

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

Georgia Marie Barnes Milburn

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Date of Birth: 08-18-27
Place of Birth: St. George's Island, Maryland

Interviewer: Brenda Coates
Interview date: September 26, 1996
Interview location: Georgia Milburn's home

Education: Piney Point Elementary (site of St. Luke Church Hall), #1 Elementary in Valley Lee, Jarboesville High School in Lexington Park
Occupation: Waitress work, Civil Service (Laundry), Day Work, Geriatric Aide (Retired in 1988)

Spouse: John Raymond Milburn
Maternal Grandparents: Mary Ann Campbell Pierceson & Sonny Pierceson
Paternal Grandparents: Roseanna Barnes (doesn't remember maiden name) & John Barnes
Mother: Grace Genieva Pierceson Barnes
Father: John Melvin Barnes
Siblings: Alvin Rudolf Barnes, Georgia Marie Barnes Milburn, Mary Angela Barnes, Elsberry Jones, John Melvin Barnes Jr., Barbara Jean Barnes Hall
Children: Carroll Michael Milburn, John Raymond Milburn Jr., Joseph Manning Milburn, Grace G. Hendricks
Grandchildren: (Michael) Tanga, Angela, Shelly, Michael Jr. (John) John III, Janet (Joseph) JoJo, Shanta, Tiffany, Shontoya, Terrance (Grace) Daryl, Roger

Transcribed by Robert Lewis
December 13, 2001

Rechecked for accuracy by Robert Lewis
December 19, 2001

Transcribed from copy 3, tape 1 of 1. Rechecked with master for final editing December 19, 2001. Tape sound quality is medium; dialect difficulty is easy to moderate.

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September 26, 1996

Interviewed by Brenda Coates

At her home on St. George Island Maryland

Transcribed by Bob Lewis on December 13, 2001

Logged by Tania Jordon on December 12, 2007

Original format is one cassette tape

51 minutes, 58 seconds

[Begin Side 1, Tape 1 of 1]

BC: . . . Milburn in her home on St. George's Island. It's Thursday, September twenty-six, nineteen hundred and ninety-six. Miss Georgia, I want to let you know that if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you don't need to answer them if you don't want to. Okay.

BC: Ah, the first question is where were you born?

GM: Right here on St. George's Island.

BC: Ah, in this . . . where exactly on the island?

GM: On ah . . . let's see, it'd be on the left going up. Because we have a home on the other side of the road that the thirty-three flood it washed away. And all the land washed away, so, we built, my aunt built a house over here ah over here on this side.

BC: On this side. So it was almost acrossed the road from here?

GM: No, it was in this direction.

BC: Oh, it's further up towards the bridge.

GM: No, no, just cross here. Like you're going cross here. Like the

BC: Oh, cattycorner, to here.

GM: Yeah.

BC: Okay. And that's just below Evan's Seafood?

GM: Um huhm.

BC: Okay. Yea, on the opposite side of the road from Evan's?

GM: Right.

BC: Okay. Umm . . . What were times like when you were coming up?

GM: When I was coming up, it wasn't good times. I mean it was, uh . . . really it was cheap times, 'cause now everything is sky high. You could go to the store, we had a store up here where the Adams house is. And you could go up there and you could buy a nickel's worth of sugar. Or a quart of molasses, or corn meal, flour, very cheap. And . . . then when we got big enough, we crabbed, and sold our crabs, we'd eat part of them. And we'd fished and had fish. There was always aplenty to eat.

BC: Okay. Did y'all have a garden?

GM: Yes, we had a garden.

BC: Uh huh. And you had animals? You had some hogs?

GM: Yes, raised hogs and chickens.

BC: So you lived off of your land?

GM: Right.

BC: And the water?

GM: Right.

BC: You didn't . . . you didn't buy that much from the store?

GM: No. Uh uh.

BC: Okay. Just say like salt and sugar and things like that

GM: Yeah.

BC: . . . that you couldn't grow or raise?

GM: And then when the fall time of the year came, Daddy would always go to the mill. And buy flour by the barrel, or cornmeal by the barrel. And . . . that would last most of the winter. And buy lard by the . . . uh . . . can. Other than that, that was it.

BC: Okay. Um . . . did you all do a lot of . . . did you get a lot of a . . . a lot of . . . you did a lot of fishing and crabbing?

GM: Oh yes.

