



THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



Oral History Interview

with

Maria Edwards

Interviewer: Kerry James Reed

Narrator: Maria Edwards

Location of Interview:

Lloyd House, 220 N Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314

Date of Interview: 5/17/2024

Transcriber: Kerry James Reed

Summary:

Maria Edwards discusses her memories of growing up and playing in and around Colored Rosemont, her grandmother's cooking, her experiences photographing Reggae artists, and her work with the Colored Rosemont Initiative

Notes:

This recording was conducted for the Colored Rosemont Community History Initiative.

Table of Contents and Keywords

Minute	Page	Topic
00:01	3	Introduction
4:38	5	Growing up next to Colored Rosemont
12:04	7	Grandfather's Garden in Colored Rosemont, 1314 Wythe St
20:17	10	Grandparents House on Payne St
26:33	11	Community Connections in Colored Rosemont
31:18	13	Holidays in Grandparents home
34:08	14	Descriptions of Family
46:21	18	Meals with Family in Colored Rosemont
48:45	19	Displacement in Colored Rosemont and Moving to the Burg
54:49	21	Memories & Description of the Burg
59:52	23	Going to School in Alexandria
1:07:20	25	Living in Washington D.C.
1:11:00	26	Working with Reggae Artists & Photography
1:24:07	31	Black History in Alexandria
1:28:12	32	The Colored Rosemont Initiative
1:39:49	37	Closing Remarks

General	Childhood; Black History; Colored Rosemont; Family; Community; School; Photography; Reggae; Washington D.C.; Alexandria; Underground Artistry; Activism; Cooking; Immigration; Gardening; Self-Sufficiency; African-American Neighborhoods; Women's Army Corp; Women Accepted in Volunteer Emergency Services;
People	Edwards, Maria; Greene, Stanley; Turner, Deborah;
Places	Payne Street; Wythe Street; Madison Street; Colored Rosemont; Rosemont; Parker-Gray; Malcolm X Park; Washington D.C.;

Maria Edwards: [00:00:01] My name is Maria Edwards. I'm 70 years old. Today is May 17th, 2024 and we are located at Lloyd House. [00:00:13][11.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:15] My name is Kerry James Reed. I am 27 years of age. It is the 17th of May, 2024 and we are at the Lloyd House. So, thank you so much, Ms. Edwards, for agreeing to come and do this interview with me today. It's been an absolute pleasure getting to know you over the past couple of weeks. [00:00:27][12.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:00:28] Thanks for inviting me. [00:00:29][1.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:30] I suppose we can start from the very beginning. Where were you born? [00:00:32][2.7]

Maria Edwards: [00:00:33] I was born in Washington, DC, at the Freedmen's Hospital in Northwest D.C. Freedmen's Hospital. [00:00:39][6.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:44] Freedmen's Hospital. [00:00:44][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:00:44] 1953. [00:00:44][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:44] 1953. So, where was your mother living in DC at the time? [00:00:51][7.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:00:51] No, she wasn't living in DC, but, at that particular time, it was easier for blacks to get taken in. You know, like an emergency case or even if it was prepared pregnancy there in Washington more so than in Alexandria at that particular time. So, they just felt more comfortable going to Washington to have their babies. [00:01:17][26.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:01:21] Where was your family living when you were born? [00:01:23][1.7]

Maria Edwards: [00:01:26] When I was born, ok. They say that it was on Buchanan Street in Washington, DC, northwest. But my family actually was living in Colored Rosemont. Okay. Colored Rosemont. My mother moved there when she was about four years old. Because they say they took the property from 1939 to 1953. So, basically all of grandmother's children kind of became teenagers and young adults there at, 1314 Wythe Street. [00:02:08][41.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:02:09] 1314 Wythe Street. Absolutely. So, when you were when you were brought home, then, from Freedman's Hospital, you came home to 1314 Wythe Street? [00:02:20][10.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:02:21] Well, see, that's what I'm really not positive on. Because I was told that we was at grandfather's house in Buchanan. Well, he had that house also in Colored Rosemont. But we were in grandfather's there only for a short period of time. Let me see, let me try to remember for sure. When I was born... No, we were at, 505 Payne Street. Five-oh-five, that's one block up. One block up from Colored Rosemont. It is called, still, they call it Uptown. But there was just one block up, 505 Payne Street. That's where it was. I kind of got confused with you asking the question. But I'm on track now [laughs] [00:03:10][48.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:16] So, you were brought home to 505 Payne Street, which is Uptown, as you pointed out. But you mentioned that your mother grew up in Colored Rosemont. [00:03:26][10.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:03:27] Yes, yes, she did. [00:03:28][1.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:28] So, when did they acquire the house on Payne Street? Do you know? [00:03:32][3.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:03:34] The house, as I said, this is 1953, I believe. It was the same year that I was born. [00:03:38][4.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:39] Ok. [00:03:39][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:03:39] Yes. That they acquired that house there at 505 Payne St. And that's really the house that I really know. But I also know Colored Rosemont, because they were still affiliated with it. Its just one block down and they grew up with these people. And, you know, I guess they always associated themselves with each other. They went to church together, you know, and other community events. My auntie used to put on a lot of events there. She was a schoolteacher. She lived right next door to my grandmother on Payne Street. That was Elizabeth. Mary Elizabeth. Mary Elizabeth Fields. Actually, it was Major-Fields. [00:04:31][52.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:04:38] So, we've been talking about Colored Rosemont a bit already. Could you describe Colored Rosemont for those who aren't familiar with it? [00:04:44][5.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:04:47] What I remember, because I said I was about 4 or 5 years old when I really started developing thoughts or memories about Colored Rosemont. And it was always well kept. It was always, people willing to give you a hand. They were pleasant people, sharing, caring. The environment was always clean. I didn't understand it being a self-sufficient community until I got about 12 years old. I didn't really understand that, but I just know that it was someplace where I felt safe. Someplace where if I left my house on Payne St, I know if I go to Colored Rosemont, I'm good. Because everybody down there knew my family, and I was good. And I used to go there. I didn't spend much time there in Colored Rosemont other than the garden, my grandfather's garden, and going to the store for some of the elders there. I remember there was one woman that had one leg, and I used to go to the store for her. And there was a woman named Ms. Small, I can remember her because she was kind of different. She was a Muslim. And I didn't, you know, know that much about her because my family were Christians. And I used to love to go to talk with her because she was different. And Miss Small, she was on West St. West Street? Yes. I don't know if it was her home or if she was living in someone else's home. I'm not sure about that. [00:06:49][121.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:06:51] So, growing up on Payne St a block away from Colored Rosemont, where would you say that College Rosemont began? [00:06:59][7.8]

Maria Edwards: [00:07:03] Ok, I was confused until I started coming to these meetings. Because I thought that from where Parker-Gray was always located, from Parker Gray to maybe Oronoco St was Colored Rosemont. Because everybody had the same type of, you know, attitude. Everybody had the same type of behavior and, you know, everything was kept the same. But, I get to realize

that it was just that area what we learned.... Ok, they call it Colored Rosemont, but it was just that area. Ok, I just saw this from Parker-Gray to Oronoco, but it's like from Parker-Gray to, what's that Madison? Madison. And then from west to, what would be up top? Henry? Yeah, to Henry. That's what I maybe saw. It's Colored Rosemont. And, like I said, a lot of them told me, 'no, you're block was not Colored Rosemont.' And I said, 'ok, it wasn't Colored Rosemont,' but that's how I felt. That's what I was thinking as I was growing up. I just found different when I came to meetings. [00:08:38][95.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:39] So when you were growing up, you considered a very large area, I guess, to be Colored Rosemont? [00:08:46][7.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:08:47] Larger than... [00:08:48][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:50] What the maps say. [00:08:51][1.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:08:51] Yes, yes ,yes, yes, yes. [00:08:53][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:55] So, what was it about the area that specifically made you think this is all sort of one community? [00:09:01][6.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:09:03] I think the most important thing would be safety. I feel safe there in that area. Ok. Coming outside of that area, you know, you had to navigate a little differently. But while you were in that area, it's almost like everybody was family, you know, everyone treated you like family. But when you come out of there, I mean, it's not like the other people past Oronoco St didn't know you, but you just feel safer in that vicinity. And that's with me. I don't know how anyone else felt, but that was, like, secure to me. Anytime I'd venture out there, you could feel, I could feel the difference, you know. I had to navigate, move differently. You'd noticed that, I had to make sure. Yes. [00:09:58][54.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:10:03] So, you started talking about your memories of Colored Rosemont a little bit with your grandfather's garden, as well as going to visit, Miss Smalls and going to the store for some elders. But can you describe your first memories of Colored Rosemont? What those would be? [00:10:22][19.1]

