



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



Oral History Interview

with

Deborah Turner

Interviewer: Kerry James Reed

Narrator: Deborah Turner

Location of Interview: Lloyd House, 220 N Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314

Date of Interview: 02/21/2025

Transcriber: Kerry James Reed

Summary:

Deborah Turner recounts her childhood in Alexandria's Colored Rosemont neighborhood, primarily centered on her grandmother Pearl Waterson's home at 1315 Wythe Street. She describes a close-knit, self-sufficient community marked by extended family gatherings, gardening, street games, church, and mutual care among neighbors, contrasted with the trauma of her family's displacement in the early 1960s. Turner also discusses attending T.C. Williams High School during integration, her early adulthood and 36-year federal career, becoming a Master Gardener and beautification judge after moving to Maryland in 1990.

Notes:

This interview is part of the Colored Rosemont Community History Initiative, which took place between 2022 and 2027.

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General	Racial Segregation; Displacement; Urban Renewal; Community Gardens; School Integration; Family Genealogy; Multigenerational households; Neighborhood history; Childhood recreation; Domestic life; Foodways; Church History; Religious practice; Grandmother-grandchild relationships; Public Housing History
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People	Waterson-Turner, Pearl Nancy Louise; Turner, Luther; Turner, Larry W.; Turner, Paula Renee, Lynn Turner; Turner, Shelly; Waterson, Pearl Barnowe; Waterson, Parker; Uncle Robert; Uncle David; Aunt Vivian; Aunt Catherine; Catherine, Maud; Greene, Carrie; Greene, Stanley; Morrison, Pearl; Cross, Sharon; Cross, Eleanor; Cross, Lydia; Mrs. Lily; Mr. Ed; Lee, Dermot; The Burke family; Taurance; Greene, Veronica Yolanda
Places	Colored Rosemont; 1315 Wythe Street; 1312 Wythe Street; The Berg; Princess Street; Hopkins Court; Madison Street; Payne Street; West Street; Pendleton Street; Freedman's Hospital; Roberts Memorial Baptist Church; Parker-Gray Middle School; Charles Houston Elementary School; T.C. Williams High School; Johnson Pool; Carver Theater; Woodbine Nursing Home; Fayette Court; South Fayette Street; John Roberts Homes; Annie B Rose House; District Heights, Maryland; Florence, South Carolina; 511 N Henry Street

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:00] This is the backup. And then when I press record, I'm going to point at you, if you wouldn't mind telling me your full name, your age, and the date. It is February 21Street [00:00:08][8.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:00:12] My name is Deborah Turner. I was born May 20th, 1952. [00:00:15][3.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:18] My name is Kerry James Reed. I am 27 years of age. It is the 21st of February, 2025 and we are here at the Lloyd House. So thank you so much, Mrs. Turner, for agreeing to do this interview. I've been looking forward to it for a long time. [00:00:32][13.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:00:32] I'm excited to do this. [00:00:33][1.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:35] So I suppose we can just start from the very beginning. Where were you born? [00:00:39][3.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:00:40] I was born in Washington, D.C., at Freedman's Hospital in 1952. Yes. [00:00:45][5.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:46] Fabulous. Were your parents living in D.C. at the time? [00:00:48][2.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:00:50] No. That was just where we had to be born at that time. [00:00:51][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:00:53] Why was that? [00:00:53][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:00:53] Blacks weren't allowed in Alexandra Hospital, so we were born at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C., which is now Howard University Hospital. [00:01:03][10.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:01:04] Right. Where were your parents living at the time? [00:01:07][3.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:01:08] My parents were living, I'm trying to think. Were they on.... On Madison St, I think, in Alexandria, Virginia. [00:01:20][12.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:01:23] Madison Street Do you know the house number, by any chance? [00:01:26][2.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:01:26] I think it was in 1100 block, I'm not sure, but it was next to the corner house on N Henry St and Madison Street [00:01:37][10.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:01:38] Ok. [00:01:38][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:01:39] Yes. I remember the house, but I don't remember the number. [00:01:43][4.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:01:44] What do you remember about the house? [00:01:46][1.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:01:47] It was the projects, that's where we lived, my mother and father. I remember me and my brother in the beginning. I don't remember the other two sisters, because there

are five of us. And I remember we had an old Victrola, is that how you pronounce it? An old record player, where you had to line it up. So my father had that and we had, there was 78, the numbers were 78 records, and I used to play the records on that Victoria Patroller or something like that. Yeah. So I used to play music on that. I used to wash clothes, had to wash clothes. The old washed clothes where you'd put the clothes through the wringer. And then you had to rinse them in the sink and then take them back to the yard. That was fun. [00:02:36][49.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:02:39] What sort of records did you listen to on the Patroller, was it? [00:02:41][2.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:02:43] Yeah. Victrola. It was whatever music my father had. It was probably blues and jazz and big band music. That's what I remember. Yeah, I was playing them when he wasn't home. [laughs] [00:03:01][18.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:04] That's interesting. Was there a lot of music in your house growing up? [00:03:06][2.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:03:09] Yes and no. I mean, yes, I could say yes. It was a lot of music, there was music every day, let me say that. Because he would play the music when he came home from work. Yes. [00:03:19][9.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:20] Did anybody in your family play instruments? [00:03:21][1.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:03:22] Not a soul. [00:03:23][0.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:24] Interesting. [00:03:24][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:03:24] I know. I always wanted to play the piano, had a little bit of lessons, but never pursued it. Yeah. [00:03:30][5.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:03:30] Got it. So you said that your parents were living on Madison St at the time, did they move at all? [00:03:38][7.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:03:40] I'm trying to think, now you taking me way back. First, they lived on Princess St down the Berg. And I can't tell you what address that was; down the Berg between North Pitt St and North Royal Street I remember being in that block. There was a fire. And I remember there was a stove and a rug. And I remember the sparks, and I must have been about three, because my brother's three years older than me. Because it's just two of us at the time. And one of the neighbors came over and she told my brother that, all I know is he grabbed me by the hand and took me out the house. So we lost, I think, everything, in that fire. Yeah. Everybody got out. [00:04:30][49.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:04:31] That's important. [00:04:31][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:04:31] Yes. And then we moved to, I think we went to my grandmother's house then, at 1315 Wythe Street And then we went to [the house] on Madison Street [00:04:40][8.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:04:41] Ok. Could you describe your grandmother's house at 1315 Wythe? [00:04:46][4.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:04:47] Yes. It was a three bedroom. What you'd call a one story ranch-style home. There were three bedrooms. The living room when you come in. Living room, dining room, kitchen. And at that particular time, when I was younger, there was no in-house plumbing, at the time. We had a front porch, a big front porch with a glider on it, red and green and white glider. And I think it was a red and white rocker chair, and green and white, another Adirondack chair that was on that porch. And on the front, when you come off of the steps on the porch, there was a patio that my uncle had built with bricks. Yeah. The kitchen was a nice sized kitchen, we had sit down dinners in the dining room and sit down dinners in the kitchen. I remember the stove. I remember the sink, the big sink. I remember the window in the kitchen. It was a window in each room. One window in each room. And then, I'm trying to think what else I can remember. I remember it being a brick house. I remember my grandmother grew flowers on the side of the house, and she grew hydrangeas and roses. We had, grapevines, we had a peach tree. Trying to think what else we had. And we had mint on the outside of the kitchen window. We had plenty of spearmint growing, and it probably grew about three feet tall. So yeah, my grandmother was growing mint beside the house before that even became the thing to do: grow the mint by your house for cooking. And then in the backyard there was a grassy area and there was a little incline. I'm not sure how that incline became. It was just a little, little hill, like, I don't know if they put trash in there, threw the trash in the hill or whatever, but we did have one trash can. And the outhouse outside of the house, right after you come out the kitchen door, there was the outhouse, there was the door to it where there was a toilet. [00:07:26][159.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:07:29] Interesting. So, before we go any further, would you mind telling me the names of your immediate family, if that's all right? [00:07:36][6.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:07:37] My mother's name was Pearl Nancy Louise Waterson. Married name Waterson-Turner. My father's name was Luther Turner. You want the children too? [00:07:48][11.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:07:49] Yes, please. [00:07:49][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:07:50] My brother's name was Larry W. Turner. Then it's me, Deborah Turner. And then it's my sister, Paula Renee Turner. Lynn Turner. And then Shelly came 15 years later. [00:08:06][16.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:07] Oh, wow. [00:08:07][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:08:07] Yeah. Many, many years, because I'm 15 years older than she is. So yeah, that was the four of us in the beginning. Because Shelly was not even born when we left from Colored Rosemont. [00:08:20][12.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:20] Got it. And then your grandmother's name? [00:08:24][4.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:08:25] My grandmother's name was Pearl Barnowe Waterson. [00:08:28][3.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:29] Bano? Oh, Barnowe. [00:08:29][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:08:30] Barnowe was her maiden name, Waterson. W-a-t-e-r-s-o-n. [00:08:32][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:35] Got it. [00:08:35][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:08:36] And my grandfather's name was Parker Waterson. [00:08:38][1.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:08:41] Fabulous. Thank you. So, y'all lived down in the Berg, and then after the fire, did you move in with your grandmother? [00:08:57][15.7]

Deborah Turner: [00:08:57] We moved in with my grandmother. I can remember that, yes. [00:08:59][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:09:00] What was that experience like, moving in with your grandmother? [00:09:04][4.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:09:06] Great experience. Always loving, always inviting. That was home. That was where my mother was born. So, whoever needed a place to live, she took them in. Yeah. So it was...I loved that house. There was always somebody in the house. My grandmother didn't work. She cooked three meals a day. We always had food in the house. My grandfather, I remember my grandfather coming home from work. I remember holidays and Sundays where her brothers would come and visit on Sunday. Her brother and my grandfather's brother would always come by almost every Sunday. So the house was full on Sunday and we had plenty food to eat. Yeah. So it was a loving gathering all the time at our house. [00:10:05][59.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:10:06] Absolutely. [00:10:06][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:10:06] Yeah. [00:10:06][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:10:09] So you mentioned the family gatherings. That was sort of the first thing that you fixated on. Why do you think that these gatherings stick out so much in your mind? Was it the food? Can you describe a gathering for me? [00:10:26][17.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:10:27] It was the uncles and aunts, the cousins. It was fun. And I guess the food kind of brought us all together because my grandmother's house was the hub of the house [family]. Everybody came to visit. There was a lot of laughter, a lot of warmth, a lot of love in the house. I can't ever remember if there was either any unkind word spoke among either anybody in the house. And I may have done it without us being there, because a lot of times when the grown ups spoke, when they were talking, they didn't allow us to be in the same room, the same area if they had

some business to take care of. So that's what I remember. I remember that connection, of having family and and sometimes friends that would come over to have meals with us. [00:11:31][64.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:11:32] Absolutely. [00:11:32][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:11:32] Yeah. So it was a great time. [00:11:33][1.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:11:34] Yeah. It sounds fabulous. [00:11:34][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:11:35] Yeah. Yes. And that was more like a tradition. I mean, that's just what happened at grandma's house. [00:11:41][6.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:11:46] Do you remember the neighbors that you had a 1315 Wythe? [00:11:50][3.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:11:50] Yes. [00:11:50][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:11:52] Would you mind describing them or telling me who they are? [00:11:54][1.7]

