

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

The Bridges that Carried Us Over Collection

Special Collections & University Archives

3-19-2021

M. Jean Peacock

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges>

Recommended Citation

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation, "M. Jean Peacock" (2021). *The Bridges that Carried Us Over Collection*.
8.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/8>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections & University Archives at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Bridges that Carried Us Over Collection by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

The Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

M. Jean Peacock

Interviewer:

Mary Tanouye

Interview Date:

March 19, 2021

Interview Location:

Remotely via Zoom

Length:

00:52:26

Media format:

Digital Video (mp4)

Interview Summary completed by:

Mary Tanouye, 2021

Description:

M. Jean Peacock describes moving to San Bernardino in 1956, and her early memories of the westside churches and businesses. She describes her father's prominent Black church in Michigan and the political activism of members. She remembers her early friendship with Amina Carter, and some of her experiences with discrimination in school and how they motivated her to complete her Psychology Ph.D. and ultimately to become one of the first Black professors at California State University, San Bernardino. She shares stories of her husband Walter Hutchins who became an early black school board member and his work supporting political candidates including Amina Carter. She concludes sharing her experiences of living through Covid, losing her husband, and how the Black Lives Matter movement and her own ancestors inspire her to persevere.

Keywords:

- San Bernardino Valley College
- San Bernardino High School
- California State University, San Bernardino
- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- West Side San Bernardino (Calif.)
- New Hope Baptist Church

- Temple Baptist Church
- George Air Force Base
- Black Lives Matter
- Discrimination in education

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
New Hope Baptist Church	7th Street
Jean's Family Home	1556 West 21st Street
Temple Baptist Church	Medical Center Drive

Temporal Coverage:

- 1950s (Michigan)
- 1950s - 2000s (San Bernardino, CA)

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:01:15	Moving to the West Side of San Bernardino from Michigan and what that was like
Digital Video	00:04:30	Describes what her neighborhood was like
Digital Video	00:09:38	Going to church, and her memories of her father's church in Michigan
Digital Video	00:14:42	Talks about her relationship with Amina Carter
Digital Video	00:24:02	An example of discrimination that she faced at Valley College

Digital Video	00:27:20	Her experience as a student at Cal State San Bernardino, and being a pioneer as the first Black Psychology Ph.D. student at UCR
Digital Video	00:40:12	Talks about Walter Hutchins, her husband's involvement in politics
Digital Video	00:42:20	Talks about living through Covid and what that's been like for her & how she is inspired by BLM and her imagining how her ancestors persevered.

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Mary Tanouye: So we are here today doing an interview with M. Jean Peacock for the Bridges that Carried Us Over Archive of Black History in the Inland Empire. And Miss. Peacock could you spell your name for the tape, please.

M. Jean Peacock: First thing actually is, I go by M. Jean Peacock, like the bird.

Mary Tanouye: Awesome, thank you. So I think just to start us off, we were just wondering about some of your early childhood memories I know you moved to the IE when you were younger. So if you could just tell us a little bit about moving to the IE What was that like?

M. Jean Peacock: Well actually I was at, well I was 16 I don't know if that's considered younger but we came here from Flint, Michigan, my dad had been a pastor in Flint, Michigan, and we moved here in 1956. At that time, we purchased a home, a house on 21 Street, 1556, West 21st Street. And it just so happened that that particular section of homes had just opened up to African Americans being able to move there. Prior to that, most of the blacks lived in an area called the, I think the valley truck farm. I think you're familiar with that. So many of the blacks lived in the Valley and blacks were just beginning to move into this area.

And it began, it was not very long, say about six or seven years until it was almost entirely African American, maybe just a little bit longer, it's called West Side San Bernardino is where we lived.

And on the west side of San Bernardino the community hospital was there. If it were, it definitely wasn't as large as it is now.

And let's see, I attended San Bernardino High School, I had entered the 12th grade there. When I came here, I already had enough credits to complete at least half of the 12th grade but San Bernardino high school did not graduate students in the middle of the year. So, most of the students went to San Bernardino high, and it's in the same place that it is now. I'm not sure what else you'd...

Mary Tanouye: Can you describe a little bit about your neighborhood like, what kind of things did you see when you walk around, any businesses or restaurants that you remember going to?

M. Jean Peacock: The neighborhood was very quiet, very nice. Definitely a lot of foliage, trees, etc. Up on the corner was a huge bakery, which is no longer there. The building was there for quite some time, but I think it's been torn down. As I indicated, it

was a neighborhood, of kind of a family, community neighborhood of two and three bedroom homes. I think the price that my mom paid for our house was \$7000 and her payment was \$75 a month.