BC: And your father was a waterman?

GM: Yes.

BC: Okay, did he do any other kind of work besides that?

GM: Yes, he worked, he was a caretaker of a home over on Piney Point Beach, and he taken care of O'Donald home for years. And uh. After the O'Donalds died out, then that was the end of that. But a . . . he was a oystermen, a watermen.

BC: Okay. What is your earliest memory?

GM: My earliest memory. Of growing up?

BC: Yeah.

GM: My earliest memory a I was six years old and I remember the thirty-three flood.

(small laugh) And ah

BC: Okay. Later on, I'll ask you about that. I'm going to go into more detail about the weather and things that

GM: Um huhm.

BC: . . . ran the people off the island. Okay. How did you get along with you're um . . . with your brothers and sisters?

GM: Fine. Fine, we all did, so, we better had 'cause Mama and Daddy would've killed us.
(both laugh)

BC: What kind of games did y'all play? You know?

GM: Oh man . . . (giggle) we'd right here, we had tires, we'd roll tires, we'd jump rope. Wasn't no such thing as bicycles for a . . . us people. And uh . . . we play tag or something like that, ball, pick us . . . (giggle) takes some old socks and make us a ball. And have a regular old stick for a bat.

BC: Uh huh.

GM: Play ball.

BC: What church did you attend? When you were coming up?

GM: Oh it was a church here on the island. But we always come out to St. Luke's Church which was in Piney Point, but the church here on the island . . . right off in this direction not too far from here, right cross the road. And uh . . . we attended that church, but I don't remember the name of it. And then uh . . . just like I say when we had the flood, we didn't leave the island 'cause we didn't get a chance to. We waded from the house up to the church and stayed in the church. We lived in the church for about three weeks. There was quite a few of us. There's Uncle Oscar . . . ummm . . . Uncle Oscar . . . my Grandmother . . . Mama, Daddy, Rudolf, and myself. And theys was wading in water up around their chests. And um . . . Uncle Oscar had me

sitting on his shoulders. And um . . . Daddy had Rudolf. That's the only way we got sick from the flood. Cause the water was still coming up.

BC: Uh huh.

GM: And we lived in the church and people, different people would bring us food and stuff, at the church. But that was trying times. Ugh.

BC: Okay. Well, I might as well go ahead and finish asking about the flood now. But now, that wasn't the church that got washed away during the flood?

GM: No, it didn't wash away. The church didn't wash away. The church was tore down.

BC: Okay, but was it another church that was on the island that got washed away during the flood?

GM: Not that I know of.

BC: I just spoke with Catherine Blackwell and she was saying, uh . . .

GM: Wait a minute, wait a minute.

BC: The church that she used to attend down here.

GM: Oh, there was another little church up the road here, between here and up to Catherine's. Cause there used to be uh . . . the church

BC: A Baptist Church?

GM: Yeah, and a little one-room schoolhouse, I hear, I hear Mama talk about it, but I don't, I don't remember that.

BC: Okay. But you don't remember what this church was that y'all lived in for three weeks? After the flood? You don't remember that?

GM: No I don't, uh uh. Both black and white went to that.

BC: Oh, Okay. And that was tore down?

GM: Yeah.

BC: Okay. Okay. Um . . . You said you all didn't get a chance to get off the island?

GM: No.

BC: What y'all were warned about it, right?

GM: The bridged washed away. (laughs)

BC: Oh. Okay. Okay. Um . . . And, uh. . . and . . . okay, the bridge washed away. Your families home got washed away, and about how much of, how much of . . . well all of that side of the road?

GM: Yes. All that side of the road. All that side.

BC: So, about how many feet? I mean I can't imagine because, you know,

GM: Oh, let's see.

BC: about the same amount, was it the same amount of land on that side as it is on this side?

GM: It used to be.

BC: And all that got washed away in the thirty-three flood?

GM: Well, it was beginning to deteriorate before then, because I can remember when there was a farm, off this way. And I don't remember the name of the farm, cause, they used to raise corn and stuff out there. But uh

BC: So there used to be enough land over on the other side of the road

GM: Oh yeah.

BC: . . . for farms?

GM: It was houses. It was houses built over there too.

BC: And even though, like you said, it was, they had, it had started to wash away before the flood, the flood just went on and took everything that was left

GM: Right.

BC: . . . over there?

GM: Right.

