



MRS. ERNESTINE CLEMMONS BORN 1914. WITH HER DAUGHTER MRS. GRACE GREEN GEORGE BORN NOV. 15, 1936. HOLDING HER GRAND DAUGHTER NANCY D'CHELLE GREEN HICKS. BORN JUNE 24, 1994. MRS. GEORGE IS THE FOUNDER AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE JAMES CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. MRS. GEORGE IS THE GREAT GRAND DAUGHTER OF THE LATE WASHINGTON SPIVEY. LEADER OF JAMES CITY COMMITTEE OF TWELVE. ALSO THE FIRST POSTMASTER IN 1890. NANCY D'CHELLE GREEN HICKS IS THE SEVENTH GENERATION OF WASHINGTON SPIVEY.

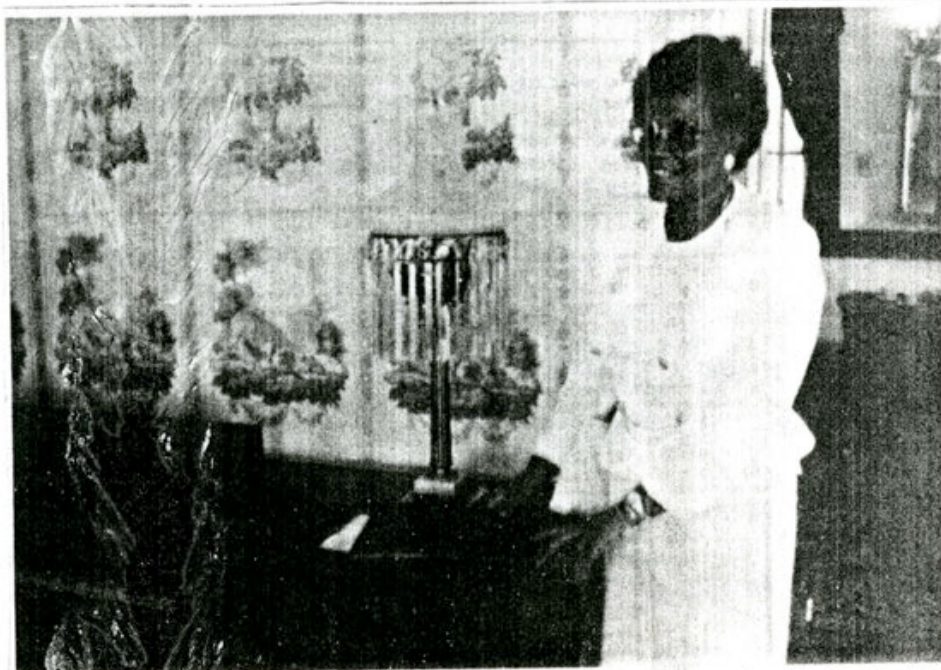
9/91

New Committee New Chairman

The Board of Directors of the New Bern Historical Society appointed Grace George as Chairman of the Committee to Explore a Black History Museum in James City.

Grace, a former New Bernian, recently returned to New Bern and retired after 30 years of teaching in New York. She was instrumental in the organization of the newly formed James City Historical Society. Her dream is to have a Black History Museum in James City. In order to fulfill her dream, she needs the support of the community, utilizing the skills and talents of everyone. The committee is in search of black history artifacts.

Members of the New Bern Historical Society are invited to become a part of the Committee to Explore a Black History Museum in James City. If you have an interest in education and history and are willing to volunteer your time, please call the Society office (638-8558).



Member Grace George speaks to the Board of Directors Monday evening, September 9th, during the Board Retreat held at the Attmore-Oliver House. She shared her desire to develop a Black Historical Museum in James City. Mrs. George has been instrumental in the organization of the recently formed James City Historical Society, whose purpose will be to preserve the Black history and culture of the James City and surrounding communities, utilizing the skills and talents of all its citizenry through study and participation. She would like the two historical societies to work on the museum project as a joint venture.

Clemmons George

(E) You know, where the people had to go. (Q) Were there other taxi services? (E) Huh? (Q) Were there other? (E) Yeah, Mr. Dunson had one, Sam Dunson. At that time it, just a couple of them, Mr. Dunson and Papa. (Q) Right. (E) And they were the only, but Papa he was some of the first to have a car. When they started to have cars he was, had an old, one of the first to have old Fords, one of them Ford cars. (Q) Right, now did you, did you, um, did he just have one car in his taxi service? (E) Huh? (Q) Did he just have one car in his taxi service. (E) Well, uh, he had one and then finally my uncle, he got a car. And they, uh, you know, but my uncle didn't do to much, Papa was the one that really taxied. He would, Uncle Bud would take them if somebody wanted, if Papa wasn't around or something like that. But he never did. She say you want some water? (Q) Uh, no I'm fine. (E) So, uh, Papa was the man, most of the thing Uncle Bud did was working in the, he was, studied to the farm, you know, truck farm, they were truck farmers and that's what. Papa-stuck with the farm and the taxi and when they stop handing, uh, come out the car, uh, grocery store, everybody wanted trust and nobody paid the bill so they finally got to the place they wasn't no more, wasn't nothing, you know, but loosening money, so they come out, come out the groceries. (Q) Right. (E) And um, this place over here, he had a pool room up, the store downstairs and a pool room up, upstairs. The guys use to

go there and shoot pool. (Q) So they, this is, this is in their, in the grocery store or in the. (E) Huh? (Q) This was in the grocery store? (E) In the upstairs, two-story, it had a back entrance to go up in the back, in the back there. (Q) Right, right. So your father owned the pool hall as well? (E) Yeah. Yeah, he was, he was one of these go getters. (Q) Now what, what about your mother? You talked a lot about your father, what was your, what kind of person was your mother? (E) Well Mama was a mother. She was uh, a home lady. (Q) Right, okay. (E) And uh, she would work with Papa, like, uh, to the stores when he was out. (Q) Right. (E) She would take care of the store in New Bern. (Q) Right. (E) And uh, come home she was a mama. She didn't do to much getting around and doing like that. But she always was there for us. Until, so she didn't have no, you know. (Q) Uh huh. (E) No way of, Papa was the type, his wife stay home and take care of the family. (Q) Right, right. (E) So she just mama. (Q) Were there many women who could, could stay home with their, at, all the time or was? (E) Yeah, there was other, the people like the Williams and different people that had their own business. (Q) Right. (E) And, it wasn't like, you know it's just like now, working class of people and ones that don't. (Q) Yeah. (E) But most of the time there, back there old men thought, they didn't have much, but they thought the wife should be home with the children. (Q) Right. (E) So it was a quite a few people, that uh, the Joyner's and different people. Doc Joyner, his family, he was a family man took care of, you know, family stay home, his wife

stay home with the children. So it quite a few people. In fact, I think most of the old people believed in the family being home.

(Q) Right. (E) Not like now, if people working, their mothers working their fathers working. But the most of the people years ago, way back in my time, people believed in, old people believed in the family being home. (Q) Right. (G) And most of the women

worked. (E) Whether they had a lot or didn't have a lot they figured that they was better off with the children. (Q) Right.

(G) And what I understand a lot of the women did work, brought their work home, like doing laundry and everything, that way they could. (E) Huh. (G) Most of the women that didn't have family's

that they could, they would stay home with the children and would bring their work home, do the ironing and washing. (E) Well that

was like Miss Mayliz, that's a fewer people did that. It wasn't no majority of people doing it. It was a few families would take

clothes, you know, take it and wash it, and bring them home and wash them and do. But the majority of people, it was a few

families that did that, in a big scale, but uh, most of, that was years, later years, that wasn't way back. As I can remember that

was when I was more like a, uh, a teenage. Miss Mayliz, I remember, Miss Mayliz and Miss Ida and different people. (G) But

