



EARNESTINE CLEMMONS was born in James City in 1916. Her father William Sylvester Foy (1882-1940) spent his entire life in James City as a businessman. Her mother Rebecca Ellis (1893-1974) arrived in James City around 1894 with her mother Josephine Hawkins Ellis, a missionary. Josephine Ellis died of Small Pox and was buried in the Near Cemetery. Rebecca was taken in by the Migett Family and remained in James City until her death. Mrs. Clemmons speaks of a period from the early 1920's to present day.

Clemmons, E.

(Q) Talk to me a little bit about the community in which you grew up and about the people you grew with. (E) Well I grew up here in James City, and um, I'm not too far from where I was born. The community is the same, but the older people that I remember, majority of them is dead. But the few still living, but it's not just, it's just a few. So, uh, all I can remember that I grew up here and my father and mother, they had a grocery store. (Q) Oh they did? They, and my daddy truck farmed, right down here at Leesport. (Q) Right, okay. He and my uncle, they had a truck farm, and they had a grocery store here in James City and one in New Bern. (Q) Uh huh, right. (E) And, uh, for a while till he got sick, uh, he uh, after the banks and everything closed, then start taxi, he taxied years ago. (Q) Taxied, oh, okay. (E) He had a taxi, he taxied from New Bern to James City. And he had a grocery store, the one in New Bern, my mother and him, in fact, she the one running it, in New Bern. And in James City, my uncle runned it, right up the road here, he runned that one. So they truck farmed and sold vegetables here in New Bern to the grocery stores. When I was young, I use to go to, um, I'd sell the vegetables, you know, go around the street with a little pull wagon, pull it from over here to New Bern and I would set it round the streets from house to house. And after that, we took orders from Week's Store and different stores in New Bern and all and, um we delivered, gathered, would go out in the morning, first thing in the morning, like string beans and stuff like that, we would take it and deliver

it. And so in the winter time, we, in the following year, we raised collards, and you know, fall vegetables and I use to, uh, still after years, I use to go to school right out here. This is the, uh, first we went to a, sort of like, up in Brownsville they had a something like a hall and the people, the children use to go, have a private, sort of, you call it would be a private, old man Mr. Sawyer, he use to teach us. That was before I was old enough to go to public school, so when the public school, they build this school down here, that was the first school, public school, James City had. (Q) Before that, people were going to school, there was somebody who was teaching privately here? (E) Yeah. It was an old man, he use to, uh, Sawyer, and when it come to the public school, this was the first public school that James City had, that I know. They say, they one years ago, back in, you know, before I was born. But anyway, this was the school that I ever, when I was six years old, or seven, this was the first school, public school. I think I went in first grade to this school right here, out here in James City. So, it ain't to much from ---- she use to, in the Old James City, this is the Old James City is over there, and they community, there my mother, I always lived in this community over where you've got the bypass. That was, our home set right near about the middle of that. (Q) And that was considered Old James City? (E) This to Scott Creek Bridge, from the New Bern Bridge to Scott Creek Bridge that was suppose to be James City. All that area, was James City. And when you cross Scott Creek Bridge coming over this side, this was Brownsville, over here was Meadowsville, over there was, uh,

that was Meadowsville, this was Graysville, the little communities, this wasn't James City. This wasn't the town of James City, James City was suppose to be over there from Scotts, from the New Bern Bridge to Scott Creek Bridge. (Q) But it was on this side, it was still on this side of the river. (E) It was on, James City was on Neuse and Trent Creek. (Q) Okay. (E) But it was on both sides. On both sides on Neuse and Trent. (Q) Oh, okay, it was right along the water, along the river. (E) Yeah, the whole place, it was the whole community, the Old James City. Clean out to Madame Moore Lane from there the old mills. They had mills on that side, the men worked at the mill and people worked, the women mostly worked out in service for two, three dollars a week. And as I grewed older, I, my father lost his health and so, he still up until he died, he truck farmed and taxied until he died in 1940. So, uh, my mother in the Old James City, she use to, they didn't have a, she had a cow, and she would take the milk and sell it to the people in James City, take it and I'd go with her to round these different peoples houses and sell the milk. So, uh, all in all the whole thing James City and Brownsville, now they say this is James City but this is, always was Brownsville, Meadowsville, and Graysville. (Q) Now when you talk about these different places, what were they like? Were they small communities? (E) Just like it is now. Only it was more people, the people that was there then, the majority of them is dead. And these are their grandchildren and great grandchildren. That's living here now. But this place is always been just like it is now. (Q) So quite thickly populated? (E)

Yeah. And James City was populated too. And over here, cause over here, the people would, uh, they was buying their lots, leaving, they were treating them like had to leave James City. And a lot of people was trying to buy lots and building house over here, in Brownsville. So the biggest majority was in Old James City, most of the people, till they started building, buying these lots from Meadowsville, and building their own houses. (Q) And when did that change come? When did people start doing that? (E) Well, when was it, about the late 30's, it was in the 30's I think cause they build the school and I think it was in 29 or something like that, wasn't it? And James City was thickly populated in the 30's. (Q) Why were people having to leave? (E) Well, why they were having to leave, cause the people said they didn't, uh, see the way I understood it from old people years ago, James City and the Civil War, that they, uh, the federal government give James City to the black people, the black soldiers. They fought with the federals and they were suppose, this was, they, uh, if they come to James City they were free, the slaves. And so, people that could make it, from the other parts of the state and other places, they would come to James City. Well when they come to James City, they were suppose to be free. Well they build their homes with what material they had. And after people come, they build their, uh, up their homes. But why they had to move, is because the people, white people said that the property didn't belong to them. First, they wanted to start to charge them rent. And the people fought against paying rent. So, cause the figured it was own home. So, then they

couldn't get them out that way, so what they did, they wouldn't let them fix up their homes. And you stay there, but the homes will go down, go down, they your actually, at the time you'd had to move. So, actually they forced them out like that. (Q) Now was that, was it because, did people not have a deed to the land? (E) Well I don't know. I'm just getting it from the old people, the people that come here, some of their pals, some of they born right in slavery. I use to talk when I was young, I use to love to go sit and talk with people, old people like that and talk about the slaves and what they had to do. But the majority of the people they had to, you know, had to try to build what they could and so when they started to force them out, a lot of people stay there. Now Grace, grandmom stayed there, she was one of the last one to leave James City. And, uh, lot of people just didn't believe that they had a right to take it from them. So, all this new stuff about, uh, it belonged to somebody else, I don't know nothing about that, I just got all my information from old slave people. (Q) Now how about the communities like Brownsville, were those communities founded by Civil War soldiers as well, black soldiers? Like this, you lived in Brownsville, is that right? (E) This is Brownsville, what they did, Meadowsville, I think Meadowsville far as I know they bought the property from Meadows. The Meadow had a fertilize factory down here in the town. But all this land, most all the land was owned by the Meadows. So the people they, uh, sold it in lots and the people I think just sold it by the \$100, \$200 a lot. So whatever they paid for the lot they would construct with the

