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Interviewee: Esphur and Harold Foster

Interviewer: Hudson Vaughan

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Location: Unknown

Length: 3:00:00 approx.

Logged/ transcribed by: T.C. Owens

[0:00]

[TV running in background.]

[0:24]Esphur Foster talking about a cookout they had one night. Started showing pictures. Forgot and left them out in the rain. One picture of when place was just a field she and her mother on a blanket on her first birthday. Lived in 506 [cobbs / cotton] street. Sister was born there, not sure about brother. Esphur was born on Sunset Dr. Just moved down the neighborhood. Used to be two neighborhoods: Mitchells and Potter's field. Talking about rivalries between neighborhood – music, sports, everything. ****part of this section transcribed below****

[0:20]

Hudson Vaughan: So how long have you lived in this neighborhood?

Esphur Foster: Seventy years

HV: Your whole life?

Esphur: Yeah, we have a—we had—we had a cookout one night and we—we, uh, brought all of our—a lot of old pictures out. And were showing them to everybody at the cookout. And we forgot and left them out, and it rained. And one of them was when this place was just a field. And it was a picture of Mother and me on a blanket. It was my first birthday, and she had baked me a cake, and it had one little candle in the middle of it. And my sister—we lived at 506 Cotton Street, which is straight down the street but on the same side of the—And, uh, she was born there. And I'm not sure whether my brother was born there, or whether he was born at Duke. I was born on Sunset Drive.

[2:00] Growing up there were children, dogs and cats everywhere. Laughter everywhere. Sneaking out the yard. We do not go through people's things because he and her sister got caught going through their mother's drawers every day. Mother always knows. She'd say "get A switch. I'm gonna get you for the old and the new." Mother's name was Hattie. She was the jewel, elegant, brilliant, sweet. Sister is carbon copy of her, except for lacking the sweet personality. Mither was tactful. Black and white talked about what a wonderful person she was.

[4:00] Hattie was born out in the country, near Chapel Hill. By the time she was 10, her father, step father and mother had died. She was the apple of her father's eye. Orphaned

young. Mother was a professional seamstress, asked a white lady, Mrs. Neil, to please take care of her baby if anything happened. Mrs. Neil took Hattie and an orphaned white boy. Complex situation. All the children died of cancer, possibly colon-recto.

[6:00] Mr. Neil died in Florida. Downtown by university florist was where their building was. They owned a building. Often wondered why mother didn't like the beach, never understood it. Espthur thinks it's because of what happened to Mr. Neil, because he was very good to Hattie.

[7:00] Harold and Hattie are insatiable historians. Harold is soft-spoken. Have you noticed that everytime the Fosters get together we have grits and fried fish? Dad's daddy was full Creek Indian. Espthur never heard that. Didn't argue with Harold, spoke only from fact. Looked up "Creek Indian". Father was from SE part of NC, which is where Creeks were from. All children had hair that was straight and a little wavy. Wondering where it came from. "That hair must be from grand-dad," the Indian." They lived in Mervin, couldn't find work, so left for Florida. Found a job, sent for wife, but she wouldn't leave her mother. His oldest sister, Aunt Kathleen, said she was going to go find grand-daddy, so she did, and they had a relationship for a long time.

[10:00] [T.V. turns off]

Espthur's father was a beautiful black man, and the women was his weakness. That and being an alcoholic. Mother worked three jobs to support family. Maid. Mother worked at Danziger's and learned a lot about the Jews and what was done with them because the first Mrs. Danziger told them all about it. Told mother how they put them in trunks and shipped them over here. Upstairs from Danziggers was "Old World Candle and Gift." Mother loved hearing about all the Jews trials and tribulations, because she loved history.

[11:30] She worked for a private family, the Whitmeyers. Mr. Whit. was in business with [Fashee] insurance and realty that here on Rosemary St. They used to have a porch, but tore it off. Used to have an office right behind what was called Spanky's. Mr Whitmeyer became an alcoholic, and he and Mrs. Whitmeyer separated. Son had some mental retardation. One day Mr. Whitmeyer was backing out of the drive to go to Hillsborough. He had the, and didn't see Dougie, backed over and dragged him a little bit. And that really exacerbated what was already wrong with him. He loved mother, and mother loved him (Dougie), and he was so jealous of Dougie. When they separated, Mrs. Whitmeyer said to [Dr. Serdevan]. Ms. Whitmeyer told mother to do something one day, and she raised her voice, so mother walked home. They lived at 219 E. Rosemary St. The house is still there. Everyone in Chapel Hill would love to have mother, that was her reputation.

[14:20] So Dougie cried all the time and wouldn't eat. Ms. Whitmeyer took him to Dr. Baker. There was a children's hospital at Duke. Couldn't find anything wrong with Dougie. "Have you had a maid in your family leave, or someone die?" "Yes, my maid left." "Well, if you want Dougie to live, you'll do everything you can to get that maid back." So Mrs. Whitmeyer came down, told mother Dougie was so sick that he wasn't eating, and he was dying.

[15:32] "Don't ever raise your voice to me again. If I am not—if you tell—if you ask me to do something, and I'm not doing it the way that you would like for me to do it, or the way

that you think that I should do it, tell me. But don't ever raise your voice at me again." And Ms. Whitmeyer of course apologized, and Mother went back, and that saved Dougie's life 'cause then she was happy.

[16:00] So when the Whitmeyers broke up and Mrs. Went back to work, she got the job with Dr. Sturvin. She said that her maid needed a job. Mother went down and talked to Dr. Sturvin, and she became heads of the maidstead. That was in 1952 or '54. She was the first one to unlock the doors at the school when they got their certificate of occupancy.

[17:15] Mother was very organized, and got to a position to get her GED and wanted to go to business school. She asked aunt Dina if Esphur and her siblings could stay with their aunt Monday through Friday, and Mother would help with the bills. She took the bus every night and went to Durham business school, something like community college, but for black people. She finished that.

[18:30] Dean [Boughtman]. She was going to evening school at UNC. [Boughtman]'s secretary was in her class. "Do you know Hattie's in my class." Dean: "Hattie's tell me, what you can do besides just clean." Telling dean about accounting and business school, because she loved math. The students used to pay Hattie's dad to help with math. The [Boones] always had a thing with numbers, and Hattie's family has inherited it, too. Dean: "Hattie, [physical plant] is getting ready to take over housekeeping, and I don't want those rednecks taking over." Hattie went to Peabody, took the written test, passed with flying colors, but didn't do well on typing. So she practiced typing everyday for 30 minutes for a month. Took the test, and burned it up 'cause she was like grease lightning. *(a few interesting comparisons here between family members worth coming back to maybe)* She got the job, and that was when they added a part to the Dental School, Bryer Hall. The Dean asked her if she'd like the job. "Well, if you think I'm qualified, I'll try it." Very humble, by a fault. First black clerical staff; everybody was blown away. When there was an opening at the admissions office, "Well, if you think I'm qualified, well, I'll try it."