BC: Okay . . . um . . . when did they put up the, uh, the rocks? To stop some water erosion? How long have they, the rocks and stuff been over there?

GM: I guess about . . . eight, ten years.

BC: Uh um.

GM: Yeah, cause it hadn't been (laughs) it would've been nothing. The road, everything would have been gone.

BC: How many times have you'll had to leave the island because of the weather?

GM: Just once to my knowledge. And that was back in thirty-three, I mean uh . . . we, they uh . . . they tried to evacuate the island here when they had this last storm.

BC: Uh huh.

GM: And uh . . . some people left and some people didn't, but we didn't leave in the morning, but after the water went back down, we had to go out to go the drug store to get some medicine. And when we came back, they had the road blocked. (both laugh) I told that man, I said we had . . . we got to get home cause I need to get my husband's wheelchair. And uh . . . need to get the rest of his medicine. "I'm sorry, ma'am, you can't go back on the island." So I sat there and I talk back and forth to him, and he say, "Well, I'm going to let you go through, but it's all yours, it not going

to be on us." I said, "We go on and get what we need and we'd be right back". And so they let us through.

BC: Did you go back?

GM: Yeah, we went at night. We drove cause they said the water was going to come up higher. And uh . . . we wasn't taking any chances. But the water did come up as far as that chimney over there.

BC: That chimney on that house?

GM: It wasn't that high, now. But the water came up that far. You couldn't see the road enough, nothing but water

BC: Oh from that side it came over?

GM: Uh huh.

BC: I thought you meant it came from this side?

GM: Oh no, it came in both sides.

(phone rings - break in recording)

BC: Okay. So y'all only had to leave once, and that was in thirty-three?

GM: Um huh.

BC: But it's been bad weather?

GM: Oh yeah.

BC: And uh . . . you sort of thought about leaving?

GM: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. (both laugh) But we didn't leave.

BC: Okay, Okay. Um . . . okay. Well I'll ask you a little bit more about the weather later on in the interview. Um . . . so you said you always attended St. Luke's, up here?

GM: No when I was growing up. I'm Catholic now.

BC: Okay. When you were growing up you attended St. Luke's?

GM: Um huh

BC: And now you go to?

GM: St. George's.

BC: Oh, you don't go to the island church?

GM: No that's not. See that only opens some months during the summers, it's not open during the winter.

BC: Oh, oh, okay. Okay, so now you attend St. George's Catholic Church in Valley Lee?

GM: Um huh

BC: Okay. As a child, do you remember taking any trips?

GM: Oh yes. Not a, not ah . . . trips like people go on now. We always went on boat trips. Leave Swan's and go crossed to Virginia on the big boat that we'd used to buy oysters. And get us, I don't know how many people it would carry, but it could carry quite a few. The families would pack their lunches and stuff and go for the day and come back that evening.

BC: You said the boats that used to carry oysters.

GM: Yeah, the oyster boats. The big, the big boats that would go to the, ah . . . boats that oyster, and buy the oysters, and carry them out the places. But they was doing very good. We'd call them buyboats. That was what, you know.

BC: Okay. They would have room for people who just wanted to travel?

GM: Oh yes.

BC: Back and forth?

GM: Um huh.

BC: Okay. Okay. Um . . .okay. Do you remember, just like, traveling to Washington, or whatever, when you were coming along?

GM: No.

BC: Okay, it would always be these boat trips?

GM: Um huh.

BC: Okay.

GM: Just in the summertime.

BC: Uh huh. Okay. Ah, when you were coming along, ha . . . do you remember how senior citizens were treated? You know. Were there any facilities like nursing homes or anything for them, or would they be cared for in the house?

GM: Cared for in the house.

BC: Uh huh. Okay. And what were your health concerns? How did your parents deal with sickness and health issues? Did they have ah . . . home remedies that they used or

GM: Mama had home remedies and they also had doctors. It was Dr. Brown and Dr. . . . what was his name?

BC: Lane?

GM: Yeah, Dr. Lane. There were two different doctors. And they made house calls.

BC: Uh huh. Did your Mother use any home cures? Home remedies? Or did she just depend on the doctor?

GM: No, she was ah . . . make us what you call onion sip for colds. And rub us in mutton tallor . . . for the chest. But other than that, that's all I can remember. I can . . . I can remember that nasty stuff.