mill. People would get lumber from the mill and black carpenters, whoever, and build the house. So that's how these people bought these lots and build these houses. (Q) Did Brownsville exist as a town before those people started to buy those lots, the people pushed out from James City? (E) I don't think, the uh, far as I can remember, it was just a few houses. Now, like my, uh, my family, my father come from Leesville, up here and a lot of people bought the lots, you know, and stayed here for, they throwed people out of James City. They was a little community, a few people that bought lots and then after they started get putting the pressure on them in Old James City, then the people started buying the lots over here. (Q) Now where they all black people that lived here originally? (E) Yeah, only white people that live in Old James City, the people near the mill, surrounding the mill, the mills. The rest of the people was all black. (Q) And that was the lumber mill, right? (E) Yeah, it was two of them, two mills. And then they had another mill, three mills all together on the Neuse, is that Neuse over there, it was two mills over on that side. In the Trent it was one, one mill. And that's were the black people worked at these mills. And, uh, if they worked a lot of them bought the property over here and build houses. That's were this generated from. (Q) What do you know about your own family? Do you remember your grandparents? (E) No. I remember my, see my, uh, grandfather, his was from Wilmington, North Carolina, he never lived here, my mother and my grandmother and grandfather on my fathers side they were dead before I was born. (Q) Now and they

came from Leesville. (E) My fathers family was from Leesville, right down here. (Q) Where are your grandmothers people from? (E) Over here, my grandmother stayed, was right in James City. All in Craven County. (G) Do you remember, you talk about grandma's people in Halifax county? (E) Well, see my mother, that's what I was getting to, my mothers family come from Halifax County. And they were, my, uh, grandmother on my mother side was, uh, English, white lady. (Q) Your grandmother? (E) Uh huh, my mothers, my great grandmother, its my mama's great grandmama, and her grandfather was an Indian Chief. So my mothers people that wasn't here in New Bern, they were in Halifax county and her fathers people in Wilmington, North Carolina. That's were she belonged, in Wilmington, North Carolina. (Q) Now did you ever hear stories about this great grandmother or your Indian grandfather. (E) What in, yeah I went up there, my mother took me up there. I know a lot of my relatives on my mothers side. (Q) Were they Halawa Indians? Cherokee? (E) Cherokee, uh huh, up in Halifax County. And, uh, all of her people were half-white, half-indian, and then they married black people, you know and mixed it up. But the background of my mother, her mother was half-indian, and half-white. And she was some of the first missionaries to come, my grandmama, was the missionary that come to James City with Miss Rena, and Miss Cara, they was the white missionaries that come here. And shortly after they come, my grandmama come. And she brought mama, mama was two years old, when they brought her here. And her mother died when she was 2 years, over malaria. She didn't believe in doctors, so

she wouldn't take medicine and stuff, so she died. And, uh, Miss Catherine Midget, she was the cook for that, uh, for their people. So, she took mama and adopted her. (Q) So this was your mothers, mother, that died? (E) That died. (Q) Yeah, and she brought your mother here. (E) Here, yeah, here, when she was 2 years old from Wilmington, here when she was 2 years old. My grandfather was a preacher and he was in Wilmington. And she was a missionary. (Q) Now back to Halifax County for a minute, you said your great grandmother was a white women. Is that right? (E) She was an english women. (Q) Did they ever, was she, she was white, your great grandmother? (E) Yeah. (Q) Did people ever talk about that, because usually you hear about people having grandfathers who were white. (E) Well, up to Halifax County the old people, they all dead now, but my aunt, my mothers grandmama's aunt, sisters and things, I meet them and she looked just like her Indian Chief, with her nose and dressed like them, and all them had long straight hair and all them wasn't looked like indians, looked like they were half-white, looked like they were white. The had a real light complexion. (Q) And now she, that, that, that, english women she married, uh, she married the Indian? (E) She married an indian, Indian Chief. He was the chief. And that's all I could here when I was in Halifax, when mama took me up there, and I was grow, you know, small. And I met all of my relatives and I was the darkest person in the whole family up there, everybody. And right now you can go up there and meet them, they all mixed up, white. But my great aunts and I met all them, great uncle. (G) Tell them their

names. Do you remember their names? (E) Melisha was one of my great aunts, Melisha Silver, and, uh, what is my, uh, see you asked me right off, I can't think of their names. (G) Uncle Lemon? (E) Uncle Lemon, that was my great uncle, and, um, Queeny, Aunt Queeny, that was my great aunt. And I had another great uncle, uh, I can't call his name but he, he was the one that look just like a indian his-self. There was two brothers and my mother, grandmama, and two more sisters. So all in all, I think it was five of the children on my mothers great. (Q) Now you said your grandmother came here as a missionary? (E) Yeah, here in James City. (Q) What kind of mission work was she doing here, do you know? (E) Well, as far as I know she was teaching the Bible and teaching the school. The place where you had, up in James City, it was in James City, were you had, were the missionary had the school, and, uh, they would teach children, little children, you know, like the alphabet and stuff and teach them the Bible and stuff, far as I know. Cause, uh, that was years ago, but it was still, it was Frances Dudley, Reverend Dudley's wife, she still, when I growed up in all them years, she still had the little chairs, some of them little chairs and things they used way back-then. (Q) Now on your mothers side of the family, back in Halifax County, were they slaves? I know there were a lot of free people up there. (E) I never heard a counting they were slaves. They owned their own land and everything up there. I don't think they were never slaves. And up to the day I went there, they own oodles of land. And they children is still on that now. (G) They mostly had indians and

whites in that area. So I think that's why it may be. (E) Don't forget now, Halifax was wealthy, by one of the reverends places I've been. (Q) I was just up there. (E) Okay. (Q) Now your fathers people, what do you know about them? (E) Well all I know is, uh, my fathers mother, all here, family was up here in James City. I don't, uh, the were in Old James City and then they moved from Old James City, uncle, all I can remember is my great uncle, Josh Oden, that was my grandmothers, on my fathers side, brother. And they was down river, down in Leesville. With all my grandfather, as far as I know, they said he lived there and the Foys is still down there. It's frustrating, Foys all over here. (G) I don't know if you are aware, uh, there's of the section, Leesville is on the other side of this mall. (E) Where the shopping malls is. (G) Yeah, that is, would have been Leesville area, from the shopping mall on down. That was mostly the black people in this area. (E) Ah, them was black alright. (G) Leesville, that was their farm area. So when you hear her mention about Leesville and Brownsville and Graysville and Meadowsville, those are the sections that is the New James City. (Q) Okay, right. (G) The Old James City, is the historical part that they telling, so when you hear people talk, their speaking of these sections that was right in the area, and was owned by the, all the blacks over in there and was taken by the highway and separated and all that. So that's what she's saying here, but it extends all the way, way past the mall and the car dealerships and all. (Q) Okay. (E) It's a lot of black people still live in Leesville. They own

