

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This project is a study of the changes in Bridgeport neighborhoods from the viewpoint of selected Black residents during the historical periods of World War I, the Depression, World War II, and the 1960's.

By means of interviews, we have investigated the social and economic effects of each period on Black Bridgeporters. All persons interviewed have resided in Bridgeport during at least three of the targeted periods. We attempted to explore how their families, friends, and neighbors were affected during those turbulent times. We discovered the changes that occurred on their jobs, in their neighborhoods and in the city as a whole.

This kit contains a transcript and a tape recording of the interview along with suggested activities that are best suited for grades 5-8 and adaptable for high school students.

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PERSONAL DATA

Jannie Sims

849 Chopsy Hill Road, Bridgeport

Born: August 13, 1913 - Hamlet, N. C. to Frances
and Samuel McEachin

Spouse: James Sims

Children: Frances Baker, Noel Raynor

Education: High School Graduate

Profession: Licensed Practical Nurse (Park City Hospital)

Travel: United States, Canada, and West Indies

Church: Messiah Baptist Church

Organizations: Verimaci Alpha Epsilon Sorority

"A Study of Bridgeport Neighborhoods:
A Black Perspective, 1900 -- Present"

Interview by: Gwendolyn Roberts Johnson
Interview with: Mrs. Jannie Sims
Date: December 2, 1983

JOHNSON: Mrs. Sims, will you tell me something about your early childhood? Where were you born?

SIMS: Hamlet, North Carolina.

GJ: And when?

JS: August 3, 1913.

GJ: How long have you been in Bridgeport?

JS: Since I was 15 years old.

GJ: Where did you live in Bridgeport?

JS: The North End of Bridgeport, High Street.

GJ: Can you tell me something about your neighborhood?

JS: It was a mixed neighborhood. That's one of the things that surprises me now that a Black person will move into a neighborhood and suddenly all the white people moved out. But I grew up next to an Italian family and Lucy Carrillo were very good friends. There was a German woman on the other side of us. We were in between an Italian and Germans. Across the street from us were Jews.

GJ: Were there many Blacks in the North End at that time?

JS: No, not an awful lot.

GJ: Because most of the people we've interviewed were living in the South End and the East End and that. So there that many? So your neighborhood had many people from many ethnic backgrounds?

JS: Yes.

GJ: Can you tell me anything else about your neighborhood?

JS: It was pleasant. Clean.

GJ: Which school did you go to?

JS: Well when I came here I was already in high school so I went to Central.

GJ: Can you tell me something about the relationship between teachers and students at that time?

JS: It was very, very good. But at that time I was newly from the south and it was a little strange to me because I had been used to going to schools for all Blacks. Then to be in with white and Black it was new to me. Well, I just found it a little strange but I coped and managed to finish a year.

GJ: What about the student relationship? The relationship between the students and yourself?

JS: It was nice, very nice. There was one Black girl in my class besides myself and we were very friendly -- which we are until this day.

GJ: Who was that?

JS: Dorothy Allsop.

GJ: That's interesting. Now you told me you completed what? Ninth grade?

JS: Ninth grade here in Bridgeport. But in North Carolina I finished the eleventh grade because there we only had to go to eleventh grade at that time. But I was afraid. I was terribly afraid. Everybody had told me that the schools don't compare with the schools up north. So when I came here I started all over again.

GJ: That's interesting. That really is.

JS: I was frightened and my mother was very upset with me because I did it. But I said, "Momma they don't have

the same thing." So I went back.

GJ: Did you find the school that different?

JS: No. I went over the same thing that I had gone over.

So that's why I talked to different teachers and instructors and they all told me to use my eleventh grade education in North Carolina as my base.

Because I was only repeating myself at Central.

GJ: Really. What did you do when you were not in school?

For example, what were some of your social activities?

JS: Well I went to the "Y" on Beach Street. Then the Black "Y". We had the Black "Y".

GJ: The "Y" was very popular at that time I think.

