

Eva Gibbs Adams: —to build a fire at school, and the Whites were riding, they'd throw things out the buses, they were riding buses to school. They would throw things out of the bus at the Black kids walking. Of course, sometimes they'd get to school, they were real cold and they'd got to get warmed up and whatnot.

Eva Gibbs Adams: They wanted to learn, and I tried to teach them, and evidently must have done some good because they wanted me to come back. They said I had done more in one year than some of the teachers had done who'd been out there five or six years. So I was proud of that, but having been given a job here in the city—

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, you had gotten a job in New Bern by that time?

Eva Gibbs Adams: I came on here.

Sonya Ramsey: How long did you teach in Vanceboro? [indistinct 00:00:59]

Eva Gibbs Adams: Two years, uh-huh.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: People were very friendly. Every weekend when I'd come home, because I stayed out there with them during the week so I could learn about them. They wanted teachers, this family would say, "Bring your teacher home to spend the night, have dinner with us." In that manner, and they would just give me more farm things to bring home, vegetables and canned fruits, and whatnot.

Eva Gibbs Adams: It was very nice, but I'd rather been here in the city and I still meet some of those people now who still live out there. The kids were good. They'd make the fire because I had never made the fires in any pot belly stoves, even though I'm right here in this house, but I didn't ever have to make any fires or anything. I just happened to be one of the lucky ones.

Sonya Ramsey: I wanted to go back and ask you, when you were at Winston-Salem, what was the social life like there?

Eva Gibbs Adams: It wasn't too much there because of the boys, there weren't enough boys, so they'd just have dances sometimes, but girl to girl, and they cut that out. If you went downtown, they'd have to go in a group and have to be chaperoned by some higher grade, maybe a sophomore or junior, or somebody like that would have to take you.

Eva Gibbs Adams: But you went in a group and then you came back that way. If you went walking, you could walk on the outside of the college, but you had to be back a certain time. We even had restrictions on

bedtime, lights out, and if you didn't turn your light out, the matron would pull the whole switch. Of course, it was a lot of fun because the kids would go to town, they'd come back, they'd bring by something to cook and had the hot plates. Of course, sometimes you'll smell all this ham or something all over the dormitory where they were cooking in the rooms.

Eva Gibbs Adams: A bunch of them, the matrons sliding down the hall, come out, "Who's that cooking?" If she'd go up to the back, they threw things out the window and everything, but the odor was still in the rooms. The ones downstairs who weren't involved, some of those upstairs, everybody came out in the hall to watch her go upstairs and look for this cooking. But of course, she found a room because naturally, if you going cook in a room, bacon or pork, or ham or something, they were going to smell it.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Such things like that was amusing, and then of course, sometimes they would pull a little day bed or something they had in the hall up, so they'd pull it across the steps. When you got to the top step, instead of being able to turn, you'd fall across the bed. But we had great restrictions. You had to be in a certain time and you really was supposed to have had those lights out a certain time.

Eva Gibbs Adams: One night, there were about seven or eight of us in one room, just sitting down talking and whatnot, and it was time for the lights to be turned now. They heard miss lady came up the steps, and of course, she got so near that you couldn't run out. So we got in the closet, the clothes closet, and closed the thing, and she came in and she was just talking to the ones who lived in there. She was saying, "I heard something in here."

Eva Gibbs Adams: And of course, the people in the closet got thicker, it's like, grinning and everything. Finally, she followed that sound and she pulled the curtain back, she said, "You better get in your rooms or take you to the principal." But it was interesting.

Sonya Ramsey: What was the year that you finished?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: What was the year that you finished?

Eva Gibbs Adams: What was the year I finished?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: '45, that's when I really got my degree.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay. Did World War II affect you?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: Did World War II affect you and your family, or anyone you knew in any way?

Eva Gibbs Adams: The war?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Mm-mm, it did not.

Sonya Ramsey: No? You didn't know anybody who had to go fight?

Eva Gibbs Adams: None of my brothers, I had three brothers at the time, and they didn't have to go. Mainly, I guess it was because my mother, they had to help support her since she didn't ever go back to work after my daddy passed.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, I had one brother, my youngest brother that I lost in '88, who stopped school in 9th grade after my daddy died so that he could help take care of us. To see that I had some of the things that my friends who had all of their families living, my brother had opened an account downtown for me and I could get anything that my friends had.

