

Shared Stories: African Americans in North Mecklenburg

Interview with Dorothy Burton, November 4, 2016

Conducted by Nancy Fairley

Transcript edited by Andrés Paz '21

Summary: In this oral history, Davidson and Cornelius resident Dorothy Burton shares many insights about life in Davidson. Burton has lived in the Davidson and Cornelius areas for almost 80 years and worked at Davidson College for a great part of her life. Born in 1942, she talks about her early days living in a house owned by Davidson College while her mom worked at the college laundry. Burton talks about early work experiences at the college, washing dishes and helping in kitchens. She also discusses her church involvement and the many activities they had during Christmas, Easter, and Children's Day. Burton recalls the difficulty to obtain permission to fix her house on Griffith Street, having to eventually sell it to the college. Additionally, she mentions her own and others' small businesses at home, as well as some of the different shops at Davidson. Towards the end of the interview, Burton recalls the Outlaws, Davidson's first African American baseball team. Lastly, she goes over different aspects of her family, personal and professional life.

Interviewer: This is Mrs. Dorothy Burton, she's currently living in Cornelius, but she's going to give her name, where she was born, her age if she wants to, and then we'll start this interview on what it was like growing up in Davidson when she was a child. Alright.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, my name is Dorothy Kerns Burton. I lived in Davidson all of my life until I got the age of 70 and I moved to Cornelius, North Carolina. And now I am 74 years old. I stay in Antiquity Heights Way, apartment 108 Building 3. I moved here four years ago. And, but I need to tell you more about Davidson. That was most of my life when I was younger. When I was younger I stayed with my grandparents. We stayed in a big two-story house down in the alley and we lived upstairs with our mother. And it was four of us. Jimmy, Bettie—

Interviewer: I met Jimmie.

Dorothy Burton: —Laura May, myself. Which my brother—our brother died. And from that I was about eight years old when I got third degree burnt.

Interviewer: Where? How?

Dorothy Burton: Okay, I did not go to school that day, I played hooky. I throwed my—my momma gave me my lunch money and I throwed it behind my grandmomma's dresser because my Aunt Mariam—we all the same age—and she didn't go to school that day and we just like sisters. And I stayed home with her. We went over to my great grandmother's house to get her a fire started, and so she could have her hot tea and her roll. And my cousin thought that he dropped the match on the floor, but he dropped it on the tail of my skirt. And we didn't know what was burning, the house or me. And it was in March, I done forgot the year. But anyway, I wasn't that much older because I was born in '42. But I ran out—it was in March and the wind blowed it up. And my uncle, he put the fire out on me with a bucket of cold water. And that—went on to the hospital.

Interviewer: Which hospital was that?

Dorothy Burton: Lawrence in Mooresville. At that time that was the name of the hospital. And Dr. McClena—I remember him, he was my doctor, he was a good doctor. And from then on I had to go and get dressed, you know—

Interviewer: Every day.

Dorothy Burton: —every day.

Interviewer: Where were the burns at, on your legs?

Dorothy Burton: The burn was from my thigh right here to right here on my front part of my body. If everybody looks at me they would think was not anything wrong with me, but it is. I

have the scars, so that—

Interviewer: Okay, but it didn't stop you from having a normal life, right?

Dorothy Burton: No, it didn't. No, it didn't. No, it didn't. I could have blowed up in my face, but I did not blow up in my face. My arms and everything. And so, I sat in the hospital for about a year. I had to learn to walk again another year. I had to lay on the flat of my back, I couldn't go turn on the sides. My mom and my daddy had to turn me. And after that, removed from my father and them house to a little college house where my mom used to work at Davidson College.

Interviewer: What did you mom do at Davidson?

Dorothy Burton: My mom worked in the laundry. And I remember them—I remember her, snow was up to her knees. She would go and they would walk over there to the laundry. Uh-huh. And, but all that to say we moved to that little college house which is down there by the back of—what that little street is—what is the name of that street? —okay, across, you know where admission, where the—the little white house down behind those houses. And that's where we moved to until she died. And she died in '52. And after my mom—

Interviewer: So, that was the little houses behind where admissions is today?

Dorothy Burton: It was one.

Interviewer: One, okay.

Dorothy Burton: And that was the college house. If she did not work for the college she would not have moved. That's right. Soon as she died we had to leave. So, our daddy found a place up in the country.

Interviewer: Okay, where would that be?

Dorothy Burton: That would be up 115. Okay, you know where the store used to be up there, 115?

Interviewer: I know where—

Dorothy Burton: Ankle grip.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, you know there's a road down below that, that's where we move to in a great big house which was a two-story house. Our aunt was in the hospital, but our daddy took care of us, him and his lady friend. They kept us along with our aunts, Vandina Bright and Geneva Terrance. She married my uncle—she married my mom's brother; my momma married her brother.

Interviewer: Oh, wow, okay.

Dorothy Burton: And so, they took care of us.

Interviewer: So, your mother grew up here, too, in Davidson?

Dorothy Burton: Yes, our mother grew up in Davidson. She died at the age of about 32, I think she was.

Interviewer: Oh, she was so young.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, she died young.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Dorothy Burton: I was, like, I think I was eight, eight or nine, Jimmy was 10, I think, and I was

nine, and Laura May was seven, seven, eight, nine because I'm two years older than her. Well, she died that early. And after that we stayed up there in the country for about four or five more years and then we left there. We came back to Davidson, which you know where all the water's at on Griffith Street? Well, we stayed over there in the apartments. The apartment was Crout company from Mooresville. He put about six long apartments down in there.

Interviewer: It was still there when I came in '93. I know what you're talking about.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, alright. And then we had to move from there because they wanted a little river, a little water down up in there. So, Crout moved his apartment and moved them back to Mooresville somewhere. But anyway, we moved up on Griffith Street. Our daddy bought the house from Gathal Reed which was a White man, family. They moved back to the mill hill where the red brickhouse at. That was the mill hill over there.

Interviewer: Yeah. And the mill hill is where the White people live mostly.

Dorothy Burton: There you go. The only White person that came to play with us were Mr. Gay Reed daughter. I think her name—we called her Snuffy. She al—she was there, she played with us.

Interviewer: She was deaf?

Dorothy Burton: She was there with us. I mean, you know, she came—she the only White that came to play with us. And so, we moved right there. I had got me a job over—well, I was over at Davidson College, when I got out of school I'd go over there in the evening. I was, like, 14. I put my age up because I was big. And so, I start washing dishes in the dish room in the evening.

