great. Thank you. And where were you born?

[00:06:05] **Freeman:** I was born, uh, in Nashville, Tennessee, Riverside Hospital. And. Went to 2518 Jefferson Street to live until I left

[00:06:17] **Lemley:** to

[00:06:17] **Freeman:** go to

[00:06:18] **Lemley:** work. When did you leave there?

[00:06:21] **Freeman:** I, after graduating from Fisk University in elementary education in 1970, I left to go to the Midwest to teach and live.

[00:06:31] **Lemley:** Okay.

Beautiful. Um, and so you grew up on Jefferson Street? I grew up on Jefferson Street. Okay. , how old were you when you left? 20. 20. Mm-Hmm. . So what was, what? What are, you know? So we're gonna be talking a lot about the weather, which is a little different than most oral histories. We're gonna touch a lot on, um.

You know your neighborhood that all plays into it and but if you hear me keep kind of going back to the weather That's why because this is a climate related the climate related interview, but our lives are intertwined with the climate every day and so you we may start going in a really interesting direction and I'm gonna ask you something that's gonna seem seem a Little of a non sequitur, but but that's why so what when you were growing up What is your earliest memory of the weather?

You

[00:07:37] **Freeman:** I remember warm weather,

and that's significant because we didn't really have a lot of snow during those times. I mean, even less than we'd have now. I remember another connection to that in seeing some pictures that, uh, were taken when we were very little. Past my memory, I would not have remembered that, but seeing the pictures, it was outside in the snow.

You know, all bundled up as little kids, but didn't really have that much experience of snow. So, you've seen a picture, but you don't really remember the snow. No, because I was too young to, that was past my point of, of remembering, but saw these pictures where we were bundled up in the snow. That's sweet.

And I say we in terms of, and I think it was all the siblings, uh, so I had four siblings. A four and a half year difference between all of us. So probably all of us were in that picture, whatever picture is us.

[00:08:44] **Lemley:** So from the youngest to the oldest, half year difference. Okay. And there were five of you all together?

Four. Four of you all together. But you remember warm weather. That, that sticks in your memory as a

[00:08:53] **Freeman:** kid. I mean when you ask that question, uh, that's what comes to mind. That when I say warm, not really weather that, that, that. It was

conducive to snow because after I left here, I went to regions that it was plenty of snow and cold because I went to the Midwest, Chicago area, and then I was in Boston, Massachusetts for 20 years.

So, so maybe that's why when I go back and think of my childhood, it was relatively even temperatures. Not enough of snow on a regular. Yeah.

[00:09:29] **Lemley:** Yeah. I'm going to adjust your mic one second.

When you remember the warm weather, what do you think about? Yeah.

[00:09:43] **Freeman:** Playing outside, um, at younger ages, uh, sitting on the porch.

During that time you walked where you were going, and so walking in reasonable comfort without being bundled up with five or six layers to go wherever. Yeah, so Since you're directing, you know, the thoughts to the weather, it takes some time to kind of go back and think

[00:10:11] **Lemley:** Right, right. About that. Yeah, like I, I I don't know what I would say if you asked me.

I think for me, for me, I grew up in Alabama, and I do remember the Coldmoor, I think. Yeah. Okay. And I guess it's just also kind of what you like. Like, I think when I was little, I do remember, you know, we'd go out like a Stay Puff Marshmallow Man, you know, with the coat and the gloves and all of that. Um, and I remember ice storms as well in northern Alabama.

[00:10:38] **Freeman:** Yeah. That's so interesting. I, I don't even remember anything like that.

[00:10:41] **Lemley:** Yeah. Yeah, so maybe it's more what we like or more what's dramatic.

[00:10:46] **Freeman:** that's that whole thing of what do you remember? Yeah. It didn't mean what was, it's just what did you remember,

[00:10:51] **Lemley:** yeah. So you remember it being generally comfortable going around, you don't have to bundle up and um,

[00:10:57] **Freeman:** Comparatively, so you remember, that's why I gave you the reference, look, I lived in, for 30 years, I lived way, I mean mid, midway and way up, where it was some serious winters.

Yeah. So in going back and, since you're having this point of focus. It was nothing like that. I mean, I did not, I was not accustomed to that type of weather experience when I left here in 1970, all the way to 2000, you know, the type of weather that you deal with. And then the other thing about that is, which I don't necessarily remember, but if we're talking about a contrast, is it's beautiful to think of the greenery.

So many months of the year that spring buds in March and leaves fall completely in November. And so, so that's a whole nother thing about temperate and warm climates comparatively. Whereas much of my adult life, well now it's almost evened out 25 years. But, but, but that growing up work years Much of my experience would have been spring in June, starting to bud in mid May, uh, up until the end of September.

And so, again, since we're talking about it and I'm thinking about it, that's another reason I think about the temperate, because you had experience of a nice spring and summer season.

[00:12:44] **Lemley:** So you're saying in the, in your first 20 years, you do remember more of the spring buds happening More like in June.

[00:12:51] **Freeman:** Oh, no, no, no.

Once you left. Yeah. Okay. Once I left when you were in the Midwest and in Boston, Massachusetts, particularly. Spring doesn't bud till much later. Okay.

[00:13:05] **Lemley:** Yeah. And what I call a winter or I'm all bundled up and for two inches of snow. That's, that's like nothing for you guys. You're like, this is not winter. I

[00:13:17] **Freeman:** still have my winter coats.

My, what I call my Boston codes, that you almost never need, but I look forward to those times. You, what did you have, you had three

[00:13:28] **Lemley:** days this winter where you could pull out your Boston code?

[00:13:30] **Freeman:** this year was pretty good. Okay. You got to wear your code. You know where you can use it, yeah. Okay. Yeah, because think about it, we had several little stretches where you had a, a week of cold and.

Up until just, now I think even with this, what I, to be honest with you, and it, it's funny how weather does affect a lot of things when you, when you start connecting. So one of the things I have adapted to in, uh, being back here almost 25 years, see I've been back almost 25 years. I still proudly wear my Boston coats and my scarves and my layers when it gets cold.

And that would be, let's say, 30s. Okay. For it. Yeah. But what I found myself adapting to, which is what I see, which is a norm for the way people dress is they, I don't even know if they layer, they just do. lightweight coats because generally you don't even have opportunity to purchase the bigger coats. So this season, I think I remember, I didn't pull out the Boston coats as much and just layered a little bit more underneath and had a lighter weight coat.

I'm just thinking about that.

[00:14:48] **Lemley:** No, I like it. I'm the same way that most of the cold, I just wear a hoodie.

[00:14:53] **Freeman:** Yeah. So that's what I'm saying. Most people, most people do. And so, um, I wouldn't just do a hoodie, but I'll do a hoodie with a jacket. Whereas before, I'd just pull out the big coat. So I didn't pull it out as much this time as, whereas I could have, because I did just accommodate and say, I'll just do something different.

[00:15:12] **Lemley:** Did you, do you, have you always called these Boston coats? Or is it just because of this conversation? No,

[00:15:18] **Freeman:** I think someone called that. For me. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. I just, uh, uh, maybe. But anyway, uh, but they are Boston Colts because you don't need them here, so. What do they look like? I have a variety of Boston coats.

You do? How many? Of course. I mean, I, look, I had coats. Because you had to do it for months. Yeah, and, and then also, you know, when you get old, you don't get rid of your things. So, generally, I have the long coats. I have, uh, the coats below the knee with a hood, and a couple of them with hoods, and then something that's just at the knee.

Then you've got the longer coats that, you know, that, you know, That was probably more fashion that would be mid calf or something like that. I don't have real fur, but I have a couple of fake furs. You know, that I don't use that much. Um, and even some, you know, lighter weight like raincoats with lining. Mm hmm.

Just, that you've collected over 40, 50 years. Yeah.

[00:16:22] **Lemley:** Yeah. Yeah, I'm noticing today, I love your color. So you've got, you know, because the people who listen to this interview aren't going to be able to see this, you're pairing a beautiful orange, a orange, I think, and I put you on the orange mic. Um, yeah. Oh, that's true.

So, orange, I think right now is my favorite color. Oh, good. And you've paired, Aloysius has paired this with a turquoise, um, it's just beautiful contrast. So, your scarf. You call

[00:16:47] **Freeman:** that turquoise? Well,

[00:16:48] **Lemley:** your scarf is, right?

[00:16:49] **Freeman:** Oh, it may be. Yes. Yeah, that's

[00:16:51] **Lemley:** closer to turquoise. Yes. But,

[00:16:52] **Freeman:** yeah. And there's a little of it in here.

There's some highlights in there. Which kind of

[00:16:57] **Lemley:** brings it out. It brings it out, so you didn't even know you were matching and you're matching.

[00:17:00] **Freeman:** Oh no, I know you were matching. I'm gonna be matching it. So I had to choose the right color of this. Because the one I wanted to wear, which was a little lighter, I couldn't find.

I'm a scarf person. I always wear scarves. Year round. You're right. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. I like scarves. Signatures, hats, wraps, caps, and scarves and jewelry. Ah, it's beautiful. Yeah. I always have all of it.

[00:17:28] **Lemley:** You're like, I know. It's beautiful. Yeah. So, okay. So, I'm curious. Between 1970 and 2000, you left in 1970, you're about 20 years old.

You come back in 30 years. Mm hmm. Did you notice changes? In the climate here, did you notice, or did you feel like, you know, Oh, I'm, I know this, like, so what, what was your, what did you notice about the weather when you came back 30 years later? Now again,

[00:17:58] **Freeman:** we're going to have to think about that because I hadn't thought about that.

And it's so funny, I'm just coming back from, uh, panel where we're talking about civil rights areas, so people are asking you how did the interstate change things, and how did you, the kids are asking wonderful questions about how did you feel, and you know, economic, and now you're asking me about weather, so okay, this is like a real shifting of gears.

