

Lilian Currin On Flooding

Mrs. Currin: ...altogether because it had been flooded so many times. They didn't want to go to the expense of having a house raised. And at my house, water came down the hill, and under went up under my house, and in my crawl space.

Frank: Did you have problems getting it dried out; did it take a while?

Mrs. Currin: Yes, rural plumbing and heating said some of the committee members said that I'd need a boat under there, but I did not find that funny. With my heat knocked out in February, January and February, it wasn't funny. Yeah, it takes a while for it to dry out. In fact, I don't think it ever gets dry. When I first moved out here, the yards were like rocks, bricks, clay, hard clay. It was hard to dig up. But now if you walk out there it's a little bit spongy. And I sometimes joke that I might wind up on Walnut Creek. You can tell the difference in the yards...are sort of dropping. It's wet wetlands. And things rust. I have a rusty mailbox, and it was that way because of the flooding.

Frank: Is that with flooding, or is it just because of the humidity?

Mrs. Currin: Yes, the flooding, and the land being wet.

Frank: The dampness of things.

Tess: What is your opinion of how the city responded to the flooding, and do you feel the problem has been fully addressed?

Mrs. Currin: Well, as I just said, it's still moist up under there...(continued in clip "City Responds")

Lilian Currin On Response To Citizens

Tess: What is your opinion of how the city responded to the flooding, and do you feel the problem has been fully addressed?

Lilian: Well, as I just said, it has been moist up under this building, and there can be things done to get rid of the wetness. But, the city did work out here to redirect the water, by putting in those big channels to go through. So there has been work done. And they responded to the flooding after one particular incident. After we went to a city council meeting, I had on my red outfit getting ready to go to St. Louis the next day.... I went down there with the group, and we asked that the remnants of a house that was just knocked down be removed, because it had been there for months. I mean months, just piled up there at the entrance to our neighborhood. So as I went to St. Louis the next day and stayed there about a week, and when I got back it had been removed. So they would respond, but you would need to make your request.

Frank: So it seemed to work once you started voicing the concerns. The city seemed to respond like it would to citizens.

Lilian: Yes, the city responds to these citizens, if you make your request, they will respond. But sometimes, I think, it has not been requested...because I have seen things. I left a funeral out here one day, and water met me there coming up Darby Street and I couldn't imagine what was going on, but I called. They got right out

here, but I had been in the funeral all morning preparing for the funeral and working on the funeral and the neighbors hadn't even complained. So, they will respond.

Lilian Currin on Community Objectives

Mick: You said before that the Walnut Creek Education Center is a valued part of the community. Could you explain more about how this will help the community as a community resource?

Mrs. Currin: Well we have some information here to start with what the goals were for it. Do you want me to share this with you? Well, it will help with community programming and environmental education. It's just a place where the neighbors can learn about the value of the wetlands and just go and interact with nature. We are going to have gardens, bog gardens, explorations trails, and encourage the neighbors to use the trails and make them safe for them we hope. There were a number of objectives put out with the center, but Dr. Camp would be more involved with that because I was mainly involved with my objective- to improve the situation with the flooding. That was my objective for the whole thing.

Frank: Do you feel that that objective has been met to your satisfaction, with the flooding?

Mrs. Currin: Well, I feel more could be done with the storm runoff. When we first started this, that area across the street was a wooded area. It was wooded where those houses are. And there was just water down near the street near State Street and Darby Street. But you know they have put in Habitat houses. Now that affected me a lot. I talked about it and they said they need somewhere to stay. I said I need my house to continue to be there. I went to Houston Texas; I had been there a week. The night before I was scheduled to come back I got a call directed to me that it appeared that someone had been in my house, broken into my house, because they were looking how the curtains were and everything. Imagine being that far away from your home your house has been broken into. But what it was, it was just what I had been telling my neighbors. My house was just shaken up by that, very much. The floors were separated from the woodwork there. And the police came over and went in my house to see what had happened, but nothing had happened. It was just shaken up. So folks saw that I was really being affected. But they were seeing nothing wrong, you know, nothing. And then I go off and they see the activity going on with the curtains failing off, that came from the movement back there and everything.

Frank: The movement of the tractors and the trucks and stuff...

