

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

JAMES CALVIN DELEMAR

INTERVIEW 1052

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Mr. James Delemar at his residence at 714 Old Cherry Point Road, James City, North Carolina. The number of the interview is 1052. The date is May 11, 1993.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Delemar, the tape is running and I want to tell you for Fred Latham and myself that we're really happy to be here in your home and it's a pleasure to meet you and your wife. Thank you for letting us come. Let me start this by just asking you first of all your full name.

MR. DELEMAR: James Calvin Delemar.

DR. PATTERSON: I read somewhere that, is it your wife who spells it D E L M A R?

MR. DELEMAR: That was a mistake that someone misinterpreted.

D E L E M A R.

DR. PATTERSON: Where and when were you born, Mr. Delemar?

MR. DELEMAR: Place I was born in 1924 Number 7 Township in an old plantation mansion in the Foy and Perrytown area.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, where is that located?

MR. DELEMAR: About six miles southwest of New Bern across the Brice Creek bridge where now Gerald Anderson has a development in that area. The man that bought this particular plantation was in 1859, his name was Samuel Hill.

DR. PATTERSON: Dill or Hill?

MR. DELEMAR: Hill. H I L L.

DR. PATTERSON: (Now, let me just stop a minute and make sure this is recording. I do this every time in an interview and I started it up again and punched the wrong button. We talked about fifteen minutes worth.)

MR. DELEMAR: (laughter) An eighteen minute tape like Nixon, huh?

DR. PATTERSON: Now here we go. We're on the air again. Were you born at home, then, in your house?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes, I was born at home. We didn't have any hospitals at that time.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you have a doctor?

MR. DELEMAR: No, midwife.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were your parents?

MR. DELEMAR: Mr. and Mrs. Octavia Delemar. My mother is named Mary Hill Delemar. Mary Etta Hill Delemar.

DR. PATTERSON: And your father?

MR. DELEMAR: Octavia Delemar. O C T A V I A. He was the son of Alexander Delemar.

DR. PATTERSON: I was gonna ask you about Alexander, but before we get to Alexander, let me ask you about your status on that plantation. Was your family working there?

MR. DELEMAR: That's very important and I want the people to know this. Several time the newspaper had carried it. On this particular plantation that Samuel Hill bought in 1859, just a few years before the war started, I had a great, great, grandmother, my great, great, grandmother named Jeanne Hill. She was a Simmons. Oscar Simmons was

her father in Jones County near Trenton. Samuel Hill bought her as a young lady and brought her on this plantation, the plantation that they had in Jones County and that was his mistress. So he was my great-great grandfather. Jeanne Hill, or Jeanne Simmons Hill, was my great-great grandmother born in 1812. He had two boys by my great-great grandmother; Richard and Christopher. I come under the other twin, Richard, cause he had a son named Richard Hill, and then this Richard Hill had a daughter named Mary Etta Hill Delemar. There is Delemar, James C. Delemar that brings me into the scene.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, your father was a free man, when you were born of course.

MR. DELEMAR: My father?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: He was working on the plantation as an employee?

MR. DELEMAR: No. My father was born 1896.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: So this was after the plantation there. He met my mother. My father met my mother. My mother still stayed on the plantation, so that Jeanne Hill and her children still stayed on the plantation until 1930. We occupied that plantation there for fifty-nine years.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you own your land?

MR. DELEMAR: Nope. My grandfather bought, Richard, bought some land out in that area, about five acres out there in 1930.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask this question, which may be irrelevant. Oscar Simmons was from Jones County.

MR. DELEMAR: Jones County.

DR. PATTERSON: I wonder if he was a slave on the Simmons Plantation.

MR. DELEMAR: No doubt about it. They had a big plantation over in that area, the Simmons over there. And matter of fact, from Trenton to Pollocksville, Simmons owned that, and then on the other side going toward Kinston.

DR. PATTERSON: They are my people.

MR. DELEMAR: Simmons are your people?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. F. M. Simmons is my grandfather. I've been down to that old plantation area many times. I've wondered about a lot of African-Americans named Simmons, if they didn't come from that plantation.

MR. DELEMAR: Okay, now, most of the Simmons that came to James City did come from Jones County including my great-great grandmother Jeanne Simmons Hill came from Jones County there near Trenton. So that put most of the Simmons, they're either relatives or they was on the plantation which they inherit the last name. They always kept for first name John Simmons. Like Nat Turner, a Roberson supposedly have owned him and he was a Nathaniel Roberson. So when Turner bought him, which is more famous, Nathaniel Turner. But we always kept the first name, and as we be sold or whatever then we'd get the last name of the slave-master.

DR. PATTERSON: This is a good time to ask you about your grandfather Alexander Delemar. He is a well-known man in his own field. Would you tell me about him? He was a slave.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. He was born 1858. My grandfather, Alexander, was born in 1858 in the city of New Bern and his mother was named Eliza Hill. His father was named Caesar Delemar. Also in 1870, he was going to school here in James City under the ladies from the North. He was going to the school here in James City right where Ramada Inn, just about 500 foot southwest of there, that's where that school was there, exactly where the school was at right there. In the old part of James City over there. He went to school there. Hoarse James, the superintendent there, the chaplain, he was a Captain, he got this corporal out of that band from Massachusetts, the Army band, to teach music at James City to the school over there when he was a boy twelve years old. I have that census, 1870 census, twelve, he was a school kid. I've got all of James City 1870 census and 1880 census. I got it. That's how I found out where he got his musical genius from, from this corporal. I got the corporal's name in other documents. Like I said, if I would get that stuff out it would take me a week to put it back. It sits some on this shelf. Most this material going to the New Bern Public Library.

DR. PATTERSON: That's correct. It's gonna be put in the New Bern Public Library.

MR. DELEMAR: I'm talking about my personal material. My personal material that I've chosen.

DR. PATTERSON: Oh, you are gonna give it to the library?

MR. DELEMAR: Right.

DR. PATTERSON: This is gonna be right there also.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh, well, okay. Well, I'll back it up.

DR. PATTERSON: That's fine. Well, Mr. Delemar, your grandfather, Alexander, had a band.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Tell me about that band.

MR. DELEMAR: He had a great band. The last one that was in his band died several years ago named Austin Brown. He played trombone. But he traded none of them in. He could walk outside and tell you when you hit the wrong note. See, I'm a jazz trumpeter myself, but I didn't copy after him. I still have my trumpet right here now and I practice right there in that room. There was a piano in there. I had all that stuff in there.

DR. PATTERSON: Did he play the trombone too?

MR. DELEMAR: Played everything.

DR. PATTERSON: And he had a number of people in his band.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: They played for dances?

MR. DELEMAR: No, they didn't play for dances. They played mostly hymns and marches and such alike. He was a very religious man. He wouldn't play no jazz, like me.

DR. PATTERSON: He played for funerals.

MR. DELEMAR: Funerals, oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Like down in New Orleans.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. Well, they done that here with two bands. When he died, one brought in from out of Columbia Town like where Mack Bennett stay up there. Marched them up there to the cross where the old part of James City up there near the Ramada right up there, the railroad track crosses up there, that old part of old James City up there, and marched them there to Jones Chapel, oh yeah, Jones Chapel AME Zion, where that other band met him right at the crossroad there and then they come right on out. Marched over there, the funeral procession. Marching!

DR. PATTERSON: So you probably got your musical talent from your grandfather then.

MR. DELEMAR: I wouldn't dispute that, but I went on my own.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Delemar, did you grow up and spend most of your younger days out there where you were born?

MR. DELEMAR: No. See, my father moved from off that old plantation when I was six months old, so I guess it was in 1924. But my grandfather was still on there. My folks was still on there. I just loved those wide open spaces and I kept going back there. Matter of fact, it was home to me because I was raised up out there. I'd rather go back to my grandfather up until I got eighteen years old in high school.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you move to from out there?

MR. DELEMAR: We moved in the old part of James City where they got that artificial lake at. Over there in James City with the brick fence around. Over there in the old part of James City. You know

where the old mills used to be right over there?

DR. PATTERSON: I'm not sure I know that place.

MR. DELEMAR: They have a development over there now. They built a brick wall around there.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Yes! Oh yes!! Yes! I know what you're talking about. Right at the foot of the bridge.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. That compound, that's where I was raised up back there from then on. We did a lot of swimming there in the Trent River and also the Neuse River there.