Interviewer: For, like, what, from 5:00—8:00? What kind of—

Dorothy Burton: Oh, I went over from 4:00—8:30 after we got through serving the line and cleaning up. I did the dishes and helped in the pot room. And it was a lot of people worked in

that building. And it was called ARA I think at first. And then they changed the name to ARA Food Services which had come under a guy named Cleebury. He was from Germany. And he was our supervisor. He was the supervisor over there then. It was still a lot of them.

Interviewer: So, this is in the 50s.

Dorothy Burton: Yes.

Interviewer: And he was your supervisor.

Dorothy Burton: And then, along came Ron Scott. I don't know, did you know him? Well, Ron Scott, he came and he took over. And then they moved the cooking places down to three buildings at Russ House, Bailey House, and—God, what was the other house?—Russ House and Bailey House—it was three houses because I baked in the Bailey House. I came from the dishwashing room and everything to the Bailey House doing dessert. I baked desserts.

Interviewer: Who taught you how to do it?

Dorothy Burton: Ron Scott sent me along with a lady—I forgot her name, but anyway—Jean, to a cooking school in Charlotte. And that's how I learned how to bake and decorate. I learned a lot under a lady named Isabel Davis at Sladers. She was the baker. And then, when they moved me from the dish room to the pot room, they moved me from there dipping up desserts, setting up the line. And then, from that, she really is the one that taught me how to bake.

Interviewer: Now, she lived in Charlotte?

Dorothy Burton: She stayed in Cornelius.

Interviewer: But she had a school in Charlotte, or what—

Dorothy Burton: No.

Interviewer: Okay, well you said they sent you to school down in Charlotte to learn how to bake.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, with this White lady named Jean. We went down to this—it used to be—I think it's still going on now. It was like a—they turned it over to a big tasting food place, but it was something like a school where we went to get trained.

Interviewer: Do you remember how many months, or days, or weeks—how much time did that take, do you know?

Dorothy Burton: Oh, okay, well it didn't take me too long because really I knew how to cook, but I had to cook for a big crowd.

Interviewer: So, that's—yeah, okay.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. I knew how to cook, I knew how to bake because Ms. Isabell Davis was in the baking department. That was our lady. She stayed in Cornelius.

Interviewer: Now, she's White or Black?

Dorothy Burton: No, she's Black. I married her grandson. Yeah, I married her grandson. We always called her Mama Isadell. And that's what she taught me. Outside of me—well, I didn't stay with my grandma that long to pick up any cooking because we was—like I said, we were moving. But Betty, she was the oldest sister, so she didn't come with us, she stayed with our big mom—Grandma. We always called our grandmomma, Momma, and our Grandfather, Daddy, because we was raised up with their kids. And that's what we do, we called her that. And so, after that, well, when I work at Davidson College—

Interviewer: So, you started as a teenager working part time.

Dorothy Burton: I did, I did.

Interviewer: So, did you go to Torrence-Lytle? Or did—where'd you go to school?

Dorothy Burton: I did not go to Torrence-Lytle because, I don't know how to put this—you know when you don't have a mother to tell you different things that a child did—

Interviewer: Yeah, my mom told me that—we lost our mother early and it makes a big difference.

Dorothy Burton: And it did. And our daddy, you know, he was out there, you know. And so, I really didn't know this guy was related to me, we would play play-house. I didn't know nothing about, you know, but I seemed to me like he did. And so, when I didn't know anything, I'm in school, I was pregnant, I didn't even know nothing about a child.

Interviewer: You didn't even know how pregnancy occurred. Okay.

Dorothy Burton: No.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Dorothy Burton: Thirteen.

Interviewer: Oh, 13? Jesus Lord.

Dorothy Burton: Didn't know it and didn't know this guy was my cousin. And I don't—I really, you know, wanted to miss that, but you know. So, things happened. Okay, that's when we moved back downtown because we was all staying in this big house with our aunt. But our other aunt stayed up in the other little house. And I would play playhouse, and he said, well, I'll be the daddy and you be the momma, you know. And I didn't know nothing about that. And my daddy didn't really know—he didn't know I was pregnant. He didn't. I went to school the whole term.

Interviewer: Wow, you thought you were gaining weight.

Dorothy Burton: I didn't know because I didn't pay no attention. And so, I did not know nothing about that. And everybody kept whispering at school, you know. I didn't know what they was talking about. And so, I was in Ms. Bargum's room in the 6th grade, and then I went back—until I got into the 8th grade, and my daddy told me I had to come out of school because he couldn't do it, he couldn't work and pay the bills and all this.

Interviewer: He needed help.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. So, one of my brothers was working, but Laura May was in school. And I said, okay, I'll come out. So, I came out of school and all my aunts and things was mad at Roy, my daddy, for letting—

Interviewer: For taking you out of school.

Dorothy Burton: Because he knew that I needed to be in school, but I didn't go back. I took some classes over to Ada Jenkins. You know, I still went back and took some classes. And so, Big Momma said, well you can go to Davidson College and take some classes because they was giving classes. Because my Big Momma, she went over there for classes.

Interviewer: Oh, they were giving classes to the Black community?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: For what?

Dorothy Burton: The people that didn't go to school and—yeah.

Interviewer: To teach people how to read and write and get your—what do they call it? —GED

type thing.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, yes. Okay, I wanted to do that, you know. And he raised hell and stuff for us and I just came on out and start working full time. And I've been working ever since.

Interviewer: Okay, so did you always work at Davidson?

Dorothy Burton: No, I did not always work there, majority of my life I did. I worked at Reese Brother Corporation. We walked to work from Griffith Street to Cornelius.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know where that plant used to be.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, right there by Food Lion. But we worked there. I worked there and I worked at Burlington Mill in Mooresville and then came right back to Davidson College. And that's when I worked in the housekeeping. I worked there, clean dorms and everything, houses up down the street and thing. And so, when this other guy came to take over Ervin Bralee and them place, his name was—God, what is it? He's a big man, he died though.

Interviewer: Collins.

Dorothy Burton: Collins, Bob Collins. Now, that's—

Interviewer: He was still here when I was here.

Dorothy Burton: That was my supervisor. And he made me a supervisor over housecleaning because they liked my cleaning. And, well, Junior Barkler, he was first because he's the one hired us. Tell you something funny, he hired Laura May, myself. And so, they said we was supposed to start Labor Day, September. So, they kept looking for us that Labor Day. Well, we didn't come there until that Tuesday. And so, Town said, Dot, where were you all at? I said, it was Labor Day, we didn't know y'all worked on Labor Day. He said, from now on we work Labor Day. I said, oh, okay.