Mrs. Currin: Yes, yes, yes, and things would fall off the wall. But then I go off and they see it and act like chicken little. So I was very much affected by that. Even now water will run from over there down the hill.

Frank: So the city addressed some of the issues with putting in more culverts, but more development has caused more flooding.

Mrs. Currin: Yes, it did for me. You know, that was a personal thing because see I was right...the back of my house was facing all of that activity. So it shook my house up a lot.

Lilian Currin Our Response

Frank: Do you have any questions for them today?

Mrs. Currin: Well, yes. I would like to hear some expressions from you, and just what you noticed just in coming out here.

Mick: The water level has definitely risen quite a bit since the rains have happened. I mean, the creek behind my neighborhood the water has risen like here, but it is controlled.

Mrs. Currin: There was a time the city would be blocking off that street and blocking off out there and people would have to go down and go around and come through the next neighborhood to get over here.

Tess: I've noticed the flooding, like Mick said, and I've noticed the amounts of the trash in the creek and all that. And even though we have the cleanups, there is still a big amount of that in the creeks.

Frank: Has anything surprised you as you've learned about the history of Walnut Creek and Rochester Heights?

Mick: Well, I never knew there was a wetlands in the Raleigh area off to the side. Also, how much rich history of the creek has to do with the "ethnicity" of Raleigh.

Frank: You mean how the land is tied to the different ethnic groups?

Tess: I've noticed how much a small creek can affect a whole community and it could start up P.E.J. (Partners for Environmental Justice) and it could make people more aware of the situation.

Emma Dorssett on Flooding

The flooding was devastating; there were occasions where houses were flooded up to the second floor. Most of the houses are single floored, but they are up on a foundation and the water came all the way up into the houses and destroyed many of their personal items. In one instance, a family had to be retrieved from the floods on a boat and these were all elderly people. And I witnessed that. As a result of the flooding, several houses were totally removed from the area so now it's just greenway. And that meant that persons had to give up their houses and move away to a different area. One of the ladies who had to give up her house, it wasn't very long after that when she passed away. I will daresay that was a devastating experience for her, to give up her house that she had lived in nearly fifty years.

Emma Dorssett on Wetlands

If I were a young girl now and thinking like I thought back then, I would say the wetlands was a swamp and it is a swampy area. But now I know that that is a very special place for animals, the smallest kinds of animals and I'm looking forward to the project that is going to provide us with a building where we can study more and I hope as I grow older that I will be able to experience this new project that will open up that swamp or...wetlands. And when I hear the word wetlands I think about...Africa...safaris, stuff like that where those creatures that we don't always appreciate do live and I think that's what that is out there in the wetlands. Those creatures that God created just like he created us and it's a place where they can live and grow and we can appreciate because it's one of God's creations, too.

Emma Dorssett's hopes for the future

I want them to see that this is not only an area where people dwell but where people are active and making use of the resources and that's what the center will do. It will allow the residents of this area and residents of Raleigh and other places to see that even though it's houses...we also have some natural resources that can be appreciated by the residents and it can also provide learning experiences for the schools and for people in general. **What do you mean by resources?** Yeah, natural resources. Oftentimes people get caught up in meeting their everyday needs and they don't look around and see the natural resources that are available...the many creatures, the plants We have a walking trail and those are some things that we want people to know when the learning center comes. It will be available to not only the residents but other people and it will make the area perhaps come alive...more

Mrs. Lithia Daniels

Mrs. Eunice Joyner

Clip 1

Ben: How long have you lived in Raleigh?

Lithia Daniels: We moved to Raleigh in 1935. February 5th 1935.

Ashlyn: That must have been a significant day. You were both young.

Eunice Joyner: I'm next to the baby. I'm eleven of twelve. It was dramatic for me because where we used to live my father taught at a junior college and it was a small college community. When we came to Raleigh and we went to Washington School. My mother put ten of us to walk to Washington School each morning and it was a big adjustment for me. I was in the last half of my second grade, so imagine. I did not adjust as well as I had wanted to.