DR. PATTERSON: What was your home like on the plantation? I know you left when you were six months old, but you went back a lot. You had a house of your own.

MR. DELEMAR: No. That old plantation house was still there. We stayed in the old plantation house.

DR. PATTERSON: You stayed in the plantation house.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. Right. When we moved out in 1930, it was still there. When Hanes bought it...

DR. PATTERSON: Newton Hanes.

MR. DELEMAR: Newton Hanes, when he bought it there it was still there. The old plantation house was still there. And that gin house is still there. The old gin house is still there. They are using a stable out of that. It's still there today.

DR. PATTERSON: Did Newton tear it down, did they tear the house down?

MR. DELEMAR: The old plantation house?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: I don't know what happened to it. I was in, no, I wasn't in service. But I come back from service then in '46 and it was still there. But I tell you, it either rotted down or maybe caught fire and burned. I don't exactly know.

DR. PATTERSON: But you grew up where this new development is at the foot of the bridge.

MR. DELEMAR: Right.

DR. PATTERSON: What was life like there?

MR. DELEMAR: Wonderful. Wide open, plenty of leisure time, fishing. We could go down in the backyard and catch a rabbit. And everybody was together there. Sort of cohesive people. We had to do that for survival.

DR. PATTERSON: Were there many families there?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes! Many families! Yeah. Up until 1960.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, is that the location of Hayti?

MR. DELEMAR: That is Hayti.

DR. PATTERSON: Now for the purpose of the tape, that's spelled
H A Y T I.

MR. DELEMAR: Right.

DR. PATTERSON: And that was the name that was given to the Trent River settlement for blacks during the Civil War.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. Right. Right. And they associate that with Hayti, sort of like misspell or whatever. They associate that as a black republic; which Hayti was, you know, during the 1805's.

DR. PATTERSON: It was located right there at the foot of the bridge then.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. Anytime you crossed that Trent River bridge up there where Ramada Inn, or whatever there, it was all that there between Scott's Creek and the Trent River and Neuse River. That's what is was bound about. And also what we call the Kinburial Hill, which was a big gate there, that's how you got in, especially during the time of the battle for New Bern. They call that the Kinburial Hill. That's why, it was just a local name, Kinburial Hill.

DR. PATTERSON: When you were growing up in this area called Hayti, you could swim right there in the Trent River.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah!

DR. PATTERSON: And go out on boats?

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah!

DR. PATTERSON: What else did you do?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, you speaking about on the river? Trent?

DR. PATTERSON: Well, in that area. What did you do for fun growing up?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, we would play baseball just like anyone else then. We had a basketball court and so forth like that. But it was collective way of doing things. No one person had a basketball court.

We had a sand lot that we would keep cleaned off for a basketball court and even a baseball diamond. We had all that stuff. But most of our living came from the river and our gardens, and also there was two mills there. The Mills and Cambel Mill, it was out there on the

creek, Scott's Creek. Out there where those barges is at out there with tugboat. That was Mills and Cambel Mill there. Then further down was called Munger and Bennett. Then there was Sanders Mill and Slater's Mill. Most with the lumber mill. And the people from James City furnished the labor, and also from New Bern and surrounding metropolis.

DR. PATTERSON: They lived right on the waterfront then? They didn't go in front of the area where you lived, did they?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes, in the Trent River. But that didn't make any difference. They'll be still living in that compound and we swam in those river and we tied our boats up. That was part of our food and resources, so they didn't try to stop us from either fishing or swimming in there.

DR. PATTERSON: James Gavin's father lost a foot.

MR. DELEMAR: Right, right, right. His grandfather.

DR. PATTERSON: His grandfather. Was the fishing pretty good?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes! An abundant amount of fish.

DR. PATTERSON: What did you catch?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, now, in the Trent River we caught fresh water fish. Even pikes was in there; and robins, what we call robbing the sunfish; goggle eyes; the crappies; and the catfish; eels. Occasionally, you know the water would get a little brackish, not much rain, catch a spot up in there. Plenty of blue crabs. And now in the Neuse River you can catch croakers, spot, trout, puppydrum, most anything that they salt water fish. Blues and all that, we'd catch

that right out here in the Neuse River.

DR. PATTERSON: Shad?

MR. DELEMAR: Shad too, right, right. Shad too. During that time, we didn't catch any striped bass. It was up around Chowan County, up in that area.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go to school?

MR. DELEMAR: I went to school to the James City School. We used to call it James City Training School.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was that located?

MR. DELEMAR: Our assembly right across the street from here right down on Highway 70 East. That's where it was located right there.

We matched, the people in James City and surrounding area, matched the Julius Rosenwall Fund and built that school and then we moved in there. Now, before then, this was a public school I'm talking about.

But now, we had a Christian school, what they call Christian school then, but we didn't. The New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association bought four acres of property in 1894 from Jesse Brooks.

Jesse Brooks was a black county commissioner here in Craven County. He was from Number 7 Township. And incidentally, he had around 3,000 acres of property. He owned most of this property over in this area, because he was a commissioner. You know how that's done, you know.

But anyway, we had a school named the Eastern Baptist Institute and we own that property today. That was in 1894, with 32 churches.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, you went to the public school.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes, I went to the public school.

DR. PATTERSON: Were your teachers mostly black teachers?

MR. DELEMAR: Black teachers.

DR. PATTERSON: From the James City area?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, we employed them from all over the state; like Professor Cheek came there. He came from Durham, Nathaniel Cheek. He died about four years ago. I called him up in 1982, '83, or something like that, in Durham, called him up and talked to him there. He went over into the new school that was built with the Julius Rosenwall Fund and with our funds also, matching funds. Now getting back to this Eastern Baptist Institute, which is called the New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association. As of today, we got thirty-two churches. I'm a trustee of that association now and I'm also secretary for those trustees for those thirty-two churches. We banks money and put it in there. We don't take any out there.

DR. PATTERSON: How many grades were in this public school?

MR. DELEMAR: Went up to the seventh grade, and then we'd go to New Bern West Street High School in New Bern during my time.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you, is that school still standing?

MR. DELEMAR: No, that school is not standing now, but it been a replacement that was put up there during the fifties and it's still there now. But the old school was built by the Julius Rosenwall Fund was torn down to make room for this particular one that is there down. But now blacks bought that there now. The Holiness Church bought that place now.

DR. PATTERSON: When you went to West Street School, did you walk?

MR. DELEMAR: No. During my time we had a bus and we caught the bus from James City School to West Street High School. That one bus had to come from Brice's Creek area in Columbia and go on down Riverdale and pick up the children and bring them back from there in time enough to go to West Street High School in New Bern for class.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you have good teachers over here in the school?

MR. DELEMAR: Excellent! Excellent!

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember their names?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes! Everyone of them. I'll start from the primary. We call it primer. Shirley Elliott Coverton; Nannie Holly Martin; Rebecca Elliott Davis; Mrs. Emma Moyer; Pearlie B. Hawkins, she died last year at old age.

MRS. DELEMAR: And Mrs. Davis is still living.

MR. DELEMAR: And Mrs. Davis is still living. She's still living, my elementary teacher, third grade.

MRS. DELEMAR: And another one of the teachers is still living.

MR. DELEMAR: Come on up here, honey.

DR. PATTERSON: This is Mrs. Delemar. She's gonna be joining us some too.

MRS. DELEMAR: I don't know too much about this.

MR. DELEMAR: Come on over here, honey. Come over here to the microphone. Come on over here.

DR. PATTERSON: You just go ahead. You were naming the teachers.

MR. DELEMAR: I got down to Pearlie B. Hawkins.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. DELEMAR: Mrs. Davis.

MR. DELEMAR: And I had also named Mrs. Davis. R. E. Davis, Rebecca Elliott Davis.

MRS. DELEMAR: Mrs. Williams.

MR. DELEMAR: Mrs. Williams. Emma Williams. She was a Moye, when she was down there before us, M O Y E. But, now, when you know her she was a Williams. And Mrs. Bulware.

DR. PATTERSON: Who is that?

MR. DELEMAR: Bulware. B U L W A R E, she was there about three years. Mrs. Clara D. Mann. That was Dr. Mann's wife. She was there. You remember her?

DR. PATTERSON: Now, is this at West Street?

