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UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

ORAL HISTORY DEED OF GIFT

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I, ______________________, have read the above and, in view of the historical value of this information, agree to the recording of my voice and my stories. I grant the University of Baltimore the full use of this information in all media known and unknown. I grant and assign all my rights pertaining to this information to the University of Baltimore.

Signed: ______________________

Name (print) ______________________

Address ______________________

Telephone ______________________

Date ______________________ Interviewer ______________________
**INFORMATION SHEET**

**INTERVIEWER:** Lucy White  
**PROJECT:** East Baltimore Oral History  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW:</th>
<th>1997.12.11</th>
<th>PLACE(S) OF INTERVIEW: Monument East Senior Housing 633 N. Aisquith St.</th>
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**GENERAL TOPIC(S) OF INTERVIEW:**

**INFORMANT’S BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**NAME:** West, Marie Anderson  
**ADDRESS:** 633 N. Aisquith St., #10-K  
**TODAY’S DATE:** 1997.11.28  
**DATE OF BIRTH:** 1927.07.13  
**PLACE OF BIRTH:** 428 Somerset St., Baltimore

**SCHOOLING AND/OR OTHER TRAINING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>East St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>116 Orleans St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunbar High</td>
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**PARENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTHER’S NAME:</th>
<th>Viola Anderson</th>
<th>PLACE OF BIRTH: Baltimore</th>
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<tr>
<td>FATHER’S NAME:</td>
<td>John Anderson</td>
<td>PLACE OF BIRTH: Virginia</td>
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**SIBLINGS:**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Calvin Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonard Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Anderson, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Anderson</td>
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Transcript

Lucy: Ok, I need each of your names. If you could say your name, please.
Marie: I am Marie West.
William: I'm William Ruff.
Lucy: And I am just going to ask some biographical information...your birth and birth place.
Marie: I was born seventh month...thirteenth date...twenty-seven...428 Somerset Street
Lucy: Ok.
Marie: By a mid-wife.
William: I am William Ruff. I was born second month...twenty-eight day...1930.
Lucy: Were you born in a hospital?
William: I was born by a mid-wife...99 East Madison Street.
Lucy: And um...What's your father's name, your mother's name and do you have any brothers and sisters.
Marie: Yes, My father's name was John Anderson. My mother's name was Viola. I got a brother Calvin, a brother Frank, a...a brother Leonard and a sister Katherine...and I got brother named John...Anderson, Jr.
William: My father's name was Cody Ruff. My mother's name was Leslie. I have three sisters and two brothers (laugh). I'm not going to name all them.
Lucy: Where were...
William: Do you want names?
Lucy: If you want, yeah.
William: Jeannie, Mary, Shelly...a Oliver and Donald.
Lucy: Were your parents born here...or were they born in another city?
Marie: My father was born in Virginia...Solorta, Virginia. My mother was born here.
William: My mother was born here.
Lucy: Your father...Do you know where he was born?
William: A...Virginia.
Lucy: Um...What schools did you attend when you were young?
Marie: I went to East Street and I went to a Orleans Street then I went to Dunbar.
William: I went to a...129 Harford Avenue and 116 from 116 to a...a...Dunbar
Lucy: So both of you went to Dunbar?
Marie: Both...both and I went to 116 too...that's Orleans Street. (laugh)
William: Yeah
Lucy: So how long have the two of you known each other?
Marie: Ever since I was five. (laugh)
Lucy: So you grew up together?
Marie: Um hum...(laugh)
Lucy: Um...you would like to..I guess tell me something about your childhood, growing up in East Baltimore...since both of you have lived here your whole life. What is something that sticks out in your memory about this area.
Marie: Well.
William: Just turn around and look and you can see it (pointing to the window)...(laugh)
Marie: TC30 Used to go to Dr. Kennins Church...right over there. I use to go to school. I use to
walk to school and didn't have no problems. Nobody bothered me going to school and I used to go to Dunbar movies... for nickel on Saturday. That was my big day (laugh). My father gave us a whole twenty-five cents on Saturday (laugh). The movie was a nickel and we bought twenty cents worth of candy... stay all day... from the time the movie was over to 11:00 at night.

