Walk Together, Children

Act I/Prologue

(The actors walk down the aisles singing "Walk Together, Children," greeting audience members and clapping their hands to the rhythm. They move onto the stage, still singing and clapping.)

Student 2 : (steps DS) Welcome to our show. Thank you for coming. We'd like to begin by honoring those of you who helped us put our show together by sharing with us your memories of race relations in Williamsburg during the 1950s and '60s. When a cast member calls your name, please join us up on the stage to receive our thanks. If you cannot make it to the stage, please stand for recognition. You can also help us with a little bit of theatrical magic. We are going to hand you a stage property or piece of costuming as you walk onto the stage. When you in turn hand this prop or costume piece to one of the actors, he or she will magically become a citizen of Williamsburg who lived here 30 or 40 years ago. Only with your help can our cast members transform themselves into some of you and begin telling your stories. Let me warn you that strange things will happen in this process of transformation. That actors will rapidly age (temporarily) and some of them will even change the color of their skin; some blacks performers will turn into white characters and some whites will become blacks. So when you hear your name, please come up on the stage by one of the side stairs. We need your presence, your touch, to transform us from college students to long-time residents of Williamsburg. We'd also like you to join us for a final chorus of "Walk Together Children."

Student 1: Dr. and Mrs. Blayton, Julie Oxreider

Student 2: Myrtle Engs, Rev. Thomas Shields, Caroline Jordan

Student 3: Ronnie Novak, Thad Tate, Lois Hornsby

Student 4: Stella Neiman, Patty Kips, Rev. Harold Hines

Student 5: Bill Bryant, Pat Paschall, Esterine Moyler

Student 6: Nancy James, Madeline Gee, Phillip Cooke

Student 7: Tony and Alvene Conyers, Nathaniel Reed

Student 8: Doris Rainey, Rev. James Tabb

Student 9: Shade and Carletha Palmer, Iris Lynch

Student 10: Sarah Wright Belpree, Bob and Penny Kidd ,

Student 11: Rev. Moody, Bob Welsh, Hattie Sasser

Student 12: Carol Talbot, Dick and Hanni Sherman

Student 13: Rubye DeWitt, Elise Emmanuel

Student: The stories we tell ourselves keep changing.

Student: An invocation.

Student: For those of us here and now who remember how our community struggled, still struggles to become her better self. We have come to this day through the wills of our elders, our ancestors who didn't know what this day would bring, who prepared their children and their children's children to come together and not to get weary but to carry on and make this place a world.

Act I/ Scene 1 -- "The Opening Story Circle"

(Male and female student walk in and take their seats for their first story circle. They make small talk. Recorder is fumbling with tape recorder. Facilitator explains.)

Facilitator: Has everyone gotten a cup of coffee and a piece of Mrs. Eckbert's wonderful pecan pie? So we can get started!(Circle responds unanimously) Well I'd like to start by thanking Mrs. Eckbert for allowing us into her home. (Mrs. Eckbert nods to say welcome and the circle applauds to show thanks.) Allow me to formally introduce myself. I'm _____ and I'm a junior at the College and I will be facilitating this story circle. This is _____ and he will be recording the stories you tell by hand. And for all he can't catch, we also have the help of this trusty tape recorder. If it decides to work. (Facilitator stops and looks over at Recorder who is still fumbling with recorder) Well, let's start by explaining just what a story circle is. The idea of the circle is that it should be round. That way everybody can see every body else. If you can't see everybody you should move until you can. A few rules. Like once one person starts telling a story no one should interrupt. It is also important that you don't try to think of your story while someone else is telling theirs because you can't give the storyteller your full attention and that

means you aren't really benefiting from the circle. Don't worry if you can't think of a story to tell when it's your turn. Just say "pass" and we will come back to you if you.... (Facilitator pauses because Recorder is so loud with the recorder.)

Recorder: In case you're wondering what I'm doing to this recorder, I don't know either. I'm an English major. (the people in the circle laugh)

Facilitator: ...like I was saying, if you can't think of a story right now that's fine. Oh! and you all will be graded after this, so make sure your stories are good. (silence comes over the group and then Everest very loudly begins to laugh and pats Mrs. Eckbert to his left on the back. Facilitator then continues.) Just a little College humor... (the circle laughs) _____, have you got it yet?

Recorder: For better or for worse.

Facilitator: Well then let's start by going around the room and letting everyone introduce themselves. Whoever wants to start can jump right in. (Everyone in the group lowers their head except for Everest Forest.)

Everest: Everest Forest is my name. Okay! Okay! I tell people when I meet them that the best way to remember my name is to first think of the tallest mountain in the world. And they'll say, 'Why, that's Mount Everest.' And I'll say, 'That's right and that's my name, Everest. Then I say to them, 'what do you think of when you think of a place of deep shade, green growing things, a place where God's creatures can romp and play in peace.' And they'll say, 'Lake?' and I'll say 'no,' and they'll say, 'Forest?' And I'll say, that's me. That's my name. 'Everest Forest.' And people rarely forget my name after that. (Everyone in the circle laughs) I got a lot of

stories to tell about my life here in Williamsburg during the 1960's. Like other black folks in town, I fought segregation.

Woman 1: I'm Lisa Richards. I used to live here but I'm just visiting from San Diego.

David Dodd: I'm David Dodd. I've been working as a historian at C.W. since the early 50's.

Man 1: Hello Everyone. I'm Tony Washington I've lived in Williamsburg for most of my life and now I'm a Pastor at the Third Street Baptist church in Newport News. I think this project is a good way to bring this community together. This race question has divided us too long.

Man 2: I'm Paul Williams. And I'm a country boy and I've been around these parts for some time. I was raised right up on 60 on a little potato farm in Toano. Before desegregation many Blacks worked with my daddy and me at our place. And well when the potato business moved out of this area we couldn't pay them no more. I use to play with black children when I was little and we had a good time. A good time. And now and then I wonder how they're doin' and I see a few of them here and there and they always say "Mr. Williams, we sure did have a good time back then, didn't we?" And I always say we sure did, we sure did. I guess I can tell some stories too about the old days. I miss those days..

Recorder: [ad lib]

Mrs. Eckbert: I have met all of you and would first like to thank you for coming to my home for this story circle. My full name is Nancy Jane Matthew Eckbert. I have lived and taught in Williamsburg for most of my life and, of course, Matthew is my maiden

name. When I heard about this project I was really excited and I started telling people. Like you, Everest, I have a lot of stories to tell, a lot of stories.

Man 3: I was in my last year of high school when they desegregated the schools and the blacks came in -- oh -- I'm Dr. Grayson and this is my wife Rita (man touches woman next to him).

Woman 2: Joe, I can speak for myself (woman pats her husband back and moves his hand. The group laughs.) I've been here in Williamsburg since 1985 when Joe and I moved back here. I'm a Sociology professor at the College.

Woman 3: My name is Ester and I just come to listen really 'cause I haven't lived in Williamsburg for more than 5 years. I couldn't help but come when Betty told me where she was going. This is great, just great. I really don't have anything to say much but I'm happy to here.

Ms. Johns: Well I guess it is my turn. My name is Betty Johns. I retired from teaching in Williamsburg about six years ago. Race has never been a issue with me I had no problem being black; it was the rest of America that couldn't handle it. I experienced a lot here in Williamsburg during the 50's and 60's, like many of you. And I think it's time that people find out the real story of how it was here. I plan to help anyway I can during this project and I want to learn and meet a lot of new people, too.

Elyce White: Elyce White and I like you I was born and raised in Williamsburg. Since then I have married and raised six children of my own. I don't think I can tell any great stories about myself, but I remember how the kids felt when the schools changed

over in the late sixties what my husband went through to keep his store going after desegregation.

Facilitator: Well, it's nice to meet all of you. Let's get started. Does anyone have a story they would like to began with? How about something that takes us back to segregation times? What was it like in Williamsburg during the 1950s?

Elyce White: It wasn't as bad as some places. Williamsburg was a small community, like a village really, certainly smaller than it is now, but people knew each other and maybe that's why it wasn't so bad.

Betty Johns: I had white neighbors and we played with each other. We were like oreo cookies, but backwards, with whites on this end and on that end and blacks in the middle.

Man 2: We were neighbors long before we were enemies on either side of the color line.

Woman 1 : We all came together in a tragedy. My mother had eleven children and ten of us had ptomaine poisoning. Ten of us, and the whites came to our mother's rescue. They brought sheets, 'cause we were running out of both, you know. They took my daddy and my two oldest brothers to the hospital because they were in danger of dying. And they brought in a doctor, Lee Hale, great big big white doctor, big red man. I think he used to drink all the time.

Nancy Eckbert: Dr. Brooks.

Woman 1: No, not Dr. Brooks, Dr. Brooks was a butcher. This was a real nice country

doctor, and he, when he came, had a great big lap. I was a little girl, I guess ten or twelve years old, and he told Mama, he said bring me a box of salt for each of the children, a box of salt and a glass of water. And he put that whole box of salt in that glass and set me on his lap and held me back and made me drink all that water, but that saved our life. That saved our life.

Nancy E.: It's a wonder you hadn't died in his lap.

Woman 1: He was just like a . . . we were like chickens. He'd give you that water then throw you to Mama and it was just like, like, you know, throwing chickens in a barn. (Circle laughs.) What had happened was that my mother had cooked some cabbage. She'd left the spoon in the cabbage and it had, what is it, some kind of acid from the spoon was in the cabbage.

Facilitator: And so the whole community came to help?

Woman 1: The whole community came to my mother's rescue. Mmmm-hmmm. White and black together. It was that kind of thing. Coming together in a tragedy.

Elyce W.: I had a friend, a high school classmate, who lived across the road from a white family. And there were several black and white families mixed in the area. And these two girls, one black, one white, would exchange clothes. The white student went to Matthew Whaley and my friend went to Bruton Heights. And one of the funny things about it was, when they went home from school, they were friends. They played together, and they did things together in the neighborhood, but once they got on their school buses, one went one way, one went the other. And if the, uh, if they saw each other downtown, as small as Williamsburg was, the white girl

would not recognize my friend. . . my friend's name was Elaine -- she would not recognize her, even though she might, they might be wearing each other's clothes.