And those are all,

[00:18:22] **Lemley:** like those are intersecting too. Please ask that question again. Okay, so, so you left in 1970 around the age of 20. And you're coming back in 2000, around my age, so I'm, I'm, I just turned 47, so you're coming back around the age of 50. And um, what, what kind of place did you move into? Did you have an apartment or did you move into a home?

[00:18:46] **Freeman:** So when I came back in 2000, I believe we started out at my mother's house because we were going to have the home that's on Jefferson Street I grew up in was being renovated and we were going to stay there. So initially I was in South Nashville off of what we call now 12 South, actually, which is now Belmont University because Belmont bought her house.

So, um, so I was there. When we came back, it was fall, it was, uh, close to the end of October. And again, I'm gonna be honest with you, there's certain, there's a certain mildness about weather. Uh, and if, if I'm thinking about going back to those memories, now looking at it from a weather dimension, You know, you, you, I would think about, okay, what do you have on?

I don't have to have on a big bundled up garment. Um, but I think the other thing that I, I, is I'm reflecting. It's funny that theme of, of the milder temperatures with a sprinkling of cold. It's just something that is going to be the theme, because even as I am now trying to reflect on that.

So I would be, and the other side is contrast of where I've come from.

[00:20:33] **Lemley:** Where did you come from in 2000? So what was that? That was in Boston. That was Boston. Mm hmm. So you're coming in from Boston in the fall. In the fall. So are we talking like, uh, September? October?

[00:20:43] **Freeman:** Like I said, end of October. Okay. Um, around, yeah, the end of October I think is when we landed here.

And, um, who is we? My

[00:20:54] **Lemley:** husband and my daughter. Okay. And

[00:20:56] **Freeman:** I,

[00:20:57] **Lemley:** so you came back and you're living in 12 South area? Um, in many ways on

[00:21:02] **Freeman:** Ackland Avenue, it's not 12 South. They don't

[00:21:04] **Lemley:** that part. Okay.

[00:21:05] **Freeman:** I said Belmont, Belmont University area would be the Belmont, and now it's Belmont's property. They bought it. So,

[00:21:11] **Lemley:** okay.

So on Ackland and, and, um, in many ways, I would imagine 30 years later, this feels like. Did it feel like coming home?

[00:21:20] **Freeman:** Yeah.

[00:21:20] **Lemley:** Okay. It was coming home.

[00:21:21] **Freeman:** Even though, even though that wasn't our house and our house was being, the house I grew up in was being prepared for us, was being remodeled. So yeah, it was coming home.

It was an, you know, we'd had an invitation to come on back and we were in a position to take that invitation. And so yeah, it was coming home.

[00:21:43] **Lemley:** But coming from Boston, you were probably, you were Getting out your coats in Boston, putting them away when you landed.

[00:21:51] **Freeman:** Um, yeah. Because

[00:21:54] **Lemley:** it was more mild than where you had just come from.

Um, do you have any comparison to the springs and falls, winters from the 30 years prior? Did you see, oh gosh, let me think, I love analogies, so I'm going to try to think of an analogy. Um, like, oh, for example, okay, so, uh, You know, it might be, if I had not been back to my middle school in 30 years, I might come back and feel like, Oh, the teacher, my teacher's a lot older because of course she is.

You know, there's been some changes or these walls are looking kind of run down 30 years later. Did you notice anything, you know, um, And you may not have because you'd experienced so many different things, but did you, did you feel like you'd noticed anything, um, climate related or, you know, Nashville was two years past a significant tornado that went through downtown at that point.

So you're coming back. I was here

[00:22:52] **Freeman:** when that happened. You

[00:22:52] **Lemley:** were here in 98. Yeah, we came in 97. Okay. Okay. Okay. Yeah. So.

[00:22:58] **Freeman:** We came in 97, left for a year and then came back in 2000. Okay. So you. So I know I was here.

[00:23:03] **Lemley:** Okay. So you were here for the tornado. Where were you? What was that experience like?

[00:23:07] **Freeman:** So, on that particular day, I got my daughter off to middle school and I think,

I don't know if it was a tornado warning in the forecast or not, I know it was certainly severe weather. And then I remember I had plans to go to Trinity City, is that what that's called? The Christian place out in Hendersonville for some. And I did, and the weather, I, I did leave there and maybe by the time I got

home and maybe even my daughter was, we got, she got home safely before stuff.

I don't even remember. I remember being there and kind of praying for Jess. Maybe the forecast was shifting or something and they might have said something in the session. But I remember just praying for safety for people and left there. I don't remember whether schools got dismissed earlier, but, you know, my child got home safely.

And, um, I don't remember the other details. I certainly remember the aftermath. We're just, the devastation, that tornado came straight down Charlotte Ave and then went to East Nashville and destroyed so many homes. But that would be, if we're going to talk about a contrast, I mean, in my childhood, I don't know if we ever had a tornado, and if we did, it was not memorable.

Tornadoes was not a part, matter of fact, tornadoes were something that took place in Kansas. That part of the country. Right, right. I don't know if Arkansas had them. You said you're from Arkansas, right? Alabama. You were Alabama. Yeah. Arkansas is more over Alabama, yeah, so I don't know if you all had tornadoes or some thought of it.

We did not. I mean, again, that was what happened, you know, in that, that mid, that middle part of the country. So growing up, that was never, ever. Anything that was an issue and if there was an exceptional time as a child, I don't even remember that. So, here I am coming back and there was a real deal tornado.

[00:25:29] **Lemley:** You'd only been here maybe a year and all of a sudden everything's I was accustomed

[00:25:33] **Freeman:** to hurricane warnings being up in Boston. Yeah. And, but, uh, so that was another contrast in terms of that period when I was going that tornadoes were a real deal option here. Uh, again, we're not having that much dramatic winters in the things like I would have experienced while I was gone.

And year two, being here, yes, we had that experience of a tornado. And since then, if you want to look at it from the broader thing, these major floods that we've had, flooding, tornadoes here, um, even the ice, you know, the ice events that we've had. So, if it was a part of my childhood, it wasn't significant enough where I remember it.

And childhood

[00:26:29] **Lemley:** all the way to the age of 20, where you're a young woman. Right. So, it seems like your perception is pretty mild overall, and then there's these dramatic Coming

[00:26:39] **Freeman:** back, and coming back, these very dramatic weather situations. Everything's all nice? But I think that's all, you know, I mean, we can document that that's different.

It's not norms in this area. To the degree that we have had them in these past 20, 25 years that I've been back.

[00:26:57] **Lemley:** But your experience overall is still pretty mild, pretty nice, we've had some really beautiful days in the last couple weeks, but then these, these sort of significant events that, like monster events.

Mm hmm. Um, what about the heat? Now I'm, I'm someone who, ever since I was little, doesn't like the heat. I don't react well to the heat. Now I'm worse than ever. I like it cold. You could put me in a cave and I'd be happy. Um, how, how are you with the heat when you were young? How do you, are you affected by the heat now?

And um,

[00:27:28] **Freeman:** yeah. So my turn, my turn for that is heat is hot.

So in the times that I've been back through our church, we ran a summer program. So we're out. You're out of the hut! It's hot.

You can deal with it because it's hot. I mean, you know it's going to be hot. And so, that is an interesting thing because I would be out in the heat. And the heat is hot. And so, even sometimes you, whether it's staff or children. Just think cool, it actually works as opposed to fussing about how hot you are.

Oh, come on. Think, I'm helping you. Take my advice. Think cool, because heat is hot. I mean, it's gotta be hot. It's hot. It's uncomfortable. And if you're out in it, which we would be. I mean, you're out for sports. You're out for swimming. You're out field trips. I mean, it's not a preference, but it's hot. It's, it's hot.

Yes, it really is.

[00:28:42] **Lemley:** Do you feel like it's a different kind of hot than when you were young, or it's the same hot?

[00:28:49] **Freeman:** I, you know, I hadn't thought about that. I, you know, I remember it to be hot. Oh, so even

child, the younger childhood years, I don't so much remember one. I was, I, I played outside maybe my younger years, but then my, Mid elementary up. I was not an outside person. I was a reader. So go to the library get my book on the inside Uh, but again, we had to walk where we went So I remember it would be hot because I did summer school and you'd look forward to getting in the house Because at least by this time we had an air conditioner in the front part of the house At the back part of the house.

They had the kitchen and the bathroom and You had a window unit in the front. Had a window unit in the front and I remember distinctly looking forward to hitting that doorway to go lay under the air conditioner for the rest of the day. Cause it was hot. How many square feet was your house?

[00:30:01] **Lemley:** Oh,

[00:30:01] **Freeman:** I don't know that now.

I mean, even the house is I don't even know how many square feet that is. How many bedrooms? Um You know, if you had a family of six, four children and two adults, my mother and my grandmother, uh, things that, whatever's extra is a bedroom, so the back porch is a bedroom. Uh, so there were four, four, four places where people slept, to two bedrooms and then the back porch.

And my grandmother had a little room off the back porch where she, she stayed. And one bathroom. And one bathroom. Mm hmm. So the window unit's in the front. Mm And so not, so yeah, the back part of the house, you had to close the doors to the kitchen and the little hallway that led to the bathroom and the back porch in the kitchen and my grandmama's little room, which is so funny.

My grandmother, this is her house. But, you know, she was gracious and, you know, helped her daughter with her four kids after, you know, she was divorced. My mother taught school. She had good work, but, you know, during that time, black teachers didn't make any money either, so. So, so that was the blessing that my grandmother gave me.

Provided her house, but I'm thinking my grandmama was in the bag with no air. Do you remember her ever complaining about the heat? Oh, absolutely not. Not fanning herself or? I mean, you know, I mean, look, think about even that from someone of that generation, you, you don't complain. It's not part of a culture.

And, um, and I mean, that's what, I don't know if it's, I don't even think we ever put a little air conditioning in her because she didn't, I mean, she was just that kind of person. What's your name? Mamie Clardy. Mamie Clardy. Mm hmm. So, um, to your point, yeah, the, the front part of the house, and so in the daytime for anybody, if you wanted to cool, you came to the front part of the house.