Interviewer: They still do.

Dorothy Burton: I said, okay, we'll be here. And so, Tim Corner and Junior Barkler and Bob Collins got together, and that's when he made me a supervisor and Hindrew Withers.

Interviewer: He died. He used to live over in Cornelius.

Dorothy Burton: He ain't dead.

Interviewer: You talking about Little Henry?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. Little Henry.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness, I thought you were talking about his father.

Dorothy Burton: No, no, I ain't talking about Mr. Henry. Yeah, Little Henry, Henry—his daddy died.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: But anyway—

Interviewer: So, what year was it that they made you, like, a supervisor?

Dorothy Burton: Go back to 17 years. I worked in supervisor for 17 years.

Interviewer: And you retired in what year?

Dorothy Burton: I retired in '98. I left out—

Interviewer: Okay, so it was '81 when they made you—

Dorothy Burton: Supervisor. Because I left out in '97 because Earnest hadn't been too long started. And I had back surgery.

Interviewer: I remember that.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, I left out on back surgery.

Interviewer: I remember.

Dorothy Burton: So, I came back and I tried working, and so they told me I wasn't able to climb steps and I wasn't able to drive the club car anymore because the [00:20:24 unintelligible].

Interviewer: [00:20:25 Unintelligible].

Dorothy Burton: And so, then, after that, okay. I just went out on disability. Then after disability, and after I had my back surgery, I came down with breast cancer.

Interviewer: Yep, I remember that. Go on.

Dorothy Burton: And so I had to go back in surgery. Then I took chemo. I just had a mild chemo. I took it for 45 minutes when other people took it longer. And my hair got thin, it didn't come out. Yeah, they said your hair's not going to come out because you're going to be on the mild chemo. But any kind of chemo, it makes you sick. And so, after that I said, Lord, what should I do. I said, nothing left to do but go back and retire. So, I went back in '98 and retired in '98.

Interviewer: So, you retired, like, a year after Bobby Bark was there.

Dorothy Burton: I worked under—I was treated nice by a lot of the professors and the

secretaries. I was really treated nice by them. And Barbara, she worked on—she was what's her name secretary. Oh God, he was on second floor. I forgot his name.

Interviewer: Okay, that's cool.

Dorothy Burton: But anyway, that's very much—

Interviewer: Okay, now let me ask you some questions. When you had your first child, did you go to the hospital or did you have a midwife for it?

Dorothy Burton: No, I went to a hospital.

Interviewer: You went to Lawrence.

Dorothy Burton: Lawrence.

Interviewer: Did they have a Black ward or what? Or they put everybody in the same place?

Dorothy Burton: Nuh-uh, no, I was in a room.

Interviewer: Okay, but I'm saying they didn't have a special section of hospital for Black people and a special section for White people? Because where I grew up, that's what they had.

Dorothy Burton: They probably did, I didn't pay it no attention.

Interviewer: No mind as a child, yeah, yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Right. I really didn't.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, so what kinds of things did y'all do on the weekends? Tell me about where you went to church and—

Dorothy Burton: Okay, grew up at Davidson Presbyterian Church. That was my home church that we grew up at. And then, after we got big enough to move over to Gethsemane Baptist Church where our father was at, Jimmy and myself were the only first two that left Presbyterian and went to the Baptist. And I was 15 when I went to the Baptist. And, Laura May tell you when she came over. And I liked it. And I stayed over there and I would never go back to the Presbyterian because I liked Baptists.

Interviewer: Now, who's your minister? I know Reverend Morris was when I got here, but who when you were a teenager?

Dorothy Burton: Before, Reverend Nash.

Interviewer: Nash, okay.

Dorothy Burton: What's his name? Thomas Nash. He was from Salisbury and we had service every other Sunday. We didn't have it every Sunday.

Interviewer: I grew up in the same kind of church. We had Sunday school every Sunday, but service was every other.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, Sunday school because our teachers were local, you know, in Davidson such as Ms. Brandon and John Brandon and all them. That's who taught Sunday school with us. Marvela's momma, Ms. Evelyn. We was under them for Sunday school. Of course we went to Sunday school when we was at Davidson Presbyterian too. Ms. Judy Grimm—I think she was a Grimm—she was our teacher. And then, after that, that's when they got Reverend Marsh.

Interviewer: So, you were a young woman when he came in, huh?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. I was still young when Reverend Marsh came.

Interviewer: So, you—no wonder he was here for so long.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. He said—well, you know, a lot of people had difficulties about him. You know, they called him dumb and all this, but he said he didn't care, he was faithful to his church, to his members, to other members that wasn't even his members. He would go visit other people.

Interviewer: Who would—yeah. Oh, wow, that's—

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. I mean, he didn't care who it was, he went out.

Interviewer: Why would they call him dumb?

Dorothy Burton: Because they said he didn't have an education. You know, he had education and he knew what he knew.

Interviewer: Yeah, what's important.

Dorothy Burton: He just—you know how some other churches are.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know how some churches are. I don't mean no harm, but I grew up a Baptist—

Dorothy Burton: I did nothing—

Interviewer: —okay, so when I came here and I started going to the Presbyterian church, I heard things, but I know that Presbyterian people think they're better than Baptist people, so I don't participate in that. So, after my daughter became grown and went off to college, that's when I left and went to the Presbyterian church in Charlotte, CN Jenkins. And Jerry Cannon is a very progressive minister, he doesn't approve of that we are better and somebody else is lower. But I figured that out when I got here.

Dorothy Burton: They went on a trip last week, didn't they?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, so what kinds of activities did the church sponsor for you guys when you were growing up?

Dorothy Burton: Okay, we had a lot of activities, and it was all three churches together. We participated together. We went places.

Interviewer: Like what?

Dorothy Burton: We went, like, to Georgia to Six Flags over in Georgia, and we went up to the Black Mountains. We went a little bit of everywhere. White sand, wherever that white sand was. I mean, we just had a good time.

Interviewer: So, those would be church picnics?

Dorothy Burton: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, and everybody would go.

Dorothy Burton: Everybody would go. They had busses and they packed lunch for us. And we got out off the bus and spread the lunch and, I mean, we just had a good time.

Interviewer: That's good.

Dorothy Burton: I don't know what happened between the churches now. I don't.

Interviewer: Yeah, but back then they were really close.

Dorothy Burton: We were really close, very much close.

Interviewer: Now, what about when Christmas come, what was Christmas like in Davidson for Black people?

Dorothy Burton: Christmas was good for Black people. Now, you know, I don't know nothing about them White people.