their own property down there. (Q) Now, when you were growing up, uh, what, now what did people in Old James City do for a living? Were they farming and doing truck farming as well? (E) No, most of the people in James City worked in the mill. And most of the women, that worked, they worked out in, uh, white peoples houses. (Q) Now did they go over to New Bern to do that, or did they. (E) What? (Q) To work in peoples houses. (E) Yeah, they go to New Bern. (Q) Now you said, well you said, when you were growing up, that you liked to talk to all the old people about slavery? (E) Yeah. (Q) What kinds of things do you remember them telling you? (E) Well, they, all they would tell me about how they would, how they would, how the families, they had to be sold. When they were little children, they took them from the parents and sold them, like you sell a horse or something, sell people like that. And then they, if you didn't do what they say do, they whip them, just like they were children. They say, they were some people had some good master, masters, they call them masters, and some of them had just, didn't care what happened to them, all they wanted the money. And they would have had to go out there and work and slave and then if they, I hate to say this but, if they'd when they'd, had young girls, black young girls, when the girls grow to Mrs, they like their master to have a son or something. They would make him go with this black girl, and that's why so many different color of children. But they use to tell me all of that and they said some of them, some of the children, never knowed their parents, cause the parents, when they were born, and got, they sell them. And

they didn't know who were the parents, who the parents was, or nothing. Cause they were so young they couldn't remember. And, uh, they said when they come to James City, they, lot of them died on the way, trying to get here, but then they got here, they, uh, made their home. (Q) So people knew about James City, the x-slaves knew about it, to come here? (E) Yeah. They would try to get from South Carolina and different places to get here to New Bern. They say they would come and try to get, to come here, this way they could be free. (G) They had heard about this area, cause the Civil War was fought in this area, they sort of just took over, they gave up, went away, and so this was the area that the soldiers, the Union, had severed. And many of them, from what I understand, followed the Union in to New Bern and that's how the word spread back, you know, behind the lines. (Q) Now, do you, does your, on your fathers side of the family, were there any people who remembered slavery on his side? Do you know whether on your fathers side people were slaves? (E) Well see it wasn't to many of my family on my fathers side that I knowed well. When I growed up, it was cousins, but there was younger people, so I don't, the older people, I never was close to, my fathers, what still was living, my uncle was the only one. I was raised up with my fathers brother. He lived right in the house with us. And he wasn't, he was younger than my father. (Q) So was he a bachelor? (E) He was a bachelor till he got 50 years old and then he got married, after he was 50. (G) Did you tell them about, tell them about papas stores and everything? (E) Yeah, I told them about that. (Q) Now how did he,

how did your family, how did your father and your uncle, come to own their land? (E) Well, what they did, they worked, uh, see I, they got the land I think down at Leesville, they paid little money for it and from that, they raised some vegetables and stuff and then they bought the, uh, you know, just turned the money over, you know how people do, just use the money for improve, you know to get more stuff. So, what they would do, papa would always save his money and when he wanted to buy something, cars, house, he always saved his money. And they worked together to farm and took the money come from the farm, they used it, you know, stuff was cheap then, and, but if you count your pennies, I reckon you could get more, you could get right now. So that's the way he did, he did it, I never knowed my father nor my uncle to work for nobody. They always, papa told me, when they first started out they worked to the mill about a week or two or month or so, till they got a little money and then they start the farming. (Q) Now did he talk about that, about not wanting to work for other people? (E) He wanted to be his own boss. And he and my uncle they never, they always worked, for themselves. And whatever, papa was the brain, and they would work together and everything was half and half, and when they, when, uh, my uncle got married, they divided the property. But the store, after years, they give up the stores. But papa kept, both of them truck farmed and they, papa drove taxi till he died. (Q) Now these, the store that he bought, now that was right in this area, right in Brownsville? (E) One of them was right up here, not far from where the, the last street where the bridge,

where the, you know down, the end of the street, down old Cherry Point road, that was where, one of them, my uncles house is still there, on the same spot that the store was. And over on, uh, on Broad Street, you know, where the funeral parlor, Rivers Funeral Parlor, well wait now, it comes down, where's that drug store, right there? (Q) So this was in New Bern? (E) Yeah, this is in New Bern. I'm trying to tell her where my fathers store was in New Bern, grocery store. Do you know where, what is that drug store? (G) I can't think of the name. (E) Where you say, you all go to meet? That little shopping center. (G) Its a law office right up in there. (Q) I think I know where your talking about. (E) Its right beside, I think the lot is still vacant. But is was right there where that church, see where that church is up there, between, up in there, it was right up in that section. That's were the store was, I remember from a child. That's where the grocery store in New Bern was. Its up from five point. (G) The area past five points? (E) No, you past, you coming up like your going to Rivers Funeral Parlor, you know where the church is, there's a church right, where the Parlor is now, you know where the church is there, the house was setting, I mean the shop was setting right in that section. I can't put my finger, but it's in, I remember that. And the Dixons had a house, that parlor wasn't there. It was all private homes and papa's store was sitting right in that community. Right on Broad Street, the front of it was right on Broad Street, a two-story building. (Q) Now were there any businesses over on this side of the river, in Brownsville, in Old James City? Were

there many businesses? (E) Yeah, in Old James City that was, uh, Amos William had a store, and the Davis, old man Davis, the post office was in James City, and, uh, down to the foot of the bridge, that old bridge where you come cross the bridge, Simon Phillips had a store, grocery store. (Q) And these were all black owned businesses? (E) Everybody owned their own business. Yeah. (Q) Now, would you say that you were, you family was a little better off than most in this area, when you were growing up? (E) Well it was quite a few people, kind of, but I think we had a life. We had nice home, furnished and everything, when I growed up, I growed up with nice, you know, mother and father, papa always would try to see that his family would be a taken care of. So, for, till I got grown, that was I, before I got grown I, you know, people buyed it for us. Whatever we do was family like, vegetables, he raised the vegetables, my uncle raised, we helped work it sometimes, and then, uh, my uncle sell the vegetables, we sell the vegetables, we got so good at it, he bought us a pony. And we had a little pony cart, we go round instead of pulling the pull wagon, we had a little pony to ride. (Q) For selling the vegetables? (E) Yeah. We had our own little pony cart. (G) You use to sell them in New Bern too. (Q) Now what was the difference between New Bern and James City in those days? (E) Well between me and, I never lived in James City, I never, I always lived in this area. (Q) Well the difference between living over here on this side of the river and living over in New Bern, what was the difference? (E) For my point of view, the people over there and the people over here was all the same.