[22:00] Mother became secretary of admission, and a short time after was diagnosed with colo-rectal cancer. Annie Lou was just devastated. "Hattie did the work of three people. I've not had anybody that could hold a candle to her." The day that she died... I think that she. She resigned the week before she died. Everybody signed a card. When they took her down, Esphur and her sister lived in the room with her. Esphur would sleep in the bed with her at night. Haunting sound, the "death wails." I was in denial about mother dying.

[24:30] The whole dental school filled the hospital room to say goodbye to Hattie. Church was filled. Line of cars to say goodbye. I cried one time: when a law student came by. When the church was filled with law professors.

[25:30] Hudson tells a story about a mentor he had in Memphis. A similar experience when she died.

[26:20] Gritty-grit flew in for the funeral. "You know how many time I put my feet under her table."

[27:20] She was superintendent of Sunday school at First Baptist. She was directress for children choir, loved music, played by ear. Secretary of PTA. We had graduated: "Please, please remain." She had a garden, made our clothes. Worked us to death. We cleaned. We had to paint every August. We had to paint six

[28:50] God took care of Hattie. "I know there's a god, because if this was a man's world I would've been dead a long time ago." One day walking out of church one day Uncle Louis apologizes for not taking care of Hattie. She was the apple of her father's eye. He would be so proud of her. Uncle Louis was the least able to take care of five mouths to feed.

[31:30] HV: How did you come to hear these stories?

[31:30] Mother just mentioned things in passing; she never talked much. She had a beautiful mirror, with small scallops around the edge. When she turned 14, Mr. Neil gave her a comb and a brush. "You're becoming a lady; I want to be able to take care of yourself." When Mrs. Neil died, Mrs. Neil's sister said, "Hattie I wondered if you'd come." Hattie: "Why wouldn't I come?"

[33:15] Mother was pregnant with me, and it was a shotgun marriage. "So, Miss Neil told Daddy if you can't treat her right bring her right back where she came from. Mother said, "I would've died and gone to hell with gasoline drawers on before I went back, so I didn't--." Mother said Miss Neil taught her how to work with money, but she didn't; that was innate. It was harder after Mr. Neil died. Roger, the other boy that lived with the Neils died of colorectal cancer.

[35:00] HV: What was growing up like around here?

[35:11] She always made our birthdays special because she never had one. Her parents were so young when she died. A birthday was a gift. Didn't have to do any chores, she'd cook a favorite dinner, and favorite dessert. Esphur's favorite dessert was peach cobbler. Harold's was devil's food cake, and Charlie's was peach cobbler. Christmas was so wonderful. Mr. Whitmeyer would get samples of toys, and she would order stuff from him. One summer we discovered the toys under the bed. She got me a typewriter. We played with them all summer, and put 'em back under the bed and got them on Christmas. ****This section transcribed below****

[35:11] EF: She always made—she always made our birthdays special (HV: Yeah?) because she never had a birthday gift. She never—and you, know, when we would give her—when we would give her a gift, she would she would take it and [loose?]. and when she got through, she would put it back and—put it back just like, you know, 'cause she loved the bows and it was so... pretty. So, our birthday was— Jesus Christ—

[35:43] [Esphur stops to adjust the air conditioner. Very audible sound of air conditioner in the background for a while.]

[36:36] So what was I saying? Oh, oh, the birthdays! Because, uh, because her parents were so young when they died. So she said that a birthday is a gift. So we, uh, we didn't have to do any chores on our birthday. She would cook our favorite dinner and our favorite dessert. My favorite dessert was her peach cobbler. His was devil food cake. And Charlie's was fresh three-layered coconut cake. And that how—I always grade-graded the coconut for that.

[37:14] And Christmas—oh my God, Christmas. Chrstimas was so wonderful because Mr. Whitmeyer would get samples of toys and clothes and all that kind of stuff. So he always let mother pick whatever she wanted for us. And then she would order stuff for us. And so she would put it under her bed. And one-one summer, by chance, we discovered it. And so she had gotten me—she had gotten me a typewriter. We played with our toys all summer long and put 'em back under the bed, got 'em that Christmas, and was clueless. Still didn't put it together who Santa Claus was, and that we had played—and so many, many years later we told mother, and she was so gotten away with that, she just laughed and laughed and laughed. Like she was really—and so she would—she would have—Daddy—Daddy was home a lot on Christmas Eve. And she would be trying to get us to go to bed. Well we were so excited. You know, you couldn't— So Daddy would say, "I'm-I'mma go up the street and I'll be back." And so he would go out, and in a few minutes, whit all this racket would be on the back porch. And we thought it was Santa Claus, and you should seen us flying to get into bed. And my heart was beating, and I just could remember that song that says, "He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake." And I said, "Oh, God, I know he hears my heart beating out. Now I'm not gonna get anything!" [laughter] I finally—I would-I would go to sleep. And then when we would get up the next morning, the cookie and milk would be gone. And I guess it was. Mother was exhausted. And that would be, you know—she'd just have all these goodies for us and she even tried—she would have—she try—she would buy a fifth of liquor for Daddy, hoping that he would stay home, would spend the—would spend the Christmas with us, but he never would. You know, just had—just had to—And, uh, so she was just a—she was just a wonderful person.

[39:39] In the summer time we would, uh, we would decide—we loved bid whist. Have you ever heard of bid whist? It's the complete opposite of Bridge. It's black folk's bridge. Okay? So we would decide—'cause see, you're supposed to stay in the yard. "You're not supposed to be going—!" So we would decide whose yard we were gonna play bid whist in for that week. We would go to everybody's—. And then the boys would go over to the trustle and jump into that sewage water, and learn to swim because there was nowhere else to—You need a tissue, Harold? You need a tissue? (Harold: Yes please) There was no, uh—there was nowhere for us to, uh, to learn to swim. So they weren't—the girls didn't play that. So they would—they would go over there and swim in the trustle. Um, I remember one day Harold slipped off, was riding somebody's bicycle, came down Airport Road, what's now Martin Luther Kind Boulevard, and some kind of way his foot and pants got in the spoke. And drug him all the way down airport road. Came home (HV: Just tore up) [laughter] and he said, "Mother?" [laughter] And he took—Mother looked so mad she couldn't even whip him. He said, "I know what you mean, mother about 'A hard head'll make a soft ass.'" [laughter] And I thought, "Oh no, he didn't say that to Mother!" [laughter] but he apologized before he said it, 'cause he knew he wasn't supposed to say it. So she didn't do anything. 'cause he was

already ripped! Oh, man, I am telling you! Oh! He was *scratched*! Oh my goodness! And, um, we had had—the, uh— ****end transcribed section****

[42:00] In the seventh grade, Mrs. Belle was Esphur's teacher. She used to be married to Mr.---, then she married the band teacher. When you were going to the hall at Lincoln [high school] you went by the practice room, and the next room was Miss, Scales/ Bails. Last class of the day was band practice. She knew we were not gonna do. Our band was so good. When they would play "Rhapsody in Blue," it was so good. Esphur didn't play anything, played the radio. She was supposed to be playing the horn, couldn't make the b-flat and never went back. Doesn't know why she thought she was expected to know something right off the bat. Mr. Bail had a beautiful operatic voice.