Lucy: Did you go to church every week? When you were young?
Marie: Every Sunday.
Lucy: Every Sunday.
Marie: Um hum.
William: She still does believe in God.
Marie: The church is right there (pointing)... The church is right there. The white church right over there. That was Dr. Kennins.
Lucy: What about you?
William: Well, I had a good time. I used to go to the church right down the street there... St. James. Do you see it? Can you show it to her, Marie.
Marie: Yeah, that church right there with white walls.
Lucy: Um hum.
William: Right down Monument Street there... My grandfather had a store on this side of the street... you understand... and Saturdays was my big day. I got about... about forty cents. I go down... I go down to Baltimore Street and get two hot dogs and a big root beer. An old fashioned root beer and go to Dunbar. (laugh)

Lucy: So you have forty cents and you got twenty five cents.
Marie: That's it. (laugh)
William: The hot dogs... lets see you could get two hotdogs and a root beer for a quarter.
Lucy: Hum
Marie: Then, I got a job.
Lucy: Where did you work?
Marie: Making flowers... Abraham Street... on the corner of Harford Ave. They made flowers for the funerals and I used to go in there and make flowers. I made $1.00 a day! I worked seven days a week. (laugh)
Lucy: A $1.00 a day.
Marie: (Laugh) I thought I was rich. (laugh)
Lucy: That was alot of money back then.
Marie: Yes, it was.
Lucy: Where did you work?
William: My grandfather... When I was that little I used to work everyday for my grandfather. I sat on that... on the back of his truck where they go out and sell a... the produce and fish and stuff like that and I got $3.00 a week. (laugh) She come out...
Lucy: So you made the money.
Marie: Yes, I did cause I had a job. (laugh)
Lucy: (laugh)
William: That was my job.
Marie: But, I didn't get the $3.00.
William: I got $3.00.
Marie: I got $7.00
William: I got $3.00
Marie: He say you spend some and you save some...and I used to get mad cause I wanted to spend all my money. (Laugh)
Lucy: That's the smart thing, save some and spend some.
Marie: Yes.
William: Well you would get a quarter and they say, boy don't spend it all in the same place.
(Laugh)
Marie: (Laugh)
Lucy: (Laugh)
William: Don't spend it all at one time.
Lucy: But your getting, two hotdogs and a rootbeer for a quarter.
William: Yeah.
Lucy: So you have a little left over.
Marie: (Laugh)
William: (Laugh)
Marie: TC60 See... and I would get candy...cause I had twenty cents to spend. after I paid my five cents for the movie.
Interruption, someone walks in...Good morning!
Lucy: So what was the neighborhood like...What was the neighborhood like when you were growing up.
Marie: It was very friendly, Yeah.
William: Yeah.
Marie: I used to have a good time in the neighborhood. I knew everybody, so it was very friendly.
Lucy: The neighborhood...when I was...When I see pictures of you know...thirty, forty years ago. This neighborhood was clean.
Marie: Um hum.
William: It really was.
Marie: Um hum.
Lucy: Everybody seemed friendly.
William: They were...they were.
Marie: You could go to Mary Jones house, if you were hungry, she would feed you...but they...if you act smart they would tell your parents. They would give you a whipping and then your parents would give you a whipping.
William: That's correct.
Lucy: Everybody looked out for Everybody else.
Marie: Yes, they did. Yes, they did.
William: You know that saying...It took a village to raise a child. Well, that was the village. They raised us. That if I'd done something...three blocks away from here and someone my mother and knew me...I got a whipping there and we didn't have telephones, but they had horsegrams...you understand (laugh)...they had telephone that would beat me home and I'd get one home and one from my grandfather. So, I had three beatings. So, I wouldn't do that no more.
Marie: TC90 And, my father used to carry us to work. He rode a bicycle. That's the way he commuted. He put me in the front and my brother on the back. He carried us to work everyday and bring us back. We went to work everyday.
Lucy: You went to work with him?
Marie: Um hum.
Lucy: Where did he work?
Marie: He worked digging ditches.
William: Construction.
Marie: It was WPA, then...and he was digging ditches. He would carry us to work and us to the site.
Lucy: Did your mom work or did she stay at home?
Marie: No, my mother had died then.
Lucy: Oh! She passed away.
Marie: Um hum...she passed away after I was born.
Lucy: Sorry about that.
William: It was a long time ago.
Marie: Yes (laugh)
William: My father was a WPA (laugh) worker. I told you all about that. He was a WPA worker.
Marie: I think most everybody at that time was on the WPA.
William: We didn't have no radios...we didn't have a...a electric.
Marie: Sure didn't.
William: You understand...and we didn't have running hot water.
Marie: And we didn't have a toilet inside.
William: Inside.
Marie: You had to go outside, in the woodshed to the toilet.
Lucy: Thoses outhouses.
Marie: Yes, out in the outhouses.
William: But it flushed. (laugh)
Lucy: Where did it go? (laugh)
Marie: (Laugh)
William: (Laugh)...it...down the drain, in the sewer, but it flushed and if you sat down on it the spring...you know...the thing up there (bang)...a little brass thing (bang)...it would go up and when you get off it you becareful now, make sure that you get off it quick cause if you don't it will snap you in the back. (laugh)
Marie: (Laugh) The cold water is gonna get ya.
Lucy: (Laugh)
Marie: Me and my brother used to take our little wagon and go down here on Milman Street. Use to have a place down there where the train comes in and brings coal. We go down there and load our wagons up with coal and bring it back home. That old soft coal.
William: It warmed everything up. (laugh)
Marie: Sit around the fire and get this part warm, you turn around and get that part warm, by that time this part is cold. (laugh)
Lucy: Um hum.
William: Thats what you had.
Marie: Yes, we'd burn our knees on each side cause we'd be sitting on the stone plate.
William: The karosene...the karosene.
Marie: No lights.
William: We call it Karosene, but we had karosene stones and the karosene lamps.
Marie: Lights...Um hum.
William: But we got along.