Lithia Daniels: I was in 9th grade. But high school was a little different then what you have now. Washington School was the only high school in Raleigh that black children could attend. So that's where we went. It was a long walk. Fuller school is right on the spot where our house was and we walked from there to Washington School. Of coarse, the two younger ones, my oldest brother would put one on his back, and two would take her by the hand. But, it was a struggle and we just made it. Mother made it so that was didn't have to go out of service at all.

Q: So why did you move here?

Lithia Daniels: Because my father died and we had to move off of the college campus and then when my oldest sister was ready to go to college my uncle said, "Sister lets move to Raleigh." Because you have St. Augustine's and Shaw that's really the reason we moved because we had our own home. My Mother had bought a home. That's why we really came because of the two colleges.

5 seconds silence

Eunice Joyner: Now we farmed. We farmed; some of the things that we grew were tobacco, cotton, garden veggies, peanuts, strawberries, beautiful orchards, and we worked in the fields. We would come home from school, get a snack, change our clothes, then go to work each person in the family had a job and my baby sister and I milked the cows and took care of the chickens, my brother took care of the hogs and the horse and mule. Everybody had a job and one thing that sticks in my mind we ate our meals together. We didn't carry a dish in here, we ate our meals together. We were never hungry because we raised vegetables, and on Saturday my brother, sister, or somebody would go to Raleigh with the mule and wagon and sell vegetables on Chafes Heights up in the area of Davis Street. Sell vegetables to people on Saturdays.

Lithia Daniels: Well, we had customers we would go to daily, they tell us you come, and I rode that wagon many times. When I went to college the president told my mother anything you use on the farm I can use here. I know we had six hogs, and the slaughter pen was right over there. And my two brothers would take hogs over there and have them slaughtered and inspected and they would ship them to Barbascocia, where I went to school first, and tell them, here comes Young's hogs. But, they ate it. And we did things that I guess most families would not really do because our Mother would take time and sit down with us, well, lets use this as an example. If she had ten dollars she would say, this is what we have to spend today for groceries or something to eat. And we'd sit down together. She didn't hide anything and that that

Eunice Joyner: We... But we knew she didn't have much cause she was keeping us together and Mr. Street carried vegetables down to Barbascocia on his trailer. Potatoes and things, and he would carry vegetables and put it on their bill. It's called survival.

Ashlyn: Yes, you seemed like a very close-knit family.

Eunice Joyner: We had to

Ashlyn: It's very nice

Eunice Joyner: Now, it was hard work, believe me. Some mornings, most mornings, my baby sister and I would come, this was the cow pasture and barn was up here to the barn, get the cows with the lantern. We would start the day off with the lantern and come and milk those cows, go back, get washed up, eat your breakfast, get dressed, and walk to school by 9:00.

Ben: Wow, that must have been some day

Lithia Daniels: I know many times we had to get up at least four o'clock in the morning to do all of the animal stuff because my Mom could not do the animal stuff and my Dad was gone. Um, but tell them about Uncle John. Lets see if they have some more questions they want to ask

Mrs. Lithia Daniels

Mrs. Eunice Joyner

November 4th 2006

Clip 2

Ben: What's your earliest memory of the Walnut Creek area?

Lithia Daniels: When we came here in 1935

Eunice Joyner: One of the things that I have ignored that creek has been there and they have never tried to clean it out. We have found animals in there. The city has never cleaned Walnut Creek out. Not this one they could clean the other but they didn't clean this one.

Lithia Daniels: we have found animals in there. Dead animals. We found clothes. We found every sort of thing. Just haven't have found a body.

Eunice Joyner: Trees, trees. And people just dump in there.

Lithia Daniels: And people just dump in there.

Eunice Joyner: But what did we think of... it isn't as grown up as it is now. Watson's seafood was up on the other side. Just on the left up there. We even had a nice fishing pond and somebody went in and blew it up. But um, Walnut Creek, I, I, um, it's really poor.

Ashlyn: Do you think it's getting the attention it deserves and starting to get it now?

Lithia Daniels: No. It's getting ignored by Raleigh.

Eunice Joyner: They need to start cleaning above Garner. See, they cleaned Crabtree and all that back that way I was told that some businesses have told I don't know who did it but I know we tried to get them to clean this way but they told us that we had to pay half for us to clean this creek. And that means that from Garner road all the way back to the habitat houses back here almost to rock quarry.