Mama use to take in laundry. (E) Huh? (G) My great, my grandma on my fathers side use to take in laundry too. See the old people in

old days. (E) Well I don't remember nothing but back there when Miss, uh, Mayliz and them use to do it. Further back than that, I

don't know. But they might of did it, years, way back in the

1800's but I don't know. All I know was in the 30's, you know, last of the 20's and 30's. (G) I remember when I was little Aunt Grace, the one that I was named for, she use to do laundry. (Q) Uh huh. (G) They still did that laundry, taking in clothes. (Q) Right. (G) And Miss ---- even opened up a laundry place, where the people, and that was, you probably had gone away then. They would bring the clothes to that laundry, it's a big building, and they would wash and iron. (E) Let's see, I wasn't here, I wasn't here then. (Q) Yeah, yeah, okay. (E) I was, I was gone then. Anything happened after the forties, I wasn't here. I didn't, I left here in 42, 43, and left here for good, I went to, I was in Wilmington, and in 1951 I went to Washington, DC. I stayed there till 60's, the end of 60's, then I went to California. (Q) Okay. Well we can get that. (G) Hit some other spots, she can carry you all over the country. (E) Yeah, I think, I had my day, I can sit home, on Chicago, Detroit, California. (G) Tell her about Mississippi. (E) Mississippi, oh God, yeah, you don't want to hear about Mississippi. (Q) When, well we can. (E) My husband was from Mississippi. (Q) Oh really, okay. (E) He was, that was, the worst experience, you talk about Jim Crow, I was scared down there, I was scared of Mississippi in the first place when I left South Carolina. I was, but when I got to Mississippi, we, he drove down there, but I was married the second time in Mississippi. (Q) Uh huh, and when, when was this? (E) 19, uh, 42. (Q) 1942, okay. So you went down to, you drove down to Mississippi? (E) Uh huh. (Q) And why, what made you afraid? (E) Well, we were driving on

down, you know, my cousin was with me, one of my, cause I wouldn't go down there with just my husband, but uh, my cousin went with us. So we drove all the way and we didn't have no where to stay at night. There were motels all the way down the road, but you had to sleep in your car. You could be right, right past one and you couldn't, no, no blacks. So we for a time, we had to sleep in the car. Went all the way through the mountains and we went to the mountains and when we got up in the mountains, you know, the roads wasn't like this now, just one where you had ---- ---- all that reveue down there. (Q) Yeah. (E) So uh, what we did, we got some little place up in the mountain and they had watermelons we stopped up there. The man told us, this white man, told us, you better be out this mountain before dark because any black people up here in the dark they'll kill um. That's was the first scary thing I got. So we got out the mountain. So when we got to Mississippi down to where my husbands home was, we got to the, to the like you, you know, like you go out here to this road out here and, uh, you stopped and if ain't nothing coming, you go on. (Q) Right. (E) So he stop and he start to pull on off, the policeman come somewhere, I don't know where, when I seen him he had the gun right in my husbands face. And he said, did you see that stop sign? We said yeah, we seen the stop sign. He said I stopped. But you didn't stop still. He said well I don't use to driving in the. This is Mississippi, you stop means stop. And he took the pistol out and had it, not even doing but going across the stop, took the pistol and had it right in his face, just like that in the car window. So

he made him, took him to the police station. All of us had to go down the police station. And he wanted to put him in jail for just stop slightly to the stop sign. He told him he had to, you know, so when my husband told him, he had North Carolina tags on the car, so when he, when he told him that he was born and raised in Mississippi, told him who his father was and they was all still down, you know, they let him go without a penny. But he thought he was a, trying to be smart. They say he was trying to be smart. Cause he didn't stop still. That's what happened. And from then on I ready to leave Mississippi. But, and everywhere you go, you can't go nowhere hardly, and if you go in the store, they look at you like the, you was some kind of, of, out of space people. If, you know, you half way look decent, they look, everybody looking at you, you think something's wrong with you. And then they come up and ask you, where you from? You ain't from around here. They scare you. And I, last time I went to Mississippi was when my father-in-law died and it still hadn't gotten much better. (Q) Right, right. (E) A little better but not much. Ain't, ain't, it's not that good that I want to go down there again. (Q) Now what, you said you left, you left home at 16 then? (E) Huh? (Q) You left, you left here at 16? (E) Left here? (Q) Yeah, left, left, uh, left Brownsville? (G) You left James City. (Q) James City. (E) About 15. Went to New York. I was, I was, see I couldn't go to school and I couldn't work and I just determined I didn't want my family, my father to take care of me cause I figured I could take care of myself. So, I tried to work around here for

25 and 50 cent a day and I couldn't make it on that. So, I wanted a little more than that. So, I went to New York. I had a cousin in New York, so I had to, I asked my father, he didn't want me to go, nobody wanted me to go, but I, I just determined that, to work for myself. So I went to New York and worked up there. And worked till I get tired, then I come home and rest, and go back. And then I wasn't, wasn't setting the world on fire up there cause I wasn't getting but \$15 a week. (Q) Right, right. (E) And down here you wasn't getting but 3, \$3 a week if you work out in service. So I worked a bit till, till I meet my husband and married him. (Q) Now, now what kind of work were you doing in New York? (E) Housework. (Q) Housework, okay. (E) Cause there wasn't nothing else to do. (Q) Right. (E) You couldn't go in nothing else but the housework. (Q) Had you done any domestic service before that? Had you worked in peoples houses before? (E) No. Cause all I did was sell vegetables and stuff like that. The first time I worked out, really worked out in service was when I went to New York. (Q) Right, right. (Q) Was there anything else that people could do? (E) What? (Q) In, could, were there other jobs that, that I guess a women could do? (E) Well, unless, the only things black could do was teach school and preach. That's the only, teach school, that's all. That was the hired jobs. (Q) Now your, your husband was from, he was from James City? (E) My husband from Mississippi. (Q) Your first husband? (E) Huh? (Q) Your first husband. (E) Yeah, James City, uh huh. (Q) So you meet him down here. (E) What my first husband? (Q) Uh huh. (E) Yeah, he's young people. (Q)

Now had you known him all your life? (E) Uh huh, first husband.
(Q) Right. (E) Went to school with him. (Q) And you had, and what was your courtship like? (E) Well, it wasn't nothing but like children we go walk up to the railroad crossing you and your boyfriend and it's just, just ordinary. Wasn't nothing to do but to talk and walk and set on your front porch and talk, that's it.
(Q) Did you like New York City for that reason? (E) Huh? (Q) What was the big change that you found when you went to the city? (E) Nothing but work hard. (Q) Oh, okay. (E) And every time I did, I, uh, I know the people that, they would, use to have, uh, once a year or something like a ball in, uh, New York. (Q) Right. (E) And they'd go to that ball once a year and that's where you meet all the people from, from here. (Q) Right. (E) That left here and went to New York, you could see them all when you go to this ball, once a year. (Q) Right, right. (E) And I'd try to go that and after then it just working come home and go to movies. (Q) Right. (E) I knowed every picture that changed in the movies, cause you'd go to movies for 10 or 15 cents. (Q) Right. (E) And the neighborhood movie, I use to go every time I come to work. I wasn't to tired I'd go to the movie. (Q) Right, yeah, yeah. (E) So that's the way, just ordinary life. (Q) Uh huh. Now where did you and your husband go after you got married? (E) What? (Q) Your first husband. (E) Nowhere. The same place. (Q) You went to New York again? (E) No. After we separated. (Q) Oh, okay. (E) We separated and, uh, he was still a boy a mama's boy and I didn't want mama's boy, so we just separated. And then we stayed

separated and after I met my husband from Mississippi I got a divorce. (Q) Right, right, right. (E) And then I married him. (Q) Now, now, this is, this, the first husband is your father, is that right? (G) Yeah. (Q) And you, you stayed here then? You were brought up here? (G) Yeah, I stayed with my grandmother. (Q) Oh, okay, I see. (G) My father's mother. (Q) Right, right. (E) See what happened when I was born, uh, my mother like to say they were very young. And they separated and so I was more or less stayed with my father's people. (Q) Right, okay. (G) That's why I'm sort of on that side mostly, but my mother and father being young they went on their, with their lives. (Q) Uh, huh, right, right. (G) And so they sort of took care of me, but I was with grandma. My father's mother. (Q) Uh, huh, right, right. (G) And so that's where my story begins. (Q) Begins. Okay, well we can just talk a little bit more. (G) Talk more to her cause she has more to say. (Q) Okay, okay. (G) But that's where my story begins. (Q) Right, okay. Now were, were you, so you, you went, where did you go after you got separated? You went back to New York City? Right, okay. (E) I go to New York and stay till I get tired. I work till I get tired and then I come home to mama and rest and then go back until I met my husband. When they started building Cherry Point, that's when I met my husband. He was a cement finisher. (Q) Okay. (E) He come here to work down at the Cherry Point, and uh, that's where I met him. He'd been living up there with some of, people, friends I know. (Q) Right. (E) And we got acquainted there. (Q) Uh huh, right. Now I know that Cherry