One of the areas where my sister and I sat had the TV. So that was the central place anywhere. This was during an era where. You did not live in your living room and dining room. So those two rooms, even though they were cool, because the air conditioning unit was up there, that's not a place where you could sit.

Why? On a norm. Oh no, those were special rooms for guests. And so children didn't linger in those rooms. Now the thing is, we got older, like high school, it wasn't an issue. But in growing up, no. You, you weren't, you didn't go and, into those spaces because they were reserved for, to be kept. In good condition, so that if you entertain, you know, had dinner for the dining room.

Now the piano was up there, so we'd go up there and practice piano, but, um, but I'm saying that to say that when the family gathered, they gathered in this space that was our bedroom. They had the TV, because that's where, so that would be like comparable to what you call the family room.

[00:33:05] **Lemley:** Okay. Thank you. Um, uh, let me see.

You're, I had a couple follow ups,

and one of them has slipped my mind. Um You mentioned your church, and what church, what church have you been involved with?

[00:33:23] **Freeman:** Westwood Baptist Church University Center. 2510 Albion Street in North Nashville. And how long have you been involved with that church? Since I've been back, and then that's the church we grew up in.

So, the first 20 years of my life, and since then. It's the last 25 years of my life.

[00:33:42] **Lemley:** What kind of things do you do at the church?

[00:33:45] **Freeman:** I am a minister of the gospel there, and so at this season I am minister of justice. And that's a term that, uh, title, defined it that the pastor had suggested for what I shared with him as my call to be out.

In the spaces and sharing the gospel as you go, but in ways of service, but also connecting resource, well, providing resource, but also connecting resource from the community to us. And so that's what, uh, my ministry is now. And so what that means is we took, we made reference to the tornado when the most recent tornado hit a few years ago, and then COVID shutdown, we began with providing gift cards to those who were impacted in assessing our own congregation.

Thank God, no one had lost their homes, but they were in a, neighborhood that lost power for days upon days and weeks. And so that was one of the things that we said. And of course, by the time we were about ready to initiate that initiative, COVID shutdown hit. And so that still was a way that we could help people by providing these gift cards because they could get food, offer food support, but at the same time they could get gas because we decided on Kroger cards and even other things.

And, but, by reason of this extended ministry, we were able to partner with the high school across the street, Pearl Cone High School, and Second Harvest, so that what started out as gift cards, we were able, over a course of, you know, Nine months plus to distribute 800 boxes a week to the community in a drive thru.

So that's that whole power of the collective. Whereas we never would have been able to do that as a church. But because of the COVID time when everything was shut down and we had this weekly drive thru. So much of the community came to us because this was the way you could see people. So WEGO came and the, uh, unions came to help us.

And the, one, one of the local restaurants were a part of an initiative to, help support grassroots restaurants by giving them funds to provide community meals. So we were a space they could distribute the meals. So we were distributing, uh, hot meals and the bread person, the person who developed, uh, excuse me, who delivered bread to the missions couldn't do that because they shut the missions down.

But we, we were a space. We could distribute them. So, I mean, it was just this wonderful place where folks came to minister to the community. And, um, so again, through our position of being able to, Being in relationship and being out there in our gospel outreach, we've been able to bless so many and still are able, in different kinds of ways, you know, that, that need was different, the resources to give are different, but we still are just looking for how can we work with

others and, and really meeting the needs of the people and one of the key things that was our goal to assist people who are not in regular streams of support.

Explain what that means, yeah. There are a number of people who know how to work the system. They know how to, they either are connected or they know how to make the calls and get what they want. But there are a whole lot of people who just say, Well, the Lord will provide, we'll make it. And those are the people that we want to be in relationship with.

It's always going to be somebody we know. So part of our Encouragement to our members and community is stay in touch with your folks. We always say that, right? When it's hot or anything, back to weather. If it's hot, they always say, check on your seniors. Well, I mean, and, and, and we're talking about this weather event so we can connect this to weather.

That as a result of the impact of that weather event, which was so long term, we said, let's check on your neighbors. But not only check on them because what we know about our elder people are also black people who just learn how to make do. Well, like your grandmother, you'd never complain about heat.

Yeah, you don't complain, and so people don't complain. And so this, this, even this notion that people have of the poor, it's so wrong because people don't want handouts and also they are prepared to survive. But what I, that's what's about helping people who don't have streams of support. We want to find those people.

That you saying and one of my examples I like to use all the time a friend of mine I was checking on her. She's you know about my age and so She was actually impacted I think the tree fell in the front of her house or maybe partially on it But she was able to still be in it and her refrigerator. I mean her Power was off for weeks, and she, she is raising, she had raised her granddaughter.

Her granddaughter said, look, I'm getting out of here, and went to stay with somebody, but my friend said, oh no, I'm, I'm fine, we're, we're making it. And so, what we had to do was just make sure that she got some regular food cards. Because, yeah, she was making it, but she didn't need to be making it like she was going to make it.

And so that's what I mean, people not in the other streams of support. Now this particular lady could be resourceful to make calls, but again, her mindset was, she probably would let other people go on and get the help, because she's

making it. So that's what I mean, people who, Either don't have a knowledge or how to connect to resources.

And that's a lot of people or people who even have a mindset. No, I don't need anything. Just, you know, I can make do with what I have to just offer support to people. And what that means is you're giving to them by reason of initiative that they didn't ask for. And because there is a real need and also by reason of relationship, it's not handout, you know, it's love.

[00:40:26] **Lemley:** Hmm. Oh, thank you. So, because of your position in the community, you have the connections and the knowledge and the, and the power as a group to be able to do this work.

[00:40:39] **Freeman:** And so even, the only thing I would shift is by reason of the position being in connection with other people, like minded people, that makes a difference too.

You are, we are able to do so much more than I would even be able to do, period. But. I wouldn't be able to do that if I wasn't in connection with other people. So that, so that's why the ministry part comes out. You know, the gospel says go into all the world. And so, I'm blessed to witness what happens when we do go.

That even the Heavenly Father will connect you with like minded people. And out of that, things far above your imagination. can take place. And if I could, since you gave me a pause, I'll continue. Yeah, keep going. So here's the, one of the things that even, so our church is blessed to have a housing ministry, houses that over the years we have purchased, uh, by reason of graciousness of neighbors initially who said, who offered the church to purchase the house at a very, you know, reasonable price.

And so, we have housing, and we already talked about, and that's only able to accommodate a few people. I think we have 20 something units, which is not small.

[00:42:04] **Lemley:** No, that's not small.

[00:42:05] **Freeman:** But, but again, you still can only accommodate. So part of what our prayer and goal is, is to learn and get out there and connect with other people so that we can be equipped to take the lots and the properties that we have and build so that we can accommodate more people.

So that would, that would be, you know, an example of the. That I, you know, of what we can potentially do. So that's the other part of it. Vision of what can we begin to do together that we don't so much see now by ourselves. And so often when I go, if I'm, you know, meeting with people, so in that example of, with housing, met with all kinds of folks to try to see do we make connections.

And usually people would say, Oh, yeah, we do this renovations is on, but you know, we don't have a model for the church. We don't have a model for what you do. And that's still kind of where we are. But one of the things that I would encourage, which many of them would say, But. You know, maybe there's something we could work out, which is, that's all you need.

And I think that this is what we need for these places where we have problems that we don't have a will to solve. That if we've got somebody who's willing to move out of the constraints of whatever box Therein, by reasons of regulation or just mindset, that there is so much that we can do, again, to help those not in streams of support.

Oftentimes, non profit money stays within kind of larger boxes, and there's still a whole lot of people who do not benefit. And so, in going to folks from very, who do, whether it's housing or whatever, part of a speech would be, I remember one time I was meeting with someone from one of the housing, one of the housing giants in the city, I'm not going to name them, but, um, to just even model what I was saying.

So I think I remember sharing with him that what, what I did is I looked on their website to see how I could support them. And so there's something that you could do, you know, give a donation. So I gave the, this is a CEO we're talking to, gave the CEO a donation. And what I'm saying to him is, out of my means, I give.

And then I think there was some other thing. And so what I would encourage you to do is look to see how you can You've got a great wealth of resource that you could begin to think of differently about how you can give even in some new models. And so that just is what I'm encouraged to be in spaces to raise as an issue and would love to see

this, this new way of helping folk.

[00:45:13] **Lemley:** When you left in 1970 and came back about 30 years later, what, um, changes did you experience being a black, black family moving back to the South? So you, you left at a pivotal time, you're coming back, you know,

we're about to have a lot of things happening in 2000. What were the differences moving back to the South after some time in the North?

[00:45:37] **Freeman:** I was heartbroken and I'm still heartbroken. Uh, we didn't talk a lot about the community that I grew up in. But it was an intact community. The interstate, of course, interrupted and deliberately, that's part of the discussions we were having at the other session with the students, uh, a historian was there, and so we were talking about the intention of the state and your local government to bring in interstate directly through a black community, the business section of a black community.

[00:46:09] **Lemley:** Educate me on what you mean by an intact community. I can make some guesses,

[00:46:13] **Freeman:** but. But what do you mean? So I think I would even, I could ask you, what is a community that is strong? I mean, you had people who, uh, who have homes, who own their homes. You had people who looked after each other as a neighborhood.

You had a stretch of community, even in the segregated South, that was self sufficient. And so on this, we were blessed to be a part in Nashville, Tennessee. In North Nashville particularly, we were blessed to literally be a part of a community that had every resource that you need right there on that street.

The movie theater, especially in a segregated society where you were told you were not even a human and to keep out. And so, but what was able to develop in our neighborhood and in neighborhoods across the country is self sufficient neighborhood banks. Cleaners, I mean, anything that you need. So when I say that, I mean, I grew up in a community where whatever you needed was right there.