Deborah Turner: [00:11:54] I remember the Greenes across the street at 1312 Wythe Street. We were connected in a very close way. We helped each other out. My grandmother used to have seizures. And the first person, if I knew that my grandma was getting to have one, or was having one, I would go get Mrs. Carrie Greene, which was the Greene's mother. She was the mother of the house. And I'd get her. She would come over and assist my grandmother. If my grandmother was chewing on her tongue, she would tell me to go get a spoon and put a spoon in her mouth to stop her from cutting through her tongue. Then she would come out of it. And we would always go to the neighbor's house because Mrs. Carrie, baked cakes and rolls, and we had ice cream in the summertime where all the kids had to do the churning. And if you wanted ice cream, you had to work for it. So yeah, so we had a good connection across the street from us. [00:13:01][66.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:13:02] Absolutely. Was your grandmother an epileptic or? [00:13:06][4.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:13:07] I didn't know what they called it at the time because I was very young. [00:13:11][4.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:13:12] Yeah. [00:13:12][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:13:13] But I don't know if she was ever diagnosed as that. Because I don't even remember ever going to the doctor. She may have, but she did have seizures. Usually, sometimes as I got a little bit older, because I could almost tell where she was going to have one. Because she would get up a strange look and she would start moving her hand a certain way, and I'd usually try to go grab her hand and just rub on her hand. Sometimes I can, I guess, have her to come out of it. I don't know if that was what it was doing, but I would just rub her hand. And then she would come out of it. Sometimes I would catch her when she's really having a hard one. Yeah. So I'm not sure if she was

ever diagnosed, but I know she has seizures. And how I know that name, I do not know. [laughs] I guess as hearing the adults talk about seizures, and that's what she had. But I can remember her taking Stanback, I don't know if you ever heard of Stanback [00:14:20][66.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:14:20] No, I haven't. [00:14:21][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:14:21] It's an old, powdered medication. It comes in a very thin pack. I think I remember it's a blue and yellow pack. And she would take it every day. And she never complained if she had a headache or anything, but that was something she took every day, with a Coca-Cola. With a bottle of Coca-Cola? [00:14:40][18.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:14:40] Bottle of Coke. [00:14:41][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:14:41] Yes. And back then I think Stanback had codeine in it. So it was doing something for her. But you never would know that she was sick or had any aches or pains. Yeah. [00:14:55][13.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:14:58] How old was your grandmother when y'all moved into the house? [00:15:00][2.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:15:02] That I don't know. She was a young woman because my mother. My mother was born in 1930. So, I don't know. I can't tell you how old she was. That's a good question. [00:15:15][12.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:15:17] I guess I was leading up to if you knew when your grandparents bought that house on 1315 Wythe St? [00:15:23][5.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:15:32] I did know, because I went down to the courthouse to do some research. But I remember that date, I think was in the 19...I guess early 1900s. Because my mother was born in 1930, because all of them were born in that house. My mother had two older siblings. There was 3, 4 or 5 years difference. So they had to be in the house before 1920's, I guess. Yeah. [00:16:04][32.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:16:05] Five year difference? [00:16:05][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:16:09] Yeah, because my mother had two older sisters. So I can't tell you what year that was when they bought the house. But it is on the paperwork that I do have at home. [00:16:23][13.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:16:27] Got it. So what inspired you to go do that research? [00:16:29][1.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:16:31] Being involved with preserving the history of Colored Rosemont. Just different questions coming up about the time frame of them living there. And I wanted to know what happened because my grandmother and I were displaced. So I wanted to know what happened, and how did that come about. So, I went to, [Veronica] Yolanda Greene and I went down to the courthouse, and I researched what exactly had happened. And it gave me several different things, but

I don't remember the dates, and I just wanted to know who was involved, who went to court with the housing authority at that time, and exactly what came about. [00:17:30][59.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:17:35] Absolutely. So, before we begin talking about your memories of your grandmother's displacement. In my haste to learn more about your grandmother's house, which you've talked to me about before. I forgot to ask you to describe Colored Rosemont for me. Would you mind doing so? [00:17:51][16.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:17:53] Colored Rosemont was, most of the homes were single family homes. Some of them were row houses around the corner from us, but most of us lived in single family homes. Most of them were wood framed. It was a well-connected, loving community. Everybody knew everybody. If you needed something, it wasn't strange for someone to knock on your door, "do you have a cup of sugar or egg or something like that?" And everybody looked out for one another, even down to the children. So we were not just disciplined by my immediate family, but we were disciplined by anybody in the neighborhood. If we were doing something wrong or needing to be somewhere else, they would also call out to us and tell us, "what you doing? Where you going? You need to be home," that kind of thing. So it was a community where there was a lot of protection and a lot of love and a lot of fun, a lot of eating, and partying too, with one another. Yes. There was a neighbor around the corner, where I remember Ms. Pearl Morrison living on the corner house of Madison St, no, Wythe St and West Street That was my grandmother's best friend. [00:19:20][87.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:19:21] Pearl? [00:19:21][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:19:22] Pearl Morrison. [00:19:22][0.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:19:23] Morrison. Why do you remember her? [00:19:27][4.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:19:27] I remember her because they used to always visit each other. She was a gray haired lady with very pretty grayish eyes. House always smelled like something was baking whenever you went there. She would always make you welcome, and she would have a niece that would come to visit and we would go play with the niece. Some of the girls in the neighborhood would go down and play jacks on her porch. Yeah. [00:19:55][27.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:19:58] So you just mentioned playing jacks at Ms. Morrison's house, where did y'all play as kids in Colored Rosemont? Was it normally people's houses or where was it? [00:20:10][11.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:20:11] In the street, on the sidewalk. We used to play hopscotch, jump rope, double dutch, Chinese jump rope. We used to play, Mr. Watson had a field on Payne Street, North Payne Street, we would play on his lot, playing kickball, baseball. Some of the kids in the neighborhood, the Burkes, built a tree house and we had a swing. [laughs] Well, it was a rope dangling from the tree. And I think it was actually a rubber tire, where we would swing there. So that was a lot of fun. That's where we mostly played. And when we'd skate, we'd skate down the street around the corner on the sidewalks. Most areas had sidewalks in the neighborhood. [00:21:03][52.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:21:08] Y'all would skate, roller skate? [00:21:09][1.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:21:10] We would, not roller skates, these were metal skates. [00:21:14][3.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:21:14] Metal skates? [00:21:15][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:21:15] Yeah. They had a key to them. Yeah. The metal skates, you put your foot on it. It's not like a roller skate, it's not a shoe, but it's an open metal shoe that has prongs that go around your foot to hold your foot, and a strap that goes around your ankle. And you take the key on the side to tighten up the clasps that would hold your foot in the in the skate. And the rollers were metal. Yeah. So you never seen one of those? [00:21:48][32.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:21:48] I've never seen that before. [00:21:49][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:21:49] You got to Google it. [00:21:50][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:21:51] Absolutely. Yeah. [00:21:51][0.6]

Deborah Turner: [00:21:52] Yeah. So yes, we used to skate on that rugged road. Tar road coming down the street or the sidewalk. Yeah. And sometimes it would be about eight or nine of us, and we'd have a rope. And we would start at the Bass's house, cause it was a little hill. We'd go round the side of his house on Payne St, and the first one would go, and we would just come flying around the corner down to West Street [00:22:17][25.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:22:19] Oh, man. That sounds like a lot of fun. [00:22:20][0.6]

Deborah Turner: [00:22:20] Yes. And, you know, I don't know how we got together all the time, but it seemed like we had a routine. We were going to play this then, and I don't know how it happened, but we just did it. [00:22:29][9.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:22:31] Oh, that's so cool. I'm so surprised that you're the first person to mention the skates. Because that sounds, because I go down Madison St a fair bit, and I think I can picture the hill you're referring to. [00:22:44][12.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:22:45] Yeah. Yeah. And to us, it was a big incline. When you're young, it seemed like a really big incline. So we'd start it there and then come round the hill. Yeah. So it was great. [00:22:54][9.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:22:55] That sounds so cool, [00:22:55][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:22:56] We'd skate almost every day. We did almost the same thing almost every day until it was summertime. And then we would swim. We did a lot of swimming. [00:23:03][7.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:23:04] Would y'all go to the... [00:23:04][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [00:23:04] The Johnson Pool [00:23:05][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:23:05] Johnson Pool. [00:23:05][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:23:06] Yes. [00:23:06][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:23:06] Ok. Absolutely. So, when we spoke on the phone previously, you described derby cars to me as well? [00:23:15][9.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:23:16] Yes. One of the Burke brothers that lived on West Street They were very good with their hands. Their father was a carpenter, and they built, I don't know what you'd call it. We called it a go kart. I don't know if it's called a derby cart or not, but it was a little go cart that they would bring out. And then we had to take chances in riding in it. [00:23:37][21.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:23:38] Oh, man. But a lot of speed in the neighborhood, y'all were going around. [00:23:41][2.6]

Deborah Turner: [00:23:42] Oh, yeah. We were about having fun, you know. The kids in the neighborhood were very active. I was a tomboy. I have the scars to prove that, I had a whole bunch of scratches. And most of the time I would play with the boys, even if they played football. There were 2 or 3 of us that would play football with them. Yeah, so it was... [00:24:05][23.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:24:07] Interesting. When you played football, what position did you play? [00:24:11][3.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:24:11] I don't know. [laughs] I just play it and do what they tell me to do. Yeah. They say catch the ball or run it, that's what I did. Yeah. [00:24:22][10.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:24:23] That's really funny. Yeah. So when y'all were racing up, up and down Payne St, whether in your little go kart derby cars or in skates, were there any streets that you knew you weren't allowed to cross or anything like that? So I guess in your mind, when you were growing up, what were the boundaries of Colored Rosemont? [00:24:45][21.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:24:48] The boundaries, most of the time that when we played or was in the neighborhood, we were between Payne and West St, between Pendleton St and Madison Street That was in my mind, what Colored Rosemont was, just two blocks, to me. That's West St and Payne St and Pendleton St and Madison Street. And I also can remember my best girlfriend, we still talk to one another. Well, I had two girlfriends. One was Sharon Cross, they lived two doors from us, my grandmother's. And then Ellie, Eleanor Cross was around the corner. Her grandmother had, Mrs. Lydia had a big house. They had these homes where they had rented on the back of the house, I guess it was sheds or something like that, I'm not sure exactly what they called them. But she had chickens and roosters. And the rooster, whenever I would go in that gate, every day I was almost in that house, the rooster would always chase me, you know. It was just wild. I guess he knew I was afraid of him, but he would always chase me. He was sitting, "cock-a-doodle-doo," but when I'd come around the corner, I'd be looking to the side to see if I can see him. He'd come out of nowhere and just chase me. [00:26:20][91.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:26:20] Oh man. [00:26:20]/[0.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:26:21] I'd go back out the gate, and then one of my girlfriend would come get me. I said, "I don't know what's wrong with the rooster," because he knows me. [00:26:29]/[8.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:26:29] Right. [00:26:29]/[0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:26:31] But every day he would chase me. Oh, man. He'd never peck me, but he'd always chase me. Yeah. [00:26:36]/[5.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:26:36] That's so funny. I interviewed Ms. Ellie recently, she never mentioned the rooster to me. [laughs] [00:26:41]/[4.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:26:43] Really? Wow, 'cuz I had talked to her about doing that and well, yeah, there was a rooster. Oh, yes. Not only that, on the field next to Ms. Lydia's, she had land there where she grew a lot of, they did a little like farming there. Yeah. They grew a lot of vegetables and stuff like that on the corner. So when we'd go around, when we were skating, we had to go out in the street on West St when we came to that area. Because there was no sidewalks or we'd just walk across the land until we got around on the other side of Madison St, where the sidewalks would pick up again. Yeah. [00:27:21]/[38.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:27:23] Got it. So you've mentioned a lot about the, you know, sort of the natural beauty of Colored Rosemont, everybody's gardens and things like that. And I was curious about your grandmother's house, because you mentioned the mint growing outside the kitchen window and the peach tree and the grapevines. Did she garden anything else? Or was it just sort of that natural stuff growing there? [00:27:47]/[24.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:27:49] I don't remember her doing any other gardening. Except for tending to those hydrangeas, because I had to be there to help her with the maintenance. Like picking up dead stuff and she'd tell me where to put it. She would do the pruning on that and the rose bushes, because she had two rose bushes. And they were huge, too. And then she had the grapevine. But I don't remember her doing or growing anything else. I just knew that it was mint on the side of the house, and then the peach tree in the back. But I don't remember her growing anything else. And I remember when my uncle did, when they did the brick patio, him and Mr. Dermot Lee, they did a brick patio right below the front porch. And then they built, they did a cement walkway to the back, from the front to the back. A path, I should say, a path lined with bricks going toward the back. Yeah. Then we had on the other side of the house we had a driveway. I remember when my grandfather had that big Black, I don't know if it's a Ford or Buick, but we used to play in the back of the Buick, it was so big you could sleep in it. And then on the on that side of the house, Mrs. Lily was the neighbor next door, Mrs. Lily and Mr. Ed, and they had a lot of bamboo. So, there was a lot of bamboo on the side of the house. Yeah. I don't know what that stuff was for a while, but it was bamboo. So, they had a tall, like six foot fence, but there was a lot of bamboo and we could go from, on both sides of our house we could go from the front to the back. A lot of houses didn't have that access like we did,

because my grandfather could drive this car way to the back yard. Yeah. So, and we had two dogs.
[00:29:57][128.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:29:58] Two dogs, too? Oh, gosh, what kind of dogs? [00:30:01][2.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:30:02] One was big Black Fox. His name was Fox. And then we had a little small dog that belonged to my uncle called Igor. Little brown, looked like a hot dog. [laughs] But we had two dogs, yeah. [00:30:15][12.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:30:15] That's perfect. [00:30:16][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:30:16] Yeah. Fox would bark every time someone, the mailman or anybody come down the street, a car. And sometimes he would jump over the fence and run down and chase the car down and run beside the car and then come back and jump back in the yard. [00:30:26][10.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:30:26] Oh my gosh. At least he was trained enough to come back.
[00:30:30][3.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:30:30] He came back every day. And the thing about it, it was a very smart dog. My grandmother, in the morning, I swear that dog could speak. She would say good morning to him. And he would like [mimics the dog's sound] and, you know, trying to say the words. I mean, maybe it's my imagination, but I can believe that that's what he was saying back to her. Because every morning that's what they did. [00:30:54][23.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:30:56] Did a lot of people in Colored Rosemont have dogs or pets?
[00:31:00][3.7]