Point, the building of Cherry Point was a big turning point for the black community. (E) Yes, that's for everybody around New Bern's turning point. Because that's when people could get decent jobs, cause other than that you was working for 50 cent and 25 cent, anything you could get. (Q) Right. (E) Three dollars a week anything. But when the Cherry Point come, people got a chance to, to work down there. My husband he was making a hundred, a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week. That was big money. That's what he, cement finisher, when they were making Cherry Point. And they thought he was, he the money man. It was a lot of people, strangers, come here when Cherry Point, when they building Cherry Point. (Q) Right. (E) So I, when Cherry Point was 50 years old, I had been married 50 years. Cause I remember when the first was, when they first bombed Pearl Harbor, I was scared to death. I was looking for the --- minute for the bomb to hit New Bern. (Q) Right. (E) I don't know. (Q) Right. Now, now your, so your husband had come from Mississippi to Cherry Point? (E) Yeah, when he come from Mississippi and I married him, he came in forty. Forty-two we got married. (Q) Uh huh. And what, what happened after, after the base was finished? Were there still a lot of jobs? (E) I don't know we left we he got through we cement finishing. He left and went to Wilmington, that's where the shipyard was. And he was a, he went to Wilmington and was the shipper. You know, working on the ships. (Q) Uh huh. (E) And he made good money down in the shipyard. And when that give out, then he went to Washington, DC. (Q) Right. (Q) Now how, how did making

more money like this, how did that change your life, you life personally? (E) I don't see no difference. I just, things that I wanted, I just got. You know what I mean, I didn't never get excited, you know what I mean? Like some people, to me, I just, just living a little better, I didn't have to work. I just had my children cause, I had three more children and I just, uh, stayed home with and take care of. He, when he went to, uh, Washington after he left the shipyard, he went, uh, subcontracting. (Q) Okay. (E) You know, sewage and stuff like manholes and stuff, he went into that. So, he would subcontract from there, he was working for he's self. So he subcontract the, uh, work, from, uh, the builders and things, you know. And uh, so he had his own, had his own men working for him and everything else up until, what was me and him were 60, in the 60's, 60's or 70's, first, last, middle of the 60's. And he died, when he died, he was, uh, had subcontracting up until about a year or so before he died. (Q) Right, okay. Now, um, and then you moved to California? (E) Uh huh. (Q) After that. (E) When, when, um, my sister was out there so me and my daughter went out there. She got married and so I went with her husband and her out to California. I stayed out there about, how many years? Good while, till the 70's, up in the 70's, till mama died in 74. (Q) Now throughout this time, were you coming back to James City? (E) Well when I went, when I was living in Washington, I come back and forth cause my mother was still here and Grace was still here. So I come back and visit, so often. You know, drive from, I'd drive from Washington to New Bern myself. (Q) Right. (E) And I

visited and then after I went to California I don't think I come in no more till 74. (Q) Right, right. (E) I was, I lived in Washington about 30 years. (Q) Right, right. Now what, what was your favorite place to live? Where did you, where did you like living the most? (E) Well, for a while I used to love Washington, Washington, DC. Till all this uproar stuff started then it changed, you know, all this, uh, blowing up and fighting and going on. And you'd never look like, never was the same. (Q) Right, right. What did you like about it, when you were living there? (E) Oh, it was just a nice place to live and you didn't have to worry about people, you know, don't hit this, don't hit that, you just get you a nice home and live there, raise children, go to school, and go to church. It was nice. It, really enjoyed it. I really enjoyed Washington. It was, the, it was, wasn't all this stuff going on like it is now. It was just a nice place to live, neighborhoods and everything else. Where I lived, I always lived in, uh, nice neighborhood, you know, and it was integrated neighborhood. (Q) What section did you live in? (E) I lived in the Northwest, the Northwest section. And, uh, near, right to the border of Silver Springs, in the District of Columbia. (Q) Now uh, how do you, how did, you said you neighborhood was integrated? (E) Yeah. (Q) Does that mean that you had some white, white people living right next door to you? (E) Uh huh. (Q) Okay. (E) But we wasn't, we talk if you'd come out to the front, see. But we didn't visit each other. (Q) Right. (E) It was just like you and your house and I'm in my house. And everybody kept the neighborhood up

and kept everything nice. So, we all got along cause we never did, have no, and the most of the people that live in this neighborhood was kind of professional people. (Q) Uh huh. (E) And we all, the black people we use to have block meetings and keep the, you know, our section nice all the time. So it was really nice, I enjoyed it and the church was nice, real nice. You know, you could go to church and enjoy that to. But we all had, in fact, I, it was really nice in Washington at that, but now, I wouldn't want to live there for nothing. (Q) Right. Now were black people, were black people in your neighborhood as neighborly as they had been in James City? Did people do the same kinds of things for each other in the city? (E) No people, people, people in, in uh, Washington, mostly big cities like that, you stay in your house, I'll stay in my house. But we be friends if we see each other we know we're neighbors but you never had, uh, only time you talk to, even the black neighbors, its when you have block meeting and belong to the meeting you go there. That's to improve our neighborhood and keep it nice. You know and the houses, you keep you building, your houses up and keep your, that was what this meeting was for, to see that everybody kept everything, you know, in order. (Q) Did you miss that neighborly feeling? (E) Huh? (Q) Did you miss the neighborly, people helping each other out and the neighborly feeling of James City? (E) Did I miss it? (Q) Yeah. (E) No, no. (Q) Why not? (E) Cause I wasn't that friendly, you know, I mean I didn't. (G) You weren't that involved. (E) I wasn't with them that much. I always, kind of like a loner. No, I didn't miss it.

(Q) That's interesting, did you ever, did you ever feel when you were growing up here that you wished people would, would stay out of your business or anything like that? (E) Well I tell you, I was always God's stepchild. (Q) What do you mean by that? (E) I mean I don't know if some people, you know, people takes to. But I never was the kind that they took to. I always, I don't know where it was, on the count of my father, or the way we lived or what. (Q) Right. (E) But up until today, I don't have no friends. (Q) Right. (E) You know, I talk to people and be nice to them, but say I'm in their house and they in my house, know, uh, and still ain't. (Q) Yeah, yeah. (E) We uh, we're nice people but you know what I mean, I never been that, I never even growing up I had one girlfriend we use to go around together, I never had, never was in a crowd. Now, my sister, who is dead, oh man, she had, everybody was her friend. And they come right to me and tell me, I don't like you I like your sister, I don't like you. I said, well I don't care. I never, you know, I won't associate with them a lot. (Q) Now you said this might have something to do with your father? (E) Huh? (Q) You said that this might have had something to do with your father and what he did. (E) Well see, uh, I don't know, some people have the attitude to think if a person, you know, gotten something and you don't have to get out there and work for other people, that you don't feel no different, but they feel that you do. (Q) Right, right. (E) And so they draw a line and I was Wes Ford's daughter. And um, I never had to, you know, when I was growing up, I had a decent life and everything and I don't know, I

just, just didn't, they just didn't take to me. (Q) Yeah. (G) You can imagine you having the first car, your father had the first car. (E) The first car and this great big eleven room house and furnished, it furnished off and everything. (Q) You lived in an eleven room house? (E) We ran, uh, velvet dresses and everything else. (G) Now you know nobody liked her. (E) So you can figure it out. (G) I'm just sorry they lost all that money in the bank cause I'd have been a well off person myself. (E) ---- The preacher in the church was telling about how my daddy. (Q) Oh, that's right, now what, now how did that, did that affect you because your family, you were, you weren't coming up like that either. (G) I didn't come up wealthy like that, but. (E) See my father, my father died when she was little. (G) I was her daughter so even if I lived poor with my other grandmother, I still was her daughter, Wes Ford's grand daughter, so I had to go through a lot more. (Q) Now what kinds of things, so people remembered, you know they had a long memory of things. (G) Well just like she finished telling us, in fact the people knew more about what, how they lived than I did. (Q) Right, right. (G) Because what I remember was what my Grandma Martha, which was Washington Spivey's daughter. (Q) Oh, okay. (G) See that's who I was around. My mom, as you know, she traveled a lot. After she and my father separated, she went her way and he went his, but he remained in New York. (Q) Right. (G) So see, I was living with my grandma so I was a big shot cause I had my mom and my dad sending all kinds of little things to me. (Q) Right. (G) Which the average kid in the area, at my time, was

not getting. (Q) Yeah. (G) So I would play the odds still at that time, I would get, my mom would send me and I'd make my dad send me too, so I was getting two of everything. So I was the little rich kid living in a ragged house. Cause my grandma, in James City was some of the last ones to leave James City. (Q) Right. (E) No, that's a you got to go outside. Grace let her go outside. (G) Let me finish, so she said, uh, that she would stay there till she died. And as my mom said that, uh, the people told them they could not fix the houses. (Q) Right, right. (G) So she said well she'll just let it go into the ground cause she was not going. And we tried in our own way, my father did, he said well let's try to fix you a house somewhere else. No, she was determined to stay there. (Q) Right. (G) Well at the time, I loved her so much, because by them being young and leaving me with her, that was my mom. (Q) Yeah, yeah. (G) Okay, so I said, well hey I have to stay with her. (Q) Right. (G) Many times it came up, why don't you go with your mother or father. No I want to stay with her. So that's how my life started. (Q) Right. (G) When I was very young they brought me to my grandma, she wanted me there because they had separated. (Q) Yeah, right. (G) And which is unusual because most of the mothers leave their children with their mothers. (Q) Right. (G) But my Grandma Martha, which was my dad's mom, said she wanted me right then. So that's how it started. And um, I lived in this old town, and that's why it's so close to me. (Q) Right, right. (G) I grew up in Old James City. Which many of the people which live here now is on this side of James City. As they were moving out at