Maria Edwards: [00:10:24] My first memories would be probably four and five. Because, like I said, I didn't get a chance. I was raised by my grandmother and I didn't have the opportunity to venture out too much; and if I'm going out, there would be with grandmother and grandfather. So, I frequented the garden with him an I kind of know Madison St from the garden, from Madison Street to Wythe. I'm more familiar with that side, ok, than actual Wythe St. Now, there is a little, like I said, wooded area that was between Madison and West. There was some houses that are still there, but there was a little wooded area and I used to go past there trying to look for the man that slept there. Other than that, that would be my first memories when I was four and five. Just surveying the area and trying to be there with grandfather to assist him, you know. And I kind of really didn't play with anybody. I didn't talk with anybody too much. I just was there in the garden with grandfather. [00:12:02][98.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:12:04] Where was your grandfather's garden? [00:12:05][1.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:12:06] It was on the same property. 1314, it's after he tore down the house. Yeah, he tore down the house and I think, he had a smaller garden there until he tore down our house, tore down the house and then the garden kind of dissipated. And I remember the Greenes used to play, the younger ones used to play there on that lot. Yeah. But I was a little bigger then. I think the only ones that were my age would have been Deborah Turner and Vanessa Green. Vanessa was like a year younger than me, and Deborah is like, a year older than me. And we were the, you know, I was an outdoors person. Deborah I don't think she was outdoorsy too much, but Vanessa, everybody played, everybody enjoyed ourselves. But I was a real, like what they would call it a tomboy. Yeah. I was like really active and did a lot of things that the girls, well, the girls weren't doing. Yeah, I played with the boys. Ok. [00:13:27][80.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:13:29] So, what was your grandfather's garden like on 1314 Wythe St? Can you describe it? [00:13:33][3.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:13:34] Oh, it made me feel like we were wealthy. Because he had so many things. He had green beans, Okra, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes. What else did he have? Squash. Grandma used to make a wicked squash pie. Ok, I've never seen anybody else do that. Ok, but that pie was delicious. And let me see. What else did she have? Collard greens, Kale. He had quite a few things. Let me see. What else? It was just immaculate. I mean, it just made me feel like I was just sitting down in the middle of the tomato patch and eat the little cherry tomatos [laughs]. They had to stop me, because I'd get home and the corners of my mouth would be stinging and burning from all the acid from the tomatoes. [00:14:35][61.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:14:35] That's funny. [00:14:36][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:14:37] It's true. They said, 'we told you stop eating all those, stop eating all those.' It's funny. That was a cute memory. [00:14:46][9.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:14:48] Yeah. So, was the majority of the produce that you ate at your grandparents house, did that all come from the garden? [00:14:57][9.8]

Maria Edwards: [00:14:58] Most everything. Grandfather only bought meat and fish and maybe grains, rice. You know, rice was in the house every day. Every day. Even if the meal didn't call for rice, rice was cooked [laughs]. But it's like, I guess that was the staple, you know, staple in the house that you get hungry, eat some rice, maybe in gravy or something until dinner or whatever. But that's why I used to think we were rich because food, the food the grandfather used to bring it. I used to just come in with arms and baskets, you know, of food. And then it's all stuff that he planted. He used to be a sharecropper. So, that was where I guess he got his skills, his farming skills. But I thought we were rich because so much food and the fridge, the refrigerator was never, I never knew the refrigerator to be empty. [00:16:07][68.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:16:09] Did you have a favorite thing that your grandparents would cook? [00:16:11][2.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:16:14] Greens. Greens, and fish. I love the greens. And I love fish. I love, she used to cook rock [rockfish], Porgies, Trout, Trout is my favorite. And, it was another one, Ling. She used to cook Ling. [00:16:35][20.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:16:36] Ling? [00:16:36][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:16:37] Ling. L-I-N-G It's a soft white fish, like a whiting. [00:16:41][4.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:16:42] Oh, okay. Interesting. [00:16:43][0.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:16:43] Yeah. And, that was my favorite, thing to eat was just give me a nice good plate of the greens and a piece of fish. Absolutely delicious. [00:16:59][16.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:17:01] So, even though your family wasn't living in colored Rosemont while you were growing up on Payne Street, they were still very much connected to the community there. [00:17:11][9.8]

Maria Edwards: [00:17:11] Yes. [00:17:11][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:17:12] So, what sort of things did your grandparents tell you about Colored Rosemont when you were growing up? [00:17:17][4.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:17:18] Well, like I said, not too much because they were kind of close mouth, but they were always, anytime they did say anything, it was always pleasant, with pleasantries you know. Never anything negative, ok. They told me one time about a peeping tom and how everybody in the neighborhood got rid of this peeping Tom. Didn't even call the police or anything like that. I don't even know if we really had the option to call the police then, or if they had the option of calling the police, they probably did, but whether they would want to or not. But it's like a place, like I said again, it was a place of safety, a place. To me, like I heard brother Stan says, Stan Greene, and he says, "it was a utopia." [laughs] But I guess me, as a little kid, it was like a utopia. It was, a place where you go for respite. You know, it's like, you go out, go to school, do other things you need to do, and you come back there to safety and security. That's Colored Rosemont. [00:18:43][84.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:18:44] Did they ever mention why they decided to tear down the home at 1314 and move onto Payne? [00:18:50][5.4]

Maria Edwards: [00:18:50] They never mentioned it, but grandfather always expressed anger about that. Ok. And he tore it down himself. He tore it down. I don't even know if there was a house there already when he moved there. But I know it's 1939, but maybe if it was a house there, he maybe added somethings to it. But, I'm not sure. Can you repeat the question? [00:19:24][33.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:19:24] Yeah. Of course. Did they ever mention why they moved away from Colored Rosemont? [00:19:28][4.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:19:29] Yes. They never really mentioned actually why. It's just that grandmother was tight lipped about that and would never say anything, ok. But I had assumed that its because the houses were so old, that, you know, that they had to tear them down. That was just the assumption from a child, because no one really told me that it was displacement, you know. But, grandfather, he tore down that house piece by piece itself, because I just think it was part of his anger, you know. He just said, 'no, I'm going to do this.' And he took it down. Yeah. [00:20:15][46.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:20:17] So can you describe your grandparents home on Payne St?
[00:20:21][3.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:20:22] Oh, yes. Wasn't actually on the corner, but it was right behind an apartment building. Apartment building faces on, what street is that? Oronoco. And there was one house and my grandmother's house was the next beside it. And, it was just a small townhome. Had two bedrooms upstairs and a bedroom that grandfather built downstairs. And he also put in a toilet and shower there. He put in the shower because his sons used to come to town all the time. When they come to town, they like to play ball and grandmother would fuss at them all the time about stinking up her bathroom. So, grandfather put the shower in the basement. And then that's when he started. They started giving, I guess they start saying, 'ok, well, we can get other people in here now.' As they started taking young guys from the South. They're in our house to get them to, you know, it's kind of like housing for them, so they could go to Parker-Gray, the high school there. Because a lot of the children weren't able to go to school where they were from in North Carolina or whatever. So, they come up here because it was known for that. Parker-Gray was known for teaching young black youth. And it had a nice yard in front, used to have a big tree. They used to have a crack in the cement. And there was this woman that used to visit it. Every time she visited, she tripped over, tripped over that crack, and I was like, 'every time?' [laughs]. But it was every time, I can't remember her name. And it was just so well kept. She didn't have a lot of furniture, but I remember she had a nice big piano. Beautiful flower stands. Whole lot of little whatnots and, all of the coverings. For the sofa and everything she made by hand stitched all that by hand. And she would change it, maybe like every 3 or 4 years. Yeah. She loved to do that. Yes. And she played the piano there and would sing and the dining room was, like, it was always set to eat. It's always the dining room was always ready. And, it was a small kitchen, but you couldn't tell because everything that came out of there was a lot. Yeah, a lot. And it was, like I said, the basement, they had a stand up radio in the basement. Later on when I got about six, they got a black and white television in the front room. But it was just a nice small place. The yard was my place. I stayed in the back yard and that was everything I did back then. There was a weeping willow tree back there. It was so many flowers, daffodils, gladiolus lilies, honeysuckle bushes, roses. Everything was back there. And I just loved to investigate. Kept butterflies and bees and attracted all that nature. And I just loved nature, so I guess that's why I was there all the time. [00:24:26][244.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:24:30] So, it's interesting that, you know, you have such a connection with nature, considering that, you know, when you go to Colored Rosemont today all that nature is gone.
[00:24:40][10.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:24:41] I Know [00:24:41][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:24:42] How does it make you feel that, you know, all that nature that you played in, like, you know, when you were growing up is no longer there in Colored Rosemont?
[00:24:48][6.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:24:50] Well, it's like I say, it is kind of saddening to see that, you know. But I know there's progress, you know. Things is not, they would never be able to stay the same, ever, you know, like forever. But seeing how it happened or realizing how it happened, because I didn't see how it happened. I didn't understand how it happened. I was too young to really understand that until I got older about displacement. But it's just sad to see. I think what it did was broke up the

community, you know. It's like, I think community was such, the fiber of that, you know, it's like them being together, working together, bartering, sharing. You know, like everybody's child was, you know, one child was everybody's child. I think that that's what they lost. That's what was gone. Even if you did go somewhere else and you found nature a place where you could be comfortable, you missed that. You know, you missed all of those times that you shared as one big family, you know. Even though there were many, many families, but it's like one big family. That's what I miss. [00:26:29][98.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:26:33] So, you mentioned earlier that you used to go to the store for elders in the community. What stores would you go to? [00:26:39][6.4]