The churches were there. My church was a couple of blocks over, uh, from Jefferson Street itself. Um, I don't like, even when I talk about this, We're not talking about ideals. Of course, when you're a child, you don't know all this stuff. Oh, except that some people like me, you know, you listen and you kind of see stuff.

So, we're not going to talk about that. But I mean, we're not talking about ideal. I mean, you know, I'm sure you had all of the issues that you had, but There was not crime. There wasn't crime. You didn't have men, um, who were half your men in your population incarcerated or more. My brother points this out, that I

mentioned that we lived in my grandmother's home, but all the other families had two parents in their homes all around us.

So you had the stability of mothers and fathers in, in the home, you know, we talked, we raised an issue about that. I even challenged that emphasis. I mean, that's definitely an ideal, but the fact that you have a single mother raising a child doesn't mean that you're going to have belligerent children. So that's what I mean by intact, a, a solid, not only having resource, but having connection, having commitment of helping each other.

And one of the things I mentioned, my grandmother, my grandmother taught. Particularly my brother. Oh, yeah, that was another thing. Developing a strong work ethic. Valuing education. So, my mother and my brother, excuse me, my mother and my, no, my mother most likely, really was very serious with my brothers of teaching them to have a work ethic.

You know, they both had to work. Uh, but my grandmother, I know particularly was very good back to looking after each other. You know, we would just be available to help the neighbors as needed. My, you know, my younger brother and actually older brother too. If somebody needed something, you know, you go down and help the older ladies with whatever they need.

And part of that message is, you know, Don't take a dime. You don't take anything from people. Uh, and some of the comedians talk about this even if you were going to visit somebody with your grandparents and they offer you something, you say no. I mean, so in other words, what, there's a self sufficiency. I was talking about that earlier.

I grew up in a community of self sufficiency, uh, God centered and community centered, where you just took,

you didn't disregard the messaging of the larger community, but you were not going to be defeated. By the evils and the messaging of a larger community that again brought an interstate right, right across in front of you. And it took three fourths of our front yard.

[00:50:06] **Lemley:** That's what I was going to ask. So the interstate comes through, and you said it comes, comes through the business district.

Yes,

[00:50:10] **Freeman:** deliberately so. Deliberately so. To destroy, to destroy the wealth of a community, destroy generational, uh, unity. I mean, it's, it's documented in books. Nashville Way, uh, one of the books, um, that, that speaks to this, that comes to mind right now. But I mean, it's, it's documented. People's dissertations. Uh, it's deliberate.

It's, it's, it's, it's, it's an assault of the state. Using concrete. And cars. And, but initially, uh, take your land. And some of it they say is about urban renewal. So the interstate was one phase of that, but then there's this other phase where they take your land because they say it's dilapidated for redevelopment.

And, you know, we won't go into all the details because you're focusing on the weather piece, but when you're talking about income, intact community, that even when those things are done, still I rise is one of the poets, I think it was Maya Angelou said. And really by the grace of God, a dependence on him because you just, you know, And I'm a child during all of this time, so, you know, I'm not feeling it like my mom and my grandmother would, would have.

Um, and we were protected from that, a knowledge of that outside world that's cruel and murderous.

[00:51:36] **Lemley:** And we are still in many ways cruel and murderous. And that's why,

[00:51:38] **Freeman:** and that's why we knew, back to your question, when I came back. Yeah. To see the impact of that kind of division, where my friends are crying and praying for their sons to even get out of high school, never was an issue.

We were blessed to be in Nashville, Tennessee, to be in a community where it was expected that you could But also that you go to college because Tennessee State University afforded an opportunity for anyone who wanted to, to register to go. And what I'm saying, you had to have some braids and a little money, but it was, it was, it was something that you could reach.

This university was there, Meharry Medical College is there. And so we saw professional people. But when I came back, I just saw, I saw the impact of this type of division enacted by the state. On regular people who, however much perseverance you have and overcoming power, when the state is out to get you.

And, and that even is, is in, even in terms of schools, you know, black teachers that we went, even in my professional life up north, they started removing black

teachers from schools, um, through various means and even with integration. And my mother was impacted by that. So you had, you moved the strength of the community, of teachers who know you and love you, and are committed to educating you, to taking babies and busing them to other places where people don't want you.

And it is so significant now, I, I mean, I'm sure every week I can hear somebody talk about that experience if they were one of those first ones to go or second ones to go or third ones to go, being in that kind of environment. It is not healthy to your soul that even some 50, 60 years later, you can remember the pain, the isolation of that.

And you did that to children. You did that to children and then now how those children to develop, you know, with this, we were protected from that. You had adults who would nurture you and give you a messaging that in spite of what this larger world is doing, trust God and work hard. And then you go into spaces where they just see you as some entity, don't believe in you.

So now we've got a subverting of our education. And we're seeing the consequence of all of that now, over policing in new ways, you know. And so, when we look at a black community now, a lot of times the question is, what's wrong with those people? Well, let's just talk about all these variables. And you tell me how you're going to do when all of this is hitting you.

Now, everybody is not impacted in the same way. But also everybody, we talked about streams of support.

[00:54:43] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[00:54:43] **Freeman:** Different people have different streams of support. And so again, we're always looking at how can we help those who are not in the streams of support to know that there is help. And there are so many other people who do that kind of thing too.

So that's what we're about.

[00:54:57] **Lemley:** Thank

[00:54:58] **Freeman:** you. And whatever the weather is.

And look, weather is more than temperature and, and, and, uh, precipitation, isn't it? It absolutely is.

[00:55:11] **Lemley:** Thinking about your ministry.

Do you look at stewardship of the planet as part of your ministry? I do. I do. How, what are we supposed to be doing?

[00:55:37] **Freeman:** So on a, a, what is it, a, a local individual level, and this is a part where I would certainly defer to people who research that. I, you know, I consider myself a researcher, but you can't really search everything. So this is not an area of expertise or research. So that would be the first thing I say, let's.

Let's, let's, let's listen to folk who really can give us insight in terms of what's happening and also one of the things that I think that the environmental justice movement has done pretty well is have public messaging that, you know, that helps you even the whole thing of think about climate change.

Control. I mean, what's, um, climate change, climate change. That's what I was. I know it's climate control, climate change. I mean, even how do we even know language except there's been some. Opportunity to give messaging.

[00:56:36] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[00:56:37] **Freeman:** And then also the now even Stephanie and I are working on this food piece, food sustainability.

And I know they're on the part about food waste. So I defer to people who have knowledge and where you can connect so that you can be in spaces where more people can get messages. To be conscious of things that you do that are impacting. I think the real larger piece, which we have less control over, is that the real issue is in the hands of these corporations and our government who I don't know about that.

I mean, I, I just think that, I know that there are success, there have been successes in lobbying, but, uh, they're the ones who are polluting, polluting the air. They're the ones who are, and see, I know some area of research, I mean, there's all kinds of levels of pollution in terms of the, the, uh, vibrations, even from power lines and what's that five, 5G, 5G.

I mean, all of those are things that are environmental. And so, to the degree that we can know and have people who are in that and they can educate us, and even help us to know how we can impact and influence the ones who are really Making the difference in bringing the disaster to the climate. It's not the regular man.

But I mean, yeah, give us something to do and we'll do it. Thank you. Um, let's

[00:58:17] **Lemley:** get some water. Water break, water break.

Okay, I'm gonna check my questions.

Oh, you said something. What was it? Oh, oh, oh. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. Never fear, people listening to this tape, I'm going to ask about food. So, you mentioned food, and you mentioned you and Stephanie are working on, working on some ideas. What was food accessibility and nutrition like, I'm going to keep doing this, back before you left, you growing up until the age of 20, and what was it like, what do you see in the same communities when you returned?

[00:58:55] **Freeman:** So one of the interesting pieces that come to mind first, is, uh, we had a grocery store right down the street. And

[00:59:03] **Lemley:** that's the, that's the, the intact, when the community was intact, when, um, you've got entrepreneurs, you've got business owners, and you're, you're walking over to your grocery store.

[00:59:12] **Freeman:** So, right now we talk about food deserts.

As a matter of fact, having a conversation with someone driving through this same community, now talking about the food desert.

Sad. 50 years later, we have the food desert. We, so, in terms of impacts, there was a grocery, I mean, this was a grocery store, grocery store, not a corner store. We had a grocery store half a block down the street. What was it like? Tell me about it. I mean, it was, it was our grocery store. I mean, it was, it was, like I said, because we had the corner stores, but this was the grocery store where you went and shopped.

Now, the beautiful part about that. I don't recall how in the heart of segregation that was for black people shopping with white people at grocery stores. I don't know. It's funny. I don't even know how that worked, but I do know this community had Jefferson street. Remember that's the long stretch. Where you had all your different businesses.

So there was a grocery store that people, black people could shop at. And, um. Pretty much in walking distance of everybody? Well, yeah, of course it wouldn't be everybody, but I mean. And I'm thinking that served the whole, you know, the whole black community. Now, I do remember, of course, now there was a

period of time my mom didn't have a car, but I do remember that after, you know, she got a car, you know, we'd go to the, you know, Other stores, the A&P, and I don't even know if Kroger was around then.

And what I don't know, if that was always an opportunity, you know, when you're young, again, you don't know. I don't know if that was always an opportunity for Negroes and colored people. And, you know, again, you know, back to names, how we identify ourselves. So, we weren't African Americans until the 70s and 80s.

So, before that, we was Negroes. You know, colored people. So, I don't know, and I, and I, and I, those are not derogatory terms. Right. They actually, Negro means, you know, black. So

[01:01:22] **Lemley:** you don't know if your mom may have been picking specific days and times, but it wasn't emphasized to you that. You felt like you with your mom could go to these other grocery stores as well.

Right. And I

[01:01:32] **Freeman:** think when I say time, I mean eras. Yeah. So, I don't know if, let's say in, so I grew up in the 50s. I don't know in the 40s if this Logan's, which was the local store, was the only place. Because segregation was real in these, you know, this was ugly real. And so, Bottom line is we had this store and so my only question is, I don't know, at what point was it the only store people could go to?