Ben: Wow. That seems kind of unfair.

Eunice Joyner: Well this way, it is.

Lithia Daniels: A lot of opinions on that.

Eunice Joyner: I will sit in court and say this.

Lithia Daniels: I will too.

Ashlyn: Have you seem like do you think Walnut Creek has been getting worse over the years? What significant changes have you seen um within Walnut Creek?

Eunice Joyner: The north hill is clogging us up. Trees have fallen in there. And you know where the trees are, sand and other debris is gonna tangle there. You can go up to the highway and look down. You can see it. If you go out this way, you can go see it. Where the creek is.

Lithia Daniels: Right down there where State Street is, there used to be a little white sand. It was white sand and a little stream and uh, a lot of times, when we went to do field work, we'd set our water containers there and it would keep them nice and cool in there. When they built that school, then they just, it just damaged the whole thing. And State Street started flooding again when they built State Street.

Eunice Joyner: Don't forget the overpass. They came, they split my mothers property in half with I-40. See it went all the way up to the beltline and they took cause she and I went to fight they cut our land with that

bypass. They took the highest land for I-40. And the runoff comes straight on down to Walnut Creek. When they made the nature trail, they lowered the side of Walnut Creek. So when it rains, it floods the nature trail.

Mrs. Lithia Daniels

Mrs. Eunice Joyner

November 4th 2006

Clip 5

Ashlyn: We just want to know if you have any advice for the future occupants of Walnut Creek. Anything that you want to see people doing in the future or you want to give to people saying about your life that you think affects this place.

Lithia Daniels: Respect Gods creation. Use it as best you can to enlighten and teach not just school children. Adults need to know about nature and everything and, uh, just to use it to the benefit of the community and those that come in. I hope that it will be a success. I really do.

Mr. Bruce Lightner

February 16, 2007

Mr. Lightner: Date of birth, place of birth: Raleigh, North Carolina. Date of birth June 26, 1947.

Hannah: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Mr. Lightner: I have two sisters.

Hannah: Two sisters, and what number are you in the order?

Mr. Lightner: No brothers

Ashlyn: Well, What birth order?

Mr. Lightner: What order? I'm the oldest.

Hannah: ...Can you tell us about your family connection?

Mr. Lightner: I guess it was around 1955 that I began going to the farm. At one time when I was a small child, Raleigh property started right around the North Street and everything south of that was farmland. So where Southeast Raleigh High School, all of that, all the way back where Carnage is, all of that, that was farmland. And Garner Road ran right down to, from Raleigh to Garner, and our farm was 430 something acres, which was a dairy farm. My granddaddy had a dairy farm, and after he stopped dealing with dairying and moved onto something else, he literally gave the land away for housing. So where you see, where Rochester Heights is, Biltmore Hills, all that was our dairy farm. And he gave it away for housing for black people because they couldn't afford houses anywhere else. I used to go to the farm when I was a kid. We didn't live there. I didn't live there. Well, some family members lived there, but we would go there mostly on weekends and it seemed like a long way, from Raleigh to the farm. But it was right here in town, literally. Now, the impact that Walnut Creek had on that area of the community did not really ... After the houses were built, after there

were other developments around what we call the area around where Carnage School is now, that whole area, there was never any flooding there until after Crabtree was built. That's when all the flooding started occurring in that neighborhood. It's gotten a lot better now, but it still floods every time there is a real real hard rain.

Ashlyn: Parking lots, right? The parking lots, the run off from the parking lots.

Mr. Lightner: I guess it was so much, I guess. Crabtree was built in the mid-fifties, I think, and that's when, and a lot of that happened when at the same time they were building houses. But, I was told that there was never any flooding along Garner Road and as a subsequent, a lot of the land that my Granddaddy had that he passed on to another part of the family became a wetland because of the flooding. That wasn't wetlands before, but it is now. So it impacted that part of the family real hard because they can't do anything with the land. Sell it, and do anything with it.

Sam: Is there any other reasons for giving that land away?