Mary Tanouye: Wow

M. Jean Peacock: Yeah. Really different then. And it's interesting when my brother and I sold the house in 99, the houses there we're going for over 100,000. And so that was definitely a good investment. We didn't get \$100,000. But the houses were going for \$100,000 I think they still are, they may even be in the 200 thousands. As I indicated there were not a lot of African Americans living in the area at the time.

And actually where I mentioned about the bakery. It wasn't there then because over there were orange groves. Orange groves were everywhere. And when we would go out to Baseline, or Highland when you got to Meridian, or even before that was all orange groves just orange groves everywhere. I remember being just absolutely fascinated because we didn't have... I had not ever seen oranges growing on trees being from Michigan.

The weather was so nice. It was it was unreal. In fact, I was very unhappy that first year, because the first year we were here at Christmas. It was probably about close to 80 degrees. And I was used to snow around Thanksgiving and football games and snow and hot chocolate.

And I recall, I recall crying, wanting to go back to Michigan. But I got used to it very quickly because I went back to Michigan the following year, and I could not bear it. One of the things that happened was when I came here we went downtown San Bernardino, and people were walking around with their bathing suits on and high heels, young girls, of course. I had not ever seen anything like that in Michigan. When we went to church, and just not only me or my family because we were the preacher's family, everyone when we went out, like my mom, wore a hat every day, especially the older women. They wore a hat. My mother wore gloves, high heels, stockings. We went to church, we wore hats, gloves, stockings. We came here and everything was so laid back. People were walking downtown with shorts on and, like I said, we saw a couple of people with swimsuits and little jackets and heels. And we were just so thoroughly appalled. I can't ever forget that I thought these people are crazy. But like I said I got used to it very quickly because when I went back to Michigan, a year later, after I graduated from high school, I recall thinking, these people are so uptight. And oh, it's so conservative. So I've been a Californian ever since.

Mary Tanouye: Yeah, I'm from Wisconsin so I can definitely relate to coming here and now whenever I go back I get super cold super easily. But you mentioned that you were a part of the church when you were in Michigan. Were you a part of any church when you moved to San Bernardino?

M. Jean Peacock: Yes, absolutely. We joined the New Hope Baptist Church at that time, it was on Seventh Street. You can see. Seven Street now dead ends at the railroad tracks. But 7th Street off Mount Vernon, and the pastor was Reverend David Campbell, and he lived in the Valley as well as did many of the other parishioners. There were African Americans on that side of Mount Vernon, because I had friends who have lived there for some time. That would be off Mount Vernon, seventh, eighth, Perris. There were a couple of black businesses there on Perris. There were not a lot of Black owned businesses. I recall, Dr. Ingram had an office there. I think it was on 9th street. It wasn't ninth. But down in that area. And like I said, the church was on seventh, and then sometime later, Reverend Campbell was responsible for building the current New Hope Baptist church that's located on 16th Street, across from community hospital. The church acquired that land sometime later and built that church.

The other church that African Americans attended was Temple Baptist Church, And that is off Medical Center Dr. And there was a barbershop there, that was where almost everyone went. Women if they wanted to get their haircut it was both men and women. Temple Baptist Church was there. And that's the church where Amina Carter went and there was a family of people that actually founded that church. I think Amina might be related to them. And there was that church. The other church, so the two popular churches would be Temple and New Hope.

But there was also St. Paul Missionary Baptist. No St. Paul A.M.E. St. Paul is off 21st Street near Mount Vernon. And that's the church where Dorothy Ingram, I don't know if you talk to any of the people who know Dorothy Inghram, but there's a very rich legacy there with the Ingram family. They were among the first African Americans in this area. In fact, Dorothy Inghram has written a book about her experiences. I don't know if you guys have a copy of that book but if you don't, you should get it. I could tell you where to get a copy. I know that the librarian Cesar Caballero at Cal State San Bernardino, he probably still has a number of copies, because I had a box of those books, and when I retired from Cal State San Bernardino, I shipped them to the library. So hopefully, they're still there. And that would be a really interesting book for you to read about really early San Bernardino, I'm talking about early because Dorothy talks about living somewhere in the Valley and her family going to church when they got the place at St Paul up on 21st street. Them going in a horse and buggy and taking all day.