But some people felt different, but to me it always, James, you know, it was James City and I, I never. (G) I, in my time I felt that the people in those days lived better over here, because they had farm land, over there it was like on the back of the city they had to be compensated, you know what I'm saying, or more independent. I'm sure some of them had stores, but not the way they did in the olden days. Cause from what I understand James City use to supply New Bern with their fruits and vegetables. And like she said, they had a truck farm and everything and she would go out and the parents would go out selling vegetables in New Bern, and I'd love for her to tell you some stories how she would go around selling the vegetables in New Bern to the people. You want to tell her anything how you use to sell the vegetables? (Q) She wants to know whether you can tell me some stories about selling vegetables over in New Bern, when you were a child? (E) Well, I just told, that see we use to sell the vegetables. Papa would raise the vegetables and we would sell it to the stores, wholesale prices, by the bushels, you know, bushel baskets. And we raised white potatoes, everything that you, they raised some, vegetables, we raised them. And all we didn't sell, we had, we supplied most of the stores in New Bern with vegetables, some of the vegetables. And then we'd turn on top of that, we use to sell it just like I say, we use to pull vegetables out on the street. We use to get up mornings, like on Monday morning, we'd get up and go down the field and pick string beans and gather everything that we had to, to the store by the time the stores opened, we ready to put the stuff in

the stores. And then, um, up until years ago, I, we use to, uh, raise vegetables, papa died in 40 and when he died we had a big nice crop, right down here at the Leesville, so, uh, we sell vegetables like that and after then mama, she use to raise vegetables and we sell those vegetables, after papa died and everybody, then she still would try to keep a little. And then my uncle always would, till he dies, till he got sick where he couldn't farm, he use to sell vegetables. So, in fact, our family always was kind of independent, on their own. We sell, we raised our own stuff, sell it and whatever happened we, it was a family business, my uncle and my father. (Q) Do you remember your father ever having problems getting credit at the bank, or from? (E) Well, don't say about the bank, papa use to save his money and put in the bank. (Q) He didn't put it or he did put it in the bank? (E) Uh, huh, and he didn't, he lost it in the bank. (Q) Was this in the 30's? (E) Yeah, every penny he had, he had put all his money, that he didn't use, all this money in the banks. And they shut the banks up, he didn't get one, five cents. The George, all the black people, this Citizens Bank, I look at it all the time, that's where he put it in First Citizens, he put his money in there and a lot of my relatives, you know, older people that I know, said they like savings and their bank. They shut the bank up, nobody had a penny. So, what papa had to start from scratch. He didn't believe in no more banks. He went and got him one of these old fashioned banks, a safe and put in his house and from then on that's where he, till he died, he put his money in that bank. And

papa said he had so much money, cause I know when he died, when it was time the bank closed, you know where he took his money, what he accumulated he didn't believe in insurance, he said he could save his money as well as the man could save it for him. And so he never believed in insurance, when he died we had to get somebody to open his bank. He had money in there to pay off his bills, he had money to bury him, I mean a nice burial, and we had enough money to divide up between my uncle, myself, and my sister, we all, and he saved that from the time the bank closed, up until 1940 when he died. Now you know how much money he had in that Citizens Bank, then they said, well if the people dead they gonna give it to the heirs, I am 77 years old and I ain't got a penny this morning. (Q) Now, when Citizens Bank, when it, when people were wiped out, was it, do you think worse, did some people get their money back and not others? (E) I ain't never heard tell nobody, I know none of the blacks did. (Q) Do you think some whites got their money back? (E) I don't know, back then you don't know what's going on. But all you know, that the bank, and the bank was right there where you got the library, were, you know, on Middle Street, that big building, that's were the bank was. And that morning, I remember just as good as anything, the bank, and papa lost every, they thought the bank was closed, but they, after get things straightened out they would get their money back or do something. They ain't, this morning they ain't done nothing. And then they got the idea, and then you go to the banks to borrow money you can't borrow a penny. You can put your money right now, people can

holler about Jim Crow, they got a lot of Jim Crow right now because you can, you got collateral, you go to the banks they won't let you have dime. But yet before you go there, you got to have collateral, your collateral ain't worth nothing. Now this man, can go out there, this white man can go out there, he ain't nothing, he want a car, he go in the bank let him have anything he want. But do you think that's fair? Right now, that's happening right now, you ain't got to go back, and right now you can go in a store, I watched it, if its where you got to be waited on, they'll pick every white person, you got to stand there and be last. I done it so much right here in New Bern, here recently. I go pay a bill, you stand in there, they'll reach all over you. Now what is that, but still Jim Crow. And people, if you watch it, see a lot of people just overlook and keep going, but I'm a sensitive person, I've been through all this, years ago. I use to have the, you go to New York or go with interfare, you got to sit on the back of the bus. Now you come from New York you get to Richmond you sit anywhere on the bus. But you get to Richmond you got to get in the back of the bus. Then when you leave Richmond and coming to the south, they have mad black people sitting right to the back of the bus, madder than, when a white person get up, keep from him standing up, he make the black people, don't care how many miles you got to stand, they'll take your seat. You don't come all the way from New York and everywhere else, or Washington, DC, somewhere, you got to stand up. And when I come home after 42, 40, 51, I lived in Wilmington, in that married, the second time in 50,

what is it 42, 43, my sister died in 41, papa died in 40 and I got married in 42, we went to move, my husband and I, he worked at the shipyard in Wilmington and when we went to Wilmington, you couldn't go, everything was signs, white, black, white, black, and that's the way it was in Wilmington. When we left Wilmington, we went to Washington, DC, that's the first of the children going to integrated schools, when we, we went in 51. But when I come back down south coming back here to visit mama, I drive back down here, you stopped, I look at some of the places right now on 43 you come from, uh, after you get in North Carolina, Roanoke Rapids and coming on down, you start from Emporia, you go in Emporia that was a joint in North Carolina, you couldn't get a sandwich. If you go, you go to the back door. And you got to stand out there at the back door like you were an animal or something, you go, I had the children in the car, you go, stop, they ain't got no place for you to go to the bathroom, what they got is out there in the flies and the, it filthy you wouldn't even want to go in it. But they had nice bathrooms and have a sign white only, black, and then you go for a drink of water, now they take your money, you go to the service station, go get gas, they'll fill your tank up, but you ask for a drink of water, they got a cooler right there, you looking right at the cooler, no water, but they take your money for your gas. And that's the way they did up until when I left Washington, in, way up, even after they called this, a, some places along the road, they still didn't want to serve you. (Q) Now did you find a big difference then, between going from Virginia into North

Carolina? (E) Well its the same thing from after you leave Richmond. (Q) Richmond, so Richmond was sort of the border, Mason Dixon. (E) And after you leave Richmond, you could take any kind of ferry that come along but that's, they hand it out to you, don't care how you look or how nothing, your children, if you had to go out in the, I don't know, it was a mess. (Q) You were talking about the way that blacks could control blacks economically by keeping them from getting loans and that kind of thing. Do you remember that happening to your father? (E) Well see my father I've never knew of Papa, you know, he never had no trouble cause he dealt with feed stores, Jacobs, you know Jacobs where he had the feed store. He had a big store down there. And when you were in grocery, he dealt with a the big company. And he never had trouble cause he always paid. And the biggest part, Papa would pay cash. But he never had Jacob's, I remember Jacob's where he use to buy feed, he had a account due when he died. We paid it. What was balanced that he owed Jacob. And I think Jacob was about the only place that he owed. That was the seed store. And that wasn't much. But the banks he never, he always would put his money in the bank, like all the people did to save it, and use it when he needed it. And, uh, but he always would keep money above the water heater, on its own. (Q) So people would get their credit mainly at stores then. (E) Yeah, you didn't had to go nowhere and ask for credit or nothing. If I own a store and you wanted credit, it was up to me to let you have it. All this stuff about your credit unions and all, we didn't have nothing like that. (Q) How about your father

