

Shared Stories: African Americans in North Mecklenburg

Interview with Patricia Stinson, January 13, 2017

Conducted by Jan Blodgett at the Davidson College Library

Transcript edited by Andrés Paz '21

Summary: Patricia Stinson, a North Mecklenburg native, is the daughter of Evelyn and Orlando Carr, and granddaughter of Minnie and Johnny Mayhew. In this interview with Jan Blodgett, she shares details about her childhood and family, her primary and secondary education in Davidson and Huntersville, her work experiences including a secretarial position at Davidson College, as well as more specific aspects of life in the town of Davidson and its closest surroundings. Ms. Stinson recalls many details about entertainment and recreation in the area, mentioning for example the Teen Canteen at Davidson and the Smithville Community Center in Cornelius. She offers relevant knowledge about businesses in Davidson, recalling Black-owned stores, barbershops, as well as Black hairdressers around the town. Religion is another topic explored in this interview, with her mention of Mount Olive Baptist Church, Torrence Chapel, as well as Davidson Presbyterian Church and persons such as Ms. Copeland, who held Sunday Bible studies for the community. Lastly, Ms. Stinson talks about serving in the Davidson Town Council, and offers a few comments about her involvement in the community and the changes she has noticed throughout the years.

Interviewer: So, this is Jan Blodgett on Friday, January 13, 2017, talking with Patricia Stinson in the Davidson College Library. So, we're just going to start with asking you a little bit about your family, who your parents were and your grandparents, which is, I know, a complicated question, or a long question. You've got famous parents and grandparents.

Patricia Stinson 00:42

All right. My parents were Evelyn Mayhew Carr and my father's name was Orlando Carr. My grandparents was Minnie Torrence Mayhew and my grandfather was Johnny Mayhew.

Interviewer: Okay. And on your mom's side or your dad? So, is Minnie Mayhew on your mom's side?

Patricia Stinson: Mom's side, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, do you know who your dad's parents were?

Patricia Stinson: His father's name was Fred Carr. I'm not sure about grandmother. I know I've got it at home somewhere, but I don't know it right off the top of my head.

Interviewer: So, did you know your grandparents at all?

Patricia Stinson: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what do you remember about your grandparents?

Patricia Stinson 01:31

Well, my grandmother Minnie, she worked here at Davidson College. She worked at the Phi Beta Kappa, at the eating house. She worked there. She and my mom both did here for many years. Then, she also worked for Will Terry. She worked for the Whites. She worked for Coach Couch. She worked for a number of people, my grandmother did. My mom worked for Dr. Bill Williams, Dr. Clark...

Interviewer: That's Tom Clark?

Patricia Stinson: Tom Clark. She also worked for the Keltons. She worked for the Whites, too, and the Avingers. They pretty much worked for a lot of the Davidson College community. And when I got older, I worked for—or babysat for the Keltons, the Ratliffs, and the Avingers. That was, when in school, when I get out of school, I'd babysit for their kids when I was young.

Interviewer: So, it was your first job?

Patricia Stinson 02:50

I guess you could call it a job. I didn't really call it a job. But it was, more or less, yes. My grandfather worked for the asbestos mill there. It was the only place I knew him to work. Oh, I take that back. He also worked for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. He worked at Davidson School one time, and also he worked at North Mecklenburg. My dad was a truck

driver. When we lived in Charlotte, before we officially moved to Davidson, my dad worked for Sears Roebuck, the Charlotte Observer, worked for Alexander Trucking Company, and he also worked at the asbestos mill and in Kimspon in Mooresville.

Interviewer: Okay. So, he had quite a career.

Patricia Stinson: Yes, mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about—Okay, so, you mentioned that you started in Charlotte, so you were born in Charlotte—

Patricia Stinson 03:57

No, I was born in Mooresville. We lived in Charlotte. My dad got a job there in Charlotte working, so we lived in Double Oaks there in Charlotte until I was six years old. I had one brother older than I was, and when we left Charlotte, he was in the first grade. He went to first grade there. I came here to Davidson and started first grade at Ada Jenkins.

Interviewer: Okay. So, tell me a little bit about going to school. So, you started at Ada Jenkins and went through eighth grade?

