Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project
Interview with Emmanuel Fields by Chris Keeve
Conducted on June 30th, 2023 in Frankfort, KY

[00:00:00] **LuAnna Nesbitt:** The following interview is a part of the Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project. It was conducted in Frankfort, Kentucky by interviewer Chris Keeve on June 30th, 2023. The narrator of this oral history is Emmanuel Fields.

[00:00:12] **Chris Keeve:** So to start us off, I'm wondering if you can just tell us a little about yourself and your story.

[00:00:19] **Emmanuel Fields:** Sure. My name is Emmanuel Fields. I am from Frankfort, Kentucky, but I have lived in Louisville, Kentucky before. I've lived in Lexington, and I've also lived in Northern California. I am a seeker, like a storyteller. The way someone once described me was as a folklorist of gathering stories. I am a through because I am a photographer and videographer, I love to document individuals experiences and get their stories because I really feel that each individual person has the most interesting, radical story you'd ever heard

I'm also a conservationist, um, I'm a steward, a steward of the land, I guess. I'm an avid birder. Naturalist and I love the outdoors generally and I am an avid gardener, which is kind of weird to say but I do love to be in my garden. Yeah

[00:01:26] **Chris Keeve:** May I ask how you came to gardening?

[00:01:28] **Emmanuel Fields:** That's really interesting. I guess I haven't really kind of put that all together till you just said that. I am so back in 20, actually, it was probably like 2009, I got a job working for, uh, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife. And at first, kind of like starting that job out, I was just kind of like working the front desk, just like talking to people in and out. I had left college previously before that, which I didn't finish at that time.

And they started putting me in all sorts of different positions. I was working with wildlife and fish and I was learning all sorts of different things. They put me with this woman who, her name is Mary Carol Cooper, who she's now deceased. But she was at the time, these states like leading our, uh, our plants that are from here, are endemic plant species, native plant. She was our native plant specialist.

And so I started to learn a whole lot about native plants and planting and just the process of flora's like, you know, ecosystems and forest and what plants grew where and everything. And she came into work one day and I think she brought a tomato plant and a cucumber plant and she said, here, these are for you.

And I had never grown anything ever before. I never even had thought about it. I didn't even have space where I was, like, living. And so, I just put them in, uh, two pots, actually, at my parent's house and left them on their porch. And I kind of forgot all about them that year, honestly, um, until when I came over later in that summer and I saw a single tomato and a single

cucumber growing on them. And ever since then, I guess I became fascinated with it and my garden's kind of gotten bigger and bigger every year with different types of, you know, edible varieties and some that are just ornamental or cool to look at. Yeah.

[00:03:28] **Chris Keeve:** What were some varieties that were significant to you that you carry with you now?

[00:03:33] **Emmanuel Fields:** Hmm. You know, I can't remember the absolute, uh, well, the specific name of the variety of this plant. It was a type of kale that, I had randomly come across, back then, I'd say this was probably like 2011, 2012, as I was still trying to get my, like, footing in it. I was actually visiting some friends in North Carolina, and we were doing like a bunch of hiking and just camping and stuff, and, and when we were leaving, we ran across a guy, really cool, older black guy, who just at his van, he just kinda was like, had plants for sale out there.

But when we got there, all he had left was like, bags of seeds. And he said, uh, I told him that I was trying to learn how to like, grow some kale and some like, lettuce and stuff. And he gave me some special kale seeds. I'll never forget that. And he told me that this specific type of kale was, the seeds was given to him by his granddad. And I thought that was the most amazing thing. I wish that I had the skills at that time to where I could have gotten those seeds and kept that going, but I did not, and I'll never forget, that was the most interesting looking kale I'd ever seen, it almost looked like flowers and the colors were kind of very vibrant on it, it was a vibrant red, I'll never forget that, and it, my parents, I remember they loved, they loved the way it taste, I did too.

That was, like that is kind of what first got me into realizing that some of this stuff can be not only like passed down but it's it's incredible, like it's very cool. I feel like to you know plant something in the ground, take, like nurture it take care of it. Watch it grow And then it rewards you by like nourishing you or even feeding you or just, you know, and then, but to think that that same exact plant this guy like gave to me and he explained this whole story to me that he got from like his granddad, something about that was just absolutely amazing to me and I felt like it was more than just kind of food, you know, something in it felt like a, deep like spiritual magic to it almost that came with it and I think about that a lot I've not still growing that same one, but I really wish that I was and that's, I would love to think that it kind of added some of that deep magic to the soil I grow my garden in now.

[00:06:21] **Chris Keeve:** Where is that soil now?

[00:06:23] **Emmanuel Fields:** It's uh, it's in Frankfort, Kentucky. Yeah, um. My little garden plot is, I'd say, it's probably 10 feet by 15 feet, so it's not large at all, but, it is incredible, it's a, it's a very meaningful space to me. When I wake up, like, early in the morning, you know, if I don't have time to, like, water everything, or, you know, go through and make sure everything's like doing okay, when I watched like the birds and like wildlife, like little voles or, chipmunks or something running up out of there, it makes me feel, I don't know, incredibly happy about that. Like, there are plenty of times I've noticed over the past few years to where it's like end of the season or something, and I find myself not able to either like, you know, all the new fruits and

veggies that are popping up, like use them all. When I see that there's like, you know, a whole family of rabbits, or the birds are coming through, or something, and they're like tearing it up. That makes me just, I love that. I know a lot of people love to keep wildlife and plants, you know, pests, I guess they call them, out of their gardens, but I kind of really like it.

And it also, um I feel like it's kind of like rewarding. So like last year I grew a type of tomato. It was a yellow pear tomato and I grew Roma tomatoes. And at the end of the season, I had so many of them still left at the front, well, uh, after the frost came, which kind of surprised me and kind of killed them all, there were so many tomatoes that I noticed that rabbits and everything else were just munching on.

And this year I'm still pulling up volunteer tomato plants from last year, which I know typically doesn't happen. The seeds, I guess they, you know, they took root. They're actually growing all over the yard. I've pulled out 75 of them so far, and I don't know where I'm gonna put them.

[00:08:28] **Chris Keeve:** We grew up in Frankfort, and I'm wondering about these practices that you're doing now with the scope of growing up also in that landscape.

[00:08:38] **Emmanuel Fields:** Absolutely. So, growing up, that was something that, like, we didn't do. Not because it was, um, you know, my parents just didn't really, like, know about it or anything, and none of my friends were doing that type of stuff or neither were their parents. Frankfort is a interesting place, to say the least.