[44:15] In the spring we would have a concert. On May Day we would have the May Day festival. One year Prince Taylor was Prince Charming. The Walker daughter was Snowwhite. Prince Taylor was just incredible as a singer. Could've been huge recording star, but didn't want to leave his sweetheart in Chapel Hill, and they're still together.

[45:16] Describing how to wrap the May pole. Boys and girls wear white. Esphur got to wrap the may pole once. It was absolutely gorgeous. They would have sack races and other activities, baseball games. Esphur was not athletic at all. Harold would play baseball.

[46:30] Harold and Charlie May would race. There was always a lot of sibling rivalry. It was alive and well. They would start at the bottom of Cotton St. Cotton and McDade and run to Cotton and Brooks. Harold and them used to kill birds, and eat 'em in the summer time. And so Braxton and everyone got into an argument about birds. Braxton pushed Harold down and broke his leg. One boy was nick-named "Ti-ti" because he was born premature. ****This section transcribed below****

[46:30] And I remember the boys used to run up and down, and Charlie May, too. And-and she could out—

HV: She could out-run them? So she was fast?

Esphur: It's always been this sibling rivalry, honey! It's alive and well! And they would run—

HV: And you just got to be the older sister kind of laughing at it, admiring it

Esphur: [*laughing*] So they would start at the bottom of Cotton Street. Um, lemme see, but they go, I think—Would you all go—would you all go passed, uh, Miss Farar—Miss [Faranough's] house? Or would you start at MacDade? And run all the way up—all the way up?

Harold: No, we didn't go passed Miss Cotton. We couldn't go passed Miss Cotton's house. Remember, we had a certain distance we couldn't go passed.

Esphur: No, I'm talking about-about Gene's mamma, Gene Strayhorn's Grandmom, Miss Far'.

Harold: Right, that's where we would go. We would go up there, and you couldn't go any further, because she told us not to go any further.

Esphur: So that you would start down at-at-at-at-at—at Cotton and MacDade and then run up here to Cotton and-and-and, uh—nor that was Cotton and Brook. And run up here to Cotton and MacDade.

HV: So Cotton used to run farther down?

Esphur: Uh-huh, just alitte pa—a little—it goes-it goes to—you go straight down, and the first street is Brooks. To the right. But ti's a little patch below-below there. And they would do that. And-and they used to kill birds. Harold and them used to kill birds, and would eat 'em in the summer time. And so Braxton and Harold got in to an argument about whose bird—one of the birds was. And he pushed Harold down, and broke his leg. (HV: Oh no!) Weeeeeell! Lord have mercy! I thought they were gon' kill Braxton, his momma and them, Aunt Lee, *mmm*.

[48:25] He had an aunt named Aunt Lee. (Harold: Uh-oh)

HV: [*laughing*]

Esphur: She was—she was—**she was a legend in her own time. She would smoke.** She worked for a doctor. He'oud named Dr. Patterson. And Braxton's brother, [Teetee]—and the reason they called him "Teetee," his name was James Thomas, but the reason they called him Teetee was because he was born premature, and he was so tiny. And so **Aunt Lee** called him Teetee. And so she worked for Dr. Patterson. Some kind of way, she built an incubator to keep him alove until he got big. **And she would walk around with a cigarette in her mouth.** [Harold *laughing*] **And that was before filters. It would burn to-to about that much. And it'd have an ash on it that long. And that ash'd never fell off. And she'd been walkin' and cussin', honey. And now I'b tell ya, they got on her nerves so bad one day, she told me. 'Cause we loved to go—we really loved to go down there and play-play cards. And every mother and grandmother in Potter's Field heard that— heard that day. And she had a—she had a hip set-up, really high. And side up higher than the other. And she would put her hand on that hip, and that cigarette, and that ashes dangling. She told 'em one day, she said, to the top of her voice, "Go home! Go home! Your mammy wants you home sometime!" Well, when we got home, Mother was just laughing. She said, "I do not blame her." "Cause, you know, she got all Braxton and them sisters and brothers. That was a big family. And the all of us coming down there, you know. [*laughing*] Mother said, "I don't not blame," uh-uh, "Miss Lee." So we always we know—none of us ever forgot that. So when people get on our nerves we'll say, "Go home! Go home!" and you have to say it [--?--], 'cause we know that the other part is gonna be.** ****end of transcribed section****

[50:41] They'd go to [O'Bryants Chapel] 'cause it was right there. That was the first church they went to. And Mother played piano. There was always Christmas and Easter services. And every time Charlie May would have a speech to say, she'd say two words and start crying.

[51:20] Mother loved Rev. Ward [minister at O'Bryants], but the Methodists didn't send him back, so she stopped going to church. **Maybe look back at description of Rev. Ward.** There's a family named the Norwoods that lived on McMaster, went to First Baptist. Mother asked if kids could start going with them to First Baptist. Of course, Miss. Norwood said yes, but Mother realized after two or three times that she had to start going to First Baptist. Esphur was very young. Hattie had her when she was just shy of being 18. Esphur was born on Aug. 17 and Hattie was born on Aug. 22.

[52:50] Don't let us go talk to you with Rev. Manly. He'll tell you he's never had a member like Hattie Foster. He would have to tell about how wonderful, competent she was. Been there for 62 years, says a lot. Ken Brown, who ran for mayor of Chapel Hill, asked to be introduced to Rev. Manly for his endorsement. They all just talked about Mother.

[54:00] Every August, five or six buses at First Baptist going to Raliegh for the annual picnic. Everyone could cook. Made: fried chicken, potatoes salad, string beans, apple pie, peach pie, ice cream, biscuits. Can't remember tossed salads.

[55:10] Everything Mother cooked was her specialty, and Charlie May cooks just like her. Esphur cooks like her father, who was a chef. They say he used to do beautiful ice carving. Esphur's family loves her banana pudding. Just loves to cook. Sweet potato custard. Mother used to make grated sweet potato pudding. Christmas, thanksgiving, everything. There was always a pound cake in the house. Mother always got butter from family friends who owned a farm. They'd bring milk and butter on the weekends. Dad was a master carpenter.

**** This section transcribed below****

[57:40] And Dad was a master carpenter. So a lot of these houses that you'll go in, all of these big historic houses will have the crown molding. He's the one who did that. If you ever go to Hamlet's Chapel, that whole—that whole, you know when you come up [for prayer—alter, he made that. **So, he—she told Mom and Dad that she wanted to buy what she called "a little piece of land," and build a house. And, uh, so and she told—but she didn't have the money. So she asked [Ma Older look back a few minutes for name] to loan her the money, and she would pay her back. So, when she got ready, and they told her yes, 'cause they loved the life she lived, that she had been a wonderful child. So they did a search—search title for where we were. And that's when they found out that that was heir property, and they couldn't find all of the heirs. So, Dad said, "well," he said, "don't worry, I know somebody who's got some property, and I'll talk to him." The name was [Joe Buck Dobson]. And he was sick. He was dying from cancer. And mother said Dad told him, said to him, "You know, you've been a son of a gun in your life." And he said, "If you ever go and do anything for anybody, you need to sell that property to Hattie Foster." He said—Mr. [Joe Buck Dobson] said, "Is that so, Rufus?" He said, "Yeah." "If you say so, I'll do it." So he sold Mother this property.**

HV: This property here?