Eva Gibbs Adams: He was very talented. I was so sorry that he couldn't have gone through the school. But see, I was kind of small then, but he didn't miss a week after he got married. He didn't miss one week bringing my mother money over here and his wife was [indistinct 00:07:11]. I loved his wife as much as I loved my sister. So, we've been a close-knit family, mm-hmm.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you have to work when you were at Winston-Salem?

Eva Gibbs Adams: They give you duty work.

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Scrubbing the halls, and washing the dishes, and waiting the tables, because we had family style. That's the biggest thing. Let me see.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Yeah, you scrub the halls, you serve the tables, you might have to wash dishes, and of course, sometimes I had to go down and prepare the vegetables. If you had a friend that went down, maybe if they were doing collards or cabbage, or something of that nature, they probably would tell you, "Don't eat the vegetables today." Because we just shook handfuls and put it in. So it was quite amusing, yes.

Sonya Ramsey: You said you liked to dance, did you ever want to be a professional dancer?

Eva Gibbs Adams: A dancer?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: No, I just like to teach it.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I came back after I had had all the folk dancing, and the dancing that I got during the summer under Nancy Parks, she was White, she used to teach at Chapel Hill. She was a dance instructor, not a physical ed teacher, she was strictly a dance instructor.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Of course, she came from there to Hampton. I took under her at Hampton, and the last time I heard from her, she was in Greece after she left Hampton, but she loved the Black boys.

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: She and her husband broke up and she had one little boy, Chris, and of course her ex-husband and his girlfriend moved her to Hampton, got her settled. Then they went on and got married.

Eva Gibbs Adams: But she was very, very good. She was a dancer. Well, I opened up a little dance studio and I taught it on Saturdays.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Mm-hmm, and I started them with tapping, I started them with ballet, that was in the school. It's my private thing, but other than that, in school, during physical ed period, we did folk dancing, we did creative dancing, and just a lot of things I like to do.

Sonya Ramsey: When you had your own dancing school, did you have your own building or where did you—

Eva Gibbs Adams: No, I rented a building on Main Street, it's now called the Ellis Hall, but every Saturday we would go up there.

Sonya Ramsey: How did you go about getting students for your school?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: How did you go about getting students for your school?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, I'll tell you, most of the students were my friends' children, and of course, then they would tell their friends, and then that's the way it was built up. About the school dancing, the physical ed, when I had dancing part of it, I had taught the basic steps for tapping, and I guess after those girls got to be mothers, they taught some of the children that I was going to teach the same steps that I taught them.

Eva Gibbs Adams: When I would start something like tapping, they said, "My mother was teaching me that. Ms. Adams, they said you taught it to them." So they carried it right on. I enjoyed it. Even now, this year—no, the senior citizens connected with the recreational department.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Two years ago when they had their fun day, I was going to teach the senior citizens a Jewish share. It's something like a Jewish square dance, which requires eight people for a square. Well, most of them had arthritis or cramps, or something. Lord have mercy, I was older than some of them. They would get out of the steps and then maybe get a pain or something.

Eva Gibbs Adams: But anyway, I taught them a dance, it was going to be the Jewish share, but we had to not call it a square dance because I only had six people to remain in it because others couldn't get it. So we called it Stanley White Swingsters. That's the name of the recreation, the center.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: He was a Colored guy that had charge of recreation here, but he passed sometime back, so they named it for him. And of course, they did it, they had it in the papers here and whatnot. They had the full skirts on, the white blouses, and the flower in they head and their hair. And of course, they got recognition from the Sun Journal. Then a lady who passed last year had her 60th birthday, she has a beautiful lawn 'round by the cemetery, and she wanted them to do the dance at her birthday party because she had it out though.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Of course, this year, we got—let me see, one, two, there were three of us. We were going to take off The Supremes, but we weren't going to sing the songs, but we were going to just [indistinct 00:13:30]. We were going to wear these evening dresses, it was integrated, it was at the White Recreation Center here last month, no, it was in June.