Maria Edwards: [00:26:40] There was, and I was trying to listen to them the other day to remember what this neighborhood store was, I think it was a Safeway. Ok. It was where the train station is, the Braddock Road train station. It's right there. And that used to be one of my little tasks. And grandmother would see how you can follow instructions. And so she would get me to be charitable. Supposed to be. Why? I had to go down and ask the elders if they needed anything from the store. Sometimes it didn't, most of the time they didn't. But still, I had to go. That was my instructions. Yes. [00:27:31][50.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:27:32] So, would you deliver food for them or in what capacity would you go to the store for them? [00:27:40][7.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:27:40] Okay, most mostly it was something small. It was nothing big. Something, like, maybe a couple of things small, like Cheerios. I got cheerios for her, and it's like, you know, picking u, Band-Aids or, you know something. I can't quite remember everything, but I remember Band-Aids and I would do bread. Bread, picking up bread. And I remember tuna, a couple of times I got that. So, something like that. Any other veggies that's coming from granddad. [00:28:23][43.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:28:25] So your grandfather would provide vegetables to people? [00:28:26][1.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:28:27] Yes, yes, yes. I mean, they would pay him a minimum fee, you know what I'm saying. But he had other places where he could make a bigger, where he would make a bigger profit, you know, because he was a messenger and he rode the bicycle messenger for bike down here on King Street. And he'd do his messaging and would be selling his veggies, too. Yes, absolutely. [00:28:52][24.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:28:53] So, it seems like, you know, your grandparents are still very much connected with the Colored Rosemont community, even though they were technically outside its boundaries here. Do you remember them ever having interactions with anybody from Rosemont? Did they host gatherings, go to gatherings or anything like that? [00:29:12][18.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:29:12] Yes. A couple of the... Like Miss Ward, Miss Katherine Ward. The Ward family. Turner family. They went to the same church that my grandmother went to. They had, like, tea parties, and grandmother was an usher, so they have usher, like, meetings and, prayer meetings. Ok. Prayer meetings at at her house, or they would have them at different houses. We'd

have meetings and auntie, who lived next door, Miss Mary, she was, like I said, the school teacher. She always gave events like pony rides, little carnivals, and everybody in the area would come. There was a lot behind, ok, I think it was between West and, West. It was on West Street, behind West, it was in between West and Payne. It was a lot back in behind those houses on Payne St. And she used to give carnivals and like pool, like, ok, like, what do you call it? Like, not pools, but when they water you, water hoses and that type of stuff, everybody, all the children in the neighborhood would come. Yes. Raffles, you'd have and all the events. Yes. Staying with each other. Everybody knew what was going on with each other, you know? Nobody was out of the loop. [00:31:12][119.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:31:18] Can you describe what holidays were like in your home? [00:31:20][2.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:31:22] Very pleasant. Singing. A lot of singing. Ok. And that's when I found out that grandmother could play the piano and sing. Because at the time she didn't sing. And she'd sit down after she's cooked and her family is all gathered, she sit down and she started playing. And then she point for somebody to come in and she'd point for the next person to come in. And I was like, 'when is it going to be my turn?' [laughs] And then they gave me a part and then I pointed at me. That's right. It was just fun. It was enjoyable. [00:32:01][39.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:02] Absolutely. [00:32:02][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:03] Yes. Lots of food and lots of singing. [00:32:05][2.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:09] So, briefly, what church did your grandmother go to? [00:32:14][5.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:15] Robert's Memorial. Right here on Washington Street. [00:32:17][2.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:18] Ok. [00:32:18][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:19] They were members to the end. [00:32:21][1.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:23] Ok. And then what was the name of your grandparents or the names of your grandparents? [00:32:28][5.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:28] Mr. Fred Major and Mrs. Ophelia Major. [00:32:35][6.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:38] Fred and Ophelia Major. Then your aunt's name was Mary Elizabeth Major Fields. What was your mother's name? [00:32:46][8.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:48] Eunice Althea Major. [00:32:52][3.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:52] Althea? [00:32:52][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:32:53] Althea. Althea. A-l-t-h-e-a Major-Thomas. [00:33:00][6.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:33:05] Thank you. So, it's interesting talking about your grandfather. You mentioned he was a sharecropper and he does all this work, you know, in the garden. He seems very industrious, I guess is a good word for it. [00:33:22][17.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:33:22] Grandmother and grandfather were very resourceful. [00:33:24][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:33:25] Absolutely. [00:33:25][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:33:26] They were very resourceful. I think that's where I got a lot, a lot of that from, being brought up by them. They taught me a lot. And then not always verbally, but just by watching them and watching how they did things and they never cried or worried about it. I never seen them worry about things too much. They just, 'ok, that happened. Let's do this now.' You know, it was like that, they were real resilient. Real resilient. I really got that from them, I'm sure. [00:34:06][40.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:34:08] So, could you describe your grandfather in a little bit more detail? [00:34:12][3.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:34:14] Ok. Let's say he was about, ok, they say he shrunk because he was taller, but he was like about five foot ten. He was strong stature. He was dark complected. And he had this accent that my grandmother didn't want him to use so much because it came from Nassau, Bahamas. I'm not sure why she didn't want him to use it, but she'd tell me, "don't mock him. Don't mock him. He speaks bad language. It's bad English. Don't mock him." Ok. But, yes, he was the person that, you know, that when you were around you, you were safe, ok. He was not that talkative, but he was attentive. You know, you could know that he's paying attention, ok, because he'll come back later and say something that he's observed. And it was like, 'wow, he saw that.' But he wasn't that talkative. And he used to love to watch, cowboy stories. Let us sit down and watch Gunsmoke and all the old cowboy movies. And he whistled. He whistled in chords, not notes one right after another. He whistled chords simultaneously. And I have witnessed this, ok. And I used to love to look down in his mouth and say "how could you do that?" But that was so beautiful that he, and Stan will tell you, Mr. Greene would tell you that he witnessed them. They all witnessed it. The whole Greene family, because grandfather used to work and whistle. He'd work and whistle, and whistle in chords. I couldn't understand, it's like three chords and three different notes simultaneously. [00:36:32][137.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:36:34] That's incredible. [00:36:34][0.1]

Maria Edwards: [00:36:34] It was incredible. I just wish that we had a recording of that. I remember having a little doll baby called Little Miss Echo, and I didn't like doll babies too much, so I took out the box, the recording box, and I tried to catch him in the recorder, and he caught me. He said, "what you doing there? What you doing?" I said, "nothing." [laughs] [00:36:58][23.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:36:59] That's funny. [00:36:59][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:37:02] It's funny. That was a nice, pleasant memory. [00:37:05][3.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:06] Absolutely. [00:37:06][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:37:07] Yes. [00:37:07][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:08] So you said he's from, Nassau, in the Bahamas? Do you know why he immigrated to the States? [00:37:14][5.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:37:15] Yes, actually his mother sent him away. The grandmother told me the whole story, his mother sent him away. His mother was a lady of the evening. And she was running from a bad relationship and grandfather was being protective. And messing up her money. So, she asked him to go to her auntie. Though came to find out that when he got to the auntie the auntie was a madam. And then there was a whole new thing, you know. He learned a lot from that. And maybe that's why he became so religious because of his exposure as a youth, you know, in the in those type of establishments. Yes. But that's why he came. And he used to be very embarrassed about it. But they only chose me to tell that to. I guess I'm the oldest grandchild. And when grandmother was close to leaving this earth, she shared that with me. [00:38:31][76.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:38:33] Interesting. So, you think they chose you to share that information with, share their family history history with because you were the oldest? [00:38:40][7.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:38:42] Because I was the oldest. And she knew that I would hold it in not a negative way. [00:38:47][5.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:38:47] Right. [00:38:47][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:38:48] You know what I'm saying? She knew that I would share it, not being upset or hurt about it, or she just knew that I could handle it. Yeah, that it was just life. Just life. [00:39:02][14.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:39:05] Can you describe your grandmother? [00:39:07][1.1]