Esphur: Uh-huh, this property. And so Mother paid [Ma Older] in the time that she said she would pay it. Then when she got ready to build a house, the bank that's on the corner now, RBC, was uh Orange Savings and Loan. And they all knew Dad. And so Dad said, "I'm gonna tell you what you need have to do." He said, "Now you gonna have to tell a lie, but you follow it, and you do exactly what I tell you to do. And then when you do what I tell you to do, you get down on your knees and you ask for forgiveness, 'cause he already knows why you're doing." And so she did—she did what Dad—

HV: What was that?

Esphur: I don't know. She never told me. And so she did that, and she got the loan. And she—so Dad and, uh, and Mr. Cambell built the house for her.

HV: This house right here?

Esphur: Uh-huh. The front part is fifty years—be fifty years old in October. And then I had had—we had a fire and I added to it in, uh, let's see, 2003. Let's see, I retired in 2003, so it must've been 2002. ****end of transcribed section****

[HV asking about the architecture, whether or not it has the crown molding]

[1:01:50] Family has been on block for over 70 years, in particular house for 50 years.

[1:02:00] Esphur talking about Orange County Training School, on Caldwell, which became Northside. Mother's laid the corner stones; the Booths were masons. First class to go through Lincoln all the way, 7th to 12th grade. Reflections of Lincoln.

[1:05:00] On Fridays go down to AMP to meet Mother and help bring home the groceries (where Panera used to be). Furthest downtown they could go was Roses, because it was owned by the Whitmeyers, down at Columbia and Franklin. Couldn't go on campus, but her friend could. Parents wouldn't let them, didn't want anyone messing with them for being black.

[1:06:45] They'd go uptown though, to [Emminy Griot], sweet shop, Hollywood Theatre. Esphur worked there, black theatre. Car shop right by St. Paul's, theatre was next to it. Now called Pacemaker, excellent work. Next door was Baldwin's Sweetshop.

[1:09:00] Charlie May questioning Mother for not letting Esphur wear lipstick.

[1:10:00] Local places: Bynum Weaver Chapel is now home, [Knott's] funeral home. "Before they tore down where they're building now, that was a funeral home that was in memory of Mr. Bynum. But Knott's funeral home was where he was, and it was just a shack. And that why when Mother died, we didn't have her wake there, 'cause it was awful. Charlie said,

'I'm not having Mother's wake here.' And so that's why we went to Durham. And Holloway, you know. And the people followed us, you know that. They came."

****begin transcribed section****

[1:11:00] HV: Now were you involved in any of the marches, like Harold?

Esphur: No, he was—he was at the forefront. I w—I did march in one or two of them. 'Cause see, we had to take—we had to take an oath, uh, not to be—non violent. And I'm like—? And Mother always told us to support each other if we were doing right. So we thought Harold was doing right. Mother was very upset because she had just built-built this house. And-and we were the only Fosters in Chapel Hill, black or white. And his name was all in the paper, so they knew that—But nobody—s' she was afraid she was gonna lose her job. And she just, you know—but they never said anything to her. It just— She n-never suffered any repercussions, because the people in charge were—they—most of them were Jewish, and they were from up the way. So she-she did not suffer any, uh, repercussions. [--?--] So Charlie and I we-we marched 'cause we were supporting him, but Mother never did, 'cause we broke the law. That—she—to her, that was breaking the *law*, and you just did not *do it*, you know. But when he got arrested and stuff, she all that he got food and clean clothes and stuff, you know. But, uh, so I was—we were—we were in the—in the background. But he was the one that was up front. He was the one that started it. He and they, and all the guys from over here. There's a rock wall right down here, if you go—l

HV: That's where they planned the sit-ins, right?

Esphur: That's-that's it. It's famous—it's famous.

HV: [to Harold] So you were one of the key planners there?

Esphur: Yeah, he was. He was. He's talking to you, honey?

Harold: Huh?

Esphur: He's talking to you--

HV: So you were on that rock wall planning the sit-ins?

Harold: Oh yes. You remember that?

HV: I don't remember that, but I've read about you—I've read about you doing that. How did—how did y'all come to that?

Harold: We were just hanging out. We tell about, just hanging out.

Esphur: That was the hanging out wall.

HV: That was the hanging out wall. So you'd just be there discussing things and then—

Esphur: Yeah, uh-huh! They could go there because—

HV: And that was after the Greensboro sit-ins too, right?

Esphur: Yeah, uh-huh.

HV: So that had kind of caught—

Esphur: Yeah, right. So, but-but—but I-I—it—everybody in-in-in Potter's Field and Sunset could go to the rock wall, 'cause everybody knew Miss [Fanny]. And she had those ten or twelve grandchildren. And so—[--?--] and see, back in those days, we obeyed, you know if somebody saw us doing something, and they could say something to us, then we would hope that they didn't tell our parents. Ohhhh, yes!

HV: So everybody kind of knew each other's parents.

Esphur: Right. That's right. So-so—

HV: Do you remember most of them—a lot of the families that were around here? 'Cause it was a little more scattered around here. There wasn't as many houses. It wasn't quite as dense was it then?

[1:13:53] Actually—

HV: It was just as much, it's just changed?

Esphur: Yeah. Yeah. Umm—(HV: Did—) There are some places gone that were—yeah, so—it was—it was a good little, you know, a number of house and families and stuff. It was wonderful. It was just so wonderful. You know, I have—I have *tried* to-to—. 'Cause I was just furious when, um, the people start selling, and they would build these places. And all these students came over here, and they were very disrespectful. You know, and then I realized what—"don't get mad with the students. It's not the students who did it. It's your peers who did that."

HV: And the developers, too—

Esphur: But I don't— but I don't understand when they say that they can't afford to live here, because *I* worked at the law school. And *I* raised a child by myself. And *I* have had two mortgages where I remodeled and stuff, you know. So don't tell me—! You know, and everybody else I know they got husbands or boyfriends and stuff that help them. I haven't had nobody—I don't want to hear that. You know, and I think about how hard my moma worked. To sell this house would be to negate her very existence. There's no way I could do that, Mr. Hudson. No way, you know. So I just said, well, change is—y—you know, it happens everyday. So, you know, you just have to get used to it. Um, I can say that, uh, the students have gotten much, much better. Because now it's a—it's a, uh—uh (Harold:

integrated) uh, what, Harold? (Harold: Integrated) No, no, it's a—uh... oh what is it when students do something they not supposed to do?

HV: They get some kind of punishment for it?

Esphur: Uh-huh— [thinking to herself, trying to remember. Maybe she'll remember] And with the professors assigning students assignments to come over here and learn, you know, learn about that this here is—that blacks folks do live here. And black folks had a roll in building the University—

HV: Not just a roll [*laughing*]. *Built it!*

Esphur: Yes, yes, yes, and so it's got—it's got—it's gotten a lot better.