JS: Oh yes, that was heaven for the Black kids. If you wanted to be with the better class of kids you went to the "Y".

GJ: Who were some of your friends?

JS: Well Dorothy, Melissa Hannah, which is now deceased, Jeannette Jackson -- my God, she's deceased too -- and I was friendly with the Roshay girls. That's about it.

GJ: Did you come from a big family?

JS: Six of us.

GJ: Six of you. How did you celebrate holidays?

JS: Well, the best way we could because my father died during the flu epidemic.

GJ: In Bridgeport?

JS: No, in North Carolina. And my mother came here. She would not marry again. She wanted her children to be

happy. She was afraid someone wouldn't be good to us. In fact, she worked herself into an early grave because she had the six of us to rear by herself.

GJ: Hard times. What were some of the things you did during the holidays?

JS: Well the usual thing we made for Thanksgiving we usually had a -- if we didn't have a turkey -- we had the largest chicken she could find. We stuffed him with the corn bread and sausage stuffing. We had candied sweet potatoes. We then went to church. We went to church for everything. That was one of your outlets.

GJ: What about childhood games and activities?

JS: Oh, the usual things: swimming, going to the park, playing ball in the street.

GJ: What about courting in those days?

JS: Oh, well, now that poses a different question [laughter]. I thought I was the most popular thing going [laughter].

GJ: laughter

JS: Because my mother was a seamstress for a cleaners which was called the Rappoport French Cleaners up on Main Street. And Sims lived up on the street up above there -- I can't recall the name of it right now -- but anyway he delivered clothes for the cleaners. And she thought he was the nicest boy ever. So I saw him over two or three years. That was shortly after I came. See my mother came here first and left me with an aunt. Then I came. Then if your mother approved of someone, you had it made. And he

didn't look so bad [laughter].

So I decided -- we were over at a dance at the "Y" and I told him what my mother said. Dixon Street which was off Main Street. So I told him that I lived on High Street which was off Main Street, Bridgeport, North Main Street. So I told him that my brother took me to the dance, and I told him that my mother said since he lived my way would he mind walking me back home?

GJ: [chuckles]. Smart.

JS: And he was nice because he had brought another girl and he had promised the parents that he would bring her back home but could he see me the next day. So I haven't gotten rid of him since. That was the extent of my courting [chuckles].

GJ: [chuckles]. Where did you go to church?

JS: Messiah.

GJ: Messiah. And you still go there?

JS: I still go there.

GJ: Yes. Can you remember who was the minister back then?

JS: Oh yes, Reverend Gay.

GJ: And where was the church located then?

JS: Arch Street.

GJ: Well that's where it just moved from then?

JS: Yes. We moved from Arch Street around to Congress Street.

GJ: To what extent was your family involved in church?

JS: My mother was a church worker. She was on the

stewardess board. My mother was Methodist. She went to A.M.E. Zion.

GJ: Well did you go to Messiah when you were a child?

JS: From fifteen until now.

GJ: How did that happen then?

JS: Because when she came to Bridgeport and left me with my aunt in Hamlet she was Baptist. I went to church with her so that's why.

GJ: And you stayed there?

JS: Yes.

GJ: Where were you during World War I?

JS: Where was I as living?

GJ: Yes

JS: Read Street.

GJ: During World War I?

JS: Oh World War -- oh oh no. Oh I was in North Carolina.

GJ: You were very young then weren't you?

JS: Oh yes.

GJ: So you don't know too much about your family participation in all that? You remember very little about it?

JS: No.

GJ: You remember very little about it. Okay. Do you remember your parents speaking about World War I?

JS: Well not an awful lot.

GJ: Not enough to know ... What about the depression?

JS: Oh God. I know about that.

GJ: You were here then?

JS: I was here then.

GJ: What do you remember about the depression that you would like to tell us about?