Mr. Lightner: No, that was there was a big push back when I was small, because the only housing that was really available for African Americans was public housing. There wasn't any such thing as, you know, developments that were exclusively made for housing and Rochester heights and Biltmore hills was about the first. And my grandfather who was friends of John Winter's father, I don't know if you've ever heard of John Winter, but he was a developer back in those days, but he built eighty percent of those houses. Some other people came in and built some others, and it was his way of giving back to the community. But, you know, I wish he hadn't of given it away. I wish we still owned that much land. But that's what he did and a lot of people benefited from having low cost housing.

Hannah: Is there any of the farm left, like just as a farm?

Mr. Lightner: Still there? No. There was one big farmhouse that sat on a hill. I guess it would be about 200 (yards), maybe a football field from where Walnut Creek went down. Walnut Creek runs east and west and it set to the south of the creek, so. And one time the creek served as the watering source of the cows and they would line up around the creek bed and drink water from that creek. This was, I must have been about five years old, but I remember going herding the cows with my grandfather and his brother. But the creek served a lot of purposes. We used to go down to that creek during the summer and catch crayfish, and tadpoles, and a whole bunch of stuff out of there. It was, you know, nice clear water then; I don't know what it is now. I haven't gone and looked at it in a long time, but that's a tributary that runs from the north that empties into the Neuse River. It runs all the way to the, well, let me back up... No, not to the Neuse, it runs to somewhere else that runs to the Neuse. I'm not sure what it is.

Ashlyn: So it's like a tributary of a tributary.

Mr. Lightner: Yeah, yeah, I mean it flows all the time, if its raining or not, you know,. When it's a drought there is still water running, coming from somewhere north of here. Anything else, let me see what else. He didn't sell the land to the city, he sold it to, well he gave it to John Winter.

Ashlyn: Yeah, he gave it to the contractor?

Mr. Lightner: Yeah, he gave it to the contractor. Yeah, I would say that the first flooding I remember would be, in the mid sixties. Prior to that I don't remember any flooding.

Ashlyn: So, do you feel like the city's been making the problem worse, in the beginning, more than trying to fix it?

Mr. Lightner: I think the city's trying to fix it. In fact, they have. What the city did about, I guess about ten, twelve, fifteen years ago after it kept becoming a recurring problem every time it rained hard, the city came in and bought a lot of houses that were in that area and flood prone area. They just bought them and moved the people out of there. Now that's just vacant, so, and they also dredged, I don't know, probably it was the state that did this, but they dredged, meaning dug it out, cleaned it out, made it larger. They raised the bridge. One of the problems around Garner Road to know is that when a good, nice little rain would come and (water would) go over top of the bridge. So they raised the whole road and the bridge and that alleviated some of the flooding. And they also opened up some other areas north of the creek so that some of that water coming from the creek could go to other creeks, other tributaries. So I think they have been very diligent, they've been at least trying to address the problem.

Ashlyn: I think it was the Young's. We interviewed the Youngs, Mrs. Joyner

Mr. Lightner: Yeah, the land that Mrs. Joyner owned was at one time my Grandfather's. He gave it to them. So, all of that was at one time and the Joyners, they are my cousins. Yeah, you didn't know that?

Hannah & Ashlyn: Oh, no.

Mr. Lightner: But, most of that is wetlands. They can't do anything with it. So, whenever there are issues around land development in southeast Raleigh there is a city commission called Southeast Raleigh Assembly that looks at these types of issues and makes recommendations to residents and the city. I used to serve on that and when I was serving on it one of the things that I recommended was, this was back when it used to flood a lot, we said something has to be done. They helped those people because they get flooded out every time it rains hard. So it, from that part on, the city started paying attention to that area of town and the flooding that was occurring. Now, it's not a big problem. It might still flood, but it doesn't affect anyone's house. But it does impact some stores. There are some, you might want to interview some of those people. There is some little strip mall along Garner Road, I don't even know the name of it, but it's before you get to Rochester Heights. It's the only little mall down there. But, every time it rains hard they get hit by flooding, even today.

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James Revis - Farm Life

What sort of animals did you have on your farm?

James Revis: We had cows, roosters, horses, hogs, chickens, dogs, oh yeah we had a lot of hunting dogs.

How big was the farm?