Man 2: I remember some very dear memories of colored friends. There was a lady. Name was Mary Pinkney, she lived down on South St., and at Thanksgiving mother and dad would fix up a basket, and I remember as a child they would send me to take up the basket. Miss Pinkney surely appreciated that little blessing at Thanksgiving.

Man 3: I remember a lady who came in and helped my mother, helped my brother in the hospital when he broke his arm. We didn't have a hospital here then, had to go to Newport News. But she stayed and helped, and she taught me how to make stitches on a sewing machine. I have good memories. And like I said it was before integration.

Nancy E.: One of my memorable experiences was just a small thing really . . . We have a son and daughter and in 1960 Elizabeth and Jonathan were quite young and we took them to Jamestown -- you know, we wanted them to experience something of history. They were quite young, so we took them to Jamestown and there were two drinking fountains there. One said "Colored" and one said "White" and the children had never seen that kind of thing before. "Why," the children said, "why are there two drinking fountains, Mommy? Why don't people all drink from one drinking fountain?' And I was so embarrassed, I felt so awkward, you know, I had never thought about it before, never questioned it, I guess. And I felt so silly "explaining" . . . why there were two drinking fountains. And it, it made me feel, well, awful to explain to these children what was going on here. They were just children, and it made me feel (voice drops) . . . just awful.

D. Dodd: You . . . you needed to know about the Harry Golden "Out of Order" plan. This was a North Carolina weekly newspaper editor who, who insisted you could break that sort of thing if you put an "Out of Order" sign on one of the fountains.

Act I/Scene 2 -- "Willie John"

Everest F.: When I was growing up, my family lived right here on Scotland St. Whites lived on Richmond Road. My front yard was the backyard of some whites across the street. I remember there was a young boy lived on Richmond. White boy. Name was Willie John. (As he speaks, scene materializes behind him. A group of children, black and white play foursquare. The drum accents each time the "ball" hits the ground.) He and I were the best of friends. Why, we played together, fought together, ate at each other's houses, I tell you. (Focus shifts to the action.)

Boy: Willie John, you're out. Now you go on to the end of the line. It's Regina's turn.

Willie John: Oh, Evvie, you weren't even payin' attention. That ball landed on the crack. Why should I go to the end of the line?

Boy: (stomping his feet) You heard me, Willie John. It's Regina's turn. Go on, Regina. Boy, do you want to play or not? Cuz if you do you need to skip your behind right on down to the end of the line. This way, buddy! (He points to the end of the line) And hurry up. We got time for just one more game.

(Willie John goes to the end of the line. He looks off in the distance, when he hears someone, perhaps his mother calling his name.)

Mother: (offstage) Willie John . . . Willie John . . . time to come in . . . Willie John. . . supper's ready.

Willie John: (Looks in the direction of the voice, but is reluctant to leave the game. Two people miss and Willie John is in the game again, in the same place. As one of the children bounces the ball to him, his mother calls again and he misses.) Oh, shoot! I get another turn!

Boy: No you don't. You missed. You got to go to the end of the line, Willie John.

Willie John: That's not fair. I just got up here. That ball hit a rock and bounced out of the square. Go to the end of the line! Huh! I don't gotta go nowhere. Anyway, I gotta go home, cuz my supper's gettin' cold. (Bounces the ball high in the air, so that he sends one of the children off running after it.) Gotta go home, y'all. (He pauses, then skips toward home.) Well, I guess I'll see you niggers tomorrow. (Laughs as he skips away).

Boy: Who you callin a nigger, you little redneck rascal. Come on, ya'll. Let's get him! (The children chase after Willie John and all of them freeze.)

Everest: Yes, indeed. We'd get after him and tear his behind up. Next day, he'd come right back. (Focus shifts back to the playground and the children playing marbles.)

Willie John: Hey, ya'll. Can I come over and play? Lookee, I got a brand new ball. How 'bout some four square, huh?

Boy: You gonna behave yourself, Willie John? I don't want no more mess outta you.

My momma told me not to let nobody call me outta my name.

Willie John: Whaddaya mean? Well, sure. I'm not gonna call y'all no more names. (Children take their places and begin a game of four square.)

Everest: Yes indeed. He'd play till he'd get tired. Then. . .

Willie John: (Willie John misses the ball, loses the game, bounces the ball away in a fit, and starts to skip off stage) See ya'll niggers tomorrow. (He laughs and runs away as the other children chase after him.)

Act I/ Scene 3 -- "Ice Cream"

Elyce: Another incident I remember. I was probably fourteen, fifteen years old -- I wanted an ice cream cone -- well, the man behind the counter, I remember him well because he was a tall white man with snow white hair. The man behind the counter hesitated for a second -- but he sold it to me -- but then I had to go outside and eat it, so I took myself and my ice cream on out on Duke of Gloucester Street to eat it. Never occurred to me that wasn't right -- you just sort of accept things.

Man 4: I remember that. My kids went to Bruton Heights and the drug store was on the corner there, and they would go in there and buy something and they had to take it out. They used to come home with me and say --

Woman 4: Dad, whyyy?

Man 4: I'd say, Tameka, this is a segregated town. She didn't know what I was talking about. She'd say --

Woman 4: Daddy, I want to sit down in there and eat my ice cream like the white kids.

Man 4: And I would say, "Tameka, you can't do it, but I'll tell you this, don't try to buck the system and one day you will be able to do what you want." So Rev. Beal, he was our church pastor. He went and talked, and I don't know who he talked to, but from the pulpit he told us, "You can go and sit and eat ice cream anywhere you want now." And I thought I had done a good job in telling my daughter to be cool, don't stir up nothin in this town, and just wait and things will be worked out.

Act I/ Scene 4 -- "Dr. Dreyfuss"

Dr. Dreyfuss: (Background music -- Ramsey Lewis, "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.") I, I, I'm a country doctor. When I came here this was a country town. . . I came here round about the same time that, of course, the restoration had begun before I . .. came, . . . graduated from Howard University Medical School in 1930. I was just out of school, but the world was just out of everything. Didn't seem like there would be much room for a colored man with a medical degree when the Depression had everyone so far down. (laughs) A good frat brother of mine who was one year ahead of me told me, well, maybe I should consider practicing in Newport News. So after my internship I came to Newport News to practice medicine. Kind of odd how I was going South and all the other black folks were running from little towns like this to get to the North. I knew better. Black was black wherever you were . . . (he hums a bit more and snaps his fingers) Pat and I used to dance to this. . . So after a year of starving . . . See, what he didn't tell me was that shipyard

employment had dropped from the thousands to the hundreds. So, as I said, after I 'd starved for a year, my brother told me about Williamsburg. Country town. Folks said all they had in the "Burg" was 500 lazy and 500 crazy. (laughs) They'd never had a black doctor, and they should have one. One of the black churches in Williamsburg who had heard about me, were very supportive. They embraced me, or should I say they hauled me to Williamsburg, the Triangle Block and set me to work. As a matter of fact I was delivering babies and didn't know I was violating the law. You see, I delivered a couple of babies in my office and that was against state regulations. But I was running the clinic for the Richmond State Department of Health . . . for this area, and that connection got me a building, because I had been working in what amounted to a little shed out back. When I had the new building in the Triangle block, one of the dishwashers at the Inn or the Lodge, I don't remember which said, "Lawd, Doctor! You got yourself a new building, a regular hospital here! I wish you'd let my wife, Eleanor, have her baby here. Well, vacation was coming up, you see, and I planned to go to New York, so I let Eleanor come and view (says with a wink) my new building and she had her baby. It was still against the law. Word got around in the community. (Five people, one on crutches, two pregnant women, a sick man, a woman carrying a child, parade behind the doctor).

Woman 4: Did you know that Dr. Dreyfuss is seeing patients in the Triangle?

Woman 5: Yes, I know, because I'm seeing him myself? Did I tell you about my...

Doctor: (interrupts Woman 5 as he continues his reveries) Indeed, word got out. Ahem...hmm. There was a Dr. Joseph Smith from the State Department of Health. He didn't want me to lose my license because I was the only one in Williamsburg

running the free clinic for them ..., so this fellow, got in his car and came down, and he had his secretary type a little slip of paper which said, "This be ye Williamsburg Maternity Hospital... two beds." (laughs) So, you see, I wasn't violating the law anymore. In fact, that was the same week as the Topeka versus Board of Education, so that had to be 1954. Yes, indeed, I like that tune. (points his thumb at radio and asks) Listen to much of this stuff?

(Music--"La La Means I Love You" begins)

Act I/ Scene 5 -- "Back Row"

Woman 3: (She begins the monologue looking middle-aged and gradually sheds her age until the end when she appears young.) Child, please! Now we're talkin bout the back row! You know where it used to be? East on 60. Yeah, that's right, East on Highway 60, up there where the Elks Club is now. There was Leroy Scales shop, (he had a little dance club -- leased the place from an upright deacon, so you know it was good clean fun.) Then there was a house in between, and then Mel Mooney's Place, right across the street from Mr. Allen's barbershop. Yes Indeed. Mel Mooney's! That, darlin', was what we called the back row. And did we have some fun? We had some <u>times</u>! After cleaning up the house, yours or somebody else's -- after cooking up the food, yours or somebody else's -- after taking care of cryin babies, bouncing children -- after sayin, "yes sir," "no ma'am," "be right there, sir," you could give it all up to Charlie Clinton and his "bless me, Jesus" blues. You know he's famous now! Well, well, well, well, well. I declared my allegiance to rhythm and blues right there on big Mama's porch one night, just before Lee Ronnie Younger came to pick me up for the dance at Mel's. Everybody was on the porch. Big Mama, Tisha, Bobby Earl, and a host a chillun, so many you'd

think Bebe's kids had stepped off the TV and invaded Big Mama's yard. And there we were. Me, Big Mama, Tisha, Bobby doin' the stroll! ('Course, they all church people now). But that night, it was a full moon, and the sky was "rock steady" blue. By the time Martha and the Vandellas started singing "Wait a Minute, Mr. Postman," Lee Ronnie Younger was strollin' on up the walk to pick me up and I declare he was sharp. Had a Quo Vadis haircut and a shimmery silk shirt, indigo blue, Big Mama decreed and if anybody know, Big Mama know. Lee Ronnie anointed my head with a sprig of pink japonica and we were off to Mel Mooney's. When the lights were low, you could dance a while to the holy boogie that was stompdown blues with people who'd known you from way back, or you could stand nearly still and rock gently with the one you'd chosen or the one who'd chosen you. One Lee Ronnie Younger was my choice, one night in early spring 3when grape hyacinth, snowmound candytuft, crocus and the most delicate iris peeped out the ground to begin summer's dream. At Mel Mooney's on a Friday night, life and livin' was sweet, if only for a little while.