the time when I came along. (Q) Uh huh. (G) So when I recognized that I was in James City there was about 20 or 25 families, very old people. (Q) Right. (G) That was determined that they weren't going to leave. And most of them didn't until the houses just went in the ground. (Q) Right, right. (G) So um, growing up there I remembered, uh, the old houses which was very old and very run down and the people were still very close. (Q) Right. (G) In that particular area of James City. They looked upon this area over here in Brownsville as the uppity black folks. (Q) Oh really, okay. (G) Because they were able to build their nice little houses because they left James City. (Q) Right, right. (G) But they stayed in those old houses over there proud to be in James City. (Q) Right. (G) So I grew up with that saying that hey, we, they think their a little better than we are over there cause they got nicer houses. (Q) Right. (G) So uh, I remember there was three other girls that my age. (Q) In Old James City? (G) In Old James City. The rest of them all lived over this side. So the three of us became very good friends. (Q) Right. (G) And that was when we started to be able to socialize and go different little places. We were always together like sisters. But before then, uh, I remember that my grandma, we couldn't, I couldn't leave the yard, unless somebody took. (Q) Right, okay. (G) So I would look through the fence at the people passing and everybody knew me. Whether I knew them or not they knew me because that was Miss Martha Green's grand daughter. (Q) Right. (G) And that was Washington Spivey's daughter. (Q) Right. (G) So the people from Brice's Creek, cause

we lived on, which was then called the Old Airport Road, which is now the Howell Road, Howell Road, leading from the Ramada. (Q) Uh huh. (G) If you come over the New Bern Bridge you see the Ramada then you have Howard Road going out to Brice's Creek there, Madamore Lane then you go on out to Brice's Creek. Well I lived, that was the area I lived in. So the people would pass, that was the main highway, main road, and they would all know me and anywhere around here you would ask, do you know little, they call me little Grace. Cause I was named after my father's sister, Grace. (Q) Uh huh. (G) So um. (E) Could you take this off me a minute? (Q) Sure. So they all saw you as little Martha? (G) Little Grace. (E) Yeah, little Grace. (G) And they were very, the whole little town was like, the Old James City that I lived in. They sort of looked up to me as, I don't know, I never understood, but I got so much love and so much, uh, uh, uh, felt so secure in the area that I think that I just grew up to feel that I was really somebody very special. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And seeing the people they were always so friendly to each other, uh, if one had anything, it was like everybody, they shared it, you know. (Q) Right. (G) And so, I think that has, had made a, quite an impact on me that I feel like I have to share or I want to do something to help the people. Uh, so I lived there until I was 20, well I went away to college. And my mom still, my grandma was still there, refusing to move and getting very old and so when I came back she was so ill that was when she moved about the end of the, about the end of the fifties. (Q) Right. (G) Okay, and I, that's when I went to New York. But

I'd like to go back to James City some more. During the Jim Crow era, we lived in, in that little house still. And there were some whites on the out skirts because the people had stopped farming when I came along. They were more or less just living there. Because they were very old. (Q) Okay, and this was very, white people were very old as well. (G) Well some of their descendants had come along. They were very old but they had young children just like, I suppose my age, their grands or whatever. (Q) Right. (G) And uh, we would have people coming through the area, whites, during the Jim, during that Jim Crow era, cause that's when I lived in there. Throwing stones at the houses and I remember people who were moving out of there, but there were, every night or every, twice a week they would come through the area and throw stones at the old people houses. (Q) Now why would they do that? (G) Well you know, I guess young people cranks, they just doing things. (Q) Yeah. (G) And everybody sort of knew each other in the area, the whites knew the blacks and, but they knew, you knew where you stood. You weren't socializing but you knew each other. So they would go and tell the whites parents about it, white children that were doing that. And uh, they claimed they would stop them. (Q) Right. (G) But they would come and throw bottles and stones and many times, most of those old houses had shutters, so that's what I remember so well. And they would have to close them up every night or else they would just throw the stone right threw the windows. (Q) Right. (G) And the old houses being very old, you know, it didn't take very much. So that was their fun and games

and many people was not aware because most of the people was moving over in this section. (Q) Uh huh, uh huh. (G) So it, was, had a fear that something would happen to my grandma so I would always stay there with her in that manner. Now also in that little area, and as I said before, there was only a few more older people left, there was a blind man, we use to call him professor. (Q) Right. (G) And uh, he would do everything for himself, in fact everybody was very independent in that community at that time. And uh, his, like being old his wife and all of them had passed on so he was by himself. And he would cook for himself, he would do everything and I never forget, he would and insist that I eat some of his food. And being a young person and loving him, I would eat his food and I look back now I can't believe I did that. But he taught me. (Q) Uh huh. (G) My grandma could not read or write. In fact, most of the people in that area, they would, they wanted to learn but my grandma couldn't read and write. But the professor before he went blind, he was able to go to school, what little bit they taught them. And um, so he would sit up nights when I was going to school, you know, elementary and all that, and I would spell the words and he would pronounce them. (Q) Right. (G) Some maybe right and some wrong, but that was how, and then when he would find out what the words are then he would teach them to me. So he was really, a blind man taught me a lot, to read and write, yeah. (Q) Huh. (G) And then when I went to school, you know, then it happened, you know, then I was ready for a lot of, uh what academics to study. But my grandma couldn't read and write but

what she would do, she would sit there with me and it was all she want to do if she could just spell her name. And we, I taught her to spell her name and she was so proud and she would spell her name every chance she get. You know, take her time, Martha, and she would spell it, you know. And so she was very proud of that, but in spite of the fact that she wasn't educated she was a very bright, intelligent women. Because she knew she stood up to anyone, she wasn't afraid to stand up for right. And uh, so I, I was sort of proud of her that, uh, and she was a loving lady, she would do favors for anybody, you know, it was just her nature. And uh, so I went on and I, uh, when I attended James City school, by living in Old James City we had to walk the trestle, the railroad tracks, to come over here to the school. (Q) Right. (G) Now uh, by the time that I was going they had buses going to River Dale, Brice's Creek, all different areas, busing them into James City school. But for some reason, I never understood it, but they say we weren't far enough from the school to be buses in. (Q) Right, right. (G) So my poor little grandma would pay 25 cents I think or 15 cents, I can't recall, that a man that would do the taxiing throughout the area. He would pick up teachers that live far and they, like I said we had about three or more young people in the area and they would, uh, his name was, uh. What was little Bud Hicks name? What was Hicks first name? I think it was Edward. (Q) Uh huh. (G) He would drive the cab and he would pick us up and bring us to school and take us back home. (Q) Right. (G) So, not realizing, I had someone, like private service, you know, and I

was, didn't know what was going on. But that's how I came to school everyday until I grew up enough that we would walk back and forth. And by, after we, uh, grew enough that we could walk back and forth to school from James City to Old James City, we had to cross a trestle. And I think I've had nightmares of crossing that trestle all my life until later years. Such a fear. (Q) So you'd have to go over and fast enough. (G) Train was coming, and you were watching for a train, now we're, not realizing that trains have different hours to come. (Q) Right. (G) But then, this was a very active railroad track then, because you had different factories that they would haul things, you know, different places. So, you could look up and hear a train coming anytime. (Q) Right. (G) But we had to cross that trestle to get to this part of James City. And so I had many nightmares and also many nightmares of falling into the water. (Q) Right. (G) So, I kind of out grew it by myself because I don't know, I think I needed therapy, I would have, wake up nights jumping like I'm falling, even when I went to New York. (Q) Right. Now was anybody ever hurt or killed on the trestle? (G) I don't recall anybody ever being killed or hurt on the trestle. But uh, I've heard now, then they had, uh, a bridge where we have the bypass coming, that you could take that coming over here, but it was such a distance that, you know, most people would try to get to the school or get to this area over here by the trestle. And many, a few people have had accidents out there, I heard, on the highway, trying to get to the bridge coming to this part of James City. (Q) Now your, your father, your father's

family has been living in James City for a long, long time. Could, how far back could you trace it, could you trace that? (G) Well as I said, um, we go back to the 1800's, during the Civil War. (Q) Right. (G) Now I can't go, I know that my grandma told me her mother, which was named Gracie Alice, Alice I think that's what she said, well she was a slave. No, her mother was a slave and just as slavery was ending she was born. Her mother's mother. So really what happened is that, I can only hear what they told me, then her father which was Washington Spivey, that's as far as I can go, which he was one of the, uh, uh, leaders of James City that sort of stood up when they finally told them that they lost the court battles. He was in many of the court cases, battles. Uh, the original cases and all that they would tell the James City people that they had to get out of there and uh, reconstruction they was prospering very well over there, and so they were all under the impression that this land was given to them as my mom said. (Q) Right. (G) And so, on my father's side they were determined they weren't going to give up, from Washington Spivey to his daughter Martha Green, my grandma, to my father. Now as my mother said my father stayed there for awhile but like I said he went in the Army. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And in between the marriage that he went to New York, so he sort of got away from it. But there were their childhood times, that I'm not that familiar of how they lived there but they did stay in James City, until he went away. (Q) Now Washington Spivey, what did he do for a living? (G) Okay, well from what all I understand he kept shop he was also, uh, later in

