

Transcript: LEE BROCKINGTON, Senior Interpreter, Hobcaw Barony

Interviewer: RAMON JACKSON

Interview Date: OCTOBER 20, 2015

Location: FRIENDFIELD VILLAGE, HOBCAW BARONY

Length: 79 min

Ramon Jackson: Can you tell us a little bit about Friendfield Village, provide us with an overview, and then I have a few questions after that.

Lee Brockington: It probably is important for people to remember that Friendfield was an early plantation, eighteenth century plantation, carved out of the Hobcaw Barony, that eighteenth century name. Friendfield was created by a man named John Waties whose grandfather and great-grandfather knew a great deal about land. We think John Waties had his choice of land purchases throughout this district and chose this property. We know it was John Waties who named it Friendfield. Although unmarried at the time of his early death, he did give this property to his fiancé, a woman, Elizabeth Allston.

When she inherited this property she continued to operate it as a woman, a white woman who owned the property and bought slaves. Also there is evidence that she told her overseer how she would want her slaves treated and also their religious education and their welfare. Elizabeth Allston went on to marry and she continued to manage the property in addition to her husband who was a medical doctor.

Upon her death, she gave the property to her nephew, Robert F. W. Allston, who was already situated on the Great Pee Dee River at Chicora Wood Plantation. Robert F.W. Allston owned the property briefly but because he was situated primarily on the Great Pee Dee River at Chicora Wood Plantation and owned other lands there, he felt that Friendfield was just too far, almost down at the end of the Waccamaw River. He sold it to a family relation, yet another Allston.

It was during this time, this man's ownership, that we believe that most of the oldest cabins standing today were built, about 1840. We know from photographs that Friendfield

Village and Barnyard Village both were built prior to the emancipation of slaves. Both have existing nineteenth century structures and, according to restoration contractors, most of these cabins that exist from the nineteenth century, 1840-1850.

RJ: Okay. Tell us a little bit about Elizabeth Allston and how she laid out her plan to manage enslaved people on these properties. What were some of the requirements that she gave to her overseer in terms of treatment or maybe the religious education of enslaved people here?

LB: We know from Robert F. W. Allston's papers that have since been published and are available to the general public, that she had authorized and discussed and, in her letters to her nephew R. F. W. Allston, had talked about the treatment of the slaves. We felt like, from those letters, that she thought their health and their wellbeing was important. That the sense of a family unit, these cabins, particularly on Georgetown County rice plantations are normally dedicated to one family as opposed to duplexes, as opposed to gang labor on other Southern plantations.

Her sense of family - she often visited the property, took an interest in the children and also, about 1830, gave permission for All Saints Waccamaw Parish Church and Reverend Alexander Glennie to establish a slave chapel. Reverend Glennie established 13 chapels up and down the Waccamaw Neck at various plantations. We do know from All Saints records that one of those slave chapels was also located here at Friendfield and we believe it to be under her authorization. Her enthusiasm, again, for their religious education.

RJ: Where would that slave chapel have been located?

LB: We think that the slave chapel according to maps, although sometimes maps are slightly incorrect, we believe that the chapel may have actually stood, according to one map, at the very edge of the Friendfield Village Road and King's Highway. If that map is

correct, the slave chapel established by All Saints sat at the intersection of Clambank Road and King's Highway. Clambank Road, the road that comes through the middle of the slave street where we're seated today.

RJ: Why was religious education emphasized by Miss Allston and other slave owners in this area? What were the benefits of instilling Christianity amongst these enslaved people?

LB: I think there are two major theories that have been put out by those that have studied plantation religion for a number of years. I think one is that people of the Episcopal faith, as were the Allstons, and including Miss Elizabeth Allston, it was real important to her to be a missionary. It was real important to her to spread the gospel. Most people that are Christians feel compelled and instructed to do so. Certainly there was that fervor.

I think the other theory, and certainly it holds true, that a Christian slave was a better disciplined slave. By using carefully chosen scripture, scripture not only that Reverend Alexander Glennie chose, but that most slave owners approved, that scripture talking about a slave on earth and free in heaven, talking about obeying your master and rewards in heaven. I think all of that made for what slave owners considered a better disciplined slave. Individually, do we know what reason she chose to allow a slave chapel to be built here? We don't. I think it could be a combination of both.