MR. DELEMAR: I'm still in James City. Professor W. W. Ryder, great man. Our Principal, Mr. Marshall. Who else? Mrs. Hill. Dr. Hill's wife. What was her name? Elvira Hill. Her husband was a pharmacist there in New Bern. And Mr. Rivers.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. O. T. Faison worked with Mr. Hill, didn't he?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, yes, but that not considered James City.

DR. PATTERSON: Excuse me. Mr. Rivers.

MR. DELEMAR: Mr. Rivers was principal over there at one time. And another Hawkins was principal at one time over there too. So to my memory about 12, 15 teachers was over there during my reign over there.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, did you graduate from West Street High School?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: What year did you graduate?

MR. DELEMAR: '43.

DR. PATTERSON: During that time, as I recall, there were some great football teams out there.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. There was great football team, and we had some great boys could have made it in the majors. Oh yeah, quite a few of them.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you play athletics?

MR. DELEMAR: No, no, no. I played softball.

DR. PATTERSON: What was your career like at West Street High School?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, my career was good. I got my lesson out and I abide by the rules and regulation and I learned, and I learned how to learn. That was the most important thing in my life is learning and learn how to learn. And I can learn most anything. I learn how to swim good, be a good carpenter, good speaker, a good entertainer.

Not only see vaudeville entertainer like you see on HBO and stuff like that, but entertain like I'm entertaining you. I learned all that there. As a matter of fact, I got it from my grandmother, Anna, Alexander's wife, and my mother, Mary Etta Hill Delemar, and many other people that I know that was in my church, Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church here in James City, I was trained well by those older people.

They saw something in me I didn't know at that time when I was a boy.

They would put me at the head of this and put me the head of that

and so forth like that, and I didn't realize it and I was grumbling. They 'bout to work me to death. But it was something that they saw in me that they was trying to bring out and thank God it did come out. I'm an old man, that's when I found out. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Well, it sounds like West Street School was a great place to be going to school.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Your teachers cared about you?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes!

MRS. DELEMAR: Oh yeah!!

MR. DELEMAR: Ohhhhh yes!

MRS. DELEMAR: We had fine teachers at that time!! Mrs. A. D. Smith; Mrs. B. S. Rivers; Professor Barber was the principal of West Street High; and later years Mr. Danyus took over being principal. But we had fine teachers. And Miss Styon. And they saw that you learned! You didn't mess around in school like the children do today.

DR. PATTERSON: They cared for you.

MRS. DELEMAR: Yes, they did! 'Cause you had to stay in after school if you didn't get your lesson.

MR. DELEMAR: That's right. You better believe it!

DR. PATTERSON: Did they stay in touch with your parents?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah!!

MRS. DELEMAR: Oh yes! We had meetings and our parents would come out and we would have functions and they would be in on the functions, like different activities we would have. And it was a great

time during that time in school! We had plays. We just expedite what we knew in doing different things, like activities.

DR. PATTERSON: It was a fun time.

MRS. DELEMAR: Uh huh. And plays in school. Now they don't even have nothing like that. And you had to learn!

MR. DELEMAR: Miss Fisher.

MRS. DELEMAR: And Miss Carrie Fisher, she was a great Home Economics teacher. She taught boys and girls, and the girls were no more important than the boys. They learned how to take care of the home and cook and everything just like the girls.

MR. DELEMAR: Was she strict in your appearance?

MRS. DELEMAR: Yes, she was! You had to come there clean. And she would teach you and teach you well. And when you come out of there, you was fit for anybody's house.

DR. PATTERSON: From what I have learned talking to people like you, there was a great pride in being an African-American?

MRS. DELEMAR: Uh huh.

MR. DELEMAR: Yes! Yes!!

MRS. DELEMAR: We often reminisce now about the teachers, all those old teachers. Most of them are gone on, but we still talk about them.

DR. PATTERSON: There was a sense of union?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

MRS. DELEMAR: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: Collective. All teachers. And they'd see to it

even they would come to that house. And also our ministers, our preachers, they took pride in the children there. They would come to the house to see that that child got the proper care and the proper lecturing and whatever scolding or whatever and that child had to sit there and take it there. And once they finished that there, they knew how to get that there and it was good! Boy, that was good! And that's in me today!

DR. PATTERSON: It sounds like it was good. Let me take you on a little beyond that. What happened to you after West Street School?

MR. DELEMAR: I got married. We got married there and we went to Virginia.

DR. PATTERSON: What year was this?

MRS. DELEMAR: '42.

MR. DELEMAR: '42. We got married in '42, but I still graduated in '43.

DR. PATTERSON: So you've had your 50th anniversary then?

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah, right. Now, watch us here now. It's a little catch in there, but we still correspond there and I still graduate. You know what I'm talking about now? You understand me now?

DR. PATTERSON: I'm not sure I do.

MR. DELEMAR: I still graduate there in '43, but I got married in '42.

DR. PATTERSON: Okay.

MR. DELEMAR: Now, some people gonna say, how you getting there? I just want to clarify this. Many kids today, they get married and

go back to school later. What they got the GE, and not only that, they got a lot of things. You know what I mean?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: So we'll just skip about that.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you all in the same class?

MRS. DELEMAR: No, no.

MR. DELEMAR: I was ahead of her.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go then after you left West Street High School?

MR. DELEMAR: Went to Virginia. I went to work up in Suffolk, Virginia. Went to work for the Norfolk Navy Yard. From there, I stayed up there and went in World War II in 1944. I went and trained in Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

DR. PATTERSON: In the Army?

MR. DELEMAR: In the Army, right out of Harrisburg. Then from there I went to California, and from California I went to New Guinea, and New Guinea to Leyte and Luzon, and also occupation in Japan, and I came home in '46 of February. I finished my career. After that there I start to working at Cherry Point down there.

DR. PATTERSON: Before we leave that particular period, let me just say that you have two allies in here who were in the Pacific also.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah?!

DR. PATTERSON: Fred was in on many Marine landings out in the Pacific with the Marine Corps, and I was on Okinawa and I was in Korea. So we banded together.

MR. DELEMAR: So we're bedfellow, huh? (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, that's right.

FRED LATHAM: I worked at Cherry Point also.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh, you did? Now, I was in New Guinea and Leyte around, and then also in Luzon up the Lingayen Gulf and then I went over in the Tokyo Bay in occupation in '45, and left in February in '46 and I was back home in February. I learned how to speak Japanese too.

DR. PATTERSON: (laughter) Well, don't speak it to me.

MRS. DELEMAR: (laughter) 'Cause you wouldn't know what he was saying, would you?

DR. PATTERSON: When you came back, you went to work at Cherry Point.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah. The colleges was overran with pretty near eight million people. We had sixteen million in all services during that time. Sixteen million women and men in armed forces. The colleges were run over, so there was no room. I had a wife, and I had to support her and the kids, you know. I had to support those, so I couldn't go to college. So I went to the GI school down there to Cherry Point what you call "On the Job Training." I finished the four years on that, there. It was fifty-one. I have a picture of my graduation. And my curriculum was the same thing. Our instructor was from East Carolina University.

DR. PATTERSON: What area were you in? What did you do?

MR. DELEMAR: Mason, brick or stone.

DR. PATTERSON: Then you worked at Cherry Point for a while?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes, worked down there for twenty-three years. Then I retired. I got hurt. The same foot that's bothering me now today, I got hurt down there.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you doing masonry work all that time?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes, I was doing masonry work.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you ever drive a bus and take people down to Cherry Point?

MR. DELEMAR: No.

DR. PATTERSON: That's someone else I'm thinking about.

MR. DELEMAR: That's Floyd Hill, my second cousin.

DR. PATTERSON: You stopped work then about what year?

MR. DELEMAR: In 1970.

DR. PATTERSON: And what happened to you after that?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, I began to contract some. I done some building down there to the river. Did you go down there to the river where I got those houses at?

DR. PATTERSON: I haven't seen them, no.

MR. DELEMAR: Fort Spinola. Civil War fort built by General John Branch. He built that fort down there.

DR. PATTERSON: S P I N O L I?

MR. DELEMAR: No. S P I N O L A.

DR. PATTERSON: And that was a Civil War fort and you built houses on that site?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah! I built four brick houses down there.

Rentals, you know, for low income people.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Are you still building houses?

MR. DELEMAR: No, I quit that. I'm turning all that over to my grandson, Bernard Fisher.

DR. PATTERSON: How many children do you all have?

MR. DELEMAR: Four. Three boys and one girl.

DR. PATTERSON: Are they all still around this area?

