

Grace George: People enjoyed that.

Annie Gavin: Right, right, right.

Grace George: It was kind of—

Annie Gavin: The Far Graveyard, that's where the slaves were buried.

Grace George: Okay.

Annie Gavin: That's where slaves were buried in. That's one thing JoJo did right, he fought for that graveyard because they were digging that up for the airport, and would have got away with it.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:00:27] not quite clear on it, because now they have fenced it in. I don't know what they're going to do with it, but part of the airport we were speaking about before, slave cemetery out here on Howard Road, they used to call it—

Annie Gavin: Howell Road.

Grace George: Howell Road. But I used to call it Old Airport Road, but now—

Annie Gavin: To me, it's still Airport.

Grace George: Airport running through Old James City.

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: So he did fight for that.

Annie Gavin: Mm-hmm.

Grace George: He used to go up [indistinct 00:00:57] the airplane.

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: What amazes me about James City, Ms. Annie, is the cemeteries, how they're located. My mom said not only that was the slave—

Annie Gavin: Well, the road came across the cemetery.

Grace George: Right.

Annie Gavin: Because it was a cemetery on that side of the road.

Grace George: Okay, by Ramada? On the other side of—

Annie Gavin: Other side of Ramada Inn.

Grace George: She said that's where her grandma was buried.

Annie Gavin: Uh-huh.

Grace George: Mama's—

Annie Gavin: I think Aden Howell was the last person buried in there. And you could see his grave clearly because people put all his—you know, them watches and clocks and stuff? On top of his grave was a lot of that.

Grace George: So a lot of things are still in that area because from what I understand, like you said, way back there, how you lived, whatever things you did, you sort of put those pieces on your grave.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, yeah.

Grace George: And he worked on clocks.

Annie Gavin: Howell working on clocks and watches.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:01:48] Such a shame how they have disturbed those areas, historical areas.

Annie Gavin: Right.

Grace George: You can find a lot of old artifacts and things in areas like that.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, sure would because he had a lot of different clocks and stuff. He didn't, but the people put his stuff on his grave. Because that's the way we used to have to come from James City over here, unless we came down the railroad. I remember the little red schoolhouse too, sitting on a hill. I must have been four or five.

Grace George: That was the first schoolhouse?

Annie Gavin: I didn't go to school there.

Grace George: But [indistinct 00:02:31]

Annie Gavin: But I remember, it was still there. And Friselle Ada Davis daddy, he looked like a White man. But you know he did because she did. He was the principal. I think my mama said she went to school there. But we had the school down here because I didn't go to school in James City too much. I went to Sutton School.

Grace George: Let me just keep on with school. Now the Sutton School's in New Bern?

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: Okay.

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:03:11]

Grace George: Okay. I'm going to come back to that. But James City School, you were a big girl when that school was [indistinct 00:03:21] My mother said she was one of the first ones that went to that school?

Annie Gavin: Yeah, but she and Addie and that group went to that school. Brick school that they burnt down not long ago. You went to that school.

Grace George: Right. Yeah, before they built the automobile dealership.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, yeah,

Grace George: They burnt the old school down?

Annie Gavin: Yeah, they burnt the old school down.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:03:50]

Annie Gavin: The one you went to, brick school.

Grace George: The brick school.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, all my children went to the brick school. But we didn't have a brick school. In fact, I don't know why my daddy always sent me to school in New Bern, but I had to have the best.

Grace George: Well, did they offer school [indistinct 00:04:06]

Annie Gavin: I went to Sutton School, the AME Zion Church school.

Grace George: Okay.

Annie Gavin: AME Zion Church had a school.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:04:13]

Annie Gavin: J.T. Barber was a public school, West Street.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:04:20]

Annie Gavin: Oh yeah?

Grace George: West Street. I mean, old West Street, J.T. Barber. And Barber was the principal.

Annie Gavin: Because you went to West Street too. All of my children, you did too. But they got a lot of photographs?

Grace George: He asked me did I want to use them on the exhibit. I told him yes, I'm not turning anything down.

Annie Gavin: Right, right.

Grace George: I feel that eventually we will use all of it.

Annie Gavin: Right.

Grace George: That's what we were planning.

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:04:59]

Grace George: [indistinct 00:04:59]

Annie Gavin: That's good.

Grace George: People from James City did attend that school?

Annie Gavin: Yeah, because that was the high school you all went to. Y'all had to walk, didn't have a bus. Did they have a bus when y'all went—

Grace George: Oh, yeah.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, later years.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:05:07] a wooden bridge that I had nightmares many years after leaving here of that bus going into that water.