Maria Edwards: [00:39:09] Very sweet woman. We used to call her Miss Foofe, and she was stern. [laughs] But she was Mama Foofe because she was prim. She was tall and big feet, long arms and big hands, ok. But she didn't play. She'd cook good. She always had these parables, ok. And you're like, 'wait, what is she saying? Ok, what is she talking about?' The other children in the family used to say, "oh, grandmas senile." But no, I remember quite a few of those parables, ok. Because I live by them right to this day, you know. Except for one that I didn't understand and I still don't quite get it, she says don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Yeah I'm still not sure, but I was thinking of what she was saying. If somebody offers you something, don't try to say how they should give it to you or.... I'm still not sure. [laughs] I'm 70, I'm still not sure. But she used to say that, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Well, maybe I can ask one of the other members of this group. They maybe they can tell me because I was just the grandchild. [00:40:36][87.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:40:41] So, your grandmother told you the family history from your grandfather's side. Did she ever tell you her own family history, where she was from? [00:40:51][9.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:40:52] Yes. Grandmother, like, her mother and father died when she was really young. And she became the mother and father for all their siblings, ok. And that's why she

married Grandfather young. She married grandfather when she was like 18. They were together for like 65, 70 years I think. [00:41:15][23.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:41:15] Oh, wow. [00:41:15][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:41:16] Yeah. She was the oldest, so she took care of her, it was two sisters and two brothers. Only one brother was gone, away. And she took care of them. And as far as I know, they moved to Pittsburgh. Because grandfather moved to Pittsburgh because that's where his relatives were. So, I guess he took his wife with him there. And Auntie Marie Doke was my grandmother's sister. She still lived in Pittsburgh. She stayed in Pittsburgh. And then she had a cousin, Ms Maddie, and Miss Maddie lived in Canisius in New York. And I was supposed to go live with her one time, but, grandmother wasn't having it. Yes, got into a little, spat with a little girl that was like, I was about five, and the little girl was like 12, and she was trying to cut off my hair. So, because I had real long braids and she was trying to cut them. We were outside playing, but then she just started to get weird, ok. Then she goes to the house and comes back out, and she has these scissors. But my Auntie I know was looking out of the window, and she knows the little girl, and she told her, "If you do that..." [laughs] Ok. But, when she told my grandmother, my grandma was like, "oh, no." She came and got me because she didn't want me to go anyway. [00:43:19][122.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:43:20] Yeah. So, can you describe your mother? [00:43:24][4.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:43:26] Mother. She was kind of, so she wasn't the nurturer, let's just say. She loved ball. She loved to play ball. She played baseball and basketball. She kind of took me more as her sibling than her child. And I understand, I understand the situation. But I used to always want to play ball like she did, although I never got as good as she was. She was real good. She played for the Negro League, yes. It was a semi-pro league before the WNBA, yes. And the softball league. I remember one time, there were two: the WAC [Women's Army Corp] and the WAVES [Women Accepted in Volunteer Emergency Services] was fighting over her to get her to come, the military people, they wanted her to come in to join, to be in the military, to play on the team for them. [00:44:46][80.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:44:51] Oh, Oh, Ok. [00:44:51][0.4]

Maria Edwards: [00:44:51] Yes. And how she got started was hanging out with her brothers and they needed somebody extra to play on the team. They would draft her. And that's how she started. And she didn't even start playing, until she was 12. [00:45:09][18.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:45:10] Very interesting. [00:45:10][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:45:11] Yes. By the time she was 16, she was like in the semi-pros [00:45:16][5.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:45:17] Yeah. That's so interesting. Was there a local team around here that she played for? [00:45:21][3.8]

Maria Edwards: [00:45:23] You know, and I really can't name any, I really can't. I wish I had it, but it came from Washington. It did not not in Alexandria but in Washington. But they had players from Washington, Maryland, and Virginia. [00:45:39][16.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:45:39] Ok. [00:45:39][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:45:41] And she traveled all over, and I used to travel with her sometimes when she goes. Locally, not when she went to New York. She played in New York, played in North Carolina, played in different places like that. But when she played locally, I would go with her, yes. And that's the time that I had the opportunity to play with so many different people. And, you know, different people from the people that I grew up with in my neighborhood. It gave me an opportunity to see different people, see how different people live, you know, different perspectives. [00:46:18][36.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:46:18] Yeah. [00:46:18][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:46:19] So, yes. [00:46:19][0.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:46:21] Did your family have any traditions that they passed down to you, your grandmother, grandfather, your mother? [00:46:27][5.9]

Maria Edwards: [00:46:30] Making sure we always eat together, eat dinner together. And we still do that now. I do that with my family ok. No matter what it is, ok, what was going on, you had to be at the dinner table. And if you wasn't going to be there at one time, you had to call. You had to have a good excuse, ok, you have to be there. After the meal, then everybody talked. How was the day, you know what went on, you know, does anybody need assistance, you know, who needs a pat on the back, you know, something like that. That's something that I know that I got from them, that I still do to this day, yeah. And sometimes my children will say 'ok, why do we have to be that long with prayer today?' But that's how it goes. It's just something that I got from them. And this is the main thing that I think that was passed down because traditionally I don't do holidays, you know, like I used to. But, yes, the meals, everything kind of wrapped around, like I said, that that made me feel wealthy when I was young. Yes. [00:47:56][86.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:47:57] So, the recipe for that Ling, for instance, do you know that? [00:48:00][3.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:48:01] The recipe? [00:48:01][0.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:48:02] For the Ling fish that you told me about? [00:48:02][0.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:48:03] Oh. Well, it's just that she would fry it. She would fry it. Yes. Fry it. Flour it and kind of like deep fry, you know, because it's a nice soft white fish. And when you fry it, she would chill it, make sure it was chilled, and then make sure the flour chilled too. I don't know why, but that's what she would do. And it's chilly and then put in a nice hot oil until it was crispy and delicious. [00:48:40][36.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:48:40] Oh, that sounds so good. [00:48:41][0.7]

Maria Edwards: [00:48:41] Yes, it was delicious. [00:48:42][0.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:48:45] Sounds Fabulous. So, you mentioned briefly a little while ago about the instance of displacement that you witnessed in Colored Rosemont. Specifically the, well, the development of Adkins public housing. What do you remember about that time, about when Adkins was being built and people were being displaced? [00:49:10][24.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:49:11] Ok. I remember me being in the Burg, living in the Burg. And I didn't know, I didn't pay that much attention to what was going on there. I was in school then, and I was trying to do the best I could in school because I was playing an instrument. I was in sports. I was doing a lot of things that kind of had me focused. So, I didn't pay attention to those things going on. But as I got older, I met Ms. Dorothy Turner. And Ms. Dorothy Turner was fighting hard to get blacks into that community. Because they weren't, you know, letting them in there at that particular time, yeah. And she fought hard. Now, I know a lot of people didn't like the idea of blacks, of people of the community moving there in what they call the projects. But, you know, some people had no other place to go but there, you know. So, she fought hard Ms. Turner was dynamite. She got a lot of people, you know, helping her out. And a lot of people ended up there at Adkins because of that. But as far as the building of it, only thing I remember is, as it was tearing down, and it was easier for you to access the other side of the train tracks that was there. You know, that's kind of all I can remember about that. [00:51:10][119.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:51:12] So, when did you move to the Burg? [00:51:13][1.3]

Maria Edwards: [00:51:15] I was eight. I was eight when I moved to the Burg. [00:51:18][2.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:51:20] How did it feel to leave Payne St and the home of your grandparents? [00:51:23][3.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:51:25] It didn't feel good at all. It didn't feel good until, like, until I got there and started making my own way. That was another place where I developed a whole different family, different type of family. All of the children, there was many more children there my age. And we played sports together, we discovered things together. Actually, this is where I learned who I was, right there in the Burg. But as far as being in the house, it was like a military barracks. And it was cold a lot, you know, it was never, you know, I never felt cold at my grandmother's house, you know, and it was dimly lit. We didn't have that at grandmother's house. It was just not the same. It was just uncomfortable. Especially at night, ok. We lived right by the water, Potomac River and the water. And especially in the wintertime, it'll be cold. Cold, until we figured out how to seal the windows and it got a little better. But yeah, that wasn't the place that I really like to, and it was all full of bugs. It was full of bugs. Mother, she didn't know what to do. And I went and talked to grandmother, grandmother told me what to do. I came back to help my mother, you know, to do what grandmother suggested. That's how it always was, go to see grandmother. Grandmother and my mother, I would always have to go growing up to get help. [laughs] That's how it is. It's okay, that's why she was there. [00:53:36][131.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:53:38] What was the reason you and your mother moved to the Burg? [00:53:40][1.6]