Marie: Yes indeedy...It wasn't all this sickness, we didn't have alot of sickness.
William: Wasn't no AIDS.
Marie: No...we could take a orange or orange sugar.
Lucy: Orange Sugar.
William: No colororange sugar.
Lucy: Oh!
Marie: And you have a piece of orange to eat behind it. So it could take the taste out of your mouth...and then we used to take big sav on a spoon and then a little piece of orange to take the taste away...it kill your cold.
William: It kills you. (laugh)
Marie: But now medicine has to many chemicals in them.
Lucy: So, did everyone help each other...did the neighbors help each other with food?
Marie: Yes.
William: Yes.
Lucy: And watching kids.
Marie: Yes.
William: Yes.
Lucy: And if you didn't go to school.
Marie: TC135 Oh yes.
William: We didn't have a choice. We had patrolling officers. They...they made sure you went to school.
Marie: Sure did have patrolling officers.
Lucy: So you had to go to school everyday.
Marie: Yes.
William: Yes.
Marie: You had to go to school everyday and if you didn't your father would know it...or your mother would know it that evening cause the patrolling officer would come by that evening and let your parents know that you didn't go to school that day. You hooked school.
William: Everybody...and you wouldn't hook school on their corners.
Marie: No sir, cause Ms. Emma over here would tell. Oh, I saw your daughter over here on this corner and everybody would know it...you thought you had committed a crime. (laugh)
William: Right over there accross that street is a place called AJAX house...#??#^#^#
Marie: Um hum.
William: A...
Marie: Huffoff
William: I call it Huffuff.
Marie: Yeah, Huffuff.
William: You know that woman nursed me. She was Jewish.
Lucy: She did?
Marie: Yeah.
William: Yeah.
Marie: Mrs. Huffuff was good to everybody.
William: She owned the...owned the...a bar and a...
Marie: We played with her sons and daughters.
William: I used to sit...
Marie: Bubba!
William: Yeah, he sat on one lap and I sat on another...
Lucy: (Laugh)
William: She had big boobs (laugh) out to here and my lips were on...
Marie: Yeah, she had 3 daughters and a son. Bubba and them used to come around to the house. Oh, they loved biscuits. We would have biscuits. They loved biscuits and they would have light bread. And, we would...would switch. (laugh)
William: We had biscuits.
Marie: And they had the light bread. (laugh)
William: I liked the light bread...you know (laugh)...so I didn't eat biscuits no more.
Marie: Yeah.
Lucy: TC150 So this was a intgrated neighborhood?
Marie: Yes.
William: Yes, we got along. There was no a...
Marie: There was no name calling you wasn't no different than nobody else. You didn't have no more than nobody else. We all got along.
Lucy: Thats the way it should be.
Marie: Um hum.
William: But now...
Marie: Nope...
William: We got along...I used to sell shopping bags right down there.
Marie: Thats right. If we was out there and Mrs. Huffuff knew you were hungry...she'd say come on and eat with the children.
William: That right.
Marie: And then, my father would tell them come on and eat with us and thats the way we got along. We would spend the night at each others houses...by her having a bar we always used to go through the kitchen. They wouldn't let us through the bar.
William: (Laugh). Oh no...couldn't go that way!
Marie: We go through the gate and go upstairs, but we made some noise...gone up the steps.
William: (Laugh)
Marie: Yes indeedy.
William: Whats that...*#%...brewery. Whats that?
Marie: Yeah, that's the brewery on the corner...right on the corner...$#!&...brewery. We used to dance there.
William: When they had...
Marie: When they had like Christmas parties...parties we used to go there and dance. And, they used to throw us money.
William: Had big grey horses.
Marie: That was beautiful horses.
William: Great big horses...Whats the name of them other horses that you see on TV. Whats the name of them horses? You know the horses I am talking about.
Marie: I know with all the stuff on the back of their legs.
William: Them great big horses, have you seen a picture?
Lucy: There all dressed up?
William: No, them great big horses. see them on the commercials. Where they got this horses who kicks a fieldgoal. (laugh)
Lucy: OH...Um.
William: What is the name of them horses.
Lucy: Is it a bronco?
William: No
Lucy: Maybe?
William: No, they're big horses. They're strong horses...and those horses was big.
Marie: Yeah, they had some big pretty horses.
William: Big...big grey horses...big with wagons.
Marie: Yeah, they had wagons and they put the ... %$#!...on the wagon...and the horses would carry it.
William: And the guys that was driving it...was just as big!
Marie: Yes.
Lucy: There was...so no one had a car around here?
William: Noooooo!
Marie: Noindeedly...if you went on your way, you went on the wagon (laugh)...My father, used to put me and my brother in the wagon. We had one of those streamliners with the sides on it. He put me in the front and my brothers behind...and carry us where he want us to go on the wagon. We didn't have no car.
William: No car! That was a luxury. Yes, that was if you was...you was one of the up-ity ups.
Marie: Right...and we thought a big thing...when we went up to...a...the park...up there on Caroline Street and we stay up all night. We thought that was a great thing. Oh we was vacationing. (laugh)...up in the square what's it called?
William: The square?
Marie: Um hum.
William: Square Park.
Marie: Yeah. We'd get a blanket and pack a lunch and we'd go up there and spend the night.
Lucy: Is the park still there?
William: Yeah, its not there anymore.
Lucy: Oh, its not there.
Marie: No, its not there anymore. No.
Lucy: And that was on Caroline Street.
William: Caroline and...and...wait a minute its Caroline and Eden...mostly sat on Eden Street.
Marie: It was right in the middle between Eden and Caroline Street.
William: Yeah, between Eden and Chase.
Marie: Yes, It was a big park there.
William: Yeah.
Marie: It had benches up there and trees. That's all was there.
William: And a water fountain...
Marie: A water fountain...
William: You had to press down on it and if you was too light in the backsides, you had to get somebody else or you and your brother had to stand on it (laugh)...for water to come up to come up and smack you in the face.

