

York David Garrett: Her father married twice. He married my mother's mother. And she died. Then he married again. His first wife, my mother's mother, was half-Indian. And she had one or two sisters that were half-Indians. Then when her father married again, he married a Colored—Well, not Colored. But you know what I mean. His second wife was just a Colored woman, and he had two children by his second wife. But there were ten years difference in those children. He had two children by his first wife, my mother and her brother. She was ten years older than her brother. Long ways apart, they had it so long. Then he married again. My grandfather married again, and the woman he married that time, he had three children by that woman. But they were all Robinson instead of being Harrison because they took their father's name. And two or three of them lived until a few years ago. One of them that died—yeah. About 10 years ago, the last one died. They died after my mother did.

Kara Miles: Did your mother work?

York David Garrett: With her husband.

Kara Miles: Okay. At the store?

York David Garrett: No. At home. She ran the house and took care of eight or nine children. She worked. Only thing about it, she was a good organizer. She knew what she was doing, and she didn't want to do all that work. And she had those children that come along. She had twins, Hattie and Mattie. And when [indistinct 00:01:49] and she wanted to have three children. When my sister was born, [indistinct 00:01:55], who happened to be the secretary of North Carolina NAACP for 37 years. That's Ms. Burdette. When she was born, she was, of course—[indistinct 00:02:10]. The oldest one of the twins, my mother turned her over to her, said, "You take care of this baby. You nurse him, you clean him, and everything."

York David Garrett: Two years later, little less than two years later, when I was born, she turned me over to my other one of the twins, the younger one of the twins. But they were twins. And so that twin raised me. My mother didn't have to touch either one of them because she was busy running that house and cooking and doing all this other stuff. And I was the last child that was born that lived to get more than five years old. I was the baby. But I mean, she had two children after me, but one of them died at childbirth and the other died at three years old.

Kara Miles: Okay. What was your father's name?

York David Garrett: York David Garrett.

Kara Miles: And he was Senior?

York David Garrett: Huh?

Kara Miles: He was Garrett, Senior?

York David Garrett: Yeah, yeah. Because, see, his father was York Garrett, but not David. His mother had a brother named David, and when this child was born, she named him York and put David in for her brother. York David Garrett. So that's the reason my father is York David Garrett. But his father was not York David. His father was just York Garrett. Then when I came along and they looked at me after the eighth child, they said "Well this is really the only [indistinct 00:03:44] have more boys or not," so they named me York David Garrett, Junior.

Kara Miles: Where was your father born?

York David Garrett: I guess he must have been born in Edgecombe County. That's where they were living when he was a little child. And his mother was a nurse. Not a nurse. The cook for the family that owned them. And that was Edgecombe County.

Kara Miles: All right. Now I need all your brothers' and sisters' names and—Were they all born in—?

York David Garrett: Yeah. All of them were born in the same town. I mean, in Edgecombe County.

Kara Miles: Okay. And I need all their names, and if you know their birthday and death date.

York David Garrett: I don't know that. I can find out, but I don't—Ain't too much trouble. My sister was the oldest child.

Kara Miles: That was—

York David Garrett: Mary Emma Garrett. She's the one finished her school in Raleigh. What's the name? Estey in the old days but they don't use that name now. [indistinct 00:04:49]. It wasn't Shaw. Like Hartshorn in Virginia? Hartshorn was the girls' school of Union. Spelman is the girls' school of Atlanta. Hartshorn and the boys' school in Union is Union. Other one in Atlanta [indistinct 00:05:12]. You know what I'm talking about. But now in Shaw, there was a girls' school and a boys' school. It was all Shaw, but they call the girls' school by its name and the boys' school was Shaw. Understand what I'm talking about? And I call it [indistinct 00:05:28], but I forgot what it was. But that's the school she finished.

York David Garrett: And the building is still there on Shaw campus that she went to school in. But it was a part of Shaw University, but that's where she went to school. Her name was Mary Emma Garrett. And now the other [indistinct 00:05:49] one child was born, died about a year or something like that. I didn't know him because that was before I was born. Then the next child was born was [indistinct 00:06:00] Garrett. He was the third child. He lived to finish college. And the next children were the twins, Hattie and Mattie. Hattie Price and Mattie Garrett. And the next was a daughter, a sister of mine who was older than—She was younger than the twins, but she was [indistinct 00:06:30]. Her name was Annie Lilian Gertrude Garrett. She

lived to get 17 years old.