Interviewer: No, I'm not interested in them. Okay—

Dorothy Burton: Okay, but Black people Christmas was good to us.

Interviewer: Okay, so what—

Dorothy Burton: We got a little doll, we got doll, we got—and whatever little girl got, we got. Whatever the boy got and wanted, they got.

Interviewer: Like a little gun, yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Yes. And we got fruit, it was in our little shoe boxes.

Interviewer: That's what we had too, shoe boxes.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's so funny because White people say, what's a shoe box, what do you mean. I said, we got—they would decorate our shoe box and put our different little treats in it. And they say, oh, okay. They had stockings but we had shoe boxes.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, that's what we had. And we had cakes for Santa Clause. We used to get up and peek to see if that was Santa Clause or was our Mom and Daddy. They didn't know we were peeping.

Interviewer: Peeping, yeah, yeah.

Dorothy Burton: And so, our Big Momma, we headed down there first where we were living at. And Momma said, y'all chaps go to bed because Santa Claus coming. And it was funny. I mean, she had everything lined up. They did. Their mom and our mom had all the children's thing lined up. And, this is mine, this is mine. They had our name on it, you know, and stuff. And it was great.

Interviewer: It was fun.

Dorothy Burton: It was great.

Interviewer: Did y'all have, like, a Christmas program and the kids were acting?

Dorothy Burton: Yes, we had Christmas programs. We really did.

Interviewer: Easter too?

Dorothy Burton: Easter. We had Easter and Children's Day—which they don't have Children's Day.

Interviewer: They stopped because a lot of children don't go to church like they used to.

Dorothy Burton: Oh my Lord. And—

Interviewer: That was a great day. We didn't get new clothes like we did for Easter but we wore

our Easter clothes. But the children took over everything in the church.

Dorothy Burton: They did, we did.

Interviewer: We'd usher, they'd have a child—young teenage child who could preach.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, but we didn't have that one now. But we did—I remember part of my Children Day speak. I found a little dime, muddy as it could be, I tried to shine it up by rubbing it on me. It was dull and wouldn't shine, the metal of this dime would buy, but I'm going to spend this dime anyway.

Interviewer: Oh, that's so cute.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, I remember that. So, Laura May may even know it. Yeah, and it was nice. And our kids, it was nice coming up for them too. And now they cooperate with the White folks more than we did.

Interviewer: Yeah, when I came home we just worked with them, but we went to our own schools and stuff. Now—

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, our children did. Our children would go out there and play with they children. Every time I look around with my kids, they play baseball, football, every—

Interviewer: Now, they said there used to be a baseball team here in Davidson. Did your children play on that team?

Dorothy Burton: Yes, yes they did. Outlaws.

Interviewer: What was the name of—the Outlaws?

Dorothy Burton: Yes it was.

Interviewer: You got any photographs of these?

Dorothy Burton: I don't have any photograph of nobody. I don't. I can't find my children little pictures. After I moved—see, I moved so much I couldn't find no pictures. I couldn't find a lot of my things after I moved. Because, I'm going to tell you—this is what I was going to tell you about the house I was staying in on Griffith Street. Okay, it was a lady named—I don't know if Janny French was here when you came or not. She was at the guest house. She would do the guest house, her and Mattie Fletcher. Okay, she would pick us up every morning walking to school from up in the country. We still had to come down to Ada Jenkins. And Ms. Janny French would wait on use. She's a white lady, you know. And she would wait on us, she would take us there to the other school. That's how good she was. And after the college got to talking about people land and thing, they knew how much land we had back over there on Griffith Street. Right now ain't nothing over there on that right hand side.

Interviewer: That's right.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, because I was sitting back in the middle. Alright, she said, Dot, she said, let me talk to you. She came down to the house one night and she said, they got to fix this house. I said, Ms. French, I said, me and my brother went to Mr. Potts—he was the main person to give permit for your homes to be fixed up—but they denied ours.

Interviewer: Why?

Dorothy Burton: They wouldn't do it because Davidson was wanting that land. Me and my two boys, we could lay up and look up at the sky, that's how bad it had gotten. And when it rained we had to go and get tin tubs and put it in the floor to catch the rain, that's how bad it was. Jimmy went back up there and told Mr. Potts how bad it was, but he wouldn't do nothing. He said he couldn't do it. Because one day Bob Curry, he called me to the office—

Interviewer: At Davidson?

Dorothy Burton: At Davidson College, I was still working down there in the cooking place. And he said, Dot, he said, we'd like to buy your land, you know. He said, because we heard that it was so bad that Potts won't give you permit to get it fixed. I said, that's true. And so, I said, I can't do nothing until I talk to my sisters and my brothers. And so, okay, we thought he was offering us—I'm going to tell you what they gave us. \$500. And they gave us the land over there. And I said, why can't you build me a house from this wreck and all this land back here. So, he looked at this man and the other man looked at him like if I was crazy. And so, Jimmy and myself, we went over there again to the office. They wouldn't change their mind. And so, Jimmy said, well, she got to have somewhere to go because she can't stay in this house another year. And so, he said, well, that's all we can offer, the land, and she have to pay for the house, you know. I said, okay. So, me and Jimmy went over and picked the lot out because my lot was right next to Jimmy's, my brother. But the Jordan guy—what's his name? Rorley, Leroy—Frank, that's what I called him. But we switched land because I didn't want that close to my brother.

Interviewer: You let him be in between. Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, and that's how I got that corner house.

Interviewer: Okay, was that an FHA house?

Dorothy Burton: Yes, Farmers—yeah, it was. And then I stayed there for years. For years.

Interviewer: Yeah, well you were there when I moved.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, because I got married in '84. Yeah, I got married and my husband died in '92.

Interviewer: That's before I got here. I didn't know that.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, my husband died in '92 because he kept begging me to, you know, put

his name on my house. Nuh-uh, I'm not putting your name—

Interviewer: That was your house.

Dorothy Burton: That's right. I said, you wasn't here when I built, this is my name. And so, well, after I had back surgery and everything and again my house got broken into with the police, drugs. And down there where I usually keep my—where I used to do hair because I went to cosmetology school.

Interviewer: Okay, which school was that?

Dorothy Burton: Concord.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Dorothy Burton: Mm-hmm, cosmetology.

Interviewer: So, you were doing—

Dorothy Burton: Hair.

Interviewer: You had a little business at your house and you did hair in that shop. That would be on the weekends or at night?

Dorothy Burton: Everyday except Monday. When I come in from work I had hair appointments.

Interviewer: And how long in the evening would you do that?