Marie: Oh, we liked that...we thought that...oh we carried our lunch and spread our blankets. We'd eat and go to sleep.

Lucy:TC190 Now did Johns...Johns Hopkins the hospital...

William: Yes indeed, it was there.

Lucy: Did it have a big influence?

William: Yes, it did.

Lucy: On the neighborhood?

William: Yes, it did.

Marie: Yes...everybody

Lucy: When you were younger....

William: Yes...everybody...

Marie: Everybody went to Johns Hopkins.

William: I still go.

Lucy: You still go?

William: Yes.

Lucy: Its a good hospital.

William: Yes.

Marie: Yes.

William: Its the best in the world. I love it. I had a triple bypass there.

Lucy: My father had...um a quadruple bypass...

William: Yeah, Yeah, thats it.

Lucy: He had um...

William: Yeah...split down the middle, cut my leg.

Lucy: Up your leg...they take the vein.

William: Yeah, That's what I had.

Marie: I used to work in Hopkins.

Lucy: You did work in Hopkins?

Marie: Yes.

William: Um hum...

Lucy: Both of you did...

Marie: Yes.

Lucy: When you um...How old were you when you worked in Hopkins?

Marie: Um...I couldn't tell ya. I used to run the buffer, polish the floors.

Lucy: Oh, what did you do there?

William: I was an orderly.

Lucy: OH!

William: I went to work after school...You understand...there...and I used to be a orderly...and...that how...

Marie: Yeah, cause Hopkins was on this side. There was another Hospital across the street.

William: Sinai.

Marie: Sinai.
William: Sinai was like a house, was a rowhouse...as a matter of fact all of them was like houses. Johns Hopkins wasn't that big.

Marie: No.

William: Johns Hopkins was like a... little houses and they used to have an iron rod fence around. Do you remember that fence?

Lucy: Yeah, they had a big fence, didn't they?

William: Yeah and they had sheep. (laugh)

Marie: I had my appendix taken out at Johns Hopkins.

William: They had sheep and goats out there...in the grass.

Lucy: So, were they friendly to everyone in the community...did they...did they try to help?

Marie: Yes, they did.

Lucy: They Did?

Marie: Um hum...Didn't nobody go no where but Hopkins, Johns Hopkins...had to go to Hopkins.

William: Thats the only hospital I thought we had. (laugh)

Lucy: And the Doctors and Nurses were friendly?

William: Yes.

Lucy: And Helpful?

Marie: Yes.


William: Was none...What you mean pay? (laugh)

Lucy: You didn't pay anything?

William: Didn't have nothing to pay.

Lucy: They had assistance...

Marie: Yeah, They had a system, you know.

William: I don't know how they did it, but I know one thing we didn't have no money.

Marie: No.

William: My mother never talked about paying no hospital bills.

