

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings

Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive

1-13-2022

Anyta Archer and Kris Maria McCullough

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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

Recommended Citation

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation, "Anyta Archer and Kris Maria McCullough" (2022). *Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings*. 103.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/103>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Anyta Archer, Kris Maria McCullough

Interviewer:

Jennifer Tilton

Interview Date:

Undated

Interview Location:

Remotely via Zoom

Length:

00:48:39

Interview Summary completed by:

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

Description:

Jennifer Tilton interviews Anyta Archer and Kris Maria McCullough, granddaughters of the important figure, Robert Burton. The interview starts with a discussion of the family, particularly how it started in Texas and, eventually, settled in the city of Redlands. The family consists of connections between the Meadows, the Butlers, and the Burtons. Their grandfather, Robert Burton, was an important figure in Redlands who helped the Black population gain access to housing and real estate at a time when it would have been difficult. Their father, who wanted to be an obedient son, continued to work in that same field of work despite his disinterest. Both women have wonderful memories of their grandfather. McCullough then talked about a memory of him telling her not to pick oranges. Archer also talked about her own memory, where during her grandfather's funeral, a group of Hispanic individuals marched in white to pay respect while the family drove. The topics shift multiple times, ranging from domestic duties, family interactions, faith between different denominations from both family sides, and the discussion of Masonry. The discussion of genealogy is particularly discussed the most by McCullough. The woman discusses how she had been able to obtain documents that further helped her search through Ancestry. Both women are asked about more family stories they remembered, such as their father working in the navy shipyards and how the family wanted to help the community through the family store. After discussing butchery and having fresh food, Archer talks about her retiring from nursing and then getting another degree to work in teaching and her side business in website making. The interview ends with a message of education, being oneself, enjoying oneself, and embracing flexibility and change.

Subject Topic:

- The Bridges that Carried Us Over archive of Black history in the Inland Empire
- Genealogy
- Robert Burton
- Family Traveling

- Memories
- Fruit/Orchards
- Funeral
- Bonding
- Learning Lessons
- Manners and Etiquette
- Marriage
- Real Estate/Homeownership
- Faith
- Gender Roles
- Naval Shipyard Migration
- Butchery
- Education

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
The Bay Area	Area in Northern California
Redlands	City in California
Berkely	City in California

Temporal Coverage:

N/A

Key Events:

- Anyta Archer and Kris Maria McCullough, grandchildren of Robert Burton and daughters of James Burton.
- Kris Maria McCullough is another grandchild whose father is also James Burton.
- A lot of history wasn't passed down.
- The family started in Texas but moved to different states, and settled in Redlands.
- Friendship between the Meadows and the Butlers.
- Structured people and family traditions.
- McCullough's memory of the oranges.
- Archer's memory of the funeral and the Hispanic community honoring her grandfather's life.
- McCullough's memory of her grandfather teaching her to fish, thus a lesson on patience.
- Traditions of the clubs of Black women.
- Both sides of the family go to the same church, Baptist and Episcopalians.
- McCullough and how the Ancestry journey has helped to find her past.
- Burton saw and fixed the need for the Black population to have a place to live.
- The connection to Masonry in the family history.
- McCullough and Archer learn about their family after so long with the help of birth and death certificates.
- Childhood memories, like cracking an egg on the hot sidewalk.
- The migration of Black workers to naval shipyards.
- The family wanted to be helpful to others in the community.
- Butchery, raising chickens, and having fresh meat.
- Continuing education and having side businesses.

- Message to the future generations and to be flexible.

Key Organizations:

- Prince Hall Masonic Lodge

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:12:00 - 00:12:38	McCullough's memory of her grandfather teaching her to fish.
Digital Video	00:13:32 - 00:14:57	Archer's memory of the funeral and the marchers in white.
Digital Video	00:23:39 - 00:25:20	What real estate and homeownership mean to the family and taking pride in the family.
Digital Video	00:27:06 - 00:28:05	The women's father's job as a religious DJ, turned to faith when jobs for Black men were not as open.
Digital Video	00:34:04 - 00:35:48	Other memories of the Meadows and the Burton families.
Digital Video	00:41:02 - 00:43:20	The last question was how the women wanted their family legacy to be.
Digital Video	00:44:41 - 00:48:29	The interviewees send messages to the next generation.

Related Materials

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

JENNIFER TILTON: We are here today to do an interview with the granddaughters of Robert Burton, a prominent historical Redlands resident. And we are here online in the world of Zoom to do this interview for the Bridges that Carried Us Over archive of Black history in the Inland Empire. And so today to just start us off, if you could both introduce yourselves. Maybe Anyta can go first. And just tell us your name, how to spell it, and just a little bit about yourself.