Dorothy Burton: Sometimes I would do it until sometimes up to 10:00/11:00 at night.

Interviewer: And then get up the next day and go back to Davidson College?

Dorothy Burton: Mm-hmm. And then had my two granddaughters.

Interviewer: Yeah, I remember that.

Dorothy Burton: Chenerik and Abany.

Interviewer: Yeah, because my little one went to school with one of them.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. See, the doctor told me, he said, you have to let one of these jobs go. And so, I said, well I'm going to have to let my hair go because I need something with benefits.

Interviewer: Yeah, you got to have benefits. Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: And you ain't got no benefits with cosmetology—

Interviewer: You get your own—

Dorothy Burton: —unless you get it out there yourself. And I said, nuh-uh, I better let this go and keep Davidson College. And that's what I done.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Wow, so you had your own little business, huh?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, I really did.

Interviewer: Well, that's nice. So, that helped you pay off your house and stuff early, huh?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, yeah. Well, then I did, I said, shoot, I'm going to—I put it up for sale. I really did. And I said, I'm going to get me an apartment because I got tired of begging people to cut the yard and—

Interviewer: Listen, I'm getting to be the same way.

Dorothy Burton: I couldn't take it.

Interviewer: I'm not going to—I think I'm going to give myself a few more years, but I'm not going to stay in my house like Ms. Sis and Ms. Bernice. I'm just not doing it.

Dorothy Burton: You will feel better. You will feel much better. Like this man was talking to me, his name was Jeff, the other night about Habitat. And he told me that they was going to build some Habitat apartments, affordable—

Interviewer: Apartments.

Dorothy Burton: Yes. He said, Dot, and they coming up. He said, because I think you paying too much for yours. He said, you get over there and put your name on that list. I said, because I don't want a house. I said, I've been there and I'm not able to take care of a house. And he said, well, you get over there and put your name on that list and tell them I sent you over here. So, I told him I'd go over there Monday—I mean, not Monday, but Tuesday, because they're not open on Monday. Have my name down and when those affordable apartments get built, my name is on one. He said, because you're not—but, you know, you don't even have enough money to do what you need to do. I said, yeah, but I'm living comfortable. If it wasn't for David, well, I don't know what I'd do right now.

Interviewer: Who's David?

Dorothy Burton: My oldest son.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. You know, I had a name for him—

Dorothy Burton: What, you had Pick?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Everybody call him Pick.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, everybody call him Pick. And they call—there they used to call him Big D.

Interviewer: Big D. Okay.

Dorothy Burton: And so me and him is working, you know, right now, together, paying my rent and stuff. But, you know, he helps me pretty good.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, that's good.

Dorothy Burton: Just like I told Derrick, you know, if you get you a job and stuff and work it wouldn't be hard on nobody if you going to stay here. I said, because, I mean, you know, time is time.

Interviewer: Yeah, the economy is not that great.

Dorothy Burton: No.

Interviewer: Now, whoa, so your sister, Lorene, was telling me that somebody in your family was the first one to shine shoes in the barber shop?

Dorothy Burton: Uncle Fred. Uncle Fred was the first Black person. They had a shoe shop up there, it was between M&M shop and another little building. It was right up in there. Also, my brother had a beauty supply store up there too.

Interviewer: Jimmy?

Dorothy Burton: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so what year was your uncle up there? When you were a little girl? Or—

Dorothy Burton: When I was little.

Interviewer: So, that would have been in the 40s and 50s.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, when I was little. Uncle Fred used to fix shoes. I mean, he could fix some shoes.

Interviewer: Now, when he died nobody took over his store or what?

Dorothy Burton: Nobody took over for years as I know of until a man came and his name was Warren McKissick. I know you know him I think because he used to have a church, Great Galilee in Charlotte. He came and reopened the place so many years after that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Wow. So, your Uncle Fred was on your mother's side or your father's side?

Dorothy Burton: Oh my mom.

Interviewer: Okay, and his name was Fred?

Dorothy Burton: Fred Torrance.

Interviewer: Torrance, okay, okay, okay.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, my mom had, like, 19 children—my grandma. My grandmother had 19

children. Out of all 19 children there's only six living. And, you know Alexander Torrance, Presbyterian Church, that my uncle and he's, I think, 83. And his sister, Faginger, she stays in Delaware. His sister, Helen, stay in Delaware. And Faginger just turned 86 the 28th of October. We called and talked to her. And, let's see, Faginger, Helen, Catherine stays in California, Juanita, and Marian, and Uncle S stay this way. Well, Juanita and Marian, they stay in an apartment together at the Birkdale. Now, Marian stayed in New Jersey for years, 30 something years, might have been 40 something years.

Interviewer: And then she moved back here to retire.

Dorothy Burton: She moved back, yeah, after she retired—she moved back and she moved with Juanita. Her and Juanita's together.

Interviewer: Okay, do they like living over there in Birkdale? They live in an apartment or a house?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, they live in an apartment. They got a three bedroom, an apartment, and they pay for it too.

Interviewer: Yeah, I heard that. I heard they pay big money over there. She said, Dot, you are not a fool, she said, me and Juanita hadn't, you know, be together—

Interviewer: Come together they wouldn't—individually they wouldn't be able to afford it, but together—

Dorothy Burton: Of course, I had them to put their application in over here at that new building, but you can't smoke in there and that's one reason why they didn't move, because Juanita is not going outdoors to smoke.

Interviewer: I got you.

Dorothy Burton: Now, this is crazy, you can't smoke outside here, but you can smoke on the inside. And I told Berry, I said, that's crazy. I said, because a lot of people can't take smoke. I cannot inhale nobody's second smoke, and David smokes. And I can't inhale, but he goes outside sometimes. Sometimes he goes in that bathroom in the middle of the night, you know, at night. Because you can smell—I try to get stuff to keep the soot down in there. And I say, I got to get me a little brush so I can wash the walls, keep that smoke down and scent.

Interviewer: Yeah, keep that smoke down. Okay, so your Uncle Fred owned the business where he repaired shoes. Anybody else you know who had a business? Don't have to be related to you. We're trying to figure out what kind of—okay, a lot of women went to cosmetology school and they would have, like, hair salons at their house. So, you had one. Do you know of anybody else who had one? I know Dubby—

Dorothy Burton: Dubby Howard.

Interviewer: Howard.

Dorothy Burton: And once upon a time in Cornelius I think Paulette did hair at her house.

Interviewer: Paulette did hair.

Dorothy Burton: And—

Interviewer: So, here in Davidson it was you and Dubby. Okay, alright. So, Dot, what'd you charge for—back in the 70s—

Dorothy Burton: For hair?