MR. DELEMAR: No. The two boys is in New York. Two boys in New York, one boy is in Durham, and my daughter, she's stay at the Rocky Run area near River Bend Deerfield area.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, we've gotten you here sitting on that sofa now. We've come that far and that's pretty good. How do you think we ought to talk about the history of James City? You know so much about this area. How would you like to tell us about the history of this area?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, some of it, though, we already said about the Eastern Baptist Institute. We had a school. So, self help, that was James City, and also the Julius Rosenwall Fund, we matched it. We matched that fund. We had a collective form of way of doing things.

DR. PATTERSON: And the whole community worked together.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Delemar, when the community, the Trent River Settlement was established and was called Hayti at the foot of the bridge and this area folded, where was the movement from there to form James City? Did the Hayti area adjoin what is now James City?

MR. DELEMAR: We moved here in 1863 and there we stayed on Bryan property.

DR. PATTERSON: This is the ex-slaves.

MR. DELEMAR: Ex-slave, right. On the Bryan property. It really didn't belong to us. This is very important. It didn't belong to us. It was just a temporary thing during wartime that these things would happen. Not only here, in Japan. We didn't keep Japan, we turned it back over to the people. Same thing happened to James City. We turned it back to the original owner. The original owner was Peter G. Evans. Peter G. Evans, he sold to James A. Bryan. He was a county commissioner also, politician.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, he is the ancestor also of Jimmy Bryan who just died recently in New Bern, is that correct? Had the Bryan wholesale beer place out here.

MR. DELEMAR: I don't know.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm not sure about it either.

MR. DELEMAR: But Henry Ravenscroft Bryan was his brother. James H. Bryan was his daddy. His name was James A. Bryan.

DR. PATTERSON: So, Mr. Bryan got his property back.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. He wanted to get us off of that old piece that he owned that he bought from Peter G. Evans and he tried to sell it to somebody from the North up there. He tried to sell the whole place.

DR. PATTERSON: This is the Hayti Settlement he was trying to sell.

MR. DELEMAR: Right, right, right, the Hayti Settlement, he was trying to sell there. But since we had been there so long, and he started this in 1880, this court proceeding, and we fought it up until 1893, and when the State Supreme Court says that we could stay on there but we had to pay rent, that they couldn't get us off of it. And that's what we done from 1893 up until 1960, we stayed there. No one ran us out of there! I want that to be known. And I repeat that again.

No one ran us out of that old part of James City! We moved because you couldn't own the land. It would have been very stupid for anybody to stay there if say today they put a \$125,000 house up there and don't own the land! So I think the people much smarter than some of them to run around here saying, "We want that land back." We can't never own it. We never did have it to get it back. And I say that's very important to get that straight. We didn't own that land. So what we done, we bought land over here in Graysville. I want to show you a strange thing that happened. I said in 1893 that the State Supreme Court said that we couldn't own the land but we could stay there and rent it. So we preferred to own land. This is what our goal was to own land that we staded. In Brownsville, I want you to listen, Brownsville, Graysville, and Meadowsville, they sprang up in 1893.

Ralph Gray, who's E. J. and J. A. Meadows' grandfather, made Graysville. He bought this property from Jesse Brooks, the black county commissioner, then he made Graysville. That's why Graysville named after Ralph Gray - Graysville. And had a Graysville farm back further over there. That was called Graysville Farm, neat little subdivision.

And E. J. and J. A. Meadows became the owners of the Meadows and Company for like that. Incidentally, Ralph Gray also had a pulp mill right down where those barges is at right now. There was a pulp mill right there where they made paper plates there. That was a pulp mill.

So, Weyerhauser wasn't the first pulp mill here. It was not. I done got ahead of myself now. (laughter)

MRS. DELEMAR: Talking about the mill, about Graysville.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah. Graysville there. So we had abundant amount of work that we could do. We moved over here. The subdivision start popping up. Because they knew, they knew that these people from James City in the old rented part is gonna move and buy land, so that's why these subdivisions sprouted up. In 1894, Henry Ravenscroft Bryan and his wife, Mary Norcott Bryan, had their plantation, which they got also in 1859. They made that out a subdivision, in ten acres plots and twenty acre plots there. Many blacks bought from them. I got part of that now. Called the Clermont Plantation. I have a part, two acres of that right now. It's called the Clermont Plantation over there. Right next to the airport over there, which is mine. But in 1894, that's when they start selling that land over there because they knew that the people gonna move after that decision where the State Supreme Court says you can't own the land but you can stay there and rent, but you can't own the land. So they knew, so they were ready.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, what year was it that folks really left that Hayti area and came into these subdivisions?

MR. DELEMAR: It was a gradual meltdown thing.

DR. PATTERSON: When was it finished?

MR. DELEMAR: 1960.

MRS. DELEMAR: They didn't all leave at one time. Gradually.

DR. PATTERSON: But James City had been growing all during that time.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah. That's when the people start to leaving after the Supreme Court made that decision in 1893. Then they begins, "Well, I don't want to stay here." Naturally I wouldn't have neither. But many people hung on because they didn't have enough money to buy land in other places. So it wasn't until 1945 there that my mother was able to buy some land over here in Graysville. We were staying over there too. I moved from over there in '46 here, 1946 over here. So again I'm saying, I'm putting this message out. They did not run us off of there. We moved off of it and for a good reason - we couldn't own the land.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't blame you one bit. Now, has James City progressed pretty well since that time?

MR. DELEMAR: No.

DR. PATTERSON: What's been the trouble?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, the trouble is laziness and empty-headed, lazy-minded and empty-headed. Now I'm not bragging on myself, but I've done something about what I could do and I tried collectively to do things. I didn't fail, but the ones that I want to do collective things, they failed me. For instance, down there where the old Fort Spinola, you'd be surprised that I wanted to make a laundry down there

where blacks could own the laundry. I go to the white owned laundry and I see black people back there in the back working, gathering up the clothes, but who is at the cash register, is the white people.

White girls, white boys, white folks. Some black back there. I'm not anti-white because you're here now. I never was and I never will be. I'm not like that. I said, well, why can't blacks have that thing?

So I talked to my first cousin, I'm not calling any names, and my brother-in-law, and they said, "Yeah, let's buy it then do we have a mind to." I saw myself getting this particular land that we pooled our resources together to have a laundry where we could hire black people, white people there, and get white trade, black trade. Whatever trade it is, didn't make any difference there, but blacks can own it.

This is what I'm saying, lazy-minded, empty-headed there, then that was it. But I went and bought the land anyway. It took me three years to pay for it. Five hundred dollars down there to pay for that there. A \$125 a lot.

DR. PATTERSON: Are you saying that the community since 1960 just hasn't been pulling together very well?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh, they got church and that's the only time, on Sunday morning, but after that, no. But you got to live Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

DR. PATTERSON: So Sunday's a good day and the rest are not so good.

MR. DELEMAR: That's right. If you could show me something that day that is going on. Now during my time when I was a younger man,

I had the boys. I was manager for the Little League. Each year they would come up there for about 12, 14 years, something like that. My boys, and they from then on near twelve years after that there, I was their manager. And I saw to it that they was in a league, that they played. Not only in James City, but they played in the Craven County Recreation. By the way, I was Craven County Recreation, one of the commissioners. Then, we gave them a lot of things to do. We went off on a trips. My wife done a lot of cooking for them then. We had little cook-outs right in the backyard there. But, we the only ones that ever done it. No one else since has done that. So why have progress? We got old now. DR. PATTERSON: Are there a lot of white people in James City?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, the old original James City, no. Now we do have some, but they're married to or either are blacks, or whatever section they are, the American blacks. But that's just no more than about four or three something like that. No more than three.

DR. PATTERSON: So it's a black community still?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes! Oh yes. Predominantly black.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Mr. Delemar, I read about you in the paper a lot. That's another reason I'm so glad to meet you. But the business about the cemeteries has been an issue that's been in the public eye for a long time, the old cemeteries, the slave cemeteries. Would you speak to that and what the problem has been?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, I would like to ask a question. See, the Clermont Plantation, Richard Dobbs Speight owned that plantation one

time. You know that, don't you?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: All right. The Clermont Plantation. Do slaves be born like anyone else?

DR. PATTERSON: Like anyone else.

MR. DELEMAR: Do they die like anyone else?

DR. PATTERSON: Just the same.

MR. DELEMAR: Do they bury them like anyone else?

DR. PATTERSON: Should.