sounds, like he was quite a prosperous man and independent like you said. Did you think that he ever got in trouble with whites because he was independent? You know they didn't want to see somebody, a black person succeed in that way? (E) I never had no one in, I never heard tell, but they, Papa always know how to far to go with the people. See if you know how to take care of yourself and he never get things out of the law, against the law. As long as you didn't do things against the law, get your money hard like Papa did, from the muscle, you didn't have no trouble. Cause Papa had a nice home and everything. But they seem to be respect him for it. But for knowing anything like they try to hurt him or stop him or something like that, I never heard. (Q) Do you think, did he have, were there white people who would help him out, that smoothed his way, in that way? (E) No. What he did, Papa worked for his and all they helped him was when they buyed vegetables and stuff like that. (Q) So they were just his customers? (E) Yeah, yeah customers. No, he never knowed him depend on nobody for help you know. (Q) Now, you talked, you lived in Wilmington and you've talked about Halifax County as being rubbish up there. Now how does New Bern fit into these places? How does New Bern compare to Old James City, or this area, compared to Halifax County or to Wilmington? In terms of the way that black people live. (E) That's hard to say. It ain't hard to say cause Halifax County, ruble, ruble. And in Wilmington, its the same. (Q) What do you mean by that? What makes something ruble? (E) They didn't let the black person go but so far. Stopped them. You

couldn't go, you go to the store you could spend your money anywhere. But if you had to go to the bathroom, or go something like that, they had no place for you. (Q) And in New Bern you could go to the bathroom? (E) No! (Q) Okay. So they were all the same. (E) No. There is a sign everywhere. No. You wasn't going nowhere. And I think some places, they said, they ain't got no bathroom, but you can't go in. Right here in New Bern if I have been to some stores and asked for bathrooms and they say they don't have one. But you see a sign up there for people, you know, private. So, I tell you one thing, you told the south, from New Bern here where I lived, in the south it ain't no different. (Q) Right, so it's all the same. (E) They sort of smooth it over a bit now, but if you lived back then, and you know what happened back then, you still can feel it. And you can see it. Cause I watch a lot of things and the courtesy. Some people, now everybody ain't like that. All white ain't like that. Some of them acts real nice. I don't know who it is, cause my grandchildren, the two boys I raised, my grandsons they had all their friends, just about were white. And they still got friends in Wilmington, they went to college over in ECU, and they still got white friends. And I don't put them all, they, a lot of them come here and treat me with respect, younger, and their parents. When they were growing up, I didn't drive at night and a lot of their parents, if anything they went to St. Pauls, and they the people would come up and take them, you know, back and forth at night when any programs or anything was going on. But I don't think everybody in New Bern, is rebels, but

some of them trys, but if you push them in a corner, you can see it. But long as you tend to your business and they tend to theirs, you can get along with them. But step out of line, one minute, they're on your back. But now they got to the fact and most everybody they think, now a days niggers has just got to be on drugs or something, black people. They still catch you. They put the black people all over the television. Now yesterday, the day before yesterday, in Pitt County Court, this man got a home, everything, come to find out everything he had, was, he was one the big drug dealers. They put him on screen a little bit, then shut him off. See that ain't fair. You, there is just as many criminals in one race as the other. But why would you put all the black in, just to make the, you don't want your race to think that the black people is evil, they mean, they'll kill ya. Black people ain't like that, its bad people in every race. I don't care how you figure it. Now they talk about T.V., all these crimes, what about back there when the gangster, what about back there in them years when I was a child. They didn't have no television to see it, but you could see it in the movies. And you could see it, hear it, on the radio. But this was the drugs and back there I was 17 or 18 years old the first time I went to New York. They had reefers, people were smoking reefers, that was drugs. And one of, the man I know, smoking reef about walk off the L Station. I look at him, I say to myself, why is the world is people talking about. It's like this drug stuff is just started. These people way back when I was I was, they drink, people get drunk, way back then. And

what is this, what's happening now? Cause the children can see it on TV, maybe some children don't understand it, they think you can get away with killing like that. I don't, I say it, they should take the a lot of that off, cause this young generation ain't like the old generation. In a way of speakin, a lot of children think that you can do this stuff and get away with it. I, I agree, there needs to take some of this stuff off, cause some children, think its for real, you know this crime this stuff is for real. (Q) But what about, how about when you were growing up, how did the police treat black people when you were growing up? (E) Well one thing about policemen didn't come on James City. Most of the kids, uh, them young men in James City, you couldn't even come over James City to see a girlfriend, if you lived in New Bern. So the policeman, uh, they wasn't to hot about James City, about coming over. Cause back then, those days, them young men would protect over James City. And, uh, they felt like what ever they do they still, they own school. Whatever they said, years ago. (Q) Was there ever a time when you felt like you needed some protection, and the police wouldn't come over? (E) I ain't never, if it were left up to me, they wouldn't have no police. Cause I never messed with the law, the law never messed with me. I never had no trouble or nothing in all my days. I never had no trouble, so, I ain't had to call the police or nothing. Only thing when somebody broke in here and took me radio. That's all they took. My television out that room, and the daughter, the other daughter called police. I didn't even call them then. Cause I never got the television back.

So, I never had no trouble. (Q) Now how was it different, do think than people growing up in James City, and in New Bern, considering you know growing up in an all black community and then over in New Bern, you know living in a sort of segregated community, where there were a lot more white people. Do you think that made a difference in the kind of person you became, or in your attitudes?

(E) Well, I don't know. I never, for me, I grewed up you know, kind of, you know, not being prejudice and all this. I grewed up just like a family thing and I never had, until I got grown, had any dealings most with people you know, all this stuff with people. So, I never, I always got along with people. I never had no trouble about, you know, even out here, a lot of people had a lot of trouble, but I never had. (Q) What kind of trouble would people have?