ANYTA ARCHER: Okay, so I'm so excited, getting a little emotional obviously. But my name is Anyta Archer. That's A-N-Y-T-A last name Archer A-R-C-H-E-R. And I am the granddaughter. I think [00:01:00] oldest. Yeah, I got to remember which side of the family tree I'm on.

JENNIFER TILTON: Great, and who's your father, Anyta, just so we --

ANYTA ARCHER: So my father was [James?] Burton, B-U-R-T-O-N. James Burton. And my grandfather is who I guess this is regarding. Right?

JENNIFER TILTON: Yeah. Absolutely. Fantastic. All right. [Chris?], do you want to introduce yourself?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Hi, and here I go. My name is [Maria McCullough?]. And I am the granddaughter of Grandpa Burton. My father is James Burton. And I'm excited as well about this thing of my grandfather, his part in history. [00:02:00] Okay?

JENNIFER TILTON: Fantastic, fantastic. So maybe you can tell us. I know you know some family history. I've been as you know interested in your grandfather's story for a while. But I would like to know any stories that came down to you about how your family ended up moving to Redlands and where they came

from before that. So anything that was passed down to you about their family history would be wonderful to share.

ANYTA ARCHER: Oh, wow, we should (inaudible) Ancestry.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: It wasn't passed down, I just found out by doing Ancestry.

JENNIFER TILTON: Great. Well, so what'd you find out?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: A lot.

ANYTA ARCHER: We learned a lot and a lot to retain as a matter of fact, but he came there, oh boy, I wish we knew we were going to --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I have that. I know that. I know. Because through Ancestry we found out [00:03:00] that they started out in Texas where my dad was born, and then they weren't there that long and then they started moving. So my dad was born right at the time of the close of the pandemic. Was a pandemic back then. My father was born in eighteen nine -- no, 1919. So Grandpa was born in 1892. There are some questions about the exact year. I've seen different things. But I'm realizing that they kept traveling. They went from Texas to Arizona and then to Redlands. Because I looked at all the censuses and saw where they were living as that time passed. So they finally settled in Redlands. [00:04:00]

JENNIFER TILTON: Fantastic. I've looked at some of those same census records. Did they tell you anything, any stories about what Redlands was like when they lived there in the early days? Did any stories of their early time in Redlands get passed down to you all?

ANYTA ARCHER: Some of it is from other family members.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Family members, yes.

ANYTA ARCHER: On my mother's side more so than on my father's side. And I think that's because that's where my parents met. My mother and father met. In

Redlands. And so that's where the family history of the two of them uniting came from. Even though we did come -- we relocated to the Bay Area, but every summer when we were kids my father would make this road [00:05:00] trip to southern California and we would spend time with our grandparents, who we're talking about now.

JENNIFER TILTON: I didn't know that your mother was also from Redlands. What's your mother's maiden name? And who was her family?

ANYTA ARCHER: So she is actually from Texas, she was born in Texas. But that family would have been the [Meadows?] family. And you know, I see the excitement in your face. Okay. So you know of some of the connections with the Meadows family.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: The [Butlers?].

ANYTA ARCHER: And I think I talked to you also about [Clarence Butler?]. Because the Butlers and the Meadowses were longtime good friends from childhood.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Still are.

ANYTA ARCHER: In Redlands. And still today our matriarch auntie and Clarence, [Beatrice Washington?], [Beatrice Talbert?], [00:06:00] and Clarence are still good friends today.

JENNIFER TILTON: I talk to Clarence Butler quite often. And have some beautiful photos of a church.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: That's my mom's family. It was so exciting to see my aunts when they were kids, I had never seen that.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah, that was a real emotional visual for me as well at that time, that was a good one.

JENNIFER TILTON: There are lots of them in that picture, that's awesome.

So what did you hear from either side of the family about what Redlands was like back in those early days when they were meeting, your dad and your mom?

ANYTA ARCHER: So that's the thing. Those two families, the Butlers, the Meadowses, were large families in the area at the time. And my father's father had a store. He was in -- [00:07:00] from what I've seen he was in real estate, he also had a store, and that's where my mom and dad actually met, at that store. Through the years, after they got together, like I said, got married, relocated to the Bay Area, then my father would take us to spend summertime with my grandparents. And one of the things that really resonates with me now, even in thinking and preparing for this, is the structure. They seemed to be very structured people. Like --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Regimented.