Eva Gibbs Adams: We got these big wigs and of course, one of the ladies got sick the morning she's supposed to come, so my friend Ms. Bryant, who was very active, but she doesn't bother about dancing too much, so she said she'd take her place. She brought her evening dress and these big wigs for us, and I was supposed to have been, what's the—

Sonya Ramsey: Diana Ross?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Diana Ross. I'm supposed to lead the thing, and we were singing "Baby, Baby." The lady who was taking care of the record didn't know there was a little break in there, and I think Annabelle, that's Ms. Bryant, I think she had forgotten that we were supposed to pause a little bit, hesitate, and picked it up. She started off the stage, and of course I was leading the thing whatnot, and everything.

Eva Gibbs Adams: By the time we got halfway back to the dressing room, this record comes out just singing, they knew we weren't singing bad because the record. So it was lots of fun there. Mm-hmm.

Sonya Ramsey: I wanted to ask, when you went to New York to school, what was your impression of New York City?

Eva Gibbs Adams: One thing about it, New York City where I stayed, I stayed with a first cousin of mine who lived over a bar. Well, in the two blocks in which we lived, it wasn't bad even though the bar was down there, and it wasn't dirty, but they had certain sections of our Black people, around Manhattan. I just thought it was awful at the way those streets looked with the trash and garbage out.

Eva Gibbs Adams: And then they come down here and say, "I'm from New York." And don't say "how are you, how are you?" Things of that nature. But on a whole, there's too much crime. You're afraid sometimes, most of the time, and you just have to pick locations that are suitable for living there.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, the other years when I was in New York, see, I stayed with her the first summer, and the next time, I moved up on St. Nicholas Avenue up near the stadiums and whatnot.

Sonya Ramsey: Was this during the 1950s?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: Was this during the 1950s?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Yeah.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: '51 or something.

Sonya Ramsey: What did you think of St. Nicholas?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: What did you think of St. Nicholas Avenue?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Between 153rd, way up, they call it Sugar Hill, between 153rd, and let me see—between 155 and 185.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you live by yourself or did you get a roommate?

Eva Gibbs Adams: No, no, no. There was a teacher from Chapel Hill, an elderly person, she taught here one year, but I knew her when I was in undergrad school at Winston-Salem. She was teaching in the city, and of course, she was friendly with the librarian over at Winston, and of course I helped in the library and I knew a

lot of the friends.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Anyway, the way I got in touch with Mrs. Turner, that's the lady that I roomed with in New York the second year, she and the librarian were good friends and one night she came over, the librarian had to go to a meeting with the president and they left me in the library. She had told me, she said, "Don't let any of those city school teachers check out any books." 'Cause they would come and study. She said, "But don't let them check out any books."

Eva Gibbs Adams: So this one comes up and says, "I would like to—" She was very Irish, "I would like to check out these books." I said, "Well, I'm very sorry, Mrs. Dunlap," I said that no books were supposed to be checked out off the campus, for people off campus. "Oh, well, we are good friends." I said, "But I'm sorry." I said, "Now, she's in a teacher's meeting if you want to go down there and she okays it, very well."

Eva Gibbs Adams: That's the way we met. And he came here to teach one year, and then she left and went to Chapel Hill. Well, I said, all right to say this, she was going to summer school at New York U, and she knew I was coming north, so she told me not to try to find a room because the lady who owned this apartment was going to be in Florida for the summer and she had told her she could have charge of the house. So I rented a room there and she had a room, so that's how I happened to get up there. Mm-hmm. Very nice.

Sonya Ramsey: Had you married by that time?

Eva Gibbs Adams: I got married in 1941.

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, okay. How did you meet your husband?

Eva Gibbs Adams: I met Ernest Adams—I'm not married now.

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I'm divorced.

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I met him through his stepmother. His stepmother was down here with the—that's because she married his daddy, her first husband. She lived, there was a house right on the other side of my lot. And she—no, no, no. He had gone. Yeah, she was with him.

Eva Gibbs Adams: So then she went back to Goldsboro, and this husband died, and she met Ernest's father, and he was going to Hampton College. So she would write and she'd tell me she wanted me to meet her son, really was her stepson, and I stopped through there once, and that's how we met.