BC: (laughs) Okay. Do you ever remember having to go to the hospital? Or ah . . .

GM: No.

BC: You never did. Okay. And were there any other medical facilities that ah . . . like maybe the health department would have?

GM: Not that I know of.

BC: Okay. What kind of things did you do as a child? You were telling me about playing soft ball and those kinds of games, but ah . . . you know, did you all go to a lot of maybe church functions or

GM: If there was any. Yes. Go camp meetings. That was the main thing. And ah . . . they didn't have trips like they do now.

BC: Um huhm. And what did you like to do the best?

GM: Eating. (both laugh)

BC: I know. I have that problem too. (laugh again) What kind of chores did you have to do?

GM: Oh, had to wash dishes, that was in the house, go chop and bring wood to put in, cause we had all wood stoves. And ah . . . that's about it.

BC: And you said when you all got old enough, you could crab and sell them.

GM: Oh yeah.

BC: About how old were you when you started doing the crabbing and stuff like that?

GM: About eight or nine. Cause see, we lived right on the water. And Grandmama could always watch us. She wouldn't let us go too far. And go ahead and catch crabs and bring 'em in and catch fish and bring 'em in and have 'em for supper. And if we caught enough, we could sell it.

BC: But first priority was to have them to eat yourself and

GM: Right.

BC: Okay. How did your parents treat you? You know,

GM: Fine. We was all fine. We were a loving family.

BC: And . . . did they have to discipline you, and if they did, for what? What did you do? And how did they discipline you?

GM: (giggle) They whipped our butts, (both laugh) if we did something wrong. But I can't ever, I think, I think the worst discipline I got was when I said . . . something was going on, the one didn't do something and I didn't wanna do it, something. And, know I ah. I know what it was and Rudolf was older than I am. "I'll be glad when I get sixteen." And that was the worst whipping I had ever bothered by. (both laugh)

BC: So, mostly for talking back?

GM: Yeah. When I talked back, they'd knock your mouth off. (both laugh)

BC: Oh, what did, what did your parents do with you that you remember best?

GM: Treated us nice and . . . give us a place to stay.

BC: Umm huh. Cause you were talking about you used to take the boat trips.

GM: Umm huhm. Yeah well. Well that was from Swan's over to . . . I wanna say Crisfield, but that's not Virginia.

BC: No that's over the Eastern Shore. But did they do anything else like that with y' all, you know like, did they ah . . . maybe, you know, play games with you and

GM: No they always work. Daddy and Mama always worked. Mama worked and Daddy worked. Grandmama was there with us.

BC: She lived with ah . . .

GM: We lived with Grandmama.

BC: Oh okay. Ah, you told me you went to school umm . . . at Piney Point Elementary School which is at the, which was at the site of St. Luke's Church Hall.

GM: Ah huh.

BC: And um . . . How did you get there, did you ah

GM: Walk. We walked. And then after we attended Piney Point School, we went to number one. Up in Valley Lee.

BC: Oh okay. That's about where the old dump was?

GM: Yes.

BC: Okay. And how did you get there?

GM: We had a bus that came down as far as Swan's. And we had to walk from the island to Swan's to catch the bus. And then finally, couple . . . three or four years later, they got so the bus would come on the island. (phone rings) Oh you. (break in recording) Grandma, grandma would call, we'd all meet to wait up in the parking field.

BC: (laughs) Okay. So, um, okay, you caught the bus, you were still going to number one when they started bringing the bus over to the island.

GM: Um huhm.

BC: Okay. And then you didn't have to walk as far (giggle) anymore?

GM: No.

BC: So how long, you went to Piney Point Elementary for how many grades?

GM: I believe about the . . . third grade, cause Miss Mason was teaching from the first to the third. And Miss Jamison was teaching from the fourth to the seventh.

BC: This was at Valley Lee or Piney Point?

GM: At Valley Lee.

BC: Oh, so you . . . you went to Piney Point Elementary until about the third grade?

GM: Uh huh.

BC: And then you went up to number one?

GM: Right.

BC: And . . . you had both Miss Mercer and Miss Jamison?

GM: No. Miss Mercer didn't teach, Miss Jamison did, but I was just saying the grades that Miss Mercer taught.

BC: Oh, okay. Uh huh, okay. And then you went to high school at Jarboes, Jarboesville?

GM: Right.