MR. DELEMAR: You just don't leave them on the ground, do you?

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. DELEMAR: You don't bury them in around here all over the plantation, do you?

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. DELEMAR: So you have a specific place to bury your slave, don't you?

DR. PATTERSON: Sure.

MR. DELEMAR: Ain't that right?

DR. PATTERSON: That's right.

MR. DELEMAR: Well, that's what happened to what they call the Bryan Cemetery. But we call it the Far Cemetery. The one that's farther away from James City, that was the Far Cemetery. Now the one over there at the mound right up there by those barges up there, buried up under there, 400 is up under there.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, where is that?

MR. DELEMAR: When you cross that railroad track going to New Bern on Highway 70, the minute you get up on that high hill up there, they're under that hill. You got it now?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: And 400. That was called the Near Cemetery, or the James City Cemetery, whatever. But the Far Cemetery, the one that's farther, we call it Far, that means colloquial name.

DR. PATTERSON: Now in these cemeteries, were these the slaves on the Clermont Plantation or were these free people who died?

MR. DELEMAR: It was a mix. As I just emphasized to you, they have one particular area to bury their slaves, because they're not going to bury them all over the plantation cause that's for cultivation.

DR. PATTERSON: What's been the problem? People taking over the land where these cemeteries are, is that right?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, now, we buried them up until 1940 there. (laughter) But greed and things of that sort happens a lot of time and ignore what's there. I wrote an article in the New Bern Sun Journal, April 10, 1976 concerning that cemetery and that's when the ball start to rolling. Then I got in touch with the proper authority and we went out there and found forty-one at the time, just cutting a trench in there. Found forty-one. Then we went back there we uncovered 422 graves that we know that are there, and more. There's more down there. I estimated myself right at 3,000 from the time that the Clermont Plantation was there, up until 1863, and from 1863 up until 1940 that we were still burying them in there. I done some research work and

I was the one who traced those records. Did you know that? Did you know I was the one who traced those records there, the slaves to there?

I intensified it because one of the members on the Airport Authority said we're not gonna pay any attention til you can't find no record of it there. That's when I went to town and I traced it and I found it.

DR. PATTERSON: What's threatening these burial spots?

MR. DELEMAR: The extension of the runway.

DR. PATTERSON: At the airport.

MR. DELEMAR: Right.

DR. PATTERSON: They want to put it right through this site?

MR. DELEMAR: They did one time but I stopped it, and I have confidence that good people that is in there now that will heed to that. This Ray Clifton, a dirty fellow. He's out of there now, you know what I mean. But knowingly that this cemetery exist and he cut a ditch through there. That was the latest about two or three years ago, something like that. That's bad! Knowing that they was there! And all maps and everything indicate that there knowing that was there. But it really didn't make me mad. I wasn't mad with it. You know why? I felt sorry for a man supposed to be outstanding and do something like that. He just didn't care. But listen! In six months later he was gone because some things he still done wrong. He was gone! But God bless him wherevers he at.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me shift a little bit to something else. You have been in this area all throughout the civil rights movement

and the school integration bit. Tell me how it all looked to you when it went on. Was it a bad time in this area when school integration developed?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, no and yes. Craven County, New Bern, it was a little resentment, it's true. By Camp LeJeune being down there, and the Marine Corps was integrated at that time, Cherry Point was down there, integrated there, and many blacks worked there, it was a controversial, where we gonna send you black kids to school, the children of the Marine Corps. The President of the United States knew of this here Johnson and so did Kennedy. We knew all of this stuff and so did they and so did Congress. So the transition here was a little better due to that fact because of those bases nearby. And so they would have to integrate or else do away with the bases. Does that make sense, Dr. Patterson? Huh?

DR. PATTERSON: It makes sense. Yes. I hadn't heard that expressed before, but that makes sense.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah, well, Delemar thanks a lot.

DR. PATTERSON: Was there much trouble in the New Bern schools?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, I remember one time there was about a couple of days of it. But when Grover C. Fields got there, well, everything cooled down. I did not foresee anymore trouble out of it. A little pocket might come over wanting to say something because even the devil don't want to give. You know what I mean?

DR. PATTERSON: What about the time of Martin Luther King's death?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, during that time I knew there was gonna be

some things raised, there was gonna be some atrocities. There was gonna be a catastrophe. People have a tendency of doing that. One man can spark that light. And people, when they hear things like that, that you've killed their hero, then life is no good for me now, I don't care if I die. Well, I felt empty myself. Very much empty. Not because of the burning of the cities and whatever. But you know what? Let me tell you something, Dr. Patterson. Many people talking about this looting stuff. Many people didn't loot. They just took out their frustration. They just took a hammer or axe or anything and busted these TV's, though, they didn't take no TV's home. And that's a fact!

I know what I'm talking about! Washington, D.C., California, everybody else, they did not take those TV's home! Now some of them did, but many of them this frustration they were angry so they got to break the glass anyway - frustration! Now, many people look back at that and say, well, you blacks done that there! When the first 20 blacks came over here in 1619, that's when it started! You see what I'm talking about now?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: As slaves. Let me say this. We were never slaves! That's strange to you, isn't it, Dr. Patterson? Not yet. I use the word "free slaves", sort of like that, like did on this tape here. But we were never slaves. We were free people. Let me show it to you. First, they brought us here in shackles and in chains and sold us on the market, said, "You a slave." Don't forget I'm saying, brought us here in shackles and chains. You can't run, you can't take the

shackles off your foot because your hand is chained and you're chained to one another. Now, did they shackle that person's mind? I'm asking you now. Answer me. I didn't hear you. See, I want it on the tape.

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. DELEMAR: They didn't shackle that mind, did they?

DR. PATTERSON: No.

MR. DELEMAR: So if a man got a mind, that's what frees him, that mind. So he says to himself, "I'm not a slave." You can right now put cuffs on me, shackles on me, "Delemar, you're a slave. I got papers on you." But you didn't put it around my mind. My mind tells me to say "No!" And one thing, if you talk like a slave, act like a slave, and believe you are a slave, ain't no papers in the world can free you. So why did they ran away? Their mind told them to run away. I didn't tell them to run away. You didn't tell them to run away. John Brown didn't tell them to raid Harper's Ferry. That was another frustration.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me get back to the schools here in town for just a moment. You and Mrs. Delemar were talking a while ago about the pride you had in your schools and how wonderful the care was and all. Do the black children feel those same feelings now about going to school?

MR. DELEMAR: No!

MRS. DELEMAR: On a whole, no.

DR. PATTERSON: What do they feel?

MR. DELEMAR: They feel that they don't need teaching. They feel

like they don't need anybody. Now it came gradual. Like their mothers and their grandmothers slowly got away from that. Tried the means to let the kid raise himself. Now I have a special tutor, my mother, a special tutor. Men that I like, women that I like, was in my life, old women, I'd call their name out right there in my church. Men, start with the men; Samuel C. Elliott; Deacon Forbes; Deacon Arthur Sumner; Deacon Ganzwhite; Annie Gavin's daddy, Dr. Joyner; Solomon Phillip was a great merchant in James City, S. T. Phillips; and my father; my grandfather, my mother's father. I didn't know my daddy's father, Alexander. He died a year before, got killed in the sawmill at Munger-Bennett before I was born. Then there was the women in my life. All of my teachers I just called back there! Everyone of them! And also the male teachers and Mr. Ryder. Various men in my life. W. W. Ryder. Do you remember him?

DR. PATTERSON: What's his name?

MR. DELEMAR: W. W. Ryder. His widow still living on, what's street is that, honey?

MRS. DELEMAR: On Johnson Street, right side of St. Peter AME Zion.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you this, Mr. Delemar. In your lifetime, do you recall trouble with the blacks registering to vote?

MR. DELEMAR: We couldn't vote! My wife and I and my mother and my brother-in-law and my two sisters and their husbands and Annie Gavin and Walter Gore were the first ones to register here in 1948. Now we had been registering, but you know they took that away from us and

they brought in the poll tax and so forth like that, you know. You know the things on that. So for years we couldn't vote. But we were the first.

DR. PATTERSON: You were voting before '48?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah, right here in James City. But that was way back. That was before 1898.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. And then...

MR. DELEMAR: Defranchised.

DR. PATTERSON: You were defranchised until 194...