JS: I remember the cold and I remember it was so cold those winters it seemed -- unbearably cold. I guess it was because she had no money for coal and fuel. Because everyone was using coal stoves then. Wood stoves and coal stoves. And we were in what you would call now a cold water flat. Not being able to find a job. And my mother was the only one working in the house of -- how many were we -- there was four then at that time. And I went to school in the morning and in the afternoon I was able to get a job [chuckle] for a quarter a day -- well say from one o'clock when I got there until six.

GJ: Where did you live then?

JS: On High Street.

GJ: Same place. And who else lived there? Just your immediate family?

JS: Yes.

GJ: Do you remember anything about what people ate at that time?

JS: Oh yes, yes. Lots of beans and they didn't have welfare then. So you really went hungry. And we ate a lot of chicken because chicken was cheap. Chicken has always been the staple. [laughter].

GJ: That's true [laughter].

JS: God bless chicken. My mother was famous--very famous-- for

making a huge pot of stew. And you would go to Mohegan's Market on Main Street and ask for five cents worth of dog bones. I guess they thought -- well, I'm sure they knew -- everybody in Bridgeport had a dog [laughter]. They were for dogs [laughter]. So you would get a bag of bones and come home and my mother would wash the bones, boil them and put some of everything in those bones. And make the nicest pot of stew. And then she would-maybe get a bunch of greens. She'd boil those greens. And then she would make corn bread dumplings and drop in that. She always managed to give us food.

GJ: She was a good cook.

JS: Oh, excellent.

GJ: What about employment. You say you had a job. What about your friends and their relatives? Were many people unemployed at that time?

JS: It seems that everybody and his brother was unemployed. No one seemed to be working. It was devastating. I never want to live through something like that. I think if I had to live through that again I'd kill myself. And I don't have suicidal tendencies.

GJ: You just explained how people survived. Can you think of other ways in which they did ingenious things to try to survive during that period?

JS: Well, I can remember my brothers going to Brown Brothers Furniture Store which was on the corner of Main and High Street. They would wait for them to open

crates of furniture and they would get the boxes.

Then everything was --

GJ: In crates.

JS: Shipped in wood crates. And they would bring that home and we would use that for wood. They would go up there and -- somewhere -- where the trains went in Bridgeport pick up coal such as that.

GJ: That fell from the cars?

JS: Yes.

GJ: Can you remember much about medical care, about childbirth and those things at that time?

JS: They had -- what did they call it up there on Bull's Head -- they didn't call it the welfare. But you could go in there and have a tooth extracted or filled for thirty-five cents.

GJ: Oh really?

JS: Yes.

GJ: Some kind of health service.

JS: Yes. And it wasn't called a clinic. What the devil did they call that?

GJ: What other service did they render?

JS: Oh they'd give you a physical or if you had a pain from there they would send you to the hospital. I guess they called it the emergency. And it was at Bull's Head where that building --

GJ: That was a health department there at one time. Years ago I remember that.

JS: Where that building is now. Yes. Well that's where

it was.

GJ: Corner of Washington Street.

JS: Yes. I remember going in there for thirty-five cents to have a tooth extracted and he put the Novocaine in. And there was so many people so I stayed outside until the Novocaine was beginning to wear off [laughter].

GJ: Did people have babies at home or did they go to the hospital or what?

JS: Well, see I didn't pay too much attention to that.

GJ: At that time.

JS: I didn't care [laughter].

GJ: Where did Blacks live this particular time?

JS: They were still on High Street.

GJ: Still on High Street and some on the South End. Yes. But do you think the church played an important role at that time?

JS: Well I'm sure it did. But people were still very very proud. I think the white churches did more. Because I can remember when my mother died in 1932. And I can remember a Negro lady coming to me and telling me that she was going to put my name into some -- white church. And they did send us two big baskets of food. But I didn't ask her. She did this on her own. And I really think the white churches played a larger part because I never remember anything coming from my Messiah. I'm sure it would now because things are different now. And also from Zion's nothing ever came. But that it certainly came.

GJ: You were in Bridgeport during World War II, too?

JS: Oh yes.