Annie Gavin: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Grace George: But the planks, my mom said they first used to go over. She don't remember, but her mom told her, that it would go over on barges in [indistinct 00:05:24] Then they put this bridge, the planks that you could look in the water.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, the plank bridge.

Grace George: Yeah, and then—

Annie Gavin: I remember when they didn't have a bridge and people used to walk on the railroad trestle to town, but you had to pick the time between when the train running. Some people, I reckon, still walk that bridge.

Grace George: I know, I've seen them standing out there.

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: Boy, I would have died trying to cross that.

Annie Gavin: Well, it wasn't too bad because there were big cross ties and they were sort of close. Then it was a factory down there on that same creek, same railroad.

Grace George: Was that the one that was the preserves? Different fruits and things? Or this was later? Because I remember on the side of the old bridge, there was a factory that—

Annie Gavin: Well, that's one.

Grace George: —preserved peaches and tomatoes and [indistinct 00:06:30]

Annie Gavin: No, that was Mac Lipton's factory.

Grace George: That was [indistinct 00:06:38]

Annie Gavin: Yeah. That was later years. That was like you're going to this bridge we still got. Mac Lipton had that and a lot of people got work down there. But then it was a fertilizer factory on that other bridge and the train could drive up there and load the bags of fertilizer. The White family—some of that family still lives—I used to go down there and play with the girl about my same age, and we used to play under the house. It

was so high up. That's when Poppa had his café down there. All I had to do walk down the railroad and be there. But so many changes took place. As far as integration goes, White and Black have been integrated among themselves for years, even before. But to be in friendship or have a Black friend or White friend, they had to hide it.

Grace George: Yes.

Annie Gavin: But White people and Colored people always loved each other. The biggest trouble came was when other people got mingled up in it because my daddy had a car and I forgot what the name, but the family there, two of the girls were teachers. And my daddy carried them to the school every day because their daddy didn't have a car. But my daddy had the car because he lost his foot on the train and he was in the pension and had the café, so he was kind of progressive. But your granddaddy's uncle, Wes Foye's brother, had the first Black business in James City that I know about.

Grace George: My mama say he used to have taxi and before the cars came along, he would chauffeur people around in a horse and buggy.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, he had what they call a surrey with the fringe on the top.

Grace George: Yeah.

Annie Gavin: Against the front one seat and another seat. Sam Benson had one and Wes Foye had one, because Wes was always Bud's boss. They was brothers, but they—

Grace George: [indistinct 00:08:59]

Annie Gavin: But Wes was ambitious. He had a big house, it got burnt down. His house got burnt. Somebody set his house afire, I think. But then before his house, all the house on the other side burned too.

Grace George: Oh, I think what happened there, my mom said, before his house caught, the sparks from her house—

Annie Gavin: House, stopped the big house.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:09:23]

Annie Gavin: Because his house was kind of on a hill.

Grace George: On a hill. Because she'd left a stove on or something that burned the whole—

Annie Gavin: What they had the habit of doing is they wouldn't take time and cut the wood short enough, and that you could put the wood in at the end of the stove. And it burned down, then that other piece going

to fall.

Grace George: Right.

Annie Gavin: Bee out in the street talking, like they burned up James City.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:09:49] like they burnt Old James City.

Annie Gavin: Yeah. Sure did. But it's interesting to let your mind—

Grace George: It's amazing when you think about things, they sort of connect.

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: Because it's [indistinct 00:10:03]

Annie Gavin: Bea used to drink her liquor.

Grace George: Liquor.

Annie Gavin: But you didn't go hungry around her.

Grace George: No sure [indistinct 00:10:08]

Annie Gavin: She'd feed you. She always had something to give somebody.

Grace George: She was sort of like Boocher.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, Boocher gives as good, as she going to ready to raise a whole lot of hell.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:10:16] Raise hell and feed you at the same time.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, same time. Sure would. Well, one thing, James City people would fight among themselves. And they could be mad with you, but wouldn't let nobody else bother you. Boochie was one of them. Clannish, that's what we were.

Grace George: Yeah.

Annie Gavin: Clannish.

Grace George: Had your own little clan.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, clannish.

Grace George: I think they're still—the young people have that, but they don't understand what it is.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, they have it.

Grace George: They have it.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, they have it.

Grace George: We've been trying to reach them, penetrate, get into to them. But they're standoffish. But once you're in there, they sort of protect you. Don't let anybody else [indistinct 00:11:07]

Annie Gavin: Right, let me—

Grace George: Give it to you.