We lived out in the county area, but I went to school in the like independent school system down there. So all of my friends were, everyone, like all of my peers were the people of like kind of the downtown Frankfort area, which back then, you know, it was, it was, I don't know exactly how it is now, but that would definitely be considered like the lower income area of town and everything like that.

And so it kind of, you know, someone who was like gardening wouldn't not be considered like a cool kid or even something that was, um, we didn't think about where our food came from. We didn't really, there were, there wasn't any conversation about that at all. Uh, there wasn't any conversation about, you know, connection, like with the soil and the roots and like roots and history and also with your community through it. Um, there wasn't any of that actually. And it wasn't until much later when I started to like think about things, I started to learn more and my education expanded and I continue to grow and do gardening and things that I actually like asked my parents, my mom, and specifically because I knew that my mom grew up in Louisiana where they later moved to Chicago where she spent the rest of her life at pretty much until college and in Louisiana they were sharecroppers is what her parents were and so I remember my grandma telling me at the time that growing things and farming and things like that was something you absolutely didn't want to do and like don't do it and so I completely understand that, because that lifestyle was completely exploitative, and it was hard, and so by kind of, you know, learning those things, it was something I was like, okay, that's just not where my focus should be at, you know, not really something that I shouldn't do, but it's not really, you know, it's not really there, or I guess I should, it's not going to be beneficial in the slightest.

And so I started to realize that a lot of my friends actually kind of felt the same way or had a lot of similar experiences. And so I guess it took me learning about native plants first and then going into discovering this kind of like love of gardening in reality to where I guess I actually began to feel like this is okay to do, you know, it was something I was like, yeah, this isn't like a bad thing or, you know, it's like, I completely understand where that, where it can be something that, you know, you don't want to, you want to tell someone like, don't work outside or grow things or, but that's when I started to understand, it's like, this is very okay, and a lot of things are connected to this, and I have learned a lot about myself through it, and it's actually been, I don't know, I, it's something I'm really trying to share and teach like my nephews, because they love it, and it's actually, it's, you know, especially having a hard week of work, like I've had this week, it's actually, one of the things that I really look forward to doing at the end of the day.

[00:12:36] **Chris Keeve:** So growing up in Frankfort, where were those stories of sharecropping in Louisiana given to you?

[00:12:45] **Emmanuel Fields:** They were first given to me by an old picture. It's actually like pretty funny. It's like, um. So there is an old picture of my grandma's family the year before she was born. So she's not in the picture, but her siblings and her parents were.

And, um, they were in front of the smallest, most beat up, run down, like, farm shed you'd ever seen. And she said, yeah, this is where we all lived at. And I was like, so this was your dad. She was like, yeah, Big Frank was his name. And I thought it was pretty funny because he looked just like my brother. And, um, so evidently, I guess this guy was pretty hardcore and he was super into farming and everything.

But he hated the folk he worked for and he kind of, you know, hated not really able, being able to provide like he wanted to for his family is what my grandma told me. So Big Frank actually quit farming and sharecropping and he opened up a juke joint down in Louisiana that my mom and her sister would tell me that as them as little kids, they would like sit on the front porch of it.

And, they would laugh at everyone coming out of there because the music, they said, was amazing. Which evidently, I guess, there's like, I'm not sure how true this is, but I'd like to think it's pretty true, um, that when James Brown was becoming, like, a thing, he actually, like, went and performed there, I guess, at some point. Because they're from the, uh, same area, Louisiana, I guess, that he's from. And so, they told me that, like, one of their favorite things to do, and as, like, little girls, my mom and her sister, is, uh, you know, I guess this juke joint place is in the middle of the country somewhere, that, um, they would sit on the porch of it and laugh at all the drunk folk coming out of there, and all the, you know, but they, they found a brand new love of music as they their whole family and lifestyle began to leave that farming, that farming livelihood, that lifestyle.

It's pretty, it's pretty interesting now that I think about it. Yeah, it makes a lot of sense. I guess kinda, you know, having this terrible time of sharecropping and, you know, being black down in the south back then, and then kind of leaving it, like, I don't know how he was able to do that. I, that's something I really want to know. I'm gonna have to talk to him about that. And then to kind

of leave this kind of growing lifestyle. I'm not sure how fully removed from it they were, but I do know that it was soon after that they kind of abandoned that whole area and they, uh, all moved to Chicago.

So, yeah, it's pretty interesting. I got to find out more about that.

[00:15:32] **Chris Keeve:** So in Frankfort, how did your family get food?

[00:15:35] **Emmanuel Fields:** 100? Well, okay, I was going to say 100 percent of the time, but that's not true. Most of the time it came from the grocery store, which, let me see, in Frankfort, you know, now it's Kroger, there used to be a different store in Frankfort, you know, um, I do remember being younger where there actually used to kind of be a, you know, it wasn't a farmer's market, but in the summer there was like a fresh food kind of like market stand type of thing that was actually pretty close to where we lived that I remember getting a lot of food from there.

But I never once, like, thought about, you know, access to food or where food comes from or if this, like, fresh market stand were to leave, what would that leave the community and the people? It's kind of funny because I just remember going there, not really even caring about the food, but it was kind of more about, like, hanging out and seeing, like, friends and everybody and just kind of, like, running around like crazy.

You know, it was summertime, out catching, like, lightning bugs and stuff and, um, and then, yeah, just talked to, uh, I don't even know who was working the thing, you know, um, then, uh, just, yeah, leave and go eat whatever was like being fixed or whatever. And yeah, that was actually a lot of fun, but that is gone for sure.

Yeah, that's wild, you know, so, um, before living in Frankfort, you know, I think I was 10 years old when we moved to Frankfort. Before that, we lived in Dayton, Ohio. And I remember in Dayton, the landscape was a little bit different where we lived. And I remember that's where I learned to ride a bike. My dad, I remember he, uh, uh, my dad worked at, uh, Central State up there. He's always been involved with HBCUs like my entire life. And so, he taught me how to ride a bike and then, I remember there were several times after I learned to ride a bike, would it be my job to go pick up whatever, like, miscellaneous item we might need from the tiny, like, shop, you know, food item down the street.