Patricia Stinson: I believe it was eighth grade, we went through there. And then, went to Torrence-Lytle in the ninth grade.

Interviewer: Okay. So, where did you move to in Davidson? I'm thinking about, how far did you have to walk to get to Ada Jenkins?

Patricia Stinson 04:45

We moved to Davidson. We lived—I can't remember the name of the road. I'm not good with roads. I just know where it is. But it was out there by where Mr. Houston, Logan Houston, and where the old—

Interviewer: Like, Hoke Lumber? Catawba Street?

Patricia Stinson: Yeah.

Interviewer: So the Catawba Street area.

Patricia Stinson: Near—right across from the Hoke Lumber Company. And also, there was a blacksmith shop there. Tut Smith was the guy's name who owned the shop there, blacksmith.

Interviewer: How do you spell his first name?

Patricia Stinson: All I knew was Tut Smith. I don't know how he spelled it.

Interviewer: Probably T-U-T or something.

Patricia Stinson: Probably something like that. And that probably wasn't his real name. That was probably just what we called him.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah. Did you ever know Charlie Torrence? He had a blacksmith shop on Main Street.

Patricia Stinson: I didn't.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I think he's related to, Marjene Torrence. She was a niece or something.

Patricia Stinson: No, I don't remember him.

Interviewer: Okay. So, it wasn't too many blocks to Ada Jenkins.

Patricia Stinson: No, no, it wasn't.

Interviewer: So, I presume you walked most of the time. You didn't need to take the bus?

Patricia Stinson 05:57

We didn't have buses then, or they weren't available for us. We walked. And if the weather was bad, my grandfather would pick us up. Or if my dad wasn't on his job driving, he would take us. Or somebody—if the weather was bad, we always got a ride to school somehow or another in the neighborhood.

Interviewer: So, how many—you have eight brothers and sisters, is that right?

Patricia Stinson: Yeah. Total, there's nine of us and one foster child.

Interviewer: Okay. So, at any time, there were probably two or three or four of you going to Ada Jenkins? Some younger?

Patricia Stinson: Well, I know me and my older brother, we started out there first. And then, Garfield, he was—Garfield was right after me. He was like two years after me. And so, yeah, there was always somebody going with us to school up there. I'm trying to think who all it would have been. I know, at one time, Brenda Howard, now Tapia, she joined in the group with us, because she started going to Ada Jenkins. So, we would all walk.

Interviewer: Okay. What do you remember at school? Any teachers stand out to you? Any activities that you really enjoyed?

Patricia Stinson 07:17

All the teachers stood out. Ms. Brown—Josephine Brown was her name—she was our first-grade teacher. She made the biggest impression on me, because I always said, when I finish school, I want to be a teacher just like her, first grade teacher. And in the mornings, we would get started. We always did the Scripture, and then she taught us—she was real particular about your penmanship. We had to make those letters just right. And back in those days, we printed. We had to print. And so, she was real particular about that. She always made sure we read. We always had to read, and then you come back and you tell what you read. In the first grade, I don't think we did a lot with math and stuff. But I know reading, writing—just like they say, reading, writing, and arithmetic. You know, we had to do the one plus one and the two plus twos and all that stuff. Another thing she instilled in us was being courteous. We always had to raise our hand. We could not just blurt out if we wanted to say something. If we did, we would get in some trouble. So, she was—she wasn't hardcore, but she was—you knew what she wanted you to do, and you did it. I had no problems with that.

Patricia Stinson 08:48

Then Ms. (Kiprow??) came along, I can't remember what grade she was in, and she was good. And she and Ms. Boyer, or at the time her name was (Sweetly??) when she first started. We had music. We always had to go to music, and you always had to go outside to play. Always had to do that. And so, they taught me the piano, Ms. Sweetly and Ms. Kiprow. I had piano, and we'd just go down to the Davidson Presbyterian Church to take our lessons. That's where we took our lessons. Yes, when we were in school we took our piano lessons.

Interviewer: Did they drive you down, or did you just walk over? That's a pretty far walk.