Because the other stores were off limit, which was true for most things for.

[01:02:06] **Lemley:** But it sounds like this was a great store that did provide a lot of needs. I mean,

[01:02:10] **Freeman:** it was a, it was a real deal grocery store. You know.

[01:02:12] **Lemley:** What, when did it go away?

[01:02:13] **Freeman:** See, I don't know. Okay. I don't remember that. I don't know if it was there when I was in college or, I just don't know those details.

[01:02:21] **Lemley:** And then when you returned, you know, we're talking about food deserts these days. How do you see your community experience a food desert?

[01:02:32] **Freeman:** Well, people have to, oh gosh. So the new way that people experience a food desert is they shop at the Dollar General.

[01:02:42] **Lemley:** And

[01:02:47] **Freeman:** I was having a conversation with what that is really about.

[01:02:52] **Lemley:** What is that really about?

[01:02:59] **Freeman:** On one level, it's about a corporation that has found another stream of. Wealth from people,

[01:03:09] **Lemley:** many who are impoverished,

[01:03:11] **Freeman:** who have food cards. So there's a, I mean, they've got their EBT cards. I mean, even when Target sells groceries, you can Uh,

[01:03:23] **Lemley:** so. But Target sells, without making a moral judgment on food, Target sells better food than Dollar General.

Does Dollar General sell anything fresh?

[01:03:34] **Freeman:** I don't. I don't think they do. I don't think they do. And see, now I'll be honest with you. I don't go to Target's often, but when I went maybe a year or two ago, and I found this whole half the store was. Trust me, I did not go and try to shop there because that is not my value, but so they do have fresh, but, but let's talk about that.

I'm trying to figure out, but let's just still talk about that. We're talking about how, how these dynamics really work. And oftentimes we talked about the change being made and what people who have no influence are supposed to do. I shouldn't say no influence. They certainly have influence of their own, on their own lives and.

Surviving, but what we're really dealing with is how these corporate giants do capitalism real good. Okay, because it's about the profits. So back to this whole thing of food dances. What does that mean? It means that you don't have a grocery store, but you have a local story because you know, Dollar General is everywhere now.

And to your point, you're not going to get any fresh food there. I don't think

[01:04:36] **Lemley:** I can get a banana there if I want. I don't think so.

[01:04:38] **Freeman:** Yeah, I don't even know if they have little trays. Gas stations. I don't

[01:04:41] **Lemley:** think they have a little

[01:04:41] **Freeman:** The gas stations you can get a banana and apples. get banana and apples. And let's just talk about that too.

Within those, and what most gas stations now do is they always have that little corner where you can get some fried chicken.

[01:04:57] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[01:04:57] **Freeman:** And then they got the little tray where you can get some fresh fruit.

[01:05:00] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[01:05:01] **Freeman:** Even the little, even the smaller ones. So I'm not, I'm, you're helping me to even see this piece. So within, and, and usually those kind of places are in the hoods.

Yeah. Right, on the edges of them or whatnot. So that's what people can do. But the other reality which I think we often know is oftentimes poor people don't eat fresh food.

[01:05:23] **Lemley:** And that's part accessibility and part you don't need what you're not used to.

[01:05:29] **Freeman:** Right. And the other part is cost.

[01:05:32] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[01:05:33] **Freeman:** And I've learned about that just through, through some research, is that because processed food is subsidized.

And fruits and vegetables less so. And so you're paying a cheaper price for processed foods of all kinds of varieties because of certain subsidizing, whereas your fresh fruits and vegetables, especially if they're coming from local farms,

are not. And so now those costs are higher. And so in budgeting, people have to make that, make that, make that difference.

That's one of the ways that schools over the years. Have tried to fill that gap. So we're talking about what happens with food deserts. So you have, you don't have access to the full service grocery stores. So now we're finding other places that we have to get something to eat. And then we have, and then targets aren't in the hood.

I mean, you're going to have to go some distance. Right. Right. You got to drive for that. Yeah. But then now the schools over the years have, have as part of their, uh, plans and programs. The breakfast, even the backpacks that people take home, but that's not fresh food and stuff. And a lot of that still is about the dollar, you know, the whole, and even when we talk about everything we're talking about, and that's the interesting thing is we're connecting this to whether or not, I don't know how to connect this piece, but we're in a capitalistic system where we're talking about profit.

I mean, that's the, that's the success, right? And one of the things I was mentioning to you about the high school. Excuse me, the highway coming through, but that's around profit. And, and, and if you, when you go do the research, you'll see, don't they say always follow the money. Yeah. So you can see where the money goes.

I mean, here, they're, and everywhere we, we are not talking about that piece. But then what we then begin to do is what are new ways that we can get new streams for the profiteers?

[01:07:55] **Lemley:** Mm.

[01:07:58] **Freeman:** And so get that EBT money.

[01:08:00] **Lemley:** Mm-Hmm.

[01:08:05] **Freeman:** Dollar Store sells food. Now, are they selling it so that these poor people can have some nourishment? No, because the food is not nourishing food. But they can get that EBT money because at one point I remember you couldn't even use a card in dollar stores. You had to pay cash. Then they started where you could use your credit card.

But then now with food, you got that EBT card, guaranteed money.

[01:08:34] **Lemley:** It'll, it'll feed you, it'll, it'll keep you alive, it'll fill you up, and it'll make you sick. It'll

[01:08:39] **Freeman:** make you sick, all of that. But then, from the profiteering side, somebody's benefiting.

[01:08:44] **Lemley:** Oh, just get closer to Mike. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm just getting too comfortable.

We're starting to lean back.

[01:08:52] **Freeman:** Oh. But back to this whole thing of food desert, so that, you're saying, what am I observing? I'm observing this dynamic of what's happening in my community, even to the impact, how it impacts education, how it impacts safety, how it, it just impacts everything because Now, with a divided community, you don't have the diversity of the community, so we're going to move to another point.

When I was growing up, especially in the segregated world, all black people don't care what jobs you did. You're living within these square blocks. So you had your doctors and your professors and your janitors all living right there together. And, you know, you live right there together. But then when you then create this division with this interstate coming through, people's number one, people have to move, but another dynamic is property value is lowered.

So even if you were to stay, You don't have any value in your property. That's not an incentive for people. So then what begins to happen is, the people who live in those homes in the area where I grew up are now rental properties. And that's a whole different dynamic in itself, in terms of when people don't own.

What I also understand is the whole thing of banking. That if you're not able to get money to keep your property up, then your properties are going down. But that's a very real thing, that you can't get money, because redlining and, and you know, this is not a place of any value. So, I saw that impact on my community when I came back.

The impact of those things on my community and it brought me great sadness. So when I first came back, I began to work with Tying Nashville Together. Learned of what they were doing and that's, uh, I don't know if you're familiar with NOAA. Yes. Tying Nashville Together is the forerunner of NOAA. Many of the people who are NOAA worked with Tying Nashville Together.

But it was that coalition of, uh, Churches, non profits that were working around some key issues generally that come from the community's voice of what we need. And oftentimes, what that group's capacity and will is to work on. So I work with them around education issues primarily, and our focus at that time was parent involvement because that was another issue.

And, but some of the campaigns that were going on during that time was, Fighting to keep the hospital in North Nashville because they wanted to close it down and food deserts over in South Nashville. And so those are the things that were, those are the things that were, would describe the climate in this other way around this community.

Not so warm. Yeah. A little

[01:12:20] **Lemley:** bit chilly. Chilly. You mentioned, um, the cost of food from local farmers. Do you remember, um, when you were growing up, being able to get produce from local farmers? Yeah, the

[01:12:34] **Freeman:** farmer's market was where it is now. And it was a real, I mean, that was, that was a real farmer's market.

You know, I mean, so during that time it was the farmer's market where people would come in. Yeah. So I do remember that.

[01:12:47] **Lemley:** And then you feel like that's

[01:12:49] **Freeman:** less accessible these days. Um, feel is not even an operative word. It's not. Tell me how. I mean, even the farmer's market is different. And what happened is when they changed their model.

I remember the local, the local, local farmers, uh, left. And I know there was this one black family, the Maxwell's, I think that's their name. Oh, yeah. They had to, I remember they had to find new locations and, and so they were at several places. The last place that they were that I remember that they stayed for some time was right across from the Kroger's on Monroe.

Okay. They had a little corner and they'd be there a whole lot and I don't know if what that was up to the tornado. I have not seen them lately. So that was one of the things that their model was fresh and I don't, I don't, I don't know enough about the To, to speak to what happened. I just do know my experience.

I remember when I would go and because of their model of Oh, oh, 'cause of, of someone like that family, they would purchase things from the, what is it? Supply place, distribution place. Oh, like, like a and everything. They sold Restaurant Depot or.

[01:14:06] **Lemley:** Restaurant depot or a place like that. Something like

[01:14:07] **Freeman:** that.

In other words, everything they sold, they didn't grow. Even though they sold things they grow, you know, they had the, because you could go to them and get almost anything. But the, the farmer's market model was that you had to sell what you grow. If that's what, if I'm correct. You're correct,

[01:14:22] **Lemley:** yeah.

[01:14:23] **Freeman:** So that, I just remember one time I go, well everybody had pumpkins and pumpkins.

Greens. I mean, before you could go and get your apples and your oranges and whatever, because they could sell all kinds of things. So, um, to your point, what does that even mean for the people that we're talking about that are living in these communities right here? Um, people need a diversity of things if they are going to get something fresh.

And maybe the people who we're talking about, whether it was grown right there, is not the biggest issue in the world. You know, I need some, I want, if I'm going to get something fresh, then I need that. Wherever it came from. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, so if the market is right, and the market is right there at the edge of the community, but now you all have a model where I can't even go there and get, you know, everything that, not everything, but the selection of things.