life a postman, postmaster of James City, uh, farmer, you know, and uh, and very active in community. (Q) Uh huh. (G) Cause there was a committee of twelve people that sort of at that time, sort of ran James City. And I'm sure it went all the way back, cause I can pick up, you know, where he was. (Q) Right. And uh, it seems as if they more or less made the rules and regulations for the Old James City and, um, so you know that, it goes as far back on my father's side, cause they came from slavery on up. On my mom's side they came on a different level as you said. (Q) Right, right. (G) Which, you know, sort of puts me in the middle of hey, I got a lot of rich blood here, you know, strong, strong blood. But yeah, Washington Spivey in the 1800's and the amazing thing is that, uh, 100 years, see they lived in James City before they had to move, about 30 years. And as I said the other night, that I went away after living in James City for 30 years and came back right in that time period of 100 years that the court battles were going on. (Q) Right. (G) So I'm here almost like picking up where 100 years things were happening. And 100 years later look like things are happening to the James City community. You know, in between but this is where the courts and everything had to speak for the people. (Q) Yeah. (G) And so, uh, it's amazing that, uh, as a descendant of Washington Spivey and I look back at history how it has turned that way. (Q) Now when this, the people, now when you mom, when you grandmother, when she was living in James City as well, what, um, what type of things did, did your father's family when you father was growing up, what did his, his parents do for a

living? (G) Okay, well from what I understand, they were, they did farming. Mostly people in James City did farming. (Q) Farming. (G) More or less gardening. Uh, she wasn't able to have a lot of land because the land was taken, but they did a lot of little farming in there, in the surrounding, I think. Each, each person had so much land, right in their immediate, you know, near the house. (Q) Right. (G) So they did their own little farming. She had chickens, oh I remember that, uh, most years I was trying to tell my mother, say to my mother after she left, my grandmother and my aunt they took in laundry. And they did a lot of housework. My grandmother would go to New Bern after they would do the washing and the laundry, uh, and ironing they'd take the clothes back. Certain days she would do housework. So they more or less was, you know, did light housework. (Q) Right, right. Now when did the people finally stop living in James City, in Old James City? (G) Okay, I would say that most of the people left maybe in the, uh, 1900's, 1920 maybe 1930's. (Q) Right. (G) But that's when they were told in the 1890's that they had to get out. But people gradually left James City. (Q) Yeah. (G) But the last of them is my, my grandmother and the last one is my cousin. He's a Spivey, he's called William Spivey, which is Bill, we call him Bill Spivey. Uh, he's one of the, some of the last ones to leave and that was in the 60's, the early 60's, I think Bill left from over there, because nobody else was over there. And so he sort of felt that he had to get out of there, but he, he's some of the last ones. And my grandma we took her out of there in the late 50's because she

was very old and there was so few people.

SIDE TWO

James City is were she wanted to die. (Q) Right. (G) And she tried very hard but we had to take her out of there. It was almost, like the house and everything, there was no way we could leave her any longer there. (Q) Right. Now these white people you were talking about before, now were they, had the black people in James City had they worked for these white people or were they? (G) Well from what I understand, okay, Old James City is the area where the people lived. On the outskirts of James City was were the people did their farm land, did their farming. So when, when, when the people, in other words the black people felt that, that was their land. And so they did the farming and then when reconstruction, after reconstruction, they were, weren't able to buy the, the seeds or to run the farm land. I think that's where share cropping came in. (Q) Right. (G) The whites came, more or less, we gonna share and we share the profit, you know, the produce and whatever. So in some form or fashion it wind it up that some of these whites wind up owning the land. The people didn't know because Jim Crow came in and everything, see these people when, going back before I get to that, when the people lived in James City as my mom said, they felt that the land belonged to them. (Q) Right. (G) So when, when time came for the Union to leave here, everything was set up that they were in. They were able to take care of themselves by farming or mills and everything. So when

they wind up leaving and Jim Crow set in all this with the Ku Klux Klan and everything else, they were afraid to stand up. Because before then they were voting, they were doing everything that they were suppose to do as American citizens, owning their property, owning their businesses, voting to put who in, in the, in the, uh, political arena that could help them. (Q) Right. (G) So when all of this went back, turned around, during the Jim Crow era the people got scared away. (Q) Right. (G) James City always stood up, they fought back. But then they got so disillusioned with the Grandfather Clause, laws and all these things, they just got so confused that I think they got turned off. And so that's what their key was, they didn't follow through on what they were suppose to do. So back to the farm land, they just sort of got away because they couldn't get the grain, they couldn't farm, so they had the, uh, share croppers which some people in other areas continued and they came out alright. But I think James City with the mills and everything as an industrial area sort of went to the industrial part and sort of let the land lay there and between the, uh, share croppers they sort of, some kind of way took it over. (Q) Right. (G) So that's what happened. I feel from my research that the land was turned back in that manner. (Q) Now when you went to school, when you went to school here, um, you went to go to, you went to the James City schools? (G) Uh huh. (Q) And then you went over to, to West Street High School. Um, now how were you perceived by, by uh, by the students, like other kids who came from this area? (G) Uh huh. (Q) Did they treat you any differently

because you were from Old James City or anything? (G) Well, uh, yes. In, uh, uh, in, in New Bern when we went to the high school over there, we were bused in. (Q) Right. (G) And, uh, for some reason, I never understood but James, the James City kids, are uh, that came on the bus, you were like, almost like second class citizens. (Q) Really? (G) I'm sure they wouldn't acknowledge it, but we were treated that way. (Q) Uh huh, right. (G) And uh, you sort of, went to school, did what you had to do, get back on the bus and come back to James City. (Q) Right, yeah, right. (G) So, we, I, we did feel a little, little different. Even though in James City our teachers were more or less, you know, they sort of, uh, we felt close. We felt that they cared more and was concerned about us. Not that the, uh, black teachers at this school in New Bern didn't, uh, uh, care or, but we did feel, and I speak for most of them, that we were treated a little different than the kids from the inner city, uh huh. (Q) Yeah, now how did they, now how, how, in what way did that manifest itself? (G) Well, to me, I felt that, um, you could make a difference by whatever, uh, uh, acknowledging children in different ways. (Q) Uh huh. (G) Uh, if your from James City, you were called last for whatever, you know, if you were extremely brilliant you were, uh, uh, aggressive, a little bit aggressive, you would just jump right in. But then you had children over here that I felt, that weren't that way, you'd have to sort of work with them a little bit more. And uh, I felt the children were put down a little bit more than they were over here, then when they were going to school over here. And I don't

know, now that's my feeling of how they were. (Q) Right. (G) Then we had the parents over here that was aware of that and they would go over and let them know what, you know. It's just, people are people, and I think in any group they will make a difference. Like we were, James City has always had that little knock from every direction. I don't know if it's because we, as my mom say they started as an independent they did so well and so it's always been like, okay, we're a little bit better than you, better off than you, you know. (Q) Yeah. (G) It's, it's almost like New Bern felt that they were a little bit better off, which they weren't. Because we had our farm, we had our little garden and many times, uh, as my mom saying, we were sort of isolate ourselves from the, from the other people. (Q) Right. (G) So when you got, went in to their territory, it was like hey, now we can treat you like, you know, so that, I think that was it. But we got along, but we knew we were the children on the bus. (Q) Right. (G) And so you get on the bus and you get, you know, get out of there. And uh, but they taught us. But I still don't, I feel that they did make, the teachers and all, made a little difference in the children that were bused in than they were the children that lived there. (Q) Now do you think that, that in James, that James City was a closed community? Do you think, how, how, how were strangers perceived? (G) Well they, they, they were very closed. This is like my mom say, even in her day, uh, James City was like very close knit people in their own way. They give it to each other, but they were always keep strangers out. And I can go back as far as what my

mom, my grandma use to say, if you come in James City, you better come in here right or you better be able to drink a lot of water, or swim that water, out there. Cause they would run you out of town. (Q) Right, right, right. (G) So people sort of, didn't fool around over here. So it did sort of make it like people were to themselves. And I guess it started from protecting themselves since the Civil War. (Q) Right. (G) It's like we're here and we don't want any outsiders coming in here bothering us. Cause we don't trust any body. (Q) Right. (G) You know, that's the feeling. And to a degree you sort of got that now. (Q) Yeah. (G) You know, they, you know, you go just so far, but if one, sort of back you off, you got a problem getting in to them again, you see. (Q) Yeah. (G) So it, it, they still got that little with the older ones here. (Q) Right. (G) And, uh, so, yeah. We, I think they sort of protective of James City and so when you go other places people are ready to give it to you cause your on their turf now, not being aware of why they are that way. (Q) Now were there still these fights going on between boys in, in James City and New Bern, when you were growing up? (G) Yes, yes, yes. (Q) So would they, what would they, what would they fight over? (G) The girls. (Q) The girls? (G) The girls. Uh, we always had, uh, beautiful young girls, you know, when they were young and, um, when we started to go to high school and I guess with my mom even back then, the boys always liked the girls. And uh, they just did not want any body to go with any body outside of James City. Even if you didn't like any body in James City, you weren't, you know, they didn't accept