(E) Well, you go out here and they take the stuff and sell it. You know what I mean, just like they're doing right now. Whatever they want they take it. Don't care how hard you worked for it or nothing. Its progress. But you ain't got no progress. You worked all your life just like people way back there coming out of James City, coming here buying these lots, building these, they ain't the finest of homes, but they home and they paid for it. Now they taking, now over there, my house was sitting right, they took my house over there right in the middle of the by-pass. I had a house right there. They went to Leesville. I had land from, my daddy had land from the highway back to the railroad. They cut right through that, just did it. Now what land they left was from this highway to second highway and the rest, them come clean out

here where William Store was. We had land clean out to William Store. You know where that service station, that shopping place right up there. That whole place up there, and its a patch of land right there, that vacant land right between William's and the black community, that's suppose to be my property. They got it so messed up that I don't know where, what happened. My husband, he, what I had left were the roads took, I had a piece left in there, but I don't know that the tax people, he wouldn't pay income, but he was a self-worked, he worked in Washington, DC subcontracting. The governor, now this land was mine, he didn't have nothing to do with it, my father left it to me when my husband, he, cause he was married to me, then he took my property, he sold it, auctioned it off. I didn't even know nothing about it. My daughter, she called me from Washington, told me, I didn't even know what was going on. And I don't think they have a right to take may land, and not tell me nothing, and sell it. But I never had, if I could of, could get a lawyer, but they so expensive, and they want to be sure of money, if I could get a lawyer, I could check it out. But they took my land, and they still taking more. That was way back then. Now they got how many highways, one, two, there's two over, one on that side, and two on this side, that's three lanes. They took black peoples land from them, three roads right there. And then come back and took the bypass. Now they coming back to take the rest of it. Now you can just say, progress, well why can't progress be somewhere else? You go ride through North Carolina you see nothing but open fields, they don't touch that. They come here where

people sweated, and their grandparents, and their great grandparents, sweated to get these little pieces of land. It ain't no ----- but its home. And its paid for. They ain't gonna take all that for the airport, take all this for the bridge, why can't they go somewhere else. Why they got to come through the black community? Every time, its the black people, got to sacrifice. And they get less than anybody. They give them, I'll be frank and tell you, when they took that land over there, oh, I don't know, that house over there, I don't know why it got sold. Its such a little bit. A few hundred dollars. They said they paid what the value of the property. They had in the Court House what the value of the property, that's all they give you for the, and you know, you work your lifetime for it, and that's fair. Call that fair, no it ain't fair. But one day, they gonna find out somebody gonna take things the same way they took somebody else's and it don't feel so good. Cause these people is old now. They can't go out here and buy land and take your land, like here in New Bern you pay a lot. A lot is around seven or eight thousand dollars. Just a clean piece of land, ain't that right. I don't know how much it is, but they don't give them enough to buy land. How you gonna build a house? A house, fifty, you can't get a fifty-thousand dollar house, no more. They are up in the hundreds. Now how you get them to take their house, it ain't the thought of the house, but you could give them a decent place to live, see that they got a home. They live, if you gonna take it, if it's progress, let them be progress. Let them gain in it. You take my home and leave

me, I'm 70 years old, 75, the average people that lived in these places is near about 80. Now how is they gonna, they gonna buy another home. What can they do. It just don't make sense. But it's progress, let, tell it, well how much progress do they have to have. Do they have to take it from, how many years does it been to be taking peoples land from New Bern. These people suffered. They James City, and put them out of there. The people scrambled and brought over here, and try to make a home for themselves. Now they got a little comfort, now they gonna take the, they took the houses and put them behind the graveyard. That's the only place they could go. Now they want that back. Some of them is back there, right over where some of them is trying to scuffle. Now that's the bypass they pushed them from, the bypass back over there. Now, the airport wants that. Now where they going now. And then the bridge is gonna take the rest of it. All these people and grandparents and great grandparents go for, they had a home for their children and great grandchildren. Now they ain't gonna have nothing. And the most of the people that's living on this land is in the 70's and 80's, some of them is older than I is. I am 77. And some of them are 80, 90. Now where they going? What can they do? Nothing but old folks homes, and die, cause a lot of people use their hand at their own stuff, why do they have, they ain't got nothing to hope for, but to die. It ain't fair. It's not fair. I don't care who it is or who do it, and they ain't God, but there's a God up there. And you, if the Bible ain't wrong, such as a man sow, so shall he reap. And if they don't reap, they children and children

gonna reap it, cause it goes back to the third and fourth generation. Them that do wrong, so if you do wrong they feel it's progress, what is progress, when life depends on it. You take a persons life for progress. That ain't fair. But God is above us all. Man's mighty, but God's all mighty. When he gets to stop them, they will reap just what they sowed. Some other nation will come and do them the same way they doing us. And it may not be in my day, but somewhere down the line, you gonna pay for what you do. And the Bible said, you defend the least of my little ones. You do it for me. So if you don't know who you fending, you don't know who God's people, you see. And people go in and take over, but they forgot they ain't God. There's a man up there, whether you believe in him or not, he's there, cause the breath you breath, he giving it to you. And when he get ready to stop it, you riches is gone. So you do, man's mighty but God's all mighty. And when you go, you can go back to the difficult times, when God suffered, the world they take over. But his children Farrow, way back in biblical times, they was mighty, but when God stopped them, they stopped them. And the same thing of today, people got there face, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar, they don't care, they take their grandmom up for a dollar, sell out. And they gonna sell out and sell out and sell out to one of these days the dollar ain't gonna be good. It's gonna be just like the confederate money. The confederate money, they took confederate money, what, when the war was over, it wasn't no good. They gonna keep right on messing with the foreigners selling out, selling out, you don't know right,

today, how much foreigners own here in the United States. And one of these days, its gonna be a reckoning. They gonna, we gonna have yeahing and everything else. You watch, I may be dead and gone, cause these people is just like the Bible says, money is the fruit of all evil. And these people is going crazy, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar. They get every dollar they can rake and scrape, any kind of a way they can get it. Then when they get all the money, they, they wants the power. The tell who can live and who can die. They take over God business. They get you out the way when they want to, if you don't do what they want, they put you away. But see, they do that to a certain extent, but one day all this is coming to a head, and when it comes to a head, you can't have no control over it, cause God is out there, just like the water. They ain't got no control over it, cause God's in it. Man put the sand bags and if God see fit, it go right up again. People got to stop and think about God and not theyselves all the time. Because God is this world. And this, he's mighty. You can forget him, they took him out the schools, alright, what is the children in school got to look forward to. They talk about there is drug in the school, pistols in the school, when I was a child they didn't have all that in school. Children didn't even think about it. Children played and had fun. Now they got guns. Now they're selling drugs. Where's God? We, when we were going to school, they didn't never, you never go to your class, all would come in the auditorium, all the kids come in, teachers and have prayer and sing then march to your class. That was the beginning of the day. They don't do that

no more. What is the children got to look forward to? Their mothers working the fathers working and children are on their own. These children go to school, all they can give out, drugs and pistols and fighting. When they had prayer in the school, the children, there were some bad children then, all of them wasn't good, but the majority of the children had something to look forward to. They had a future of God and what they want out of life. But now the ain't got it. That's the reason 15, 16 year old children, selling drugs, on dope. Why do you think is out there doing it? Because they don't have nothing to look forward to. (Q) Now when you were, you were a girl, now you said you had prayer in school, what else was different in school back then? (E) The children, you had homework, and you did that homework. Now, my teacher use to give a switch in school sitting up there and if you do wrong the get you. They'll whip you and then you go home and get a whipping. So the parents would work with the teacher. Cause if I do something, if you do something in school, course I was always scared of whipping. But if you do, children do something in school, the teacher didn't have no telephone number, they get the message and when you get home, you have switch waiting for you there. And the teachers, if you fight, the principal, if you fight on the way going to school or coming from school, he'd call you in the office and if you were, he was just like you parents. And children was afraid to do wrong, cause they know they gonna get punished, at home and at school. But now what happens. They ain't got no punishment at home, they ain't got nothing at school. (Q)