Annie Gavin: But nobody else better not.

Grace George: They stand on the sideline and watch.

Annie Gavin: Right.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:11:15] way back that people showed how, expressed it, but today, it's sort of like, "I'll wait and see."

Annie Gavin: I'll wait and see what's going to happen. Yeah, because the James City boys used to get together, as Black boys come over from town, if they start courting the girls, they'd run them back.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:11:38] bother with the ladies.

Annie Gavin: Bother with their women. But now, well, after they started going to school together, they were more mixing. Because I used to have house full of boys and girls all the time. I had a record player and piano.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:11:54] free, let them be children.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, bicycle.

Grace George: She always had a store. Ms. Annie always had a shop. We were young children then. I grew up with her children. We would always, after church, we'd come to Ms. Annie's house and we'd just have a good time. We'd play the piano, we'd sing—



Annie Gavin: Play records.

Grace George: We'd dance. We'd have our little boyfriends to come and [indistinct 00:12:21] the parlor because most of the parents still wasn't too [indistinct 00:12:25] about little boys talking to you. So we would have that little freedom to come and sit down and talk, and everybody just had a good time.

Annie Gavin: Mm-hmm. Sure would.

Grace George: That was our afternoon if there wasn't any church.

Annie Gavin: After church. Well, they had to go to church and Sunday school.

Grace George: I think it's what has made us strong.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, it did.

Grace George: They don't get that, that atmosphere. Something today just [indistinct 00:12:51]

Annie Gavin: But you know what happened? It follows you because when Gwen's children were little, growing up, and I'd go there to visit, they always had a lot of younguns all over the steps, all over the porch. So Gwen said, "Mama, go out there and look out that door. And see what is remind you of?" I said, "My house."

Grace George: [indistinct 00:13:10]

Annie Gavin: I went and sometimes I come home, one day in particular, Bill Ryder was in the kitchen and had him some molasses and biscuits, because I'd make a lot of biscuits and food. We always had food. James City people always had food.

Grace George: Yeah.

Annie Gavin: That's one thing, we always had food.

Grace George: I think that's why you don't see a lot of them out there when things are being handed out. You don't hear of them running to grab. They have that—

Annie Gavin: Instinct of getting their own.

Grace George: Getting their own.

Annie Gavin: We were kind of clannish. We could be mad with you, but nobody else better not bother you.

Yeah, we were clannish. But forget about being mad if somebody else bother you.

Grace George: Did it—

Unknown Interviewer: I'm curious, did you ever hear any stories of people who either fought with the Union as part of African Brigade or perhaps worked as laborers out at Fort Totten or any of the other forts around here?

Annie Gavin: I didn't quite understand what you—

Unknown Interviewer: Do you know of any stories of people who fought with the Union in the Civil War as part of the African Brigade perhaps or [indistinct 00:14:36] work as laborers for the forts? I know some of the laborers came here in James City to build Fort Totten.

Annie Gavin: Yeah. Well, I don't know. I probably know them, but I wasn't able to pinpoint them because we don't have where they could get work, they worked. That's one thing about James City people, they would work.

Grace George: You can rest assured that many things that were built in that time in this area were probably built by—You can't, like I say, say upfront names, but—

Annie Gavin: No, but they worked.

Grace George: But they did work in those areas because fact is, most of the Whites, we had to work for them. So I'm almost positive that you could name some [indistinct 00:15:29] but we don't have that. I don't—

Annie Gavin: No, well, whatever work there was to be done—

Grace George: They did it.

Annie Gavin: —they did it.

Unknown Interviewer: Also [indistinct 00:15:32] did you ever hear anybody talking about fighting with the Union or building those forts?

Annie Gavin: No. When you think about it, there's always been sort of like a good relationship between Whites and Blacks in our area.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:15:51]

Annie Gavin: The Whites would fight for the Blacks. Especially those that grew up on the farms and stuff together.

Grace George: Well, we didn't have a lot of plantations in this area.

Annie Gavin: Uh-uh. No, just farms.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:16:13] you had a independent, when they became free people. They sort of came to this area almost free, before [indistinct 00:16:15] So most of the people [indistinct 00:16:15] They had so many acres of land around that they were able to farm on. My mom also said about the fishing, that they could go take a pole and put a little pin on it.

Annie Gavin: Yeah.

Grace George: They'd go and catch all the fish the family could eat and the rest they would sell. So with their little farms, they [indistinct 00:16:40] go over and sell it to the area—

Annie Gavin: Pull wagons.