GJ: Did anybody in your family participate in World War II?

JS: Yes. Three brothers and one was killed.

GJ: During the war?

JS: Yes.

GJ: What do you remember most about this period?

JS: World War II?

GJ: Yes.

JS: Well I guess I can remember the change. I could see the change coming. We were able to get jobs. Kind of heartbreaking to feel that way. But you could get jobs where you got into defense plants. Things really began to get better.

GJ: How did it affect your family? Did members of your family get better jobs?

JS: Yes.

GJ: You didn't have a shortage of food at that time?

JS: No, no. We were getting the -- what do you call them -- not the food stamps. They gave you --

GJ: Ration books?

JS: Ration books yes. Then I had friends who would give me that didn't have children they would give me theirs. So I lived very well.

GJ: In Bridgeport there was a definite change in economic status wasn't there? Because this was a factory town.

JS: Oh very big change. Yes. Big, big change. They came from

all over.

GJ: Could you see a change in social life at that time?

JS: Yes.

GJ: What happened? Tell us about it.

JS: Oh we were able to go together places. And we were able to have friends at home and do things that we were not able to do before.

GJ: What about housing?

JS: Housing became better. You began to come out of the cold water flats and to running hot water. Bathtubs.

GJ: What about changes in race relations?

JS: That was slow. That was still slow. It didn't come about overnight. They still didn't give the Blacks the same jobs that the white were getting. We find it, you know worked our way into those.

GJ: It really was a long time coming you say.

JS: Yes.

GJ: So after the war, you feel work habits changed?

JS: Yes. They changed.

GJ: Living conditions were better?

JS: Yes. Much better.

GJ: There was still problem with jobs?

JS: There was still problems with jobs.

GJ: When did you start working at Bridgeport Hospital? You told me that you were the first Black to work there.

JS: Well during the war I worked in G.E. Before the war -- '38 I think -- I started working at Bullards in Black Rock. And then when the war started I left there

because they wanted to put me on the night shift and I didn't want the night shift. And I went to the G.E. And I worked in the G.E. I left the G.E. I went and stayed home awhile with my children. Then I went back to work in the brass shop and I worked there for awhile. And I couldn't stand working nights so I went back to the G.E. So I'm working in the G.E. doing very well. One day my machine decided it would break down and he wanted to put me on another job that I knew -- it was piecework-- and I knew I wouldn't make out on this machine. So I picked up my pocketbook and said I wouldn't work on that job. I would go home and I would be back in the morning. And as I was walking home -- I lived on Read Street -- and I walked from my house to the G.E. And as I was walking home I passed Bridgeport Hospital and I decided to go in. And I walked in and asked to see the supervisor of nurses. I had no appointment with her. So they sent me up. They called her to find out if I could come up and she said, "Yes" send me up. So I went up. And I had been hearing about the -- as they called it -- the trained attendant course. And I went up. I introduced myself to Mrs. Richardson. I told her what I was there for. And she hemmed and hawed and she told me that I sounded very promising and that she would like to have me but I had two small children. And they didn't like to take mothers from children. I said, "Well, I'm working now." I said, "I work each

and every day, so why not now." I said, "If I wasn't able to have someone care for my children I wouldn't be here and I wouldn't be working." So I said, "Now, if you don't want me, if you don't want to hire me" -- because at that time we hadn't become Black -- "If you don't want to hire me because I'm colored," I says, "I can go to St. Vincent's and apply there because I hear they do-- in fact I know--" because I knew they had Evelyn Alves. I said, "They have a colored woman in St. Vincent's." So she says, "Oh no no it's not that, it's not that. We just don't want to interfere with the families." I said, "My family will be taken care of, no matter what." So she gave me the necessary papers to fill out and to bring home and have them filled out. And I did so and I took them back. She found no reason not to hire me. I was hired. So then I got frightened [chuckles].