ANYTA ARCHER: Every meal at the table. We're all sitting there for the breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And then I remember my grandfather watching the news. And that I think is where I learned about Walter Cronkite, who for some of us, I don't know if you know, was pretty [00:08:00] prominent. And it was like oh, that must be a thing to do. And from that I gathered knowledge and information with what was going on in the world because he did that regularly. And then his connection with the church. When Sunday came you didn't have a choice, you went to church, and everybody kind of knew everybody. So good memories as well. Where they lived, with the orchards, and so forth.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes. Yes. So my notes are in my notes where I can't even go to them. I don't know how to toggle over back and forth.

ANYTA ARCHER: Oh boy.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: But like I said, the connection with my mom's family and that family, when I looked at that church picture, I didn't see any of the Burtons. But then I realized that there's [00:09:00] a large age gap between my father and my

mother. So we found plenty of pictures of my dad's family and his siblings Redlands High. They did take a lot of pictures. And then also my mom is in there too. But they weren't in school at the same time because my dad is 11 years older than my mom. So I figure that's why we didn't see those pictures. Those pictures at the church, them not there. I said by that time the Burtons were going off to college. They were adults. While my mom's family were still children.

JENNIFER TILTON: Yeah, that's interesting. Yeah, I wish that Robert Burton was in that picture, but he's not either.

ANYTA ARCHER: Back to your original question of how it was living back in that time, it was -- us coming from the Bay Area, going to Redlands, [00:10:00] when we were young, it was like going to the country. Farming type thing. Because we were city girls. Which made it a lot of fun. Different lifestyle definitely. But it seemed to be very structured. And I appreciate that today. Like I said before. I don't know if that helps you or not or if that's the information that you're looking for but --

JENNIFER TILTON: All the information is good. All the information is good. I thought you could tell me a little bit more about what you mean by it felt country. Did people have gardens? Was there -- and I don't actually know where your grandfather lived in the days you were going to visit. That would be in the '50s, right? Where did he live then?

ANYTA ARCHER: Yes. That would be --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Was at 508 something street. See, I also have that information from death certificates. [00:11:00] I thought about it, I should have pulled those out.

JENNIFER TILTON: You can get me that later.

ANYTA ARCHER: I don't remember exactly address, street, et cetera. But I do remember area. And in the backyard there were blackberry --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: And grapes.

ANYTA ARCHER: Blackberries. Grapes. Those type things that were not as prevalent in the Bay Area. Obviously we had our fruit trees. But not the same. And I do remember the orange.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Orange orchards.

ANYTA ARCHER: Orchards.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Right across the street.

ANYTA ARCHER: Which in my mind I want to say they were like across the street --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: They were.

ANYTA ARCHER: Or not so far. But again I don't have address, et cetera committed to memory. So I don't know if your investigation can help with that.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: One of my -- go ahead.

JENNIFER TILTON: No no. You go ahead. [00:12:00]

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: One of my memories with my grandpa, I love oranges, and it was directly across the street, and it was so fragrant. And my grandpa told me not to go over there and pick those oranges from the orchard, that we have plenty of oranges already in the house. I felt like that lesson I got from that was yield to temptation. Because it smelled so good and I love oranges. And most of my adult life I can't find oranges that taste as good as those did.

JENNIFER TILTON: Absolutely. Now when you were coming to visit he didn't own the store anymore, right? He was sort of retired from that.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yes, he was retired from that, I don't remember him getting up, getting dressed, going out to work type thing, he was always there in the house. I did spend and learned a lot [00:13:00] from my grandmother as in I needed to carry a handkerchief. And etiquette. The proverbial tea party. And certain things a lady

does and does not do. Which brings me back to that structure. It just kind of stays in mind. It comes to mind very often with that. Which was a good thing. There should be more of that in the world today. Because amazing foundation. Then there was a vivid memory of when I came to his funeral. I drove there to his funeral. Which was probably one of the first funerals I had ever attended. Sitting there with my father. And then just kind of following instruction, go here, go there. I remember my father holding my hand pretty tightly. Which [00:14:00] I wasn't used to that. But getting in the car going to the cemetery I remember looking back out of the window. And there were tons I mean of people that were walking along following us dressed in white. And I want to say that had to do with my knowledge and very little experience of that Hispanic culture that it had to do with the way that they honored the dead at the time. And because he was so well known with them. Real vivid memory of so many people walking behind us. Because remember we're in the car. So I imagine he had a lot to do with the community. And I understand he was that kind of person. [00:15:00]

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. So I have memories of my grandpa.