Maria Edwards: [00:53:42] Because at that particular time, my grandmother, I mean, my mother had another child, and my grandmother was telling her it's time for her to be a little more responsible. And she urged her out, yes. And that's how that went. And, she went kicking and screaming, but, well, not really, but she wasn't really ready to go, yes. Because she lived with, she was with my father for a little while. We lived on Buchanan Street in, you know where Cameron Run is? Right near there. Lived over there for like about six months and they didn't make it. So, we moved back to grandmothers, and then grandmother was suggesting, ok. Guess you get to realize, okay, we've been without you for six months now. Yeah. let's move on. [00:54:47][64.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:54:49] So, you mentioned the dimly lit home, the problems with sealing the cold, sealing the windows from the cold. But could you describe the Burgg in a little more detail for those who might not be familiar with it today? [00:55:05][16.5]

Maria Edwards: [00:55:06] Okay. You want physical descriptions? [00:55:07][1.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:55:09] Yeah. Where was the burg? What was it like? [00:55:11][2.1]

Maria Edwards: [00:55:12] Yeah, the Burg was like... I lived at Hopkins Court. [00:55:18][5.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:55:18] Ok. [00:55:18][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:55:19] Ok. Hopkins court was, it was two courtyards. And I lived in Hopkins Courtyard. Where at 307 Hopkins Court and, it was like a big courtyard, and they had the houses that would come down. On the south and the north side. No houses on the west side. And then on the east side there was another court. We use that court to play ball. That's basically what we did. We play volleyball, kickball, we ran track races there. We did that in that court. We hopscotched. We did, like I said, baseball, everything. I got hit the eye with a baseball. [00:56:22][62.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:56:23] Oh, no. [00:56:23][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:56:24] And I was blind for six months, ok. The ball was hit, and I'm riding my bicycle. I wasn't playing that day, and I was riding by. And the ball hit me straight in my eye, yes. Yeah, I did go straight to Children's Hospital. But, yes, it was a it was a fun place. I'm going to tell you, it was really fun. I really enjoyed it. It gave me a lot of freedom, had much more freedom than I had before. Maybe I was just slightly older, too, so that would allow me a little more freedom. And it was just a place where I could just know different parts of myself or experiment with things that I had never thought about before, you know. It was, ok, like it was beat bushes, it was a playground near there but basically it was just a simple little courtyard. And we made it everything. Anything that we needed it for we made it. [00:57:36][72.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:57:37] So, do you have a favorite memory of the Burg or a favorite aspect of the Burg that you can recall? [00:57:43][5.7]

Maria Edwards: [00:57:45] My favorite memory would be just playing and playing sports. Playing. Just enjoying myself. Jump rope, double Dutch, that was my favorite thing. Oh, dancing. We used to have dance offs. [00:58:05][19.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:58:06] Really? [00:58:06]/[0.0]

Maria Edwards: [00:58:07] Yes. In the courtyard, we just have these dance offs. And my stepfather had a big fancy, what do you call that back then? You know, you didn't call them units then, you call them just the turntable and the speakers, ok. And, we're with the receiver, and we put it in the window, and you could hear it all over the whole courtyard. And we all did have dance offs, ok. [laughs] It did that. That was one of my favorite memories. [00:58:40]/[33.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:58:41] So, how long were you living in the Burg before the displaced families from Colored Rosemont arrived in the Burg? [00:58:51]/[10.2]

Maria Edwards: [00:58:52] I don't remember. I was maybe about 11. About 11 when I remember Deborah, and I don't remember too many people coming from Colored Rosemont there, other than Deborah and her family because everybody else there was basically there when I moved there. And then there were families that did come in but they weren't, they were from the Carolinas. But I remember Deborah moving there because they moved two doors down from us, and my mother and her mother, grew up together. Yes, it's Pearl. [00:59:46]/[54.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:59:52] Ok. What schools did you attend in Alexandria? [00:59:58]/[6.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:00:00] Charles Houston. Then I went to Parker-Gray. Then I went to Hammond. And I went to T.C. Williams for a very short period and ended up graduating from George Washington, yes. at George Washington is the last year that they had that as a high school. When I graduated in 1971, yes. 1971, the last year. [01:00:37]/[36.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:00:38] Do you remember any of the teachers that you had? [01:00:42]/[4.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:00:44] Yes. I kind of wrote them down to see if I could. I could come across the real quick because I remember quite a few. I remember there was this English teacher that used to always try to get me to write. She loved my writing. And she kept some of my writing on her board for ten years after I graduated from school as an example of, I forgot what the assignment was, but she encouraged me to write. I forget her name and that's why I was trying my best. But it's, like, Miss Gunn; she was a teacher that I had, I did shorthand, shorthand and speed typing. And that was really required a lot you know, when you were graduating from school, okay, you could get a good job with it, you know, and I was thinking about being a court reporter then, but that didn't work out. But she was very instrumental in me focusing and doing that work that good. And Mr. Griffin. Mr. Griffin was, he was, a history teacher. I remember him and Mr. Trice. Mr. Trice was my math teacher. I gave him problems. [laughs] I remember him. I went back and apologized afterwards, because I really gave him problems, okay. And, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Morrison was the art teacher. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Timmons. But they weren't the same school, Mr. Morrison was at GW. Mr. Timmons was at the elementary school. And that's where I actually realized that I could draw. And Mr. Timmons used to use me to help put up seasonal murals and things on the wall yeah. And Mr. Morrison said he enjoyed, he said that I was very creative, I enjoyed him. Let me see, I remember most of my elementary teachers. My first grade elementary teacher was Ms Edwards. That was my first and second, just like my name. Ms. Wright was the third grade teacher. Miss Baytown. Was a fourth grade teacher. Miss Henderson was my fifth grade teacher. Miss Claiborne was my sixth grade teacher, and I remember from the fifth to the sixth, because they used to give

me permission to leave school early so I can go to grade the play in the band yes. And that was a privilege. [01:03:45][181.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:03:47] What instrument did you play? [01:03:47][0.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:03:49] I played clarinet. Alto clarinet and bass clarinet. [01:03:54][5.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:03:55] Ok. [01:03:55][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:03:56] Yes. Bass clarinet was my favorite. Absolutely. Yes. [01:03:59][3.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:01] So, it seems like there's a recurring theme of you being very artistic in your youth and being recognized for that. [01:04:07][6.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:04:07] Yes yes yes yes yes yes. [01:04:10][3.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:11] Now, I'm jumping ahead a little bit, but did you learn anything about photography while you were doing any of these things as a kid? [01:04:20][8.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:04:20] No, that came later. I'll tell you, because I didn't have access to a camera at all, ok. But by the time I graduated, looking to go to school, I went to, I didn't, I was supposed to go to Howard University, but it didn't work out. Something happened in the middle of that and I went to the Agriculture School of Learning, the Agriculture School for Learning, and that's where I started photography. I started photography there, and I did so well that the teacher suggested and actually helped me enroll in NOVA [Northern Virginia Community College], to take some photography classes there. And then I went from there, from the photography I actually wanted to extend that to journalism. So, started to study journalism. Did end up going back to Howard, actually getting into Howard, ok. And then, I didn't do photography there, but I, like, it was a hobby. Yeah, it was a hobby. But then now I went to broadcasting school, School of Broadcasting. I've done a lot of stuff [laughs]. I went to the School of Broadcasting and that was just too exciting to kind of get over my nervousness, like I'm feeling now. I'm feeling a little better now, ok. But work as to interview people. You know, that's being a journalist, ok. So I went to school for broadcasting. And that was when I got the first assignment to go out and see if I could get into a show and interview the person that was, you know, being billed for that day. And that was the assignment. And I went in and it was Peter Tosh. And went up to him, and Peter Tosh actually gave me my first encouraging push to do reggae photos. To photograph reggae. [01:06:55][155.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:06:57] So, right about how old were you when you first got into the show that Peter Tosh was performing? [01:07:04][6.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:07:04] I was 27, 27. That's your age, yes. [01:07:08][3.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:09] Then you went to Howard School of Broadcasting? [01:07:11][2.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:07:12] No, no, no, it's called Washington. It's the Washington School of Broadcasting. [01:07:13][0.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:20] So, were you living in Alexandria at this time? [01:07:28][8.1]