I says, "How can I do this all by myself?" So I got on the telephone and I called Thelma Plummer. I says, "Plummer," I says, "Let's go into the hospital. We've been saying we wanted to do something that we could have to be proud of and have for the rest of our lives." She consented to go up. And then I called Meredith Rivers and she consented to go up. Now, why I did this for Meredith -- because Thelma had always been talking about she'd love to be a nurse -- Meredith Rivers and Lucille Homes and Jame McEachin were three that Reverend Gay had tried to get into Bridgeport

Hospital as student nurses. So that has always stuck in my craw that I wanted it so much. But after he couldn't get us in there. They wouldn't accept us. My mother had said, "Well sister we will do whatever we can and I can try and send you to New York." I felt --well at least-- I could start with this. Which I did. And I was the first Black person of any capacity to be hired in Bridgeport [Hospital]. Now the other girls came. They went up the next week. They were hired.

GJ: So you made history. You opened the door for them. You were a trailblazer.

JS: I opened the door. When I decided after working and taking the abuse -- and, Gwen, you will never know the abuse that we took.

GJ: I can imagine.

JS: Oh no, no, you can't. They even made a different dining room. They had to say that this is the trained attendant's dining room. They didn't want us in the main dining room. So after being there for awhile and the girls learning that we weren't going to eat them or the black wasn't going to rub off, they would say, "Come on, Sims, let's go to lunch." Nobody called anybody by their first names. Just, "Let's go to lunch." And we would get to the dining room into the cafeteria. Our dining room was over here. The main dining room was down a few steps and around. "Nope, this is our

dining room. We have to go here." Well then they got --

It was a nice little room so the doctors decided they wanted to use this room for conferences. So we would come in and the door would be closed. The doctors would all be in there. So that meant we had to go into the main dining room. But they kept us out for about a year until finally they found out it was so silly.

Our own people, our own Black people, ridiculed us to no end. They didn't hope ...

GJ: You mean the ones who were working at the hospital?

JS: No, no, the ones out in the street. They says we was nothing but glorified bedpan emptiers. It was terrible. And I thought and felt that that's why the N.A.A.C.P. didn't recognize us as being pioneers.

GJ: That was a tremendous achievement.

JS: We had a few Black girls here who were R.N.'s out of New York. One was Marge Hamilton. The other was Gladys Bailey. Another was --

GJ: Doris Farrar.

JS: Farrar. Another one -- what was her name -- Mary Freeman. She died here.

GJ: Yes I remember.

JS: Yes. She was in the service. But they could not work in Bridgeport Hospital.

[end of side one]

I meant to ask Marge where did she work because after I -- let's see we started working in December in the hospital.

GJ: Do you remember what year that was?

JS: Yes. '49.

GJ: 1949.

JS: And then I saw Marge. She worked down on Perry "C" for awhile. Then I think -- no Gladys never did work there -- I think Gladys took care of her mother or something there. And then the Amos girl, Annamae Amos, she came to take --

GJ: Is that Dewey's sister?

JS: Dewey's sister. She came to take care of her mother. And they would not let her care for her mother. She was bitter against it. That I gave her mother her medication and her bath and she was sitting there. But they would not let the Blacks work in Bridgeport Hospital until about a year. A year or maybe a year and a half after we were there.

GJ: Well, your going there must have had something to do with it?

JS: It did, it did. They started letting them come in after they found out that we were capable and very capable. Because we did have an excellent instructor. And then our teacher -- we went to school at St. Vincent's. We went to school for a year. She was excellent. She told us, she said, "You are going to run into so many obstacles." But she said, --

GJ: Pioneers always do.

JS: She says, "Grin and bear it. I think you three are tops." So that's what she told us. And we beared it. It was something. So then after working there for --

GJ: How did the patients react to you?