Lucy: And they never turned anybody down?

Marie: No indeedy.

William: No.

Marie: Cause I know I stayed in there two weeks and I know my father didn't have to pay nothing. He didn't have no money.

William: We didn't have nothing! The famous words were hallstead and #*$^!...everybody was on hallstead and *!?!.

Marie: Thats right.

William: Black and white...

Marie: And they treated you just as nice.

William: Was just the same...truthfully I never knew discrimination at Johns Hopkins.

Lucy: Cause there has been...some people have said that there is discrimination and...Hopkins a long time ago...those walls kept a barrier around the neighborhood and that they never tried to help anyone...they kept themselves isolated from the community.

William: Not isolated from nobody, never,never,never...I went there...I've been there...all my children been there.
Marie: I left from the Dunbar movies and went there that night cause my appendix had busted.
William: I can't remember that and I'd been...
Marie: They even sent someone home to my father's house to get my father. So, he could sign the papers.
Lucy: Oh they did!
William: They worked on my grandfather.
Lucy: That's good...that's goods to hear.
Marie: Yeah, cause my father was there before he died and he died in 87. He was 83yrs old. That's the only hospital he knew.
William: I worked at Johns Hopkins as an orderly and I know I used to go...I used to shave...I learned how to shave people...upthere...they taught me how, to shave patients. I shaved black and white and combed their hair. And I also know...they had a dining room where you could eat. Well, you didn't have to pay to eat at Johns Hopkins...the people that worked there.
Marie: Go into the dining room...
William: The dining room and get eggs, bacon, toast, juice, milk all that was...and your pay...you understand. You work at Hopkins you were entitled to eat.
Lucy: TC256 Was there alot of jobs available at Johns Hopkins...for everybody in the neighborhood? Did alot of people in the neighborhood work there?
Marie: Yes, they did.
William: That was everything in East Baltimore, just about.
Lucy: What other jobs were in the area...was there any other companies or a brewery that employed alot of people.?
William: *^%#!...brewery and...
Marie: At that time it was Sinai. You could get a job at Sinai Hospital. It was right across the street from John Hopkins. They were facing each other like this.
William: There was a packing house. It packaged pork and beans, tomatoes...stuff like that. That was my favorite meal, porks and beans.
Marie: Yeah, cause I worked in gifts...packing house...packing tomatoes. The can company.
William: They had work, but it wasn't as...you know...
Marie: TC270 You didn't make no fortune, but you made enough to live off of, you know because at that time things were cheap. Because my father bought me a pair of black patent leather shoes and they wasn't but $1.50.
Lucy: I wish I could buy a pair of black patent leather shoes for $1.50. They don't cost that. (laugh)
William: Yeah my shoes cost ninety-eight cents.
Marie: I never thought...a little grocery store down here on the corner...Where you could come and get a 1/2 pound of beans for five cents. A whole pound is a dime...one like thesises little country stores, have beans and noodles and whatever you wanted.
William: Yeah, right down stairs. A place called Sigmund. The name was Sigmund. He had dried apricots, dried prunes, dried apples and all that stuff...selling right out there, dried codfish.
Marie: You could get five cents worth of this.
William: You could go to the store and buy five cents worth of sugar...five cents worth of
flour, five cents of lard about that big.