Nancy E.: That's Grove, but that wasn't the only all-black community or subdivision, was it? What about Carver Gardens?

Betty J.: I can tell you something about that. They started Carver Gardens shortly after World War II when all the black veterans were coming back from the war and wanting a place to stay, just like the G.I. Bill said. And this man named Ben Levison decided to help blacks out, so he contracted to build Carver Gardens, out 143 East, half a mile mile west of Grove, in fact. The local bank would not let us get money to buy a house in the subdivision. We only had one local bank. So homebuyers either went to Newport News, or Levison got a mortgage company in

Richmond for them. Of course blacks couldn't move into the white subdivisions. The realtors kept them strictly segregated.

Act I/Scene 6 -- "Real Estate"

Man 5: That reminds me of a situation here in Williamsburg. A black affluent couple you would know, they're no longer together, went to this white development, very upscale neighborhood, and asked if they could buy a lot. The agent's response was

Wall: Now I am totally for integration, but I've got to live here.

Man 5: That was in 1966, '67...

Man 3: I remember the time we were living in Lightfoot. We had a small house. I knew that we wanted something different. She had a piano. The piano was on the wall next to the bedroom. And when she was playing the piano, I couldn't even understand the ball game. I was working two jobs, so I asked her to call a Realtor and ask him about some lots. She went up there, when he saw her he kind of smiled and said

Wall: I'm sorry, I can't show you the property because we don't sell to blacks.

Man 3: I didn't pursue it. I didn't want to build up there, because we would've been the only ones up there. And I didn't want our little girl and... Florence... I was away a lot... I didn't want them to be up there being harassed. We could've gone to court, and we might have beat it, but it wasn't worth it to me.

Woman 4: I'll never forget the Realtor who met my husband and me when we were looking for a home. As I approached him, he was waiting for me in the community parking lot. And when I drove up, he just shook his head, and I knew what he was shaking his head for -- but I had to hear him say it...

Wall: I'm sorry. I can't show you the property because you're black.

Woman 6: (Music -- Carol King's "So Far Away") We live right off Penniman Road, the neighborhood is integrated in several sections, with whites and blacks living peacefully together. I think about this white family that used to live next door to us. They'd been there since their daughters were two and three years old. We knew each other well. When their daughter, Lucy, was a little baby girl, she'd go down the street to the Finley's house to play, and before it got dark, the Finleys would take her back home, just before it got dark. Happened all the time.

Man 6: As the girls grew up, they'd be up and down the street, skating, riding their bikes with the other children, with the black children, just having fun being kids. They didn't seem to make distinctions. But after a while it seems as if the father would get angry when he'd see his daughters playing with black kids, especially when he'd see his daughters riding bikes with the black boys.

Woman 5: Finally, we noticed a "for sale" sign up in their yard. I guess it was just as well. I thought to myself, one day the father was gonna come out there and he was gonna hurt one of those boys. People just don't think rationally when it comes to race. They don't think -- these are just children. No, maybe the father didn't see Junebug, Joe Beatty's son. Maybe he saw a little Emmett Till out there, a black boy who would look at his daughter one day and then he'd want to lynch him. And

maybe he knew there couldn't be anymore lynchings. So he decided to sell his house and move his family out of a neighborhood where they had grown to care about the people, where their daughters grew up. I guess it's just as well. People just cannot think rationally about race.

Wall: People just cannot think rationally about race.

Act I/ Scene 7 -- "Callie"

Woman 4 (Callie):

When I think back on it, I've had some times. Some folks have mistreated my family and then again, some folks have been kind. My mama used to work for this white lady, Miss Rae Martha Whittington was her name. That musta been round 19... oh, 1957 or so. I remember, because Mama smoked Pall Mall cigarettes and seem like she increased her habit to a pack a day while she was workin' for this woman. Anyway, one morning, just before my mama was about to go to work -- she kept house for Mrs. Whittington, you know -- one morning while my mama was getting ready to go to work, we heard a knock on the door. And there was Chief Weller telling us Mrs. Whittington had called the police and told them my mother had stolen her diamond brooch. He asked Mama if she would go up to Mrs. Whittington's and help her find the brooch, but my mama, she didn't really want to go. So Chief Weller told my mother he would be back. And he did come back. He told my mother that Mrs. Whittington had found her brooch and Mama didn't have anything to worry about. You know, Mrs. Whittington called my mother many times over the years to apologize, but Mama never went back to her house. She never did.

Act I/Scene 8 -- "Pender's Store"

Man 1: Oh, this was way back before the flood, the flood of integration that is, and I was working at D.P. Pender's store -- I was working there doing everything -- we had two white fellas workin in the store, too, but I was the only one who could ring the register. The manager wouldn't let the two white boys ring the register. At one point some money was missing. Russell knew -- he was the manager -- he knew that I didn't do it -- my father would've killed me. But the company was pursuing this, so he said, "Ronald, you stop ringing the register." Then we found out that the assistant manager was taking money -- but basically it was the idea that I was doing it -- I was a black and I was the only one ringing the register --

Man 1 and Man 4: Just goes to show how it worked, and it works like that still today.

Act I/Scene 9 -- "Crow Scene"

Woman 2 (Mrs. Bell):

(Music -- Miles Davis from "Prayer," Porgy and Bess) I remember, down at James Weldon Johnson, I had a class, all boys who came to me for reading every day. I got to know those boys very well, very well. I had them in eighth grade. And when the kids came back to school, I always started them off by talking about what they had done during the summer and where they worked, what they had learned. This particular September morning, I think there were about six or seven boys. And I asked them, I asked the first boy, "Calvin, what did you do this summer?" And Calvin looked at me and shook his head in a peculiar way, almost a mournful way, and he said,

Calvin and Woman 2:

Mrs. Bell, I had it hard.

Woman 2: Well, what did you do, I said.

Calvin and Woman 2:

I got a job, he said, with this construction company.

Woman 2: I said, Well, what's the matter? You didn't like the job? Didn't they pay you well? He said,

Calvin and Woman 2:

Yes, they paid me well, but...

Woman 2: But what, I said. The whole class had been kind of boisterous, you know, hadn't quite settled down yet, but something about the way Calvin looked that made them get quiet and pay attention. He began,

Calvin: They had a white boy, same age as I was. And you know, it looked like every time there was a hole to go in, I would be the one to go in and get in the hole. And it seemed to me like some of those holes were getting deeper and deeper. Sometimes you could be in a sewer line or something that you didn't know was there and we'd have to dig all around it, and go down deeper and deeper into this hole. One day I was so far down in the hole until I couldn't see anything but blue sky. I was working, working, working, and then I heard this strange noise. And I thought to myself, 'What is that, what is that noise?' Then I looked up, I craned my neck all the way up to the sky and saw that there were crows flying overhead.

One of the larger ones, seemed like one of the larger ones perched just on the edge of that hole and he went 'Squawk! Squawk! Squawk! (The students take up the noise, squawking until the squawking turns into words)

Students: Look at him. Look at him. Look at the nigger in the hole! Nigger in a hole! Nigger in a hole! (As the rest of the characters are screaming, Calvin places his hands over his ears. When the noise fades, Calvin is back in Mrs. Bell's classroom again, and the other students are in their seats.)

Calvin: Mrs. Bell, It was the shape of the sound that made me come up out of that hole, misery's poor mouth, Mrs. Bell, something about the shape of the sound that howled death down at me. And everything in me said, "No" to that mocking crow. As I clambered out of that hole, I promised myself if I ever got out, I will never go down there again. And Mrs. Bell, you will never have any trouble out of me this school year. I want to learn, Mrs. Bell. I want to learn anything and everything.

Act I/Scene 10 -- "Dow Chemical"

Woman 3 (Mrs. Snow):