Patricia Stinson 09:33

Not from where we lived in, because when school was out, we went to my grandmother's house, and so we would just go from over there. So, yeah, there was Ms. Brown, Ms. Whitley, Ms. Jones, Ms. Ross. We had one, she was really tough, and that was Ms. Morris. Ms. Morris didn't play. She didn't allow us to chew gum or anything, and if you did, she caught you. Sometimes you get a paddling, depending on how many times she caught you. But most of the time, she just gave you some—put some castor oil in your...

Interviewer: Ew. In your mouth?

Patricia Stinson: You made a little cup of what you were chewing, and then you had to put it back in your mouth and chew it with castor oil. So, and then—but the one person that made the biggest impression was the principal at the time, and that was Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris was real stern, but he made sure you were going to get your—back then, we used to diagram sentences. You had to take them apart. And math. And he was the one who instilled in me the idea of the math part, because when I finally went to Torrence-Lytle, to High School—I guess now they would call it in junior high, because we started in 9th grade—but anyway, I got an A-plus in math. That was my best one. I loved math.

Interviewer: How many children were from not in Davidson at Ada Jenkins?

Patricia Stinson: That part, I'm not sure how many. But I know when I went we had children there—most of them came from Cornelius, and I think that's where they were from, Cornelius.

Interviewer: Because I'm wondering if it was a big transition when you went to Torrence-Lytle and had more people from further around, more Huntersville and...

Patricia Stinson: Well, the transition wasn't that bad.

Interviewer: Did you already know most of the people you were going to go to school with?

Patricia Stinson 11:43

We did, because of our family history. See, my dad was from Charlotte—or from Huntersville or Long Creek, down that area. And so, a lot of times, families would get together, and we would be with those same people that we went to school with down at—a few of them, we didn't know,

but most of them, we did. Now, any of them that came up from our folk, way down from Beatties Ford Road, like Charlotte area, we wouldn't know. But most of them, we knew. And most of them were relatives.

Interviewer: So, what do you remember about high school? And were you in any kind of clubs or activities? I've seen the Torrence Lytle yearbooks, and they had Junioresettes and choirs and 4-Hs and that kind of thing.

Patricia Stinson: I was in the choir, but I never could sing that good, and I still can't. But I was probably more in the different clubs that did things. I know we had the home economics group. We had a group, and we learned how to sew, and we learned how to bake, and they taught us that type of thing. The guys that went there, they were in, like, an agriculture class, and they also had a class that taught mechanics, auto mechanics and stuff like that. But the biggest thing most of the people did was, they were cheerleaders. I wasn't a cheerleader, because at the age of nine years old, I had a rheumatic fever. I was out of school for 100 days, so, a lot of things I couldn't do. At the time, they said it was affecting my heart, but as I got older, it seemed to fix itself.

Interviewer: Well, that's good.

Patricia Stinson: Didn't have any problems from that. But in the third grade, I was out of school for 100 days.

Interviewer: Isn't there a story about you being able to go back to school in fourth grade?

Patricia Stinson 13:45

Yeah. The system at the time, if you were out of school so many days, you had to stay. And at that point in time, I got ready to go back, and we were doing tests at that time. They told me I couldn't go to the next grade. And the teacher said if I couldn't go, then nobody should be able to go, because when I went back and did the testing, I had five point something, which meant I was doing fifth grade work, even having been out of school. So, she and my mom appealed to the Board of Education, and so they let me go ahead and be promoted to the next grade.

Interviewer: So—whoops. Phone's ringing there. When you were home during that time, did you have access to books?

Patricia Stinson: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: So, what kind of—with your family, I know Frances Beale talks about the fact that her family was sports fanatics, so they always had newspapers, were reading sports pages. And then she actually learned to read reading football stories.

Patricia Stinson 14:54

I'm sure we had all that. I know we always had newspapers, always. But the one book that I did a lot was—and I can't remember now who gave it to me, but somebody gave me a Bible story book, had all the stories of the Bible. And that was the one book that I had most of the time. And so—and my grandfather and my aunts and my mom and whoever would come in, I'd pull that book out, and they'd read me a story, because at the time, I couldn't walk or anything, so I'd be there, laying there or sitting in the chair, and they would read to me. And so, that's how I learned what I learned, is from, you know...

Interviewer: Being read to. That's right.

Patricia Stinson: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you go to high school. You're in the choir. Then you graduate. And how many people were in your graduating class?

