

Mr. James Sheppard on Education and Employment



“My experiences raising children? Well, seeing to it that they attended school and seeing to it that they did their homework. That sort of thing. That's standard I guess; regular stuff, I guess. I don't know how to answer that. Between my wife and I, we saw to it that they did a lot of reading. And we did a lot of traveling. We did a lot of traveling to the Caribbean and South America, and we took them with us. In addition to seeing to it that they did their work at school.

And they excelled, especially the one that's a professor now. The youngest one gained. You know, you learn a lot. You don't know anything with your first son; you get better as you have more children. By the time number five was born, we knew exactly how to channel things. And I think that's why he came out number one. With my first son, I didn't learn anything. [laughter] I shouldn't say that; he's the

horticulturalist in New York.”

Mr. James Sheppard was born in New York City in 1924, to parents who had just emigrated from Antigua. He was the eldest of four siblings. He graduated high school in 1942, and served in the Army during World War II. He worked as an aviation mechanic after the war; in 1957 he was hired by the Federal Aviation Administration as an inspector, a job he continued until he retired in 1985. He married twice, and had five children and seven grandchildren. His family moved to Westbrook, Maine, in 1971, when the FAA transferred him to work at the Portland Jetport. He was an active member of the Lions Club, and mentored local students. He discusses raising children, his family history in the Caribbean, discrimination he has faced as an African American throughout his life, Portland's growing community of African immigrants, and cultural differences between Maine and New York City.

You can listen to a recording of Mr. Sheppard's interview and read a transcript at

https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/aa_hiwimi/14/