any body outside of James City. So, when I was growing up and going to high school the boys would come over the New Bern bridge, slip over at night to see the girls. And if the guys in James City knew this, they would run them back. And so, the same thing happened in my mom's and all the rest of them's time. And even when Cherry Point came into being, uh, the Marines were down there. They couldn't come into James City, they would ride through James City, but they were very particular about coming near the girls in James City. And so we had several little night spots in James City, and you know, Marines are going to find those spots, so we had what my mom mentioned, The Beach, which was a nice building on the water down here. And everybody. (Q) That was a building, it wasn't actually the beach? (G) Yeah, it was a building and you could go into the water, okay, years and years ago. Now you can't because they dug it up and done so many rotten things about it, that you could drown in there, so most people don't go in there any more. But we had that place and they have, uh, large bands coming in, okay. (Q) Okay. (G) And they would have different affairs down at The Beach. And then they have little night spots which weren't the greatest but they were places where you could go and socialize, in my time. So what they would do, the Marine's, you know, they get pig-headed and they will come in anyway so they could dance and have a good time. But if they couldn't bother with the girls, well naturally the girls was going to smile at the guys and sometimes there would be a big fight. So you would wind up the girls and the guys would some kind of way meet. But if they wanted

to survive they had to get out of town, you know. So they'd run back and you'd hear about a big fight or something that took place. So James City has always had that name of, you know, we're a, we don't take any junk. (Q) Yeah. (G) And it still goes on but it's not necessarily all true, you know. But that's how it was when I was growing up. (Q) Now you said, now this place The Beach, they had, they had some big name bands and stuff? (G) Uh huh. (Q) Who do you remember seeing? (G) Oh, they even had Chubby Checkers they've had the Drifters, all the old groups in the 50's. Because now, I, I use to wonder and when I tell that, people, that how many people, Ruth Brown, and, and uh, Ray Charles, all these people then were starting out. (Q) Right. (G) Okay, so what they would do, they would have a, as they call it now, a gig or whatever in another place like a big place maybe going to Georgia or somewhere like that. And they would make it that they would, these people would stop off at The Beach. (Q) Right. (G) So this is how we got so many big name groups coming into this area. And uh, people from all over would come to, to hear them. And uh, so that's how, I mean cause, U.S., you know it was right on the main line going wherever they going. So they would form their tours around that. (Q) Now would white kids ever come to, to see these shows? (G) Well we had maybe, it's funny you asked that because I didn't see any whites but there was a Mr. Scott that owned Scott's Carpet and Tile in New Bern and he says that he remembered coming over here and he was one of the white guys that was accepted over here. (Q) Oh really? (G) So I don't know he, and he has, uh, uh, uh, a music

group that he has promised that he would give us a little concert or something if we get it together. But yeah, but yeah, mostly over here it was mostly all black. Now I remember when I was a little, little girl, uh, they use to have minister shows in New Bern. And my Aunt Grace would take me and, um, some other older people would go and they had a separate side for the blacks and separate for the whites. I remember that I didn't understand it but all I know we had a good time. And I go back with that segregation era and Jim Crow era, I really didn't recognize really what was going on. Because to me this was how it was. (Q) Right. (G) Uh, the blacks were in their communities and the whites was in their communities. The only thing that bothered me was when they use to throw stones and that was, you know. I didn't know why, but I thought it was cause it was just a old neighborhood that kids were just having a good time. I didn't know the difference, you know, that, that was probably why, cause we were black and they were white. Uh, just like kids now they'll go and throw stones and we use to as children like there was an old man in James City that had an old house that was older looking than ours and he would go in and close up, called Mos Wälston. And they said he had plenty of money and we as children use to throw stones at his house. So to me it was almost like, you know, kids just doing things, okay. (Q) Yeah. (G) But later I found out that these were things that were doing because you were black, you know, or something like that. (Q) Yeah, right. (G) And uh, back to the minister show, I thought it was just fantastic because we were able to see most of

them were black on the show. So, I just thought it was fantastic to see these people performing, you know, cause we had, didn't, well at The Beach then it wasn't, I wasn't old enough to go to anything like that. So to see these stars, different ones performing, putting on costumes, and really singing and dancing and all that, I was just fascinated by it. And I remember sitting in the stands and the whites on that side and the blacks on this side and I thought nothing of it, you know, just that's the way it is, you know. But that I remember very well too. (Q) Do you remember, do either of you remember anything called the June, the June German dance. (E) What? (Q) June German Dance? (G) Do you remember the June German Dance? (E) Yeah. (G) Okay she knows that. (E) They had, um, use to be in, uh, they have it in uh. (Q) Okay, you would go, you would go there? (E) They would have it in, um, sometime in Kinston, and they always had it at a warehouse. (Q) Right, okay. (E) Yeah, I remember June German, the dance, they, uh, one year I think it would come, uh, people from all over, that lived in James City would go to June German. And that would be, always had it in a warehouse, it was so many people. (Q) Right, a tobacco warehouse. (E) Yeah, like in the, in Kinston, wherever they had it would be, and at one time I think they, I don't know for sure but I think one time they had it New Bern, years ago. In the warehouse when it was in New Bern. But it was always be such a big affair, had a lot people so the bands and everything would go in there, these warehouses. And they, they had orchestra's then, you know, like um, Cab Callaway and all these different orchestras and the

June German would pay these big orchestras to come down. And so it would be sort of a big circus, I remember when my father died in 40, the June German was suppose to be. And I was prepared to go to the June German and he died at the time and so I never got to wear the evening dress. So, when my sister died in 41, I buried her in it. In the dress. (Q) Oh, okay, right, right. (E) So, uh, I never did go to it after then. (Q) Right. (E) Cause I went away. (Q) Now was June German, was that, is that, was he a person? (E) June German was just, I don't know, I don't know why they called it, I think it was because June, the month of June, I think that's why they give it the name. (Q) Right, okay. (E) I think that's why they give it the name cause they always had it in June. (Q) Uh huh, and then it was German, like the country? (E) June Journal. (Q) Journal, oh. (E) Say June, June Journal. (Q) Oh, okay. Journal like the newspaper, like the J O U R N A L. (E) Uh huh, journal. And uh, it was, cause they always had it in June. (Q) Right. (E) And so the name was June Journal. (Q) Oh okay. (E) So it wasn't nobody's name specially, but I think it was just the month, as far I can understand. It was just the month that they had it in. And the Journal would just mean for everybody that was, uh, you know, involved like people have once a year, outing, with some good orchestra. (Q) Yeah, right, right. Now I've heard someone, someone told me that, that white people sometimes went to that dance. (E) They did. (Q) Oh, they did? (E) Uh huh. (Q) Now would they, would everybody dance together? (E) Well, I, I didn't go to that many of them, but I think most of the white people went

for spectators. (Q) Oh, okay. (E) I think, I think they just wanted to see what was going on. I don't think they really wanted, you know, be included. But I think the, you know, just like you go somewhere, you just go there to see what's going to happen. (Q) Right, right. (E) So I think that's most, when you went it was mostly like spectators. The one I went, I went to, I don't know about, I just one or two I ever went to. (Q) Right, right. (E) But for going, every year they have them, so I couldn't say whether they danced or didn't but when I went they were just like spectators. So I don't know. (Q) Right. When you, when you were growing up, were there any bad places in James City? Places that you weren't allowed to go to. (E) Uh huh. (Q) Yeah. What kind of places were they? (E) They weren't bad but, uh, they places that, uh, your parents didn't think you would, should go. (Q) Right. (E) See it was older people and they, it wasn't just a few, one, I remember one. You could be over here and you walk by there, but you didn't go in. And they were most adults, young adults go there. (Q) What kind of places were they? (E) Oh, it was, it was just where people get together and I think they served drinks and stuff like that. And back then children, you know, wasn't allowed. We go to The Beach now that was an open place where children and everybody could go and you could buy sandwiches and dance. They had a jute box and everything and so that was mostly where your kids go. And then they could go out in the water. You know, before they drudged the river out, down here, that was a, you could walk out, and near out to the channel. But now they done drudged

the river up and you walk right off there you right over your head. So, its, I wouldn't go out there for all the tea in China. They drudged it out so these big boats could come up. (Q) Right, right, right. (G) What about the story you told me about, there was a place that grandma, you and, you and your sister slipped in one time and grandma caught up with you. (E) What? (G) That grandma gave you a spanking for going to, going in to the water. (E) Oh, that was out here, that was in, um, in the, uh, when they built, uh, a place right up here where the church is, where the Reform Shiloh church is. (Q) Okay. (E) That use to a large hall, the Davis people built it. And it was a large hall upstairs, and downstairs they had it, you know, rent it out for parties, like dances for the teenagers and the older people. So the older young men, they would, uh, have dances there. And children like my age, my mama, she didn't believe in dancing and all this carrying on. So my sister and I lived right, mama lived across the street from it. So, we set out on the porch try to wait till mama go to sleep, so we could go over there. So, she fooled us, we thought she was asleep one night, they had a big dance over there. They let us go in for nothing cause we know we ain't gonna stay long. So my sister and I, we went over and thought mama was asleep. And we was in the swing swinging, and mama wasn't asleep like we thought she was. So we got over there and we jumped out and runned over there, we gonna get a couple dances before. I love to dance and my sister too. So, we gonna get a couple in there before mama get back out on the porch. Time we got in there and started to dance, your