Patricia Stinson: We had 100 and some. We had the largest class that went down there. It used to be, it was 91, 92, 93. Well, we went, it wound up being a 94. So, we had a number of kids, a number of people. And so, there was like 100 or better that graduated.

Interviewer: And were you—how many more years was Torrence-Lytle there after you graduated? Were you the last class to graduate from there?

Patricia Stinson: We were the last class to graduate from Torrence-Lytle in 1966.

Interviewer: Did you know that when you graduated, that the next year the students would be going to North Meck?

Patricia Stinson 16:34

Yeah, we knew that. Well, what happened was, we were told that the year before, or the year when we were going to the 12th grade. And they gave you an option. You could either stay at

Torrence-Lytle or you could go to North. And so, I chose to stay at Torrence-Lytle. Some of the rest of them chose to go to North. So, some of them did go to North that would have been in our class. And so, just this year, we celebrated 50 years of being at our school.

Interviewer: What was it like knowing you were the last graduating class from that school? Was it something you all were really proud of; you were upset about?

Patricia Stinson: Well, it was twofold. We walked around a lot saying, you know, we shut it down. You know, we were so bad, we shut it down. But it didn't feel good. I'm not sure how everyone else felt about it. I would have liked for it to stay. But the other thing is, I never liked the idea of it being separate to start with, you know, being separate. And at Torrence-Lytle, we had some wonderful teachers. I had one, Ms. Hackett. She taught us typing and that type of stuff to get us ready. And so, at that point in time, after that, instead of being a teacher, I wanted to be a secretary. And I didn't like shorthand, didn't like it at all, but typing was what I really liked. And I think from what I learned there is what helped me here at Davidson College, because what I learned there helped me get the job, I think, here, even though one of the criteria here at that time, they said you need to know shorthand. Well, I didn't know the first thing of shorthand, so the first time I applied, they wouldn't give me a job. Then, the second time I applied, because at the time they already had an African American working here, and I guess they didn't need any more. So, then, the second time I applied, I got the job. And the funny thing was, like I told Mr. Stevenson, I said, "It's funny, the first time I applied, because I didn't know shorthand, you wouldn't hire me. And this time, you didn't even ask me if I could type or if I had ten fingers." But I did get the job, and I was here for, I think, two and a half years.

Interviewer: And that was—you were working in human resources, personnel?

Patricia Stinson: No, I was working in the secretarial services.

Interviewer: Okay. So, how did that work? You just got different things every day to do?

Patricia Stinson 19:12

Yeah, what happened was, well, Ms.—I think it was Prichard, I think. Anyway, she—there was a person in charge of the secretarial pool, and so the professors would bring in work. She would give the work out to the different ones, and she made that choice. And I think at the time, I was

typing at a good speed, so I pretty much typed for Dr. Ratliff, Randy Kincaid. And I'm not sure what their area was.

Interviewer: Both in economics.

Patricia Stinson: Okay. I did a lot of their typing, I mean, because I liked math too. But anyway, that. And—trying to think who else. I'm not sure if I did a lot for Dr. Clark, but I know I did a lot of work for Kincaid and Ratliff and Avinger, yeah, Dr. Avinger.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, after you graduated from high school, what did you do?

Patricia Stinson: Okay. When I graduated from high school, I started working—well, prior to that, I was doing something with Head Start while I was in school. I guess now they would call it like an intern. But anyway, I worked with Head Start system, assisted one of the teachers. That was my first real job.

Interviewer: Was it here at Davidson or Ada Jenkins?

Patricia Stinson: It was at Ada Jenkins. Then, after that, I got married in 1966 too, and had my first child, and I didn't work at all.

Interviewer: How did you meet your husband? School?

Patricia Stinson 21:09

No. We knew each other from—I used to go down to Cornelius, to the center, and I met him there. And he knew my brother, and so, you know, that's how that happened. And so, then, the next job I had was, I worked at General Time. That was my real first job, at General Time. Worked second shift. And then, when I left, I wanted to work in the office. And so, I applied for the job at the office, the office at General Time. I didn't get that one either. It was just difficult for us to get those type of jobs.

Interviewer: So, you were working, like, production line, making the clocks?