BC: At the ah . . . this is at the . . . this wasn't . . . when it was on base? This is after they

GM: This is all I can tell you is old Jarboesville School.

BC: Okay. Okay . . . Now um . . . the school, the Piney Point School, how big was it?
Was it?

GM: One big room.

BC: Uh huh. And how many grades was there?

GM: One through seven.

BC: In that one room?

GM: In that one room. And one teacher.

BC: Okay. It's . . . I guess it's, it's, it's going to be hard for me to imagine,

GM: Umm huhm.

BC: seven different grade levels

GM: Right.

BC: in one room and one teacher

GM: Right.

BC: trying to teach. About how many kids were there?

GM: Now that's a good question. I can't th . . . think of really something. Might have been about, it was too many . . . maybe forty-five, fifty. Maybe that's how many. I can't fix it. I really don't know.

BC: Umm huhm. Fifty. It sort of boggles your mind.

GM: I know.

BC: Do you remember any of your teachers?

GM: Um . . .the first teacher I had, was Miss Gatton. And the next one I had was Miss Butler. And then after Miss Butler, Miss Butler, went to number one.

BC: Miss Mercer and Miss Jamison taught there.

GM: Um huhm.

BC: Okay. What was your favorite subject in school?

GM: Recess. (both laugh) No I take that back, I was pretty good at spelling and math. Arithmetic as you call it.

BC: Uh huh.

GM: Yeah.

BC: (giggle) Okay. Okay. As a young adult, what did you dream of becoming? What did you want to be?

GM: That's a . . . that's a good question. Cause I don't remember what I do, now. (laughs) Really I wanted to get old enough to get out and get myself a job and get away from home. (laughs) That was the way.

BC: Okay. Okay. As a teenager, did your parents let you court?

GM: Oh yes.

BC: Okay. Where did you go and what were the types of things you used to do?

GM: (Expressive "oh" with giggle) Oh---, oh God. We went to Happyland. And they used to show movies up there.

BC: Yeah. I remember that.

GM: Want to look at that? Want to see how old I was?

BC: Now, well, I'm thinking, Happyland was what, late thirties? Or whatever, but ah?

GM: It was just a small place on the hill. I can't say how big it was cause I just don't know. I can't remember how big it was. Cause I remember it had a little place in the back for a barbershop. Very small place. And uh . . . just a bar and a little dance place with dance area

BC: Uh huh.

GM: and that's where they had the movies.

BC: Okay. Now what other ah, types of things?

GM: Wasn't no other things to do. (both laugh)

BC: Okay. Ah . . . what was it like when you first went out on your own? Like you said, that you wanted to once do was get big enough so you could leave home.

GM: Oh, to me, it was great. Cause I had a job. Making my own money. Could buy what I wanted to buy.

BC: Okay. Where were you working when you first went out?

GM: When I first. Now I'm getting ahead of myself right now. Now, before I got old enough really to get out, leave and go on my own and go to work, I used to work here on the island. That's when we'd go down to the white folks' houses and scrub clothes for fifty and seventy-five cents a day.

BC: Okay.

GM: But things, like I say, things was cheap then.

BC: Uh huh.

GM: But ah . . . other than that then the first job I had I was a waitress at the Oak Club organization. And then I worked at the laundry on the Base. Then after that, I went into domestic work, days work, and then taking care of the elderly.

BC: Okay. Okay. Um . . . so your first job you had, was on here?

GM: Here on the island.

BC: Island. For about fifty seventy-five cents a day?

GM: Uh huh. Not all day long, you know what I mean, could a had you scrub the clothes, come on at nine

BC: Uh huh. But when you first went out on your own, when you left home,

GM: Um huhm.

BC: what did you do?

GM: I . . . I had a job working on the Base.

BC: Oh Okay.

GM: At the Oak Club on the Base.

BC: Do you remember about how much you made there?

GM: No, I really don't.

BC: Okay. And, why did you choose that type of work to do?

GM: What? Waitressing?

BC: And working in the laundry?

GM: Well in those days you take anything you can get. So, and as both of them was on the Base and you had ya . . . um . . . ID and everything all for the Base, then you could just go on to work. So that was no, it was a good job to me.

BC: How would you get to work?

GM: They had a bus that came to Swan's and picked people up and carried them back and forth.

BC: The Base sponsored a bus or?

GM: Ah, you know, I don't know.