Aunt's husband come through the door, your mama said come hither. Oh Lord, oh Lord, we got out there, I mean I come around mama, mama had a switch. (Q) Right, right. (E) I curved around mama, sister right behind me. We running back home. And I don't know how mama got home so fast, but she had one of these old fashioned china closets, you know, glass around and we were coming round like you coming out that door, in that door. I was getting away from mama. Sister got by, but I slipped, when I slipped, she tore me up. I, I bet you one thing, when I went to a dance again, I was old enough to go. (Q) Right. (E) I didn't have to slip. But I tell you one thing, she really tore me up. Sister got away, and I got, I fell down. (Q) Right, right. (E) I was going around the curve, I made a slip and I was right there for mama. (Q) So your mother did all the disciplining at home? (E) Yeah, I don't ever remember my daddy ever hitting me a lick. Never, he would talk to us, but for laying a hand on me, I never in my whole life, from the time I was a child until grown, never did. (Q) Right. (E) But mama, oh boy. (Q) Now when you were, when you were growing up in James City was there any electricity or sewage over here? (E) No. (Q) And how about you? (G) Well I remember electricity, you know, we didn't have television or anything when I was growing up until later years. But my grandma she was very, very poor, but she had a radio. (Q) Oh, okay. (E) But see most the people, I remember when there wasn't but one radio in, in, James City, in Brownsville, in Doc Joyner's shop. They had one when Joe Lewis would fight, and uh, things like that, people go out there. And people gather and sit

round to hear the radio. And uh, there wasn't no electric when finally the people saw it down in Jones Chapel put a light just like I got out here. And for a little while people, different people started to have electric in the house. But uh, people that, they didn't have electricity if they were people that worked with electricity some people wire up houses just like, you know. And you pay them, then, but it wasn't all this going through, connected, they were connected. So finally people got to the place they had lights in the house. But before they didn't have nothing but lamp light. And we got a, uh, Papa, before papa died he put lights in his house, you know, before he died. And uh, we were able to have lights and then, then I got a television, I mean a radio. And so I had my own radio, you know. And uh, but before then everybody, nobody had lights, nobody had, we had lamp lights, you know, these kerosene lamps and that's what people used to see by. I use to squeeze my eyes getting my homework at night, looking at, and trying to look at the book. So you didn't have, till it was way up in the 40's. (Q) And the people, the people over in New Bern already had electricity? (E) They had sewage and lights and stuff over in New Bern. I don't know about any black community I think, I don't know. But I know all the white community had lights and sewage and stuff, bathrooms and stuff. But here we had outdoor, up in the 40's, I mean the 70's we had out door toilets. Cause when mama died, before mama died it was in the 70's and they still had out door toilets. Few people had bath, they got bath, but you had to have septic tank. Still didn't have no, uh, like

they got now. They had septic tanks and still most of them got septic tanks as it is. (G) Over here. (Q) Right. (E) Over here. (Q) I wanted to ask something, I know we're kind of jumping from one thing to another, I wanted to ask about Cherry Point. But I guess you know, probably know, your mother's wearing it. Um, now you talked about the Marines coming over, I've heard so much about the positive things that happened with the opening of the base there, were there any negative things? (G) With Cherry Point? (Q) With Cherry Point, any conflicts between, between the marines and then the, you talked a little bit about that, and the people here or maybe down in Havelock, or things like that? Do you know of any kind of more negative things that have come with the base? (E) Well I don't know much about Cherry Point cause I left here in 40's. When they first built Cherry Point, they hadn't even, um, wasn't that many people, you know marines and things around here when I left here. (Q) But how, how about you, did you? (G) Well I don't, didn't hear that much negative things about Cherry Point because the people were so poor, that they were so happy to get a decent job. Most people, you know, it just helped this community, you know, those who worked get to, to prosper. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And those who were too old, you know, they just continued to. (E) Mama use to work down there when it first. But all I know she had a job working down there, cleaning offices. (Q) Right. (E) And uh, I hear, her use to come home when I come from Washington, she would tell me about, you know, she working down there. In fact, she was working down there when I lived in Wilmington. And she

checked, signed out in 51, 50 or 51. (G) Tell her about the people who were doing so well here that they didn't even have to work, they just worked as they wanted to. (E) Oh, well you know most of the people, a lot of people were glad to work and were working at Cherry Point. And then you know, there's always some people that, uh, you know, lazy and they ain't gonna work, and live off of any kind of way. But people that want something, they go work for it. (Q) Right. (E) But most of these people would, uh, sit in the shopping and Mr. Phillips and talk and gossip all day long, men not women. And then lot of them use to fish and do things like odd jobs for themself. They never did want a job, steady job, so when work got so plentiful after Cherry, you know, after people started at Cherry Point, working at Cherry Point. Between them building Cherry Point everybody, anybody that wanted to work, could work. So, some of these guys would sit out there under the shop bench all day long and so some people wanted to hire them to work, right here in New Bern. You know, work going up everywhere. They told us they could bring the job and sit down there and they'd work. But they wasn't going nowhere, if they bring the job to them under the shop bench then it would, would do it. (G) You know I think that could have been, they're so use to doing their own thing and staying. (E) Well see that's, that's just, there was people that any kind of way that they want to live, they want to live, they didn't want no --- telling them how to live or what to do for a living, they do what they want to do, while living they do what they want to do. They kind of free people. (Q) Right. (E) Yeah,

don't care about nothing but what they want. (Q) Right, right. (E) So that's, it wasn't the majority of people, it was just them few. (Q) Right. (E) But the majority of people glad to work and, you know, try to have a job that earn money and stuff. Everybody that could work was down there. And when I left here and when I come back everybody was working. (Q) Right. (E) I come to visit mama, you know, and everybody was working, that want to work. So it was kind of like a boom. (Q) Uh huh. (E) So, I didn't, I just come in and go out before the marines, cause when I know anything, this was, this one thought I had married a marine, the other one thought I had married a marine. But I didn't know to much about it. (Q) Right, right. (E) Once they built, uh, after I got married and left here I didn't know much more about, about what was going on. (Q) Right. (E) But all I know when I come home, if you and --- was, wanted to work was down there working. (Q) Right, right. (E) So I don't know no more, you know, know to much about it. My sister married a marine. (Q) Oh, she did? (E) Uh huh. She's still living in New Bern, just moved from California, she and her husband. He's retired. She married him from Cherry Point. He was a marine down there. (Q) Right. Now all, both of you migrated from here, you left here and um, I wanted to talk a little bit about that. Was that, was that something that was, um, expected that people would do, that people would leave, were they, you know? (E) Well why the people would leave here and go away because they just like I did, people didn't want to work for nothing. And these people in New Bern would not pay you but 50 cents. (Q) Yeah. (E)

They couldn't live off it but they expect you to live off it. (Q) Right, right. (E) And that's the way the younger, older people did it, but when the young people my age and younger, they, when they grew up, they left home, that's why. (Q) Yeah, right. (E) Because they had to go or else live with this 50 cent and dollar, go out there from sun to sun, pick tomatoes and you get 50 cent. (Q) Right, right. (E) Now, and younger people just didn't want that. So they just left home. (Q) Right. Was it hard, was it hard though to leave home? (E) Well with me I, I, I, me I wanted to explore. Cause if me, if I had, had my way I'd of been in the Navy. Cause I always wanted to travel. For me it was just, I wanted to see what was going on. And so I didn't want to say I live here in James City, die in James City. So, when I got married I start to traveling then. (Q) Right. (E) And now, from New York, I was in New York before I, when I was younger. But from New York to the Southern states then on to the Western and out in Chicago and different places, I went all out there, travel. (Q) Yeah, yeah. (E) And when I got to the place I wasn't scared to drive, ride a plane, I did travel, airplane. (Q) Now did you, but while you were doing all this traveling, did you always consider James City home? (E) It was home, but I never, I could of did without coming back here if mama hadn't been here, and Grace. It's my home, it's true. But I would never be in the position that I'd say I never want to leave here. (Q) Right. (E) I don't know, I don't know, it's just, just, I never did, you know, die to just stay here. And I never died to come back here. But it was just another

