

TAPE LOG – Gracie Webb

Interviewee: Gracie Webb

Interviewer: Khristian Curry and Zaina Alsous

Interview Date: April 2, 2012

Location: 609 Bynum St, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

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<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
0:00	Zaina introduces herself and states the date. Interview begins by Zaina asking “How are you doing today?”
0:42	Khristian asks Ms. Webb how long she’s lived in the Northside neighborhood. Ms. Webb describes how she grew up in the Northside neighborhood but then moved away once she got married. She moved back when her husband passed away.
1:03	Khristian asks why she chose to move back. Ms. Webb says that she moved back because her children were living in Chapel Hill and they asked her to move back.
1:25	Zaina asks Ms. Webb “How long have you been living in this house?” Ms. Webb says she’s lived in her current home for about 5 years but she once lived in Cedar Grove for 27 years.
1:41	Zaina asks if Ms. Webb remembers cooking with her mother. Ms. Webb explains that she learned how to cook by cooking with her mother. She says that her mother was known for being a good cook and she made some of the best egg custards and chicken dumplings.
2:11	Khristian asks if Ms. Webb had a favorite that her mother would make. Ms. Webb responds by saying that she liked everything her mother would make. She says that she can’t recall anything in particular that she liked but everything was good. She remembers loving her mother’s stewed corn and biscuits. She recalls a time when a neighbor asked her mother for some of her left over bread. Her mother responded by saying that her husband did not eat left over bread and she had been feeding it to the birds. The neighbor asks her not to throw the bread out because “they were the best biscuits I’ve put in my mouth.”

- 3:03 Zaina asks Ms. Webb to describe the kitchen in the home she grew up in. Ms. Webb describes the location of the home she grew up in. Her mother had an electric stove but then used a wood stove. Ms. Webb says “she could cook some of the best pinto beans on that wood stove.” Ms. Webb says that her mother was known in the community for her cooking and she cooked at St. Josephs. She says her mother would cook at events like family reunions. Ms. Webb adds that they heated their home using the wood stove.
- 4:18 Zaina asks if her family sat at the table together for dinner every night. Ms. Webb says they all ate together and on Sundays that everyone would come together and eat including the pastor. Ms. Webb says “we won’t the wealthiest thangs, but we was always full.”
- 4:56 Ms. Webb says she grew up in St. Joseph’s Church. She describes how three generations of her family have grown up in the church.
- 5:30 Zaina asks Ms. Webb if her mother cooked for any other special family events. Ms. Webb describes family cookouts and visiting other neighbors’ homes as well. She describes a gathering when she and other women visited a friend who was grieving the loss of her husband. She says they play cards and share food.
- 6:10 Khristian asks, “Would you consider yourself to be a good cook?” Ms. Webb responds by saying “No, I’m not a real good cook.” She adds that the children think that she cooks well.
- 6:30 Zaina asks if Ms. Webb remembers her mother teaching her how to cook or if she learned by simply watching. Ms. Webb says her mother taught her how to cook. She says that she did not learn everything but she wishes that she had. She explains how her mother taught them to cook different things like bread with step by step instructions. She talks about how she would do all of the cooking while her mother was at work.
- 7:50 Zaina asks Ms. Webb if she remembers the first dish she ever made. Ms. Webb says it’s been so long she can’t even remember. She goes on to say that she tried to teach her grandchildren to make a cake. She describes their reactions and says that they enjoyed it.
- 8:25 Zaina asks if Ms. Webb’s siblings enjoy cooking. Ms. Webb says that she does not have any brothers or sisters. However, she states that she grew up with her cousin.
- 8:40 Zaina asks if they had a garden growing up or was most of the shopping done in a grocery store. Ms. Webb says that her family lived in a rural area when her grandparents were living. She says that her grandfather and her husband both planted things in a garden. She describes how anyone from the community was welcome to get things from the garden.

- 9:05 Ms. Webb describes how her husband taught her to can vegetables. Khristian asks Ms. Webb to describe the things her husband grew in his garden. Ms. Webb says her husband grew string beans, butter beans, Crowder peas, corn, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, and “some of everything you can put it in the ground.”
- 9:40 Ms. Webb would describe how her husband would have the vegetables picked by the time she got home from work. She describes the way they would sit down together to string the beans and shell.
- 10:05 Khristian asks Ms. Webb to describe how she would can vegetables. Ms. Webb says that she would start by washing her string beans and cleaning the jars she would put them in. Then she would pack the string beans into the jar and fill it with water. She goes on to say that you add a teaspoon of salt to each jar and then let them boil for an hour or two. Then you finish by sealing the tops of the jars.
- 11:20 Zaina asks Ms. Webb if she misses canning. Ms. Webb says that she does not miss it because it was hard work. She says that many people use pressure cookers but since they didn’t have one they would set a big fire outside instead.
- 11:44 Zaina asks Ms. Webb “When did you get married?” Ms. Webb says that she got married in 1957. Zaina then asks if she and her husband would cook together. Ms. Webb says that she and her husband would cook together and on weekends that she had to work he would cook.
- 12:35 Khristian asks if there was anything in particular that her husband liked her to make. Ms. Webb says her husband liked stewed beets and fish. She adds that she loves to fish but her husband didn’t enjoy it very much.
- 13:05 Zaina asks Ms. Webb if her husband was a good cook. Ms. Webb says that her husband was a good cook and that he could make some of the best cabbage, pork chops, and chicken.
- 13:40 Khristian asks Ms. Webb to describe her family’s Sunday dinners. Ms. Webb says that her family would gather for Sunday dinner frequently. She says she would fry chicken and make potato salad and banana pudding.
- 14:05 Ms. Webb says that lately everyone has been too busy to get together and that they don’t do it as much as they used to.
- 14:30 Zaina asks Ms. Webb, “Why do you think that people like to get together for big dinner on Sunday?” Ms. Webb describes how it is easier to get together because everyone is off from work and it is a good chance to get together to mingle and talk.