Now did your, the teachers in James City, did they live in James City? (E) Uh huh. (Q) Oh, they did. So they lived, they were your neighbors? (E) Yeah, they grewed up together, then finally, they thought that taking the children from Foers----, sitting down in those little schools in Foers--- and then a in Riverdale. And all of them had, you know, put them on the bus and bring them up here. Then after that stopped, then that stopped, they integrated schools, and they shared this school and everybody went to Brinson, the grammar, and then New Bern. (Q) Now when you were growing up did you like school? (E) No. I could walk to school. (Q) No. But did you like it? (E) Oh, I loved to go to school. (Q) What did you like about it? (E) Well when you go to school, your free, you got to play, you can study and it was just a lot of fun. I enjoyed going to school. I couldn't wait for school. (Q) Until what grade does the school over here go to? (E) It went to eighth grade and then you had to go to New Bern. (G) But before then, tell about the little school that you went to before they opened this school here. (E) I did tell her. (Q) Right, and this was a man, he tutored children or gave private lessons to them. (E) Who? (Q) This, the private school. The private school or the school that you had gone to before the school over here. (E) He was an old man, he was, uh, you know, back there, they didn't have, about you got to have a diploma and all this. If you know how to read and write, you could teach and your people would send the children there to learn how to the ABC's and everything else. So, this old man taught me. When I went to public school, I know my ABC's, I

could read and everything. (Q) Now when you say that the school, the school wasn't open in New Bern then, at that time, you were one of the first students to go into the school? (E) Well see James City children could go, the few children that went to school was Catholic, if you Catholic children, went to New Bern to Catholic School. But the rest of, the majority of the people, they have a little place up here like they have a hall, like a dance hall and downstairs and so the people years come through and started teaching in there. After they left James City, then that probably would be the first of the 1900's then they start that. This old man, old man Sawyer, use to teach children. (Q) But then, but then you said, so when did the public school open then in James City? (E) That one there the first public school was in 29. (Q) And you were one of the first students to go to that school? (E) All the children, they, from this little place, where this little, see after the year, then they started teaching they had one or two public teachers that teach in this little hall. (G) Were you one of the first children to go to that school? (E) Yeah! When they opened the school. (Q) Okay, so when you went, started going to that school it had just opened. (E) Uh huh. Brand new, they most your children from that old place where we were going to school and to this school. This was the first public school. (Q) Now how much education had your parents been able to get? (E) Well my mother got, oh, mama got high school, up in high school. (Q) So did she finish high school? (E) I don't know, she could read and write better than I can. And my daddy, he was educated to, but

mostly children that didn't go to school, the parents taught them, at home. You know, a lot of the children were taught before they even got home, cause my mama use to teach me years before I was even old enough to go to school. (Q) Now did all children go to school? (E) They didn't make them go. Some children didn't want to go, parents wouldn't send them, let them work and stuff. But the majority of the people wanted their children to go to school. But some children didn't go, but majority of people sent their children to school. (G) Would that be because most of the people in James City wasn't farming like there was in the outer areas? See, I remember when I was going to school, a lot of the kids had to stay and take in the chops, in other areas. But James City never had a big farming, so. (E) They never had no farms that they had to stop school. In Halifax County, children use to couldn't go to school till after they get the cotton and stuff in. They didn't have but about 6 months of school. But down here they had 9 months in James City. (G) So it was always a full term, the school term. (E) Uh huh, 9 months. (G) The surrounding area, like Brice's Creek and Riverdale, they had farms, so their children would sometimes have to stay out to do crops, you know. (Q) Now was education important to your parents? (E) Uh huh. To me to. All of us. (Q) Now did you go to high school then? (E) No I got to go to high school and I went blind. Down there on that same farm, I got some kind of poison bugs. One morning we was down there taking vegetables, you know, getting vegetables out the farm and some kind of bug flew in my eye, and I mashed him like that and before I

could get from Leesville to New Bern I couldn't see out of one eye and it was about a couple hours, I couldn't see nothing. And so papa took me to the doctor and he couldn't understand it and all I know, it was poison insect, this insect that I mashed in my eye was the cause of it. So I, he couldn't do nothing about it, he, uh, couldn't understand why. He put stuff in my eyes and that didn't do, he would talk and talk all the time. So, uh, I stayed like that about a couple months, where I couldn't see day light. So, old man Adin Benjamin, at that time they had a horse and cart, and he told mama to get some aloe, this aloe, you know where, and burn it on the stove, they had old cook stoves then, you know iron cook stoves then, so they put it on the stove, let it, you know, melt on the top of the stove and then take it off. When it get hard, crumble it up, you know, like it would before crumbling it up in little bits. Put a little bit in each one of my eyes, and take the white of a egg, like you would for a cake, beat that up and put a little aloe in there, and make it like a pack and at night, put it on my eye. And in a weeks time I could see day light. And in the morning you take hot water and you know, just get the stuff out. But mama did for about a week or two weeks and I could see just like I seen. But I never could see up until now, I can't read but so long, for the words go, mix up. And so I tried to go back to school and tried and tried and it, I just couldn't see. I couldn't study, so I end up had to stop school. (Q) Were your brothers and sisters able to finish high school? Any of them? (E) My sister did. My sister went to, what is it, Barbour, where that, on West

Street. (G) This --- was West Street, and there was the Barbour School. (E) I didn't, I had one sister, she, she went to high school, but I never did make it on the count of my eyes. So, uh, I couldn't go to school no more, so I just went to work. (Q) Now this Mr. Benjamin, who made this. (E) He was an old man, use to live right down here in Leesville. (Q) Now did he make other kinds of medicine? (E) No, he just, its just like old people, years ago they didn't have no doctor book on medicine, they used old remedies, and some times I do what mama use to tell me. I ain't went to the doctor in 19 years, isn't since mama died. I had a, I went to the doctors then, for just to have tests and then I go for, you know, check-ups. But I ain't had no drugs or nothing in all them years. I use old stuff, like mama tells me. Just like I told you the other day about that cough medicine. (Q) So you still make medicines? (E) No, I still use, there's a few stores in New Bern, drug stores, that keep that old medicine, and I still know the name of it. When mama, you know, when I was a, mama use to use it on us. So, now and then, just like I tell my daughter the other day, I saw some medicine I use to take for cold, and it was like a laxative, it was in a grocery store. So, uh, I always, the old people use to things that ,uh, they used the herbs, stuff out in yard. They raised stuff right in the yard and just like when you had a high fever, they use to take palm of christian--- leaves and put them on your head and tie it up and the things would cripple up and fore you knew it your fever gone. And doctor giving you shots, hurt, so I mean, another thing that is right, but you know sometime