BC: Okay. Do you remember how much you use to have to pay for the bus? Or was it free or what?

GM: I don't think . . . I don't remember.

BC: Okay. And, what did it mean, you know, to you, to go out and work like that? You know, way from home, you know?

GM: To me it was nice. I could have what I wanted and I could help my mother and father. And ah . . . it was, it was really nice.

GM: Come on in baby (called out as if to someone at the door)

(break in recording)

BC: I was asking you about your, when you went out to work on your own. Um, what did it mean to you to, to ah,

GM: Um huhm

BC: ah, be working. And you said, you know, good feelings cause were able to give your mother some money

GM: Right.

BC: and um, you were doing it on your own. Okay. I'll ask you about your wedding. How did you meet your husband?

GM: He's not going to be in this thing. (laughs) Oh, I met him at the Happyland. And um, he was with a friend of his by the name of Eugene Nagusson. (spelling?) We started talking and that was it.

BC: Okay. Um, what, when did you get married.

GM: August twenty-first, nineteen forty-eight.

BC: Nineteen forty-eight okay. Like I said, if you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you don't have to answer them. So why did you decide to get married?

GM: Because he asked me! (laughs)

BC: Okay.

[End Side 1, Tape 1 of 1]

[Begin Side 2, Tape 1 of 1]

BC: Where did you get married?

GM: At the Parsonage in Valley Lee. At umm . . . where?

BC: St. George's?

GM: No, I wasn't Catholic then.

BC: St. Mark's?

GM: St. Mark's, yeah.

BC: Oh okay. Do you remember, what can you tell me about your wedding?

GM: Well.

BC: Who were your maid-of-honor?

GM: We didn't have none of that stuff. We had the Preacher, his wife, John, and myself.

BC: I thought you had to have witnesses?

GM: They were the witness. Well she was the witness. You didn't need but one.

BC: Uh huh. Okay. Did y'all have a honeymoon?

GM: No. No honeymoon.

BC: (laughs) Okay. What has your family life been like? You know, beside your marriage and relationship with your husband, with your children and grandchildren?

GM: I can say one word, great. My marriage has been great. And as far as the children, they all fine. Theys fine with me and I was fine with them. So, no complaints there.

BC: Okay. What part has religion played in your life? You told me when you were growing up you were . . .

GM: Oh, I used to sing in the choir.

BC: At St. Luke's?

GM: Umm huhm. And then ah, I didn't turn Catholic until after we got married. We got married in the parsonage at St. Mark's. And then I took lessons from Father Smith. I don't know if you remember

BC: Yeah, I remember Father Smith.

GM: from him. That's when I turned over.

BC: Okay, You turned Catholic cause of your husband?

GM: No. Not really. Nobody talked me into it. I just done it. That's what a lot of people say, well I wouldn't a been Catholic if they hadn't turned, talked me into it. Nobody talks you into nothing you don't want to do. So, I said, well, we can both go to church together.

BC: What does the church mean to you? Are you really involved in the church?

GM: No. I go to church occasionally. Now, I could have been, but, like I say, I've been so sick and then I have arthritis stuff. I couldn't, like, wait on tables or working in the kitchen, I couldn't do that, cause of my back and legs. But other than that. I know, I know when I used to go on out and dance all night long, then nothing bothered me. (both laugh)

BC: So, ah . . . you don't . . . ah . . . you're not on any committees at the church?

GM: No.

BC: Or anything like that? And did you ever do Sunday school?

GM: Uh uh.

BC: What community activities do you participate in?

GM: None.

BC: Did you ever . . . work with the 4H Club?

GM: Uh uh.

BC: What do you feel, how do you feel about life in general today in this county?

GM: Well . . .

BC: And in what ways is it different from what it used to be?

GM: I don't know what to say about that. Because things is so much difference. And as I say . . . well . . . I just don't know.

BC: Do you think the quality of life is better than it used to be?

GM: Well so far as, as nursing homes, hospitals, more doctors, and stuff like that, yes. But as far as the living, and all that other stuff. No. Because ah, things was much better when I was growing up than it is now.

BC: Okay. Why do you think it was better then?

GM: Well, well now, you have so many bills to pay. Back then, you didn't have that many bills to pay. So

BC: Do you think teenagers are different now than they used to be?

GM: Oh God yes. Yes.