Eva Gibbs Adams: He was very slow and everything my grandson used to say, they call me Gigi, he said,

"Gigi, why did you and Granddaddy separate?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, I do. He was too slow for you." But we didn't have the arguments or anything, but I don't know, it just was not—I'm an outgoing person. I like participation and wholesome things.

Eva Gibbs Adams: So I just came on home. I stayed married for three years, I wanted me a child, and I wanted it to be legal, so I had my daughter who's in Atlanta. She's a band teacher, she finished Virginia State, and Vivian is 50. All of her children—

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, be careful of the microphone.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Oh, I forgot that one.

Sonya Ramsey: You want me to—I'll look at the picture.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Okay.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: She went there and took music, she was a band instructor in Atlanta. But in '86, I believe that's our last family reunion in Baltimore, she used to tell me when she called, she said, "Mother, sometimes my eyes black out when I'm coming home." I said, "Well, you have to be careful about that on those expressways in Atlanta."

Eva Gibbs Adams: It finally came to the point when she came to the family reunion, she told everybody but me that she was having great trouble with her eyesight. Well, she had just bought this van and she had the three children, one girl and two boys, the boys are older, so she helped them to drive from Atlanta to Baltimore, I had one niece there.

Eva Gibbs Adams: After that, when she went back the next term, she just resigned and she went around with 99% blindness until last October, I was in Atlanta at the particular time, but she works at a bank. I'll tell you how she happened to get there.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Vivian's always been aggressive, and if she is my daughter, she's smart. She was 99% blind, and I guess when she was about 90% blind, she had to stop teaching. She decided that she would go over to Georgia State and take a course in computer service. She did.

Sonya Ramsey: How did she see it [indistinct 00:23:14]?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Huh?

Sonya Ramsey: How did she do that? How did she see?



Eva Gibbs Adams: She didn't. She had 90%—I mean 90% blind, but she had 10%.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: And being a person with a strong will, because the kids said they weren't going to let her sit up in there and mope and you know, worry. Anyway, she took the course, and the people in Atlanta hire people with low vision, so when the lady from the Wachovia Bank came over for some interviews, she selected Vivian.

Eva Gibbs Adams: They gave her this job down at the Wachovia Bank, but the state of Georgia bought her the computer that talks to her. While they were waiting for that computer to arrive, they sent her to a listening school. Now, I don't know anything about this, but they sent her to Marietta to a listening school.

Eva Gibbs Adams: What she couldn't see, she could hear. And so in October, when she came home from work, she said, "Mother." I said, "What?" She says, "I think I've lost all of my vision." Oh, I wanted to cry so bad, but I couldn't do it in front of her.

Eva Gibbs Adams: She went on, she had lost the eyesight, but she was so active, she knew how to get around in the church, she knew how to get around the house. She had taken enough Braille, 'cause she went to the Center for Impaired Vision before because she said, "Mother, I don't know what—" That's before she got blind. She said, "Because I don't know whether I'm going to lose my eyesight totally or not." She said, "I do want to learn enough so that when I put vegetables in my freezer, I'll know whether it's broccoli or whether it's spinach or something, enough for that." Which she did.

Eva Gibbs Adams: So they hired her over at Wachovia Bank, and when she lost her eyesight completely, the president told her that her work had been so good, people had called in and said how efficient she was, and I read some of the letters that people wrote and said, "Your employee Mrs. Huggins is a jewel." She said, "And because of her, I will still do business with you."

Eva Gibbs Adams: They told my daughter that she can have that job as long as she wants to. The supervisor and all of the people that work around her area said, "Anything you can't do, we'll do it." Now, she gets calls, she can explain the whole process to the people, and she does very well. Every day, she's out. She had an orchestra with her church choir, and she's going right on.

Eva Gibbs Adams: She came down the 2nd of July, she flew down here to spend part of her vacation with me, and I flew back with her and stayed a week.

Sonya Ramsey: I wanted to ask, when she was a little girl, when you were raising her, how did you manage childcare with your teaching?

Eva Gibbs Adams: How did she manage?