And I remember that felt really important to me at the time. Like, it felt like, like, cool, I got a job and I have the freedom to go do it. Something about that. You know, it felt pretty inter it felt pretty cool when I think about it. It wasn't just like the, you know, the freedom of like being on a bike, which is something I feel like I still feel whenever I do ride a bike or even like when I'm driving my car, when my car is out of commission, I know for sure I've, you know, it kind of sucks not being in a place where there's like good public transportation, but I feel as if I can't really get what I need somehow, which, yeah, that's a whole different thing to explore. Right. Yeah, you know, so that I guess is yeah, that's what we did like food wise growing up.

You know one, you know one other thing is I do know that my my grandparents on my dad's side like so my dad's from Miami and I have noticed like a come like same type of meals, but completely different styles from his family and like, you know, Miami area Liberty City to my mom's family in Chicago and it's really, really different.

I know that they, uh, my dad's family, they, they will do like a lot of beans, uh, with a lot of stuff. And they will prepare the beans a lot different than my moms side would do the beans. And when I first moved to Louisville, I did AmeriCorps program. And I met a, uh, lady who, uh, she had, this wasn't part of my job description at all, but somehow she called our, uh, place and she asked someone to help, uh, her install a window air conditioner unit. And everyone was like, no, that ain't our job. But I told her, I was like, yeah, I'll come over and do it. You know, it was one of the hottest summers on record. When I came over there, I remember she was cooking this huge thing of different types of beans. And it really reminded me of my grandma and dad's mom. And, uh, I said, oh yeah, you know, these beans. And she said, beans is what you eat when your money is funny. And I'll never forget that. Like my mom still repeats that to this day. But when we're cooking beans for holidays .

Thinking about these did you ever visit your family?

Yep. Yep. Um, I have been down there a lot. I, uh, haven't been down there in probably about six or seven years, but the last time I was down there, it was actually, uh, it was actually pretty cool, you know, cause I feel like I was down there. I'm a brand new person. I was able to like go out and like explore the world down there the way I wanted to. And I know that I came across food options that I had never even heard of or seen.

Um, you know, a lot of people from Cuba have, like, moved into the area. And my granddad at the, he actually had told me to go try some of this stuff because there was this weird fusion going on. And no one had, you know, any idea what it was called or even what was in it, I don't think, really. But I do know that it was crazy good. Super good.

Which, speaking of fusions, there's this dish that my dad makes that is so damn good. It's a breakfast thing. It's just like rice, bacon, and eggs. And, I don't know what the hell he does. It's so good. Like the spices, or maybe using like the bacon grease in it. And I asked him one year, it's like even my friends that would come over, like growing up, or even like now, like my girlfriend now. I would ask, it's like, yeah, is your dad going to make that bacon rice and eggs? My nephews love it, and I'll be like, I hope so.

I asked him one day, I said, when did you, uh, start making this? He said his dad made it for him one day, and I asked him, I said, where do you think he got it from? He said he thinks he did it trying to copy, like, an Asian dish or something like that from, like, Chinese food, I guess we'd get down there. And he said he has no idea. He said he probably just had mixed what he had and put it together. But to be honest, that is out of all the foods I've eaten and in my, all my family things, that one is the absolute favorite. And I think everyone in my family would absolutely agree. Like I've got to, I'm going to, I'm going to make it for everybody one day.

[00:22:12] **Chris Keeve:** You know what kind of beans for that in both places?

[00:22:15] **Emmanuel Fields:** Both places were, um, Black Eyed Peas for sure, and there were Llama Beans.

Llama Beans, I know in Chicago area, they were, they did something different to them in the preparation. I can't remember exactly what it was, you know, it was like, it was something different than just like soaking it in water. They soaked it in some, something different, like it was like a water mixture with something else that was I thought, I don't know, like something about the tenderness it gave them, you know, they kind of naturally brought out this kind of really robust, almost like buttery flavor. And, um, I loved it.

And I know in that, uh, my family down in Florida, they didn't do that. They did something totally different. And both were good, but I guess it was just really, um, kind of, cause, you know, I actually did talk to both my grandparents about those and they said that it was something that they both learned from like their moms growing up, which I don't, actually that's where my, um, great grandma in Florida was actually alive at the time, at the time ish, and I think this was probably like 10, 15 years ago, and I think she was 93 then.

And I remember asking her and she said that it came from her mom. And yeah, no, that's freaking, that's cool. I never even, like, really even thought about that again until now. Yeah, it's really just, it's more than just recipes and food that we're, uh, cooking for each other, I guess, isn't it? It's, um, almost our own individual heritages and our own individual, like, uh, legacies down here as we're carrying forward, like, with, that's really wild.

Cause yeah, I mean, even when I cook for, like, my nephew, I'm doing it exactly how I was taught, or I'm putting my own, like, twist on it. And then they're, hopefully, would do the same thing and put their own, like, twist on it. So it's really crazy how things, um, evolve as we go. Telling the same story, but each time getting a little better. It's pretty wild.

[00:24:12] **Chris Keeve:** I'd like to hear more about your, your family's arrival in Frankfort.

[00:24:18] **Emmanuel Fields:** Sure. So, um, I was, yeah, I was ten years old. We were living in, uh, yeah, Dayton, Ohio. And, haha, you know, I was just talking about this, um, kind of the other day. Like, growing up there, so, okay, so, I have two younger brothers.

I was actually, I was born in 1986, and I was actually born in Houston, Texas where both my families, where my, both my parents were actually, uh, living with my dad's, I believe, like, cousin. He was exploring some work down there. Uh, they moved to Chicago, which is where my, you know, middle brother, second brother was born up that way, because they were living up that way, helping, uh, my mom's, uh, mom out with some stuff. Then, my dad got a job at Central State University. Uh, what, Wilberforce, I believe, and so that's when we moved to Ohio. Um, leaving there, my dad got a job at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, and that's what brought us there.

And I remember that being a pretty big change. I think not just, not just for me, but absolutely my parents, you know. Both of my parents being from completely, like, strong and all Black like neighborhoods, completely growing up and both going to HBCUs, I haven't asked them about this, but I kind of really think that they had not had a, you know, they weren't really involved outside a community that was mainly Black until they graduated college. I really think that that is the case with both of them. I need to ask them about that.

And so, moving to Frankfort, I remember feeling like, I don't know, things were a bit, things were definitely different, because I guess like Ohio, even considered like a northern state, um, you know, and it still had its problems, but I guess moving to Kentucky, that was like a southern state, and definitely, you know, had what slavery was around.