Patricia Stinson: Mm-hmm. I was soldering at General Time. And then, job came open up at Draymore Manufacturing. I found out about it, I applied for it, and I went there and started working at Draymore.

Interviewer: Okay. And you were secretarial then?

Patricia Stinson: It was in the human resources department. So, then I left there. And actually, I took a cut in pay.

Interviewer: Oh, but you wanted to work in an office environment?

Patricia Stinson 22:18

I sure did. And they wouldn't give me the chance at General Time, so I said, "Oh, the heck with it." I left General Time. I was making \$6 an hour. I went to work at Draymore for \$3.75, something like that. And stayed there for two and a half years or something like that, I guess. And when my daughter started going to first grade, they would have programs. And what was happening was, I would have to either be late going to work up there or I'd have to come back down the road to her programs, and so then the job came open here at Davidson College, and when that job came open here and I was able to get it, I came back to Davidson College and started working.

Interviewer: You said for about two and a half years, as well?

Patricia Stinson: I think that was how it was. And then, I'm not even sure why, but a job came open in Charlotte. I found out about through a temp agency. I don't even know.

Interviewer: Sometimes it happens.

Patricia Stinson 23:23

And they were—I applied for it, and I went down for the interview, and they hired me. And I left there. I was making \$500 and some dollars a month here, and went down there making \$775, and stayed down there for 36 years.

Interviewer: So, what was that commute like? You might have seen it change from when it was hardly anybody on the road to Charlotte.

Patricia Stinson 23:49

It really did. When I first went there wasn't I-77, it could take me maybe 15, 20 minutes, at the most, to get there. And then, '77 came into play, and it made it easier, too, because it was just a straight shot. But then—and I can't even tell you what year it was, but then, after a while, it got

to be really difficult, really difficult. And the commute got to be anywhere—you know, it started out like I said, 15 to 20 minutes. Then it started being an hour to two hours sometimes, just depending. So, it really got to be really bad. But, you know, the experience from all of it, you know, like I said, when I look back at it, the different jobs and how they came about, the only thing I can say, but God, because the one in Charlotte, I don't know. Even getting back to Davidson College, because I always thought that was out. But before I—my cousin worked at Davidson College before I did, Agnes, Agnes Rivens. She was here. And she left here and went to work in Charlotte. So...

Interviewer: So, one of the things we're also interested in is what people did for entertainment. So, you as a teenager, you as a young married person, and then as a mom with children. You know, I've heard people talk about churches or other places where you had church picnics, you had activities. In the teen canteen, you must have been...

Patricia Stinson 25:40

Yeah. Well, that was before—that's before I got married. The teen canteen, we used to go there on Friday nights, I believe it was, Friday or Saturday nights. But anyway, we'd go to teen canteen. We danced. We played games. Prior to that, when we lived out there off of Jetton Street, my brother and I—I was the only girl there for a while, so it was me and two brothers. They played marbles. But then, in order for them to get me to play marbles, they had to help me jump rope. So, we jumped rope, so they would turn the rope while I jumped. And then, you know, there was such a thing called hot peas or something. They'd turn it real fast. But that was what we did. And they played ball and everything. Back when we lived out there at Jetton Street, Brenda Tapia used to come up to the house, and we used to climb up in the trees and stuff, because the trees we had, had pecans and persimmon. So, we would climb there and throw the limb down and get them when we can get through and stuff. But that's what we did when we were real young.

Then, after that, at Ada Jenkins, we used to would have dances. And the gym they had over there, I mean, we thought that gym was the best thing that ever happened when they finally put that gym there. And my brothers and all them played basketball there, and so we would always go to basketball games. And they would play each other at one time, and then they started

playing the different schools and stuff like that. But we also had dances there, too, at the school. And like I said, just as somebody said, there was always picnics. Either the churches would have them or the schools would have them, or just families would get together and cook and eat.

Interviewer: Did you walk to Cornelius to the movie theater?