Kara Miles: Anna—

York David Garrett: Lilian Gertrude Garrett. She lived to get 17 years old. She—

Kara Miles: How old was your brother when he died?

York David Garrett: He was about 22. He just finished college. And he finished early. No. When he died, he died in 1908. He died in 1908. Yeah, he was about 22 when he died. He died in 1908. Now what you was going to say?

Kara Miles: The seventh child, you just said Anna Lilian Gertrude. Who was next?

York David Garrett: Next was Sarah Beatrice Garrett. That's the one that was 37 years she was secretary of the NAACP for North Carolina. And she was a very prominent person. She's still living. 24th of January, you know how old she was?

Kara Miles: How old?

York David Garrett: Huh?

Kara Miles: How old?

York David Garrett: She's older than I am.

Kara Miles: Really? Oh, yeah. Because you're the eighth child. Yeah.

York David Garrett: Yeah. She was 100 years old the 24th of January. And her grandson came down for her birthday, and he was McDougald's grandson. The man with the bank, the daughter, was this boy's mother. So I'm tied into the family eventually. You see what I mean? My sister's son married McDougald's daughter. And they have three children. But don't talk about them. They ain't got nothing to do with it. But I'm just saying. They had three children, and they all—The children are still living and doing all right.

Kara Miles: Okay. And then it was you. And then there were two others that died, you said?

York David Garrett: Yeah. One of them lived to get four years old, but she died. She had measles. My sister, Beatrice, and I and this child had measles the same time. And they lost her. But Bea and I lived. The last child after that was a boy. But I think my mother said that boy surely could have lived. Should have lived. But when she was pregnant with him, she had a nephew, my father's nephew. My father's nephew that was living with them, and he was a little boy. And he was crazy about his aunt, but he was a baby. And she picking him up, lifting him, and carrying him, pulling at him when she was pregnant and made something

happen to the baby. And the baby didn't live.

York David Garrett: But nothing nobody did, but I mean—My mother told me, said if she hadn't been straining over trying to take care of this baby, put him in the bed and take him out and all that, he was too big for her to be carrying him. That's why she thinks she lost her last child. That was the last child they had. That was the tenth child. But he was just born, then they buried him.

Kara Miles: Okay. All right. I need your children's names. I know Nathan.

York David Garrett: Wasn't going to start with Nathan.

Kara Miles: Okay. All right.

York David Garrett: First child was York David Garrett, III. The next child—

Kara Miles: When was York born?

York David Garrett: '23.

Kara Miles: Okay. When did he die?

York David Garrett: '77. He died two months and five days after his mother died.

York David Garrett: He was not very retarded, but was semi-retarded. And they figured he was born—That was the first child. When he was born, he had a bad heart condition. Congenital heart murmur. And also, her water broke at eight months. Do you know what I'm talking about? And they thought they were going to lose either him or her. So they decided not to wait. She was living in New York then. We were married, but she was living in New York with her brother's girlfriend. So they rushed her to the hospital, and they found out she was having trouble, so he was a forceps baby, and injured his head.

York David Garrett: But he lived. They thought he wasn't going to live, but he lived. And he had a bad heart condition, and he kept that condition until he died. But they told us with his heart, head thing, he was kind of semi-retarded. He could learn, and he can do real well. But he wasn't up with all the other children. What would take him two years what somebody else can learn in one year. That's what they told us when we found out he was having trouble.

York David Garrett: I hadn't been too long out of Howard University and had close ties with Freedmen's Hospital, knew all the doctors and nurses and everything. And I sent him back up there to them to see what can they do for him. Tonsillectomy. Nobody wanted to take a chance with him because they didn't—I was very well-known, they didn't want it known if they had worked on my kid and he died. I mean, the doctor, he didn't want to take that chance. Dr. Plummer. Dr. Plummer down in Raleigh.