Maria Edwards: [01:07:29] No, I was. In Washington, and I was on R St. R St is like a block over from, it's R and Johnson, a block over from 14th St. [01:07:42][13.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:43] Ok. [01:07:43][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:07:44] It's a very busy area. [01:07:46][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:48] Why did you move away from Alexandria? [01:07:51][2.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:07:53] Actually, people in Alexandria found me weird. [01:07:58][5.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:08:00] Ok. [01:08:00][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:08:02] [laughs] No, no, I'm just saying that because I had a lot of friends here. But it's like, Washington just seemed to suit me. I had a lot of foreign friends. And a lot of friends from Caribbean, Africa, British. And we just seem to have spots where we would commune in Washington always. And so it's just, it was easier to be me. [01:08:44][42.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:08:45] Absolutely. [01:08:45][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:08:45] Yes. [01:08:45][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:08:48] So, when you would, you know, commune with these people from Africa, from the Caribbean, from the UK, where would y'all do that? [01:08:59][11.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:09:01] Oh, it could be all over. But mainly, the main place where we used to meet a lot would be the Malcolm X, ok, they don't call it that. It was the Meridian Park, but now they call it Malcolm. X. We called it Malcolm X Park, but it was the Meridian Park at 15th and what's the name of that cross the street? Euclid. [01:09:29][28.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:09:30] Yeah. [01:09:30][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:09:31] Yes. Euclid. Yes. 15th and Euclid. I used to meet, I met so many people there. And then we just developed relationships from that park. We should go there and drum and, you know, use percussion instruments. You know, just gather there, you know? And you didn't have to know anybody, you know, you just go. And they still do that right to this day. Malcolm X Park. They're all on YouTube and everything. But we actually started that. Oh, yes, from the 70s. [01:10:09][38.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:10:11] So, you mentioned the percussion. It wasn't, you know, Go-Go was it? [01:10:14][3.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:10:15] No, no no it wasn't Go-Go. It's like we were doing drumming and just African drumming. Learning African rhythms and like using the djembe drum and the, what's the other drums name? And, congos, bongos, dunduns, those things, ok. And then hand percussions.

People would use Maraccas, Tambourines, Cowbells, all of that. I have to show you, one day. I can pull it up, Malcolm X Park, because I'm still part of the membership. I just don't get up there that often like I used to. I still drum too. [01:11:05][49.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:06] I'd love to hear it. So, after you went to the show that Peter Tosh was headlining, did you know that's what you wanted to do? [01:11:18][12.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:11:18] Oh, then I knew. That's because I was doing photography, like, for recitals, weddings, even some funerals. You know, your basic everyday, you know, things that people like to have photographs, to have memories of, ok. But that day I enjoyed it so much, interviewing him, and he made me feel real comfortable, ok. And he blocked off an area. But the Tamlin's is the people, the band that was playing with them. And they kind of prepped me. They talked to him, you know, they said, "hey, you know, he can be difficult sometimes, okay," or whatever. But we got together and it was very pleasant. And, by the time everything was over, he thanked me for asking him the things that I asked him. And it wasn't the same old stuff over and over again. And he thanked me. And those are the things that I was concerned about, you know, and I never felt comfortable about it, but I did it. And by him thanking me, it just gave me the courage to say, 'oh wow, this is what I'm pursuing, I'm narrowing it down. So when I narrowed it down, it got better for me. Yes. [01:12:56][97.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:58] So, how long did you work with these famous reggae artists? [01:13:04][6.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:13:05] So, that was like, from about '78 to '94. [01:13:10][5.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:13:13] '78-'94. Wow. [01:13:13][0.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:13:14] Yes. [01:13:14][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:13:15] So, besides from Peter Tosh, who else did you meet and work with? [01:13:18][3.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:13:19] Oh, so many. [laughs] [01:13:19][0.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:13:22] Maybe not a comprehensive list. [laughs] [01:13:23][1.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:13:25] So, ok, somebody you might know, Shabba Ranks, Coco T, Beres Hammond, B-e-r-e-s Hammond. Ok, right off the top of my head, Hugh Mundell, Prince Far I, Prince Buster. See, all of these is, like, old school that I'm calling up right now. Ok, let me see some new school people that you might know. Spragga Benz, Spragga Benz is new. Buju, Buju Banton. What else? I had more of a rapport with the older ones than the younger ones that come up. Because the younger ones, like my husband, like I said, was Jamaican. So, it's like, he owned a, he didn't own it totally by himself, but he helped, he was a co-owner of, a production company, and he used to get the younger entertainers to come up and do a dance. You know, the same when they come in and do a dance, ok, and whatever. And, you know, the DJ has to come in and do a dance. And he would know them, but I didn't really get that familiar with the younger ones, you know. But the older ones, you know. [01:15:13][108.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:15:13] The ones that popularized reggae. [01:15:14][1.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:15:15] I'm sorry? [01:15:16][0.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:15:16] The ones that popularized reggae. [01:15:17][0.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:15:17] Yes. Yes. The ones. Yes, yes. Yes, definitely. [01:15:19][2.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:15:21] So, did you travel a lot from this work? I know the around this time reggae was becoming international. But would you do these interviews and take, you know, take these photos when they were in the States or how did that work? [01:15:34][13.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:15:35] In the States, in Jamaica, in Hawaii. Ok, basically in the States it was New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Florida, California, and Canada, ok. Because we had the big Caribbean festival that comes every August 2nd. And a lot of the artists would try to be part of that. And even if they weren't in it, they wanted to just be a part of it, you know. You go there, you get a lot of artists just enjoying themselves, having a party with everybody. And that was beautiful shots, you know, just kept catching them enjoying themselves with the Caribbean dancers. You know, they're there with the floats and everything, it was beautiful. Yeah. [01:16:36][60.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:16:37] So, were you taking these pictures and doing these interviews for magazines. I guess, why were you doing the work? If that makes sense. [01:16:47][10.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:16:48] Yes, ok. I became part of, affiliated with this association where what they do is they, I guess they do the bottom, the work where they go and get your credentials together, give you the credentials to go and be and photograph them. And then some of you take them photos back and they'll solicit them to people who were looking to promote maybe or put packages together for specific, you know, like the bio packages, putting bio packages together. Just advertisement, for advertisement and those type of things. It was, some of that was just personal, ok. They wanted to take different photos of them and just have them for their use. Yeah. [01:17:53][65.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:17:53] Ok. So, you're just a known photographer and journalist in the Reggae scene? [01:17:58][4.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:17:58] Yes. They would just call me. They would say, they would call me Washington. They say, "Washington!" Ok. They didn't even know what I, some of them didn't even know my name. They just called me 'Washington.' Ok. Because it would be about 5 or 6 photographers outside, and they always, like, especially with reggae, they want somebody familiar, ok. They want somebody familiar, they don't like when you come in randomly because a lot of them are smoking ganja, you know, doing that so they don't want people to come in that is going to exploit them, ok. So, they look and see. Plus I had real long dreads way down here, ok. And then they would look at it and say "Washington!" They'd say, "get Washington here." Because they were comfortable. That's how it started. They were just comfortable. And then they started bringing me up on stage, you know, to get the, you know, those intricate shots that I said, those good shots where you, you know, you want to get, you know, but you can't get out of the audience. They'd bring me in and, that was great. It was, "Washington, come on!" [01:19:07][68.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:11] So, do you have any any favorite memories of your time spent photographing reggae artists? [01:19:17][6.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:19:19] Too many. [laughs] [01:19:19][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:21] If you had to pick one though, I'm sorry. [01:19:24][3.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:19:25] It's ok. Favorite. Wow. I would say there was, a nice festival going on, and I had a lot of artists there from America, like from 2 Live Crew and... Ok, who else was there that was American? Nas, there's a whole lot of Americans there. It was such a big thing going on and they just had me all over. I was like, everybody was calling for me, ok. It was just so, you know, they just want me to take their shot. Yeah, I think that was that was exciting to me. That was exciting, ok. That and I just had so many fun times, you know, so many. But that day, and I took a lot of photos with a lot of the artists. I'm going to show you too before I get a chance to go. I brought a couple for you. [At this point Mrs. Edwards brought out a photo album] [01:20:41][76.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:41] Oh, wow. Ok. [01:20:41][0.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:20:42] Yes. Ok. Yes. But. I enjoyed myself so much, Kerry. I can't, [laughs] it was just, like, a beautiful part of my life. [01:20:55][12.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:55] Oh my word. Yeah. Mrs. Edwards has just brought out a quiet voluminous photo album. Oh my word. [01:21:03][7.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:21:04] This is Shaba Ranks. Oh, yes, this right here is Shabba Ranks. [01:21:11][6.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:14] Oh, wow. [01:21:14][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:21:15] See how close I was? [01:21:15][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:20] Oh, yeah. You were. Yes. You got all these action shots? [01:21:23][2.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:21:23] Yes. [01:21:23][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:24] These are incredible. [01:21:24][0.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:21:26] Ok. That's Shabba too, I have so many. That's my husband there. Bunny Wailer is there, Maxi Priest, Admiral Bailey, Tanto Metro, Peter Metro. See, I'm not sure that you would know them because like I said they're old. This one here Stitchy. Stitchy used to be a school teacher in Jamaica, ok, and became deejay. That's when he first started. This Bunny. Bunny is with, you know Bunny and Bob and all of them? [01:22:14][48.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:14] Yeah. [01:22:14][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:22:15] Ok. That's Bunny. [01:22:15][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:18] That's incredible. These are incredible. Will you show me more after the interview? [01:22:21][3.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:22:22] Yes. [01:22:22][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:23] These are fabulous. I would love to hear more. Would you be willing to let me take some photos of these? [01:22:28][5.3]