So who does, who do things serve? And I think this is this bigger thing when we're talking about the, the, the lot, this other piece of the climate, help me to try to bring it back to weather if that's what you want. But anyway, but, but, but, but, and I think that's, that's another piece. Who benefits? Who really does profit from the way we're doing things?

So when, when we're living in space, we've got this diversity of weather that really affects attitudes and life and clothes and everything. But then we got these other climate variables that just work against you. So, Bring

[01:16:10] **Lemley:** in the chill. So you're talking about the, the, the political climate, the community climate, that with the idea of the farmer's market with a noble idea of supporting local growers, maybe inadvertently

[01:16:34] **Freeman:** intentionally she's shaking her head.

No, I'm sorry. You know, that's our nice political click reckoning. People are not blind, deaf, or dumb. And we say these kinds of things, but it can't be true. I just love it the way we do that, and when I say we, in politically correct spaces, we do that. That's one of the things about when you talk to children, I mean, they be, oh, they were asking some amazing, wonderful questions, but also they have amazing, wonderful insight.

Why? Because they're not going to just tell you politically correct. You know, look, if you're doing that, you know very well what you're doing. You know, you put out these, these local farmers who were trying to make their, make, uh, some kind of profit by having a diversity of foods because the people needed and wanted that.

And if you stop that as a model, you know what you're doing. Now, the question is why you choose to do it, but let's not nobilize it in our language. Let's call it what it is and just say, well, you're doing what you do. But you know, which is to me, it's just the most wonderful thing in the world. If we just tell the truth about what we're doing, because now we can really begin to deal with it.

Deal with these other climate variables. The other question is how much does the physical climate even affect these dynamics? What do you think?

I guess I am being interviewed. You

[01:17:52] **Lemley:** are being interviewed. You're behind the orange light. Yeah, I've got the red mic.

[01:17:56] **Freeman:** I really do think so. I mean, even, even in terms of history, um. Going way back in ancient histories, people will, oh, not even, not even ancient, the people from colder climates have more of a survival mentality, which often, ooh, that survival mentality, hmm, hmm, have more of a survival mentality.

And what does that mean? It means it's about me and making sure that I live, which means it's not about Other people this much people from warm climates. Hmm. What am I warm? Well, if the climate is warm, there's an abundance of

growth That would be another interesting thing to think about to who had gardens when I was growing up Yeah, and people would have Even I remember when I was younger and somebody even had the chickens then so in warmer climates There is an abundance and even in terms of our gospel message, that's what our Savior Yeshua is always talking about abundance.

So when you have an abundance, there is a willingness to share and to give and to help. And let's just look at where people come from in terms of your, your heritage and your history. If, and, and, and what's passed on generationally. Girl, I think we, this is a book.

[01:19:36] **Lemley:** Yeah, here we go.

[01:19:38] **Freeman:** I'm not writing this. It's not my book, baby.

No, I mean, to answer your question, of course, of course. And I think we're dealing with some generational issues where people who have a mindset that it's okay for me to survive, And you to die, whereas if, if, if we're coming from a space of abundance, then look, my whole thing is we all got it. We can all have it and survive.

And I think we're dealing with that.

[01:20:08] **Lemley:** So tell me more, tell me more where you were going with the warmer climate and cooler climate that warmer climates, they tend to be more fertile. They tend to be, um, Are you thinking more community oriented? I mean, it's

[01:20:21] **Freeman:** definitely a case I summed it up, honey. That was my summation of that point.

Maybe I missed a link. Yes. But think about it. If you And I actually have read some things about this, so this is not like my brilliance. It's just bringing it back to memory. I'm going to give

[01:20:34] **Lemley:** you the

[01:20:34] **Freeman:** credit. It's just bringing some stuff back to memory. But isn't that true for most of our knowledge? How am I going to take credit for something I read?

No, I mean, they've actually found that, but also think about that. I mean, it really makes sense. So even to this point of what we were talking about, does the climate make a difference? I think my, even as you're making me think about these things, notice I said, make me think about these things.

[01:21:02] **Lemley:** Yeah, I'm

[01:21:03] **Freeman:** forcing it.

As you're making me think about these things, I think, yes, it does make a difference. But I also am saying it's a generational

impact. That we're not just talking about whether you come in from the cold climate now. Generationally, is that where you came from? Where these values that have been passed on generationally, as a matter of fact, you know, again, you learn from everything you do. I was hearing some conversations yesterday.

I'm in a memoir writing class, and so we're at the place now where people are writing their stories. And so they're telling these stories about their families, and it's intimate stuff. But one of the things that people will say is, which is most of our story, when I see this, I'm making the decision, I don't want to do that.

But I think that's that other thing that we've got to have this sense of history. Even in terms of climates that we come from historically. And genetically. And genetically. Not, not just

[01:22:05] **Lemley:** my grandma.

[01:22:06] **Freeman:** Yeah.

[01:22:08] **Lemley:** Yeah. Far back. Yeah. A thousand years ago.

[01:22:10] **Freeman:** And, and what's this mindset, a mindset that has come out of that mentality of my survival for my benefit only contract.

Like again, when you're in these, some people say in these cold spaces, that's what you had to do.

I mean, you know, I mean, just, you know, it'd be talking about them people in them warm climates be cannibals. A lot of history is not right. But anyway, but

think in the warmer spaces, if we have not been impacted by climate change and all of the colonial genocides, historically, think about if you were growing.

Oh, isn't that something? And I really want to get more in the gardening. But I'm, uh, I'm buying a lemon now for a dollar. Yeah, right. And a tree. If you ever see a lemon tree, all of those lemons that come on just one little part of it. If you've got that lemon tree, you don't need to try to scrounge something out of people.

You have a mentality of sharing. And that is what they say for people of hue. That's how we got in trouble anyway. Bringing the people from the cold climates and welcoming them and they wanted to profiteer off your land and your wealth and your women. And so here we are today. So all of this historically is connected to climate.

[01:23:39] **Lemley:** What about, what about the hottest climates, desert and famine, and, and maybe some of that is increasing. Those are warm climates. I think when we're talking about warm climates being fertile, we're kind of talking about more temperate and plenty of water.

[01:23:54] **Freeman:** Right. But you even think about it, for people, for deserts, if we're going to go back, even for people who lived in deserts.

They're nomads.

[01:24:03] **Lemley:** Okay.

[01:24:03] **Freeman:** And my understanding even about deserts, there's even places in deserts. So you know, there's the places of survival that people, you know, when you go, even sometimes I've seen some documentaries where even now there are still people who live in desert areas. And so they have a system of community and survival, not this, what we're talking about, this profiteering at the expense of other people.

The contrast. And I'm just trying to, girl, you, you, you talk about weather, I'm just connected, I mean, don't talk to me like I'm some Reconnecting a bunch of dots. Look, don't talk to me like I'm some expert in this, I don't know. But I do know that, again, think about it, even people who are in deserts, historically, now remember what we're talking about in contemporary times.

There, there's a whole lot of variables of things that are going on, on the whole earth that are not what was so even 50, a hundred years ago. Right, right. In

terms of famines. Most, most, most famines they say are literally politically charged or even people messing up the earth and getting everything off of balance.

Not to say that there were not periods of time that you didn't have that, which means those people had to adjust. So, to your point, right, if it's, I guess the tropical is the ideal, right, where you can have the flourish and grow, but you can have that extreme, which is to your point, which is, yeah. Right.

The extreme would be the hot. There's just nothing. Nothing, yes. And still, there are people who, you know, and there are people who live in both. What I don't know is, to this point, how people who live in the hot. Just historically, have they developed this dog eat dog? Because even there, people have to live in community.

You've got to. So, I think there's something else on that. That's a variable above whether so we're not just talking about that being a variable, right? We're really talking about people's hearts. We are yeah, but those other things I think research has shown have still impacted Mindset and as you say DNA and generational Uh, attitudes and that kind of thing.

[01:26:21] **Lemley:** And I, and I think frequently about, and I've been doing some listening to people talking about scarcity mindset. Yeah. And so I, some of what you're saying, I keep hearing that like, like we're kind of coming up where it's like, if I'm just so terrified, there's not going to be enough for me. I'm not going to share this water with you.

But if I understand that my survival is connected to yours, sure as hell, I'm going to give you some of this water. Like we're going to make it till tomorrow. We're both going to make it till tomorrow. Yes. And, but I think when we get more and more constricted, and I, you know, even being, you know, in the, in the world's eyes, I am an incredibly wealthy individual.

I'm incredibly privileged. This true. And I, and I do get fear down in my core for losing what I think is mine, which is an illusion anyway. What is mine? Um, anyway. And

[01:27:08] **Freeman:** you brought in something. Thank you for sharing that because what you've said is so profound, scarcity mindset. So what climates. Let me help you.

Here we go, climate.

[01:27:19] **Lemley:** We're going back to the climate. Okay, here we go. You say we're going to go back to the climate real quick. I'm

[01:27:23] **Freeman:** going to take you back there. No, but seriously, what, what are those variables? Climate mindset, you said, fear, hoarding. Yeah. None of that produces community. Oh my God. It's the opposite of community.

It's the opposite. And so those are our cautions. Yeah. In terms of, but you even, you even said it, mindset.

So

that's a whole nother. Interview those things, you know, what, what, so it's not just the climates, what mindsets are developed. And I'm sure that everybody in the cold climate didn't have, uh, attitude that it's just about me because you people had families and you had to, you know, all I'm saying is, is that the variable is not just.

The weather. Right. Right. We're talking about mindset. We're talking, and that heart and mindset kind of connect somewhat, but I love the way you said it. A scarcity mindset and fear and hoarding produce something that is not, that doesn't, is not conducive to thriving, which is what the moderation of weather and abundance.

[01:28:47] **Lemley:** And even these large corporations. are somewhere on an individual level, I would imagine the people in the greatest power are also some, you know, like you're saying these, looking for the dollars, how can I get money out of EBT cards, you know, like I see a market I see rather than, I don't know, it feels all connected.