York David Garrett: But he was always just like this. So they finally took him to Washington to put him in the hospital, and they sent him to children's hospital. And they gave him a tonsillectomy, and that's when they found out, said he couldn't possibly live to get more than 12 years old. They asked my wife—She was with him. "Had any more children?" "Yes, I got two more, a girl and a boy. This girl." So they said, "Well, go back home, put all your time on him. Just take good care of him. Do the best you can by him because he won't get to live over 10 or 12 years old." And so she said, "I promise you, we're going to take care of him the best we could." And he died at 53. (laughs)

York David Garrett: She took care of him for 50 something years. And two months and five days after she died, he died. Two months and five days after we buried her, we buried him.

York David Garrett: And he was in good shape. I mean, had a good mind and everything, but he was slow in doing things. You know what I'm talking about. I'm going to go ahead next question.

Kara Miles: The second child?

York David Garrett: Oh, that was Gloria.

Kara Miles: Gloria. Okay.

York David Garrett: One that went to Geneva, Switzerland. She's my heart, too. Yes, indeed.

Kara Miles: When was she born? (phone rings) Let me take this off so you—

Kara Miles: [INTERRUPTION 00:13:55]

York David Garrett: November 17, 1927.

Kara Miles: Is he still alive?

York David Garrett: No. He was the one that died with cancer.

Kara Miles: Okay. And when was—

York David Garrett: He has a daughter. He has a wife that teaches [indistinct 00:14:16] children. He has a grandson that teaches, that's at A&T. That's by his second wife. He had one child by his second wife. By his first wife, he had two children, a boy and a girl. The girl's at Knoxville College, working. And the boy, until about six months ago, was in Paris. [Indistinct 00:14:39] doing good work. But they're doing something that I wouldn't want to do, but he's still living. But that was Arlo. Arlo had three children, two by his first wife and one by his second wife.

Kara Miles: And what year did he die?

York David Garrett: Dog if I know. Must have been [indistinct 00:15:07].

Kara Miles: What decade? Do you know?

York David Garrett: He ain't been dead too long because this crazy—This boy now that's his son was born in '75. No, born in '70. And the boy now is 22. He's the one [indistinct 00:15:24]. And Arlo died about six years ago. He died here in [indistinct 00:15:32] hospital. Had cancer.

Kara Miles: And last child is Nathan?

York David Garrett: Yeah.

Kara Miles: Your last one?

York David Garrett: Yeah. Nathan Taylor Garrett.

Kara Miles: Okay. And when was he born?

York David Garrett: August 8, 1931. How old is that?

Kara Miles: You going to make me do math? 60-

York David Garrett: About 61?

Kara Miles: 62?

York David Garrett: He'd be 62 August 8th.

Kara Miles: Okay. That'd be right. Do you have any grandchildren?

York David Garrett: Oh, yes.

Kara Miles: How many?

York David Garrett: Ain't got too many grands, but I got a whole lot of great-grands. One of the grandchildren I have—Gloria never had any children. [indistinct 00:16:19] never had any children. Arlo had two children. Yeah. I mean, three children. And then the last one was Nathan. Nathan had two children. He says he got three because he married a girl [indistinct 00:16:45], and they had one child. They separated. He married Wanda, and she had one child before she got married from her husband that died in the army. Then they got married and got to know each other real well. Then they had another child between them. So they have one child, one child, one child together. So little Nathan is Wanda's and Nathan's child.

York David Garrett: And the girl in Detroit is just Nathan's child by his first wife. Is that right? Yeah. And her mother is still living. And real lucky. She's the girlfriend of the mayor of Detroit. That's right. They had an agreement. They got [indistinct 00:17:44] together, but they had an agreement not to get married. But she's accepted at all the social affairs in Detroit as his guest. [indistinct 00:17:51] as if they got married. But they decided they wouldn't get married. She's still known as Joyce Garrett. She didn't go back to her maiden name after they separated. She kept her name, and so she's still Joyce Garrett. And she had one child, and she—daughter, one child. And that child has four children. So I have four great-grands there. And my daughter in [indistinct 00:18:36], she has three children that were my great-grands. Four and three's seven, right?

Kara Miles: Mm-hmm.