JS: [gasp] "Don't put your black hands on me. What are you going to do? [laughter]. You go in. You start getting their bath together. "What are you going to do?" "Good morning Miss so-and-so. I'm your nurse." "No nigger's going to take care of me." That is what they would tell you. It was bitter. But we laughed. I'd say, "Oh come on now. Come on. You can't feel that way." I says, "I'm your nurse." "You're nothing but a nigger. You're not going to put your hands on me." So, I said, "Well I'll have to go get the supervisor." I'd go out and get the supervisor. So by this time the supervisors were at -- when it first started they would send a white nurse in there, probably send us somewhere else. Then they began to realize those girls are doing their job. My first one was Miss Pardee which I will never forget [laughter]. Did you know Miss Pardee?

GJ: No.

JS: Oh she was a tyrant. So Miss Pardee would come down. I'd go. I'd say, "Miss Pardee, Miss so-and-so -- we had big wards then -- says I can't take care of her." Miss Pardee would throw whatever she had down. Get up and she was a big woman. She'd go down. "Do you

want a bath? Do you want a bath?" "Yes." "Miss Sims is here to give you your bath. Now if you don't take your bath now there's no telling when you'll get it". And she would wheel around -- of course we had to lug the screens in -- wheel around and go out of those screens. And I would give them their bath and comb their hair and I was combing one lady's hair one morning she says, "Oh don't be so rough." [laughter] "Haven't you ever combed a white person's hair?" So by this time I'm getting a little nasty myself. I said, "Not this matted and when has it been combed." You know. So it was something. It really was.

GJ: [laughter]. That's interesting. You made a contribution to Bridgeport though. You certainly did.

JS: So I went up to Miss Richardson and asked Miss Richardson -- when you wanted to leave you had to send in a letter. The letter went up to the supervisor of nurses. Then she sent for me. And she wanted to know why was I leaving. I told her well I just felt like staying home for awhile. Now I was forever leaving a job.

GJ: How long did you stay there?

JS: Oh about six years.

GJ: Six years?

JS: Yes. So she said, "Well," she says, "Mrs. Sims, I cannot accept it." Well right away I said I'm thinking what did I do? So I says, "Why?" So she says, "You are a pioneer."

GJ: You are.

JS: She says, "You opened the door for the colored girls to come in here," she says, "Your daughter is here. We have several colored girls" -- as I said we hadn't become Black then -- "We have several colored nurses student nurses." Maybe it wasn't six years later. It was about four because I don't think we'd had a Black R.N. graduate from there. And she says, --

GJ: Your daughter graduated from there? Oh that's interesting.

JS: Yes. She says, "So I will not, I will not accept your resignation." She says, "You did a marvelous job. To take what you've had to take and come out as beautifully as you have." So I says, "Well Miss Richardson," I says, "that is wonderful. I appreciate your saying it." But I says, "It also saddens me." She says, "What do you mean?" I says, "Because as a young girl I tried to come in here to become an R.N." I says, "And they wouldn't have me." I says, "If I can do this well being a trained attendant." I says, "Oh I don't know what I could have been as being an R.N." So she says, "Mrs. Sims, I agree with you." She says, "But we will not look back, we will look forward." She says, "Go forward." And then she told me if I wanted to to go and take the entrance exam for R.N. And I could take my R.N. exam. I mean I could go to school and stay home nights.

GJ: But you didn't do it?

JS: I didn't do it because I had the children.

GJ: Oh, that's true.

JS: I went and took the exams and passed them.

But then I said, "No." Sims and I talked it over.

It was taking me away from the kids entirely too much. And at that time -- you know -- kids.

GJ: Yes. Were you aware of the social upheaval in the 1960's in Bridgeport?

JS: Not too much so. You know we really didn't get into that too much, Gwen.

GJ: You don't think Bridgeporters participated much in the marches

JS: No I don't think they did too much of that.

GJ: Some people mentioned the fact that they went away to marches because there weren't too many here. What about the N.A.A.C.P? Weren't there marches to open jobs for Blacks at one time?

JS: I don't know.

GJ: So you say the civil rights movement really didn't affect Bridgeport too much?