One of the first things I remember talking about and my mom telling me like in the community where we first was at was that she was kind of shocked and disappointed that there wasn't any like strong black, like community, like a community connection at first at all. There wasn't any like, you know, black owned shops or stores. We think there, there was a very small kind of like black, uh, church at the time, and I remember she was, like, super disappointed, even with an HBCU being right here in the middle of town. And I remember I was, I was, you know, hearing that stuff and thinking about it and not really letting it, you know, go on the deeper end of it, but several years later, I was walking around, like, downtown Frankfort, and I started to read, actually, you know, the place has a lot of history, being, like, the state's capital.

I started to read, like, a lot of the historical markers that are up everywhere. And, I can't remember all of them, but two of them said, like, this was in a, there was a marker standing up in front of a house that was right across the street from, like, the black church I was talking about. And this was in the black community, so that existed. And the marker said that this was the only black hospital of Frankfort until at such and such date it was burned to the ground by the Ku Klux Klan, you know, at whatever date that was. And I was like, oh my god, you know, walked a few blocks, there was actually some historic barracks building that was like, okay, barracks, you know, like the military is staying at the, the barracks.

No. The governor at the time called in the National Guard to stay in the barracks to protect is what the, the history marker said, which is still down there, it said that they called in the National Guard actually to protect the black families in Frankfort from racist riots and like the KKK. And I started to think about that, like, kind of put that together, like what my mom said, about not being like, you know, a strong sense of, of black self, essentially, like when we moved there, especially from where we were from and what they were used to growing up with, but I guess I don't know exactly for sure, but I would think that those type of events, which is just two of many, could have a deep impact on the, you know, someone's like cultural history as they are living in a certain place, and I really think that that is, that same mentality and attitude that, you know, forced fear that was unfortunately put into people had, uh, still kind of remains around still down there.

Which, you know, they actually just had a huge thing, I think, um, like during the pandemic, I think in 2021, they put up another marker, this time by one of the singing bridges that was

actually honoring, uh, not honoring, remembering, of course, that was remembering I think one or two individuals that were, like, lynched at the bridge that were, you know, unjustly, you know, dealt justice to, later to find out that it was something that they were all, like, completely innocent of.

I can't exactly remember what that was about, but I, I think that, you know, leaving, kind of, like, Louisiana, I'm not sure exactly what my mom had to deal with there, but I do know that they grew up in a strong black, like, rural community. Going to Chicago, where they lived at in a strong black, kind of, northern urban community, where people, I guess, were able to find work.

My dad, the same thing, where they both would, like, go to HBCUs and stuff and then come down here. And the black community, I remember they felt like was different, which not like that different, but they were, they had a different sense of trauma about them, I guess, you know, and, uh, and that trauma I think was, I don't know, it's, you can, you can tell in some places, especially talking to some people, that that is something that has absolutely become like generational.

And yeah, it was something I think that kind of took me and I mean, I'm still kind of like learning to deal with it, but it was, um, something I think that while my parents were so upset a little bit by this because it was something they didn't want for us, you know, they didn't want want their boys to experience that even though like we certainly did but that wasn't our legacy here like live moving to Frankfort, I guess which, oh, I know that legacy is a tough word, but I know that that is, um, I don't know, because a lot of the families there are really old. They go back, you know, I told, I said earlier one of the very first things that, um, we lived out in the, like, county section of it. It's a neighborhood. It's a small neighborhood that I found out used to be a farm and the, the lady, Who lived like three doors down from my parents, a very old, like white lady. It was her farm that she sold to be the neighborhood.

Well, some of my friends who lived directly behind my parents, there was a very, very old house in the back of the neighborhood that someone bought and they kind of like knocked it down. But before they knocked it down, they went exploring in it and they found an old truck. And inside that old truck was field of letters connecting the, there was a connection made with all these letters to one of the more popular, like, black families in Frankfort.

So, getting these letters, talking to the older generation of that family, I found out that the neighborhood that my parents, like, lived at, and, which is 98 percent all white, was once the Frank, Frankler, Frankford, Franklin County rural black farming community area and the old guy was talking to told me that they were chased off by you know like you know by racists and just by racists and the KKK and the ones who remained who decided to stay on their land were, they were greeted one day by the banks who essentially told them we now own your property, you have to leave.

And so, most of that family, I guess, they moved downtown Frankfort. They didn't leave the area. And, you know, I would imagine that, like, if my dad would tell me that story, then I would tell, like, my, like, you know, daughter, son, that story and them kind of like continuing down. I

could imagine like that type of hurt and pain that translates through each generation until you know things then also things are constantly happening in your own daily life that is reminding you and putting you back in that place. I guess I can imagine how the type of environment would be created that I feel like my parents kind of immediately picked up on moving to Frankfort. That was kind of the experience that I feel like I'm still trying to wrap my head around and explore it, honestly.

It's one, it's something that I kind of want to do another project on, because I would really love to know, I guess I just want to know, like, what happened in Frankfort, because it is a interesting, curious place that, you know, it's weird because I mean it has like the state's only HBCU but you would actually never think that there was an HBCU there and most of the individuals that live in the town, of course, the town is like 80 percent white, most of the white folk that live there go to the HBCU but talking to them They won't actually claim that they went there until you know, you might see their degree or something like that which I think is really interesting considering that the college doesn't get any funding or support from the town.

So I think that's, I don't know, to me, that's a whole nother thing that's, that's messed up.

[00:34:32] **Chris Keeve:** So I'm wondering if you want to talk a little bit more about the way that that black farming community resonates in the landscape of Frankfort today.

[00:34:43] **Emmanuel Fields:** Hmm. I think that, I think that especially for a while that that black farming community, like, the old folks who are probably absolutely now like passed away. I think that they felt a massive amount of hurt and like trauma, absolutely, that kind of you know, I think it, I don't want to say became like almost like an expected way of life, but it kind of seemed like it was incredibly hard how I might imagine like a lot of other cities in the south, you know, to exist in if you are at all black at all.

But I think that, I think that it resonates in a way that also shares a super strong sense of pride, I think, still in that community. Because I know that being, like, associating, like, all my friends, like, being from that area and everything like that, there's something about them that's still, like, a little bit different.

I've, uh, it's something that's, like, incredibly strong, and it's something that's, like, the way I can describe it, it's just, like, really cool. You know, I think, I mean. In that same area, I think is actually where I first saw people, like, gardening and growing things, and they were of an older generation, and I remember they used to tell me, like, yeah, this is how we used to feed ourselves, and this is how we used to do things, and I wish at the time, you know, being in high school or whatever, I had the you know, the mind to ask them, like, where did you do it? Like, who did it? To ask them all the questions I really, like, want to know now.