- 15:00 Zaina asks if Ms. Webb thinks that food is a big part of people getting together at church. Ms. Webb says that she thinks that the program is what draws people to the church and food comes second.
- 15:48 Zaina asks if there are any places that she used to like to go out to eat. Ms. Webb says they would go to the fish house in Durham on Fridays. She says her husband loved fish and she would eat shrimp.
- 16:35 Khristian ask Ms. Webb if she remembers Bill's Barbeque and if she could describe some of the food they sold there. Ms. Webb says that Bill's had some of the best hush puppies, barbeque and cold slaw. She says that Mama Dip used to work there with her in-laws.
- 17:35 Ms. Webb says that she visits Mama Dip's at times and she knows her personally. She says that they are related.
- 17:50 Zaina asks Ms. Webb to describe the foods her children liked for her to make. Ms. Webb says that her six children ate a lot of different things. She says that she cooked one meal, regardless of individual preferences.
- 18:50 Zaina recalls the biscuits that Ms. Webb previously mentioned. She asks if they liked them. Ms. Webb says they loved both her and her mother's biscuits. She adds that she thinks they probably liked their grandmother's the most. She says that she does not give out her mother's biscuit recipe.
- 19:20 Khristian asks Ms. Webb if she owns a cookbook that she uses to cook from. Ms. Webb says she cooks off of memory unless she is making something new. Zaina asks her is she has tried anything new recently. Ms. Webb says she used a recipe to make zucchini bread. She says that she liked zucchini bread and that she made a loaf for her aunt.
- 20:20 Zaina asks if Ms. Webb made anything special for birthdays or holidays. She would give them a party. Sometimes she would make the birthday cake and sometimes she would buy a cake.
- 20:50 Zaina asks if Ms. Webb has any tips for making good cakes. Ms. Webb says she doesn't have a good tip since she doesn't cook much anymore. However, she used to make a sour cream cake and some of her neighbors have tried to convince her to make one. She says that she used to cook them every weekend and at times she would let her granddaughter help her make them.
- 22:20 Ms. Webb describes how to make a sour cream cake. She says that is has eggs, flour, butter, sugar, and sour cream. After she stirs it all she adds vanilla flavoring. She says she uses a bunt pan and after it cools she put white icing on it.
- 23:15 Zaina asks if her kids live in the area. Ms. Webb describes where her children live.

- 24:30 Zaina asks if the whole family celebrates holidays together. Ms. Webb says that her family pulls names for Christmas because there are so many of them. She says that they all share the cooking responsibilities for holidays. She says she usually brings banana pudding, potato salad, and collard greens.
- 25:45 Miss Webb she uses bananas, pudding mix, and milk to make her banana pudding. She says she lines the bottom of the pan with bananas then slices the bananas on top of the vanilla wafers. After that she puts the filling on top and repeats another layer of vanilla wafers, bananas, and filling. She lets it sit for a while and then she puts graham cracker crumbs on top. She says that people at church all like her banana pudding.
- 27:00 Zaina asks Ms. Webb how many grandchildren she has. Ms. Webb lists the names of her eight grandchildren.
- 28:15 Ms. Webb says that she would try to teach her grandchildren to cook when they were younger.
- 29:05 Khristian asks where Ms. Webb worked. Ms. Webb says she worked at the student health clinic on UNC's campus as a nurse's assistant. She worked there for 28 years and she says loved working there.
- 30:00 Ms. Webb describes how she would visit her aunt and uncle in Fayetteville.
- 31:45 Khristian asks if Ms. Webb has any memories of her grandmother. Ms. Webb says she was young when her grandmother. She describes meals they would have in her grandmother's lawn.
- 33:10 Ms. Webb talks about making a sweet potato pies. She says that you boil the sweet potatoes and then you peel them. Then you mash then and add butter, eggs, sugar and a little flour and pour it into a crust.
- 34:15 Ms. Webb says she loves baked sweet potatoes. She says you can buy them with strings or without strings. She describes how to take the strings out of the sweet potatoes using a mixer.
- 34:50 Zaina asks where Ms. Webb gets most of her food from. Ms. Webb says she goes to Food Lion and sometimes Harris Teeter when they are having a sale.
- 35:05 Khristian asks where Ms. Webb shopped when she was raising her kids. Ms. Webb says she shopped at A&P grocery store. She describes where it was located. Miss Webb goes on to describe different business that used to be in the area.
- 36:30 Ms. Webb describes the home of black families that used to live on Franklin St. She describes how Franklin St. was the home to mainly black families.

- 41:30 Zaina asks Ms. Webb how she feels about the way things have changed. She says she doesn't want to accept the change but she has no choice. She describes how the Northside used to be all black and now many of her neighbors are white. "They used to not dare come in this neighborhood."
- 42:00 Ms. Webb says that she doesn't mind having white neighbors as long as they are kind.
- 43:00 Zaina asks what she misses the most about her childhood. Ms. Webb says she misses her mother's cooking. She says that food doesn't taste as good as it used to, especially the meat. Ms. Webb talks about our current food system and the way our food is procedure.