Patricia Stinson 27:54

I think I did once. But most of the time, when I walked to Cornelius, we walked down there to the—they had a center down there in Cornelius. The guy I married, or it's my husband now, his uncle had—there was a center there called Smithville Center, community center. And on Friday nights and Saturday nights, they would have dances there. And like I said, that's where I met my husband at. We were there, and he was talking to my brother, and he wanted to know if my brother could get me to talk to him, and da-da-da, and that's how that happened. But we didn't go to the movies that much. Now, when me and my husband was dating, we used to always go to the movies at Mooresville. And me and him and his sister, and they had one in Charlotte. So, those were the movies we went to most of the time. But during that whole time, all the movies were integrated. In Mooresville, we used to have to sit in the balcony, up in the balcony. And sometimes just to be a little on the mischievous side, we'd be up there, we'd throw some popcorn down there on the other people. Not to hurt them, because, you know, popcorn don't hurt no one, but...

Interviewer: Yeah, just a little protest.

Patricia Stinson 29:14

Yeah. But I just remember going to movie in Cornelius one time that I can remember. But most of the time, I went to the movies, my husband—at the time, he was my boyfriend—but me and him and his sisters, we drove—he drove us to the movies. And so, but we always found something to do, you know?

Interviewer: So, one other thing we're interested in is black-owned businesses and where people shopped and where you felt comfortable shopping and if you chose to go to Charlotte, or...

Patricia Stinson: Well, most of the time, we went to Charlotte, because my dad, from as long as I knew, my dad always had a car, so we went to Charlotte to shop. But here in Davidson, I think the only black-owned business I knew were the barbershops.

Interviewer: And the blacksmiths, I guess. Blacksmith's shops?

Patricia Stinson: The only one I knew was Mr. Tut Smith. And that's the only ones I knew.

Interviewer: Were there any women who did hair? Maybe in their homes, but not necessarily in the shop.

Patricia Stinson: Oh, yeah. Ms. Catherine Carr. And I think that's the other part. She and my godmother, Virginia Lowrey, did hair here in Davidson. I'm trying to think if that's all. And that was the other thing that inspired me, was that I wanted to be a hairdresser. And so, I finally got to be a hairdresser.

Interviewer: Now, did Mrs. Connor have the candy shop by Ada Jenkins when you were going there, or was that later? Because some people have talked about, where the Davidson Pizza Company is now, there was a little candy shop.

Patricia Stinson 31:11

It wasn't Ms. Connor. What was the name?

Interviewer: Alexander? It's Castella's mom.

Patricia Stinson: Wasn't them. It was another lady before then. I know Ms. Norabelle Torrence was there one time. God, what was her name. I can't think of her name. But she had the shop there. It was more than just a candy shop. She had donuts. She had all kinds of stuff there. And it was there, and then after that it was—Norabelle Torrence had it, and then Ralph Johnson had a store right down from there that was similar to that one. Trying to think, what else?

Interviewer: Did you know Warren McKissick at all?

Patricia Stinson: Mm-hmm. Oh, he was the best—yeah, that's right. He was here. He was the best shoe person in town, I mean in the whole world. When he left, made everybody sad. And he didn't charge you an arm and a leg to do your shoes or to fix your belts or whatever you needed done. And we'd just go to his place a lot. Back then, there were two grocery stores. It was the

Mayhew and Doc Anderson. And those were the two places that we would go to. And also, we'd pick up our clothes at the cleaners there, Jackson Cleaners. When I worked at Davidson College, Mary Mack had a store there, and that was one of the ones you can go in the front door, but any time you went in, they always were standing, watching you. Yeah, watching you. And I remember one time we went, me and one of the girls from here, she and I worked together, and we went in, and they were watching, and she said to them, "You don't need to watch us," she says, "She won't steal nothing." And I'm wondering where that come from. But then, I wasn't paying any attention to them watching me, but she did, because she knew that's what they did. So, we always went into the M&M Soda Shop. Mary and Murray.

Interviewer: I've heard that they didn't really like kids all that much.

Patricia Stinson: Well, if they did, you didn't know it, not that I—

Interviewer: But you were a good kid. You paid attention to your first grade teacher, so you were polite.