place. (Q) Uh huh, now but you, is it different for you? (G) Yeah, I don't if it's because of the close ties I had with my grandparents over the years. (E) But she was here, you know, grew up here. (G) You grew up here too, but it's almost like I really lived it. And you can hear her life experience, that, uh, she really had a different type of life here in, in James City, than the average one, you know. Now, uh, don't get me wrong, I had a good life, but I didn't live in the big house, only when I went to New York or went to visit my mom did I lived in the big house. (Q) Yeah, uh huh. (G) I had everything else, but I had to live in that old little house that my grandma would not leave. (Q) Right. (G) And they wanted to take me out of there but I said I wanted to be with her. (Q) Uh huh. (G) So I think there's something, my experience here in James City that I never left. I felt that I had to come back. But how I was going to come back, I didn't know because I know there's no wages here and I knew that I had to make a decent life for myself. So it was the only way to make a decent life for yourself was to go North. (Q) Right. (G) You struggled there, don't get me wrong, it wasn't bread and honey, but you were able if you, I should say like my grandfather, or my mama said, said that if you know how to save your dollars and put them in the right places, you can go forward. So, that was my idea, to go to New York, try to make a life so that when I could come back here, I could do something. (Q) Right. (G) To help the people, cause for me when I lived here, all of that rubbed off that. Why should I live in an old house and live under the conditions that I was

living under, happy cause I got plenty of love. But why when I look at other people, of other colors, why should they live so much better than I. (Q) Right, uh huh, uh huh. (G) So for me, I always had that question. (Q) Right. (G) People worked hard but they still could not live decent. (Q) Right. (G) And so even when I went away, I said I wanted to explore that. And so I had to go away to prepare myself that I could come back here. And that meant retiring and still that sort of, I did always talk about James City, always considered that there was something had to be done. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And so, while away, in between making my living and raising my family, I felt that I would do as much research about James City and what the old people told me and go from there. (Q) Uh huh. (G) So it just happened, not even aware of how these things were connected, that I was able to come back home. (Q) Uh huh, right, right. (G) And make a, had made my living that I would be able to take care of myself and do some of the things. (Q) Uh huh. (G) At least find out why. (Q) Right, right. (G) And so I feel that, that, in that way I could be a, be a complete person. (Q) Uh huh, uh huh. (G) Because I never could understand, all my life, why black had to live in substandard places. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And be treated whatever way, because to me people were people. And I guess I was like that even in the north, I always looked for the under dog. Everywhere that something was going on, I had to get some kind of way to get involved, to try to show some kind of support. (Q) Uh huh. (G) And so doing all of that, and I survived New York, which was very hard. I said to them if I survived New

York, I can survive anything. (Q) Right. (G) So I'm going back home now and let's see what we can do to save, enhance our community or preserve that history because it was so beautiful and so powerful to just say that was that. (Q) Right. (G) And another thing, in New York and other places like, history was so great out that way, you know people were really into it. And I'm saying, well my God, if they're talking about it in these, in the north, it really happened in James City. (Q) Right. (G) It really happened. So that's made me focus more, that if it did happen, and we're talking about history here in New Bern, historical town and all of that, what happened to the history if you talk about Civil War. (Q) Right. (G) So I got more into it and I couldn't wait to get back here, so that's why living it, see I, I, didn't have to read about it, I lived it. (Q) Right. (G) I saw the old houses, I lived in them. The, the, you could look up and you could almost look through the ceiling. You could see the boards lifting up, all of that. And I still was able to go visit my mom and pop and live very well, but come back, I still wanted to come back to grandma. (Q) Yeah. (G) So I had the best of both worlds. (Q) Yeah, right, right. (G) Not rich or anything like that but very comfortable to the point that I was able to be with a good side that had, knew how to live and a side that just tried to survive. (Q) Right, right. (Q) Now were you always planning on coming back here? (G) From day one. I left here with the idea, I really didn't want to go, because I went to college and I came back here and it was still something, I didn't think I, as my mom said, we still was treated

a little different. (Q) Yeah. (G) No matter what, now the people in Old James City, they treated me like I was a flower or great beautiful rosebud. (Q) Yeah, right. (G) But, people for some reason I always had that little difference, you know, and, um, I said well if I'm going to make it, I have to leave here. (Q) Right. (G) And so, I, I think I always knew there was something different. I wasn't accepted exactly, I'm not angry, be treated badly, but like my mom said, there are certain people in the area that will always, and I guess that's a click, you find that everywhere. Some people are a part of the click, some of them is always outside looking in. Why? We never know. But they, as she say, they will put you on a pedestal and won't let you be a part and then they try to knock you down. They put you up there constantly, so that's with every group of people. (Q) Right. (G) And so I think that because of, we don't know, we never really had time to analyze, but we analyze it ourselves, that, uh, now I'm not as, myself away from the people that she, you know, she doesn't really mingle that much at all. But I do go into the groups. (Q) Right. (G) But you can still feel that little distance in between. So I have to really mellow in to them and be accepted. Which I don't necessary appreciate sometimes but it's more to it then trying to figure out why you don't care that much for me as you care for the other person. Cause I'm an independent person. (Q) Now this, this difference, is that because of your, the family or is that because your from James City. (G) I really don't know, we have never been able to, it's a family thing, I'd say, just like

she was saying. I don't know if it started with grandpa, that he had plenty and lived, you know, raised his children a little different. And it's like, you know, I'm a part of that. Now on my father's side, they were very very poor people, I consider from a slave on up and they, they will accept me but not the way that they accept, I say other people. (Q) Uh huh. (G) Now nobody better touch me, okay, that's how they are. But they will give me, you know, do their own little stand off and stuff with me. And uh, I have learned to accept that cause otherwise I wouldn't be here trying to do what I think they need done. (Q) Right. (G) Cause I, I have proved myself and I've done what I had to do for myself. So now I think, with some of the blessings that I have been able to over, to get I'd like to share them. (Q) Right. (G) And I think that's why I keep on getting my blessings. Cause no matter what you do, I don't do it back to you, I think you need more than what I, who I am. But that's why I am. My mom sometimes gets pretty upset with me that I do so much giving to the community and try to make them understand what they have. But it's something that I have experienced that she doesn't understand totally. So no matter how much I try to tell others, cause there's a lot of people in this area here that have not experienced James City the way I have. (Q) Uh huh. (G) Even the adults, they grew up and then they moved out and they put it behind them. Some of them don't even want to remember. I've had some of them say, hey, leave that history alone, let's go on. I say, how do you go on if you don't know where you came from? Are you going to blot it out? (Q) Yeah. (G)

So I think that I am determined to make them acknowledge, stop the, uh, what is it, they're in denial, many of us. (Q) Yeah. (G) And I think once they stop the denial they will go forward. Just like this project your doing, I think it is a magnificent project and I think that we are going to be able to connect from the Civil War, reconstruction, Jim Crow, segregation, to where we are now. And once that you have it complete, this community can jump, and this is only the model because it's a small community, it could be the model. (Q) Yeah. (G) It could be the model that may be why most black communities, poor and no kind of political clout or nothing that they could understand that there, there is help. (Q) Right. (G) You don't have to go in your pocket all the time. You have to know how to reach out to other areas to bring the type of help that other people get. (Q) Uh huh. (G) That never share that knowledge with us, and so that's what I think I'm committed cause I've had it from birth. (Q) Right, right. (G) See I saw the people how they suffer in Old James City. How they tried to make it and how I had to go away and come back. And they still don't realize how far behind they are. (Q) Right, right. (G) Many of them they come from so far that they so appreciative of where they are, they don't realize. I look at this area and I go right on the other street over here where there's whites living. (Q) Yeah. (G) And the highway, the road and everything, the streets are totally different. (Q) Right. (G) Why? We worked hard all our lives, why should one group prosper so much? (Q) Right, right. (G) I know you worked hard and some get a little bit more than others, but why

should one community and of the same section. When you ride through my community, you know it is a black community because of how it looks. And as I say you have people in every area, that don't know how to take care of nice, messing things up. (Q) Right. (G) But at the same time, if the county, the city or whatever don't come in that other area, black area, and keep it up the way you are keeping the other area, naturally it's going to go down. (Q) Right, right. (G) Because one, two people can't keep a whole place up, so that is what I always saw. I always look at the other neighborhood and compare. And when I compare, I don't like what I see. If you are tax paying people and we all work very hard, why am I still living in a substandard neighborhood? (Q) Right, right. (G) Some of the people that worked at Cherry Point, white and black, they come back, yeah, they got a better house than they had. But why their neighborhoods haven't improved? Okay, the same thing about the airport and the bridge. I am not against progress. But when you continue to come through my community and leave it less prosperous than what it was, which wasn't the greatest and you have taken everything for progress. I say progress should go on, but at the same time this community should progress, not strip it as you have continued to do. Take away everything, you take away a mans dignity and everything else, really leaving him with nothing. (Q) Right. (G) If you, this prosperity, let's all sit down and make sure we all get a piece of it. Maybe they didn't do it before, but time has come. If your gonna get the millions of dollars for progress, I think you need to consider the progress, where it is

coming through? Let these people have some of that. (Q) Uh huh.

(G) So that's where I'm coming from and I finally, everyday I'm learning more and more, why we don't have anything. We never been treated fairly. And it's time now.