Deborah Turner: [00:31:02] We had a dog. The Crosses had a dog two doors from us. The Burkes had a dog called him Laddie or Lassie, who looked like Lassie on TV. Pretty dog. The other Crosses, they didn't, I don't remember them having a dog. I remember the Greenes having a dog. I can't remember anybody else having a whole lot of dogs in the neighborhood at that particular, at that time.
[00:31:38][36.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:31:41] So really quickly, what did your grandfather do for work?
[00:31:46][4.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:31:51] I can't remember the name of it. And Stanley would probably, the Greenes would probably know exactly what it was, but it was a meat plant where they prepared meat.
[00:32:01][10.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:03] Ok. [00:32:03][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:32:04] And it was actually not too far from the Johnson pool if I can recollect that because I could smell it in the neighborhood. But that's where he worked. I can't tell you what the name of it is. [00:32:19][14.6]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:20] It's not a butcher? [00:32:21][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:32:22] No, it wasn't. And I never even visit the place. I just knew he worked in the neighborhood. And I knew that when he came home, he always brought some meat at home for the neighbors. [00:32:34][11.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:34] Interesting. [00:32:34][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:32:35] Yeah. So he fed a lot of people in the neighborhood. [00:32:38][2.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:38] Yeah, absolutely. [00:32:38][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:32:39] Yeah. [00:32:39][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:32:40] Very interesting. So I'm really interested because, you know, you mentioned all this gardening you were doing with your grandmother, and then she was also, you know, cooking the three square meals a day for a lot of people. So it seems like she was just a woman full of energy, I guess you could say. Would that be fair? [00:33:03][23.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:33:03] Oh, yes, it would be. She would get up early in the morning, go clean up and be fully dressed first thing in the morning. I don't know what time of morning, but it was early. We always had breakfast and we always sat together to eat. And then she did take a couple of breaks, I remember, because she was a very religious person. She read her Bible every day, sometimes several times a day. When she had a break, she would always sit down and there was a Bible where she would be reading. And then she would fix us lunch. She would call us in for lunch, especially in the summertime, I can remember that because we would have to come in for lunch, and then we would have to reStreet And then for dinner she would fix the dinner, I mean it was just routine, what she did, because she didn't work. Yeah [00:34:00][56.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:34:01] What church did y'all belong to? [00:34:06][4.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:34:09] Roberts Memorial Baptist Church. Yeah, my grandmother was a member there. [00:34:11][1.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:34:11] Got it. [00:34:11][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:34:12] Yeah. 606 S Washington Street. [00:34:16][3.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:34:16] Absolutely. Did y'all go to Bible school there as well? [00:34:22][5.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:34:23] I didn't go to Bible school there. I went to Bible school on, trying to think of the little church on Madison? Wythe Street and N Patrick Street, it's on the corner. I don't know if the church is still there or not. It's a little white church that sits on the corner, right diagonal from where Charles Houston is. I think the church is still there, I'm not sure. Right there on the corner I think it has a fence around it. We went to Vacation Bible School there, some of the kids in the neighborhood, we would go there for Vacation Bible School in the summertime. And we'd stay all

day because they would feed us. We would go to Vacation Bible School and have our studies and play, and we'll have lunch, and then we have rest, and then they send us home. [00:35:23][60.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:35:24] Got it. Ok. So, before we started our conversation here today, you mentioned your grandmother's fried apples, which I've never had before. And I was wondering if you could describe some of the meals that your grandmother would make? [00:35:43][18.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:35:44] I can remember, in the morning, I can remember grits or rice or oatmeal in the morning. But there was always rice in the house every day, she cooked rice every day. My mother's family was from South Carolina, from Florence. So there was rice in the house every day, three times a day. So I can remember having fried potatoes for breakfast, sometimes slab, what they call slab bacon, sausage, sometimes pork chops, sometimes chicken, biscuits. I don't remember too much. I remember I had a cheese toast, but not too much toasted bread. But I can remember biscuits every day. [00:36:29][45.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:36:30] Cheese toast? I'm sorry? [00:36:31][1.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:36:32] Yeah. Cheese toast is: you have a slice of bread, put some butter on, put a slice of cheese on it, and you stick it in an oven and put it on, what's that temperature? It's the highest temperature, it's not roast, it's broil. On the broiler and you stick it in and you have to watch it, and then when you take out you had to watch, pull it out. Oh, it was so good. Cheese toast [00:37:00][27.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:00] I'm learning all new foods today, this is terrific. [00:37:02][1.6]

Deborah Turner: [00:37:03] That was, that was one of the things that we had also. Lunch, I can't remember what we ate, but we ate something. What I did not like was peanut butter, at the time. I like jelly. And we had baloney sandwiches. And I like mustard on my baloney. So we had the white wonder bread and baloney sandwiches. We didn't drink sodas in the house. We either had iced tea or lemonade that my grandmother would make. She was the only one drinking sodas. But other than that, and she drank coffee and tea. So we were allowed to drink tea also. [00:37:42][39.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:43] Of course. So you said that your grandmother was from Florence, South Carolina? [00:37:47][4.7]

Deborah Turner: [00:37:48] Florence, South Carolina. Mhmm. [00:37:48][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:49] Ok. I would have loved living in your house. I love rice. And rice every day? Oh. [00:37:55][6.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:37:57] Rice and grits. [laughs] [00:37:58][0.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:37:59] That sounds fabulous. That's my kind of house. [00:38:01][2.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:38:01] Yes, yes. Yeah, make sure you get filled. [00:38:03][2.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:38:04] Yeah, absolutely. So, you know, you mentioned doing that research down at the courthouse and then that your grandmother was from South Carolina. Do you know the story of how she came up here, to Alexandria, to Colored Rosemont? [00:38:17][12.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:38:17] You know, I was thinking about that the other day, and I don't even know how they even met. I don't even know if I even talked to my mother about how they met. But I wanted to find out. I have to do some research about even how they connected. Because as far as I know, my grandfather was from Alabama. So I don't know how they connected, how they even knew each other. [00:38:46][29.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:38:55] Interesting. How did you find out? Would they discuss their youth in Alabama or in South Carolina? Like, how do you know they're from there? [00:39:03][8.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:39:06] I knew by talking to my my grandmother's brother, Uncle Robert. And his brother, Uncle David, we would have conversation about Florence, South Carolina. In fact, my Uncle Robert, we went [there] because we had a lot of family reunions, and he took us to the house where he was born. He must have been 80 something, 80. And we were having a family reunion in, I think, Charleston, South Carolina, or Sumter, one of the other. And he took us to the house where he was born, and he showed us. The house was no longer there, but he knew where the space was. So I knew by talking to him as I got older, about Florence. And then one of my cousins did a family tree. She did a lot of research about where exactly our family came from, which was West Africa, Barbados. So there on that tree she had put in, I think it was relatives in Florence, accounts of South Carolina, where they migrated to. So just different stories from talking to different members of the family as I got older. Because I wanted to know. Yeah, but that was a good question. I was thinking about it maybe a week or two weeks ago about it, I don't even know how they met or how they connected. And I really don't know when they got married, but they were married. Because I do know that. [00:40:57][111.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:40:59] So, at some point they met and they were in Colored Rosemont, in that house on Wythe St, sounds like before 1920 based on your siblings. [00:41:11][11.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:41:13] It probably was. [00:41:13][0.5]

Kerry James Reed: [00:41:13] Interesting. Ok. I'd love to know more. You need to hire a genealogist or something. [00:41:16][3.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:41:17] I know. [laughs] [00:41:17][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:41:20] So, going back to the courthouse, you wanted to know more about your grandmother's displacement. What is your earliest memory of that process? Like, you know, when did that start to happen? [00:41:35][15.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:41:36] I didn't really understand a whole lot about it, but I must have been about 12, 11 or 12, when I kept hearing things about it. Like I said, we never was in the room, but I'm

a curious young lady and I wanted to hear some things. And I just knew they were talking about displacement and having to move. And I was just kind of disheartened about that. So must have been about maybe 11 when it first started, 11 or 12, something like that. Yeah. [00:42:12][36.3]

Kerry James Reed: [00:42:13] When they would be in the room talking, would it just be your parents and your grandparents? Would it be a community thing or? [00:42:19][5.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:42:21] I don't know, because I was outside playing, you know. Because they would they would always most of times send us outside. So I never knew when they even met. I know the Greenes talked about when the men got together, but I never knew that because I guess I was younger. I was out somewhere playing, so, but I knew there was talk about us having to move. And like I said, I was very disheartened about that. [00:42:51][30.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:42:52] Yeah. [00:42:52][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:42:52] Yeah. [00:42:52][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:42:53] So after you heard about it for the first time, when did you start to see, or realize that you actually would have to move? That, you know, the displacement, the development of the Adkins public homes was going to happen? [00:43:09][15.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:43:10] When we were packing up. And I don't really remember a whole lot about that. I just know that, I think my uncle had left first Because he had gone out to California, because he was living in the house with us, my uncle Parker. So I remember him leaving. And he was telling me he was going to San Francisco, I remember that. But then everything else started to happen after that. I can remember when my mother's sister, my Aunt Vivian and my mother and maybe my Aunt Catherine, they were talking about things, but I didn't understand exactly what they were talking about. And then the next thing I know, I don't even know who moved us. I mean, because it was all kind of a blur to me, that we were going to move down the Berg. So that's where we ended up back at, and my grandmother had never lived in the projects. And that was heartbreaking to her, very heartbreaking to all of us, but mostly to her because she got sicker. She started to have strokes and more seizures. I just know she was brokenhearted about it and having to adjust to living next door to someone [new] and then everything else around her: not having a yard, not having a garden, that kind of a thing to tend to. So, that disrupted her life, yeah. All of our lives were really disrupted. And I can tell you that if I was afforded to, I would still be in that house. Living across from 1312 Wythe Street [00:45:00][110.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:45:02] Being Mr. Stanley's neighbor. [00:45:02][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:45:02] Yes. Yes. I would have still been in that house. Yeah. [00:45:05][2.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:45:07] So, was it just your family that was displaced at the time? Or was it anybody else around you? [00:45:15][7.9]

Deborah Turner: [00:45:15] I can remember, I'm trying to think who left first I don't know if Ms. Lillie next door to us left. She moved, and she moved on S Henry Street Didn't know that 'til later on in years when I was in the neighborhood and I saw her. And I remember. The crosses were still there when we left. I can just remember us and Ms. Lillie, I don't remember anybody else at the time. And I couldn't understand that because they, like I started from my grandmother's house towards the left, going east, that people were moving. But I just remember Ms Lillie moving and then us. I don't remember anybody else. Everybody else kind of stayed. Most of the people going towards West St, they were there for a while, many years. Yeah. [00:46:17][62.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:46:19] Do you know or do you remember if your family tried to take any actions to keep your grandmother's home? [00:46:26][6.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:46:28] Only by the paperwork that I saw in the courthouse when they went to court. [00:46:31][2.9]