JENNIFER TILTON: Your camera just went off. Can you just turn your camera back on so we can see you again?

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah, your video, I don't see, can you see yourself?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Not yet. I'm looking at my notes. Okay.

JENNIFER TILTON: Oh, I see, that's why, when you switch to your notes we can't see your face, that's why.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. So yeah. I remember. And I don't know if it ever was downtown or what. But I remember like my sister mentioned she spent time with the grandma. Grandpa used to take me. I remember him taking me fishing. I think it was a lake downtown. In my mind I'm thinking that. Don't know for sure.

But I was like, “This is no fun.” Because I didn’t say that to him, but it was like it was taking so long. But now I realize he was teaching me patience. That everything doesn’t [00:16:00] happen fast. And he was teaching me to enjoy something different. For a 10-year-old kid fishing, a girl from the city, that -- but I realize that I learned about patience. Lot of life lessons. And also I felt responsibility. I mean like they let us go to the movies, like I got to go to the movies and see *Flipper’s New Adventure*. The movie theater was downtown Redlands. He would drop me off and pick me up. I asked my sister does she remember. I’m like, “Oh, those are the times that you were probably with Grandma. And he did things with me.”

ANYTA ARCHER: Could be, yeah, could be.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, so we both had good experiences. And definitely like my sister said, eating meals together. Of course my father did that [00:17:00] as well. But I never remembered that coming up at home with my mama. We might have ate meals together but it was just something about the way that the Burtons did it. Grandpa and my father. It was just something about that. Meant something to me. Because you see how families don’t eat together now. Well, maybe yes, a lot of them have since COVID. Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: That’s really interesting. Both that and the tea parties. Because I see references in the 1920s and ’30s to tea parties that ladies in Redlands would host including your grandmother.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I saw that, I read some of those. Yes, they did.

ANYTA ARCHER: Absolutely.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: It said she would have a nice gathering.

JENNIFER TILTON: Yeah, club ladies, right? It’s clearly part of this Black club women tradition that she was deep embedded in. Yeah.

ANYTA ARCHER: Exactly. Yes.

JENNIFER TILTON: Really interesting. Other memories of her? Because we've talked a little bit about her. But any other memories that [00:18:00] help bring her to life a little bit?

ANYTA ARCHER: She seemed to be the one because of the change in weather down there compared to the Bay Area, it was important that we get up early and we do our chores early because in the afternoon --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: It's too hot.

ANYTA ARCHER: It was going to be too hot. Well, the fact that I live in Henderson, Nevada now. Definitely appreciate.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: That helps.

ANYTA ARCHER: A big difference in your geographical location versus your meteorological experiences. Things like that. Like I said vividly I do remember about having to have a handkerchief and always having to have the handkerchief. That girls don't [00:19:00] do certain things. That type. More like I said etiquette and those kinds of things I guess that were normal to get from the grandmother. And that was the grandmother on the father's side. Grandmother on my mother's side, we were in the kitchen. Because she was a professional cook. She cooked. Difference in the two. But like I said very fond memories of that. And the tea and so forth.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, because I look at Mrs. Burton as more high society. She came from Poughkeepsie, New York. So I felt like she was more of a socialite.

ANYTA ARCHER: You're not in the video.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I'm not?

ANYTA ARCHER: Now you are.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Oh, I'm sorry.

JENNIFER TILTON: She was more of a socialite sort of --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes. [00:20:00]

JENNIFER TILTON: And tell me. So what's your mother's name? And your grandmother's name on her side? Just so I know who these people are.

ANYTA ARCHER: Okay. So on my mother's side [Belle Meadows?] was her name. She was married to [Joseph Meadows?]. And so they would have been the other large Black family.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Black family.

ANYTA ARCHER: In Redlands. And then my mother was --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: [Ocalla?].

ANYTA ARCHER: [Candy Young?], she remarried, so she started out as a Burton, and then remarried and became Young. And so what else do you want to know on that side?