Because I, I think that, I think it still exists in the community in a way that not only, you know, resonated people to continue to do those things, even, like, no matter what was taken from you, you know, like, it's still meaningful and important to do these things, not just, it wasn't just about

feeding yourselves, but it was also kind of like about feeding, feeding your own self, feeding your soul of things that are kind of like passed down and brought down.

I think that spirit still exists there. You know, I was down there the other day, and I hadn't been down there in probably a decade, and I saw probably the most massive community garden I've ever seen out of anywhere I've lived, um, or been a part of a community garden.

And honestly, it made me really happy. It also kind of made me sad that I didn't know that that was going on because I would have loved to bring, like, uh, get involved and like grow some things down there, but, you know, me, I'll still do that and hopefully there'll still be some time.

But yeah, I think that I, you know, one of the things I, I, that kind of keeps popping into my mind was, um, like in high school, I remember like, um, trying out for like the basketball team. Yeah. And the thing at the, like, you know, late 90s, early 2000s was we all had big hair and we had like cornrows in our hair or just whatever, you know, the style was kind of like big and baggy. And I remember the coach at the time told us no one with an afro or had braids or cornrows were allowed to try out for the team.

And, it's kind of funny because now that's like, big, like, news now. But back then, like, this guy just said it, you know, um. And I remember, no one had said anything about that being wrong at all. Except, the people, like the mothers and fathers of our communities, straight up told us, like, you're not gonna change your hair at all. And if you get on the team or you don't, you're not going to change that stuff, but you know, I guess I kind of think about the way like my school was and the teachers we had I think about that. I'm kind of like, you know, every single person no matter how they thought they were absolutely had something left to learn the fact that you know, someone was just able to just say that and that would be literally the law.

But I think that that was kind of my, like, kind of dealing with that, I think, would be probably as close of an experience, I feel like, of feeling the same way someone from the town had generationally had to deal with things. Which had none to do with kind of like food or anything, but it certainly had something to do with, you know, who you are and just the way the outside world would judge you and see you.

[00:39:58] **Chris Keeve:** So when you were walking through, or when you were meeting those, those older folks who had those gardens, what, when you think back, what, what, what kind of comes to mind with those faces?

[00:40:10] **Emmanuel Fields:** Oh man. Yeah, we were, uh, we were laughing a whole lot. I, I just remember like it being, so hot and humid out, but it wasn't something to where like nowadays it's like, okay, we're going in, but no, we all stayed outside and we all like commune together. You know, it was, we all just sat and talked. I remember like so many like amazing port sessions and just kind of stories. You know, throwing a football outside while someone just either scolded us or, you know, or really got on our case for throwing the ball or running through, like, their spot where they were growing food at and just kind of, like, laughing about it, but at

the time, like, I mean, think about that now, I would be pissed off, but it was just kind of a thing, like, they were all, like, so cool about it now that I think about that.

And so, but not only were they, um, educating us on, you know, being like who we were at the time and like growing up as young men, young women, and, um, they were doing so, teaching us about a lot of things that, you know, we weren't like quite learning in school. Teaching us about, you know, really kind of teaching us about what's culturally relevant and growing things, essentially.

Like even when you kind of feel lost, there's kind of always something that to grasp onto as long as you know who you are and like know your history and your own strengths that are like passed down to you now That's really what they were doing which I had no idea at the time But I'm just really thankful for that because I mean that was a lot of fun and it also put a lot of strength I think in each one of us individually having that kind of like shared community Yeah, that's that's something I would like to find again to be honest. Yeah.

[00:42:06] **Chris Keeve:** What were they growing?

[00:42:09] **Emmanuel Fields:** I cannot remember. I absolutely do remember stepping completely on someone's squash at one point. You know, I remember, I remember taking, like, a tomato off and throwing it at somebody, like, being a bad kid. Other than that I, I don't remember. I know it wasn't only tomatoes and squash. I know that for sure, but I can't exactly remember.

Big flowers, I remember that. Like, a lot of pride, a lot of flowers, you know. Things had to look good as much as, as much as they wanted the fruits and vegetables to, like, taste good. I know that. I can't remember it all. I had some good times, though. I had some really good times. Yeah, I remember, like, either getting out of practice or getting out of school and it's kind of like walking around throwing a football or having a basketball around and uh, just being outside messing around like all throughout summer, you know, and then someone, you know, whether like their child was with us or someone who, you know, wasn't even like associated with our group or not, would always like invite us in to eat whatever the like they had made whether it was like from the garden or not But I know that if it was something that was from the garden it was us, you know It was something that they especially made sure that we all came to eat and try because they want us to taste like good grow natural food I do remember that and that's pretty important thing. It's pretty important.

[00:43:51] **Chris Keeve:** I'm thinking back also to the fresh market stall and when you think back to, to that market stall, who, who was there?

[00:43:59] **Emmanuel Fields:** That was, uh, yeah, so I remember being, you know, just kind of like yay high, just ready to be like released to kind of like go running around or even like on like a bike or something.

I run around with my brothers, but I remember, seeing faces from, like, school, but mainly it was my parents, I believe, running into people that they knew, like, from church or just older folks

their age from the community there. You know, I remember a lot, giving people a ride home from there. Or, um, just waiting while my parents had the longest conversation, you know, you ever remember, like, with someone like they knew. And feeling like I was absolutely just gonna melt and die if they didn't, like, stop. so yeah, I had a lot of fun, but now that I think about it, my parents probably absolutely had the most fun. They probably loved taking us there.

I remember watching, like, my mom, like, test the ripeness of something and I remember my dad, I think they, I remember like my mom would kind of like squeeze it and I'd look at it sniffing, my dad I remember would like tap something with like with his fingers, stuff that they would like tell us what they were doing but honestly like didn't really matter at all but now it's like incredibly important stuff and I'm so glad that they did because I remember, my dad like tapping like some cantaloupe or something and uh, well, it was like every candle that I, that was there, I probably picked up and started tapping. I was like, this one's good. This one's good. You know, and he was probably, he was probably annoyed as crap. But it was kind of like, yeah, good, good. Yeah, yeah. But I mean that's, that's stuff that I think I still do to this day when I'm shopping at like Kroger. It's actually pretty funny.