Patricia Stinson 33:54

So, we would go there. And I'm trying to think where else. My brothers, they worked at the barber shop. And there was a men's store up here I think they would go to and shop at. We had a drug store here, pretty much everything that they've always had. It wasn't as elaborate as it is now, but it was for a small town. We had—one of the other things we did, we used to have a swing we used to hang from the branches in the trees and stuff, where we would swing. And, you know, sitting here talking about it now brings back a lot of good memories. And then, after I got married, I moved to—well, I didn't move. I moved my church affiliation to AME Zion. I was Presbyterian, and that's where I grew up at, Presbyterian and Baptist. My dad was Baptist, and my mama was a member of the Presbyterian. And then, when she married, she joined the Baptist Church. And likewise, when I married my husband, I joined the AME Zion Church.

Interviewer: So, were you going to Gethsemane as a child?

Patricia Stinson: No. My dad was a member of Mount Olive Baptist Church.

Interviewer: Okay, so you'd go down to Mount Olive.

Patricia Stinson: That's where we would go, there.

Interviewer: And then, when you got married, which church, which AME Zion Church were you going to? Bethel or Torrence?

Patricia Stinson: Torrence Chapel. Torrence Chapel was the one my husband was a member of, and that's where all my kids grew up at and were baptized there and everything.

Interviewer: And you're still a member there?

Patricia Stinson: Yes.

Interviewer: And that's sort of the mother church for most of the—

Patricia Stinson: That's where Ron goes.

Interviewer: Ron Potts?

Patricia Stinson: Mm-hmm. He's a member there. I'm not sure we would call it the mother church or not. I'm not sure.

Interviewer: I've heard that they sort of seeded the other churches around here, that they've sort of—

Patricia Stinson: They AME Zion churches, possibly.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Patricia Stinson 36:11

Possibly. Because I don't know a lot of history with their church. I know at Davidson Presbyterian, they had one of the best choirs and choir directors that I know of. And I'd just go to Wednesday night prayer meetings and that type of stuff, Sunday school there at Davidson Presbyterian. And then, on Sunday evenings, when everything was quieting down, there was a place that we used to go, Mrs. Copeland's. We used to go to Mrs. Copeland's for bible—for study, and she always had us a snack. But we'd go there for studies, and but you had to learn so many—I think it was 100 Bible verses. And when she did that, she gave you a Bible or a New Testament, and I still have mine. My mom has it. She still has it. And I remember when Dr. Clark started doing the gnomes, because I sat for one of them.

Interviewer: Oh, really? You're a gnome?

Patricia Stinson: Yeah. I sat.

Interviewer: Which one? Do you remember?

Patricia Stinson 37:23

No, I don't think it was a gnome. What it was, it was a headpiece. He did it like a headpiece, and that was back when I had ponytails and plats and all this stuff, and he captured all that in that piece. And I want to think that he gave it to me before he closed up shop, because it used to be up there. And I think he gave it to me. I think my mom has it, but I'm not really sure.

Interviewer: How fun, to have a Dr. Clark sculpture.

Patricia Stinson: Yeah.

Interviewer: But he's done some beautiful work. Along with the gnomes, he does actual busts that are really nice.

Patricia Stinson 38:00

And I think probably I was his first one. I think I was six years old, I think, when he did that one. But, you know, my life here in Davidson was pretty—not really exciting-exciting, expect for just the normal stuff, you know? We didn't get in trouble. We weren't allowed to get in trouble. We knew what time we had to be at home. We had to have our homework done and all that stuff. We always had homework. And so, we would all gather there and do the homework. But like I said, we knew what time the lights had to be out. And not saying we were great, great kids, but we didn't cause a lot of trouble. And that's probably why my mom is still going as well as she's doing now, is because we didn't cause her a lot of trouble.

Interviewer: You didn't give her too many of her gray hairs.

Patricia Stinson: Right.

Interviewer: But she is remarkably spry and still active.

Patricia Stinson: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: I'm amazed at how much she accomplishes.

Patricia Stinson 39:16

Her mother was the same way. Minnie was 87 years old when she stopped working, I think, for Will Terry. And the whole time, she always walked out there, walked, until later on, and my grandfather started carrying her. But she walked. She would tell us, if it was snowing, she said, "You don't need to be going out to work to work. You need to stay at home." And then we'd call over there and find out she done already went to work. Yeah. So, that's where we get a lot of our work ethics from, from our grandparents. And like I said, like I told you the other day, I remember my grandfather, my great-grandfather on my grandmother's side, he worked at Ada Jenkins, doing the boiler, doing that type of thing.