Interviewer: —what'd you charge for hair?

Dorothy Burton: Whatever the price they send me down from Raleigh.

Interviewer: Oh, the prices came from—

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, I didn't know that.

Dorothy Burton: The prices come and—but you know, if you want a curl, the curl's, like, \$35 or \$40. Shampoo and roll and set, it would be—what was that? —I think it was \$20. Yeah, it wasn't high, high.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, but it was reasonable. Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: It was reasonable, you could get by with it. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's great, that's great. So, who owned stores around here? Did any Black people own any stores over here? I heard that there was a little penny store where you could go get candy.

Dorothy Burton: Well, that was down here. See, I didn't know nothing about down here.

Interviewer: What do you mean down here? In Corne—

Dorothy Burton: In Cornelius. Betty told me that. Betty told me that yesterday. She said, Dot, you know, it was a store down there in Cornelius, a dime store. I said, well, we had a dime store up here in Davidson, too, on the corner where Davidson College clothing is at right there. Right there on the corner, it used to be a dime store.

Interviewer: Who owned that, a White or Black?

Dorothy Burton: White.

Interviewer: White, okay, okay.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. And I never forget the name of—Fanny and Lula.

Interviewer: That was the name of the dime store?

Dorothy Burton: No, that was their name, Fanny and Lula. And they used to stay together in that great big house in Davidson down there on Main Street. You would see that great big house, the yellow looking house? I think they fixed it up, didn't they?

Interviewer: Yeah, they have.

Dorothy Burton: That was where they used to stay.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. And we used to have a grocery store, Mr. Anderson, he was White, he ran the grocery store on—what do I want to say? —like you—you know where Nationwide? Okay, well, you go down the street because—well, I think Nationwide, I believe it was Sic and his wife little restaurant. And Black people couldn't go on the White folks side. Now, I remember that.

Interviewer: So, y'all had a side to sit on?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, I remember that one, now. Yeah, they had a side to sit on and we had a side to sit on. And that was Sic's restaurant. Okay, you come on down the street, I'm thinking it was a dry cleaner, it was ran by Mr. Jackson, which he was White. Come on down the street, there was Mr. Anderson grocery store.

Interviewer: And he was White.

Dorothy Burton: He was White. And then, there was the post office on that same side right there, and then the ten-cent store. You come on down, there was the barber shop—Pool's Barber Shop—and there was another little restaurant. I think the Preston, they was White, they ran it.

Interviewer: Okay, was that the soda shop too?

Dorothy Burton: No, the soda shop was on down. I'm talking about the Main—you know—and then we had another grocery store ran by Irving Johnson, that was White. We had another store down in there, he sold cookies and candy stuff—Pinda, that was White. Then we had a shoe store ran by Mr. Brown. We used to go up there and get our shoes.

Interviewer: Okay, now let me ask you a question, did they let y'all try on shoes when you were little? Can you remember?

Dorothy Burton: Yes, Mr. Brown did.

Interviewer: Okay, because some stores owned by White people wouldn't let the—

Dorothy Burton: Mr. Brown didn't care. Mr. Brown about like us. Well, you try on this shoe, your daddy told me to let you try on this shoe. I said, okay. Black and white shoes.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, I had them saddle shoes. I wore them to school every day, every day.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, sir. Because every time we needed a pair of shoes, Rory would go by there and tell Mr. Brown he's sending us up there.

Interviewer: And he would tell him what kind of shoe he want you to have. Okay, alright, sounds good. Now, so the baseball team called the Outlaws, where was the baseball field?

Dorothy Burton: Right there in Davidson, it's that little square. That's where the baseball field

was.

Interviewer: Okay, so did White people own that land then, or—

Dorothy Burton: White.

Interviewer: White, okay, but they let y'all play on it.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, they let them play on it. You'd get more information, I think, by Laura May and her husband because I think Jimmy was an Outlaw, too. I think he played ball, too.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, okay. You think she might have some pictures of Jimmy in his suit?

Dorothy Burton: I don't know because Laura May usually have a lot of old picture.

Interviewer: Bcuase I'd like to have some of those pictures of the Outlaws.

Dorothy Burton: I was fixing to say Vinola Hall might have some.

Interviewer: Who's that?

Dorothy Burton: You know, her husband hadn't been too long died. We called him Cat Face. Leonard Hall.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: She might have some.

Interviewer: Where does she live?

Dorothy Burton: She stays in Mount Mourne, I mean, up that way somewhere down up in there.

Interviewer: Okay, you think Ms. Bernice might know her?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, everybody know her.

Interviewer: Okay, give me her name again now?

Dorothy Burton: Her name is Vinola Hall.

Interviewer: Vinola Hall.

Dorothy Burton: You come over to church, you'll see her.

Interviewer: You got pictures of her at the church?

Dorothy Burton: No, she there.

Interviewer: Comes to the church, okay, alright.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. And I'm trying to think of another one because a lot of them have died—some of them have died out. Now, my son played, both of them. I think Derrick—Derrick? Must be sleeping. He eat and go back to sleep. But, David, he played with them. Yeah, David can tell you more than I can.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, maybe I'll come back and get him because I want to get some photographs of people in their team clothes because I've heard about this for so long. Now, there were no buses out here, so people just walked?

Dorothy Burton: Yes. Walk and have their cars.

Interviewer: Okay, so how did people in Davidson get to Torrence-Lytle High School?

Dorothy Burton: Oh, school buses.

Interviewer: Oh, you had school buses.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, we had school buses.

Interviewer: Wow, there used to be a larger Black population in Davidson. What happened?

Dorothy Burton: All of them done died out. All our people have died out just about, for real.

Interviewer: Wow. So, women who baked cakes and sold them or—because in my neighborhood where I was, we had some women who baked. And Christmas time come, your momma would bake one or two cakes, but she'd get somebody else to bake cakes. Did you have any people who baked cakes and things?

Dorothy Burton: Only thing I know, that our Momma baked cakes. And lately—I mean, you know, we learned to bake cake, we baked them and we sold them, too.

Interviewer: Who you sell them to?

Dorothy Burton: Different people who want to buy them. And we bought a lot of cake, too, from a lady name Annie Knocks. She was White and she baked a lot of cakes and she sold a lot. She was nice. The Knocks people was really nice.

Interviewer: I heard that, I heard that a couple of times.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, and they called Betty up anytime, Betty, we got some cakes, y'all want to buy some we got them. And we'd go and we'd buy them until we started baking them. Now, right to the day now, Betty and them sells a lot of cakes. Her and Nicey.