Yeah, trying to think of, you know, it would, community based things. I, I remember, yeah. Running into, like, um, at the church that we went to up there, I remember running into our pastor a lot, and that was always, like, kind of funny. I mean, he was like a funny guy, but, um, you know, I felt just, just safe and just super secure, even like, you know, I had two younger brothers, I was the oldest, the youngest one, I remember he would, like, run off and get lost all the time, but it wasn't ever, like, oh my gosh, you know, someone's lost in the mall or something like that, no, it was just, like, okay, where'd he go dip under, you know, and then we'd always find him. It was, it was, it was just a thing, you know, it's kind of fun.

I think those community spaces are incredibly important. And I feel like that's really lacking in our society these days. You know, I see a lot of old buildings when I go out into the ultra rural spots of Kentucky that you know, looked a lot like that building did back then, you know, the outside and just the, the oldness of it, you know, that wasn't like where we were at, wasn't set in a super rural area whatsoever, but I see those buildings now and I see they're all like closed up shop or completely run down.

And I really, you know, I thought about that. I was like, you know, at some point, this small rural community, this was, this was their spot, you know, this is where everyone got to know each other. And that's where they talked and they communed with each other. And, I just think that that is something that's kind of gone now, which is, I don't know. I just think that's really important to have these community spaces because, you know. You get to know each other. You feel supported.

[00:47:31] **Chris Keeve:** What else did you see in the stall? Like, what caught your eye?

[00:47:36] **Emmanuel Fields:** Hmm. Yeah. Weird things, you know? Like super long, like, peas or really long beans that I remember, like, being like, what the heck is that? Or, like, broccoli, you know, I remember seeing, like, bugs crawling on vegetables, and being like, eww, what?

You know, or dirt on it, and being like, why is there dirt on this? You know, and not even thinking, I'm like, oh, yeah, this came from the soil or the ground, you know? I remember, absolutely remember, like, physical sensations of, like, touching, like, imperfect vegetables, you know, that you wouldn't see in our big, like, grocery stores now. And, like, kind of, and realize, like, yeah, these are, like, completely fine, you know.

I remember, um, gosh, man, like, smells. For some, I remember I would always, always, for some reason, smell, like, the potatoes. Like, they had such an interesting, strong smell to them. Which, just smelled probably every single thing in reaching, you know, that I could grab that was, you know, like a fruit or vegetable and be in like, I don't know, in really associating that particular food item with a smell, which still is with me like today.

You know, I mean, I'll smell something I probably, you know, oh my gosh, like, having no idea what it even was, like, whatever vegetable or whatever it even was, and might see that at the grocery store to still have no idea, but would recognize the smell probably, you know. That's actually pretty wild, I think, because I think that I told one of my nephews the other day while I was doing some like cooking or shopping or something like that, he asked me if something was bad, you know, and I was like, no, what was it?

It was some, it was some strawberries, actually. I remember I had been sitting out and he was like, these are, are bad. I was like, smell it, you know, I remember they smell like pretty good. And he was like, yeah. And I remember he took them and ran off and like ate all of them, you know, and I remember like, several weeks later, seeing him doing that with something else, something like, I don't know, like graham crackers that were stale and sitting out, you were, you were smelling them and testing them, and I thought, it's funny what we absorb, and what, and how they like show themselves in our everyday life, like, it's funny, yeah.

That's crazy how, I don't know, just based around food, which is literally our, essentially everything, somehow, that like, things used to be, different around them and how we show our selves, you know, in such things. Like we, we learn about ourselves and each other. Then what we absorb is like, then passed down.

[00:50:39] **Chris Keeve:** I'd love to hear more, actually, about how you've introduced your nephews to, to gardening, to food work.

[00:50:45] **Emmanuel Fields:** Well, my youngest nephew is only seven. He has this thing to where he tells me like, well, okay. It started when he came up to me one day when I was like, babysitting them or something, you know, they were out of school.

And he said, I know your favorite thing. And I was like, what's that? And he said, nature. And I was like, ha ha ha, I was like, yeah, yeah, I do, which is wild, because it's not like I've taken him out on like a lot of hikes or, you know, talked to him a whole lot about nature. And so I was like, yeah, you, he was like, so why do you like nature so much?

And I remember, I was like, okay. Let's go outside and do some stuff then, you know, and so I told you about all the volunteer tomatoes that I have just randomly popping up. Well, like one

day when I first saw them, it was like the first 30 I was like I got to get these in pots and like get them out of here because they were gonna like be destroyed. And so that same day is when I took him out there and we actually started to pot these tomato volunteer starts in like little pots And I told him, I was like, all right, we're going to like, you know, set a few of these over here.

And man, they are huge now. And he is so ready if the, you know, they haven't started producing tomatoes. But he is so ready to see tomatoes on there because I mean, his next thing he said was like, what do you do to make it, uh, to make a tomato come off of it? And I was like, Oh, yeah, you know, it was weird. I was kind of like, well, I guess you just got to like, take care of the thing.

But that's not really going to be us doing it. That's going to be like, you know, we're taking care of this, like tomato plant, but we're gonna like watch the bees and everything and the pollinators come. And so I'll like, it's kind of like all connected and he was just like, oh, this is why you like nature because you know, it was kind of a weird thing.

Cause I know I absolutely explained this stuff to him in a way that I probably would not have understood. And, but I think that he just really liked enjoying being there with me and putting his hands in the dirt and just like doing the stuff. I think that it was just really cool for him. And watching what we did that day and watching these plants get bigger and bigger and bigger, I can see that it's all starting to kind of like, click with him a little bit.

Like, okay, so that thing we did that one day isn't finished yet. You know, or it's something that's going to like, kind of continue going on. And how, you know, this puts you outside doing this thing. And you get dirty like nature. I remember he did say that to me and I thought that was like kind of amazing.

And so, yep, that's how I really kind of introduced the youngest one into gardening and stuff. The older, the older one, he's into it, but he's so like independent and stuff. He can go out there and do it himself, but I did have him, I remember last year before the younger one was, um, doing all this other stuff.

I did have the older one help me pick a bunch of, like, squash and stuff that I did. And I remember he thought that was absolutely cool in the process of seeing them out there, picking them, and then eating them. But he just wasn't into, like, seeing, like, the bugs and things like that, which is okay.