Lucy: So you didn't have to buy a large quantity.
William: You didn't have the money.
Marie: No. You could buy a little bit...five cents worth or ten cents worth.
Lucy: Whatever you wanted.
William: You could take a penny and buy a grab bag and it would be about. (laugh)
That was leftover and it cost a penny.
Lucy: TC285 How has the neighborhood changed from when you were little...growing up?
What do you see changing?
Marie: Everything!
Lucy: The people?
Marie: The people really have changed. The people do not stick together anymore like they used to. They're so scared that one is going to get more than the other.
Lucy: They're jealous of each other.
Marie: Yes and thats ridiculous.
William: No, I would say its disrespectful...you understand...disrespectful. You know like I would be standing on the corner...we used to stand on the corner and sing like the corner and you know how guys get...might say abuse things, but if I see your mother...or an older person coming up, we cut that out...goodevening!
Lucy: Show your manners.
William: Yes. Cause it would get back...quicker than fast.
Lucy: Quicker than you could get back.
Marie: Yes it would.
William: It would get back...and it was a house...house just like and everybody knew...they had some old ladies. We had shutters you know. You remember the shutters?
Marie: Yeah. They would be peeping out through them shutters
William: Look through the shutters at you and you raise all that noise...they peep through...that's Mrs. Leslie's son down there. I am going to tell her. They had communication through the wall.
Marie: Do you know Leslie's son is down there and it would get all the way to my mother. And you couldn't ask no one to give you nothing for going to the store. You just had to go to the store. If your out there playing...I don't care how good your playing and Mrs. Emerson said I want you to go to the store, you had to stop doing what you were doing and go to the store for Mrs. Emerson and you couldn't...not a penny cause you would get a whipping.
William: Couldn't ask for anything.
Lucy: Nowadays everybody wants money. Thats all they care about. If there is no money, they don't want anything to do with it.
Marie: No, they sure don't! We used to go to the store and you better not ask for not a penny. If she gave you two cents you had to carry it home. Where did you get thoses two cents. Mrs. Emerson. Did you ask for it. No. Well, why did she give it to you.
William: If there was money they want to know where it came from.
Lucy: TC317 So, What are the kids like in the neighborhood?
Marie: Some of them don't have any manners, now.
William: Most of them like I said...no respect.
Marie: No, they don't have respect.
Lucy: What about their parents?
William: They don't have none either.
Marie: They didn't give none for the kids, so I know the kids ain't got none.
William: Kids have kids.
Lucy: That's true.
William: They might call you any kind of name.
Marie: Yes indeed.
William: What you looking at...they don't say excuse me or let you past...they have no value of property. They run on top of cars.
Marie: We plant flowers down there and the children want to run all over them.
William: And the parents come by and pick the flowers out of the garden.
Marie: People steal the flowers. They even steal the flowers in the building.
William: They take the flowers off the porch...nobody has no togetherness...like a rat race.
Marie: Even now they don't check on one another...see whose sick or whose not sick...cause you can go to someone's apt. you ain't seen in a couple days. They don't even do that anymore. You might find them dead up there.
William: Down there was beautiful when I was a kid there...food on the outside, the prettiest green festivals, fruits, grapes. I used to love the grapes...grapes. They had hotdogs and hamburgers. You never had one of them kind of hamburgers. You probably been eating McDonalds...you're a Micky D fan!
Lucy: I don't like McDonalds...I like my mom's good old fashioned homecooking.
William: All right...all right! Your saying something...then you get the milk shakes down there...put ice in it.
Lucy: Perfect.
William: Yeah and pour it out...and you get a little round cup...%
Marie: But Sterling Street didn't look that pretty.
William: No. You remember what Sullivan had..produce store right over there...right where sun cleaners...you remember the man used to sell fruits and vegetables on the side...across the street from my grandfather...he was white. He had horses and he had the guys would come up and load the wagons up and the horses would pull them away.
Marie: Mr. Fisher...that's his name.
William: Calvin used to sit right there on Monument and Gay remember Calvin.
Marie: Drug store was on the other side.
William: Friedman's Drug store.
Marie: We had a drug store at Central Ave. and Madison.
William: Right around from that was Sigmunds.
Marie: It was a bar on the corner.
William: The dentist...they had a shoe shop. That was down in there.
Lucy: They don't have any of that anymore.
Marie: No
Lucy: Bank?
William: There was a bank...Providence Bank...used to be on the corner.
Marie: None of that...the bank, the drugstore.
Lucy: Seems like the only thing that is still here is Dunbar.
Marie: Yes. We had three movies.
William: What was it the Rio, the Eden
Marie: It was the Dunbar, Eden and the Rio, it wasn't but three.
Dunbar: Dunbar, Radio...
Marie: Eden
William: The Rio was on Bond Street and...and...Monument.
Marie: It wasn't four movies. It wasn't but three.