****end transcribed section****

[1:16:45]

HV asking if Esphur knows Albert Williams. Esphur asks if he told HV about Harold slapping Albert in a football huddle. Harold told Albert to do something, and he didn't do it, so Harold slapped the daylights out of him. Harold doesn't remember. All he remembers is Albert being so big. All the football players were so close. The relationships that they built.

HV asking about what makes a community, the best aspects that make it. Grown up in. and if change has happened, what that change has looked like.

[1:18:05]

Esphur saying it's been the respect of our elders. Bottom line. During that time we could only go to school, to church, Sunday school. And if you didn't go to church there was no need to talk about going to the movie. We got the same lesson in and our core values, and each one reinforced – church school and home. It was always home, Sunday school and church. Respecting each other, doing homework, helping old people. Go to Bynum Weaver's.

[1:19:45] Granny Flak was a free slave. Mother was white and father was a slave. Her husband was a minister at St. Joseph's. She was petite, light-skinned, blue eyes. She always had a garden and had corn. In the fall, everybody would help her. The corn would be stacked to the ceiling. We would all help shuck corn. Someone would take the corn to Durham and have it ground into meal, and that's how she'd get money. She had a spinning wheel and we were all hypnotized. Because she was a free slave, she was allowed to stay home, and was taught to do things ladies did. Me Ed Stewart, lived across the street, and a huge garden, lived at the corner of Cotton and Brooks. The next house was ours. The day after thanksgiving, they'd kill hogs. There was a lot of community stuff. The adults brought the children along. We could not get into arguments and fight. If you started a fight you got a whipping. We learned how to work out our differences by talking, not fighting. It just wasn't allowed.

[1:22:20] Sunset, Potter's Field, [Windhill], Tintop, but there was no fighting. Even with the competition, no fighting. The ebst from each community would make up the sports teams. All the neighborhood names got incorporated into "Northside" for voting precincts. All the black people from fifty on up know all the black communities, so that still hasn't changed for us. White people are like what are you talking about, then we have to explain it. It has not changed for us. ****this section transcribed below****

[1:22:20] I don't even remember. Let's see that was Sunset, Potter's Field, Windhill, there was, uh Tin—Tintop, and those developments, butthere was no fighting! Even the-the competition and stuff, it was just no fightin'. And, you know, and the best from each community would make up the teams, you know, the football teams, the basketball team, baseball and stuff like that, so it just—

HV: When and why did those names change? Is that just the town that did that?

Esphur: Well, no, because we still know about it. Then they come and they name it :Northside" so they wanna incorporate all this, 'cause that was for votin', and precinct and stuff. But all of the—all the black people—let me see—let me see, from—from—not Mit— [thinking out loud] Mit might know. Mit's my goddaughter. But say fifty on up know all of the black communities that were—yeah. Uh, so it has—that still has not changed for us, you know, so. But it's-it's a—white people don't—you know, "What are you talking about?" So then we have to tell 'em the boundaries and then names of the street and everything that we're talking about. Yeah, so it has not changed for us.

HV: So how what you describe the neighborhood today?

Esphur: Oh, they're all gone! I'm—there's—let me see. Miss [Tameou], who lives across the street from me, she's ninety-six. Miss Willie Mae, where the rock wall is—

HV: That rock wal's still there?

Esphur: Mm-hmm. Oh yeah, the rock wall's still there.

HV: And where's that?

Esphur: I'll show you. Uh, my mother's first cousin and his daughter, coming back down. Oh, the Merrits. That's it!.

HV: The Masons, maybe. Back over here on—

Esphur: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah—(HV: It's a different area)

HV: There's more families in Sunset still left. I feel like it's kind of moving this way.

**** end transcribed section****

[1:24:28] HV talking about how Roberson is starting to change, but N. Graham is long term residents. Baldwin Park is, too, in Carrboro. Esphur talking about [Miss Pendergraff], Miss Bellma, Kathy Atwater, Miss Gritty-Grits Aunt, Miss [Gracie], and Kathy's sister. HV asks about next generation. Esphur's it, and she doesn't know why. Saying people can't afford it. They move away and don't pay taxes, then they really can't afford it. Doesn't understand that. Not trying to hear that. No idea where people are going, but out of state. Esphur loves Chapel Hill.

[1:26:20] Charlie May and Harold went to Florida because they don't like the cold. HV asks about life after graduation from Lincoln High. "You don't wanna hear about that." That was a dark time, but she got herself back together. Esphur and Charlie May did a good job taking care of Mother. She died when Esphur was 39. Got her life together, had a daughter, and worked at the law school. First time in a long time she did what her mother advised her to do, and nothing went wrong after that. When she got the job at the law school, she was offered two other jobs, and Mother said take the one at the law school. And it was the best thing he'd ever done. Mother said she wanted her to go back to school, and Esphur knew it was time. Mother said she'd really have to hit the books. ****this section transcribed below****

[1:26:26]
HV: What did you end up doing after you graduated?

Esphur: Oh, you don't wanna hear about that. That was a troubled time in my life. It really was a troubled time. And I got, uh, uh I got my life straightened out. And I'm so glad that I was here to help take care of Mother. Charlie and I did w wonderful job taking care of Mother.

HV: How old were you then?

Esphur: I was thirty-nine. I was thirty-nine when she died. I was thirty-seven was she, uh, when she was diagnosed, 'cause she was sick for two years. But like I said, I got my life together, had a wonderful daughter, and I worked at the law school. And it was just—for the first time in a long time I did what my mother advised me to do. And it just—nothin' ever went wrong from that point on. (HV: What was that?) Well she—when I was offered the job at the law school there were two other places that had offered me a job. And she told—she said, "I wasn't you to take the job at—at the law school. And I took it, and it was the best thing I had ever done. And we had, uh, we had decided—she said, "I want you to go back to school." And I said, "I know, Mother, and I am ready." 'Cause, you know, I had my child there and--. Just, you know, all of a sudden I had known the importance of an education, 'cause I always heard how important it was, but I didn't do it. And, uh, so, so she said, "Now you gonna have to— really, really gonna have to hit the books," she said. "'Cause when I was in evening college I had to really hit the books." I said, "I know, Mother, and I'm ready to do it." And so, but it in the meantime she got sick and died before, uh, I could do it. And somewhere in that period I decided—I said, "I'm just gonna—I'm gonna go to evening college and see how I do."