JENNIFER TILTON: Yeah. Since the Meadows family was an important family, any memories you have of those grandparents. And any knowledge maybe, Chris, you've pulled together through family tree research about where they came from before they arrived in Redlands too. [00:21:00]

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: They came from Texas, seems like everybody came from Texas. Different parts of Texas. I said, "How ironic." Both parents came from Texas. But I found out why my dad was born in Oklahoma. They say that Mr. Burton went up to Oklahoma for work, and subsequently my daddy was born there. They weren't even there that long before they started moving away. So yeah, I got it straight. I was like, "Okay, so that's why he's born in Oklahoma when they tell me they come from Texas." So because my original grandmother passed not after she had her last child in Redlands, through the census it appeared that they sent the

boys to a grandpa in Texas and the girls to a grandmother in Texas, [00:22:00] his or her family. And it was a few years before Grandpa got [Callie?] and married her, and then I guess the kids got to come back. My father was the oldest so I can imagine that he helped to take care of his siblings at some times. Because he could comb our hair and he could cook.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah, he was pretty good at the household domestic, yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes. Yeah. So yeah. Because of that, because we were trying to trace the years but my daughter helped. And she finally found the grandkids listed with the grandparents in Texas for -- I think it was the 1930 census. Yeah. So yeah.

ANYTA ARCHER: And Callie was our stepgrandmother.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Stepgrandmother, [00:23:00] yeah. She was their stepmother.

ANYTA ARCHER: I never knew -- I never got to know my --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, grandmother. She passed when my dad was seven and my dad is the oldest. She passed after having her last child with Mr. Burton. Not right away I found out.

JENNIFER TILTON: And that was when they already lived in Redlands, right? So they already lived in Redlands but then because he didn't have a wife --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes.

JENNIFER TILTON: They sent the kids back to the grandparents in Texas.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes. Yeah. And then they got to come back.

JENNIFER TILTON: Also during the Depression. Yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: Very interesting. And did you ever learn much about his work as a real estate agent? Did he ever talk about that? Was he still doing that

when he was -- yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Well, when I was a teenager my father told me one time. My father did real estate. And I used to go to his real estate office in Berkeley with him and stuff. And I didn't realize that [00:24:00] I was picking up stuff just from being there and being around the real estate office. He taught me how to read a Thomas maps and all kind of stuff. But what it was surprising, when I read those articles and saw that Grandpa had a housing tract. I knew that he did real estate because my dad did tell me once that he never really wanted to do real estate, he said he did it for his dad because his dad couldn't pass the test. I said, "How obedient of a son you were that you did that for your father." So my dad. And I understand that. My grandpa was born in 1892. Who knows what level of education they had?

ANYTA ARCHER: That's so true.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: But he did have good sense. I remember reading one of the articles where they were impressed by Mr. Burton. He used to work at a store. He worked at the [00:25:00] store in town. And they had nothing but good things to say about him. Said he was going to be okay, that he was going to be a good young man. So I am proud of my dad's family as well as my mom's family. And everybody went to the same church. Which makes it easier.

JENNIFER TILTON: So you all would also go to that church when you would come back and visit.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes, we would.

JENNIFER TILTON: Do you remember anything about those services? About the pastor? About what it was like?

ANYTA ARCHER: Oh. I want to say it was very spirited. Because we are Baptists. And they were I believe Episcopalians if I'm not mistaken. And it was

different than what we were used to. Lot of dancing, lot of singing, speaking [00:26:00] in tongues, those type things. Where the Baptist church that we were raised in in the Bay Area was a little more subtle. Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: That's interesting. Because they were part of the Baptist church in Redlands too. But it just must have been a different kind of Baptist.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah. True. So true.

JENNIFER TILTON: Interesting. Chris, do you have any memories of the church as well?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Not really, because I was the kind of kid that could fall asleep in church. But no. You're right. She's right. I do remember that it was a lot different from our church because ours was like -- to me it was like a show. You sing, you preach, do that. Whereas this was filled with the Holy Spirit. So that was something that I wasn't used to. But I have heard from friends and stuff when I was growing up that different churches do different things. But my dad no matter what, [00:27:00] wherever he went, he would always find a church to go to. My dad, I found out later, later in life, when he passed, that he wanted to be a sport -- he's a disc jockey. He was a religious disc jockey. He wanted to be a sports announcer but that wasn't happening for Blacks back then. So he went to the church. So he ended up being the announcer at the church and he also had a radio station, a show, where he'd play religious things. So it's like he knew that he could always go to the church when he couldn't get a job as a sports announcer. And when those things happen and they change, I always talk up in heaven, and I was like, "Dad, they got women doing it now." Or things like that. So yeah, that church was really like [00:28:00] she said. It was different for us. Was lively. Lively.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I wonder how Redlands, I can't imagine how Redlands looks today, but I kind of want to make a trip down there. My son is a truck driver and one day I tracked, I saw that he was there. And I got so excited. And I did Google Maps of Grandpa's address and different things like that. And this thing I've done with Ancestry has been so interesting. One of the things that I -- the issue I always had was not being able, not knowing much about my -- that past history and stuff. Particularly this is what happened. This is why I started it. Because all of a sudden I had a desire to know more about my dad's original mother. And I started pursuing that. And that's what led me to all this other stuff. But [00:29:00] sometimes I always felt like there was a hole inside of me because I didn't know a lot about my family's history. So since then and doing that Ancestry I feel a lot better. I found my grandma. Found her grave and stuff. And I feel a lot better about knowing where I come from.