I was the first black at Dow Chemical. Dow had moved up here from South Carolina. That was when the government said that you must have, you know, so many blacks and that's when the corporations used to try and get the biggest, blackest blacks they could find and set him up in the window, so the government would let' em alone. Well, Dow wasn't that fortunate, so I applied. I had to have a college education, and everything. Would you believe my supervisor had a seventh grade education! A seventh grader! Most of my fellow workers made no bones about the fact that I was not wanted. Their aim was to drive me away like

they had driven everybody else away. There was one girl before me, I think she stayed one day. But I was determined, like my daughters (I think they got it from me, or I got it from them, whichever). Anyhow, I was determined to stay. But my supervisor -- her name was Hallie Pritchard -- every morning, I would walk in and she would say, "There's a nigger in the woodpile!" And "nigger" was used just like you'd say 'Mary' or 'Bill'! That was my supervisor. She wasn't talking to me, she was, y'know, just saying that. I pretended I didn't hear it, so then she would, uh, when they were assigning the positions for the day, I would always get the hardest experiment. I would do my work, and she would say, "well, today the nigger's going to be in such-and-such a thing." She wasn't talking to me. And I, I never said anything, and I -- I was always polite. They said everything they wanted to me. But I never never said anything back to my supervisors. See, that was my non-violent resistance strategy. But that's also why I think I got the reputation for not liking whites. It wasn't that I didn't like whites, I told everything that the whites did to me! That's what they didn't like. And would you believe it! I had to have an escort in and out of that chemical lab! The girl who sat next to me -- her bench was right next to mine -- she tried to be nice. That's what I'm trying to tell you -- that people, uh, are genuinely nice. She told me, and she thought she was doing me a favor, she said, "Della, my husband said that I can work with you, but I can't be seen with you outside this building." Angie Pratt was her name. And I said, "Well, Angie, don't let it bother you, cuz I don't want to be seen with you either ! (She laughs.) And Angie and I got to be really good friends, but then, even Angie could not lose her -- y'know, the way she was taught. Sometimes she'd touch me and draw back. And I'd say, "Well, Angie, it's not gonna rub off on you," (laughs softly) and then we got so that we could exchange, uh, racial jokes. We didn't, I didn't joke with her about "niggers" and things like that, but like, if she would touch me, I'd say "Baby, it's waterproof, rainproof, even foolproof." One

day Angie brought her little girl in and she asked me, "Does it hurt?" Does it hurt?" (says it a little softer, almost as if pondering) She thought I was sunburned! She just didn't know, had never been that close to any blacks. And the one white co-worker who did befriend me, Beth, was ostracized by the other workers. She was the only one who would eat lunch with me. It happened that her husband died and she had to take time off from work. When she came back from her leave, someone had made a miniature coffin and put a boy doll in it and put it in Beth's desk. Our co-workers would go this far to keep one of their own from befriending me! Can you believe it! And that little girl asked me, "Does it hurt!" Bottom line -- I stayed at Dow for many many years. Bottom line!

Act I/Scene 11 -- "Bowling"

Everest: I have a story. Indeed, I do. Okay. Baker Whitfield and I, that's Babs Whitfield's husband, by the way, Baker and I, well, we must have had a lotta nerve or we were just plain crazy or maybe just plain tired. I don't know. We would do anything to bowl. Okay, and in this area, right here in Williamsburg, we had a bowling center in the shopping center, old Colony Lanes, which is now Ace Hardware Store. We wanted to bowl at that bowling center, but they would not allow us to bowl there. What I mean is we wanted to go there in peace, to simply share the space with whites in peace, instead of going all the way to Richmond. We tried a few times, but each and every time we went the manager would

Manager 1: I'm sorry, I simply cannot allow you to bowl here. Colored people are not allowed to bowl here. You must understand my position. The center is owned by major businesses in the area, er, corporations, and they would close me down, if I

allowed you to bowl. If it was left up to me, you fellas could come in, but as it is, I just can't do it.

Everest: Next time we went, they'd tell us the same thing.

Mgrs 1 & 2: Sorry fellas. You must understand my position. If it was left up to me, you fellas would come in, but as it is, I just can't do it.

Everest: Next time we went, they'd tell us the same thing.

Mgrs 1, 2, 3: I'm sorry, I simply cannot allow you to bowl here. Colored people are not allowed to bowl here. You must understand my position. (Everest and Baker join in.)

Everest, Baker, Manager:

If it was left up to me, you fellas could come in, but as it is, I just can't do it.

Everest: You see, we were ready. Didn't need to rent anything. We had our bowling shoes, bowling balls, bowling bags. I'm telling you we had everything. So one day, we just decided --

Everest/Baker: We're going to bowl today or die tryin'.

Baker: Everest, how do you think we ought to tackle it?

Everest: Well, Baker, let's just hold hands and walk in there swingin' our bowling bags. If anybody tries to stop us, they'll have these bowling balls to contend with. Okay, ready?

Baker: Ready as I'll ever be.

Everest: So bowl we did! (Baker and Everest circle their arms and the six managers fall like bowling pins.) And when we were done, we came out holding hands just like we went in and when we got outside, we looked at each other and said --

Baker/Everest: We did it! We did it!

Baker: Have we overcome?

Everest: We have overcome! Same time next week?

Baker: Same time next week.

Baker/Everest: Same station.

(The two men separate and Baker exits with the bowling bags while Everest rejoins the story circle. The "pins" all rise singing a peppy "We Shall Overcome.")

Act I/Scene 12 -- "Daniel Roseman"

Man 1 (Daniel Roseman):

I was superintendent of service at the Williamsburg Inn during the sixties. This must have been around 1966. My manager, good fellow, said "You should be bellman of the year for the Hotel and Motel Association." I don't like to tell you in the way of bragging, but we did have good service at the Inn. There were some

people, whites, who didn't like the idea that my manager would submit my name. Nevertheless, my manager told me to turn a deaf ear to all those naysayers, because he had received letters from various patrons talking about my good service -- not whether I was white or black. At that time we were serving kings, 8queens, and presidents -- we never got a negative result from us receiving them. I knew that service was the key to success in the hotel field and I loved my job. So he submitted my name in 1966. And I got a letter back saying that I was chosen for second place, not first place -- you're talking about a happy man! That was an honor for me, and I was satisfied. Mr. Malrose called me into the office. He said, "I'm not happy about that." We all have supervisors -- I don't care who you are. Anyway, he wasn't happy and he was my boss, so that made me not happy! (laugh) So he asked me if he could submit my name again in '67, and I said, "sure, Mr. Malrose." So he did. So I will not forget 1967, as long as I live. I was showing a guest the suite where Queen Elizabeth stayed in 1957 when he called me to his office. I told him what I was doing and he said, "Well, have another one of your men do that, because I've got something more important than that." So I went into his office and he read the letter that I had been chosen Bellman of the year for 1967. And that was the greatest feat I've ever accomplished in the hotel. Naturally, I had to go to Boston to receive the award. The company wrote an acceptance speech for me to say when I received the award. I had that down pat. The man who was in charge said to me, "I know you have a speech to deliver to tell to the managers of the Hotel and Motel Association tomorrow." I told him, "I have it down pat." And he said, "Well, forget it. Tell them the speech you told today to the other bellmen, so they'll know how you work with your bellforce." Tell them, "don't let the money be the criteria of service, because if you do, you'll fail. You give the service, and the money will follow." So I went up there and gave them my speech, and afterwards the people mobbed me. That was the best

moment of service that I ever had in my life, and the best reward. And another thing -- Mr. Johnson, the big boss from CW, couldn't get a room at the guest hotel in Boston, but I had one! Yessir, that was a fine day.

Act I/Scene 13 -- "Movie Theatre"

(Music -- "Pop Goes the Weasel")

Man 5 (Mr. Right On):

I can remember when I moved here in 1968 -- the "Colored Only" signs were still at the bus stop. Talk about the breaking down of tradition at the bowling alley, the same thing happened at the movie theatre. Used to be one theatre in town, used to have one show only. It was owned by, is owned by, Colonial Williamsburg. There's a long story there about the attitude of the Rockefeller family towards southern traditions. But the time came when C.W. decided to integrate its theatre. The way they decided to do it was to reserve one row at the back for blacks. So they cordoned it off, you know, at either end, with rope. But the first month they tried it, a whole bunch of white college students who wanted complete integration got there early and filled up that row. So, they moved the ropes, and some more white college students came in and filled up that row. At about that time, I don't remember whether they went to a third row or not, but about that time, the theatre manager just threw up his hands and said, "The hell with it!" and integrated the theatre.

(Music -- Bob Dylan's "Times they are A-Changing" bridges to next scene.)

Act I/Scene 14 -- "Bus Station"

Betty Johns: The most outrageous thing I did in Williamsburg was using a white bathroom. When they finally built a bus station, they had a section for blacks and a section for whites, and then they had a white water fountain and a black water fountain, and a white bathroom and a black bathroom. Sometimes the buses would come in and they'd have maybe a five-minute layover and the black bathroom would be full, so the black passengers would have to get back on the bus, because they didn't dare go through the white door. It was toward the end of the era, I suppose, and I just decided, "I'm going in this white bathroom," to see what would happen. One policeman who was supposed to have been racist, was in the station. But I went in, I walked in the white bathroom and this white lady came in and congratulated me for having the courage to break the barrier. And when I came out, the policeman was standing right there and he just looked at me and shook his head like, "She has got to be crazy." And he didn't even arrest me.

Act I/ Scene 13 -- "Churches"

(Music -- "Come Ye Disconsolate")

Rev. Haynes: I just want to remind you of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King on his visit. He said, "let freedom ring." That's right. He said that the President of the United States should proclaim "a second emancipation proclamation" by executive order that segregation is unconstitutional. Onward, Christian soldiers!

Sister Money: My Lord in the morning, Gert. Rev. Haynes ain't doin nothin but hollerin' up

there, sound like he got somethin' caught in his throat. Rev. Dunn sleep, Rev. Thompkins sleep, two fingers on his chin to make it look like he thinkin! Hmmph!

Sister Gert: Hush, Money. I came hear to hear the Lord's word this mornin', not your mouth.

Rev. Haynes: (directed at Money) We will now bow our heads in silence. Dear Lord, we, your humble servants, ask only that we may serve you in our own humble way. We know that we are living in hard times, that our children are set upon by dangers on all sides, but we must tell our children that "though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they should fear no evil, for thou art with them." (His message is punctuated by amen's from the congregation.)

Money: Look, he's hummin' now, in e flat, walking to this side of the pulpit, now that side, makin' swoopin' motions with his heavy arms, robe aflyin'. Almost looks like a bird that's about to take flight. Great gettin' up mornin', Gert, I think he's gonna try to sing again!

Rev. Haynes: What do we say to the children, my brothers and sisters, this mornin? What do we tell the children? (Begins to sing) "Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel/ deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel?/ Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel/ Then why not every man?"

Money: Good question, and while you're at it Reverend, why not every good woman?" (Gert hushes Money)

Rev. Haynes: Stand up, brothers and sisters, all those who want to witness for the Lord this morning. Stand up and speak your mind. Speak your heart -- yes indeed, unburden your heart this mornin'.

Man: (stands with difficulty) I just want to tell our young folks that's gettin' ready to go into the white schools that they should stand strong, because the Lord is on their side.

Woman: (stands as man sits down) That's right! David said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

Congregation: Have mercy! That's right! You tell it!