[01:29:10] **Freeman:** Yeah. Yeah. And that's why many people are challenging capitalism, because if you look at its definitions as well as it's outworking. It's actually encouraging us to have the me, my, I. Fear your brother. Hold it for yourself. Put up your walls. Get your guns.

[01:29:43] **Lemley:** Reminds me of your, your friend you mentioned when she might be no power for weeks and, No, I'm fine. I can make it. I'm fine. Um, A lot of my professional work has been done in and around our unhoused communities. Oh, really? Okay. And who's going to be the first person to give me a pack of crackers and a scarf?

Those are literal. Yes. Pack of crackers, scarf, come into a campsite. What can I get you? What do you need? The hospitality. There's not this. See?

[01:30:12] **Freeman:** Yeah. Yeah. And even when I was doing the I mean, I can say this anytime, but when I was during the COVID time, I had an opportunity to, in addition to the food distribution that we did at church and what we found that a lot of people in our community weren't coming through our line, the people who came through our line from other communities.

And so what we did is we took our church fan and took the food to our community because we found out that people don't have cars.

[01:30:45] **Lemley:** Or it's the disconnected feeling of no, I'm fine. I don't need to show up and stand in line. I don't need to, right.

[01:30:51] **Freeman:** I mean, so, so, uh, but another part of what we did too, through Second Harvest Partnership in the city, we distributed lunches.

And the idea was for the children, during kind of that height, but then if, if, it didn't have to be exclusively so. So what we did was, Connect with people on the ground who could get up to folk. It was a hundred lunches a day. And so even for me personally, what I would do is I'd go pick them up and then I had my distributors, you know, somebody took them downtown to the homeless.

[01:31:28] **Lemley:** Mm hmm.

[01:31:29] **Freeman:** But then also within the community I would drive around and I would see some of the people like Sitting out and I would offer it and it never fail. I would say because I had plenty I said take what you want They would say they would never hoard They said, no, I just need this or if they were going to take it with someone, they'll say, oh, I'll just take one for my other person.

Never had a mindset to hoard.

[01:31:57] **Lemley:** Well, is this like the manna in the desert? Yeah. Yeah. Is when we get scared and I put too much in my jar, it turns all wormy. See, how about that? Yes. Yes. Yeah. And that was a fear. And it's a, in some ways it's a, it's a normal fear that many people experience. Hey, the Lord only told me take what I need for today, but it's smart to save for tomorrow.

It's smart. I'm just going to go ahead, you know, I know, but you save it and it, and it turns wormy in our hearts. Now I'm going to get all philosophical.

[01:32:27] **Freeman:** No, but that's, that's very real. And in many cases, if it's hoarding, which in many ways, using the Bible, building your barn, bigger barns, you know, I mean, but really think about it.

And especially with our culture, this, uh, these climates. What the, number one, I've lived long enough to know that I've seen a whole lot of people's barns be, uh, emptied by Variables within the society, stock market crashes, uh, housing market crashes, where people have to start all over again in terms of their retirements, biblical principle.

You can't do that because it's, and, and, and what is, what, but, but again, mindset, we think we need to take it and hoard. It's up to me to make sure I, I, me, my survive. Yeah. And, but yet if I will trust his principle and which is the one we're talking about of abundance, if we will talk about that and what is beautiful is if you will try it, oh my God, you will see that if I get like number one, you'll see people differently.

So that man, that person I was going to be afraid of, I see that he's more giving than I would even think about being. Yeah, yeah, and then what he'll probably do is take half that sandwich and go give it to somebody else who would need it. Mm hmm. Because we've got some mindsets. Mindsets, you just, you just talked about a scarcity mindset and so, but what would the opposite do if I haven't done it?

I won't know until I just maybe try a little bit and that's where these messages and these conversations give us Opportunity and I appreciate this conversation it and the whole weather thing because it's it's raising this Point of helping us to see things that we hadn't just thought of saw saw before You around climate and food and, and community and what do I really want?

Do I want a space, which is what people, which is so sad that we're in the state where people who are leaders want us to be fearful and, and offering us solutions. The question is, who is it really going to profit? They're profiting somebody. Number one, they're profiting all of their people who do security business.

And I bet you if you see anything, most of them have investments and things like that. So this is about the money in a capitalistic society. And so what do we do? We talked about that. How do we get those people's EBT money? How do

we get the public schools money? Not on helping to educate children. Now we're going to put more and more money in security.

Security windows, security, you know, but let me go see who's really invested in all of that. Those same people who are voting for it. And the other dynamic, which is very interesting, these are people, the people in our state government come from these little small, I'm laughing because it's one of the people I listen to.

He's from here, but he's up at Howard University. I mean, he will be very descriptive of these, these men from these little small hick towns. Yeah. Because of a collective, a collective arrangement that they got illegally, not illegally, immorally, gerrymandering is legal, where they've got in there. And so now, those people from all these little hick towns can make judgments on the lives, basically, of people in big cities.

And it's not just black people, it's, you know, but they, they, they can power play. And until we change that dynamic. So again, we're looking at this whole thing. Give me, so how do they do it? Make you fearful, make you feel. That you, you're not going to have, make you definitely fearful of that other person.

Yeah. And the media is going to have that face of that other person to be black, because I, if you ever, I try to watch the news, I don't try to watch the news, I try to watch the weather. But even before I can get to the weather, I have seen about four black man's face, four black man's faces for whatever they have done.

Because remember this propaganda of who your enemy is. And so that's why if somebody is stuck on a highway. And you got black skin, and you gonna knock on somebody's door, and he open the door and kills you. Why? Because That's my enemy. And so, back to this mindset thing, and climate, the climate, the coldness of our heart, the coldness of our minds, but yet, there is another way, and some of us, which gets back to what I was sharing earlier, if I'm going in the meetings, those of us who have a more abundant mindset, that we can show people and give people an opportunity, look at what can happen if we, Just give a little.

I mean, you don't even have to give a whole lot if you're a little unsure of it. Crack it open. Just, just a little bit. Yeah, just, let's, we need to give people that offer

and create some new climates.

[01:37:53] **Lemley:** And stop making money off of fear. Yeah. If we get to profiting off of incarceration, that. Well, thank you. We get to see all of that. You know, that's a whole nother, nother,

[01:38:03] **Freeman:** nother. Yeah. Yeah, I'm going

[01:38:05] **Lemley:** to show you these. Okay, sorry everybody. I'm going to show you these faces on the news.

And then I'm going to make money off locking up these boys and men. Think about that.

[01:38:14] **Freeman:** But isn't that really what it's about? Making, capitalistic society. Selling false security. Yes, that's beautiful, girl. That's good. No, seriously.

[01:38:26] **Lemley:** Yeah.

[01:38:26] **Freeman:** Yeah.

[01:38:28] **Lemley:** Okay, this is going to feel like a jump back. I just don't want to let that hang.

You mentioned gardens, so this feels like a big jump. You mentioned gardens when you were kids in this intact community. Yeah. Yeah. What percentage of people do you think had, had gardens? That's a good,

[01:38:40] **Freeman:** that's a good question because I say I'm sure people did. We did not have a garden and my grandmother didn't have a garden.

We had poke salad in the fence because she'd go out there and pick that in her early days. You have to boil that like three times? I've never done it. I'm afraid. I didn't

[01:38:54] **Lemley:** even know. I just thought she would

[01:38:55] **Freeman:** boil

[01:38:56] **Lemley:** it three times or it makes

[01:38:57] **Freeman:** you sick. I know, something like that. And I think it's more medicinal than anything, isn't it?

Okay, okay. But I just remember she would go and pick this poke salad between, uh, three times a The fence. And I don't know if she'd mixed a little of it with greens or something. That's just my experience. Cause again, we had four kids and folks playing in the yard. Matter of fact, she had to at some point stop people from playing in the yard cause we lost all our grass.

She grew the grass and then shut it off, but she never did. She didn't do a garden. Oh, that's right. Our neighbor behind us did. So I'm just wondering too. I bet in my mother, my grandmother's generation, there probably was a lot more, because what I'm thinking now, we had working families, you know, working class people, so somebody's got to take time to guard.

So, I know there was probably some, but I'm just, I'm not sure. They're able to say how many. I do know gardening now is big. And it does need to be. You know, whether it's in pots or windowsills or hanging, which is part of what I'm learning through this project that I'm working on with Stephanie.

[01:40:01] **Lemley:** And people are talking about foraging more and more.

Okay. What's foraging? Foraging is like, we go out and even in your grass, so I watch this woman on TikTok. And, um, she was talking about foraging and you know those little things that pop up at the beginning of the season that got little purple flowers? Yeah. Those are medicinal. And there's two different kinds.

They both have little purple flowers and you think they're the same plant. They're not. The leaves look different. They're both good for different reasons. So people are talking about before you cut your grass, go out. Those are called, uh, red nettles was one of them. Red dead nettle and um, they're, you know, so getting out there, getting, yeah, figuring out what the land has to give to us.

That we just discard.

[01:40:40] **Freeman:** And see this is getting back to again, this abundance that's right there for us. What the Heavenly Father has really provided, what our socialization and our capitalistic society has had us dependent on certain entities and what they're giving you is killing you. Big pharma. Yeah.

Yeah. Big pharma. Think about the healing is in the land, it's in the trees. And so for those who know, back to this question of how to, what do we do? Let's learn

from those who know so that we can go there and share to other people how they can literally benefit from gardening, but also from foraging.

I've got me a new word. Because we're talking about scarcity. If I can eat off the ground Then just go up to our backyards, yeah. And isn't that what Our forefathers did so it is a mindset that's a lie because we can grow our own and now you're telling me even pick from what's right there to learn identify that was one of the things I've always wanted to do is to learn from people about your different kind of trees and leaves and what the benefit is because it's right here amongst us which are things that you could eat as grad you know even you know But we, you know, so it's to learn and it's a wonderful time because we can learn those things.