Interviewer: That's right. So, he'd go in early.

Patricia Stinson: Yeah, and then did the cleaning, the buildings and stuff there. We had some of the best cooks. Of course, the meals at that time were cooked there. They were cooked right there at the school. Miss Hill, Miss Jean Hill and Miss Vera Carr, those were the cooks. And we had a cooked meal every day.

Interviewer: Yeah, because they would not have added the cafeteria that's there now while you were a student. That was after you were at Torrence-Lytle, probably.

Patricia Stinson 40:56

I want to think it was—I don't know if it was or not, but I know that was a place there that we ate and everything. We had a place, like, say we went out and played. The boys played ball, and we'd get hopscotch and jump rope and different things like that. But we had to go out and play. That was part of—that was a requirement. Even at Torrence-Lytle, it was a requirement. That was called physical ed.

Interviewer: All right. Unless there's something else that's coming to mind that you want to talk about in your life or your family...

Patricia Stinson: No, not that other than, like I said, you already know I served on the town council.

Interviewer: That's right, we completely forgot that you—how did that happen? How did you end up on the town board?

Patricia Stinson 41:54

I really don't know, except for, we were involved in the housing, getting the houses over there.

Interviewer: Okay. So, like, Lakeside Terrace and all of the...

Patricia Stinson: Yeah, and everything. And started out talking about affordable houses. And I was part of the committee. I was the secretary and—

Interviewer: That was for the Piedmont development or the human relations council?

Patricia Stinson: Oh, no, back then, it was called the—what was the name? Westside—I can't remember the name of it, but anyway, you mentioned Piedmont, so that was part of it. The name changed a couple times. And I've got it on a—I've got a flier that I did when I was running for council, and it had that information on there. And somebody—Annie Mildred and my mom and different ones mentioned to me about doing it. And so, I said okay, and I ran, and I won. And during that time, we were able to get Central Piedmont in this area, because I knew we needed that. The other thing was the housing over there. And we were able to get a few sidewalks, not a lot, and then Lakeside apartments. I was on there when we did the apartments. And pretty much what I did is, I polled our community to find out and brought it to the meetings to get some things done. And I served two terms, I believe it was. I think back then, it was two- year terms. So, I served there. And I was on the Parks and Rec committee, because we were broken up into committees. We had town council people who headed certain committees and everything. And one of my main interests now is trying to get some of that back, to where when you got an issue in your neighborhood, there's a commission you can go to who will help you get that resolved, and we don't have that now.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's one of the downsides of having representatives cover sort of the whole town. You don't necessarily have a tie to a very specific one.

Patricia Stinson 44:43

Right. And, you know, in looking at it, my one thing is, I could see Councilman Fuller being part of, because he lives over in that area. And so, you know, I would think he would be a good one for that one. But, now, I don't know where the other commissioners, where they live or reside or any of that type of stuff. I just know where he is.

Interviewer: You can adopt him.

Patricia Stinson: Yeah. And, well, I think my mom already has, him and the Beth Cashion, her family is down from where my husband is, from Cornelius, down there. So, yes, that's what I'd like to see happen now. And the other thing is, something—the one thing that's causing some concern in our neighborhood is something for the kids to do. I know they got Ada Jenkins over there, but a lot of the kids in our area don't use Ada Jenkins. See, back when we were coming up, my brothers and them, they would go over there. They'd play ball out there, or they could go in the gym and play ball. They could do that type of thing, and we could use the gym. Now it's not available for that type of use.

Interviewer: Yeah, I've noticed, I've been there, there are a lot of older people there, so the children don't really have the basketball.

Patricia Stinson 46:20

Yes and was pretty much instrumental in the daycare center we got over there and everything. And I'm not even sure how it operates. When I left and went to work in Charlotte, you know, how they call it—what they call it? A bed—you live somewhere, but all you do is sleep there.

Interviewer: A bedroom community.

Patricia Stinson: So, I lost touch with a lot of stuff.

Interviewer: It's hard to do that when you're...

Patricia Stinson: And that's why I didn't run for town council anymore, because I couldn't get here for the meetings. And if I'm going to be a part of something, I want to be a part of it. So, that's the one thing. Okay?

Interviewer: All right. Thank you so much.

End of recording.