Maria Edwards: [01:22:30] Yes. Actually, I have some photos I could just send you. [01:22:32][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:32] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. [01:22:33][0.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:22:33] Tell me what you want and I can just send it to you. [01:22:34][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:35] Thank you. That was really cool. Thank you for that. [01:22:39][3.9]

Maria Edwards: [01:22:39] Thank you. [01:22:39][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:41] So, you really were absolutely in the thick of it. Most of the photos that Ms. Edwards just showed me, she was feet away from the artist, if even that far. So, how did it feel to be a known commodity, I guess you could say, in the artistic scene? [01:23:01][20.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:23:02] Well, that's passed now, but it was everything. Because it gave me an opportunity to teach my children a lot of things. To teach them how, ok, xenophobia is not in my language, ok, you know what I'm saying? So, It was just a beautiful learning experience for me, you know? I see everything as learning, you know, everything is learning to me, you know, even if I'm teaching, I'm learning, you know. And it was just a beautiful learning experience. Yeah. I just enjoyed every piece of it. Every piece of it. And it just opened so many other doors for me to open up the doors. [01:24:04][61.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:24:07] So, if I could circle back briefly. You furnished us with that extensive list of all the teachers that you could remember from your schools, the schools that you went to in Alexandria. I was curious, did any of those teachers ever teach you about black history? [01:24:25][18.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:24:27] Not one of them. Not one of them, ok. But I was one of the ones, ok, that year, in 1970, to be instrumental in getting African studies in school. [01:24:48][20.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:24:48] Really? [01:24:48][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:24:49] But they wouldn't put it in day school. They made it go in the night school. And the teacher that they got was white South African, ok. Now, I used to protest about it so much to get this started ok. So, when they got somebody who would teach it and they got the the white guy, they I was like, 'why?' Ok. And so he proved to me that he could because he grew up there in South Africa. He was in the middle of the apartheid. And, his father sent him to the States to get away from, you know, that situation, right. And he came here and he gave me this name here. He gave me an assignment and he said, "if you can find some information on her, you get her

name." And I was like, "what?" And it was so hard. But I ended up going to the Library of Congress. And found out information on Queen Nzinga [of Ndongo and Matamba], ok, which they have a big thing of her in the African American Museum now, over there in Washington. This is one of the first entries you see when you walk into there. But, he challenged me. And so when he when I found that information. He says, "wow, you get an A and you get the name too." And I said, "thank you so much, and now I'll let you be my teacher." But we had a good rapport.

[01:26:36][107.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:37] Absolutely. So, I must admit, at this point, a bit of ignorance on my part. I know of Queen Nzinga only by name. Can you describe more about her briefly, just for anybody who's listening? [01:26:47][10.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:26:48] Queen Nzinga was a warrior queen. If you ever seen that movie or heard of the movie 'Woman King?' That's how Nzinga was. Nzinga was the head of her whole own tribe and her whole everything. She took it from her brother, who was unable to do the duties that he needed to do to keep these British people from, and it was the British and the Portuguese, who we're trying to get rid of them. It was due to the slave trade and she wasn't having it, you're not going to take any of her people as slaves. And she held down the fort. She held them back for, like, almost like 60 some years. She was about 80 when she passed and she used to go out into the war. When she sent her people out in combat, she goes out there with them, ok. She was a serious warrior queen. Serious warrior. [01:28:01][73.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:28:05] That's really cool that you got to have that experience finding out more about her. [01:28:08][3.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:28:08] Yes. [01:28:08][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:28:12] So, you know, part of the Colored Rosemont initiative is, you know, sort of recovering a bit of Black history in Alexandria that has been, pushed to the side and ignored for quite a long time. Can you speak to how you felt when you first learned about the Colored Rosemont Initiative? [01:28:36][23.9]

Maria Edwards: [01:28:38] Well, I was kind of elated that it was happening because, like you say, there's too many times that these things just go ignored, you know? And I know if Brother Stan had anything to do with it, it was going to happen. And I was elated because it just made me go 'oh, wow.' That means that that place that used to make me feel so, it's almost like important. It's almost like, to say I was seen there you know. You see me, you know what I'm saying? Ok. And that was important to hear how they were going to bring it forward again, you know what I'm saying? Ok. I'm going to be seen again, you know what I'm saying? I'm going to be seen. And it's important that people have a place where they feel important. Where they feel, you know, like that. What's that old, 'Cheers,' they say, "where you want to go? Where everybody knows your name." It's almost like that feeling. And I was just so happy to hear that that was happening again. That they were making this happen. Yes. [01:30:11][93.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:30:13] So, the Colored Rosemont neighborhood has changed a lot over the past, you know, 20, 40 years. While you were living in Washington, did you ever come back to Colored Rosemont? [01:30:28][14.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:30:29] Only sometimes to visit Stan. I had a store and he carpeted that for me. I had a condo and he carpeted that for me. He did a lot of work, you know what I'm saying? And then did he? He was always one of those ones that help encourage me in life, yeah. [01:30:52][22.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:30:52] Yes, absolutely. [01:30:53][1.1]

Maria Edwards: [01:30:54] So, when I came back, that's where I'm coming to in Colored Rosemont. Other than that, it wasn't that much to come back to. [01:31:03][9.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:31:03] Yeah. [01:31:03][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:31:05] That's probably the only space that you could possibly, that I could really say is really Colored Rosemont, to me. That one little house there. [01:31:14][9.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:31:14] Yeah. So along that same vein, what does the Colored Rosemont that you remember from your youth, the place that that you were seen, what does the neighborhood look like today? [01:31:23][8.9]

Maria Edwards: [01:31:25] Compared to what I saw? [01:31:25][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:31:28] Yeah. If you could describe the changes that you see from your youth to now. [01:31:32][3.9]

Maria Edwards: [01:31:32] Oh, wow. Well, to me, it's a little dismay. It's like, I enjoyed seeing all the families together. It's like, when you went there in that area, in Colored Rosemont, it's like you walked into a big house, you know what I'm saying? You know, family is all there. And that's always the difference to me. It's not the building, it's not the, you know, it's the feeling, it's the, you know, it's how you feel when you walk to a place, you know, that's gone. You know that feeling of, like, when you walk down there, everybody is going to know your name, you know it's there, everybody is gonna know who you are, you know what I'm saying? That feeling is not there anymore, you know, it's gone. But like I say, I know there's got to be progress, things got to move on. But if I had anything to say about anything, like I said, it's not in the building. It's not, whatever. It's that feeling of, nobody knows your name, you know, that's it. Yeah. Did that make sense? [01:33:04][92.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:33:05] Absolutely it did. The sort of a, you know, the erosion of that community dynamic that you felt when you were a kid. Yeah. [01:33:16][11.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:33:16] Yeah, yeah. Because that's the only way, I think, that I could identify with them, because I was so young, you know? [01:33:23][7.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:33:25] Absolutely. [01:33:25][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:33:26] Yeah. [01:33:26][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:33:27] So, the recent development in the past 20 years, when you would come back to Colored Rosemont, to visit Mr. Greene, what would you see with in regards to these

recent developments? Can you speak more to that? Like...Here's a better question, when was your grandfather's garden gone? [01:33:51]/[23.1]

Maria Edwards: [01:33:52] Oh. You know, I really don't know. I really don't. That happened when I was young, though. He was still alive. And, maybe he got too old, but maybe they sold the property because they built another house on that property there. It's a new, more up to date house that they built on that property there. Two floors, I think, two or three floors that they built there on that property. And I'm not sure, I couldn't say when it was gone, you know. Because I know, like I said, that was in between, no, they played on the lot for a while. But then it went to older people, ok. At the time that I'm thinking so, wow, that must have happened when I was probably 18, maybe. [01:35:06]/[74.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:35:08] So, it wasn't the development of the Adkins homes, then. The Adkins homes weren't built on top of your grandfather's garden. [01:35:17]/[8.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:35:18] No. [01:35:18]/[0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:35:18] Okay. This is a different house. [01:35:18]/[0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:35:19] It was a different house. Different home. Different single home. Yes, yes. [01:35:22]/[2.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:35:23] Ok. [01:35:24]/[1.2]