William: The Rio was on...on...on...Bond and Monument.
Marie: There wasn't no Radio.
William: It was a radio movies, this is where they boys got hung...^#*?...the radio movies
yes, you understand...my cousin Oliver used to work in the Eden and I used to
pass her and go to the radio. Then they tore the radio down...closed the radio
down. It was the the radio, Dunbar, radio, Eden
Marie: The Rio...
William: You had four.
Lucy: TC400 You said, somebody got hung there?
William: Yeah. They...the boys had a gang during that time called the brimstones.
Marie: The brimstones didn't like the people down here to cross Caroline Street. The
people on the other side of Caroline Street...didn't allow them to come down here.
Lucy: So, if you cross over...then there was a fight.
William: Trouble...big trouble.
Marie: Yes. They would run you home.
William: You was in deep trouble.
Lucy: People fought with their fists back then, now they fight with guns.
William: Yeah, but what happened over there was they tried to stick it up years ago...%^?!
...they got caught and went to jail. They tried to get them to tell about the gangs...
they tried to round all the boys up. The gang said they would blow the movies up.
You remember that. They was going to blow the movies up...stir trouble with the
police... That was the radio.
Marie: Um hum.
William: The radio movies.
Lucy: And that is what happened?
William: But they didn't talk and got hung away. Thats when they had hangings...
yeah...they had a whipping post. out here too...right down them stairs...right
out there in the middle of that square.
Lucy: TC422 There was a whipping post?
William: Yeah it was!
Marie: A round post with a whole lot of rings on it. They used to tie your hands in there
and whip you across the back.
Lucy: When was that?
Marie: Oh! Way back there...way back then.
Lucy: Who would do that?
William: The sheriff dept.
Lucy: The police, the sheriff.
William: The sheriff.
Marie: That didn't last long.
William: They cut that out.
Lucy: Yeah, I'm sure.
Marie: It got too much of a crowd.
William: It got too much attention.
Lucy: Is that when you committed a crime... or something?
William: What do you call it... when you have husband and wife dispute.
Marie: Yes... when the husband abused the wife... they'd whip you... instead of putting you in jail
Lucy: Sometimes, I wished they'd do that today!
Marie: (Laugh)
Lucy: Some of these men deserve it!
William: Yes... yes... women picking on the men... (laugh) ... some of you women are bad... (laugh)... picking on the men.
Lucy: Your out numbered... I never knew that was what they did... in this neighborhood... or was it in other neighborhoods.
William: They had it all over... I believe.
Marie: All around... that was the thing... when husband's abused the wife. You get a whipping in front of all the people... make you ashamed... know you whipped your wife.
Lucy: TC447 So, How do you see the kids today and the people in the neighborhood. How do you feel about that.
William: I say its 1/2 and 1/2.
Lucy: See trash... furniture dumped on the curb, young people who look like they're up to no good.
Marie: There's more people now getting put out. They got there stuff on the streets and everything... they don't realize that they got to pay rent to live somewhere.
William: They don't want to take responsibility... you understand... you have to be responsible... like if I come to see you. I don't want to look like a bumb. I want to look like I am somebody. If I give you that much respect... you will talk descent to me... but these children don't care how they look. Pants... pants hanging accross... if you bump them the pants would fall down... kids have got to walk widely... (laugh)... to keep their pants up... you understand.
Marie: They show the shorts.
William: Color... I don't want you to see my underware (laugh)... you understand... like I'm saying no respect.
Marie: No.
William: Not responsible! They were not taught how to be responsible... like if I come in here and see something on the floor, I'll pick it up... you understand.
Marie: They're not gonna do that... '#%&... keep grounds clean.
Lucy: Yeah, it's a nice building.
Marie: It's the people... they see the trash and instead of picking it up... they say they don't get paid for that.
William: We pick it up... cut the grass, water the flowers... "*?#%^*. **%$%^... keep it clean… People come through and trash it.
Marie: We clean up everyday... some people... no...
William: You got to be taught... should have a school... teach responsibility.
Marie: They should have it coming up!
Lucy: TC490 Your parents are supposed to teach you.
William: When I came up, I had a job to do. When I came home from school, I had a job to do...chopwood, take ashes out...you don't know about ashes.
Marie: Little stoves...%&?!?
William: Cook stove, didn't have gas.
Marie: TC500 No, wood, coal stoves...cook and to heat the house...
William: &%$&...&^%#&...%^&...%&...did all the fryin...it would get hot...biscuits go in the oven...My job was to keep the stove clean and the ashes out.
Lucy: When you came home from school, these were your chores?
Marie: Yeah.
William: Cut wood, chop wood...back yard clean...
Marie: Wash dishes, keep lamp shade clean and make the beds.
William: Saturday, the kitchen floor and front room...
Lucy: Did your brothers and sisters do chores?
Marie: Yes! Yes! William: I was the oldest, so I had the most work. (laugh)...&%(...?$#@&...%^&...play football, stuff and shoot marbles.