But then, and go teach somebody else. So that if you've got a scarcity mindset, you can realize, oh, hey, but this is here. Open our eyes and we can see. Yeah, to see. Oh, that's what, I was in a Bible study with a friend this morning and that's where we were talking about blindness. The healing of the blind, that's what Jesus Yeshua came to do.

But think about that. There are things that we don't see and that's why we. Half scarcity mindsets when it's right here. I just didn't see it.

[01:42:38] **Lemley:** Yeah, yeah Thank you. You're welcome. Thank you

Okay, let's see 2010 flood really affected your community What did you see? What did you experience with the 2010

[01:42:56] **Freeman:** flood? So that's what I've been telling you about what we did with the

[01:43:04] **Lemley:** No. No, we were COVID. That was the tornado. Right? Where was that?

[01:43:07] **Freeman:** Yeah, time. Girl, you're taking me back. Oh, the flood goes back. That was that other, okay. So we had the two, we had the 98. We

[01:43:17] **Lemley:** had the 98.

[01:43:17] **Freeman:** And then the 2010.

[01:43:19] **Lemley:** The 2010 flood. And then 2020. You got a little boost. You guys were ramping up to take care of people for the tornado.

And then here comes COVID. Yeah. Um, but go back to 2010. So now you're

[01:43:30] **Freeman:** going back. Now you're going back. What was that? That was, hmm. Where were you? That's what I was, I'm trying to go back and, look, you gotta roll it back for a second. Especially getting, since we're talking about these weather events, trying to get them straight.

So 2010, so that's right, in 98 my daughter was in middle school and I told you she got home safely. 2010, what I'm remembering, it rained, oh my God, it was just raining. It also was my. Class reunion weekend, Fisk University. That must have been 40, I guess, I don't know. Must have been 40. And it was a

[01:44:19] **Lemley:** lot of rain.

It was a lot of rain. They were warning us, but it didn't look too weird for the first, like, day.

[01:44:25] **Freeman:** Yeah, but then day two, I mean, it was so much rain. So what I remember is, I did not go to our, and I usually didn't pay to go to stuff on the weekend, but I was scheduled to go, but I didn't go to the banquet that Saturday night because it was just too much rain.

I think also I had gotten an injury because I was working with, um, the census at that time and some books fell on me. So with those variables, I just decided I wouldn't go out to that banquet. They still had it. So, I remember that. I remember that my daughter lived in Antioch by this time and she was just stuck there because that's when that, the interstate got flooded.

And so she was, she was, she was in her twenties. mean she was, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I mean when I say she got stuck, I mean she was just in her place. She's not floating on a roof or something. Clarify that. She was fine and safe, but. She couldn't get on the other side of the waters, so I remember that. I remember, I guess it was the next day at church, in terms of doing an assessment, oh my God.

A number of our members lived in the Bordeaux area behind that creek, and a number of them had to escape, like, real quickly with their lives. But thank God they did. Um, yeah. Those are just the immediate memories. I remember that there were a lot of people who came immediately to offer assistance. Now we, we weren't doing this, I didn't do it, I don't recall particularly any assistance that we did during that piece.

Uh, but I do know that there were a lot of people who were out feeding folks in the neighborhoods and doing a whole lot to just help people bring their lives back

[01:46:21] **Lemley:** together. Mm hmm. I'm hearing another little voice on this real quick. I'm going to see if it's going to stop in a second. It's picking up something, like a newscast.

I wonder if it's recording it or not. Like, this is not in my head, guys. They're talking about an oil crisis. I can hear this.

[01:46:48] **Freeman:** Yeah. If I put my head on, Yeah, see if you can hear it.

[01:46:53] **Lemley:** Wait, she might have stopped. Okay, it stopped. Okay, good. Good, good. Um, do you remember, did you do any outreach or ministry to people whose homes were flooded?

[01:47:08] **Freeman:** I'm sure as a church, like I said, I was not involved at that level then, I don't even remember. So I've done different ministries in church. So I'm not, I do know, because like I said, I remember particularly one of our deacons was the one who shared, and we had several members who lost. I think most of them rebuilt, but I mean, they lost everything.

They were brick homes, so they didn't just like lose their home. So I know the church did. I just wasn't involved and I'm not going to be able to remember what was done. Yeah. Yeah.

[01:47:41] **Lemley:** No, that's helpful. Thank you. Um, we don't, we don't have to go too much longer. This has been amazing. Um, what. What do you want decision makers to know about your community's ability to adapt and change and what your community needs when it comes to climate, climate change, gentrification?

What do you want decision makers to know? Listen

[01:48:10] **Freeman:** to what, do what people already told you to do. Do what the people in the community have already said to do. We do not need to have any new sets of meetings. We certainly do not need to have any more studies. My big thing in terms of uh, this season, just give people cash.

That all that money that you're going to spend in having your studies and your analysis and write your report, bring that money together and talk to people who

are in the community, who work with folk, and give it to them so that they can help people. And there

[01:48:51] **Lemley:** has been some studies that show, like, Providing a living wage, actually, you know, being able to support people

[01:49:00] **Freeman:** directly financially, it matters.

I mean, it actually does. So one, one piece that we didn't talk about that part of my outreach is working with, uh, others around a guaranteed basic income.

[01:49:14] **Lemley:** That's the words I was trying to come up with. Guaranteed basic income. And it can look, it can

[01:49:18] **Freeman:** look like a stimulus check that was sent. Yeah, yeah. It can look a lot of different ways.

The root problem of a lot of what we're talking about is people don't have cash. Simple as that. Why don't they have cash? Because we have laws that allow people to pay wages to working people that do not provide you sufficient ability to live. Why? Why do we have, why do people not have cash? Because we can have inflated food costs.

up to a hundred percent increase in a year or two's time. Whereas people's basic income is generally less. And so what people need is what the folks at the top have, access to cash. And so whatever creative ways we do that, and how do we know? Listen to the people on the ground who have been doing this work.

And I'm not talking about, I'm generally talking about not people with even established organizations. People not in other streams of support. Because there's a, we're talking about there are many who do a work and don't get a dime for it because they're not in systems that do it. can get grants, and are known, and yet they serve.

And so if we can identify those people, and if others don't know, I can tell you some, and there's a whole lot of people you know who could tell you others, that we get means to them so that they can get that down to folks who are not in the streams of support, to give them cash, so that they can have their basic needs met for food, for housing, for housing.

If they have cash, that's what I'd say. So you can talk to me. You heard it here. But then you can also talk to a whole lot of other people. But what we're

looking for is, we talked about that. Being willing to get out of the boxes and the routines that aren't working. Well, I shouldn't say they aren't working.

They're working for somebody.

[01:51:32] **Lemley:** We said that together. That was so perfect. Now we want

[01:51:37] **Freeman:** it to filter down to work for the people who don't have. Because we can do this. Because there is enough

[01:51:47] **Lemley:** for everybody. There we go. Thank you. That's it. Um, can I get a couple pictures of you?

[01:51:54] **Freeman:** Okay.

[01:51:54] **Lemley:** Okay, and um, I love you're good

[01:51:57] **Freeman:** You're good.

[01:51:58] **Lemley:** Oh, you're great.

[01:51:59] **Freeman:** No, it's all you talks about weather. I know, right?

[01:52:04] **Lemley:** It's need to have a conversation around something more limited because then you you can yeah. Yeah.

[01:52:09] **Freeman:** Yeah. Well, you're good at that I tell you oh my gosh,

[01:52:12] **Lemley:** it's all you It's all you. Seriously. I'm

[01:52:14] **Freeman:** serious. I mean, who are you talking to?

Weather? What? Never in my life thought about anything like this. And here, we've talked, I don't know how long.

[01:52:25] **Lemley:** Let's see. Okay. I'm going to put it on. Oh my goodness. I'll put it on portrait mode. And if you could kind of keep talking like we were talking in the mic.

[01:52:32] **Freeman:** Okay. So, oh, in the mic. Okay. But look at you or look at the mic.

[01:52:35] **Lemley:** You can, you can look at me. Okay.

[01:52:37] **Freeman:** Yeah. So, yeah. So, but again, you are a wonderful interviewer and when you have a good interviewer, people do. You feel comfortable, you lose track of the difficulty of what's being asked and you can actually just have conversation. But isn't that wonderful? I think that's even an example of what we're talking about.

[01:53:03] **Lemley:** Yeah, I think it is an example of what we're talking about. And I just so appreciate, I don't know, I don't know, there is something about, That, that how much everything is tied together. Yes. You know, we're not going to just sit down and talk about weather without talking about, man, I love, like you broke my brain with the other climates that we've got to talk about the political climate, the economic climate, the, the, the climate of our hearts, the, so yeah, that's, I'm going to take that with me.

That's

[01:53:42] **Freeman:** You had several somatic points, honey. What does it say? If I can go back and remember them, I'll have that as, you know, some, oh, I just looked at the word topic. I'll have that as a topic.

[01:53:51] **Lemley:** Yeah. Okay. So I'm just going to say, um, this concludes the climate related brief oral history of Ms. Alois Freeman on Thursday, Wednesday, April 24th, 2024, that took place in Nashville, Tennessee.

The total running time, let's see, the time is 3. 40 PM. So the total running time is about an hour and 50 minutes. Okay. I'm going to go stop this file and I'm going to have to tell our engineer about that. There's another interview we did Tuesday and it had a full panel in here. Okay. I had a different host and I was in there.

And when I listened to the files, that's what you were hearing. And, um, I'm thinking, sometimes when you've got a bunch of wires, it'll pick

[01:54:30] **Freeman:** up radio signals. So, I'm thinking back to what it is, and I only

[01:54:34] **Lemley:** heard it one other time in our interview. Um, but when I heard it that time, I was like,

[01:54:39] **Freeman:** Was it a more extended time that you heard it?

No, she was just a little louder. Oh, okay. And I thought, I'm

[01:54:43] **Lemley:** not gonna, there's no need, we're not live, there's no need to talk on top of it. Okay, gotcha. Um, yeah, let me stop