JENNIFER TILTON: I think that's really important. Part of the point of this archive is thinking about how do we make these histories more accessible to people. Because it matters in that kind of way. Yeah.

ANYTA ARCHER: So true.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I really like the story about Mr. Burton when he came to town. And he was looking for somewhere to live. And the guy told him something, not here. But the fact that he decided, took it upon himself to have somewhere for Black people to be able to live there. That makes me feel so proud of my grandfather. He saw a need and he filled it. [00:30:00] Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: Absolutely. Yeah. That's part of why I think he's really important. Exactly for that reason. And did your dad ever talk about the importance of homeownership and that kind of idea he got from his dad?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: That puzzled me. What it did was my father did not want

to own property. Yes. I was always -- I'm like, "You're a real estate agent." I have friends. Just a year or two ago a friend from our high school reunion came up to me and was telling me. I didn't really know him. About my dad. So my dad helped Black people to get houses in the Bay Area. And he said how my dad helped his dad for them to be able to buy a house. And I was like, "Wow, I didn't know that." I did know he sold real estate. I couldn't understand [00:31:00] why he didn't want to own property. Besides the -- well, first of all he was single. Him and Mom had been separated for a lot of years. So that might be one of it. And then he explained about the property taxes and about the expenses you have to do. Well, my dad had been a single man for a long time. I think him and my mom left when I was about two. So my dad had been living a single man's lifestyle. I don't think he wanted to have the property and all of that stuff.

ANYTA ARCHER: I think they divorced when I was eight. According to the family memories. I was eight years old when him and my mother divorced.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: They told me I was two. So that math don't work out. [Myrrh?] told me that.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah. That's hard. But those lines get blurred along [00:32:00] the way.

JENNIFER TILTON: What's separated, what's divorced.

ANYTA ARCHER: Right.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I think we were pretty young, what I was told is like we were young. So I can't imagine that you were eight.

ANYTA ARCHER: I was eight. Yeah. Anyway.

JENNIFER TILTON: Really it's wonderful to know that your father carried on this tradition of investing in homeownership for other Black families.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes.

JENNIFER TILTON: That's a lovely detail. And do you know? I know that your grandfather was actually a member of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge in Redlands. Maybe even a founding member. I'm trying to figure that out.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Wow.

JENNIFER TILTON: And when it moved to San Bernardino as well. Have you ever heard anything about the family's involvement in the Masons or anything?

ANYTA ARCHER: No.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: The other family. The other family. My mama's dad. He was a Mason. My mom's dad. [00:33:00]

JENNIFER TILTON: Do you know what lodge he was a part of in San Bernardino? Or do you know anything about it?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I think maybe Redlands or something. I just know that they said that. Because what do they call the women? The something of the -- my grandmother was in the women's part.

ANYTA ARCHER: Well, she wasn't an Eastern Star. I know that. Is that what you're talking about, [Jen?]?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: You talking about [Mimi?]?

ANYTA ARCHER: Yes.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, she wasn't an Eastern Star? But she was something.

ANYTA ARCHER: No, she wasn't an Eastern Star.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Was she something else?

ANYTA ARCHER: I'm not sure about that.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Not sure. But I know they said that her dad was a Mason. Because Myrrh told me about traffic incidences and when you tell them that you're Masons even with the racism back then they seemed to respect the men that

were Masons that were Black.

JENNIFER TILTON: That's an interesting story. [00:34:00] Huh. I don't have a ton of other questions. I just want to know. Are there any other memories or stories that come to mind from either the Meadows family or the Burton family that might help us understand how they were?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Piece it together, huh.

JENNIFER TILTON: Yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, this has been an interesting puzzle for me. Because all I started out with were death certificates and birth certificates. And I'm so glad. Thank God I did this when I did because my father's second wife just passed. And when I was trying to gather these documents you have to pay and do all of that. She had those. She had my grandfather's death certificate. She had my father. So I was able to get that stuff just in time, because she just passed last year, right after her birthday, after Thanksgiving. So thank God that I decided to do this then. And what gets me is [00:35:00] I had intended on doing it way back in 1993 when I finished college as an adult. But I didn't do it at the time. Because I have found cousins and all this stuff. And you have to realize. We're old. A lot of people aren't around anymore. So I'm glad that I did do it when I did. But all of those articles that you sent, those, that weekend I lay in my bed and I just read and read. I read a whole -- I learned a lot of stuff from reading those. I found out stuff I didn't know. And it fills my heart with joy to be able to finally learn more about my family.