James Revis: Oh it was a small farm maybe about ten to twelve acres, we produced all of our food too. Corn, carrots, milk, potatoes and wheat we ground that wheat up into flour and we made that into bread. My mother would can all of the food for the wintertime and the rest would go right into our stomachs.

What was the address of your farm, where would it be now in Raleigh?

James Revis: Are you familiar with St. Augustine's college?

Yes I am.

James Revis: Well if you get onto State Street towards ST Augustine's college you will eventually go past where our farm once was.

Who did your father get the farm from?

James Revis: It was a family called Christmas, some woman named Christmas? I thought that we owned the farm but I later found out that my father only rented it. Her house is still there. Her house was a big white house and you could see it from the top of the hill.

Did the Christmas family have a lot of land in Raleigh?

Well they owned that farm and they sold a lot of their land for development, but they still have a lot of land, Christmas husband was a rich man.

So you would go fishing on the days you did not work on the farm?

James Revis: Yeah I would go catch catfish and eels and cook them as soon as I got home. I know that they don't have much down there anymore with the pollution and stuff, other then some carp but I wouldn't eat it. People fished down at Walnut Creek sometimes also there used to be a lake near it and people would go fishing at both of the places, I think that that lake was where the flea market is now.

James Revis - Flooding

Hannah: How has flooding impacted the people? What are some stories of some flooding experiences that you have experienced while you have been here?

James Revis: There was one house right off of Garner Road, right when you turn in off of Garner Road. They had to tear that house down, because of the flooding. They couldn't rebuild. It's not as bad as it used to be because one time after a really heavy rain, Garner Road would flood right over the creek where the bridge. Later, the city came in and raised the bridge, you know, up higher. So it doesn't flood as much. But I have seen it flood some since then.

Mr. Revis – Partners for Environmental Justice

Hannah: Why did you decide to join Partners for Environmental Justice?

James Revis: Well basically, it was partly because of the flooding. We were trying to get the city to do something about it, and they were sort of dragging their feet and weren't doing anything. So, we formed this group and went up to the city hall, to the city council, and presented our application. We kept badgering and badgering, and finally they did something about it. We had to keep after them.

Hannah: When did you decide to join?

James Revis: Why did I join?

Hannah: When?

James Revis: Oh, I guess about ten years ago. I was one of the first members here. And we were also interested in keeping the area and environment clean. Twice a year, spring and the fall, we have a clean up where we go through the creeks, and you would be surprised by the things we pull out. Television sets, automobile tires, and all that. We pile it all on the side of State Street, and the city picks it up and takes it to the dump.

Hannah: You joined for the flooding; how have things changed?

James Revis: Well we basically joined for the flooding, but it extended. We have a wetland walkway. I don't know whether you have been on it. That didn't start until Partners for Environmental Justice has been into existence. Also we are going to build a facility on the corner of Patterson and State Street. The city has already approved that.

Hannah: The education center?

James Revis: The education center, yeah. So, we have been working with the environment to, you know, like God intended it to be.

Hannah: How do you feel about the city's response to the issues Partners for Environmental Justice has raised.

James Revis: Well, the city has been very responsive now. Mayor Meeker has been out here. Yeah, he walked in the area and is very concerned. But before he became mayor, we didn't get the cooperation that we are getting from him, and from the present city council.

Hannah: How do you think building the education center will change how people view Walnut Creek?

James Revis: Well, I think it will be an education for people about learning to love nature, and learning to love the environment, and to keep it up, cause we are stewards of our own environment. I think that would be a good lesson to learn. They can come to the education center, and look at different things and different projects. Different kinds of plants and we have a lot of different kinds of animals here. We have deer in this area, believe it or not, and hawks.

James Revis - Environment

What are some solutions to improve the environment?

I think that a big solution is to keep people educated about the environment. I also joined Partners Environment Justice because I like the environment and I was hoping I would be able to make a difference.

Since the past ten years Partners for Environmental Justice have been here have you noticed a difference?

Yes I think so we have had a change in the variety of animals, many different animals have emerged and many different plants. Before people would shoot at the animals and cut down the many plants for firewood and for fun.

What do you hope for the future of PEJ?