[1:28:55] Now I had always thought that I had a problem in English and not math. 'Cause I know I was good at math. So I said, "Let me go and take this English and get this out of the way." Well, much to my surprise, I was excellent at English. I could not believe it. So I was like—and I remember Mother telling me, 'cause she struggled in English. And she spoke so beautifully. And I said, "Well, Mother," I said, "You just need to write the way that you talk." But she just could not—you know. And so, um, so every time— so I think I've taken, [old enough]—I've taken four semesters of, uh, English courses. And everytime I've made and A-minus. And I'm just like, "Okay." Here I had been to school—I had graduated from this segregated school. And, you know, they make you think that— our schools *were* inferior compared to what theirs were, but we had good teachers. (HV: You had teachers who cared) Oh yes! And so we-we—so it doesn't—I figured—because I had done so well, it didn't have anything to do with the school that I graduated from. And I had learned—I had made sure that my grandson knows this, and I just told my daughter— 'cause I did—I never studied, because I didn't know what studied meant. Nobody told me what study meant. So I asked my grandson about three weeks ago. I said, "Douglass, what do you—" Oh, 'cause he has a talent for writing too, and I'm so glad. 'Cause he was—oh, (HV: quite a writer?) Oh my God!

HV: Does he have written stuff that's—?

Esphur: Uh-huh. And-and-and-and-and so Douglas is like him. He's excellent in sports, and I can see he has the writing—the writing talent. So I—and so I said, "Douglas, tell Granny how you study." And he said, "Well, when I have a test I go to the teacher to find out what's gon' be on the—" I said, "No. Tell me what you do everyday when you're going to study." He said, "I—" uh, what was it he told? I said, "Douglas, that is not studying." I said, "Do you know what studying is?" I said, "Granny's gonna tell you, 'cause I'd— nobody'd ever told me. And I was too proud to say, 'Well, what is studying? And how do you study?'" I said, "Studying is reading. It is nothing but reading. Reading the assigned assignment." I said, "Take notes in class. And then when you come home, you, uh—" and I said, "an outline." I said, "Outline is so important." 'Cause I had to outline when I went back to school for English. Plus, I said the law students have to outline. They have to—all the time. I said, "That's what studying is. And nobody ever told me that." And I said, "If I had been told that, I would have been the Val. of my class." My sister was the [Salutorian]. And the only reason that she was slutorian instead of valedictorian is 'cause she's dark. So the girl that was valedictorian was light-skinned. (HV: Really?) Oh yeah. So, and so, Mother and everybody used to tell me 'bout how smart—'bout how smart I was and I didn't know what they were talking about, and didn't care. But I now know that if I had known what studying was, I would have been the valedictorian in my class. And so, uh—

[1:33:00]

HV: One of the things that's been interesting. Doing research. Integration was so important, but it was the way it happened. So many things were not good about the way that it happened. Does-does that—

Esphur: Because we didn't realize that you could not legislate hearts. You know, we thought that once the segre—desegregation was the law of the land that we would be accepted. And

I remember I was on the board with—oh, and that was when I started working the law school I became involved in a lot of community stuff. But I've also been a-a—involved in the community stuff in the black-black, you know, neighborhood because I loved children. Um, so we—oh, so I was on the board with a man who was a builder, a developer here in Chapel Hill. And we were trying to, you know, trying to figure out what to do for the black children to help them get better in classroom grade. And this, um, this man said his son's best friend was a little black boy. And he said to his son one day, he said, "Daddy—" whatever the little boy's name was, he said, "He's so smart. He knows—he knows all the answers to all the questions. And he raises his hand everyday in class and just—and the teacher will never call on him." So that's the kind of stuff—and especially black boys—that we've—and that's when we realized that you can't legislate heart, you know. You can't. so that's—that's—and-and-and, uh Julius Chambers, um, I've gotten into so many arguments with him. I said, "It's the worst thing that's ever happened." He said, "Miss Foster, how could you say that?" And he said that he, um, what was it, oh, when he... I don't know where it was, 'cause he went to Central. He finished at Central. And then, uh, Dean Brandis took a chance and then—admitted—'Cause the deans have—none of the words I wanna use are coming to my mind today. But he—discretionary! They have a discretionary admission. So it was something about Juilius Chambers that touched Dean Henry Brandis, and he admitted him. When he admitted him he was the lowets GPA in his class. When he graduated, he was the editor-in-chief of the Law Review. So at some point during his undergraduate, uh, years he learned about the Jews and what happened to them in Germany. And he was like, "Why didn't I know that!? Why was that—why was that kept out of the black schools?!" and I said, "Why do you think?" he said, "Oh, I know now." He said, "but at the time, I—," you know, "I did not understand. He said its because we went to a black school. I went like, "Noooo! 'Cause they didn't want us to—they didn't want us to do another uprising," you know. Uh, and so I said, "It is just absolutely the worst thing because the white teachers are afraid to discipline the black children because the black parents will think that you're picking on-on the children," you know. So I said, "Everything is just—the kids are the ones that're getting away with murder, but it's really hurtin' them in the long run. But it's because of the way that we've been treated"—like, because I know I—like the first thing I said to when [Chanty/ Charlie] went to school, I said, "Whatever my child does, if she does something that she's not supposed to do, do not hit her. Tell me, and I will take care of it." Well I shouldn't've said that. I mean, um, you know, uh, but I don't like corporal punishment. I used to get mad when Mother all the time for whooping CharlieMay and Harold. I shouldn't've been helping her, you know. [laughing] Uh, but [Chante] never—well she was not that kind of child anyway, you know, they be like, "Oh, gosh, you're the sweetest child we ever had," you know, "we wouldn't—" you know. But I should have let them know that if she need to be disciplined it would be all right, but just not it, you know, just don't hit her. That's what I should've said. You know, and-and-and—but it didn't, you know.

[1:38:28] So there's no—the respect is gone. The respect is gone, and some of the, uh, I'm sure that some of the, uh, the younger teachers now don't-don't harbor some fo the prejudices that were harbored when integration first started. And I thought, "Oh my God, what we subjected to our children to for-for inegreation." And-and it never has worked, it's never worked.

[1:39:05]

HV: Um, one of the—I also—what—I mean, ‘cause it seems to me that generally in American culture today, not even in a specific subset or community, that the—and maybe this is an over-generalization, but at least my sense is that it’s a lot different sense of what community means. That that has really changed. In all communities, for the most part. There’s—there’s exceptions, but what do you—

Esphur: Now I’m gonna tell you. This stuff that’s going on in Raleigh. (HV: With the schools?) Yeah. It’s true. If—but if they had put decent—because that’s why they closed Lincoln High, was because they had to come through that blighted area where [near road] and stuff. That was before they did those affordable homes, and stuff. And so the white people didn’t want their children to have to come through a blighted community to go to school. Whereas, if they had given us—paid us a decent salary so that we could’ve had decent homes, they wouldn’t have to come through a blighted-blighted, uh-uh, neighborhood to-to go to school. But it’s all right for our children to live in blighted neighborhoods and go to school in blighted-blighted neighborhoods, you know. That—and—and so, um, so the-the white—but the black people now who can afford it, uh, are moving out of the black, uh neighborhoods, the old poor black neighborhoods. And, uh, living in townhouses and, uh, and-and— who can’t—

HV: But it doesn’t change the system. Is that what you—I-I mean, like—but it doesn’t—so, yeah, it doesn’t—what’s happening is those who have access are moving to other areas, (Esphur: Right!) but it doesn’t change the (Esphur: Right!) structure (Esphur: And-and-and-and—) then the problems that are—