Maria Edwards: [01:35:25] And that would be right next door to Stan's [house]. [01:35:28]/[3.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:35:31] Yeah. Right next door to him. [01:35:32]/[0.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:35:32] Right next door. [01:35:32]/[0.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:35:32] So, what stands at 1314 today? [01:35:35]/[2.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:35:36] That same house, that house. The house that they built, that they put there. That house there, it's like a 2 to 3 story house. Up to date, more up to date. It probably went up there like, maybe the 80s. I'm thinking it was like early 80s. I'd have to ask Stan to make sure. I think it was the early 80s. [01:35:58]/[21.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:36:04] So, are there any other aspects of Colored Rosemont today that resemble the Colored Rosemont of your youth? [01:36:12]/[7.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:36:14] That resemble it? The only thing would be that one little house, ok. And I say that when I see that house that, and I'm so glad that he still has it there, because if that house wasn't there, it would just be a memory, you know what I'm saying? Because, well, there's still a memory now, but it's like, when I see that house I see Colored Rosemont. [01:36:40]/[26.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:36:42] Absolutely. [01:36:42]/[0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:36:43] Yeah. That it. It makes me. And that house there makes me see all the rest. It makes me see my grandparents and makes me see my aunt and uncle. It makes me see, when I see that house there, yes. [01:36:57][13.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:37:00] What has it been like to come to the Colored Rosemont meetings and see the work that's being done? Both by the former residents and also the city staff? [01:37:11][10.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:37:12] First of all, I want to thank you all for having me included in this. I didn't even think that I had a space there, ok. Because I am the grandchild and didn't really live there per say, but it always felt like I live there because I'm with my grandmother and them, ok. It was like they made you feel that. But I enjoy seeing the effort, ok, to put this thing together. It's like a taxonomy, like almost putting things, you know, like you put things together to throw things out. And it's like, it's beautiful seeing that happen and it's beautiful being a part of it. It's almost like a policy advisory committee board or something that has to do with an old memory, you know. It's beautiful to me. And I love to see the freshness of the people that are studying, how they are coming in and the city staff, how they are they coming in, they help the situation. And recognizing, you know, that we were people there that had a beautiful life, you know, very self-sufficient, you know. And it produced a lot of, you know, people that, just a loving people. Loving, educating, willing people, you know what I'm saying. It's just, I don't know, sometimes it brings tears to my eyes to see that all the people together to make this happen. [01:39:17][124.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:19] Absolutely. [01:39:19][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:39:24] It's important. [01:39:24][0.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:25] So, you just spoke to this a little bit, but perhaps more specifically... You know, I was driving down Henry St recently and, I forget where I was going, but there's that new development coming on Wythe St right next to... [01:39:40][14.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:39:40] Oh, at the bottom of the road on Wythe St. Yes. They stopped it, didn't they? No, no, no. [01:39:47][6.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:48] It's still going on. [01:39:48][0.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:39:48] Ok. [01:39:48][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:49] But it just made me think, you know, more residents are going to be coming into the area formerly known as Colored Rosemont. And as a former resident yourself, what would you hope that current residents and future residents of that area, what would you hope that they would know about Colored Rosemont? [01:40:07][18.1]

Maria Edwards: [01:40:10] What would I hope that they would know. I would hope that they would continue to feel the way we felt when we were there. Like, I don't know how that could happen. But you have to take pride in the place that you live there because you want to be there, you know. That you enjoy your neighbors, you know. That you commune and communicate better with the people that surround you. All of that was there in Colored Rosemont. If that could spill over

into the new, that would be beautiful. That would be beautiful. I don't know, because everybody is... And they're turning it into apartment building, right? Yeah. And I'm not sure how, what economic, you know, how it's going to be economically or whatever, I don't understand. But I'm just hoping that if they take that space that they'll be able to acquire some of that energy, you know what I'm saying, that came from there. And I don't know if you can still feel it. But it was a beautiful spot. I mean, Colored Rosemont is almost like a little dreamworld. It was like it was, it's hard to express that because you're not going to find that nowhere else. You never find it anywhere else, ok. Even when I was in the Burg, ok, we had all that camaraderie, ok, we had fun and sharing things together. But not like the pride in, you know, those type of qualities that make you a good person and make you feel like you're a good person. If you're trying to be a good person, ok. I just hope that that would spill over into that community, anything that's coming there, anything. That's what I wish. Might be idealistic, but that's what I wish. [01:42:57][167.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:42:58] That's beautiful. Restoration and continuation of community. That's fabulous. [01:43:02][3.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:43:02] Yes, yes, yes. [01:43:03][0.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:43:05] Well, Mrs. Edwards, we've been talking now for about an hour and 45 minutes. And it has been an absolute privilege, to be here speaking with you today. [01:43:11][6.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:43:12] I had fun. [01:43:12][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:43:13] Before we before we leave, I just have a few closing questions if that's all right. If you could hold on to one memory about Colored Rosemont forever, what would it be? [01:43:26][12.8]

Maria Edwards: [01:43:33] The pride, the pride. The pride and the way the community, how they commune together. How they did everything in a loving fashion. Even though I'm not saying everybody always got along together, you know, that's, you know, false. Ok. But just to say, that if you understand yourself and you understand the people around you, you're going to have a better place to live. Yeah, like I said, you don't got to be just like them. You don't have to. If you just understand those things there. I just wish the best for anything. Everything that comes out comes out of that. But, my memory, if it's just that thing of pride. And sometimes people take it too far. They get too far. But that, thing of being prideful for the right reason, you know. It'd be something beautiful to take away from there. [01:44:55][82.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:44:56] Yes, absolutely. [01:44:56][0.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:44:57] Yes. [01:44:57][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:44:59] And then lastly, if you could hold on to one memory forever, what would it be? [01:45:04][4.9]

Maria Edwards: [01:45:04] If I could hold on to one memory.... [01:45:06][1.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:06] Yeah. One memory. Any memory. [01:45:08][1.5]

Maria Edwards: [01:45:08] Any memory, any memory. Whoa, that's a hard question, Kerry. That's a hard question, Kerry. If I can remember, ok, and this would be a memory from Colored Rosemont? [01:45:20][11.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:21] Anything. [01:45:21][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:45:22] Just anything? [01:45:23][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:24] Yeah, throughout your entire life. [01:45:25][0.4]

Maria Edwards: [01:45:28] Sitting and having a good meal with my family. That brought so much joy to me. Like I said, that made me feel wealthy, ok. It might sound weird, but that made me feel wealthy, you know. That it gave me strength, you know. Those memories of sitting down with family, sharing your thoughts, you know, eating good food and sometimes give a grandfather what you didn't want, [laughs] what he's got to eat it. But that is beautiful memories to me. Beautiful memories. I can tell you a whole lot that pleases me. I kind of, like, I'll get teary for anything. But that's just how I am about life, you know. But that memory of sitting, and that's why I think I still carry it on as a tradition in my family now, because and sometimes I get a little disappointed that they don't see it the way I really see it. And maybe I'm hoping that one day they will, ok. Well, "Ma just go ahead and eat, I'll be there soon." "No, I want you all here together." You know, but sometimes it's hard to do, you know. And everybody has different things to do in life these days, you know. Life is going this way and that way, you know. You just don't have the opportunity. So I am understanding, but I still miss that, you know. when I'm not able, that's where I go. You get a little boost, sitting down at dinner, having a great meal, you know. [01:47:26][117.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:26] Absolutely. [01:47:26][0.0]

Maria Edwards: [01:47:27] Enjoying myself, ok. Having good laughter, you know, good laughter. Maybe sitting down, enjoying telling those stories, little anecdotes, you know what I'm saying. Stuff like that is beautiful. [01:47:39][12.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:40] Beautiful. Absolutely. Well, thank you so much. Mrs. Edwards it has been absolute blessing hearing you speak today. Thank you. [01:47:46][5.7]

Maria Edwards: [01:47:46] Well, I enjoyed talking with you, Kerry, and I thought that I would be uncomfortable. And a lot of times I'll draw for words because I'm very colorful person. I like to stay in the in the realms of understanding. [laughs] But I really, truly enjoyed myself. [01:48:06][20.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:48:07] I'm terribly happy to hear that. Thank you so much. Thank you. [01:48:07][0.0]