MR. DELEMAR: '48 over here. '48. And incidentally, let me tell you, a man with a PhD degree, a black man with a PhD degree, couldn't register. They say, well, he's not qualified to read the Constitution of the United States. I can tell you that. They're biased, and I'm not a PhD degree. I might have equivalent to that.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, once this opened up, has it been difficult since then?

MR. DELEMAR: No.

DR. PATTERSON: Voting is honest.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Getting back to a specific thing. You told me the other day that you remember ferries that went from James City to New Bern.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah. 1886. And I'll tell you exactly where it was at. It was parallel with the trestle bridge now. The trestle bridge, parallel right there. Right beside of it there. Some of the

old piling posts are still there. The last time I went there, say, about ten years ago, it was still there, on this side of James City. Now, the Ramada Inn and all that kind of stuff, there's a new development over there, the manmade lake and the Ramada Inn, I mean this Sheraton, the Sheraton is sitting on made-up ground. You better believe that there. It runs parallel west of that trestle bridge. West. West. I say over there. Parallel with it. It was west over there at that bridge. 1886 there, they called it James City-New Bern Ferry. And you can find that right there. I was doing some research work one day and I came across that. You find a lot of things.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did it land on the New Bern side?

MR. DELEMAR: Parallel, right beside the bridge. Right beside the trestle bridge there. Just like that there.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, that trestle bridge, that railroad bridge, has been there for a long time.

MR. DELEMAR: 1850. 1850.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, didn't the freedmen who came here during the war build another bridge across the river or did they just make that one stronger?

MR. DELEMAR: No, no, no, no, no. They still used the old Clermont bridge back out there. Called the old Beaufort Road then back over there by Colombia Town over there. It went right on through the Clermont Plantation there. That's where they had that there right there.

MRS. DELEMAR: The old original bridge always came right down

George Street.

MR. DELEMAR: Wait a minute, honey. Hold it a minute. You see, when it come to bridges, if a person don't know the history of it there, they get mixed up, because they say, well, that was the old original bridge. The original bridge going to New Bern was the Clermont Bridge going up through Trent Road, Old Towne, where the isthmus laying almost right in there. That's where it was at, right over there. You know where Mack Bennett's staying out there?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: That bridge went right on back side across right over there right up through Old Towne, then come around through Pembroke there. Pembroke there, right though there. Remember that?

DR. PATTERSON: Pembroke? Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: Right. That's where it came to New Bern. But the trestle bridge was still there. The trestle bridge was still there. But I'm talking about for other things. Only the train ran across that there. Now what they done for that trestle bridge, they put planks across there and that's when many people used that there. Put planks in between the rails. I remember those planks myself.

DR. PATTERSON: So you could walk across.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah, you could walk across there. But the ferry was still there. So when they built that bridge there at the turn of the century there, watch yourself now, 1886 they had a ferry. If they had had a bridge, they would not need no ferry. You see what I'm talking about now?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: So they built the bridge, after 1886. And it's well documented there at the register of deeds there in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that the only ferry that existed between James City and New Bern?

MR. DELEMAR: That's the only one that I saw any trace of. And the reason they abandoned that because they built the bridge. Now, exactly when that original bridge was built, I don't know. But as I say, the original Clermont Bridge, during 1863, well, you can see some of the pictures of that there by the Harper's Weekly that you find some of them there. David Henderson, my lawyer, he has one right here and you can see the old Clermont Bridge in there. But truly, there was a ferry right west of that trestle bridge there.

DR. PATTERSON: You mentioned something to me too that's particular interest to me because the airport name, the Simmons-Nott Airport, and Simmons is my family like I told you. Lt. Nott was killed the day the airport was dedicated. We have many stories about that and I've been in touch with the Nott family about the plaque that was put up, but you told me that you saw this accident.

MR. DELEMAR: I saw it. On a Saturday evening, let's see, about four o'clock, he went up there and wanted to take, we used to call a loop de loop, and he never got out of the loop. He came right on straight down and something happened to that motor. The motor start to racing - Rrrrrrrrrrrr! A little faster than it was before. I don't know, he might have gunned it to try to pull out of it. You know what

I'm talking about now?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: And bam! Looking right at it. On a Saturday evening. I'll never forget it. I been there about 1933 or '34, somewhere along in there.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah, right along in there.

MR. DELEMAR: I prayed for him right out there. A matter of fact, they had a fair out there too. The fair was there at that time. 'Cause there were holes all over that cemetery. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Delemar, during World War II, you were gone a lot of the time, but were a lot of the black people in James City involved in this war?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: The men went off to war.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah, young men.

DR. PATTERSON: What did it do for them?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, most of them that went away built houses when they came back. Families, or gotten married, they built houses. But today they don't want to build houses and that bothers me. They don't want to buy land. They want to rent. Of course now, a man do what he wants to do. You know what I'm talking about now? But, I, myself, as a black man that struggled so long, I would like to see them own land. I know what it is to own your own land.

DR. PATTERSON: When they came back and built these houses, were they better people for their experience?

MR. DELEMAR: Yes. And here's another thing we done. We helped one another. You buy the material, I'm a brick mason, plaster, cement, finisher, tile, carpenter, or whatever, you buy the material, we'll build your house. You buy the land, buy the material, we'll build your house.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, these soldiers who came back, were they different people when they came back? Did they learn different things?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Was the world different for them?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. We brought a lot of culture here that we found in maybe Camp Stewart, Georgia; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg; or Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, which was my camp; Camp Lee, Virginia; and near Petersburg and Harrisburg. So we saw a lot of living around in these other areas that we didn't have here. So that was some culture that was there that we didn't know exist. We brought that back here. And transportation, I didn't know what a turnpike was. Really. And I found out it was a superhighway. Like an autobahn was in Germany. It was another superhighway. I didn't know all of that there. We brought a lot of things. Even when I went to Japan I learned a lot.

DR. PATTERSON: What I have been trying to find out is to back up something somebody told me, that many times that the young black people came back from the war expecting a better life back home, what they had been used to, and not finding it, that it was just like when they left and went to serve.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. Oh yeah. We definitely wanted a better way of life. We felt that by going to war and getting an honorable discharge that it would be better, but when we came back it wasn't much better. There's a story that I would tell, but I'm not gonna tell about what they was doing to my parent's house. My sister wrote me and told me that they was throwing bricks. And they were white boys, I mean men, whatever. They knew better. Throwing bricks and running at people. Of course the young men were gone in the old part of James City there. Not this part, the old part of James City, where they was moving away from cause they couldn't own land over there.

But anyway, my sister wrote me and told me (I want you to listen to this! Both of you.) wrote me and told me these atrocities being committed to the people of James City and she told me who they were.

She wrote and told me who they was. I didn't write back. I was in the Philippines then and the war still was going on. I read this letter and it saddened me, and I wondered what could be done. But when I got back, I was staying over there to my mother's house over there in the old part of James City where the lake's at over there, and my wife and I. She stayed home, you know, with her dad. But we moved in with my mother when I came back. But anyway, I didn't go to church on this Sunday, and a many other person didn't go to church on this Sunday. We always had a backtree barber, a backtree shoeshine boy.

So on Sundays, we had to work six days a week, so Sunday morning you usually get your hair cut before you go to church or during the time.

It was my wife and the children and my mother and her sisters, they

went to church. So these two white guys came by and shot right dead in my house. We was over right across the street there under the tree getting our haircuts from our barber. So they said, "Did you see that, Delemar?" I said, "Yeah, I saw it." Bam! It was just like we were back there in the back there just right across the street there rode by on a red truck.

DR. PATTERSON: And shot in here?

MR. DELEMAR: No, not in here. The old part of James City. 1946. That's before I moved here. I was staying with my mother. That was in 1946. I moved here in October 1946, but this was in the spring of the year in 1946.

DR. PATTERSON: Did many of the black people in the New Bern area leave New Bern during the war? Did they move North or move to other places?

MR. DELEMAR: I haven't finished telling this. Let me go back to this here. This is very important. I'll answer that later, okay. But anyway, there was about seventeen of us and we came out to the road and the guys rode up the road up there, he was loading his pistol up. They were drunk. But a dangerous pistol and random shooting, a stray bullet could find anybody. Now, if my children or my wife or my sister had been standing, or my mother, been standing in that door they would have been shot right in the house. Okay? While the truck was passing by slowly. They went on up the road and they were loading up there. We saw them. When they come back there, when they come back, listen to what I'm saying now. I'm just telling you about

the time. Want you to follow me very closely, and they came back, the same guy that shot in there, he was on the runningboard, and we were standing out there and he was getting ready to shoot in us again and a shot rang out. We turned and run. A shot rang out and we ran.