Everest: (stands up) I just want to say this mornin' that I know I'm blessed, (congregation responds) and I know that as a parent and a teacher I will stand by my children and all the children to make this process of integration a peaceful process. And I want to call on the members of this congregation to join hands with me this morning and pledge their assistance in making this change for the betterment of our community.

Congregation: Amen! Speak on, Brother Forrest! The Lord is a mighty wonder!

Woman: Amen, Brother Forrest, but I don't know if I want my babies to go through all this just for some better books and better equipment. 'Cause I know we already have some fine teachers. Why, you're one of 'em! I don't know if I support all this integration stuff, but I will do my best to serve the Lord.

Man: I'm old, but I wanna help. What can I do?

Rev. Haynes: A good Christian poet once said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." You,

brother Wilson, are one of God's good Christian soldiers.

Gert: I'm with you reverend. Save the children. Didn't my Lord deliver Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego. Three went in but a fourth saw them through the flames, and it wasn't Nebuchaneezer.

Money: Amen, sister. (whispers) Now sit down, Gert. Your slip's hangin.

Rev. Haynes: Will you join with me in singing, "Nearer My God to Thee." Because that is where we must be if we are fully to take part in the bounty that this country has to offer, her jobs, her schools, her stores. We must struggle to achieve the American Dream, but not before we have given thanks where thanks are due, not before we have given praises where praises are due. Thank you, Lord this morning. (congregation responds) Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord. (Congregation begins to sing "Nearer My God to Thee.")

(focus shifts to the white church)

(Congregation finishes the last verse of "This is My Story, This is My Song." They are nearing the end of the service, and the minister asks if there are any announcements. Mrs. Dean whispers to Miss Bateman throughout service)

Rev. Fultz: I will close by quoting from St. John. And the Lord said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another."

Let me repeat that, "These things I command, that ye love one another." The Rev. Martin Luther King visited our city recently, and I had a chance to talk to him. He's doing a mighty difficult job that needs to be done. I am reminded that in Jesus's time of trials, he told his disciples, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service./ And these things they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

Mrs. Dean: Sarah, may I look on your bible? I left mine at home. My goodness! Service seems long today. Have we gotten to the Benediction yet?

Miss Bateman: Shh, Coreen. They're comin to the announcements.

Rev. Fultz: We have just a few more announcements. The members of our church are invited to an ecumenical service to be held at First Baptist Church. Let us show the hand of human fellowship and join them in lifting our voices in praise of the Lord.

Dean: I don't think I've ever been to a black church. Have you, Sarah? What do they do there?

Bateman: They have church. What do you think! And will you stand up! It's time for the Benediction.

Nancy E.: I think our church was the first. It was during Lent, to invite all the churches in town to come and have an ecumenical service. St. Martin's was a little tiny church back then, brand new, meeting in a tin building and we were trying a lot of new things. We decided against a vested choir, Instead, we had about six or eight

people who decided on their own to meet once a week and practice hymns ahead of time. So that was our semblance of a choir. An invitation came from First Baptist Church for our choir to join theirs for an ecumenical service. We were pleased because we had been integrated as a church from the days we opened the doors. We certainly wanted to support any ecumenical and integrated outreach going on in town, but it just so happened when it came time to go all of our six people in the choir were out of town or ill and couldn't do it. We couldn't find anybody to go represent St. Martin's. I cannot sing a note, but I was not about not to go, since I could be a warm body and Shirley Alderman, elderly lady, with a very warbly, trembly voice and she said this was important, she would come, and the only other person we could recruit was Sarah Bateman, who could not sing a note either. The three of us came to the First Baptist Church... we got into the choir robing room and before we went into the sanctuary, some lady was organizing us and every time somebody came to the door, she said, "What do you sing?" And people would say, "I sing alto" or "I sing soprano." And all of a sudden I was at the door and she said, "What do you sing?" And I looked at her and I said, "Oh, melody."

(The actors of both churches come together to sing "Let Us Break Bread Together")

End of Act I

Act II/ Scene 1 -- "Story Circle, Part 2"

Nancy E.: There's still plenty of pie left, and I have a fresh pot of coffee.

Recorder: Thank you, Mrs. Eckbert, I think I'll take you up on that pecan pie.

Facilitator: I was glad to hear about the bowling alley, the Williamsburg Theatre, and the ecumenical services at some of the churches, but there must have been some really difficult times for integration. Were most people always so cooperative? I guess what I mean is, did integration happen without political action?

D. Dodd: Well, I don't remember people picketing on street corners, that sort of thing, if that's what you mean. There was never any marching down DOG St.

Mrs. Dreyfuss:

I wonder if CW had anything to do with things not erupting. Williamsburg is such a tourist town and demonstrations would have been bad for business.

D. Dodd: *Somebody* kept racial controversies out of the newspapers. There was hardly any news about school desegregation in the Virginia Gazette.

Nancy E.: When I think about political action, I think about the beginning of Head Start in Williamsburg. The City and County Boards voted to initiate Headstart here in, maybe it was the summer of 1966, but they did not appropriate any money. Jay Samuels, who eventually became the first director of the Head Start, Jay really worked to get the program started here. We got a federal grant and raised enough other money to support a small program.. But then the school system called and

said they would do their own Head Start. You see, we'd embarrassed them. So St. Martin's withdrew. But those misers in the school system charged $16 per pupil, shutting out the poorest children from Head Start. So the next year many of us attended a school board meeting to lobby for a more aggressive approach to Head Start. The children needed so much -- hearing tests, dental exams, eye exams. I remember one school board member shook her head when she heard this. She said, "We could never do anything as complex as that." We replied that perhaps the school board was not aware that several jurisdictions that touched our borders all had Head Start -- Newport News, even Charles City -- we went down the line. If they could do it, surely we could, too. After a long pause and many questions put to Jay, the vote was taken and a decision was made to fund a comprehensive Head Start program.

Everest: I remember my volunteer work for Head Start. Jay organized about 30 of us to hunt for eligible children. We studied maps and knocked on every door in the poor rural areas of the county. And we found lots of eligible kids. I remember one large family I visited -- lots of babies and little children -- three mothers and two grandmothers -- no running water and no privy in two run down houses. Babies were crawling all over the broken floors. None of the adults could tell me how many children lived there. I counted them: there were 22. The neighborhood had shunned them. Others on the road shared wells, but this family had to get water from a stream below the sheds below the outhouses. They had never been on welfare, didn't even know welfare existed. Head Start got them social workers. Eventually many programs were brought to bear on this situation. Head Start helped to make people more aware of the extent of local poverty. That resulted in the development of programs such as the Day Care Center for poor mothers who were unable to take jobs.

Betty J.: I remember that. Some of my friends took their preschoolers there. But they always had to fight for adequate funding, staffing, and housing. All of these coalitions were interracial.

Everest: Lots of times, interracial help came on the personal level. I remember this big white guy who wanted to help with integration. Had a friend, black guy, and these guys loved to hunt. There was this place up by West Point called Nellies or Manny's or something, on the corner as you drive on 30 towards Williamsburg. And they were duck hunting one mornin' and the big guy says, "I'm hungry, let's stop in there and get something to eat." The restaurant had a big sign up that said, "Whites Only." So the black guy says, "I don't want to go in there." The big guy says, "You're scared; you're afraid," and the black guy says, "I'm not afraid if you're goin' in there. And the white guy said, "Come on, let's go in." They went in together, and the people in the restaurant treated him like royalty. Sometimes friends have to drive you to do things like that, challenge you to make things change.

Act II/ Scene 2 -- "Thomas Cross"

Thomas Cross:

As far as I'm concerned, I make it my business to get along with anybody, any race of people. Prove to me he is a man, he's okay with me. I am a mechanic, and I don't think any man's any higher or any lower than me. And I don't go around with a chip on my shoulder daring somebody to knock it off. That's just not my way. But, then, sometimes you run across one, you know what I mean, you find them in all races and creeds, that are not men as far as morals and so forth. I remember

once, there was this state trooper that I had a problem with. And he was a pretty tough customer, pretty tough. Fact is, he wanted to take me before the police department. You see I was one of the few blacks, might have been the only one on the Peninsula, doing state inspections back then. And this particular fellow tried to disqualify me. At that time I had a cinderblock building, but I hadn't painted it. I hadn't gotten around to that, because I was trying to get a little more financing. Well, he came around and started looking under benches and peering into things, trying to intimidate me. Then he said, "Thomas, when are you gonna get this buildin painted? This is an eyesore! It's against the law for a state inspection facility. You need to get some paint on this building next time I came around here." I told him I'd been planning to do just that, but I hadn't gotten round to it. He interrupted me, telling me I'd better have the building painted by next Thursday, else he was gonna have to send my name in to the police department and that's all there was to it. I told him I'd do my best, but like I'd been tryin to tell him, I was workin on some financin. He told me to just get it done and he'd be back around on Thursday. Two days go by -- it's only Monday -- and he comes back. I asked him wasn't he a few days early, but he didn't want to hear nothin. Told me I was procrastinatin about gettin paint on that eyesore and so forth and then he left, said he'd be back next week. He came back a few days later with two more people, policeman and a civilian, all three looking pretty serious. I think I had the building half-painted by then. So here he come again, and three days early, at that. I asked him if I could talk to him in private. He says, "What you want to tell me that these gentlemen can't hear." But I said to him, "I'm not going to do what you did. You spoke to me in public and even the neighbors could hear what you were saying. I'm not going to do that to you. Why don't you come into my office." The other two men came in anyway, into my tiny office, but I had my say. I told him he'd said some things that fretted me quite a bit, made me

angry, in fact. Told him I was born in Charles City, and my people were slow to anger, so he'd achieved quite a feat. But I told him, "I'm not gonna talk to you like you talked to me the other day. I'm gonna talk to you as a man. When you came in the other day, I was standing at the door and you came in and walked all through the shop, looked all under the benches, behind the cabinets and so on. I didn't know what you were lookin for and I didn't know who you were." He says, "You knew I was a policeman, didn't you?" I said, I told him, "Your uniform showed that you were a policeman, but it didn't show the man that was in it. I've come in contact with other policemen and they were just as polite as could be. Just as nice. Came more or less to help me. They would tell me what I needed to do and what I didn't need to do. Might have warned me about this, told me to be careful about that and we got along just fine. But you, you altogether different, and I didn't understand that. You haven't treated me like a man and you haven't acted like a man. Now, I don't plan on writing any letters on you, but I had to wait until my nerves were calm to tell you what I wanted to say without making myself and you look bad. I just wanted to tell you what was on my mind. He took off his hat, and seemed like he was genuinely sorry. He said, "Now that you put it that way, Thomas, I'm sorry for the way I treated you. I have a lot of territory to cover in a short amount of time and my supervisor wants his reports in." We finally agreed to just let it go at that. We shook hands like two gentlemen, then shook hands all around. I got the place painted in a few more days and we had no more trouble. Oh, I ran into him several times on the highway after that. He turned out to be one of the best state troopers that I knew of on the peninsula. One of the best.