Grace George: Independent.

Annie Gavin: Sell vegetables.

Grace George: They had [indistinct 00:16:48] in this area that, understand, they are the Elliott and the [indistinct 00:16:54]

Annie Gavin: Yeah, they were farmer.

Grace George: They did a lot of carpentry work, like buildings. I think the people trace back to some of their ancestors [indistinct 00:17:05]

Annie Gavin: Right, right, right.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:17:07] I think some of them did a lot of building the houses in New Bern.

Annie Gavin: Oh, yeah.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:17:15]

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:17:16] did.

Grace George: A few houses over—

Annie Gavin: Reverend Elliott.

Grace George: Some of the houses over here, like Ms. Davis's home, they still own, they [indistinct 00:17:24] like the houses downtown. There's still one or two of them around. But they [indistinct 00:17:24] the carpenters over this area.

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:17:24] particulars about the same.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:17:24]

Annie Gavin: Well, they worked whatever work they could get.

Grace George: The railroad tracks.

Annie Gavin: But we had a lot of fishermen, type of boats, go out there and fish. Like Simon and them could go out and catch fish and sell. Ms. Ida and them put them basket of clothes on their head and walk across that bridge with the basket and [indistinct 00:18:06] holding it. I don't know how they kept it on.

Grace George: I got pictures of people carrying baskets on their heads. Now the railroad track, did you know anybody other than your father that worked on the railroad track? From when you were a child, [indistinct 00:18:21]

Annie Gavin: No. My daddy worked mostly away from—because he got his foot cut off at Morehead. He was a brakeman and that's how his foot got cut off. He put his foot to pull back whatever it was and the thing rolled over it.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:18:34] We are collecting a few artifacts [indistinct 00:18:48] There's a lady that does have some honorable discharge that was dated [indistinct 00:18:57] There's a good possibility that name might be on there. Because during that time, there was fighting and then it stopped. So she's from Philadelphia, but this dates back and I think we have thatat the exhibit I'm not sure. I have to make sure [indistinct 00:19:25] But that might be interesting because [indistinct 00:19:31]

Unknown Interviewer: [indistinct 00:19:31] collect war stories of former residents [indistinct 00:19:39]

Annie Gavin: We had a lot of fellows that went to war. Sherman went, he was in battle. My Uncle Jimmie, Robert went.

Grace George: Sammy Randolph went with that [indistinct 00:20:05]

Annie Gavin: Sammy Randolph.

Grace George: That was the—

Annie Gavin: World War I.

Grace George: One. But I see there's a Bryant, or Colonel Bryant.

Annie Gavin: Hm?

Grace George: I think there's—[indistinct 00:20:15] I heard of a Bryant that was fighting in the war.

Annie Gavin: Pip fought.

Grace George: Okay. So it could have been his father who was in the Civil War. [indistinct 00:20:21] father could have been in the Civil War.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, but—

Grace George: Pip must be about 100 and some years old by now.

Annie Gavin: Yeah. Maybe. But I do know he went in the service. Sherman went in the service too.

Grace George: Sherman went in—

Annie Gavin: World War II.

Grace George: World War II because Pip's probably went in—

Annie Gavin: World War I. And my Uncle Jimmie and my Uncle Wilbur, World War I.

Grace George: Because most of [indistinct 00:20:53] in wars that time, that was a way of getting away and learning.

Annie Gavin: Well, they were drafted. They had to be drafted even then. I know when the Armistice Day, my grandmother's son that was married to Mama Lou, they had brought him from Norfolk. Somebody had killed him and they still had them small houses and had him under the tree, and had brought him back here. John Washington shot him [indistinct 00:21:31] his sons.

Grace George: John Washington?

Annie Gavin: John Washington. Lloyd Leroy's boy And he's the one that sent the telegram and he's the one came home with the body.

Grace George: After killing him?

Annie Gavin: Mm-hmm.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:21:44]

Annie Gavin: Killing [indistinct 00:21:46] Ms. [indistinct 00:21:47] Roy's sister. Yeah.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:21:51]

Annie Gavin: Then he stayed here, but he hung around Poppa all the time. I think he caught himself trying—because he and Poppa were friends. That was Marlene's and them's father. He was from, I forgot where he was from. But anyway, he came here to work. But he worked at the mill, used to bring—Poppa would wake up mornings and they could bring so much material from the mill. They'd allow you to carry as much as you could carry and not have to pay for it, because my daddy was working at the mill when he built this house. As much as he could carry on his shoulder, he could have.