So it's really worth your acquiring that book and reading some of her experiences of Dorothy Inghram, you've heard the name the library in San Bernardino is named after her. Her brother was a physician, I think he may have been the first black physician I'm not sure. And she had another brother who was a minister. So they were very affluent family here among African Americans. Dorothy taught school. She was a principal, and I'm not sure what other roles she had but she had a number of them.

Mary Tanouye: I know that you are really good friends with Amina Carter so could you tell us a little bit about your relationship with her.

M. Jean Peacock: Yes, Amina and I met in high school. She was one of the first friendly faces. I came 12th grade is really difficult when many of the kids have grown up together, been in grade school together. And so it's really difficult when you're coming into 12th grade and trying to make friends and Amina was always a friendly person so I gravitated toward her and then she and I had several classes together. And she even though Amina and I graduated at the same time, she's a year younger than me. I know that we had choir together, I was taking classes, all the academic courses were already complete. I completed them in Michigan.

So when I came here I just took fun classes like typing, which at the time I didn't think I needed it, but boy am I glad I took it. And so Amina and I would hang out together. And I remember this really funny incident where Amina borrowed her, maybe I shouldn't tell this but I will. Amina borrowed her boyfriend's car. And so, I was liking this guy at George Air Force Base, and she borrowed this car and so she and I took off one day and went up to George Air Force Base. And on the way back the car started running hot. And so I was not an experienced driver and Amina had just a little bit more experience than I had. So then the car started running hot, you're coming down Cajon pass and at the time, it was just a two lane, nothing like it is now, and you could look over and you could see the drop off from the cliff. So when the car started running hot, Amina said, "I heard that when the car starts running hot it blows up on you." So we both jumped out of the car with the car still running. And then the car started rolling. I don't know if she put the brake on or what but the car started rolling so we had to run and jump back in the car to get back down the hill. So we've always laughed about that.

We went to Valley College at the same time. And our career paths were very, very similar. We were working on a master's degree at the same time. Then when Amina, she started working for George Brown and I, after I got my masters, I continued working at Cal State San Bernardino. Amina was in my wedding when I married the first time.

Our lives were parallel. We both moved out here in the same area about the same time, we remarried about the same time, so our lives have been almost parallel all these years. So, yeah, she's a really, really dear friend.

Mary Tanouye: That story about the car is really crazy. I can't believe nothing happened to you guys or nothing happened to the car.

M. Jean Peacock: I know I cannot believe it either. I mean, those were different times and different days but I continue to laugh about that. And she and I used to sit out at Valley College on the grass and we talked about our dreams and our goals and what we wanted to accomplish. And, yeah, she's just an absolutely wonderful, wonderful friend. I used to tease her because when I got grandkids, she and Ratibu, when she remarried and her husband was very good friends with my husband. So that worked out really well. And we got grandkids before they did. So I used to take mine down to her house, just to tease Amina.

Mary Tanouye: What was your school experience like in high school college?

M. Jean Peacock: My high school experience was, I don't really recall it. I know I wasn't really connected. I was kind of here against my will. My parents had divorced and my mom, they decided to come to California. I was really surprised that the blacks were not as engaged or as active as they were in Michigan. I was more familiar with my dad being a minister. We were an active family, my mother taught school and we knew a lot of people. So this was a really big change so I did not engage. At San Bernardino High, I did not make a lot of friends but over time when I started going to Valley College, I did. But people were friendly, it was just that it was difficult to get into, you know these were really strong bonds that people had developed over time. And so I kind of felt left out a little bit, but everybody was friendly.

So, you know, it may have been me too, because I didn't necessarily want to be here. Valley College was wonderful. I got a wonderful education at San Bernardino Valley College. My interest in psychology came from two professors that were absolutely outstanding, Terry Mall. I don't know if he's still there. He taught experimental Psychology and no he taught statistics and Ron Oftenstein was another professor there who taught experimental psychology. Excellent teachers and that was what perked my interest.

And I had another wonderful teacher. I can't recall his name but he taught microbiology and I won't ever forget this particular incident at the San Bernardino Valley College in the microbiology class. We had for the lab, we had to streak, you know, with the blood I think they call it augur. You had to streak it to grow your microorganism in a petri dish. And so, and then we have to work to identify what those organisms were. And one time, he gave us a petri dish with staffaccocus in it. I think staff can get pneumonia from it. It's a very infectious bacteria. And I dropped it in the lab. And they had to vacate the lab because it could go through the ventilation system. So, he was in another area of the lab and when he heard it, he said, "I know that's" at the time, my name was Newman, "I know that's Jean". I know that's who did it. And we had to vacate the lab, they had to clean out the ventilation system, it was a couple of days before we could even go back, but I got an A in the class. He would tease me. I was determined I loved that class. It was my favorite class. And he said, I'm going to give you an A if you just promise you won't come back, you won't take another one of my classes.