Everest: Well... there's one thing I can say. I think that most people were pretty upfront

about the way they felt. You may not have agreed with them, but they were honest about their feelings.

Elyce White: Mmm-hmm. That's true. Most people talked and acted according to their feelings.

Mrs. D: Oh I don't know about that. *Some* people weren't honest at all.

N. Eckbert: Exactly. That president at William & Mary -- he was a tricky character. He would say one thing, but you can believe he had something else in mind. You never knew what he was going to do next.

Mrs. D: You said it! He was not honest about the College's policies at all.

B. Johns: And the students didn't like that one bit!

Recorder: Really? We went to interview the President of William & Mary during the 60s just a few days ago. He still lives in town. In fact, Dr. Stewart was very cordial.

Act II/ Scene 3 -- "William and Mary"

(Music: William & Mary Alma Mater)

Pres. Stewart: William & Mary was very peaceful during the sixties. We did not have any incident of any significance at the College until 1970. In the summer of 1970 the Regional Civil Rights Director charged that even though the College did not discriminate, it nevertheless violated Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She called upon the College, to consider quote, "revisions of its admissions criteria so

that the potential for the academic success of black students is determined by means other than Scholastic Aptitude Test scores." She also stressed that the College should, quote, "set the recruitment of substantial numbers of black teachers as one of our immediate goals." Responding to Dr. Smith's letters, I said that her action was the first time the college had been told that a quota system prevailed under Title 6. I wrote her, quote, "As president of the college and even had I the power, I would be most reluctant to direct a lowering of admission standards and the offering of non-credit remedial instruction." I reminded her that our brochure information for prospective students stated: 'Within the limits of the number that can be accommodated, the right of admission to William & Mary is open to all students without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin.' This demonstrated that William & Mary was a multi-racial rather than a segregated institution." I also detailed in the letter certain steps that we were taking on our own before we received her letter, namely the possibility of exchange of faculty members from William & Mary for a semester in return for faculty members in the given disciplines from Hampton University. Later, Dr. Smith replied and this is very... Well, here's her letter: "Your letter is a clear and detailed statement that the college entertains no commitment to overcoming the vestiges of segregation and intends to take no further action to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964; therefore, I have no recourse but to refer your letter of July 26 and all other correspondence to our office in Washington, D.C. with the recommendation that enforcement proceedings be initiated." That meant that the Department of Justice would take it over, and they would cut off the federal funds to William & Mary which, in 1970, was a very substantial... they were close to a million dollars. Ironically, neither I nor any other official of William & Mary ever received any further communication regarding Dr. Smith's letter or her allegations."

Mrs. Dreyfuss: (begins in the story circle, crosses to Harold on the SR rake)

My son Harold was the first black student to attend William and Mary as an undergraduate. I was against it in the mid-60s. I wanted Harold to go to a black school. I wanted him to be in a warm, nurturing, learning environment. Your college years are the ones in which you need to feel safe to learn about yourself, about the world you'll face when you graduate. I wanted my son to have good memories of his classmates and his teachers. I wanted him to feel like he was part of the school, to be welcomed and to feel welcomed. I wasn't so sure if William & Mary was ready to do that.

Harold: But Mom, that's just it. I don't feel on the spot. And no, I don't see going to William & Mary as automatically being a walking mascot for the race. I want to be accepted as an individual.

Mrs. D: You don't understand that this thing is bigger than you or the school, and whether you like it or not, you're going to be singled out just for being one of the first blacks to attend. Can't you understand that! It's not just any other school, and you're not just any other student!

Harold: Okay, maybe my community, the Negro community sees me as the standard-bearer for the cause, but I don't see it that way. I'll be going to a school that happens to be a fine school and that happens to be in my hometown. Period!.

Mrs. D: I don't know about all that, but I do know this! I don't want your life endangered, because somebody thinks you don't belong at their school, hometown or now. Son, what are you trying to do? Make people change who just don't want to change, who just don't believe you should be there in the first place? You say you don't see

yourself as a crusader, but you certainly act like one, or maybe even a martyr! James Meredith may be a fine man, and it may have been okay for him to integrate that school, but I'm not raising my son to be James Meredith. Your father and I just want what's best for you.

Harold: I want what's best for me, too, Mom. What's best is William & Mary. Things have improved a lot in the past few years, and they should improve a lot more. But if things do not improve, and there is no more progress toward civil rights, maybe I will have to get on my soap box and do something about it. Let's face it, I'm not going to escape the race problem, so I might as well be a part of its resolution. And the race question will never be settled unless whites and blacks get to know each other better and really have a chance to understand each other.

Mrs. D: You do a mighty good imitation of a crusader, for someone who doesn't want to get up on his soapbox!

Harold: Mom, this crusader needs some new socks and some new shirts, if he's gonna go to college. How about it, Mom?

Mrs. D: You can just turn off that Dreyfuss charm. Next thing you know, you'll be asking me to go out and buy you a supply of green and gold longjohns! Oh, Harold!

Harold: Don't worry, Mom, it's gonna be all right. Just wait and see.

(Music that should come up here is Donny Hathaway's "Some Day We'll All Be Free")

Act II/ Scene 4 -- "Pool Stories"

Elyce White: I was having some of the cub scouts over to our house, and there was a little black boy who belonged to our den. Neat little kid, Davy. My goodness, he's probably about thirty now! But he was seven when I was his Den mother. We had a pool in our neighborhood and at the end of the cub scout year when we had all our parties and everything, I thought it would be nice if we had a pool party, so I just contacted the people who ran the pool and we set aside some time for the boys to have a celebration. I wasn't naive, I knew that there could possibly trouble -- because all the neighborhood pools were segregated and Davy was coming. So I asked my husband to be home that day and come up to the pool, just to make sure. I wanted these kids to have a good time and I didn't want a scene. The cub scouts arrived and we went to the pool. My husband was there, and the neighborhood people were there swimming in the pool. I said to Davy first of all, "can you swim?" and he said, yes. Later on I found out he couldn't -- he just didn't want me to know that he couldn't swim. The pool didn't start out six inches, you know -- it started out three and a half feet deep and these boys were only seven years old. Most of us got in and I checked to see that the little boys could at least touch the bottom and that their heads were out of the water. Then I helped Michael in and realized that Davy was scared, so I tried to spend some time with him. Finally, he took the plunge and jumped in and I caught him. But the thing is, when I looked up -- the thing is that everybody else got out of the pool. And it broke my heart, and I felt so badly for Davy.

D. Dodd: Your story's not surprising. I remember a story, though I can't authenticate it. It seems the Williamsburg Inn had a policy that if a black guest asked about the pool, the manager would talk to them and say, "Now you have a right to do this, but you would be the first ones to go in. Are you sure you want to do this? And finally

some coupled allowed as, "Yes, they did want to be the first ones to go --" (general laughter in the circle) And they went in and nobody paid them any attention... they were just other people using the pool. And that was that.

Act II/ Scene 5 -- "Restaurants"

Everest: One day at work, Jack Turner and I decided to go out to eat. We went down to the restaurant to get some lunch. Jack put some money in the juke box and we sat together at a counter. (John Denver's "Country Road, Take Me Home" begins to play) Then the woman took our order. And as she was walking away she put on my slip, "to go."

(focus shifts to the action)

Man 2: I don't want my food "to go." I want to eat my lunch right here in this restaurant.

Waitress: I'm sorry mister, but I can't do that. That's against the law in this state.

Man 2: I want to know why I can't eat my tuna sandwich right here where I paid the same money as my friend, Jack. Can you answer that?

Waitress: Well, mister, I just -- I can't -- I want to live in this town... and I simply can't -- we don't serve colored --

Man 2: (interrupting) I want to see the manager. Would you please just go and get the manager?

Manager: What seems to be the problem here? Is there a problem?

Man 2: I want to know why I can't eat my lunch right here at this counter. I paid the same money for it as anybody else, and I want to know why I can't also eat it here, just like these other people sitting here enjoying their meals?

Manager: Now, mister, I don't have to tell you that it's against the law for colored to eat here on the premises. You're welcome to take your food with you, and I'm sorry for the... um... inconvenience, but it's just against the law for white and colored to eat together. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Man 2: Well I'm sorry, too. Because I will not pay my good money for food and service that I'm not receiving. I'm sorry, too. (he rises to leave)

Jack: Here's what I think of your laws. (rips up the order slips) Come on, this isn't the only place to eat. Let's go where we can get a good meal and sit down together too.

Act II/ Scene 6 -- "The Interview"

Teacher 1: It was 1961 and I was looking around the peninsula for a teaching job. I found this perfect position teaching second grade in Newport News and of course, I had a great deal of experience teaching second grade. So I called and talked to the Personnel Director. He said,

Teacher 1 and Personnel Director:

"Oh yes. I like your experience. In fact, you sound perfect for this job. Come down and we will finalize everything."

Teacher 1: So I drove down to his office and went into the waiting room. There were two or three other people in there at first, I think, a man and a woman. Maybe a couple of women.