Sonya Ramsey: How did you manage childcare with your teaching?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Childcare when she was little?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Beautifully. The thing about it, I always wanted her to be somebody you people speak of now in terms like that. And of course, I would do things and say things to her and make her conscious of it.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, when she was little, see, I put my shoes up. I didn't know whether the tornado was coming last night or not, I live here by myself. When I feel like moving, I do. When I don't, I won't. However, a girl was supposed to come help me today, actually hasn't shown up.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Anyway, Vivian was easy to train. I put her in the Catholic school when she was four years old and I put her in there for this reason, she was a smart type. Her IQ was pretty good. So I said if I'm going to teach and she's got to be going from pillar to post, I'm going to put her in someplace where she will learn something.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I didn't want her to just excel or anything, but what she would hear and be around the whole day when I was in teaching would be something constructive. So she went there when she was four years old, she progressed nicely, when she was five, she went to 2nd grade, I took her in public school then. She went from Catholic school to the public school in 2nd grade.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Around the house, naturally, I had spoiled her to the extent that she was lazy about doing anything, but she would do, very obedient.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you have to get babysitters and things like that?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Fortunately, there was lady who had been living in the neighborhood, I guess when I was young, and she didn't particularly have any place to stay. So I gave her a room here and gave that—because my mother died on the steps out there when Vivian was a year and a half, was just about a year and a half, so I got Ms. Cora, as we call her, to come and live with us.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Of course, if I had to go out, she was well taken care of even though miss lady was not educated. Vivian somehow escaped her vocabulary because she'd have, "Vivian come on, write my grocery order." Vivian would go, she was conscious of the fact she might say, "I want four cans of the ghetti." You know what that was? Spaghetti. Things like that. Vivian kept that thing up and she does it right now.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I'm just wondering how she escaped not talking like she did, but now she was a number one babysitter, built in babysitter. Now I had taught Vivian. I said, "Now Vivian," when she was little, she'd walk around, 'cause this table's younger, but if she'd go to your house and walk around, see something pretty, she'd want to touch. I taught her in the house, not to touch, but look.

Eva Gibbs Adams: She'd walk all around everything in here when she was young and say, "Pretty." But she would not touch it. You know how some children come and have everything off, but I tried to bring her up to know the values of life, to be sharing, to be caring, and that's exactly the way she turned out.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you and your family, when you were growing up, did your family attend church services here in New Bern?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Did what?

Sonya Ramsey: Did your family attend church services here in New Bern?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Oh, yes.

Sonya Ramsey: What church did your family attend?

Eva Gibbs Adams: My mother, my sister, my brothers and I, we attended the Baptist Church, Gilfield Baptist.

Sonya Ramsey: Gilfield?

Eva Gibbs Adams: My daddy attended First Baptist. We were church going people. Now, when I became 12 years old, all of my friends and pals lived out like Burn Street before the fire and everything, but anyway, they went to the Methodist church, St. Peters.

Eva Gibbs Adams: When I was 12 years old, I started going Sunday school down there with them. From there, I joined the junior church and from the junior church, I joined the senior church.

Sonya Ramsey: At St. Peter's?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm? St. Peter's, it's AME Zion Church. It's the mother church of Methodism in the South. St. Peter's AME Zion. While I'm there, I am president of the senior choir.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay. I wanted to ask you, you mentioned about the fire, do people ever tell you stories about the fire or anything?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, I can tell you what I remember.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Because I was a kid.

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: That morning, my mother had let me go around—at least she didn't let me go, she had my sister to take me over on Main Street. Now, it used to be Pine Street, it's near George Street. You know where those tennis courts are? Have you been out that way?

Sonya Ramsey: I think so.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, anyway, my aunt used to live out there. She used to live in the house right next to that cemetery on the opposite side. And we, my two cousins and I, were out in the yard making mud cakes.

Eva Gibbs Adams: That same morning before I went out, the mill caught afire. The lumber mill, something over there. Well, when I was over playing in the dirt with my cousins making cakes and whatnot, we had an alarm system here for fire. That boy, I'm telling you, it sound like the world was coming to an end when it would blow.