So, so yeah, but the one negative experience I did have one negative experience at San Fernando Valley College. I joined the Glee Club. And we put on, it was the choir, and we put on display Brigadoon. And the professor had told us to come early so that we could get have a makeup. So I came early, and I think I was only one of two blacks in that class. And I came in the area where we were supposed to get makeup. And I sat and I sat and I sat, and nobody ever came to me to do the makeup for me. And they did all the white kids, but nobody came to do me or the other black kid. And then after that the play started. And so that really spoiled it for me because that was probably, that experience was probably the first real time, I was acutely aware of being black.

I think if someone had said, you know your skin is brown and, you know, from, from the stage, you know, there's no need we're doing this because, you know, other people are fair. If some rationale had been offered. But no rationale was offered and to be completely ignored that was, that was, um that was not a good feeling and after that I did no more, except singing in the choir at church but I didn't continue. And that was,

I had always, I had some awareness, you know, it's not like I was completely unaware. Texas. My mom's family is from Texas. And I was there every summer with my grandparents. So, obviously, I'm aware of racism, you know, early on being seven, eight years old I recall going to town with my aunt, and she wanted to buy a dress, and she kept holding it up and saying "Oh, what do you think about this one? What do you think about that one?"

And being from Michigan, where, you know, there was at least on the surface integration. I said, "Try it on. Try it on. Why don't you try it on?" And it wasn't until after we had gotten outside and she had purchased the dress she told me she said, "blacks can't try on clothes." And so, so that was my first experience of knowing of realization of what being African American meant. But that one at San Bernardino Valley college of just sitting there and being ignored, that was very hurtful.

My experience at Cal State San Bernardino, there were just two in the psychology department. There were just two of us, Wilma Cochran and myself, were the only two blacks majoring in psychology so we were always in classes together. She went on to become a counselor at San Bernardino Valley College. I worked there for many, many years. And both of us graduated with bachelor's degrees in psychology.

I have one experience in my Experimental Psych class, but it was definitely unique. I had transferred from San Bernardino Valley College, and I still had a couple of courses to take there because there was an overlap between the semester and the quarter and Cal State was on a quarter. So, I was taking the experimental psych at night. And so, I was in the classroom and I was the only black person in the class, and the professor, I'll never forget him, I won't call his name. He looked at me and asked me was an EOP student. And so I said, "EOP, What's that?" And he said, "Well, you're obviously if you don't know what EOP is, you're probably not." "And so you're probably not," and he says, "I just wanted to say that EOP students probably won't do well in this class because this is a very rigorous class, and EOP students won't do well. Well, you know, knowing that I was the only black, I was really determined, because prior to that when I was at Valley College, I had a couple of C's. In psychology I had a lot of A's, but I wasn't I wasn't what you call, I got to get an A, I've got to get an A, you know what I'm saying. I was enjoying the experience. I had a couple of C's, some B's, in Psych I have a lot of A's, but I was really enjoying the experience. But that triggered something in me with my first class. And I thought EOP has something to do with blacks. Well it did two things for me. First I went to find out what EOP was and ended up working there part time as a student. And secondly, I was determined to get an A and he said he only gave two A's. And at the time classes at San Bernardino were very, very small, no more than 20 students sometimes 15 to 20 students. And it was designed that way by the president,

Dr. File. And so, I was determined I was going to get one of those two A's, which I did. I got one of the two.

And years later, after I got my doctorate, I saw him at a conference. He left Cal State San Bernardino, and went to Claremont because I guess he didn't like what was happening at Cal State San Bernardino, too many low life people were coming in. And so I saw him, and I said, Oh Dr so and so. I said, I introduced myself. And I said, "I want you to know that you are the person who inspired me to excel in Psychology and so on to get my doctorate." And he said, "This is all wonderful. I'm so glad to hear that." And I didn't have the heart to tell him it was because of his racism that that was the inspiration. I wish somehow, sometimes, I wished I had because I think he thought... he was an excellent teacher. But he was clearly racist. That was my only experience with that, even though there were few African Americans, I think that's the one that stands out, at least that's the one that I remember, the one that I remember that had an impact. And you know, I'm the kind of person that something like that happens to me, it motivates me, it was in hindsight, it was good thing, because I think I wouldn't have had that determination. After I got one of those two A's, I decided I can do anything. Yeah, I can go as far as I want in Psychology.