Esphur: Then the hearts! The hearts, uh, have not changed, because they go—they go to these good, uh, quote-unquote “neighborhoods,” but they don’t know who’s living next door! They don’t know who’s living next door. You’ve gotta know your neighbors. You gotta trust them. You gotta let your child come over to my house, and my child go—come over there. ‘Cause when Douglas wants to go somewhere now—like he was real upset, um last week ‘cause he wanted to go to a party or something, and there gonna be no adults there. I said, “Uh-uh. No, no, no.” So she’s still parenting him the old-fashioned him, you know, that way that we did, you know. The way that we were parented. Because you couldn’t go to somebody’s house if our mom and daddy didn’t—no, uh-uh! No. no, no. No. especially if it was out of the community. In the community you know you knew everybody, you know. So, it’s just that—it’s just goes to the core of the family, the head of the family. And—

[1:42:20]

HV: So what do you think it would take for our communities, for this community to be neighborhoods again? What—and even if ti’s not the same as it was, what—how could it be—what would be most valuable for the—

Esphur: I-I’m hoping that the school—the new school that they’re supposed to build over here, uh, will start us back on the path, that there’ll be young families back over here. And that—‘cause children always— (HV: create) yeah they do. I, uh—[Chante] had met a little girl. And, uh, oh her father was wonderful. Oh, he taught science at Chapel Hill High. He’s

the most incredible man. And they just fell in love with each other. So then, uh, she wanted, [Chante] to come and spend the night. So I got a chance to, uh, to meet them, and talk to them. So, I let her—that's the one—that is the only family that I would let [Chante] spend the night with, you know. And they were Jewish. Well, she was Catholic, and he was Jewish. Um, and her mother was just crazy about [Chante]. And they took [Chante] to a lot of places that I wouldn't've been able to take her, you know. But I trusted them. So, they—they becing—becoming friends at daycare caused us to become friends. And the—trust. So, if I wanted to take [Chante] somewhere and she wanted to take – why can't I think of the child's name – they had no problem with her, you know, coming with me, 'cause they, you know, we just formed that kind of relationship of trust. And that's just the way it w—it has to be.

[1:44:38]

HV: Do you feel like the church is serving its role today?

Esphur: No. 'Cause the children—something—something is-is not right, because there're not as many children in the-in the Sunday school and the church. And the Sunday school was so—that was how you—It-it—'cause I know—all that I know about the Bible now is what I elarn ed in Sunday school, and I *loved* Sunday school. Loved it. And I just don't think enough of the children are being exposed to Sunday school.

HV: Do you attend one of these churches still?

Esphur: Uh, well before I started taking care of him and my aunt—

HV: Still First Baptist?

Esphur: No, St. Jo's. Oh, no! When my moma left First Baptist, we left First Baptist. But I—[Charlie May] knows about Reverend Harrison because of me. 'cause I went to a funeral up there. And after the funeral, he extended an invitation. I was like, "I've never been to a funeral where they extended an invitation," you know, for the living. And then he sang a song. I was like, "Oh, oh, oh! Okay, this is it! This is it." And so I started going there. And, you know, Charlie May heard me talk about him so much, so then when she would come up here from Florida, then she would go. But then when she—and then she fell in love with him, too. And so then when she retired, she joined. She literally joined; I didn't join. But yeah, yeah. Yep.

HV: Yeah, I've loved getting' to know her through the church.

Esphur: She's a bird, isn't she?

HV: She's got wonderful spirit. We—I pulled out one of the pictures of Harold, and other folks who were in the march—one of the marches. It was actually a picture taken in front of St. Joseph. Um, you could kinda see First Baptist in the distance. And, uh, I pulled it out and she just goes, "Oh, they're so ugly!"

[both laughing]

Esphur: Oh, we found some pictures and when showed 'em to mother when we were like in the second, third or fourth grades. And we were talking about how ugly we were. Honey, mother just so mad when she was with us, she said, "I did not have ugly children." We were the ugliest we could be, let me tell you. [laughing] But we were her babies, honey. We were Mother's babies. She was furious with us about that, "calling my babies ugly." [laughing]

[1:47:30]

HV: Well, if—one of the things we've been working on is this Jackson, which is about saving and making history, so it's about preserving community and church history, and also doing ongoing oral histories and photographs and things like that. But also make them so they're not just housed in the library, but actually making people able to come in, or get their audio recordings back. And one of the things we just started is we have three youth interns now, high school church youth (Esphur: Oh, all right!) and, you know—(Esphur: That's wonderful!) And they're all—it's amazing, at first they kind of started off and they weren't that interested. And now all three of them: one of the is doing art projects around history, and one of 'ems doing photography, and one of 'ems doing oral history interviews. And they've gotten really interested. And they've cataloged all the books. We have a library, and they've learned how to do the online database. And it's just really been incredible. And the other day there was a—we had a refugee from the Congo come in, and they started asking him questions. So they ended up interviewing him about his story, and how he had lost all his family in a war. But as he was telling the story, then they both did free-writes, and they started writing about how lucky they were, and what they wanted to recognize in their own lives. But they're—it's amazing to watch how they've just grabbed on to the way the history can influence our lives today. And so that's really what I think I've been so amazed by, is that if we don't just let history be a static thing that we just house somewhere that we don't ever talk about or discuss. But if we let it be a dialogue that really says, "Okay, it doesn't mean that we're trying to go back to the past, or we're trying to say that we wish that—" "What does it mean about where we are now?"

[1:49:05]

Esphur: Yeah, but if you don't know—if you don't know where you came from, you won't know where you're going. You gotta know where you came from.

HV: Mrs. Jackson's quote is, uh, "If you don't know—" "Without the past, we have no future."

Esphur: —future. That's right, that's right. And Charlie—Charlie, these young people'll come up and she'll say to them, "And now who is your peoples?" [all laughing] And we see a lot of favor. We see a lot of family favor. And so we'll start—we'll start asking questions until they come up with a name. and then we'll say "Oh, okay, we know." And we'll tell them about their family, you know. So, yeah.

[1:49:45]

HV: If you had a message for youth who were coming through and listening to oral histories and trying to learn about the community and St. Joseph's and this—Potter's Field and Sunset. Or just have advise for folks who—

Esphur: We are nothing without our history. We are nothing. That is so—what is so incredible to me. And I love Maya [Angelou?], who says, "And yet, we rise, like cream to the top." Because we were stripped of everything. Babies were taken from their mother's chest, you know. And we don't—we don't know what trials we came from. Um, we don't know where some of our people were sent. I mean, just basic stuff that a lot of people take for granted, you know. And it just—we are nothing without our history, so. And that's—and and I have begun with children, and I started with Douglass. And so they have a new—a new—a new grandson. But by the time Douglas was two he knew all his alphabets and then phonetic sounds. 'Cause reading is so important to me. And I always say, "If you think reading is not important, why do you think people would kill for teaching slaves to read?" 'Cause not only were they enslaving our bodies, but they were trying to enslave our minds, too. So when you learn to read, that's a shackle that you have discarded. And so that's—with the little—the little girl who was just born now, her name is Sherine. So I'm going—because I do stationary. I do printing and design of cards and stuff. So I'm going to do a card—

HV: Do you sell some of your cards?