Interviewer: Get out of here, really? Now, see, that's what we want to know about small businesses. So, you had a business, they got a business.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, but they—

Interviewer: You don't have to have a store to have a business.

Dorothy Burton: No, you don't. I used to sell cakes myself. Yeah, it was a big—I used to sell cakes big time. And Betty sometime—Betty would call, Dot, how much you charge for a cake. I told her. And I would tell her. And a lot of time—a couple of times when Valentine's Day came, I made a lot of Valentine cake and put on hearts and wrote on the thing, took them over to the college and set them up in Peter Knocks. Those cakes got gone in a heartbeat. And I sold them all when they was in college, and I sold them all for \$5 apiece.

Interviewer: Oh wow, that was nice.

Dorothy Burton: Because they was in college.

Interviewer: Yeah, they got it.

Dorothy Burton: I would work and come home and make them cakes. I said, I'm gonna make some heart Valentine cakes and see what they buy them. I'm gonna set them up out here. I did.

Interviewer: Oh, that's beautiful. That's beautiful.

Dorothy Burton: And right now I bake cake for Ernie Jefferies, that chocolate layer cake he like.

Interviewer: Oh boy, he love that cake, yes he does.

Dorothy Burton: And I tell—he said, Dot, he said, Momma talk to you. I said, no, that was a

couple weeks ago. And he said, well, Momma want chocolate cake for Thanksgiving. I started to tell him, it's a shame because still I ain't gonna make it because I ache so bad, you know, but I'm getting over with it.

Interviewer: Did you get that shot? That shot that—

Dorothy Burton: I can't have the shot until March. Six months after you have the shingles, my doctor told me. But, I'm okay though. I have just a little few pain, but—

Interviewer: No, I had it about—

Dorothy Burton: It's something.

Interviewer: —four years ago.

Dorothy Burton: It's something.

Interviewer: Maybe it was five years ago, and then afterwards—you're right—it took a while afterwards before I got the shot. But you make sure when March comes you take that shot.

Dorothy Burton: I will. Oh, you think I ain't? I don't know how long them little leg pain lasts, but she said it will finally go away.

Interviewer: Yeah, it will, it will. Now, did you have midwives in Davidson that you knew of?

Dorothy Burton: I don't know. I've heard them talk about it but I don't know.

Interviewer: So, your momma had you in the hospital?

Dorothy Burton: My momma had me in the woods.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Dorothy Burton: In the back of the house I think was a lot of woods. I think she was walking down through the woods and Big Momma said she fell down—and I was an immature baby, I was a seven-month baby. And they carried me around in shoe box, they thought I wasn't going to live.

Interviewer: But you lived, thank you Jesus.

Dorothy Burton: And big. And Momma said that's the reason why my name wasn't down there at the courthouse as a name. My name is down there as Dorothy Ann—I mean, Baby Girl Torrance. I went looking for my name, me, Laura May, Betty, all of them got birth certificates except me. I said, well I am—she said, well here's a person name Baby Girl Torrance born 1942, belong to Mary Jo Torrance. I said, well that's me. And I came back, I said, Momma, why did not name me. Because, she said, she thought I was going to die. And she didn't—Dr. Woods told her that I was going to make it and go ahead and name me. And Momma said she named me Dorothy Ann. She named me Dorothy Ann, and it never did get to the courthouse.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, they forgot to go back. Well, I was born at home on the floor. The midwife had gone to visiting someone, so she told my mom she'd be back in two weeks, don't worry, you're not going to have her any time soon. And lo and behold I popped out. So, really, my neighbor helped my mother deliver—my neighbor delivered me. My neighbor and my grandmother. And then they called in the doctor afterwards to come and see if I was healthy and okay.

Dorothy Burton: Well, they called Dr. Woods and Dr. Woods—they said came down through the woods with the flashlight. And said, here, take her and put her in a box, in a shoe box. And he came back and forth. They said came back and forth every day to see how I was doing.

Interviewer: Oh wow, that's when doctors used to make house visits.

Dorothy Burton: Yes.

Interviewer: That's right.

Dorothy Burton: And Momma said, I told that girl not to go down through them woods. Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow.

Dorothy Burton: Oh Lord.

Interviewer: So, Dot, even though you were immature, you were able to take your mother's breast milk?

Dorothy Burton: You know, I don't know nothing about the breast milk or anything. I don't know nothing of that. I think she gave us bottles, I think. I remember Laura May had a bottle, so I'm thinking we had bottles.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. When Laura May born?

Dorothy Burton: October 23rd, 1944.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. Wow.

Dorothy Burton: And my brother was August 1st, 1941. Jimmy, myself was a year apart. Laura May and myself is two years. And Betty and myself, I think, is six years.

Interviewer: She's the baby?

Dorothy Burton: Who, Laura May?

Interviewer: No, Betty.

Dorothy Burton: Betty the oldest. Betty will be 80 if she live to see April.

Interviewer: Get out of here. I didn't know that.

Dorothy Burton: And she's all our Momma.

Interviewer: Okay, she's the momma.

Dorothy Burton: That's her. She'll call me up and, don't you take yourself out tonight, it's too cold.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's nice.

Dorothy Burton: And we love—and it's nothing but the three of us, so we love each other.

Interviewer: That's a blessing, I'm telling you, to have family.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, it is. We love each other. We may fall out or don't agree sometime, but we get right back on track. We eat a lot together, too.

Interviewer: Okay, they said that—now, when they used to have the baseball games, did no one sell, like, ice cones or nothing like that?

Dorothy Burton: I think a guy came by named Tom Robins. I think he sold snowballs.

Interviewer: Tom Robins.

Dorothy Burton: He dead now though. That child's mother, Beverly—

Interviewer: Beverly Hall.

Dorothy Burton: Yes.

Interviewer: Her mother used to sell?

Dorothy Burton: Her daddy.

Interviewer: Oh, that was him, okay. He died about a year ago.

Dorothy Burton: Yes, he used to come all over town selling snowballs.

Interviewer: Okay, alright, alright. Now, they live—I know where they live, off of—

Dorothy Burton: 73 out there in the—

Interviewer: Uh-huh, and right before you get to Poplar Tent Road you can take a left, you go down there. Is that considered to be Davidson, too?

Dorothy Burton: Yes. I didn't know that. I always thought it was 73, but they said that was Davidson.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, alright, that's amazing. Okay. So, what else was I going to ask you? Did people have gardens?

Dorothy Burton: Oh yeah. Garden, picking cotton, too.

Interviewer: You picked some cotton? You?