old people start, a lot of people say it wasn't no good. I don't say they could, you know surgical and stuff like that, cause uh, but I'm talking about little headaches and little stuff like that, little odd remedies. (Q) Now did your when your mother had her children, did she have a mid-wife? (E) When she had children, uh huh. (Q) Now what kind, would the mid-wife prepare any kinds of herbal remedies? (E) Well back there, they wouldn't let children see nothing. (Q) Okay. (E) You didn't even, I use to, they use to have me so crazy, I use to, they say babies come out of tree stumps. And I use to be silly enough to go look in the tree stumps thinking I would see some. People, children didn't know about, like they do now. You didn't even know where those babies come from, nothing. They didn't tell you nothing. (Q) I wanted to go back a little bit cause I wanted to learn what happened after you went to school, what happened after you finished school, but I just wanted to know a little more about the community, that you grew up in here. (E) Well, the community, they church going people. They had, uh, it was really, with the James City, and, uh, Brownsville people, the church use to be full. And they use to have Sunday evenings we have, Sunday morning you go to Sunday School, and, uh, Sunday evening, uh, 11 o'clock church, Sunday evening they would have a some kind of program or something, but then 5 o'clock Sunday evening they had BYPU and Sunday night they have programs. One church, or the other one. And people use to take the children in, you got an older person to go in with, you couldn't go in after dark, without some older person taking you. So they use to, we use

to have, an old lady, single lady, and, uh, we all the children use to go to her for to take us to church on Sunday nights, if the parents didn't go. (Q) Now this single lady who did this, was that common for single women to, to. (E) No, no, no, no, she was just a friend, she had nieces and we were friends of the nieces. And she was just a outgoing person, you know, and she had a boy friend but we didn't, when Sunday evening come, he come visit her, we get mad, so we couldn't get to her to tell her about we want to go to church Sunday night. So, we just, we just didn't like the boy friend, if we want to go somewhere, cause we could always depend on her to take us. (Q) So you love to go to church then. (E) Yeah, I did. I still, but I'm, there old now and when the heat come, I can't do to much about it going. I had to take care my health more. But I use to go to church, Sunday School, 11:00 church, and then to Jones Chapel, they had evening Sunday School. Go to Sunday School there and go sit with the old people and talk to them, the old slavery people, and talk to them till time for BYPU. (Q) Now did you go, did you belong to Pilgrim Chapel? (E) No, I belong to Shiloh, Mount Shiloh. (Q) What were some of the gathering places in your neighborhood? (E) Up to the railroad crossing. (Q) The railroad crossing. And people would just sit, stand there and talk. (E) The railroad crossing, the railroad crossing in James City, in Old James City. And down to the beach. We had a place down here, the young people use to go, call it a beach. (Q) What did people do at the railroad crossing and at the beach? (E) Well the trains would come. Every Sunday morning people would get on

the trains and go to Morehead, down to the beach, now in Morehead. And so, Sunday evening wasn't no where to go, so the children went and the boyfriends and the little girls come up to the railroad cause to see who went down to Morehead that Sunday morning. It was just a little ordinary thing, but we enjoyed it. We walked from Brownsville to the railroad crossing and that's the way we use to do. (Q) Were there places where men gathered and then other places were women gathered, you know to talk among themselves? (E) Well the only thing people would do, go to church. The people go to church a lot. The older people would go to church and just like they, anything they heard discussing, they have a night like Tuesday night, or Monday night, all the members and people come together and they talk over what, you know, business and anything like that. That's how they use to do. And they had lodges, like people belong to lodges, and, uh, they had a place where they go. The men, you know, so it was just ordinary thing, but people enjoyed it. (Q) Were there any burial society's or other mutual help society's, like I've heard something about a pound society? (E) Yeah, that was a society people joined and when they die, people die they have so much money they give, you know, cause burials, then was, wasn't so much, wasn't even a hundred dollars or more. People use to put money in this little society, you know, but that was years ago, before the bureau of anything. Cause they didn't have nobody with ---- list was the main funeral parlor for black and, um, another two more, Hatch was one and then they had another one, oh, I can't recall its name, it was right there where

they got the place I was telling you they put the, in New Bern. But any how, there was three undertakers parlors. (Q) And were they all over in New Bern? (E) Ain't none of them was over in James City. All of them was over in New Bern. So, people would use them. (G) Did you explain how the people were buried and how they carried on the ceremonies when they died here? (E) No. When people die, they didn't take them out, they would embalm them and put them back in the house in your living room. And they would let them stay there till it time to bury them. And the people would come to the house, nights and sing and do, till the burial. They never, recent years they started taking them out the house, but most of the time the people was, die, if they take them to the funeral parlor they bring them back to the house and the body stayed in the house till the time they burial. And body be in the front room, you'd be in this other part, our people in the evenings singing. (Q) Now was that frightening to you as a child? (E) Yeah, I was scared all of them. Somebody could die in New York and I was scared of them. I was even scared when my daddy died and that was in the forties. So I had to convince myself that dead people wasn't gonna hurt you. -So what I did, I just went out, turn all lights in the house, went out in his car, when he died he still had his car, went sitting there, and I ain't see nothing, I ain't heard nothing. And I did that, after that I got, I wasn't scared no more. So, my sister died, I stay right now by myself. After I buried her. I ain't scared no more. I stay right here by myself. But back there, I was scared of somebody die in New York. And I

know it. But it wasn't nothing, just my mind. People use to scare you to death talking about spirits come this and if you die in the mine, oh boy. And children believe every bit of it. (G) Did they tell a lot of stories about dead people? (E) Yeah, coming back and all this mess. It was just a hoax. Yeah, a whole lot of ghosts. (Q) Now you said your father after he lost everything in the banks, that he started a taxi service? (E) No, he was doing it before. Everything he was doing, he did it just the same, he never stopped. (Q) Now, did he take people over to the school? I heard something about that. (E) No, he would take them like people had to go to work, working out in, and like people going away on the train would run in that train station there. People would take the train and go. (Q) Tell me a little about the community you grew up and the people you grew up with. (E) No. I grew up here in James City.

SOURCES

GREEN, JOHN B. III. A NEW BERN ALBUM. NEW BERN, NC:
THE TRYON PALACE COMMISSION, 1985

MOBLEY, JOE A. JAMES CITY: A BLACK COMMUNITY IN
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES,
DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY, 1981

SANDBECK, PETER B. THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF NEW
BERN AND CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA. NEW BERN,
NC.: THE TRYON PALACE COMMISSION, 1988

EAST CAROLINA COLLECTION: EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
GREENVILLE, NC

DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COLLECTION: RALEIGH,
NC

MARY BAKER : JOURNAL OF NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE JAMES CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. COLLECTION:
JAMES CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. NEW BERN, NC

THE JAMES CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXPRESSES
THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR SHARING THEIR
KNOWLEDGE: MRS. GRACE GEORGE, PRESIDENT WHO
PRESENTED ALL THE INFORMATIONAL SOURCES COMPLIED IN
THE BOOKS SUBMITTED AND GAVE ENDLESS HOURS OF
DEDICATED SERVICE TO THIS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. ALL OF
THE SENIOR CITIZENS PARTICIPANT IN THE SUBMISSION OF
THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS. MRS. HATTIE H. MOORE ,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JAMES CITY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, INC.