So I don't know. So, yeah, that was in, that was a lot of, you know, I guess, like, not fun is quite the word, it was something that was so, like, so precious and special to me that, I mean, while we were doing that, I, honestly, I just could have cried, you know, I was just so like damn. This is making me so just happy, you know, and I just I just loved it. I just, I just loved every bit of it. You know, I mean my love for them is just so so strong. I just Absolutely, just I don't know. It was just it was just such a treat, you know, it was amazing.

[00:54:53] **Chris Keeve:** Yeah, thanks for that story. I, so I really would like to hear more about maybe the connections in your work now between storytelling and farming and the work that you're doing now and how you came to that.

[00:55:10] **Emmanuel Fields:** Cool. Okay. So, now, I've been, since sometime last year, I've been kind of seeking out and I've been working on this documentary about black farmers across Kentucky and what started that was, you know, that was, it kind of led to become my thesis project, uh, at my master's program at UofL.

So, what kind of set me down that path was my job job, where I do, uh, conservation and I work for, you know, we protect agricultural farmlands with conservation easements. And so, my job as the stewardship coordinator, I mainly am the one going out to visit these farms after they've already been protected to ensure that they're abiding by the rules of the easement and also to make sure that, you know, everything's just all good out there.

And so, you know, like, 30, 000 acres we've protected, I guess, like 160 farms, I guess, across central Kentucky. And I'm out on these farms like almost every day, not one of them, you know, there's zero diversity in the farm owners. They're all privately owned farms. There's not a single black farmer involved with any of that. And even in the places I go to, I don't even see, like, black farmers when I'm out here traveling around. And so that, I started to really wonder, like, where are black farmers in Kentuck, like, where are they? Because I I personally did not know any, and I had not seen any through my job. It actually wasn't even something that I had really even thought about a lot, until, like, my, my master's program, which is in sustainability, and we learned a whole lot about food systems and, this, all sorts of community, you know, all sorts of things centered around food.

I started to think, I was like, well, I'm on, you know, farms all the damn time, and I don't see, like, any black farmers, and it wasn't actually until one of the places I went to that I had even like, okay, so all these things were kind of like building up in my mind. I went to a farm in southern Woodford County, and when I talked to the guy there, you know, we just sat down and was talking, he told me that not only his farm, which was about 50 acres, but his, like, all his neighbor's farm, like, totaling about 300 acres was owned by a black woman who her and her family used to farm until, for some reason, they kind of left and moved to Cincinnati, and he knew her, and that's how he kind of, like, got, he bought his property from her, but they don't know, like, kind of what else, like, happened.

He said that she's, like, sent to pass, and I started to hear Similar stories like that, like, from that guy, and I started to hear that, oh, yeah, like, this whole area was once, like, the rural black community, or this was, like, uh, the black farmer owned, like, this entire spot. And I was like, well, where did they go, and what happened to them?

You know, I, um, I started, I started kind of doing interviews with people, just talking and listening. And I went down to, um, Jesmond County where I met a guy, who told me that, you know, he was a black farmer and his farm had started out with around 670 acres. And he told

me that what happened first was the city came in and they needed to put a road right, kind of directly through the middle of his farm.

And so, with that road that was now being there. This is all like well, this was happened after I can't remember exactly when but he, his father, I believe had actually just come back from World War two and they were farming on all this thing I believe that not World War two I can't remember exactly what it was he told me, but I know his dad had just got back from war and that he, himself, was off at like, police training or something like that, and he came back to find that the farm, the family farm, had been split in two, that had been in their family for generations.

The other side of that farm, they sold off because they couldn't really use it anymore, so it became like a neighborhood. And so, little by little, did some, something happen, the city need bits of the farm, or whatever happened, the farm that was now once 670 acres is now down to 8 acres. And talking with that guy really sparked a huge interest in me about, you know, where did the black farmers go, what were they doing, how did they lose their land, and what are their descendants kind of doing, and things like that.

But, that was kind of how it started out. But once I started to meet and talk to black farmers, it went in a completely like different direction. I found out that they were probably the most resilient group that I had ever come across and they were doing the most creative and motivational things that I, you know, every single one of them.

It's doing something just amazing, yourself included, which I thought was, I don't know, it's something that's just so motivational to me that when I showed, you know, that documentary to like my thesis board committee, that I mean, most of them were like crying and I didn't think that it was something that was like to move them to tears, but I guess that's what I kind of first, I don't know, it, that's what kind of permanently sent me down this path and to connect the now with the then and to rediscover these stories and to make, like, bring them back out is not only I feel like meaningful to me, but I feel like there's an entire community of folks that would really, really love to hear and know about these things, especially before they're all lost and forgotten.

I feel like it's, not only just, like, empowering for these communities, but it just adds so much more resilience to an already, like, super resilient group of folks.

And another thing about that is that, what really, like, okay, I've always been involved in, like, video stuff, but I've always been involved in photography as well, but not quite how I was. I wasn't, it wasn't a project that I felt like I absolutely wanted to visually document at first because well, it was something I had never done and it was also something that was quite uncomfortable feeling for me, like, especially, uh, you know, people were telling me some thing, their stories and that it's a whole lot of trust that goes on and I never wanted to be in a position where I felt I was now in charge of holding something secret that someone had just shared with me.

But I found myself like in that position, but while I was trying to find historic photos or videos of black farmers, you know, going down like the, the history center or the archive center, there was so little that I just couldn't believe it. And so that's when I decided to make it a visual project

because I feel like not only are these people's stories like incredibly, it's like so important, not just now, but for, you know, years and decades to come, but seeing them also has a huge impact. And so I wanted to do what I could to add to these archival collections of black farmers because, I mean, they are here and they are doing it and they have faces.

[01:02:48] **Chris Keeve:** I'm wondering if there are, in the process of doing this work, if there are, are there any food stories that have, have resonated with you?

[01:02:58] **Emmanuel Fields:** Yeah, there, there, there really are. You know, learning about a lot of, um, seed stories in particular was something that, you know, I guess I didn't really even think was kind of a, a, a thing at first until I started to really learn about like, you know, not just like the journey of seeds, but the journey of people and how stories like evolved and how these plants evolved and what carries them, what carries them on as they grow literally, you know, from the soil and into us and out there, like kind of like passed along, I, you know, met two twin brothers who have built a absolutely fantastic edible forest, you know, that was completely mind blowing to me.

I mean the, you know, the absolute sustainable nature of what I saw and like participated in a lot of the times. Because I try to do a lot of participant observation in a lot of my research. But, um, I was, you know, it wasn't just about, you know, for each of the black farmers I have met so far, it isn't just about a monetary thing or just like a lifestyle, it is something that is much deeper for them and something that they really like to share, you know, and also they're incredibly attuned to the impacts that chemical farming and things like that have on our, on our ecosystem.