Mary Tanouye: That's awesome. So you mentioned you were in the Glee Club for a short time in college, were you in any other social organizations or clubs, not just in college but I guess just throughout your life or were your parents?

M. Jean Peacock: No, I was not one to join. I was not one to join. I was kind of a rebel if you will. My mother was very very very fair. Absolutely beautiful. Kind of a Lena Horne kind of beautiful. And I always wanted to look like her, wanting to be fair. And it wasn't until the black movement in the 60s. You know the black and I'm proud movement that I just became overjoyed with being black and being able to say, I'm black, and just being happy about that. I often say, if I were to die and God say Oh, you've got to go back what nationality would you choose? I'd say I go back black.

Oh, but I had my mom and her, there were 11 of them, so she, there were dark people on our side of the family and fair people, but I saw the advantages that African Americans who were fair had. And in the south, they had this, what's called the blue vein test. The blue vein is, if you could look at your arm. And if you could see the thing in the arm then you were okay, if you will. And so, at that time, all the people in the magazines were fair. If you look at the Cotton Club, the dancers and the people they were always fair. The emphasis was on being as white looking as possible. And then they had even at Spelman College they said they had the Blue Veins, so these sororities and things like that. They were of the lighter skin people. I got so where even when I moved and got more involved, I got where I didn't like clubs and organizations that you have to qualify for either early on because of your, your skin color. But even after that, even after your achievements, whether it be you know like the sororities or things like that. I just shied away from it. If it was not where every and anybody who wanted to join could join, I didn't want to join. So I shied away from that.

And when I got my granddaughter, Ashley, her mom said, Ashley wants to join the sorority and Mom, don't discourage her and I didn't and I'm so glad I didn't discourage her. And she joined and she did exceptionally well, she excelled. You know, her grades, she majored in Computer Science and she had a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. And my other granddaughters did really quite well so I didn't discourage them at all. But for me, I think a lot of it has to do with the time in which I was born and what you would call the Zeitgeist of the time and the emphasis on fair skin. These were the people who were involved. These were the people whose pictures you saw in magazines and the newspaper. And so I just rejected that and that kind of stayed with me all my life, even into a time where I really, you know, didn't have to consider that because things changed, things have changed, especially I'm talking now among African Americans. So, we don't have those, what we call, what we used to call you know field blacks and house blacks, we don't have those distinctions now among ourselves. Others may have it, but we don't seem to have it.

Mary Tanouye: Were you involved in any politics or was your family involved at all?

M. Jean Peacock: Oh, my husband. Growing up, no. My dad when we lived in Michigan. My dad because we have the second largest church in Michigan, the second largest church in Michigan, at that time, in the 40s and 50s. Late 40s and 50s. My father... The largest church when I was growing up was River CL Franklin's church, Aretha Franklin's father. And my dad and Aretha Franklin's father were friends. And my dad attended Bishop College. And he was the first, among many blacks, who attended Bishop college to study Theology. And it just so happened the way we got to Michigan was through what's now known as the Great Migration. As more Blacks, as more African Americans moved north, because of the auto industry. They began to want full time pastors, say like many of the white churches, because prior to that, in the south, ministers say may have worked during the week and they preached on Sunday, and many had not gone to college. So my father was among that first group of black ministers who went to college, graduated, and then they got called to different churches in the north. And so Reverend Franklin was among that group, my dad, and many others of his time. And they were really really very well known. And when G. Mennon Williams, I remember him very well, he was the governor of Michigan. He came to our church, at least twice, in fact I have a picture of my father with Governor Williams at our church in the pulpit. And so, they would come. Politicians would come because my dad at the time was really very well known. And they and I know that they went to Reverend Franklin's church because he was well known as well. And so, my father belonged to the group of ministers who were active. Not in terms of being engaged in politics themselves, but the individuals to whom politicians turned to assist them with whatever endeavor they were taking on.