Kerry James Reed: [00:46:33] So what did you see in the courthouse? [00:46:35][2.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:46:36] I saw the paperwork where they had different meetings, different discussions, where they would go to court. And then there was no option for them to have. It was like, 'you either take this or you don't.' I saw there was, I can't remember exactly what the dollar amount was, I remember my mother and them splitting money. I can remember that, but I don't know how much it was. I don't know if they just gave in or if they were going to take the house anyway. Yeah, because it was a plan. And I'm sure they did fight. I mean, because I could see the different times that they went to battle with the, what you call it, the housing authority and I guess the City. So, they did fight, but I don't think they would've ever won. [00:47:37][61.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:47:38] Yeah. So, you spoke about your your grandmother, how did your grandfather react to being displaced from his home? [00:47:49][11.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:47:50] My grandfather was dead at the time. He had passed. I was five years old when he passed. So this was many years after he passed. Yeah. Yeah. [00:48:02][12.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:48:03] How about your mother and father? [00:48:05][1.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:48:08] Well, my mother was in the house with us. My mother and father had separated at one point. So it was my mother and us still in the house with my grandmother, my mother, my brother, I don't remember anybody else. Maybe one of the kids, because it was there was three years different between me and, 'cuz me and my brother were the oldest and it was three years difference with one of my siblings, and then it was four years difference with the other. I just don't remember, I just remember we had to move. I know my grandmother moved on Princess St and my mother and we moved on in Hopkins Court down the Berg. [00:49:12][64.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:49:13] Hopkins Court. [00:49:14][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:49:15] 303. Both house numbers was 303, 303 Princess and 303 Hopkins court. [00:49:20][5.1]

Kerry James Reed: [00:49:22] Ok. So, you were born in Freedman's Hospital in D.C., came back to live down the Berg, and then, because of the fire, you moved.... [00:49:36][14.7]

Deborah Turner: [00:49:38] To my grandmother's. [00:49:38][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:49:39] To your grandmother's house. [00:49:40][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:49:40] And then on Madison Street [00:49:41][1.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:49:42] And then.... [00:49:42][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:49:44] Back to grandma's house. [00:49:45][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:49:45] Yeah, back to grandma's house. And then forced to move to Hopkins Court. How old were you? [00:49:54][8.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:50:00] I might have been, because I remember being in the eighth grade. Because I attended Parker-Gray [Middle School], because I went to seventh grade up to Charles Houston [Elementary School]. Then the eighth grade, I went to Parker-Gray, and it was a middle school then. And then I remember that was the eighth grade, so I must have been 13 at the time. I might have been 13. I can remember going to school, walking to school to Parker-Gray and then going back to the house because they hadn't torn the house down. But I would visit that house almost every day. [00:50:39][39.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:50:40] Really? [00:50:40][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:50:40] Yeah. There was no key. There was a skeleton key, but doors were never locked in the neighborhood. So I would go in the house, and I just wanted to be there. And I would just be there. I would sometimes sit in the dining room a lot of times where there was a lot of things happening where the Black potbelly stove was. I remember my grandmother standing behind it or in front of it with her dress pulled up because her cheeks were cold all the time. So I just walked through the house, just thinking. And the house was full of memories. And it was one particular time I went in there and the refrigerator door was open and there was an egg that, somebody had dropped the egg on the floor, and I just closed the door and walked out to the back, went to the yard and just walked around. And I did that for a long time. I don't know why I stopped or when I stopped or if somebody told me, 'you need to stop going out there.' But I did that for a while because I missed it so much. [00:51:46][66.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:51:49] So, do you remember when you were no longer able to visit your grandmother's house? When did they tear it down? [00:51:56][7.2]

Deborah Turner: [00:51:58] Wow, I don't know, I don't know. It probably was there for maybe a year after that when I went to high school, out to T.C. Williams. I didn't never go back there to visit. I don't know if there was a house there to visit. But I know there were other people that were still living in the neighborhood at the time. Yeah. [00:52:16][18.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:52:17] Absolutely. So after y'all moved down to the Berg, would you still go visit Colored Rosemont at all? [00:52:26][8.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:52:35] Only if I wanted to go back to the house. But I would leave school, because Parker-Gray was around the corner from where my grandmother lived. So I would leave school, and then after school I'd just go to the house. Did I play with anybody in the neighborhood? No. At that particular time, I would just visit the house and then go home. But later on, I would visit the Burkes, the Greenes, Stanley was still there. I'm trying to think anybody else was there. No, it wasn't any other people that I wanted to visit because I think everybody else had left. Even on Madison Street But the Burkes were there, Ellie Cross, they were still there. Ms. Pearl, I'm not sure, I can't remember if she was still there. [00:53:32][57.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:53:37] So you move from, I should stop saying move, I'm sorry. You were displaced from Colored Rosemont, and then you moved down to the Berg. Which, you know, those environments must have seemed, how did they seem to you? Like different? The same? [00:53:56][19.1]

Deborah Turner: [00:53:59] Different. Because it's different when you move from a house to the projects where there is that...there really is no yard to play in, because we played in the yard a lot. I met some people there. It was like a community also there, where I moved. But it was it was just different. Missing the people that I was used to being around. Missing that connection. That community connection that we'd had. Now this was something different where I connected with other people. So it was a community. But it was just different. [00:54:49][50.0]

Kerry James Reed: [00:54:51] Could you describe what your house at 303 Hopkins Court looked like? [00:54:55][3.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:54:56] Yeah, we were in a two bedroom house. We had a living room and a kitchen. We had two bedrooms and a bath. We had a walk-in pantry from the kitchen. What else did we have? I'm trying to think something else. My mother had this room divider that divided the living room to where you go to the steps up the steps. And I used to take a shortcut, and I still have the mark on my leg where I cut my leg on the metal room divider, silver-metal room divider. Yes. And the mark is still there. I remember that. It was just different. It was smaller. We played outside, we still were very active as kids. I still played football and baseball and kickball outside because there was a field we could play in. And then across the street the housing authority had like a baseball field, so we had baseball games there where we played. I think the Johnson pool was still in, and so we'd still go to the swimming pool. It was different. [00:56:21][84.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:56:21] Yeah. Did the family gatherings continue once your grandmother's house was gone? [00:56:31][9.4]

Deborah Turner: [00:56:38] Not like it used to be. Because she was in a house to herself, but I was staying with her most of the time. I guess because I was the oldest girl and she had seizures they wanted me to stay. So I didn't want to because I wanted to be somewhere else. Because, you know, you're children, you wanted to be somewhere else. But I lived with her most of the time at 303 Hopkins House [Court], I mean Princess Street What was the question again? Sorry. [00:57:12][33.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:57:17] You know, it's funny, I forget myself. [00:57:18][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:57:19] That's all right. [laughs] [00:57:20][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [00:57:23] Because, you know, because it's very interesting to me how, like, this entire rupture almost occurred. Where, you know, you're displaced from your grandmother's house and then along with that comes, you know, consequences in community and family life and things like that. And, I don't know, I would just love to explore that dynamic a little bit more, if that's all right. So after your grandmother moved to 303 Princess St you said her seizures increased? [00:58:03][40.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:58:05] More frequently, yeah. [00:58:05][0.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:58:06] Did anything else about her behavior change? [00:58:08][2.3]

Deborah Turner: [00:58:12] No, because she kind of just, maybe she was adjusting and I didn't know she was adjusting, but I knew that there was something about her that was not, and then having to climb stairs. That was the other thing. But she was still, to me, a fairly young woman, being my age. And I didn't know how she how old she was, but I knew that was the difference. And then having to go down to wash the clothes, and then go down some steps to hang them on the line, she always did that in our back yard. But the other thing was having to deal with roaches. Oh my gosh. That was the other thing, because we never had to deal with anything like that. So those kind of insects were they were just atrocious. [00:59:04][51.7]

Kerry James Reed: [00:59:05] Yeah, I can imagine. [00:59:05][0.6]

Deborah Turner: [00:59:06] They really were, no matter what you did. Because if you spray, the nextdoor people may not spray or anything else, but it was atrocious. She began to have strokes. I never knew she had a stroke, well, she may have had one stroke before we left Wythe St, but hers were more often. And I remember her going the last time she had one. She ended up in a nursing home. At Woodbine Nursing Home, on King Street [00:59:43][37.2]

Kerry James Reed: [00:59:44] Woodvine? [00:59:44][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [00:59:46] Woodbine [Nursing Home] on King Street That's where she died. [00:59:48][2.4]

Kerry James Reed: [00:59:50] When was that? [00:59:51][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [00:59:53] 1970. It was August Why I remember? Because I was pregnant. That was my last year in high school. And I would go by, me and some other girlfriends would school, because we walked to school most of the time. We lived on S Fayette St at the time. When grandmother was still living on Princess Street My mother moved to S Fayette St in the S Fayette St Court Apartments, across the street from where the Lee center used to be. That's where we lived in my teenage years, in my high school years. But I was still staying with my grandmother. But when she got sick the last time she was put into Woodbine, I couldn't understand, why did she have to go there? I guess maybe because everybody had to work, so there was nobody to take care of her. So she ended up in Woodbine. And then I would go visit her almost every day, leaving school. And she couldn't talk, but I would just sit there and talk to her. And I told her, I couldn't tell nobody else because, I was scared, and I told her I was pregnant. And she just looked at me and just reached out and gave me a hug. And then I just kept going to see her. And her eyes would light up every time she would see me. But I knew she didn't want to be where she was. Couldn't talk, couldn't move. That was sort of devastating. Yeah. So she didn't last very long once we moved down on Princess Street Yeah, because it was 1970. Yep. Yeah, it was August 1970. [01:01:44][111.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:01:48] So when I when we spoke on the phone previously, you wanted to talk a lot about the lessons your grandmother taught you when you all would be out back gardening. And you also mentioned that you are a judge for for gardening competitions or your master gardener. How did that come, come about? How to how did you become a master gardener? [01:02:19][31.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:02:23] I moved to Maryland. I used to live on Wolfe St, and I moved to Maryland. And I lived in a community where it was sort of like where I came from. But it was no activity, no thriving, no connection. So it was intentional for me to do something in my community to try to bring people together. And my thought was to start a community garden. So what I did was just looked at some land, because I walked a lot of the neighborhood and I saw this property and I said, "well, you know what? I think we could put a garden there." So I just went to the city council and said, "this is what I want to do." And so that started the ball rolling. And then I went to Watkins Park to a garden workshop. And I sat into this workshop session where there was people called Master gardeners, I didn't even know anything about it. I went to this session and they gave a presentation and I said, "oh, I want to be one of these. I want to be a master gardener." So they told me how to go about it. So I had to take the class. It was a very, I guess, 2 or 3 month class, extensive class. I took the class and became a certified master gardener. That was in 2011. I built, helped develop and build the community garden in 2011 August. So I took the class in, I think it was March, no, May, whatever month it was. I took the master gardening class in May. And then that's how that came about. [01:04:18][114.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:20] So you were living here in Alexandria before you moved up to Maryland? [01:04:23][3.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:04:24] Yes. [01:04:24][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:25] Where? [01:04:25][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:04:25] I lived on Wolfe St, 900 Wolfe Street [01:04:27][1.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:28] Ok. [01:04:28][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:04:28] Yeah. [01:04:28][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:29] Got it. [01:04:31][1.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:04:32] In the apartments that they tore down now, yeah. Not even there anymore. [laughs] [01:04:36][4.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:04:38] So it's, you know, I just think it's very interesting because when you thought that you were going to, you know, build a community relationship, I guess, you gravitated towards gardening. Why do you think you did that? [01:04:57][18.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:05:02] I guess because I was used to seeing people growing stuff. And I had started to take care of house plants in my own apartment when I first got my first apartment. So when I went there, when I moved in a house in District Heights, I didn't have a clue about what I was doing, but I knew that I wanted some hydrangeas because my grandmother had hydrangeas, and they were blue and pink. And I wanted some some red roses because that's all I knew. And then I was just moving stuff around, and my life partner, he says "Deborah, you're moving flowers like you move furniture in the house." I had no clue what I was doing. So once I went and took the Master Gardeners class. I said, "oh, that's why they didn't grow the way it was," because everything has to have it's place. So I learned a whole lot about gardening. I learned by looking at my grandmother, but didn't understand why things were flourishing. And then I get to my house, and I have to move this stuff because it's not working where it's growing. So I didn't know until I took the Master Gardeners class. But I knew that maintenance was very important to my grandmother, because she had a garden that was cleaned. And she got rid of stuff that was not growing well or picked leaves that were dying off, those kind of things. And kept the front yard clean and swept because I did a lot of sweeping. And so I guess, and maintenance is one of the most important things to me. Not only that, it's a stress reliever. It's my sanctuary, now that I understand everything. But I understand why she was always in the yard. It was a place that was her sanctuary, it was peaceful. Where she didn't think about anybody else or anything. She'd just be involved in the flowers you and the flowers. [01:07:24][142.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:29] When you were working with your grandmother in the garden, did she try to teach you anything that you can recall? [01:07:33][4.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:07:39] No. [laughs] [01:07:40][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:07:40] Ok. [01:07:40][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:07:41] I just know that she just asked me to pick up, put this in the trash, that kind of a thing, and sweep. But not to say I don't remember or recall. Grandmother didn't do a whole