Eva Gibbs Adams: But say for instance, if this was 57, my area and up further, 58, anytime that thing would blow, it would blow five and then stop, and then it would blow seven times and then stop, well, you knew the area in which the fire was. That's where this fire started was way over somewhere in there by Craven Terrace, and it was leaping so that it would just come all the way across the street, the wind was in it.

Eva Gibbs Adams: The thing about it, as I've gotten old, I think this might have helped us spread it. They dynamited some of the houses trying to contain the fire, but that fire went across the street and it burned up all from Craven Terrace all out there where West Street, out there where the cemetery is on George Street, you where the police station is?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: All of that section from way back over to Terrace all the way to the railroad, it skipped over one or two buildings, all that fire skipped over one or two buildings. I do know that—well, my sister came and got me and I came on home because they didn't know whether it was going to come up this way or not. My mother was a quick thinker and she thought about a house that was vacant around the street, and she ran around and told a man who owned it to save it for her sister.

Eva Gibbs Adams: And so then, we got her, where I was, to move around this section. So she saved quite a bit because she sent a man with a cart and a horse out there to get the things, and she came over here to live.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, right after the fire, I do know that the Red Cross furnished all of these tents, and they

called it Tent City, and the people who lost their homes and who wanted to live in there and didn't have any place to go lived in there until they were able to get something.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, one cruel thing I think the city did was to take the land where that police station is, where the ballpark is, and coming back where the cemetery is, and the Black people had their best homes up there. Drugist, pharmacists, and teachers and whatnot, and they would not let them rebuild. They put the ballpark there. That was the armory, where the police station is, that was the armory. No place on George Street would they let the Blacks rebuild. That was a cruel thing, I thought, and they got a cemetery in one section of it. They did that wrong. That was quite dirty, I think.

Sonya Ramsey: That was in 1922, the fire?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: The fire was in 1922?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Yes, 1922.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now, in our clubhouse, we have a picture of Tent City. I don't know who furnished us with that, but we got a little clubhouse on West Street near this [indistinct 00:36:58].

Sonya Ramsey: What club is it?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: What club is it?

Eva Gibbs Adams: That's the one I told you about, we called it Climbers, that's ours. But it is a branch of the Negro Women's Federated Club.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay, I guess—

Eva Gibbs Adams: It's right in front of that little hospital.

Sonya Ramsey: I guess I wanted to ask you about during the '50s and the '60s, what were some of the organizations in which you belonged to?

Eva Gibbs Adams: During the '50s and the '60s?

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, I belonged to too much. The book club, the arts and craft.

Sonya Ramsey: Were these women's clubs, or were men and women both?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Those are women's clubs.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Mm-hmm. I belong to the—what about church?

Sonya Ramsey: Oh, that's good, church—

Eva Gibbs Adams: Missionaries.

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: I was president of the Missionary Society, I have been. I have been in charge of the youth choir, and after most of the youth left, the preacher still wanted a choir, so I got the young adult choir, and we were going to name it, this preacher was a naming person, he liked the name the organizations.

Eva Gibbs Adams: A lady that had had the choir during my elementary and high school days was named Nanny Holly Martin, and so we named the choir Nanny Holly Martin, and I remained president of that up until I think the last year. I am a counselor for it, advisor, and I'm coordinator for the choir's music in my church now.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Of course, we went to church. My mother and daddy said they didn't care what denomination we chose, but we had to go to church, we had to go to Sunday school. If you didn't go to those places, shame on you. You didn't get anywhere to go on Sunday.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Now on Sundays after Sunday school, we used to have Sunday school at St. Peter's at 1:00. Well, I had a little group, you know how you have a little friends down the church, and every Sunday, we would walk down to the waterfront on East Front Street and we'd go one particular way because they knew there was going to be some little White children out there meddling us, and we'd meddle them right back.

Eva Gibbs Adams: They'd follow us, but we never had any fights or anything like that, but we would go down there every Sunday to the waterfront and was happy. Where children now, they don't like things like that. Of course, we had a fire museum, I don't think that was in existence, but we went to educational things, whatever it was, and plays. Yeah, we were church, church going people.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you belong to any sororities or things like that?