Teacher 2: I sat there and sat there. There was no one to... well, to receive you, really. For September, the weather was relatively sane that day, but the temperature in that room was below freezing. The director would come out periodically and call people, probably people looking for a position, like me, into his office, and talk to them.

Teacher 3: I sat and I sat. In this cold green waiting room, done up, it seemed in every imaginable shade of green plaid. I sat there while each and every man and/or woman was asked into his office. I was the only black woman, black person, in the waiting room. By the end of the day, after he had literally seen each and every white person who came in, I knew that I was invisible to him. He didn't say, "Are you here for something?" (she laughs) Didn't say, 'Why are you here' or anything.

Teacher 4: Finally, he came out from his room and I said to him, "I'm Beverly Ingram, and I talked to you on the telephone this afternoon, concerning a job teaching second grade in the public schools here in Newport News. I went through my professional spiel, you know.

Director: Oh, I'm sorry, but we don't have any openings. We have all the second grade

teachers we need in all the schools--we don't need anymore, ahhmmm, anyone.

Teacher 4: And then, that's when it really hit me, you know. He... didn't know from talking with me on the telephone, he didn't know that I was black. Now doesn't that beat all? As if you can tell merely by the sound of a person's voice who and what they are. So I went back home very disappointed.

Act II/ Scene 7 -- "Superintendent"

B. Johns: You know something I always think of is the first time we integrated at Bruton Heights. When the school was first organized, it was a black school and it stayed a black school during the Freedom of Choice years. Freedom of Choice meant that you could go to any school you wanted. Some black students went into the white schools, but no whites came to Bruton Heights. Before full integration came in 1968-'69, the superintendent of the schools came down to Bruton Heights. I was teaching there then, and he, at the conclusion of his speech, he said,

Superintendent:

I can visualize white and Negro children, white and colored children, in class together, but I cannot visualize a colored teacher teaching them. Any questions?

B. Johns: That was the last remark that he made in that address. When he asked does anyone have anything to say, one of my colleagues said,

Man 3: You've got so much nerve, I wanted you to stand up for us, to have something to say when he insulted us like that. What does he mean, "he can visualize..."

Everest: Visualize... Well, he didn't have to visualize long, because about two or three years after that he died.

B. Johns: Good morning, class.

Class: Good morning, Miss Johns.

Act II/ Scene 8 -- "Trophies"

Man 2: I know there's been some talk and I've heard people say that integration was more harmful to blacks in some ways than it was beneficial. All black parents, children, and teachers wanted was equal opportunity, instead of the leftovers of white schools, books that were torn or defaced. It wasn't that black people were chomping at the bit to sit next to whites or to move next door to whites, just for the sake of being in close company. That's not what we fought for. Indeed, we gained the legal right to attend any school, apply for any job, live where we wanted, but we lost something, too. We lost a little bit of ourselves. I mean, before integration, Bruton Heights had a football team, a basketball team, a baseball team, a volleyball team. And they were champions. There was the marching band and the drum majors and the majorettes. There was the Forensic Club, the Science club, the English Club, the Business Club, the Honor Society. And our trophies gleamed in their cases in the hallways, proof that we were champions, proof that our children had achieved a standard of excellence in the classroom and on the playing field, proof that we had known victory. When Bruton Heights was integrated, the school was also renovated. They came in with mops and brooms and paint and they began to clean up the school, but in the process they also began to throw away things -- trophies, pictures of past

graduating classes, past football teams, baseball, basketball, the Science Club, the Business Club, all the things that made the school what it was, all the markers of the school's past, all the things that recalled our history and the fact that we had passed this way. They dumped it in the garbage can like so much trash, like it was some kind of administrative error that integration could erase. Oh, we recovered some of the things, once we realized what was going on, but we didn't place the pictures back on the walls, or the trophies in the trophy cases. And that's too bad, because I wanted the incoming students, white and black, to see that Bruton Heights wasn't just a building waiting to be refilled, but the place where black children had lived and learned and dreamed.

Act II/ Scene 9 -- "Racial Harmony"

(Two women, one white and one black, do this scene together.)

Women: When you think about the business of racial harmony, we all had to rehearse quite a bit in order to get things even reasonably in tune.

Woman 1: We knew what the worn-out rhythm of segregation looked like.

Woman 2: But now we had to introduce some new steps.

Woman 1: Fact is, school desegregation in Williamsburg confused a lot of children.

Woman 2: It also broke some hearts and some pocketbooks. Many of the blacks were

demoted when integration came. Some black male leaders were relegated to more menial positions than the ones they had once held when Jim Crow reigned supreme.

Woman 1: You know, things like, the head coaches were made assistant coaches. And some of the qualified black administrators could not find work in Williamsburg. They just couldn't get jobs.

Women: You could say that blacks lost some of their leadership, because many ended up leaving the area.

Act II/ Scene 10 -- "Norge"

B. Johns: When I first went into the elementary school, it was the second complete year of integration at the elementary level. I taught in Norge, and, there were eight of us at the school. For some reason, half of us would show up in the parking lot about the same time, and we'd go into the building together, we'd sign in and then we'd never see another black face all day, except for the janitor and the cafeteria workers. At first, I felt very uncomfortable. I was a typical Southern black, uh, I'd had some negative experiences with whites. And the idea of working with them all day, well... I wasn't quite sure just what was going to be. But I made up my mind, went in my room, and resolved to do the best I could. When I came to this elementary school I had little or no teaching materials, nothing to start the year with. They hired me in August. One lady who taught at the school was a strict segregationist. One day , she told me, she said, you know,

Teacher 2: Blacks just don't have the academic ability. They will never have the intelligence

of whites.

Students: (mimic Teacher 2) Blacks just don't have the academic ability. They will never have the intelligence of whites.

B. Johns: Of course, I let her know what I thought of her idea. But you know, she was the same one who, when I had nothing to start the year with, this lady offered to share her materials with me. She was completely helpful. But, of course, personally, she saw me as inferior. (Woman 2 chimes in on "inferior.")

Act II/ Scene 11 -- "Mother and Celeste"

Mother: I'll tell you one of the effects integration had. When my daughter, Celeste, started in school in the late sixties, she was only six years old and she had stayed pretty much at home. We had lived in Grove, and she hadn't even seen that many whites, because it was a fairly insular community. Anyway, I won't forget that day, because I was sewing a blouse, a black cotton blouse

Celeste: (walks in, crying) Mama... Mama...

Mother: What's wrong, baby. Celeste, come here. What's wrong. What happened? Are you all right?

Celeste: Mama, am I a black nigger? Am I black nigger, Mama? What is a nigger?

Mother: Baby, baby, baby. We are black people. What made you ask me that?

Celeste: I'm not black. I'm not. This blouse is black. That table is black. But, I'm not black. Look, I'm not black, am I, Mama? (compares arm to blouse)

Mother: Baby, baby, baby. I'm so sorry you have to go through this. I'm so sorry. Celeste, you... *we* are of the black race. "Nigger" is just a mispronunciation of where our people originally came from. Our ancestors came from far across the ocean and many of them lived in a sunny place called Africa. They lived near the Niger river.

Celeste: Well, what color is my teacher, Miss Funicello, at Clara Byrd Baker? What color is she? She's looks the same color I am, isn't she?

Mother: Miss Funicello is white, Celeste. That doesn't mean she's exactly white like the milk you drink. She's a dark skinned Italian, but in America, people call her white. We all belong to the human race and that's what's finally important.

Celeste: So why'd Benjie call me that? Why'd he call me a black nigger, Mama?

Mother: Because he was prejudiced or ignorant or both.

Celeste: That's just what I'm gonna tell him, too, if he calls me that again. Must be prejudiced or ignorant or both, cuz I'm a human being and my ancestors came from Africa along river called -- what was that river called?

Mother: The river Niger.

Celeste: The River Niger.

Soloist sings Curtis Mayfield's "If You Had Your Choice of Colors."

Act II/ Scene 12 -- "Knifing Incident"

Woman 1: There was a really unfortunate incident in it was early December, um, 1968... There was a basketball game, and a white kid knifed two blacks in the boys' restroom. None of -- none of the three (they were all 18 or 19 years old) -- none of them were students at the school. But they had come to the basketball game and the issue... which prompted it, was, that, um, there had -- there was visible, some visible interracial dating. Now I don't think I knew at the time, but I certainly don't remember, that -- the boys, the black boys who were stabbed were the ones involved in the dating, or whether it just got to be a -- you know -- big melee, but it was clearly started by some of these white kids, and the, and the knife was... held by the white kid, y'know, against the blacks. So, of course, the police were called, and... the next day, the police were at the school all day. And they broke up some scuffling between the white and black children. I then decided that this was not the way it oughtta be handled, to have the police out there and so forth, so I called the Principal and said, "d'you--d'you have any objection if I get some parents and other community people to come. And, we'll take the place of the police, so you don't have any police -- in there." He -- was beside himself. I mean, he actually didn't have any idea what he ought to be doing. So then I called a representative -- a clergyman who was really a great leader in all this, a black councilman, and so he came, I came, and another woman, Mrs. Ayers, who used to have kids at the school. She was a strong member of the Democratic party, who knew a bunch of these black kids. So the first thing that morning the councilman got on the P.A. system, and he said --

Councilman: We're gonna behave ourselves.

Woman 1: -- and all this kind of thing. The rest of us were out in the halls the whole time, and Mrs. Ayers was there, just to -- Well... if she saw a kid step out of line a half-inch, she would just take hold of him and say --

Mrs. Ayers: We're gonna have absolute order here.

Woman 1: It was a very remarkable kind of situation, and by the end of the day and the next day, there were a lot of parents there -- from both races. And sometimes people would just drop in and see that everything was sort of under control, and then they'd go on. It was sorta -- remarkable, you know.

Mrs. Ayers: I also remember that the next day there were very few white kids in school. The kids, they just stayed home. My daughter was -- um -- I think she was a sophomore that year -- she always went on the school bus, so she got on the bus that morning, and there were five or six black kids on the bus... and one of the boys said to Lisa, "What are you doing here," and she said, "Uh, well, I'm going to school." He said, "Aren't you scared of us?" and she said, "No, I'm not scared. Should I be scared of you?" And he said, "No."