lot of talking. Unless she had something, really had something to say. Unless she was disciplining us. But no, I don't remember her ever saying why this is here, why this grows there, why you need to do this, that, and the other. It was maintenance, really, for me. I don't remember her trying to teach me why this plant is with where it is, and why is it doing so well. Because I'd never see her feed anything, you know, like we do now. We feed things to death and we don't need to. And I guess she knew about good soil and good gardening because she was from South Carolina. [01:08:38][57.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:08:39] Right. Having all that rice. I just I cannot describe to you how jealous I am. Like, oh my lord, that nice Carolina rice all the time. Oh my word, that sounds amazing. Do you have a favorite memory with your grandmother, by any chance? [01:09:00][21.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:09:04] Yes. My grandmother ate strawberry ice cream every night, so we had ice cream. I remember, because she like wrestling. When we got a TV, she loved watching wrestling and Gunsmoke. She liked Westerns and Gunsmoke. That was her thing. So we would sit and watch TV, we only had one TV, we'd sit in the living room and we would eat ice cream. She ice cream with bread, with a slice of bread. Go figure, I don't know. My brother did the same thing as he got older, he would have a slice of bread and ice cream. [01:09:39][34.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:09:39] Interesting. [01:09:39][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:09:40] Yeah, very interesting. But I just had ice cream. But I remember that memory with her and then having to sit and string string beans. I guess I did learn how to do something. [laughs] she taught me how to string string beans. Pick them, which end to take off and how to snap them. So I did learn doing that, because we did a lot of that. [01:10:06][26.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:10:07] Got it. [01:10:07][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:10:08] But I never her grow any, so I don't know where she got them from. And she may have had them, I just didn't know. But it was always a basket of string beans to be to be picked. Yeah. But I remember that and she did teach me a little bit about ironing, because she used to iron some clothes from this white lady who lived in public houses across the street from us. And how they met, I don't know, but the lady would always visit my grandmother, and they would sit and talk. And they had a friendship. And I don't know how that ironing came about. And then I started ironing a little bit for her. But she'd always come and pick her clothes up from my grandmother and then take them back home. I know, go figure. And their relationship lasted quite a long time. [01:10:58][49.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:10:59] Do you remember where she lived, exactly? [01:11:00][1.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:01] In the Robertson house. Because that's what they call, where they called John Roberts. [01:11:06][4.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:06] Yeah, yeah, John Roberts Homes. [01:11:07][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:07] She lived there, John Roberts. [01:11:08][1.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:09] Ok. [01:11:09][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:13] And I don't think we were allowed to go there. [01:11:14][1.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:15] Yeah. [01:11:15][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:16] So the lady came to us. I remember her coming to the house often. Yeah. [01:11:21][4.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:22] You happen to remember her name, by any chance? [01:11:23][1.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:23] No. [01:11:23][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:24] Ok. That's very interesting. Did you have a lot of contact with the people in the John Roberts homes? [01:11:32][8.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:34] No, I didn't know nobody over there. [01:11:35][0.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:11:39] Interesting. [01:11:39][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:11:40] No. And I'm just trying to think if we, because my brother and I used to have, my brother used to have a paper route. And he would get me up early in the morning with him, I just followed him everywhere he went. And we would go, and I'm trying to think, I don't think we were able to even deliver paper at John Roberts. Because we went to Payne St, Buchanan St, Cameron St, that area where he had to deliver but never at John Roberts. That was the Washington Post. [01:12:15][35.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:16] Yeah. Did y'all deliver the Alexandria Times or? [01:12:19][3.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:12:20] No, it was just Washington, he had the route with Washington Post. [01:12:23][3.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:24] Oh, ok. All right. [01:12:24][0.9]

Deborah Turner: [01:12:25] They would drop off the paper and we would go deliver them. [01:12:29][4.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:29] Interesting. That's cool. [01:12:30][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:12:32] I know. [laughs] [01:12:34][1.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:35] How old were you when y'all were doing the paper route? [01:12:38][2.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:12:43] Oh wow, I might have been seven. He might have been ten. Because of a three years difference in our age. [01:12:49][6.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:12:50] Okay. Very interesting. So I gotta tell you, your grandmother's house sounds like my ideal place. First you got rice, then you have Westerns. I cannot tell you how much I love rice. And then the westerns, Gunsmoke, oh man. [01:13:10][19.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:13:10] Oh, yeah. Yeah, that was great. And what's that other thing, The Rifleman? [01:13:14][3.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:13:15] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I've never seen that. I've seen it all of Gunsmoke. Never seen The Rifleman. [01:13:19][4.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:13:19] Yes. But those were her favorite. And, oh, what's the man? The Wilkes man on Sunday. I can't remember, he had entertainment show. John Wilkes, The Wilkes show [Lawrence Welk] I think, that's all I can remember right now. They came on Sunday nights. His neck was always in his shoulders. But he had a lot of entertainment on that show. She would watch every Sunday, we watched that together, yeah. [01:13:59][39.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:14:00] Sounds fun. [01:14:00][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:14:01] Yeah, it was. [01:14:01][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:14:04] So really quick because the gardening stuff I still find so fascinating. So when you judge a gardening competition, what do you look for? Is it flowers or? [01:14:18][14.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:14:20] We look for beautification in a yard. [01:14:24][4.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:14:24] Ok. [01:14:24][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:14:28] Well, we look for native plants native to the area. We look for special features in a garden like a water fountain or statue. We also look for composting. We look for, how you watering? Like, are you using water from the roof to come down and go into one of your beds or something like that. So you will get special points for that. Maybe most of all, just the beauty of it. I'm trying to think, what else do we look for? That was basically it, just having to be able to be a part of that program and where you're actually trying to enhance the county. That's what it was all about. You could be commercial or resident, that you could enter. So, the beautification judges is part of master gardening now, because you used to be the horticultural society used to do the judging and then they got older and they could no longer do it. So they asked the Master Gardeners would they be interested, and so we started doing it about 6 or 7 years ago. I think something like that, yeah. I became a beautification judge also. Yeah. [01:16:13][105.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:16:15] So, because I think I'm picturing an ideal yard, I guess, in my mind. And I was curious, do you have a favorite yard that you've seen in a competition where you still remember that as sort of the ideal? [01:16:31][16.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:16:38] Because I've seen so many. I remember one particular yard where this lady had a lot of seashells. As like a ground cover. And in her front yard it was mostly sun, so she had

plants. She had the right plants in the right place. Where they would grow and she would have the water. She had a winding pathway. Like different rooms in a yard where she'd have a bicycle set in certain places that had a little plant on top of it, and then going around to the side of her house, you would lead into another part of the garden where it could be a fountain, where there's water there running all the time. I can remember that being one, and it was hot because she was she was facing the south sun. "It was hot all the time," she says. But she had the right place, the right plants in the right places. Yeah. So I remember that that yard, because it had so many different features, but it was so many of them had different features and, and things that I wanted to do in my yard. So, you know, I said, 'well, I could do that,' you know, but it gives you different ideas and perspective about what you can do in your garden. And even in small spaces, because all of them weren't huge, there were small areas, but you would think they were on a half an acre land or more. Yeah. [01:18:18][100.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:19] Got it. Making me want to start a garden. [01:18:23][3.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:24] Oh, you don't garden yet? [01:18:24][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:25] I have no green thumb to speak of. [01:18:27][1.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:29] You don't need a green thumb, you just need to want to. [01:18:31][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:32] Yeah. My fiancée and I live in a townhouse. And we have a front, like, rock bed. I've always thought it would be nice to put something there. I just never gotten around to it. [01:18:44][12.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:45] Put some lavender there. [01:18:46][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:46] Lavender? [01:18:46][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:47] Also rosemary, because you can cook with rosemary. [01:18:49][1.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:49] That's true. [01:18:50][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:50] Yeah. They like it hot. [01:18:51][0.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:18:51] I need to do something for sure. [01:18:52][1.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:18:53] Yeah, you wouldn't have to water them at all, well, in the beginning you may have to. But after a while, you would not have to do anything to them and they flower too. [01:19:02][9.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:03] Rosemary and lavender, got it. [01:19:03][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:05] You make tea with lavender. You take a bath with lavender, and rosemary you can cook with. It's one of my favorites. [01:19:11][5.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:13] Do you do that at your home? [01:19:13][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:14] Yes. I have lavender and I have rosemary. Rosemary stays green all winter long. You can pick it all year long. [01:19:21][7.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:21] That's good to know. So we have an indoor basil plant that we use, but we just got that at the store. We didn't grow it ourselves. [01:19:30][9.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:31] Okay, so I can't figure out. I can't keep basil in my house. [01:19:35][3.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:35] Really? [01:19:35][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:36] Yeah. Not in the winter time. It just doesn't do well. But I grow plenty of basil in the summer. So when I grow a lot of it, harvest a lot of it, so I'll have it during a winter. Yeah. I love the basil. The basil tea? Oh, gosh. [01:19:49][13.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:50] Basil tea? [01:19:51][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:51] Oh, yes. [01:19:51][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:52] I'm going to try that. [01:19:52][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:19:53] Yes. With some lemon, oh, yes. You got to. [01:19:55][2.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:19:57] Now I'm going to go home and try all these different things. I'm going to try ice cream with a slice of bread. [01:20:01][4.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:20:04] Oh goodness. [laughs] Yeah, I don't know. But you got to have Wonder Bread. Do they sell Wonder Bread anymore? [01:20:07][3.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:08] Oh, yeah. They do. [01:20:08][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:20:09] Oh, they do? Ok. [01:20:09][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:09] Yeah, in some form. I don't know if its the same recipe. [01:20:12][2.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:20:13] You don't know if it's the same kind of bread that you'd have a long time ago. But yeah, and I could never figure that out, but that's what she did. Yeah, and we always had ice cream in the house. Even when I got my own apartment, we had ice cream. [01:20:25][11.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:26] So the ice cream that your grandmother and y'all would eat, was that the ice cream that y'all made with the handchurn? [01:20:30][4.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:20:31] No, it was something that we bought. When we made that ice cream we ate it. There wasn't no storing it because it was too many of us in the neighborhood eating it. Plus her children. [01:20:40][9.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:40] Got it. Got it. [01:20:42][1.9]

Deborah Turner: [01:20:43] We made it and we ate it, right then and there. [01:20:46][2.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:20:49] So, I want to circle back something that you said. So y'all are displaced from the home, from your grandmother's home and y'all move to down the Berg. And you're at Hopkins Court, and your grandmother's at Princess Street And then you said your mother moved to Fayette St? [01:21:13][24.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:21:14] Yeah. [01:21:14][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:14] So when did that happen? How long after y'all moved to the Berg? [01:21:18][3.9]

Deborah Turner: [01:21:20] I'm trying to think. No, because my grandmother was still on Princess St, she hadn't gotten sick yet. And my mother lived in Fayette Court. I was in high school, so I might have been maybe 15. [01:21:36][16.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:37] Ok. [01:21:37][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:21:40] I might have been 15 when my mother moved to South Court, Fayette Court. [01:21:44][4.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:47] Right. But you were still living with your grandmother on Princess St? [01:21:49][2.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:21:50] I was still with my grandmother, yes. [01:21:51][1.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:21:52] Ok. That's what I was curious about. So were you there all week? [01:21:59][6.9]