Esphur: Uh-huh. Well I do—well I do, you know, like, custom-made stuff.

HV: Oh, will you show me some of your stuff? (Esphur: I did—) My mom *loves* cards, so—

Esphur: I did something, uh, yesterday for a group of young men. They just came by. They're called "Over the Hill Gang." And they have a list of about—well he told me it was thirty-two, so I made thirty-five cards last night. And they—as I was going through, I realized that there were only twenty-eight names, and I had done seven extra. But I'm going to do her a card with—that's an acrostic poem of her name. So her little brother,

[1:53:00] [talking about making acrostic poems for grandkids.]

[1:55:00] Esphur talking about reading to children at night. Lauren and Douglas (grandkids) would be ripping and running through the house.

[1:57:00] Every night grandkids knew Esphur was going to tell a story. She would read ones from the News and Observer. Eventually, N&O put out a book of all their stories, so Esphur got it for them for Christmas. Douglas, a freshman, has to be able to do more than play football. He wrote an incredible story about his mother and father, and how they let him drive his BMW after getting his license. Terrible accident.

[2:00:00] HV asks what the best way is for people to learn history. Esphur says by sharing and learning with youth. Esphur says that everybody knew Hattie was raising them alone, so people cared and asked if they could help out. Granny Flaks was Esphur's favorite.

[2:03:00] Charlie May sought out advice from older people. Esphur: "The day mother died, I saw God's eyes." She was able to do what she did because of God. She loved God. We all do. "I get it."

[2:04:30] Talking about praying. Esphur tries to pray in bed, before feet hit the floor, throughout the day, when she gets something done.

[2:05:30] Music. Esphur loves jazz, blues rhythm and blues. Loves all of the artists. Esphur talking about Mahalia Jackson and Jo Williams. Doug Clark and the Hot nuts was in her class. Doesn't make it down to frangelism much because it's too hot. Like romantic jazz because it's got that blues tint to it.

[2:09:00] HV talking about some books in the Jackson Center, *Blues from the Delta* and *Give My Poor Heart Ease*.

[2:11:30] HV talking about collecting recipes at the church for a cookbook.

[2:12:30] Harold loves Thelonious Monk because he likes how he composes. And John Coltrane. Talking about Stax, Booker T and the MGs, Otis Redding and all the other soul music coming out of Memphis.

[2:14:30] Talking about MLK. Esphur says he was "truly hand-picked by God."

[2:16:20]
Esphur: When President Obama won, I said, "Martin, we're getting there. We haven't got there yet, but we're getting there... I was so, you know, people were talking about how they cried and stuff. But I was so shocked. And it took in this huge breath, and I haven't let it out yet. And I know that when I do I will cry. I was just floored

HV: I just wish they'd let him actually go for those dreams. I just wish the congress wasn't such a stalemate of wealthy poeople.

Esphur: but see, that's what—let me tell you, that is what happened with this health bill. Because he didn't want to make the mistake that the Clintons did. So he wanted the excuse that they gave for not passing it when Hilary—So he didn't want to make that mistake, and he wanted to stay out of the way, and give congress a chance to work on it, and do what they wanted. But they didn't do anything. And they spread all these lies and stuff. So then when he got back in the campaign mode, and then went out there and started with—and spoke for the whole Republican party. And it changed, because people were able to see that they were really lies. And he was able to answer anything that they—you know.

HV: Well, he's brilliant.

Esphur: He is brilliant.

[2:18:30] HV talking about Obama's *Dreams for My Father*. Talking about time as community organizing. None of this would be possible if it weren't for Harold. Thanks Harold for all his important work. HV asks Harold how he came to the frontlines of the Civil Rights Movement in Chapel Hill.

[2:19:45] Well, we just—remember when we were talking about the rock wall? Well, that's where it all started, over on the rock wall. We were talking about what we were gonna do. We were talking about what we were gonna do. We were talking about how we were gonna fit in. we just said we'll just go down and sit and, and see how we do.

Esphur: That was after the basketball game that night? Is that the one?

Harold: No, this was when we were grouped together down at [Allton's] and them.

Esphur: Yeah? The rock wall? (Harold: Mmhmm) Yeah. But is that—wasn't the first one after the basketball game one night? That you all went down to John's?

Harold: John's who?

Esphur: [Colonias Road]

Harold: Oh, [Colonias Road]. I had forgotten about him.

Esphur: That was the first one, right? But you had decided that when you were on the rock wall?

Harold: On the rock wall was exactly where it was.

Esphur: So did you decide what night that you were gonna do that?

Harold: No, we just did it, 'cause it was spontaneous.

HV: Were you not afraid?

Harold: Oh, no.

Esphur: Too young. Too young and foolish to be afraid.

HV: It's one of the—one of the most powerful quotes I've heard recently is somebody was asked—one of the people who worked—her name was Anne Queen. She worked at the campus Y at the University. And she was asked about whether students were excessive in the 60s. and she said, "I don't believe that at all." She said, "Some students may have been incredibly naïve, but that's what allowed them to witness to a new freedom everyday. And it was that that made this country change." Without this naïveté we would not have the changes and the freedom that we have today. And I thought that was such a—

Esphur: and it's always the young people who do it, because they don't have it. You know, and they don't—they just try it.

HV: You were only about nineteen when you started, right?

Harold: About 16 or 17.

[2:23:00] Esphur talking about how she always got along with Harold. Mother was terrified for Harold's safety. She said the same thing about Harold playing football. Talking about Lincoln football for a while.

[2:25:45] Charlie May was married to Norwoods. They were great football players.

[2:26:40] How could students be

[2:30:00]

Harold: Mahalia Jackson sing that money—

Esphur: If-if—Mahalia Jackson said, "If—

Harold: If religion was a—

Esphur: Oh yeah—"If religion was a—

Harold: thing the money could buy

Esphur: Thing that money could buy, the rich would live and the poor would die. But thank God almighty it's not so." That is a pretty song.

Harold: Something like that everyday.

[2:30:40] HV talking about growing up in a low-income neighborhood himself, and sharing in his own community. Tells a story about his father, a preacher, befriending a schizophrenic man in their neighborhood. Esphur asks if HV has ever been to Club Nova: it's full of love and sharing, a place you can come to everyday.

[2:34:00] Talking about Dan Pollit, a white man that took part in the sit-ins. A friend of many. Esphur speaking at his funeral. Asks the questions on everybody's mind. If there has ever been a sweet man in the world it was Dan.

[2:36:00] Talking about Yonni Chapman

[2:37:00] Harold and HV talking about struggle. Important coming from Harold.

[2:39:00] Words of wisdom from Esphur, posted along with a portrait of her at the law school where she worked: "There's so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the

best of us, that it behooves none of us to talk about the rest of us." Mother never talked about anybody. When young girls got pregnant, Mother would say, "When you live in a glass house, you do not throw stones."

[2:40:00] Talking about the biggest problems of the day: closeness to the family. "Pull your pants up."