JS: I don't think so. To some extent [laughter]. I remember vividly one morning up at Bridgeport Hospital I was working in the operating room at the time. It was slow. I happened to look out the window because we did small cases in the morning on Saturday mornings. So I was looking out the window and I see the Black Maria come up. These two policemen jumped out and opened the

gate. One came around one side, one came around the other side. They opened the gate and they said, "Come on out of there. Come out here. Come out of there." So I see this little man [laughter] No bigger than two feet.

GJ: As big as...

JS: ... He was very thin. He came to the door and they punched him. And he run back into the van. So I'm looking out the window and they says, "Get out of here. Get out of here." Poor little fellow he came to the door, and they knocked the living stew -- knocked him back into ... So I says, "Well how can he come out if everytime he comes to the door they hit him?" So finally one grabbed his hand and he was punching and punching. Then we was on the top floor -- the operating room was on the top floor. I didn't wait for the elevator. I run down three flights of stairs. I says, "Why are you hitting him like that?" I says, "What's the matter with you? Why are you hitting him like that?" So the policeman turned to me and he said, "Shut up and mind your business." I says, "If you hit him again, I'll call [laughter.] What was I going to say? I'll call the police? I says, "I'll call the N.A.A.C.P." Because the N.A.A.C.P. was active. So I was going to say I'll call the police and then I realized well these are the police [laughter] hitting the man. So they stopped hitting him and they took him into emergency.

I started to follow them in, but my job was up in the operating room. So I couldn't follow them in.

GJ: I guess he was glad you came along?

JS: Yes. But do you know I was called to the office for that? Miss Richardson wasn't there then. We had a --

GJ: They knew you did it?

JS: Yes. We had a Miss Madigan -- I think it was Miss Madigan then. And I was called to the office. She wanted to know what happened. And I told her what happened. And I says, "I thought it was inhumanely cruel to batter that little man like that." I says, "Every time he came to the door to try and step down they knocked his brains out. Knocked him back into the van." I says, "I don't know what he had done. He was hollering and screaming. He may have been a little disturbed about something." I says, "But he wasn't fighting them." I says, "And two big red burly policemen were beating him unmercifully." So she says, "Oh." She says, "That isn't right. But we can't interfere." She says, "Why did you say you were going to call the N.A.A.C.P.?" I says, "Because, Miss Madigan, because as I was talking," I says, "I realized I started to say I'll call the police." I says, "And I realized I was talking to the police. And then the only thing I could think of was the N.A.A.C.P." I says, "And they should know about it." She says, "Well Mrs. Sims," she says, "I wish you would drop it." She says, "Because" -- now this is the truth -- "if we

interfere too much the police will not bring patients to this hospital."

GJ: Oh, how interesting. How interesting.

JS: Now that is the truth. Now you are not supposed to interfere. They will take them --

GJ: Elsewhere?

JS: Now if there are certain sections where they pick up the patients and bring them. That's why when I was working I used to hate Friday and Saturday nights because [laughter]. And especially when I went down Park City. Because everything in that area they brought there. So there you are. So we have had it tough. But we're coming out of the wilderness.

GJ: Yes, sounds like we are. Alright now we talked about desegregation of facilities.

JS: [unclear] Yes.

GJ: How about the Vietnam War? Did that affect you any?

JS: No. I was very upset over the boys being over there but it had no effect on me whatsoever.

GJ: Now before I close I am going to ask you if there's anything that I have not asked you that you would like to tell us. That you think is important and you would like to tell me.

JS: Well, let's see now. I can't think of anything offhand, Gwen. Other than that the Black nurses are still fighting.

GJ: In what sense?

JS: Well they don't get the -- what do I want to say -- the recognition that they have. They have such few head nurses.

GJ: Yes you mean in promotions?

JS: In promotions and that type. Yes. So they're still fighting that. But I don't say they're fighting it so much. Because I was a fighter. I just fought, fought, fought, fought. I think if the girls would get in there and do more fighting that they would probably get more recognition.

GJ: Well I thank you very much. This has been a very interesting interview.

End of Tape