Deborah Turner: [01:22:02] Everyday. I'd stay there. [01:22:03][1.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:03] You'd sleep there as well? [01:22:04][1.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:22:05] Oh, yeah. Even when my mother lived in Hopkins Court I was sleeping there most of the time. [01:22:09][4.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:10] All right, good to know. I was wondering about that. [01:22:13][3.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:22:14] Yeah. [01:22:14][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:15] And you were going to T.C. Williams. That's not an easy walk from Princess St to get all the way up to T.C. [01:22:26][11.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:22:27] Now we got the bus. We got a bus. [laughs] [01:22:29][2.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:29] Ok. I was going to say that's a long walk to get there. [01:22:32][3.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:22:32] They bussed us. We caught the the Metro bus. We didn't have no yellow bus to go to T.C. at that time, we had to walk from Fayette Court to King Street Yeah, King St, where we caught the bus. [01:22:53][21.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:22:57] So what was it like going to T.C. Williams then? Because you go to Charles Houston, then you go to Parker-Gray, which you can just walk to, no problem. And then now, you know, you get to go to T.C. Williams, which, you know, take the bus. What was that change like, taking the bus for the first time to get to school? [01:23:15][17.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:23:19] I didn't mind it. I mean, I like going to school. I enjoyed it. Going to high school, all of it. I just didn't want to go that school, I wanted to go to Parker-Gray, but that didn't happen. I was disappointed in that. But going to a brand new school and integrating because integration was then. So I enjoyed it. [01:23:44][25.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:23:45] Yeah. How far after integration began, did you start going to T.C.? Because when did they close Parker-Gray? [01:23:50][5.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:23:51] Integration was, like I said, I was in eighth grade. And then after eighth grade they closed the school. So they had to be 19, I think integration was 1966, '67, something like that. And then I had to go to T.C. Williams High School. So I started there in the ninth grade, but it did start the eighth grade. But I started there the ninth grade because the eighth grade, I did it at Parker-Gray. [01:24:17][25.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:24:18] What was your initial reaction to learn that you'd be going to T.C. instead of, you know, GW [George Washington High School] or Parker-Gray? [01:24:24][5.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:24:25] I was excited. I really was. Because I didn't understand all the integration thing, that kind of a thing, because it had not affected me. And it didn't affect me while I was in high school because most of us got along. At that particular time, during that time at T.C. Williams High School. So we all became, not a kumbaya, but we enjoyed each other. Because I was on the drill team, so we partied together. The school had dances, some of us went to the dances. But we enjoyed each other's company, we had a good time. So I liked going to school, changing classes. Some of my people that I went to elementary school and Parker-Gray with they went to the school, same school that I do now. I met other people in the neighborhood off of South Fayette Street that I had met going to school, so it was great. My high school was great. I really enjoyed it. You know, some people don't like school, but I love going to school. I never missed any school. [01:25:40][75.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:25:41] Oh, wow. Nothing? [01:25:41][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:25:42] No, when I went to school, the only time I skipped school was as a senior. And it was six of us, we decided we're going to go fix hair. This girl, she used to babysit for this lady, and we went to her apartment, and we walked around the corner from school and we'd fix hair. So that was the only time I ever skipped school. What I'm skipping school for? Where I'm going

to go? And you know, they always gave the seniors a skip day anyway. So I was always at school.
[01:26:15][32.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:17] Did you have a favorite subject? [01:26:17][0.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:26:20] I liked English and I liked geography. [01:26:25][5.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:26] Geography? [01:26:26][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:26:27] Yeah, yeah. [01:26:27][0.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:28] Yeah, I love geography. [01:26:29][1.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:26:29] Yeah. I like to know where we are going. Reading a map, took me a long time to read that map. But I like geography. Yeah. [01:26:42][12.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:43] Then you mentioned the drill team. [01:26:45][1.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:26:45] Yes. I was on T.C. Williams drill team. [01:26:47][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:48] What is that? [01:26:49][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:26:50] You're part of the marching band. You had the band, and you had the drill team dealing with the pom poms and the little skirts. [01:26:57][7.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:26:58] Oh, okay. Got it. [01:26:59][1.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:00] So it was probably, the drill team was probably maybe 35 or 40 girls on the drill team? We'd march behind the band. We marched in the parades on GW parade, George Washington parade, always marched down Washington Street [01:27:22][21.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:27:22] Yeah, that was last week. All the signs are here for it. [01:27:23][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:23] Yeah, yeah. So that was a lot of fun. [01:27:28][4.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:27:28] Yeah. Sounds like it. Yeah. Now, I think of that as color guard, is that not the same thing? [01:27:35][6.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:35] No. The color guards are part of the drill team. So where they carry the flags, those were the color guard. [01:27:42][6.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:27:43] Ok. Interesting. I didn't know that. [01:27:45][2.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:45] They called the flag girls or something like that. Yeah. [01:27:47][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:27:47] Yeah. Interesting, I didn't know that they were the same thing. [01:27:50][2.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:50] I don't know if the color guard was part of the military. So I think they were called flag girls when they carried the flag. [01:27:57][6.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:27:57] Ok. Interesting. [01:27:58][1.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:27:59] So there was a routine we had to learn every other week to perform at halftime of games, football games usually. And then the parade. And then we got to go to camp in the summertime at Shenandoah Valley, a music conservatory. Yeah, we'd spend a week and a half there. With other schools, competitions. It was great. So some of my friends didn't do, weren't very active in high school. But I had a plan. I wanted to be involved. And those are the things that I like to do. So I wasn't a follower. Some kids are in school that are followers, that wasn't me. [01:28:45][46.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:28:47] Absolutely. Yeah. So I'm guessing you didn't play any sports then. So you play football and baseball all the time as a kid, but there's nothing in high school? [01:28:56][9.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:28:56] Nope. [01:28:56][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:29:00] Just the Drill team, absolutely. That sounds really interesting. No one's ever talked about about the drill team to me. [01:29:08][8.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:29:09] Oh, at T.C Williams High School? [01:29:09][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:29:10] Yeah. I've heard all about, you know the football team, of course, at that period. [01:29:14][3.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:29:14] Yeah. Well that was, how old are you? [01:29:16][1.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:29:17] I'm 27. [01:29:18][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:29:18] Oh, shoot. [laughs] There is 40 years difference in our age. Yeah. Almost 40 years, not quite 40 years. You probably just heard about football game when "Remember the Titans" came out. [laughs] Yeah that was long after I had left. Yeah. Yeah. [01:29:47][29.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:29:49] But that's how everyone has referred it to me. Yeah. You know everybody always tells me how inaccurate that was as a description of how T.C. Williams was. [01:29:59][10.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:29:59] Yeah. [01:29:59][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:30:00] You mentioned it yourself, how the integration was amicable. [01:30:03][2.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:30:04] Yeah, it was, it was. I mean you maybe had a couple of fights, but you always had a couple fights in school, anyway. But nothing like it was today or when "Remember the Titans" was being done because they really had, sometimes you can have a group, a different group

of people from different areas that weren't like minded like that. And they didn't want to be to school with with Black folks. So that was the difference when I went to school. I went to school with President Ford's children. I went to school with a lot of rich white girls. Their parents had Welch's Dressing, LL Bean, and Hahn's Shoe Store that was right here on Washington Street I went to school with all of them, but they were pleasant to be around. There was no friction or anything. And then when we had the drill team, there was no friction. You had squad member of four where you had to learn some routine, so you got along. So after that, I don't know what happened after I left high school. I think once they closed, they made it one high school, so Hammond had to leave their area to come to T.C., and GW had to leave their area to come to T.C. so they all kind of came together and there was all that friction. And even when the kids had to go to Hammond High School, it was not pleasant for a lot of Black young folks. It was like it was in the 1950s, for some reason. But that that comes from home training. That stems from that, from parents instilling certain things in the children about not being kind and considerate of others because we are people. So I, like I said, I had a good time in school, in high school. I mean, we even went to, we got invited to parties at white folks house. [01:32:26][142.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:32:27] Oh, really? [01:32:27][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:32:27] Yes. In high school, the last, maybe the last, my senior year. Yes. On Braddock Rd, yes. So we were I mean, because there was a basketball team and a football team. They were white and Black that they played together. So we got to hang out together sometimes. Yeah. [01:32:52][24.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:32:52] Very interesting. [01:32:52][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:32:53] I know difference in the time. And the mindset. [01:32:58][5.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:33:00] So did that sort of friendliness carry out to Alexandria as a whole, or was it just, you know, good relations amongst your peers in high school? So, you know, for some context, I've heard stories about, you know, like the J.C. Penney and things like that, how some people were followed in the store and what have you. Do you remember any any of that? Did you ever have any of those experiences? [01:33:26][26.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:33:27] No. I just remember we went to G.C. Murphy's they had a color fountain and a white fountain. I remember those days. But we could go in the store and spend our money. But I don't remember going in J.C. Penney's and someone following me, that came maybe years later. That kind of thing. I did not experience that. I think people may have experience it later on, like in the 80s or 90s. 90s, maybe. But I never experienced it. It's like I was telling some of my friends in Maryland about the, because they don't remember the colored fountain, the name on it, "for coloreds only" and "whites only." And she said, "don't I remember that being in D.C." I said, "well, I can just tell you where I lived, in Alexandria, they had them there." And we had our own movies because we couldn't go to the Reed Theater on King Street. [01:34:27][60.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:34:27] Yeah. The Carver. [01:34:28][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:34:29] Yeah, we had the Carver for movies, and we had the skating rink where we went to on Saint Asaph Street But we knew where we could go. And we just I guess we just dealt with it, you know, it was a place where we could go. [01:34:43][13.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:34:44] Absolutely. What did the Carver Theater look like? [01:34:48][4.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:34:52] Big theater with your popcorn and hot dogs. And everybody was Black, [laughs] all the attendees. There were people that we knew, that my mother and father were friends with. So they almost knew every child who came in that movie. So if you did something, movies were like a quarter, 25 cents then. You can go stay in movie all day long. But that was the difference. You could not stay in a movie all day long now, you got to pay and go. But in the movie, we could stay all day long if we wanted to. So it was fun. Big movie screen. It was no different than any theater today, except for the seats were different. They didn't have the cushion seats, but we had seats. They had a balcony. And it's a big place. I don't know if you ever been in it because it's a church now, they use it as a church there. But it's the same. It's no different except for they've renovated the bathroom. Yeah. And they don't have the concession stands at the front when you come in. So that's that's the difference. But it was fun to go to the movies. And be there all day long. Well, we had the time that we had to go back home. But it was in walking distance where we could go to the movies, and that was something we did on, I don't think that we did it on a Sunday or Saturday, but one of those days we could go to the movie. We had certain days we could go certain places. And that was allowed in my family, where you can go skating on the Saturday, you can go to the movies on Sunday if you go to church. Well, there was no option, you go to church. So and those are the kind of things we did when we were young. [01:36:42][110.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:36:43] Absolutely. I've seen the pictures of the Carver theater. Yeah, definitely need to go see it. [01:36:48][5.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:36:50] It was fun. Yeah. Yeah. [01:36:51][0.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:36:53] So what did you do after high school? You mentioned that you were pregnant your senior year? [01:36:59][5.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:36:59] I was pregnant in my senior year. And before I had told my mother what was going on because I was scared to death. I really didn't know what happened. But I was accepted at Hampton University, and I had, in those years those recruiters would come to your house if you want to be an airline stewardess and all that kind of stuff. They would come to your house and talk to your parents. And I couldn't do any of those things. I said, "well, how am I going to do this." And then I just had to. My mother just came to me one day. And I just told her. Because she already knew I was because she could see me changing. And she just took me to the doctor's, she said "it's going to be all right." And so after that, after I had my son I stayed home for a while and then I went to work for Color-in Photo on Saint Asaph St, and I tried to get a job at C&P Telephone Company, but they wasn't hiring us back then. So I worked for Color-in Photo for about a year and a half, and then my aunt tells me, she says, "Debbie, go to the post office and I want you to take the test to get