York David Garrett: Then Nathan is here. He has little Nathan I'm talking about. Married, had one child, and that's my great-grandson.

Kara Miles: Okay. So you have eight.

York David Garrett: Huh?

Kara Miles: So you have eight?

York David Garrett: Eight great-grands. Yeah.

Kara Miles: All right. Now let's see. I need to know—Okay. How long did you live in Tarboro?

York David Garrett: From 1901 until 1932.

Kara Miles: Okay. And then you moved into Durham the rest of the time?

York David Garrett: I came here in '32.

Kara Miles: Okay. So before Tarboro, where did you live? You said 1901? Where did you live when you were born?

York David Garrett: I told you, Princeville, the oldest Colored town in the United States.

Kara Miles: Okay. That's right. You lived in Princeville.

York David Garrett: I was born in Princeville.

Kara Miles: Okay. All right. Let's see. I need your schools. I know you went to—

York David Garrett: Just two.

Kara Miles: Princeville Graded School. Do you know what year you started there?

York David Garrett: I started there when I was a baby, whenever that way. I don't know when I started, but I know when I graduated.

Kara Miles: All right. When did you graduate?

York David Garrett: Must have been '11.

Kara Miles: 1911?

York David Garrett: 1911. Yeah. Because I went to Howard in '13. And I stayed out of school a year.

Kara Miles: All right. Okay. And then you went to Elizabeth City?

York David Garrett: It was 1912.

Kara Miles: Okay. And then you went to Howard.

York David Garrett: 1913. Finished Howard in '20.

Kara Miles: That was the pharmacy school.

York David Garrett: Yeah.

Kara Miles: Okay. And so your jobs—You've owned your drug store.

York David Garrett: Yeah. I never had a job working for anybody but my father until I owned my own place. I didn't have to. He had work for me to do.

Kara Miles: Okay. Have you ever received any awards or honors or held any offices?

York David Garrett: That's too much, Miss. Yeah, that was—

Kara Miles: What was the most important one?

York David Garrett: Well, I mean, as soon as I finished pharmacy, I took the board and passed it, opened up my first store. I've told you all this. [indistinct 00:21:17] passed it and operated it until I came to Durham, which was '32. And before I came to Durham, I got active in professional societies. Medical and



pharmaceutical societies in North Carolina. And got to be the secretary of the Pharmaceutical Department of National Medical Association. I kept that job for 25 years.

Kara Miles: Okay. That was secretary of what now?

York David Garrett: I was the secretary of National Medical Association Pharmaceutical Department. I was secretary of that organization. Not the whole thing, just the pharmacy part. For 25 years.

Kara Miles: Okay. So when did you start that?

York David Garrett: '27. '27. No. Before '27. Yeah. '26. '26. I worked for them, kept going with them until later during the national meetings, too, because I was being the secretary of the National Pharmaceutical Association Department. I started attending National Medical Association then and continued until the three departments separated. Dentistry went one way. Pharmacy went another way and Medicine another way. And I was with them when they split. And just before they split, they started an organization. But during that time, I was 25 years I was the Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Section. And also during that time, locally, the state, Old North State Medical Society, we were all together. Understand what I'm saying?

York David Garrett: But then they never had a president of the Old North State Society that was a pharmacist. They had—generally, a physician was president. The dentist was secretary, and the pharmacist was the treasurer. But having attended about 10 or 12 years, they decided that they thought they wanted to give me the honor of being the president of Old North State Medical Society. I was the first Black, first pharmacist ever to be president of the Old North State Medical Society. I served there just one year. And later on, I can tell you now—

York David Garrett: That was in the start of the National Pharmaceutical Association. Come from the Old North—come from the state organization into the national organization. I had more of the material and everything than anybody else did for 25 years. So I turned all that over to the pharmaceutical department of the National Pharmaceutical Association, to Dean Cooper, at Howard. So he has credit for being the founder of the National Pharmaceutical Association. But I was there 25 years before he was. That's what I mean is he got all the stuff from what I brought in all together. And so then I became president of the National Pharmaceutical Association in '65, '66. Not '66. '55. Yeah. Because I was installed in that [indistinct 00:25:02].