BC: (giggles) In what way, and why do you think the changes are good or bad changes? Are they worse or better than they are now?

GM: They worse now than what they used to be. Cause (laughs) we was . . . like some of these teenagers coming along now, if we were like that when we were coming up, we wouldn't be able to sit down. Now if you hit a child the first thing they holler is child abuse.

BC: What do you think has changed . . . made those changes?

GM: Well . . . I don't know. There is a lot I could say, but I won't say it because I know it's going to be on paper. (both laugh)

BC: Do you think race relations are different than they used to be?

GM: Yes. Because when I was coming along, if a black girl looked at the white boy, you was terrible. If the white boy looked at the black girl, they was terrible. So they wasn't gonna have none of that going on. But now?

BC: Yeah. That's true. (laughs)

GM: We ain't got to put all that in there.

BC: Were you ever afraid of any group or any body that practiced hate?

GM: No we never did have that trouble. Never did, and still don't.

BC: Did you have . . . what was segregation like when you was coming up? Were you aware of it? I mean, was it a big issue?

GM: Not really. Because, now, just like we was talking about schools, it um . . . I didn't go there, my mother did it was the school up here just before you get to where Catherine lived, for . . . for black people. And, a little school down here on the shore by the Catholic Church for the white people. And everybody went, you know. Nobody had no problems. And, cause on the weekends, black and white came together. That's all they had, you couldn't go no where. And we all played together and that was it. And we never didn't have no problems. No problems what so ever.

BC: Okay. Did you ever live in the city?

GM: Uh uh.

BC: Okay. So ah . . . one of the questions is, you know, do you like living in the city?

GM: No.

BC: And since you never did. Oh.

GM: No. I have been to cities.

BC: And you wouldn't? (laughs)

GM: I went to New York. I didn't like New York. Grace lives in Baltimore and I definitely don't like Baltimore. And Washington, I'm scared to death of. I wouldn't live there for nothing in this world.

BC: Do you feel there is a difference from the county people and the people outside?

GM: Well. Yeah, there's a difference. Cause you meet some people from outside that's very nice. And some of them, some of the county people, they could care less about you.

BC: Umm, okay. Do you think that there's a difference between the people in the different sections of the county?

GM: Oh yeah, I haven't been in that many different sections of the county.

BC: Oh so you don't inter react, really with anybody in the other sections.

GM: Uh uh.

BC: Do you travel?

GM: No.

BC: (laughs)

GM: Definite no.

BC: What do you think about the Navy Base? When it first came down here? You know, did you think that was a good idea?

GM: To Piney Point?

BC: No. At Patuxent River in Lexington Park.

GM: Yeah, that's a good idea. Because it gave more people jobs. And ah . . . But now, I don't know. (laughs)

BC: The new growth is happening out there.

GM: Right.

BC: So you are sort of wary of what's going to happen now that the Base is expanding?

GM: You never know. (both laugh)

BC: Is living down here on the island, is that new growth that's happening at the Base, is that affecting you in any way?

GM: No. (sung) Once in a while a plane will go over that's flying might it go scare us to death.

BC: (laughs) What do you think of the direction the county's going in today?

GM: Like what?

BC: Well ah . . . all of the, well I guess it still goes back to the Navy Base and all the contractors that are coming in, and, I mean, the way the county is becoming

GM: You mean building up?

BC: Right yeah.

GM: To tell you the truth, it's nice. But I don't like it. For one thing, people are too close together. (big accent on "too") And it just like I said, if you buy a home . . . hey what's the use of buying that home if it's going to be on to another house, like a townhouse or something like that? What's the use of doing that? You don't have any privacy.

BC: Right. Okay. What do you think has been the biggest changes in the county in your lifetime?

GM: In my lifetime. The Base. And all these different . . . what do you call them . . . housing projects that's going up. Cause when we were, you know, there was nicer ones when we were younger.

BC: What do you consider to be the most valuable thing you have ever had? Something you could not have done without?

GM: I ain't never had nothing I couldn't have done without. Never.

BC: Okay. Well, I guess I am thinking more of, like, okay the idea of, you know, your house, your good health, or your children, or something like that?

GM: Oh, I thought you meant, well. My health is pretty good. And course John's is pretty good now. We've been through some . . .

BC: Some rough times?

GM: I guess you call it rough. (giggles)

BC: (laughs)

GM: But ah, other than that, just like I say, we've been, we've been coming along right nicely.