Dorothy Burton: Now, do you think I'm going to pick cotton? Me and my aunt, Marian, that I was saying about was just like this—she was born May 28th, 1942 and I was born September 30th, 1942, and we were just like sisters—we would get on Mr. Rob Knocks wagon and we'd—

oh, everybody picking cotton, everybody picking cotton. Me and Marian together, we were putting rocks and cotton on top.

Interviewer: Are you serious?

Dorothy Burton: I'm serious. We would pick the rocks first and then put the cotton on top. And Mr. Rob, he said, oh lordie, these girls going to pick cotton today. He would wear that sac and when he would bring us home and he would go back an empty all the cotton, he got cotton and rocks. Honey, he come and pick us up, he said, I don't want Dot and Marian.

Interviewer: Because he knew what y'all were doing, huh?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. He said, I'm not going to pay y'all \$0.50. So, Marian say, well, we pick—we did 50 pounds you said. He said, yeah, 50 pounds of rocks.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, they used to go pick cotton. But we had gardens. Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of things y'all grow?

Dorothy Burton: Our daddy, he planted a little bit of everything. And I would have to cook because I had been cooking ever since—I was cooking on the chair when my momma died. I had to learn to cook. I didn't have no, really, a child life. I really didn't.

Interviewer: You didn't have a childhood? You just remember working. Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Work, working, home, and cook. I would stay on the inside cooking and doing this and that and the rest of them out there playing. I'd be so mad and I'd just be crying. I did. But, you had to do what you had to do.

Interviewer: Had to do to make it, yeah, yeah. I tell you—

Dorothy Burton: Like Betty said, Dot, you've been working all your life. I said, I really have.

Interviewer: Wow. Well, anything else—oh, tell me that story about your grandma had to tell them people they're not going to come after her.

Dorothy Burton: I don't know that, Laura May the one.

Interviewer: Okay, but just tell me what you know anyway. I'll get it from her.

Dorothy Burton: I don't know anything about that. I really don't.

Interviewer: Oh, wow, you don't remember it.

Dorothy Burton: Nuh-uh. That's when I told Laura May, you know, sometime I remember things and sometime I don't. I said, I don't know whether that smoke messed my little brains up or I don't know. Because they didn't even put me through the tests, you know, after I got burnt. So, I don't—

Interviewer: That shouldn't have—that—if you got burnt—

Dorothy Burton: It shouldn't have bothered me?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Maybe you just—see, you had to be isolated from other kids for a long time because when you have third degree burns you spent a year in the hospital, right?

Dorothy Burton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then, when you came home could you walk?

Dorothy Burton: No, I couldn't walk, they had to take me, carry me upstairs. We still stayed upstairs in our momma's house, in our grandma's house.

Interviewer: Okay, so it took you about two years to recover.

Dorothy Burton: That's what I'm saying.

Interviewer: And see, things happen, you don't remember what happened during those two years—

Dorothy Burton: No, I don't, I don't.

Interviewer:—that you were trying to heal.

Dorothy Burton: That's right. Just like I said, I lost a lot, you know, of learning, memories.

Interviewer: Wow, but God bless you, you're here.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah, I'm here.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, when did you start driving? Because I remember you used to have a Volvo when I first got here. When did you start driving?

Dorothy Burton: I've been driving a long time. Let's see, I think when I moved over on Griffith Street, the lady next door taught me how to drive a straight drive. She said—I said, Ms. Edinmay, I don't know nothing about this car, Roy done made me buy this car. So, Ms. Edinmay say, when I get through with supper we going to go out on the highway. And sure enough she

took me out there, she said, now you put this, bring it down in first gear, then you bring it down and push it up and go backwards.

Interviewer: Yeah, for second. Yeah.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. And so, she said, every time you change your gear you put your feet on the—

Interviewer: Clutch.

Dorothy Burton:—clutch, she said. See, Jimmy didn't have time because Jimmy worked up there at Sic's in his restaurant and he didn't have time to teach me straight drive. But he had a car, but it wasn't a straight drive and he wouldn't let me use his car. No.

Interviewer: He wouldn't let you use his car, huh?

Dorothy Burton: Because I stole his car one time and was driving with the—came to Cornelius at the fish place to get some fish and he was looking for his car. But I brought it right back. I told him I went and got some fish. But anyway, and that's—I learned how to drive on the straight drive first.

Interviewer: That was your first car, on the straight drive.

Dorothy Burton: Mm-hmm. And I paid \$125 for that car.

Interviewer: What year was it?

Dorothy Burton: It was a 19—what year was that car?—1959 Ford. Yeah. And then bought a brand new Torino Ford right off the truck. I bought that Ford and we went over on the hill. I went over on the hill on it. I couldn't get that Ford back in drive, it wouldn't go in drive for nothing. I had to walk back off the hill, back on Griffith Street to get my daddy. And he followed

me all the way back. I had to go put it in reverse and come all the way home.

Interviewer: You had to put it in reverse?

Dorothy Burton: All the way home off the hill from Ada Jenkin and them because that's where we used to gather at sometimes. I had to back it all the way back all the way up to on Griffith Street all the way in my driveway.

Interviewer: So, how did they fix it? What was the problem?

Dorothy Burton: Well, they came and got it. Roy called—

Interviewer: You had a lemon.

Dorothy Burton: Yeah. Roy called the place and they came and got it.

Interviewer: And they replaced it with another one?

Dorothy Burton: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Oh my Lord. What color was it?

Dorothy Burton: Baby blue.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh my goodness. Yeah. How much did a new car cost back then?

Dorothy Burton: It wasn't much. It wasn't much.

Interviewer: So, did you get your car financed at the bank or through the dealership?

Dorothy Burton: No, I paid cash.

Interviewer: Whoa, that's when Black people—you know, when I was a little girl growing up, my father used to tell us, don't take no credit, if you can't pay cash for it, leave it. That's what he used to tell us.

Dorothy Burton: I saved my money and paid cash for it. I think it was, like—it wasn't no 20 something thousand.

Interviewer: Not like cars are today. No way.

Dorothy Burton: I think it was, like, 12 something. Yeah, I saved my money.

Interviewer: Yeah, wow. Well, I thank you for this interview.

Dorothy Burton: Okay, I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: I'm going to—please convince your—

Dorothy Burton: Sister, Laura May? I will. She'll give you a day. Most of the time you can catch her maybe sometimes on Saturday. On Sunday evenings we go to see the sick most the time on Sundays. Yeah, we go to the nursing homes, different places.

Interviewer: I'm trying to turn this thing off.

End of recording.