into the federal government." So I did, went down here to the post office and took the test And so I got into the federal government and that's where I stayed until I retired. [01:38:34][94.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:38:36] What did you do for the for The Fed? [01:38:37][1.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:38:38] I did key punching in the beginning and then it was digital inforexing, working with data. And then I went to computer operator. Then it was computer specialists, where I took some programing class. And that was it. [01:39:04][26.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:08] When did you retire? [01:39:08][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:39:11] When? 2008. Yeah. January 1, 2008. It's been 17 years. [01:39:21][10.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:22] Yeah. [01:39:22][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:39:23] Yeah. And I don't miss a day. [laughs] [01:39:26][3.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:26] I was going to say. Yeah, especially now. That's terrific. Very interesting. [01:39:33][6.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:39:34] Yeah. I worked for 36 years. [01:39:35][1.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:36] And then you were living in Alexandria during that entire time? [01:39:38][2.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:39:39] No, I moved to Maryland in 1990. [01:39:41][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:42] Ok. 1990. [01:39:43][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:39:48] Only to be in more traffic. [laughs] [01:39:49][1.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:39:51] [laughs] That's just the area, its unavoidable. So why did you leave Alexandria? [01:39:59][7.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:40:01] I was looking to buy a house, I'd been looking for two years. And the young man that I fell in love with, he asked me to come move with him. He said, "look, you know, I know you're trying to, you know, buy yourself a house." He said, "I'm in a house." And he said, "I can help you save some money" because he knew I was struggling, you know. And then I thought about it. Then I said, "ok, well, let me try this." And that's where I stayed. Yeah. [01:40:32][31.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:40:35] So did you move to Capital Heights then? Or District Heights? [01:40:37][1.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:40:38] Yeah, I moved to District Heights in 1990. [01:40:40][1.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:40:41] Ok. [01:40:41][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:40:42] Yeah. June of 1990, from 900 Wolfe Street That was my second apartment at 900 Wolfe Street My first apartment I got was when I was 20 years old. They gave me an apartment. [01:40:54][12.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:40:55] Where was the first apartment? [01:40:56][0.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:40:56] Fayette Court. Efficiency. Nice big old efficiency. They don't make those like they used to. In fact, I lived right next door to my mother. I could talk to her through the walk-in closet. [Kerry and Deborah Laugh] [01:41:11][14.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:12] That's funny. [01:41:13][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:14] Yeah, she lived on the third floor and I lived on the third floor. [01:41:16][2.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:16] Oh, wow. Yeah. Must've been some thin walls. [01:41:18][2.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:19] No, they were pretty thick walls. [01:41:20][0.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:20] It's just that one place you could do it? [01:41:22][1.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:22] Yeah, just right there in that area. Yeah. [01:41:24][1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:24] Interesting. [01:41:24][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:27] Yeah. [01:41:27][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:29] Oh, that's really funny. So when you first moved to District Heights, how did it compare to Alexandria? [01:41:35][5.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:40] The insurance, car insurance was much higher. Like three times as much. [01:41:42][2.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:41:44] Oh, wow. [01:41:44][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:41:47] They didn't have they had real estate property tax, but didn't have personal property tax in Maryland. Maryland didn't [have] no taxes on groceries or food, but Virginia did. The thing I remember, I recall, is the insurance. If I was paying insurers like \$300 a year and I go to Maryland was like \$1,200. So, you know, that was the difference. I liked the area I lived in because it was single family homes. Well-kept. It's a small community of like 5 to 6000 people. It was a municipality. I didn't like that so much because you had to pay three kind of darn taxes. So that was different. But, you know, it was great. We were on a quarter, everybody was on a quarter acre land or more. [01:42:44][56.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:42:44] Oh that's terrific. [01:42:45][1.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:42:46] Yeah. Yeah. [01:42:47][0.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:42:50] So I'm not familiar with it, so if you're taking the Beltway? [01:42:52][2.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:42:52] When you're taking the Beltway to Pennsylvania Ave going west So you're, like, coming back to D.C. So it's not too far from [there], because we're not too far from the D.C. line. I'm trying to think. We take Route 4 to Pennsylvania Ave and then you get on, make a right on 40 to Marlboro Pike, because I lived off of Marlboro Pike going towards D.C. So we're right off of Marlboro Pike. I don't know if you know where Marlow Furniture is. [01:43:32][39.4]

Kerry James Reed: [01:43:33] No, I don't know Marlow Furniture. Yeah. [01:43:35][2.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:43:36] I'm trying to think Marlboro Pike before you get to Old Silver Hill Road. [01:43:39][3.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:43:44] So I can like picture what you're saying, but I just now grew up in Alexandria and Falls Church. Maryland, if it's not right outside the D.C line, I'm a bit hazy. [01:43:56][12.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:43:58] Ok. Yeah, well, we're about, if I can leave my house to get to D.C. it would take me a good eight minutes. So we're very close to. D.C. [01:44:09][11.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:44:10] Yeah. Did you come back to Alexandria at all while you were in District Heights? [01:44:15][5.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:44:16] Every day, I had to work. [laughs] I had to go past the exit where I used to live to go to Springfield, because that's where I worked, in Springfield. But I stopped there everyday to see my mother. Yeah, everyday. [01:44:31][15.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:44:32] Because your mother lived in Fayette Court? [01:44:33][0.5]

Deborah Turner: [01:44:34] And she lived in Fayette Court until she moved from there to Annie B Rose House senior building. Yeah. And all her neighbors would tell my mother, say, "hey, here come your lawyer." They called me her lawyer. [laughs] [01:44:54][19.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:44:54] That's really funny. Really quick, what's your son's name? [01:45:01][7.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:02] Taurance. [01:45:02][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:03] Taurance. [01:45:03][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:04] T-A-U-R-A-N-C-E. [01:45:04][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:08] I like that name, that's really cool. Only child, yeah? [01:45:15][7.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:18] Mhmm, yeah. [01:45:19][0.6]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:20] What does he do? [01:45:20][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:21] He works, well, right now he's taking his child to school. [01:45:24][3.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:25] Oh, okay. [01:45:25][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:26] She wanted to go to Archbishop Carroll because they live in Southwest Washington. [01:45:30][3.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:45:31] Yeah. Yeah. [01:45:31][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:45:31] So, they didn't want her to go to a public school. So she wanted to go to the school that, I have three grandkids. Her brother went to Archbishop Carroll, way up in Northwest So they tried to figure out how they were going to do that because they didn't want her catch the bus. No Metro because it's too dangerous for a young girl to be going through that, or Uber because she was too young for Uber. So anyway, my son and his wife, they said, 'well, ok, so this is what we're going to do.' So they were able to handle it. He said, "well, I'll just do this because she wants to go here. So let's do this." So he decided to stay at home and take her to school and go get her. [01:46:17][46.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:46:18] That's terrific. [01:46:18][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:46:18] Yeah. So I told them, because I had just, not just retired, but I had told them if I was going to take her to school, I didn't mind, she would have to come spend the night. Because I couldn't leave my house, go to southwest and then come back this way. That was just, that was a bit too much. I said, or if you needed me to go pick her up, because I had picked her up from school sometimes because she went to School Without Walls in D.C. before she went to high school. So that's what he's doing now because he used to drive and work for a trucking company where he would dump asphalt and that kind of thing. Deliver concrete and that kind of stuff for companies. Yeah. [01:46:59][41.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:01] It's amazing that he's so dedicated to your granddaughter's education. [01:47:04][2.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:47:04] Yeah, well, you know, they want it. They did anything, everything for the kids to make sure they get a good education. So that was the sacrifice that, you know, they decided to do. [01:47:15][10.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:17] Absolutely. [01:47:17][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:47:17] Yeah. [01:47:17][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:18] That's terrific. [01:47:18][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:47:19] So they have one more year. And then she'll be done with that. [01:47:23][4.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:26] Fabulous. Any plans for college? [01:47:27][1.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:47:29] She said she didn't want to go. We said, you know, "you're going to have to do something. It's it's important that you do something." Because she have all kind of things that she wants to do. And then she finds out, [and says] "that's too much work." I said, "you know what? You kids are lazy." I said, "but if you want it, you got to go after it." But it is important that you go to school, and I said, "you can do it online if you want to. You ain't even got to leave home if you don't want to. But you're going to have to get an education." Yeah. So hopefully she'll change her mind. [01:47:56][27.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:47:57] Absolutely, college is fun. [01:47:58][0.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:47:59] Yeah, she all over the place. But, you know, young kids. [01:48:02][3.8]

Kerry James Reed: [01:48:06] Of course. Well, Ms Deborah, we've been talking for about an hour and 48 now. I don't want to take up too much more of your time. I just have some closing questions about Colored Rosemont. [01:48:16][9.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:48:16] That's good. Ok. Do you think I need to go feed the meter again. [01:48:21][4.3]

Kerry James Reed: [01:48:22] No, you should be fine. No one is going to come. And if they do, I'll pay for it for keeping you here so long, I apologize. [01:48:27][5.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:48:27] Ok. [01:48:27][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:48:30] When did you first go down and search up the records with, was it Ms. Veronica? [01:48:36][6.7]

Deborah Turner: [01:48:40] Yes, mmmm. It was last year. I think it was like March or April of last year or, it was early spring, I think. Because I remember it being kind of cool that day we went. And she volunteered to go with me. So that's when we went. Yeah, I think it was 2023. [01:49:05][24.7]

Kerry James Reed: [01:49:07] Absolutely. [01:49:07][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:49:07] Yeah. [01:49:07][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:49:08] What did you expect to find? Or what did you hope to find when y'all went down there? [01:49:14][5.6]

Deborah Turner: [01:49:19] I guess I was hoping for a little bit more information about how all this transpired. More about why? Because they don't even mention that. They don't even mention it at all. But I found out that there were three different, I'm trying to figure out, there was three different people collecting money for rent. I don't know why the money changes hands so much before all the transactions about the displacement, but I found all of that to be kind of, 'ok, this is strange.' But they had the lady's name there who built the homes, her name was there, but I guess I was looking for, I

guess more information that wasn't there. About why and when and the reason for displacing people like that, it's just It just wasn't there. And I guess, I don't know why I expected that to be there, to tell the truth. But it wasn't there. So I did find. Because it had all my mother's, all her siblings, everybody's name was on the paperwork, and my grandmother's and grandfather's name was there, but not very much information. But, you know, it is what it is. Yeah. [01:51:02]/[103.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:51:04] So when did you first hear about the Colored Rosemont Initiative? [01:51:08]/[4.4]

Deborah Turner: [01:51:18] I don't know if it was '22 because Stanley must've called me because, I don't know if I ran into him somewhere or he called me and he told me about it. Because I remember talking to him once somewhere, probably in a grocery store when I came up, because I come to Alexandria to shop sometimes, my sister works at the Giant [Supermarket] in Potomac Yards, and I ran into him. He was telling me, so I think that's when. It was in year 2022 or something like that. Or before then he was talking about doing something like that. And we've always talked about getting together. Whenever some of us saw each other or met, we needed, you know, to get together because a lot of us are dying off. And that never happened. Even when my mother was living, we were trying to get something together, but it never happened. But I think it was '22, so I'm not sure if this has been, it's been a year and a half since they've been in existence? Something like that? [01:52:23]/[65.5]

Kerry James Reed: [01:52:24] Yeah. Roughly a year and a half, two years. And then what were your initial thoughts when you heard about the Colored Rosemont Initiative? [01:52:33]/[8.8]