ANYTA ARCHER: Very helpful on the family history quest.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes.

JENNIFER TILTON: Any other memories from your visits to Redlands?

Because it sounds [00:36:00] like you did go there often in the summer. Any other

moments that stand out to you? Being in that orchard and the world --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: We did. Playing outside. Trying to crack an egg on the sidewalk to see if it would cook. See, I can't stand heat. That's why I'm not in Henderson with my sister. I need the cooler climate to live. And so it was -- okay, it was hot, but it was just different, because remember, the Bay Area, we're in the city, like she said. That felt like the country to us. Compared to the city life here in the Bay Area. Like my daddy came to the Bay Area. You heard of the great migration of the naval shipyards? My dad was a part of that. He worked at Hunters Point in San Francisco, naval shipyard. He worked at the navy. So I remember that migration because it was like [00:37:00] all of a sudden the Blacks came to work at the shipyards. And my dad, he had experience. He worked with antennas. Those big giant antennas on the ship. My dad used to work on them. The shipyard had a big -- the longest worktable I ever seen as a child. And then I don't know what happened to the pictures. But my dad worked on the antennas. And every once in a while he said he would have to climb up there. I remember seeing a picture of my dad looking like a monkey on top of that big pole out there in the shipyard. He said, "Usually we can fix it in the shop." But he says, "But every once in a while I have to climb up there." Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: I didn't know he came. I guess it makes sense. He came north to the Bay Area that early.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes.

ANYTA ARCHER: I was born in 1950, so --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Right.

ANYTA ARCHER: And that was here. I mean that was [00:38:00] there in the Bay Area.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Right. Yeah. They said he came to the Bay Area to

work at the shipyards as did many Blacks in America.

JENNIFER TILTON: Was that before he was married to your mom? And then he married her back in Redlands? Or --

ANYTA ARCHER: No. That was after.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: After he was married.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah. They were married in southern California and then relocated to the Bay Area. And he started work at the shipyard. By trade. That's what he did.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yes. And then he did --

ANYTA ARCHER: All those other jobs were side jobs. They were not his main job. The real estate, the --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: The radio deejay --

ANYTA ARCHER: Disc jockey. Religious disc jockey and those things were side jobs. He even went. He had some problems with his heart. Rheumatic [00:39:00] heart fever.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Oh yeah.

ANYTA ARCHER: And he had problems with that. And so he couldn't work his regular -- in regular capacity. So he started taking classes at the community college, photography and things like -- various hobbies that he would pick up. Always doing something.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. Like you said those were not his major job. He used to come home from work from the shipyard at 5:00. He would come home. Commute from San Francisco back to Oakland. We lived in the East Bay always. San Francisco rents are very expensive. And he would eat. He would take a shower. He would put on a suit and tie. And he would go to the real estate job. Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: Wow. Do you remember? Was he involved at all in politics?

ANYTA ARCHER: No. But my uncle was. That would be [Reuben Burton?].

[00:40:00]

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Reuben, the teacher.

ANYTA ARCHER: I don't know if you have him on that list. He was a politician.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah, he was a teacher. Yeah, he worked in Sacramento. In the end he did work in Sacramento. He was into education. Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: Fantastic. And where did you grow up? You grew up in Oakland? What part of Oakland?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: North Oakland.

JENNIFER TILTON: North Oakland. Okay, fantastic.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: That's where our church was. North Oakland.

ANYTA ARCHER: Close to Berkeley.

JENNIFER TILTON: Close to Berkeley.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. Close to Berkeley. Yeah. Because I hung out in Berkeley a lot as a teenager.

JENNIFER TILTON: Must have been a more exciting metropolitan space than Redlands was.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: But in the late '60s Berkeley was real exciting to me.

ANYTA ARCHER: In comparison to Redlands yes. Big difference. [00:41:00]

JENNIFER TILTON: Fantastic. Any last things? Maybe my last question is how would you want your family in Redlands remembered. What do you think their legacy is?

ANYTA ARCHER: I think that they were helping. They helped people. That they made it a mission to be helpers regardless. Whether it was from the store, the real

estate, et cetera, that they were --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: The church.