They count on going straight on toward New Bern then. Then we got in one of the cars and told Sheriff Berry about it, Charlie Berry about it. Sheriff Berry told Bill Meekin to go over there and investigate.

Bill Meekin came over there and asked us about it there and then we told him and then he went to suppose to be go look for them. I use the word suppose to be go look for the fellows. Came back and told us, "Well, I saw the fellows. They didn't have no gun and I can't do nothing about it." I told the other fellow, I said, "Well, they ran up on a blank wall, a big wall. It's just like it's always been."

Now watch this here now, did he really see those fellows? Now watch this here now. Did he really see those fellows? Because later on about three hours later he came back and wanted to know who shot that white boy who was in the hospital after he found him there. Now when them white fellows passed through here shooting up us and when Bill Meekin came back and told us he saw them, they didn't come back. They went straight to the hospital or whatever. You understand what I'm talking about now?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: And so Bill Meekin lied. You know what I'm talking about? That's the way it was at that time. So they found out that the fellow was shot and now he wanted to know who shot the fellow.

Nobody knew. And still today nobody know. And that was in '46. But the guy lived to be a ripe old age.

DR. PATTERSON: How has medical care been for black folks in your lifetimes? Have you had good medical care in James City?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, we haven't had any good medical care but we had doctors that would come see us, or circuit doctors, you know what I mean, that go out on a circuit; Dr. Mann, Dr. Martin...

DR. PATTERSON: From New Bern.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah, from New Bern. Dr. Munford, wasn't it?

DR. PATTERSON: They'd come over here from New Bern and make house calls?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: This was before the days of Good Shepherd Hospital.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. Oh yeah, before the days of Good Shepherd Hospital. During the days of Good Shepherd Hospital there were, R. I. Johnson was the one who pushed that, wasn't he, honey?

MRS. DELEMAR: What, the hospital?

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah.

MRS. DELEMAR: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: Doc. Johnson.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, in those days these doctors would come over here and deliver the children at home, the babies at home?

MR. DELEMAR: Some, but we mostly had to depend on the midwives, and I can name them.

DR. PATTERSON: And they were right in this area, the midwives?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did they get their training?

MR. DELEMAR: From their grandmothers and great-grandmothers, all the way down, was handed down. A matter of fact there, a whole lot of them black midwives delivered white babies. Did you know that?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: Did you know that, sir?

FRED LATHAM: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Before Good Shepherd Hospital opened up, what was hospital care like for black people?

MR. DELEMAR: Poor, very poor.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go?

MRS. DELEMAR: But then they had St. Luke's.

MR. DELEMAR: St. Luke, there in the basement. And you should see roaches crawling everywhere.

DR. PATTERSON: That was a bad place, was it?

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah.

MRS. DELEMAR: The blacks was in the basement.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember that. I went there with my father when he made rounds down in that area.

MR. DELEMAR: Roaches crawling everywhere. Rats run all over everywhere. I went there as a little boy. My uncle was there, Roe Henry. He got shot in the eye and they had him in there and I went in there and I saw him. You see, I was a little boy. I didn't like that! That is why I want my wife to tell you now and tell it on this

here tape, why I built those houses down there to the river. And the reason I built those houses, and when I saw these things, the condition of the houses that blacks had there, I'm gonna let her finish telling you. I want her on tape, to tell you what we, my wife and I, decided to do.

MRS. DELEMAR: The reason that he built these houses was that the way people were living during the time when he came up, in shacks. You could see out, and rain in, look up at the sky. And so, he said when he got up the money and everything that he was gonna see that the older people and the poor people had better homes to live. And that was the biggest reason that he built these houses down on the water. He built them for the poor. He wouldn't charge them the full rent that he could get for them because they were poor and he wanted them to have a decent home to live in because they never had a decent home, living in old shacks.

DR. PATTERSON: Were there a lot of people living in shacks over here?

MRS. DELEMAR: Yes! That's what James City was all about.

DR. PATTERSON: And this area, since the folks moved from the Hayti area over here, there were shacks?

MRS. DELEMAR: In James City.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. DELEMAR: And when they moved over here they moved in better homes. Like I say, when we got able and everything, he said he was gonna build these houses down on the water for the older people to

have a decent place to stay, and that's what he did. He said they was for the poor and he wasn't charging them...

MR. DELEMAR: Not charging. You couldn't stay here. You couldn't stay in that house. (laughter)

MRS. DELEMAR: Not charging them the full rent. He could get more rent for the houses, but he didn't. That wasn't his purpose. It was for them to have a better place to live.

DR. PATTERSON: How many houses did you build?

MRS. DELEMAR: There's three.

MR. DELEMAR: Three. One of them is my office space.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, housing has picked up. There's not many shacks around here now.

MRS. DELEMAR: No, not like it was then.

MR. DELEMAR: Of course we've got that Block Grant that helped us out a lot. And I was the one who organized that.

DR. PATTERSON: What is that? What is this Block Grant?

MR. DELEMAR: Federal money coming in by HUD, Housing and Urban Development.

MRS. DELEMAR: For a better house.

MR. DELEMAR: Better houses.

MRS. DELEMAR: To fix up the community and which they did. So it much better to live in.

DR. PATTERSON: As time has gone by since you all have been living here, what has been the main source of work for the people in James City?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, Weyerhauser, Cherry Point, Camp LeJeune, Hatteras, Bosch, and Barber Boat Works, or whatever the boat works down there.

DR. PATTERSON: The black people over here, well, they used to do a lot of housework, didn't they?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yes. Domestic. In New Bern, my mother was housework. I said I didn't want my wife to work in housework. It's all right, but I wanted something better. Pride! Dignity! You know what I mean? So I took care of my wife and the children.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember in my boyhood that the black people who worked in houses really had to keep their place pretty much and they had their own bathroom. There was a very sharply drawn line between the races. You think that's gotten better?

MR. DELEMAR: I would hate to comment on that really, to tell the truth, because I haven't examined it thoroughly. And I usually, when I examine something, then I can come out with quoting or whatever, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, let me ask this. Is there still a great deal of housework being done by people in James City?

MR. DELEMAR: No.

DR. PATTERSON: They don't do that anymore. When that was going on, how did folks get to work? Did they walk?

MR. DELEMAR: They walked.

DR. PATTERSON: Across the bridge.

MR. DELEMAR: Across the bridge.

DR. PATTERSON: The old George Street Bridge.

MR. DELEMAR: Right.

MRS. DELEMAR: And they laid on the taxi.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Delemar, do you remember the big fire of 1922?

MR. DELEMAR: I wasn't born then. I was born in '24.

DR. PATTERSON: That's okay. (laughter) I keep forgetting not everybody is as old as I am. So you remember nothing about that. You remember the big storms we've had here?

MR. DELEMAR: 1933, September 15th. That's my brother's birthday and it washed that part of the Neuse River bridge away. I remember that there. That was a high tide. The next high tide I saw like that was 1955 when Ione came. It washed away a lot of my bank down on the river. Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Was there a lot of damage in James City then?

MR. DELEMAR: When, in 1933?

DR. PATTERSON: Well, and in '55.

MR. DELEMAR: '55, Oh yes! Mostly shoreline, cause that was a high tide. The wind wasn't so strong to blow a building down, but no tornado was touched down in this area. But the tide was so high it washed away a lot of embankment. Of course now, the federal government gave some money to try to replace it back, but you can't replace back a loss like that.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the Depression like in James City?

MR. DELEMAR: Well, in James City, we didn't feel it too much. I mean, we worked and we didn't get much money, a dollar a day or

seventy-five cent a day. But we had our own gardens. I got my garden back there now; collard greens, peppers, tomatoes. I have that now. And most people, they had chickens. They had eggs, you know. So we had chickens. They raised hogs. They had hogs. We canned most of our vegetables. We had fruit trees; apples and pears and peaches. And we canned most of our goods. You know, the canning?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah.