Eva Gibbs Adams: No, it's the strangest thing, most people say. Now, when the AKA sorority was organized here, my best friend organized it, so therefore she wanted me to join. But see, when I was at Winston, they didn't have any sororities.

Eva Gibbs Adams: For some reason, I don't know what reason, but I did not affiliate. Of course, all of my friends right now are AKAs. I believe I have—I mean those who are in sororities. I got more AKA friends than I don't know what. I used to help Mrs. Daniels, for which the school is named for her, FRA Daniels out there on West Street.

Sonya Ramsey: Mm-hmm.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, his wife taught me French and she was like a mother to me even after I started teaching. I taught a cotillion for the debutante ball for her AKAs.

Sonya Ramsey: You taught them the dances?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Yeah.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay.

Eva Gibbs Adams: For the debutante ball, they always have special things. When they used to have their little meetings with them, each soro was supposed to bring a sandwiches or something, I've done so much for that sorority. But I still see how they have to work and I never would commit myself to joining it. Yet, most of my friends are AKAs. I probably have two that are Deltas.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you ever participate in political organizations like the NAACP of things like that?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Voters League. I have worked on the polls as a registrar and they're trying to get me going as a judge this year, but I'm not going to go because it's too boring for me. You stay there all day long and just certain periods, maybe before people go to work, you have quite a few, and then lunchtime, and oh boy, when they get off from work.

Eva Gibbs Adams: The thing that I don't—I enjoyed it to a certain extent as a registrar, but I did not want to accept this judgeship that they wanted me to take this year. The judge's duty is to see that everything is tabulated right. What that machine says, your books must say, and if not, you don't leave until you find a mistake and you have to be over there by 7:00. So I told her no, I was sorry, I had worked over there, not as judge, but just registering the people, I said, "I'm sorry darling, but I can't take that."

Sonya Ramsey: I wanted to ask, back in the '50s, was it hard for Blacks to register to vote then?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Not as many voted. They weren't vote conscious. Not many of them voted, but they used

to have you to read something, read part of the Constitution or something, but they don't do that now. They have free will now, but I guess back there, they had a little trouble voting and make you read where they wouldn't make the Whites read.

Sonya Ramsey: Did you vote then?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Hmm?

Sonya Ramsey: Did you vote during that time?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Yes, I've been voting ever since I've been grown.

Sonya Ramsey: I got another question I wanted to ask you about Cherry Point. What do you think Cherry Point's influence on the Black community?

Eva Gibbs Adams: What'd you say about it?

Sonya Ramsey: What do you think has been Cherry Point's impact on the Black community?

Eva Gibbs Adams: Oh, it's about 100% New Bern and the area around here, because I was just talking last night, I said, "We don't have too many industries around here for people to make a living." People come from New Bern and various little sections around New Bern.

Eva Gibbs Adams: In fact, they come, I think as far as Washington, North Carolina. Without that, we just would be at a loss. I think it would really add to crime if they had taken Cherry Point. So I think Cherry Point is a great, great help.

Sonya Ramsey: What was New Bern like before they built Cherry Point?

Eva Gibbs Adams: They worked at the mill, and that was just one mill, they didn't have Bosch, or whatever it is. They didn't have Hatteras where they make boats, and I forgot they said the boat place down the water.

Eva Gibbs Adams: But anyway, Hatteras make some boats for all over the country. Walter Cronkite was down here with his vote, I think it was two years ago, but he didn't want the people to know it because he knew they would crowd and see a lot of people park their boats here now because it's cheaper. Have you been to the Sheraton?

Sonya Ramsey: Yes, I've been past there.

Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, you should go in there and look in the back at the boats, people bring the boats from everywhere. The guy that was on Bonanza, I know when he came through here to get his horse, the one that died, he came to get his boat fixed here.



Eva Gibbs Adams: Well, now, I'm saying that without Hatteras, Bosch, and there's another one, and the mill doesn't have too many people over there now, there wouldn't be much for them to do. So Cherry Point, if Cherry Point was taken away from us, we wouldn't have anything. I think it really would lead to crime where the people wouldn't have.

Sonya Ramsey: Okay. I had another question I wanted to ask. Did you ever notice any discrimination among Blacks based on skin color?