Grace George: Okay.

Annie Gavin: He would bring so much every night and his mama would go over there and lay it on the wall. Mama would hold his lamp. I was a year old at the time. [indistinct 00:23:00] building their house. Course, the house been made over since then. 81 years.

Grace George: That's when the lawyers [indistinct 00:23:11] right?

Annie Gavin: Yeah. [indistinct 00:23:13]

Grace George: [indistinct 00:23:16]

Speaker 5: How you doing? How you doing?

Annie Gavin: How are you?

Speaker 5: Cold hearted, cold [indistinct 00:23:26]

Annie Gavin: Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:23:26] you all the time.

Annie Gavin: You see me all the time?

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:23:27]

Annie Gavin: Oh, yeah, that's right. I know I knew your face.

Speaker 5: Yeah. What y'all were saying?

Annie Gavin: No, we weren't saying—We talking about the war.

Grace George: The old times.

Annie Gavin: The old times. This is a reporter and he's putting us on the news.

Speaker 5: Oh, yeah.

Annie Gavin: I was telling him about Old James City. Y'all got a history too, haven't you?

Speaker 5: Yeah, yeah.

Annie Gavin: Down there.

Speaker 5: Yep.

Grace George: Did you know anybody from James City years and years ago?

Annie Gavin: Yeah, because—

Speaker 5: Just JoJo.

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:24:03] JoJo.

Grace George: JoJo, that was the modern times.

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:24:07]

Grace George: JoJo in the modern times. [indistinct 00:24:10]

Annie Gavin: Because Cove City—

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:24:12] he was living in that block house on the corner. What was his last name?

Annie Gavin: Lived in a block house?

Speaker 5: Yeah, used to work at Cherry Point.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:24:26]

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Annie Gavin: I don't know. [indistinct 00:24:30] everybody in James City worked at Cherry Point when they got there, that could work. One of my sisters worked at Cherry Point, Addie. That's what—

Grace George: [indistinct 00:24:46] good for the area when the Cherry Point opened up.

Annie Gavin: Yeah, because people got to know each other. Like—

Grace George: [indistinct 00:24:48]

Annie Gavin: Down the hollow and all around the little places, people got to know each other. Some of us knew each other by the churches.

Speaker 5: Yeah, we did. [indistinct 00:24:59] long time through, ain't he?

Annie Gavin: Yeah, he was. He not with us anymore.

Speaker 5: No? That right?

Annie Gavin: Mm-mm.

Speaker 5: Where he live now?

Annie Gavin: He's out—where is he, Grace?

Grace George: Rocky Mount or [indistinct 00:25:09]

Annie Gavin: No. It's not Rocky Mount. He's out that way though.

Speaker 5: Out towards Rocky Mount?

Annie Gavin: No.

Grace George: No, further out.

Annie Gavin: Further out.

Speaker 5: In Belgrade?

Grace George: Maysville?



Annie Gavin: Maysville. He lives in Maysville.

Grace George: Okay.

Annie Gavin: But he—

Grace George: [indistinct 00:25:27]

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:25:29]

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:25:31] Maysville, yes.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Annie Gavin: [indistinct 00:25:38] is—can't even think of nobody name.

Speaker 5: Belgrade?

Annie Gavin: That way. It's the same direction, they're not too far from home.

Speaker 5: It must be Belgrade or [indistinct 00:25:52]

Annie Gavin: Mm-hmm.

Speaker 5: It ain't Jacksonville [indistinct 00:25:59]

Annie Gavin: Hm?

Speaker 5: It ain't Jacksonville?

Annie Gavin: No, it's not Jacksonville. [indistinct 00:26:04]

Speaker 5: Well, it got to be somewhere there. Yeah [indistinct 00:26:11]

Grace George: [indistinct 00:26:11]

Annie Gavin: Well, he wasn't the first, but he was Presiding Elder at first. But he's the one put the bricks on [indistinct 00:26:20]

Grace George: Because he moved over here, there was a wooden church.

Annie Gavin: There was a wooden church.

Grace George: And he bricked it up over here.

Annie Gavin: Uh-huh. Well, it was just a small church in James City. But he brought us over here.

Speaker 5: [indistinct 00:26:37] putting you on TV?

Annie Gavin: No, he's a reporter, history stuff.

Grace George: [indistinct 00:26:48] the community college, public university.

Annie Gavin: Oh, yeah?

Grace George: He's from the college.

Annie Gavin: He records things for—