MR. DELEMAR: Then in the winter time there, we had the stuff. So therefore, we didn't feel no starvation. My granddaddy made his own molasses. (laughter) We got part of that. And they had a cow. My granddaddy, my mother's father, and then my daddy's mother, had a cow, so we got plenty milk and butter too. Many people in James City, no, we wasn't never a starving people like it was in big cities. There was no soup line in James City. No, because we had little collective farms and everything. Then another thing there, we were cohesive. If you didn't have butter beans there, you'll have some butter beans. You got enough collard greens, you plant enough collard greens you give some collard greens to someone, cabbage or whatever. You plant enough so the next person can have some. So they kept moving around like that, so they would have something to barter with.

DR. PATTERSON: You mentioned a while ago that these days Sundays is a pretty big day but the rest of the week isn't very good.

MR. DELEMAR: That's a go to work routine, that's all. They come back and lounge around.

DR. PATTERSON: This brings up the question I wanted to ask you

about the role the churches are playing in James City today compared to before. Is it still an important role?

MR. DELEMAR: It's an important role. But it's not the church, it's the leadership of the church. See, we don't have that old crowd, the collectivism people around. We got the young ministers around now. Me! Me! Me! Me! Not us and us and us, but me, me, me. You understand what I'm talking about now? I'm not saying the community is going to bad, but that collective stuff, it's lost out there somewhere. It's the new breed, the new kid on the block you might would say. But we still go to church and we worship, you know, over here, and a great many of them go to church and we believe in going to church. But to stimulate the kids there to go into business, I'm about one of the only black men that is in business over here, which is the housing business and the real estate business. Don't want to work. But, now, James Gavin would have been here, but he's sick, you know what I mean. And none of the rest have been thinking about it.

See, they have grocery store. Look, right around the corner there we've got a fish house, white man. Right up here we got a filling station there, white man. Adolph Paul right there, we've got plenty men. You go in there you see a lot of black guys in there straightening out cars, white man owns it. Surf and Turf, white man own this building.

They're right out here. The Burger King out here, white man own that there. Joe Thomas own the market out there. You see, now during that time, they would tell, a lot of the churches would tell a lot of kids go into some kind of business, buy land, and do this and do that there.

They would push you. But now day it's "me" only. And I don't believe in that. I just told you about my buildings down there. I didn't just build a beautiful building just to make money. If I'd have built those houses to make money out there, I would charge one-third more than what I'm charging now.

DR. PATTERSON: Why don't the young people do what you're saying.

MR. DELEMAR: Lazy-minded and empty-headed, not motivated. There's a gradual meltdown from the minds of their parents and their grandparents. But watch this here. I'm not letting that happen to me. My wife can tell you what I'm doing right now and I want her to come out and say that out of her own mouth into this tape. What am I doing now, honey? Listen.

MRS. DELEMAR: Teaching our grandson how to carry on.

DR. PATTERSON: Teaching your grandchildren.

MRS. DELEMAR: Um huh. Grandson.

DR. PATTERSON: Is he working?

MRS. DELEMAR: Um huh.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah.

MRS. DELEMAR: He's in the New York. He's twenty-nine years old. He's looking to come back home to stay.

DR. PATTERSON: He's in law did you say?

MRS. DELEMAR: No, I say he's in New York.

MR. DELEMAR: He's in electronics up there.

MRS. DELEMAR: He's twenty-nine years old. He's not looking to stay up there all his life. But he's teaching him now, so if he passes

away that he can carry on. As you can say, teaching him the ropes.

MR. DELEMAR: And how often do I call him?

MRS. DELEMAR: Two and three times a week keeping him abreast of what is happening.

DR. PATTERSON: That's pretty great.

MR. DELEMAR: How long he been up there?

MRS. DELEMAR: He's been up there about eight years.

MR. DELEMAR: And, see, I call him two and three time a week.

DR. PATTERSON: I was told by somebody in an interview that one problem is that the young black people are blaming the white people for everything they fail in.

MR. DELEMAR: I don't! I don't!

DR. PATTERSON: I know you don't.

MR. DELEMAR: What happened to me? I'm black. You look at me and say that I'm black? I'm not brown, I'm not red, I'm black. But look what happened to me. Pulled my own self up.

DR. PATTERSON: That's what can be done.

MR. DELEMAR: Tell me. The Koreans come over here and they can live in this world that we have here. I don't resent the Koreans, the Mexicans, or who. I don't resent no one. I don't resent none. I don't resent nobody! I can do it!!

DR. PATTERSON: I believe that. Mr. Delemar, you mentioned to me earlier that you wanted to speak about Hurly "Hull" Grimes.

MR. DELEMAR: I wanted to speak to him?

DR. PATTERSON: That you wanted to tell me about him.

MR. DELEMAR: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: As an early organizer.

MR. DELEMAR: Yeah, I do. See in there that book there?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: So, Chavez was not the first organized farm labor union, huh? Hull Grimes; well, his name was Hurly Grimes but he's better known as Hull Grimes.

DR. PATTERSON: H U L L?

MR. DELEMAR: H U L L, right. But during that time, like Nat Turner, his name was Nathaniel. It wasn't Nat Turner. It's on the census as Nat Turner, but his name was Nathaniel Turner and the same thing with Hull Grimes. So it's better known for Hull Grimes. Let's make a distinction on that there. In 1870 and 1880 census that I have right back in there, James City and Hayti, Hull Grimes, Baptist minister.

DR. PATTERSON: Did he organize the farmers then?

MR. DELEMAR: Farmers union. Right. You just read in that book, didn't you?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. DELEMAR: All right.

DR. PATTERSON: I just wanted to get it on the tape, that's all.

MR. DELEMAR: Okay. Oh yes, he organized the farmers union in James City. A matter of fact, one of the first ones during the reconstruction period after the Civil War. He also founded Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in James City in 1863. Now it's a phenomenal

thing about that. In 1863, that's when it was organized, the church was organized itself. But it wasn't until after April 9, 1865 that we built our more permanent church because we felt we would be here since the war was over. After Appomattox, you know what I mean? And so we built a better church in 1866. But the church was founded in 1863! See, many people get that mixed up there. The church was founded in 1863 by slabs and anything that we could make to make a church there and people gather to worship. But anyway, he founded that there then.

Also, in 1875, he organized the New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, and many other churches he organized. And he was a powerful force into the political area into this area. On the spiritual scene and the political scene and just as another man to inspire, a role model. A great man. He's a great organizer. He also helped organized the General Baptist State Convention, which is a black organization in Raleigh in 1867. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: I think we ought to put on the tape that it would be very important for people who listen to this tape to learn about this book about James City. The title is James City, a Black Community in North Carolina 1863 to 1900 by Joe A. Mobley. It's published in 1981 by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources and this tells the early story of James City. Well, this has been wonderful.

Now, do you have anything else that you would like to speak to that we haven't spoken to? (Mr. Delemar just showed me an article in the Sun Journal of 1978 that notes that he had been appointed by Governor Hunt to the fifteen member organization to help Veterans find

employment as a member of the Veterans Job Committee.) This is on again, Mr. Delemar, you tell me about that.

MR. DELEMAR: This came out of the March 23, 1983 the Gazette of New Bern paper. It says, "James City Looks Back With Pride." My life is in this here because there is several pages in here about me and James City.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me ask you now, the Gazette, I'm not familiar with that newspaper.

MR. DELEMAR: That was the newspaper they sort of went from the Gazette to the Shopper. Shopper now is the name of it now, but it changed names.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that a newspaper just for the black community?

MR. DELEMAR: Oh no, no, no, no. If you'll look on your patch, the editor of New Bern Sun Journal now. Dr. Patterson, I want to present you a copy of that paper.

DR. PATTERSON: We'll put it in your file, Mr. Delemar.

MR. DELEMAR: All right.

DR. PATTERSON: That will be fine.

MR. DELEMAR: And you'll find out most of my life is right there, and my expressions, and a lot of other things. If there's any time that you feel that you should contact me, you may do so.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, thank you. Well, we'll put this with your things. Well, it's really been a privilege to come talk to both of you and I thank you for Fred and myself and for the Memories committee. We'll keep in touch with you about this. I'll bring the typed up

version of your talk back to you for correction.

MR. DELEMAR: All right.

DR. PATTERSON: So I'll cut this off now.

END OF INTERVIEW

(I told Mr. Delemar that in 1893 when the Governor came down with the 400 troops from Raleigh to see about getting the blacks off the land at the Trent Settlement, that when the Governor rode the train across the bridge to James City, my grandfather, Furnifold M. Simmons, was with him, and when these folks got off the train, his grandfather, Alexander Delemar, led the band that played the music. Mr. Delemar thought this was great.)