Deborah Turner: [01:52:34] Well, I was excited to tell my story. I wanted to be involved. Because they were part of my family, that's what we called each other. So I wanted to be involved. It was something that one of my aunts, Maud Catherine, she was like an activist, my mother's sister, she was an activist, I called her. And she was always fighting for what was right. Even where she lived, where Alfred St Baptist Church is, where they was going to take all those apartments right there, she was fighting to stay where she was. And those are kind of things that she was very active in. So I said, "well, let me do this," because I know it's something that we always talked about. But I said, "well, I owe them." Because this is our history so somebody has to tell it. And I have mentioned to other people in the family but they never came up. I said, "well, I'm going to tell you, but this is what I'm doing." So, that's when I came. I was excited about it. Because it needed to be told. Because if we didn't tell it, nobody would know it. It would just be wiped away and nothing's being done. So I was very appreciative of him to even want to do that. [01:54:00]/[86.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:54:00] Of course. So when you come to the Colored Rosemont meetings or even any other time and you see the blocks that were Colored Rosemont now, how do you feel when you see it? [01:54:18]/[18.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:54:24] Sort of saddened by it all. Sometimes hard to follow. Because I'm not very good with that kind of a map, and looking at the houses there. I guess mostly just disheartened and just disappointed with all that had happened. When people or government comes in and displaced

people like that, they forget that they're people, that they had lives there, they had family, they had connection, that there was love there. So, to be disrupted like that. It's just disheartening they way people think and is most of the time is always about money, you know. What bothered me the most is when they did that, and then I knew about what the plans were, they do plans 25, 50 years ahead of time. And I had read some things about it where well, we knew this was coming because we heard the Metro was coming, and then we had a new grocery store coming before they did all these things, I said, "oh, that's strange." So then all of a sudden, you know, this displacement came. It's just the same thing just going on now, all over the place. So once I found that was done to Colored Rosemont. Well, we're not the only ones its being done too. But they treat you like your number, you know. Have no feelings about why or how it disrupts your your life and what it does to a family. Because it kind of breaks the family up. It breaks up that that connection, that fellowship, that communal connection that you have. Because once you do that, you know, your people will scatter. And how do you come back to hub? Whose house is going to be used? Then it was my mother's house at Annie B. Rose. Every Sunday we'd go to her house. And she always have, her dinner was always ready before she went to church. So we would go to her house and have dinner at her house most Sundays. Yeah. So it was disruption. So I think about a lot of that now. I said, "well, so now it's my turn because my mother is gone." And I was telling my older cousin, she's 11 years older than me. I said, "well, now we are the seniors," so now we have an obligation to our family to try and keep us connected. And try to bring back those traditions that we used to have. But we kind of have it so where we're having Christmas and Thanksgiving together with the younger folks and trying to keep them abreast and talk about family. You know, when you come to realize when you get old, it was like, "oh, they're gone. So now it's us. We are the seniors." It's just like in my church. Most of the people are gone. So now we become the seniors in the church and it's kind of hard to, it's so real to just say, 'oh, wow. So now it's us. So now it's our turn to give back. And to make sure the history is told.' [01:57:48]/[204.2]

Kerry James Reed: [01:57:48] Absolutely. [01:57:48]/[0.0]

Deborah Turner: [01:57:49] So it's important to me. It really is. [01:57:51]/[1.9]

Kerry James Reed: [01:57:55] So, along that same vein, what do you hope is the, you know, ultimate goal or accomplishment, I should say, of the Colored Rosemont Initiative? [01:58:08]/[13.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:58:13] I just hope that our story, everybody who wants to tell their story gets a chance to tell their story about how it was for them, about Colored Rosemont, because everybody have a different story. And to make people aware of what used to be. There was a Colored Rosemont, 'oh, never heard of that.' Well, it was. It did exist. But that's what I want, just want the story to be told. So that people can be reminded or people can be educated about what had happened and what is going on now. So I expect for some kind of, well, of course a marker of some sort to be there. I mean, it's basically all you can do. I'm not asking or looking for any money, but if there is some, fine with me. But, you know, I don't expect it. I just expect for our story to be told. And so we're here to do that, and we just tell our story. Yeah. [01:59:21]/[68.1]

Kerry James Reed: [01:59:24] Absolutely. And then last two questions. If there is one memory from Colored Rosemont, anything about color Rosemont, that you could hold on to, remember for the rest of your life, what would it be? [01:59:36][12.1]

Deborah Turner: [01:59:37] Party. [01:59:37][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [01:59:38] The parties? [laughs] [01:59:38][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [01:59:41] I mean, it's so many. But I can remember [that] my uncle built his own stereo system. Him and his friend. And my uncle was a classical music person. So I was introduced to a lot of that. And I would sit back in his room and play classical music, Bye Bye Birdie, Beethoven and all that kind of stuff. I would listen to that because it those big old speakers that make loud noise and I'll be in the house by myself, I'd have myself a good time. But when him and his friend across the street from us, they love music, we had a party in my grandmother's backyard. Everybody neighborhood was invited. And if his friend was Dellboy Carter. He would have parties in his yard. We would go walk through the alley to that back gate and go to their house and have fun. And they would party all night long. My grandmother usually was not home. She used to go visit her sister in Baltimore. And that's when they would have a party and sometimes it was the whole weekend. [02:00:47][66.5]

Kerry James Reed: [02:00:49] Oh, man. [02:00:49][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [02:00:49] Yeah. And it was fun. I remember that because we were kind of, like, free. But we were safe in our neighborhood. Where we can go and be calm, and be all right. So I remember the parties. [02:01:05][15.8]

Kerry James Reed: [02:01:06] Absolutely. [02:01:06][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [02:01:07] That and then the other thing. I remember the gypsy's coming to town. [02:01:10][3.7]

Kerry James Reed: [02:01:11] The Gypsies? [02:01:11][0.1]

Deborah Turner: [02:01:12] Yeah. I don't know if they called them circus [people] or what, but we called them Gypsies. [02:01:15][2.6]

Kerry James Reed: [02:01:17] Where was that? [02:01:17][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [02:01:18] Where was, when? [02:01:19][1.4]

Kerry James Reed: [02:01:20] Where? When? [02:01:20][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [02:01:21] On West Street There was a lot on West Street Used to be a Safeway there before they built the Metro. Used to be Safeway store there before Safeway came. When they came to town, they would park in that area on West St, right across from where the Burke's lived on West Street And when they came to town we'd sit on on the curb and look across the street at them,

just observing. Because they dress different from us. Nobody's ever even talked about them?
[02:02:03][41.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:03] No, no. [02:02:03][0.4]

Deborah Turner: [02:02:04] Oh, yeah. Well... [02:02:04][0.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:04] I've heard of the hobos that came off the train sometimes, but no one's ever mentioned Gypsies. [02:02:07][2.7]

Deborah Turner: [02:02:07] No, no, no. Well, anybody can come off the train. But the Gypsies come there every year, and I don't even know if there was a circus. They didn't look like circus people to me, I don't know, but they stayed for like a couple of weeks and then they were gone. But every year they would come to town. We would sit on a curb and I'd watch them. [02:02:23][16.0]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:24] No one's ever mentioned that to me. That's so interesting. [02:02:27][2.8]

Deborah Turner: [02:02:27] Yeah, I call them Gypsies. They may call it something else, but... [02:02:29][2.4]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:30] Travelers, maybe. [02:02:30][0.0]

Deborah Turner: [02:02:32] They were travelers that were into some kind of entertainment. Yeah, they weren't hobos because they had like trailers and stuff like that with them. And they stayed for a couple of weeks. [02:02:43][11.0]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:44] Was this always at the same time? [02:02:45][1.1]

Deborah Turner: [02:02:46] Yeah, always the same time every year. I think it was, I don't know if it's like close to the summer, it wasn't very cold outside. But yeah, that was very interesting. Yeah, every year they came. [02:02:58][12.4]

Kerry James Reed: [02:02:59] Yeah I'll have to look into that. Yeah. So the parties and the Gypsies. [02:03:03][4.2]

Deborah Turner: [02:03:04] Yes. Yeah. You know, it's just so many. That and the water shows at the at the swimming pool. [02:03:11][7.2]

Kerry James Reed: [02:03:11] Yeah. I've heard of those. [02:03:11][0.3]

Deborah Turner: [02:03:12] Yeah. They were exciting. It was just so much to do in our neighborhood. It's just so much to do and so many people to see. Oh, I had a lot of family right here in the area, so I would visit. My aunt used to live on 511 N Henry Street. My father's sister, used to live at 511 N Henry St, so that was one of the places too that I spent a lot of time in. Yeah, growing up. [02:03:44][31.8]

Kerry James Reed: [02:03:47] And then lastly, if there's one memory, one memory at all, that you could hold on to forever, what would that be? [02:03:53][5.9]

Deborah Turner: [02:03:54] My grandmother's house. Just to smell of it. I could tell you every detail in the house. What color the furniture was, what it was made out of. The dining room set. The coffee urn, a big old silver coffee urn that she only used during Christmas time. And the coffee brewing every morning. Food. Smelling. Playing. And what we call the back room is where my uncle stayed. And our bunk beds when we had my brother stay back there with him. And then when the bathroom came. Oh, God. Inside. [02:04:39][44.9]

Kerry James Reed: [02:04:39] Yeah. When did the bathroom come? [02:04:41][1.7]

Deborah Turner: [02:04:44] I guess I might have been about 8 or 9 or 10, because we used to take baths in the big tin tubs in the kitchen. But the bathroom finally came and I don't know who did it, but we had a shower and a tub and, you know, sink and everything else. It was a nice sized bathroom but didn't have no heat in it. So we used a electric heater in the back room to heat up the bathroom when it was winter time. So, it was fun. That was exciting because I didn't have to go outside on the back porch and walk into that thing, that outhouse. So I don't know exactly when it was, but I was young. I spent a lot of time with grandma, so I don't know if we moved a lot, but I was at her house most of the time. I lived there. I can remember sleeping between her and my grandfather some of the time. But it was just great. Christmas was great. Holidays were great. I can remember when we decorated the tree, we had a real tree, and we had that Angel Hair that if you get it you it would itch you to death. I don't know if you ever heard of Angel Hair, it was white, it was white stuff. It was almost like fiberglass, to get fiberglass on you. But it was white sticky stuff. Look up Angel Hair for decorating a tree. So, if you touch this stuff, it kind of itch you a little bit, right? But we always put those decorations on that live tree. [02:06:17][93.6]

Kerry James Reed: [02:06:22] Interesting. That's beautiful. [02:06:23][0.9]

Deborah Turner: [02:06:23] Yeah. [02:06:23][0.0]

Kerry James Reed: [02:06:25] It's funny you mention the tree decorations, because Ms. Ellie always told me about the fake tree that her father had that he would always show off. [02:06:33][8.1]

Deborah Turner: [02:06:34] Oh, yeah. [laughs] We had no fake trees. We had a real tree. [02:06:39][5.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:06:39] Absolutely. I approve. [02:06:41][1.4]

Deborah Turner: [02:06:41] Yeah. [laughs] But the Angel Hair was, I don't know where that stuff came from. And I looked it up long time ago, I don't remember what it is now, but that stuff would make you itch so bad. [02:06:52][11.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:06:53] Yeah, I've never heard of that before. [02:06:55][1.2]

Deborah Turner: [02:06:55] Yeah, Angel Hairs. [02:06:56][1.4]

Kerry James Reed: [02:06:58] White Angel Hair tree decorations. Well, Mrs. Turner, we've been talking now for a little over two hours, and it has been an absolute pleasure. [02:07:05][6.6]

Deborah Turner: [02:07:05] I can talk to you some more about this, but it was fun though [02:07:07][2.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:07:07] I mean, do you have any closing remarks you'd like to say? Anything at all? You know, we have plenty of time. [02:07:12][4.5]

Deborah Turner: [02:07:12] I just want to say thank you, for this opportunity to be able to tell my story. [02:07:16][4.0]

Kerry James Reed: [02:07:17] Of course. It's been an honor. [02:07:17][0.2]

Deborah Turner: [02:07:19] And you made it so easy. I mean, I'm just going to say this: I prayed this morning about it, "Lord just give me the courage and the strength, because I don't do well when I'm speaking sometimes and I forget some stuff, but just help me to remember the most important things so I can tell my story, and so that my ancestors would be very proud of me." So you made it easy. And I thank you. [02:07:43][24.1]

Kerry James Reed: [02:07:43] Of course. My pleasure. It's been amazing speaking with you today, thanks so much. [02:07:46][2.8]

Deborah Turner: [02:07:47] Yes. Got so many memories, I tell you. I really do. [02:07:50][2.9]

Kerry James Reed: [02:07:51] Yeah. We have time if you want to share anything else. I don't have anywhere to go. [02:07:57][5.5]

Deborah Turner: [02:07:57] But I do. [laughs] So what time is it now? [02:07:57][0.0]