As for me, I haven't ever been politically inclined. My husband was Walter Hawkins, he ran for the school board, and won and sat on the school board in Rialto for nine years. And as a demographer, he helped many politicians. He would identify areas where they needed to focus where blacks were located. And he helped many individuals with their political aspirations. He wasn't trained as a demographer, but he taught himself. He was

just a brilliant guy. He was trained as a social worker, but he taught himself. He used GIS and other platforms. And he had a business called New Hawk. And he worked with politicians. He passed away in November, but he worked with politicians and he was really very active, especially as a member of the West side Action Group. He was one of the first vice presidents. Amina Carter's husband Ratibu, he was also very active and they were very, very close. Ratibu and my husband were extremely active, especially in promoting Amina and seeing that you know that she was successful in her run for the assembly.

Mary Tanouye: And I guess the last question that we have is, um, what's it been like just living through Covid and the growing BLM movement. What's that been like for you, feelings, thoughts about it?

M. Jean Peacock: Yeah, it's been challenging. I think it would be challenging for almost anyone. Oh it's especially challenging for me since my husband passed away in November. He did not have the virus. But you know initially it was okay. I was fully retired from Cal State San Bernardino in 2018. There's my dogs. Fully, fully retired, and I. Oh, my husband and I were just hunkered down. And we thought you know we can do this. The only thing that I missed was going to lunch with friends. So we were hunkered down and my kids were bringing groceries and helping us, you know, so that we didn't have to go out and so we thought, you know we can do this.

But when my husband got sick. And he was in the hospital two months before he passed away in November. Then it became that part, I was apprehensive and nervous and then he, you know, he transitioned. And so since that time, I'm at the point where it's like, enough already. I did get my first shot. And I'm waiting to get the second. And I, I, I'm just looking forward to spending time with my family. Because my kids, they don't want to come into the house. They don't want others in the house, so I'm here with my two dogs. And they're a lot of company. I have a lot of things to do, but it's enough already. It's, um, I know being a psychologist I'm acutely aware of the importance of staying mentally healthy. So I do the treadmill and try to eat healthy, but that's still, you know, there's still anxiety there.

Mary Tanouye: Yeah, I think things look like they're kind of turning the corner recently so maybe by fall

M. Jean Peacock: For sure hope so, yeah, I sure hope so.

Denise Spencer: I just want to ask one question. When we see all the Black Lives Matter and protests and activism on the part of the young in particular what advice do you have for the younger generation for our future living in a diverse society.

M. Jean Peacock: I think I've tended to be more of a radical over these years. I shared this with a friend recently. We were having this discussion and I was saying that. Working on my doctorate was really difficult. Daily I was dropping out. It was a real challenge. The first two years were probably the most difficult of my life and the last two

years were probably some of the most satisfying. I loved it but that first year was a real challenge. Especially as I learned that I was the first African American to be in the doctoral program at UCR. I found out kind of by accident. What had happened was they were going to take pictures. And the one day they were taking pictures I was ill. And so they took the pictures but they said we have a picture of me. And they were going to have to have a picture off by myself. And I was like why such and emphasis on the picture of me. And then I found out that I was the first African American in the doctoral program. And that weighed on my shoulders. What if I fail. A lot of anxiety in the first year, You know what that doctoral program is like especially when there is all this emphasis on statistics and research and things of that nature.

And this is what I came to. In my minds eye I imagine an ancestor – not anyone in particular – but an ancestor that reached beyond my great grandparents. Not anyone in particular. My grandfather was the son of freed slaves but he was the baby boy. But reached beyond that. Perhaps standing and looking and seeing her children sold, her love her spouse whipped, and and seeing that. And I can see in my minds eye, I see her saying you can do this now. But one day we will rise above this. And counting on those who came after her to do it. And I would say to myself, this ain't nothing. Not compared to what she went through. This ain't nothing. Not compared to seeing my baby take from me and sold. This ain't nothing. And so I see that and I felt that and that propelled me and kept me going. And now I see these young people who realize they are black and that the fight goes on and we can't stop because the racism hasn't stopped. It's still there. They say it's more covert. Well it's covert but its' also overt. I'm inspired by them bringing this to the forefront and not letting it go. I don't like the burning of buildings or attacking people from anybody for any reason. But we've got to, we must continue to fight on for equity for all people. The one thing about the Black movement. The Black movement helped all people of color not just African American. It opened the door to all people in terms of ethnicity in terms of sexual orientation. I'm inspired. It's good to see these young people out with Black lives matter because black lives do matter and we have to continue the fight. I hope than answers your question.

Denise Spencer: Yes it did. Thank you very, very much. Mary?

Mary Tanouye: Well thank you so much for your time today.

End of Interview:

[0:52:26]