ANYTA ARCHER: -- like a leg up. It seemed that from what I read about Mr. Burton and the little that I know of him that I've heard, even from my mother's family, talking about them, knowing them, et cetera, it seemed like he was always there for the people. That's a good legacy to have.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Yeah. Because my aunt said [00:42:00] he even would give you credit at the store and when you get paid you come in and pay for it.

ANYTA ARCHER: So that was all a part of that helping people.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Helping.

JENNIFER TILTON: That's wonderful. Any other memories or stories you've heard about the store? Or about your parents meeting in the store? Because I think that's an important institution. We have one picture of it.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: You do?

JENNIFER TILTON: We do. I can share it with you. Yeah.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Wow.

ANYTA ARCHER: That would be great. Yeah. To my knowledge that's all I know.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Myrrh has told me. She remembers the store because I guess because she was young. You know how a kid is always going to the store to get a little piece of candy?

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah. And then the grandfather on my mother's side, my mother's father, was a baker. I mean a butcher by trade. And he used to have them take meats and things to --

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: To different families.

ANYTA ARCHER: -- families [00:43:00] in the neighborhood. And I remember my aunt speaking of this here recently. That it was such a big thing to her that every

time they turn around they had to take meat to another family member. But that was something that he did even back then. It was families helping families.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Families. Yeah.

JENNIFER TILTON: Where did he work as a butcher?

ANYTA ARCHER: I don't know the name.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: Slaughterhouse.

ANYTA ARCHER: Of the place. But he was in the slaughterhouse. Yeah, I don't know the name.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: He would not eat no meat that was frozen in the fridge. His food had to be fresh. And I heard they had a truck patch. A little garden. And that he had chickens down by some little body of water. They believed in all their food being fresh.

ANYTA ARCHER: Yeah, they raised chickens because I heard stories of my aunt wringing chicken necks in the yard [00:44:00] and then my mother having to pluck them in order to fry them and yum yum yum.

JENNIFER TILTON: That's great. And I think that that community sharing and taking care of each other is a theme that comes through a lot of the memories that like Clarence Butler has shared and others. So those are some great details.

ANYTA ARCHER: Oh, okay. Good to know.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: COVID has caused people to come back to those ways of thinking. A lot of people are saying, "We have to take care of our own communities."

JENNIFER TILTON: Now we've been mostly talking about your family but you yourselves have lived long lives. One thing we've been asking people in these interviews is what messages you would have thinking back over your life and your relatives' lives. Messages to [00:45:00] the next generation. To young people

today. What lessons do you take from your family history and from your own lives that you would want to share with them?

ANYTA ARCHER: I think it's all a part of that helping, that I worked as a nurse for 25 plus years, as long as my body could stand it. Got bad knees and had to retire from doing that work. But it seemed like a calling according to others. I never looked at it in that way. But that's what I've been told. And as I look back over the years. And then I went out on disability from that taking its toll on my knees and I didn't just stay home. I went back to school. Got another degree. Worked in education, and ended up retiring from a community college in the Bay Area.

[00:46:00] And still find my -- and developed a little job on the side. Kind of reminds me of my dad. Those little hobbies you pick up along the way. Got heavily into technology. And was able to develop a business out of that. Not big business. Small business. But enough. And I still have -- having been retired since 2009, I still today have a couple of clients that rely on me as in developing their website and doing those type things. I find that I automatically put myself in a teaching mode. It just comes naturally. And sometimes I have to stop myself. I don't even know why. Because everyone, as you know, is not receptive to it. You're an educator, Jen, so you know what I'm talking about. But it [00:47:00] just happens so automatic that when I realize it it's like oh, okay, they don't really want to know. But it's my job.

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: That's true.

ANYTA ARCHER: That's one. And I'm sure my family would second that.

JENNIFER TILTON: And Chris, any messages to the next generation that you would leave?

MARIA MCCULLOUGH: I have grandkids and stuff and I'm always trying. The messages are to try to be yourself and enjoy life as you're working towards certain things. And it's okay if you change from what you started going to college from. I

just had a granddaughter that just did that. She's in her second year and her mother, she said we both said the same thing. We said, "You're supposed to do that. You've been there two years. [00:48:00] Now you figured out what you really want to do. So it's okay. Go ahead. Change." And so I would just say to them that life isn't all fun and games. That there's good times, there's bad times. And that you just got to learn to be flexible. And accept what is happening at the time.

JENNIFER TILTON: Fantastic. Well, I want to thank you so much for sharing stories with us today. And we can maybe end it here.

End of Interview:

[00:48:39]