BC: Okay. Have you done everything in your life that you ever wanted or planned to do? And, you know, if you haven't, why, why didn't you do it?

GM: Well I, to tell you the truth, I really haven't wanted to do that much. Cause after I got married and settled down, start, and start having my children, I didn't ah, it didn't bother me one bit, but, you know, other things. And ah, there's really nothing I want to do now. But trying to be healthy. Take care of myself and John.

BC: Now, if you could go back and change your life, what would you change?

GM: Nothing. Not one thing.

BC: I guess that's the only way to look at it since you can't go back and change it. (both hearty laugh) Now I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about . . . the torpedo base over here.

GM: Um huhm.

BC: Umm, the weather on the island. And the ah . . . Lundeberg School. Now when the torpedo base came in and was here for about ten years, and, and . . . people came because of the Base

GM: Right.

BC: down to this area, how did it affect the area that much? How did it affect the area?

GM: It didn't. Because it gave people jobs. Because most of the umm . . . now are you talking, yeah that was Navy, most of the high-up people that came would hire maids. And um. And the men would get jobs on the Base. And then it was, it was very good for Piney Point. And for the island. The only thing we had to look out for was the torpedoes when they went astray.

BC: (laughs) Did that happen much?

GM: It did a few times, but they weren't loaded. You know, they weren't loaded torpedoes. They had a big barge anchored here in the middle, and ah . . . they would shoot the torpedoes to a target down the river. And sometimes that torpedo would go astray and come right into the shore. And we would stand and watch them. Cause we knew it wasn't anything to hurt us. (Brenda laughs) But we couldn't get close to the shore where it was coming in.

BC: Okay, okay. When. Okay. Then after they left and a few years in the late sixties, then Harry Lundeberg School came.

GM: Um huhm.

BC: And was that about the same affect on the island? I mean, down this end of the county as the torpedo base did?

GM: Oh yeah. Everybody was glad.

BC: Because it brought in jobs?

GM: Right.

BC: But was there any negative feedback from that? You know, people were, ah . . . you know, because maybe they brought a lot of their people in, you know, they didn't use the people from the area.

GM: No they used people, most our people from the area.

BC: And ah . . . so that was a good thing too?

GM: Oh yeah.

BC: (both laugh) Now um, the weather down here. Now let me asked you. Now, your father was a water person or waterman? He made his living from the water?

GM: Right.

BC: And your husband did too?

GM: Uh huh, that's right, for a while. But he got a job working at the . . . he worked at ah, the base, when it was navy.

BC: At the torpedo base?

GM: Yeah. And from there he went to Patuxent. So then he, you know, he didn't work on the water no more. But he did work on the water.

BC: Okay. Did he, as far as you know, did he do other jobs because the water was such a fickle job?

GM: No. No. He just went up and took an application to them and got the job.

BC: No, I meant, would he, would he . . . some . . . okay, I guess I'm saying

GM: Would he have made a living working on the water if it hadn't been for the base?

BC: Yeah.

GM: I'm sure. Yeah. Unless the weather got . . . now in the wintertime, you oyster. And if it got so cold that the creeks and rivers froze, then they couldn't oyster. But then by that time, they should have made enough to hold on to so you could, you know, carry on.

BC: Okay. So he went to the base because he wanted to and not because of the water?

GM: Um huhm. Right.

BC: Okay. Now you said the thirty-three flood came through, and then you had a couple of bad hurricanes,

GM: Um huhm.

BC: but you never had to leave the island 'cept for thirty-three?

GM: Right.

BC: But you didn't leave in thirty-three?

GM: That's right.

BC: Cause you couldn't leave?

GM: Right, remember the water was so rough, peoples was coming in boats that everybody was scared to get in the boats. You know, to get in the boat her on the island and go acrossed to the Piney Point side. But people was scared. They scared

that the, that the water was so high and the waves was so rough, that they was scared the boat was going to capsize. And the people just wouldn't go. The church was packed with both black and white.

BC: So all of those people stayed in the church for three weeks?

GM: No not all of them. Some of them's homes didn't, was damaged, but wasn't ah, washed away.

BC: And you said there was only one other time when you all had to leave the island because of the weather?

GM: Right.

BC: Okay.

(break in recording) (continues with biographic information)

[End of Side 2, Tape 1 of 1]