You know, like I met a woman who, she was retired and she had only been farming for about like two or three years. And she said that her father was a farmer there. She grew up farming and when he, her, her grandfather essentially moved into that house, like where they were at. And, they got that place because no one would sell at all, I remember, in that area to, you know, anyone black, a farm especially.

And so, they had some friends, I believe, like, buy the place for them. And when they found out, like, how everyone had, like, been tricked, essentially, to let this, like, black family move in there, it started this huge thing. And they tried to get them out of there so bad, but somehow, I mean, he just put his foot and his roots down and said no.

And so she decided that those same roots still, like, rooted her to that place. And that she was, even in her retirement now, was going to return to farming because that is what the place, it was such a huge part for her growing up and that type of history and legacy that her family had built there that she said that she can feel just the land almost like thanking her on her return for kind of returning it back to farming and that she just could not imagine it not being a farm out there so that she's, you know, these things like, hearing these incredible, like personal stories and details that I feel like a lot of other that, you know, I don't know, that I'm just really lucky to find and like, discover and hear.

It's something that, you know, I've always been a person that like, self, discovery of the self and self discovery I feel like is such a huge important part of all of our lives. But, hearing all of these things kind of helped me to realize and discover that this, like, all this stuff, like, it's okay, like, If, if you want to be a black farmer, uh, grow things like for yourself, for your community or whatever, like that is okay.

Like no matter what you have like either learned or been told, you know, uh, if that's what you want to do, it's okay. And just, just do it and learning those things and hearing so many like strong, similar stories really just. I don't know, I can't wait to, I can't wait to hear more, I can't wait to meet more of these people, you know, they're just, they're so welcoming and inviting and I was so nervous and anxious at first once I started that project because I was like, here I am like as a stranger, uh, you know, almost like invading upon like their space, asking them questions and putting like a camera in their face, you know, and like, no, that was not the case at all.

It was like these, stories that have been built literally over generations are, you know, they're presenting themselves in a huge way. And I just, a lot of times I just so happen to be the one there with the camera. And that feeling of like that deep, you know, magic essentially. It almost made me feel as if I wasn't the right one to like do such a project.

But that was just my own, you know, my own insecurity. Like, imposter syndrome in a way, because I started realizing that I was develo like, not only hearing, you know, these stories, but I was kind of developing my own along the way as well. And it's actually a huge treat and a treasure that I'm able to kind of share them, to bring light to them.

That's, that's one thing I wanted to, you know, I started out wanting to know just, where the heck are they? To now it's like, oh my gosh, not only are they here, but it's a whole golden treasure chest of amazing stories of resilience and just all sorts of things coming out of there. And I'm just incredibly lucky that I've been able to share what little stuff I've been able to share so far.

[01:09:03] **Chris Keeve:** So I want to get us to start wrapping up. So I'm wondering if there's anything that's kind of, that is bouncing around in your head right now after a past hour and 20 minutes.

[01:09:14] **Emmanuel Fields:** I guess, for a second there, I kind of started to think like, how did I get kind of in a position to where I like, you know, someone's like having like an oral history with me to talk about these things to where it's something that, not even that long ago would be something that I would, I essentially wouldn't, you know, have even thought was relevant or something that anyone would even care to follow or follow up on or, or do.

I, I don't know. And I guess that I'm not even worried about that part of it. It's like I, when I started the project that I was working on, someone like a mentor in the project asked me, what's my purpose in this project? And it wasn't, you know, of course I wanted to show, you know, at first I thought I was going at it with this mind state of kind of like equality and like civil rights and you know, black farmers, they've been done dirty from every angle, every sense from state, federal, you know, governments to just their own communities.

But I guess once I got it in there and started to do it, everything changed for me. It was not just to show and shed light on stories of inequalities, but it was, it was to show that, you know, essentially an amazing triumph. It wasn't something that was ever like to be focused on. I don't want to say like unfair and unjust really things because yeah, I mean that was completely at the core of a lot of it, but I learned that, you know, our history here, especially with growing things, is not completely wrapped up in, you know, ever since even, like, slavery. It's not completely wrapped up in negative mindsets, I guess, or ways that, we're not completely enveloped in things that are meant to almost, like, attack you and push you down, essentially, in a way, but instead, those same things are used for triumph in strength building and to honestly show you exactly like how strong you are and what you're capable of doing.

And so it all kind of became a thing for me that was like, wow, this is okay. And not only is it okay, but it's amazing, and everyone in here is just stronger for it. Um, yeah, I It kind of rewrote, I guess, a lot of things that I had solidified in my own head about, you know, my own history, my people's histories here and things.

But it actually started to unravel, I guess, a lot of those, like, tightly, tight, tight, loose knits, in a way. Because it, I started to see that, uh, a new narrative was being painted, one that had always been there, but somehow had been, like, essentially corrupted in some, like, strange way. That these, you know, a narrative, a narrative that, essentially became incredibly empowering just like just for me, but one that had always been there and it was something that I realized then was, you know, I had to continue kind of doing that work because I could only imagine like the impact that this could would have on just on several different narratives, you know, I don't know.

I feel like I can absolutely like visualize what I'm like trying to say. And it's hard for me to like get it out of my mouth because I don't know it's essentially one narrative that had a lot of negative undertones and associations with actually became one that was those same associations but was a narrative that was so incredibly positive and that has absolutely stuck with me and changed a lot of the way I personally see and move through the world.

And if I, through the work that I've been trying to do, if I can just have a positive impact on one person who could be struggling, you know, like I was at one point with a lot of, uh, deep, essential, like, generational, like, racial trauma and things that are like passed down, then I feel, I feel like I would have helped a lot of stuff.

And these are things that I really can attribute to being completely centered around food and just farming in general. Not only was it something that was like, okay, yeah, I'm feeding myself or growing myself, but it's learning about how other people do it and how their family did it. And how, like, what it did for them, and, and it's doing like a, a lot for me as well, and I can't wait to see like where it goes, and I can't wait to, I guess I can't wait to just keep being out there and doing it, this type of stuff, it's really kind of, it's made a lot of other things in my life, like, it's become essentially like my main focus and, and it's something, I mean, it's become like my passion, really, so it's, and I, and I'm happy for it, and I'm, I'm just ready to keep going, yeah.