(TC525-560 Interruption...someone walk in......fussiness in tape)
Lucy: TC560 Was there any place to play. besides the park on Caroline Street?
William: School.
Marie: What...We could go to Dunbar...a vacant lot on Enzer Street. You could go over there and play. But, you know...broken up glass...stuff like that over there...yeah
William: Alley...there was glass broke...in the lot...
Marie: Abraham Street...It was clean...that street...the ladies would get out there...early in the morning. The ladies who lived on this side...the ladies who lived on this side...that side...would sweep the whole block...one entire block...whole block
William: They didn't have water hoses...used the bathtubs...filled them with water. They had enough water...all the people...couldn't sit on nobody's step...all wet...everything was wet.
Lucy: Everyone cleaned all the time.
Marie: Yeah, they had a spring at the corner and they would go down there and get that water, wash the steps...
Lucy: Used to have beautiful, marble steps...
Marie: Yes...Yes.
Lucy: Did everyone clean the steps?
Marie: Yes, I got a job doing steps.
Lucy: You did?
Marie: First it was fifteen cents, then it went up to twenty-five, then it went up to thirty-five cents (laugh)...scrubbrush...scrub, scrub, scrub...with a brush...pretty and white.
Lucy: TC600 Um Hum.
William: We took care of things...you know...see that soda bottle...
Lucy: Um Humm.
William: That used to be glass, you could get two cents for that bottle.
Marie: Yeah.
Lucy: If you recycled it. If you kept the bottle?
William: No, you get your two cents when you take the bottle back to the store. You get a two cent deposit.
Marie: That some of the old people would give you...soda bottles...to carry back to the store, but you got two cents off of it.
William: Milk bottle was one cent.
Marie: Yes. They would give you a whole cardboard box of bottles...two cents...one cent bottles.
William: I'd beat you up...
Marie: You carry them back to the store.
William: I'd bet you up. If you broke my good soda bottles...What was wrong with you...crazy...
Marie: Two cents...(laugh)
William: You could get a whole lot with that. Don't do that...(laugh)...don't break that bottle.
Lucy: So, what else was the neighborhood like? You said you went to movies...dances?
William: Record boxes...the needle was five cents a pack...*&&#...*&&%$...
Marie: Turn it up...yeah...great big old records.
William: Plastic records...If you drop it, you broke it. You pay for my record, if you broke it.
Marie: Yeah, big graphphones.
Lucy: What was school like?
William: Well, I'll tell you. In the summertime it would be hot and in the winter time it would be cold.
Marie: Yes, it would.
William: Dunbar. We had portables and the portables...used to have pot bellied stoves. Don't you remember that.
Marie: Yeah...I went to East Street...then 116th first.
William: It was too cold in there. You stayed there with your coat on.
Marie: You keep your coat on if it was cold.
William: You went to school. If it was snowing...snow that high, you went anyway.
Lucy: You walked in the snow.
Marie: Yeah.
William: Snow...that high.
Lucy: Yep.
Marie: They would tell you in a minute. Your not staying in here. Your gone to school.
William: Your out of here...go to school.
Lucy: How were the teachers? Were they real strick?
William: You stayed in line.
Marie: Yes. Yes. Your late. Your two minutes late. (laugh)
William: They wanted to know where you was at...didn't mess around, you went to school.
Lucy: That the way it should be.
William: You went to school. I don't understand, you went to school in my days.
Marie: Yes indeedy.
Lucy: People don't like to go to school now. Everybody drops out.
Marie: Right...we had to go to school. WE went to school.
Lucy: Did both of you graduate?
William: I did.
Marie: Yes.
William: My grandsos is 8yrs old. He can use the computer. He knows it. He uses a calculator.
Marie: It is different now.
William: He is eight...he's learning...If you show interest in the child. The child the child will do well.
Marie: Yeah.
William: But if you stay on the corner all night...selling drugs, the child see that. The child doesn't know, they think thats the thing to do.
Marie: Thats the way of life...think think...
William: Think thats the way of life...you understand...you can't teach no nobody anything...I couldn't try to make an example for you...If I'm going to do bad things. I can't make an example...cause you'll pick that up. My father said that.
Marie: If you said damn it in the house, you would get a beating.
Lucy: Raising you voice...
Marie: NO!
William: I can see.
Marie: Not even mumble.
William: I got eyes...wouldn't of had none...didn't talk back...ate what you got cause you didn't have nothing to eat.
Marie: TC726 Nothing to waste.
William: The skims of the soap...When the soap gets down so small...
Marie: Put it in a jar...
William: Thats right.
Lucy: My grandmother used to do that...put them in a jar.
Marie: Yes indeedy.
Lucy: Add a little water.
Marie: I still do that.
William: Ah! You know about that. Ok.
Marie: Used to make soap...soap...with the left over grease...make soap.
Lucy: Yes, my grandmother did that too. She saved the fat from the chicken, the turkey.
Marie: Yes. The grease...yes indeedy...to make soap (laugh).
Lucy: You didn't waste anything.
William: We didn't have nothing to waste. We couldn't afford it.
Marie: That soap...We took baths with that soap. It was better than the soap you buy today. It cleaned you up.
William: On Enzer and Madison Street...up the street...we had a junk shop. Where you went and sold newspapers,carboard, magazines, rags...you know.
Marie: Sure did.
William: This was before recycling. We sold that to the junk shop for a few pennies...
you understand. We had nothing to waste.

Marie: There wasn't any trash in the street, no garbage...no nothing, not even a piece of newspaper because When Mrs. Preston bought a newspaper then you give it to Sally...she'll read it pass it on down to somebody else and they read it. It would keep on...down until they wear the paper out.

William: We have a newspaper, the Afro. There would be maybe four people in the block who could afford the Afro.

Marie:TC758 Passed all around through the neighborhood...everybody read what was in the Afro.