Well I think there is always going to be a need for Partners for Environment for Justice, because of all the cruel and unfair things that people can think of. Also because of the need to protect our environment and to keep it clean.

Dr. Camp Birth

I was born in then what we called East Raleigh, it's really now almost the business district. Born on Camden Street, which is about five blocks from downtown Raleigh. So as a kid I guess you would call me an urban kid. I explored all of these areas, but at that time, I was born in 1933, and in the 1940's and 50's Raleigh wasn't as big as it is now. We had more woods to play in and we enjoyed the wild settings around our neighborhood. But of course now that part of Raleigh is really called inside the beltline so in today's terms I was born inside the beltline, reared inside the beltline.

Dr. Camp—Earliest Memories

My earliest memories, I went to Lucer Hunter School, which is on Davies Street, Davies and Tarboro. There were woods behind Lucer Hunter school at that time it's a park now and I spent most of my free time whenever class was out whenever school was out and go out into the woods and explore around, roam around the woods and that was the kind of recreation that I afforded myself. We didn't have TV at the time so were talking about 1940s and 1950s when TV was not in existence so youngsters had to make their own fun and mine was exploring these areas and I remember the Walnut Creek wetlands when I was about or 10 and we used to walk down rockberry road down to Walnut Creek over near the women's prison which was about half a mile from here. The thing that sticks out in my mind is that Walnut Creek carried raw sewage the city dumped raw sewage into Walnut Creek from the 1890s to the 1950s so as a kid we used to come down and observe the holdup and I still remember that but it was sort of a fun thing to go down and see something like that (ha ha ha)

Dr. Camp and The City

Well, in retrospect, I think we have had a pretty good relationship with the city and they have responded pretty well to our desires to build this park and to have the support from the city and they've supported our cleanups and were good about picking up trash in a timely manner after we collected it and put it on the street.

Dr. Camp and City Response to Flooding

Well the city at first with the flooding, which occurred before we really start talking about the wetland educational park concept, the city was a little reluctant to fund the restoration or the widening of the stream that runs right through Rochester Heights which caused most of the flooding but eventually they came across understanding that the citizens should not have to pay for that kind of construction. That kind of widening of

the stream, and I think that the city wanted to charge each resident 1,100 dollars per household and that was just not acceptable, so eventually funds were found to do this with no charge to the residents that lived near the stream or were affected by the stream. So that was a challenge, one of the many challenges to get funding and at first the mayor really didn't support that, at that time, that particular mayor, I think it was Paul Coble. He on some occasions had said that he would support a similar project in North Raleigh, so we used that as leverage to make this happen. So they found the money.

Dr. Camp about the Education Center

Well the education center is being built there on that property. We knew that having a facility owned by the city and maintained by the city that that would bring some awareness in the community that this is a valuable piece of property and should not be used for dumping trash. Also there was a need to open up the whole arena of studying wetland ecosystems to the schools that surround this site. Carnage Middle school for instance, Fuller elementary school, Ligon middle school, and Washington Middle School, and the colleges that are located near by, all of these could benefit from some experience in the wild, in the environment. So it really opened up a vista for research and also a venue for kids to come and learn about wetlands and the value of wetlands. And this particular wetland, the Walnut Creek wetland was a special one because it's in the heart of a black community that has had neglect in the past because of what it was, and what it is today. So these are the things that we push because of history and because I had lived through these times and my own history. So we pushed hard to have this to happen and with my experience of my coming to church here at St. Ambrose, and jogging in this area. I understood the wildlife that I saw and treasured the wildlife and knew that if we developed a wetland park here and knew that other people could experience that kind of joy and enlightenment when they experience the wild creatures in an urban setting. So all of that really played into my pushing to have this project completed and our partners, Partners for Environmental Justice in general, albeit I am the chairman but the partners that we had also contributed to making this happen.

Dr. Camp w/ PEJ

Our biggest challenge was to get the city to approve our project as a concept that they could use with the city's parks department and convert their own property which the wetland park would be on as a future park, as a future educational park thereby supported in the future by funding from the city. We had to really work hard to get it approved as a viable concept that you own the property, we need to do something with it to prevent dumping of trash in the future and really restore this wetland as something that's valuable and needed by the city of Raleigh