Trio sings "People Get Ready."

Act II/ Scene 13 -- "Sheriff"

Sheriff (good ol' boy):

We didn't have any troubles here like they did farther South. The governor at the time said he wouldn't allow integration to happen, but he was just doin' what he thought his white constituents wanted. All politicians do that. I am a sheriff, I am an elected official, but not a politician. No, sir. Now, of course there was the occasional fight in the hallway over at the school. Mostly 'cause somebody got bumped into in the halls or over a girl. That's just boys. Sometimes the white parents overreacted to these fights. I remember one time a little girl, a white girl observed a scuffle. That's all it was, just a kind of push and shove thing. The little girl ran to the phone and called her mother. Her mother called me. And before I could do anything, the whole place went up. A whole bunch of parents went into that school everyday for a month to patrol the halls. Wasn't no reason for it. Just foolishness. Just because one little girl called her mother. (Sheriff laughs at the recollection.)

Act II/ Scene 14 -- "Gun Story"

Superintendent:

Ahh... it was following a football game. Ahhh... the athletic director of the high school and the person who was responsible for counting the receipts -- they were in an office. A group of rather boisterous students-they were predominantly black, but there were some white students involved, too... As best I know... uh... they came down the hallway and the Athletic Director, to no one's knowledge, had a pistol, and... he drew the pistol. This caused a tremendous reaction in the community, but not what you might expect. (begins to speak with more authority) I was actually in Chicago at a convention of other superintendents when it happened and... my wife chose not to tell me. But I found out soon enough. I took a very strong position with respect to the staff members involved as far as I

was concerned. This behavior was totally unacceptable and inappropriate. But many whites in the community disagreed. As superintendent, I took a lot of heat. We even had direct threats against our children. My wife got phoned at the house by someone saying that little "red headed son of yours won't be coming home..." describing our kid to a "T." It had become a pretty bitter situation. It ended up with a meeting in the auditorium of Matthew Whaley School where basically, and I don't know any other way to describe them,... upper county rednecks were there in force. Fortunately, I had the full support of the school board. But... ahhh... the rednecks were out for my scalp, there's no question about it. They were defending this guy's right to have a gun in school.

Act II/ Scene 15 -- "Town Meeting"

(This scene is "ad libbed" every evening. The casting, except for the Superintendent, changes for each performance, but the following points are always made in approximately this order. The scene should take between 8-9 minutes.)

Superintendent gives a brief introduction, explaining the purpose of the meeting. He reads the proposal, explains when the School Board will vote on the issue and the protocol for the meeting, then opens the floor for discussion.

No Gun: weapons and violence in schools impede learning

Gun: the schools are unsafe -- "my child needs to protect himself" -- people get knifed at basketball games -- it's not safe

No Gun: *weapons* breed violence -- if weapons were removed, violence wouldn't be an issue

-- weapons do not equal safety

Gun: the teacher was scared -- what about the kids? -- violence is a reality regardless of weapons

No Gun: put energy into prevention of violence -- only compassion and education will resolve our differences

Gun: it's the niggers that are causing the problems -- we were fine before they came -- they cause trouble and get all the attention

No Gun: obviously you parents are the ones with the problem -- it's your prejudice that perpetuates violence

Gun: don't tell me how to raise my kids -- i don't teach them to fight like niggers do, so they need weapons to protect themselves

No Gun: the kids get along fine -- you're the ones with the problem -- you're behaving worse than the kids -- the issue at hand is *safety*, not integration

Gun: invading my personal rights -- 2nd amendment

No Gun: 2nd amendment directed at adults -- do you want your kid to be a murderer? what if they hurt themselves?

Gun: no one at the school is protecting them now -- how will you enforce this?

No Gun: begins in the home -- community support -- religion, not violence

Gun: this was decided before we got here -- i'm putting my kid in private school

No Gun: we want what's best for the children -- if you are going to cause so much trouble, good riddance

Possibly one side, or even both, storms out in frustration. The meeting ends quickly.

Act II/ Scene 16 -- "Final Scene"

(After the meeting clears from the stage, students enter, talking about their experiences, frustrations, and future anxieties about race in Williamsburg and the U.S.)

Stu 1: Hey, what's up, guys?

Stu 2: Nothing really, gearing up for final exams.

Stu 3: I have three papers, all due on the same day!

Stu 1 : Do we have to wait for Bruce to get started?

Stu 3: No, he said to go ahead. We are supposed to discuss how we felt about the class and the stories we collected from the circles.

Stu 2: Let's get these chairs in a circle.

Stu 4: Setting up for our own little story circle?

Stu 1: (in a mocking voice as if facilitating a real story circle) Well, can everyone see everyone else? For those of you who don't know what a story circle is...

(all laugh)

Stu 5: And I will be recording what you all say on this tape recorder and by hand...

(all laugh)

Stu 6: Let's get serious, guys. I have to leave soon for my Biology Lab.

Stu 3: Yeah, and I have to go turn in my History paper, so I guess I 'll start. I really loved this project. I mean, the reason I decided to do it was to get to know more about Williamsburg, and I was very interested in learning more about Grassroots Theatre. I think my favorite circle was the one at Elyce White's house. I felt like I was talking to my own grandmother as I talked to her. She is the one person that really sticks out in my mind, not to mention her chocolate cakes and brownies.

Stu 11: I keep thinking back to Mrs. Snow's story about Dow Chemical. Even though what she was saying was in some ways painful to hear -- after all, I was born and raised in the South -- she kept smiling at me in a reassuring way that told me I was not just some white kid from the college. She allowed me in on her memories and shared her struggle and story more as a grandmother than as a project. (laughs) She even had the same ugly kitchen wallpaper as my grandmother. She said I reminded her of Calvin, her son.

Stu 4: I learned a lot about Williamsburg. And there were some stories that really touched me, but I guess I was touched most by the stories that I didn't hear. I mean, I went to so many story circles where people said that everything was okay and that it all went smoothly. Now, I know that Williamsburg was not like some places, but there had to have been some truly volatile incidents. It wasn't like I was hoping to hear horror stories, but I mean, desegregation is a touchy subject. And so many of the people that I talked to said it was just fine

Stu 5: I guess I feel like you--I was disappointed a little in some of what I found or didn't find out, rather. Like when we had to do research in the newspapers. It was like they had all decided not to write anything about the conflicts. One day the schools were segregated and the next day they weren't. There was no news about it and if there was some mention, it was on the last page of the paper, in small print. I guess that makes me wonder how many stories we didn't hear.

Stu 6: Well, I remember talking to someone from the school board. And he told me that they had let the media know that they did not need them over-dramatizing anything that happened in the schools.

Stu. 3: Yes, I heard that, too.

Stu 12: That is so sad. I mean that's is messing with the first amendment. I have to say that some of the problems were not with the story circle but with the way we tackled the issues as a group. I mean, it seems like a lot of you all expected this to be like some extraordinary field. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the class was not political enough. So what! We have these stories and we put on this play. And then what! The blacks in Williamsburg are going right back to their

predominantly black neighborhoods and their predominantly black lives and the whites are going back to their predominantly white neighborhoods and their predominantly white lives.

Stu 2: Well, the project doesn't end with the play. Of course, we can't solve everything. What we can do is to continue the story circles and the potlucks...

Stu 1: And when the potlucks get old and people are tired of telling their stories? What then...

Stu 2: Well then, we'll do something else! I don't know. You all seem to make such an issue out of something that will never be solved. There will always be prejudiced people. Don't get me wrong. I don't think prejudice is right; I just don't see the problem of race in America being solved in my lifetime, but telling stories seems a good way to start the talking, because they are, after all, our stories, about us struggling to learn how to live together.

Stu 10: I feel like in a way all of us came into this project with too many agendas. Did blacks in this class want to show how bad and mean whites were, and did whites want to show that they were not all bad and mean? Maybe I'm talking in circles, it's just that I wanted this to be a wake-up call to all of us. In some ways we're like Sisyphus, rolling this great rock up the mountainside, only -- only to have it tumble back down. (gets teary)

Stu 7: Tracy, will you get off your soapbox for a minute? I know that my participation in this project has changed me.

Stu 8: Tracy, if this'll help anything, sometimes I've felt the same way that you feel, but then I ask myself, can we afford not to find a way to live together in a peace?

Stu 13: Let me remind y'all of Miss Jessel's story, the school teacher in the newly integrated school who asked her tenth graders, "Supposed we were all "skinned?" Suppose our coloring was cut off? What would we have besides a bloody mess?" Some students were grossed out, some curious, y'know, and some just blinked at her in astonishment, but she went on to explain that finally we are, all of us, flesh and bone and heart, you can't forget the heart.

Stu 10: Yeah, I hear you. Yeah, we are flesh and bone and heart, but I guess we're even more the people we talked to, we're part of the history of Williamsburg. We've helped to keep its memory alive.

Stu 9: And maybe, just maybe we'll be all right if we can remember that we are human beings and the universe is vast enough to hold us, even our dreams -- together.

(harmonica plays "Walk Together, Children" one last time)

PHOTOGRAPHS POSSIBLE FOR "WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN" SETTING

(Look for defining lines: silhouette, sign, or recognizable detail)

1. Drug Store (on DOG Street)
2. Matthew Whaley
3. Bruton Heights
4. Black and White drinking fountains (at Jamestown?)
5. Bowling Alley (behind present Food Lion)
6. Triangle Block (Blayton Maternity Hospital)
7. Grove (Mel Mauney's Place?)
8. Bank (on DOG Street?)
9. Williamsburg Inn
10. D. P. Penders Store
11. Dow Chemical (not Williamsburg?)
12. First Baptist Church
13. St. Martin's (in a Shed)?
14. Williamsburg Theatre
15. Restaurant (Nellies' or Manny's?)
16. Tropht case at Bruton Heights
17. Lafayette High School
18. A & P
19. Bus Station bathrooms
20. Wren Building