RJ: How common was it for landowners in this area to set up slave chapels? Were there others built around that time on plantations further north, for example?

LB: It was not uncommon for there to be slave chapels on plantations. Also not uncommon to have slave balconies in churches, particularly in Beaufort, Charleston, and Georgetown, but I think it was Reverend Alexander Glennie himself who felt very strongly within this parish and Prince George Parish and Prince Frederick Parish, these three that he maintained just before, during, and after. I think it was because of him individually that

we find more individual slave chapels on plantations in the Georgetown District.

I think also it's important to remember that some of the churches, particularly the Episcopal churches and some Baptist churches, the greatest number of members, congregants, were black. They were actually members, not just attendees. When emancipation finally took place in late 1865, late April 1865, many of these churches begged those black members to remain with them in church but almost without fail those blacks chose to establish their own churches with primarily a black congregation.

Reverend Alexander Glennie is to be given great credit for wanting to spread Christian religion to those slaves.

RJ: You've helped us kind of understand that religion is really important. I want to pivot to the woman who lived in this home behind you, Miss Laura Carr. Can you tell us a little bit about her and then comment on this reputation that she had as being a practitioner of root medicine and a conjurer, how does that mesh with the earlier antebellum history of Christianity amongst enslaved people in this area?

LB: When we think of the Christian religion remember too that it was the slave owners and the landowners who felt it was their religion that they would most want their slaves to adopt, whether we're talking the Episcopal faith, Methodist, particularly Baptist. Baptist were great missionaries among their slaves, not as interested in abolition as say Presbyterians or Methodists in certain areas.

What we find over and over through researchers is that there was some sort of combination of beliefs. Not only were some Christian beliefs adopted and held on to, music and lyrics certainly reflect that. African spirituals where the tune might be African, the words my certainly be Christian, adherence to our Lord and God, our one savior, Jesus Christ his only begotten son.

Then also there's evidence over and over of some semblance of memory generations of religions from Senegal and Gambia and Sierra Leone, of various tribes. Particularly most people would identify with superstitions, with burial customs, with grave decorations. It is

often through these conversations with former residents and their descendants that we learn of people like Laura Carr who, while an active worshiper in the church here in Friendfield Village in the late nineteenth and 20th Century, that she also may have held on to some of her West African inherited beliefs, especially regarding medicinal herbs and their powers.

We know from some of our family descendants and also neighbors, contemporaries at the time, that Laura Carr seemed to have knowledge and skill. Sometimes that in itself is considered a special power, isn't it, knowledge and skill? But also by knowing about medicinal herbs and their uses, Laura Carr did hold the power to make people well, to make people virile, to make people fertile. Some might say mind over matter. Some might say the specific herbs she had knowledge about were improving it.

Then what's to say that some of those herbs and some of those medicines, according to her contemporaries, were also used to make people sick, to make people die, to make people simply disappear. That's why sometimes that word conjure woman or witch doctor is used. Most of the people I've had conversations with refer to her as a root doctor, as a nurse, and as a midwife.

RJ: What evidence has been found say in her dwelling or in the environment around the dwelling that has led you to kind of interpret her life in this way, as being a root doctor? Did you find anything specifically in the dwellings that told this story?

LB: In 1999 we received a grant from the Edward S. Moore Foundation to do some restoration or what we call conservation work on this 1840 cabin where Laura Carr last lived. If it was lived in after her death in the early 1930s, we're not aware of it. We think she might have been the last person to live in that structure.

During the restoration work by Tommy Graham and our Executive Director George Chastain, one thing that was found in addition to various archaeological evidence underneath the house of pots, and spoons, cooking utensils, but also a prayer sack, a prayer sack, which is very often worn by a nurse, by a midwife. Not only was it made of burlap

with a leather thong, a leather strap, but also it contained inside medicinal herbs, tooth, actually several teeth, and things that were more difficult for us to identify but things we felt surely held meaning to others.

That prayer sack is in our exhibit in our small museum, The Discovery Center, at the front gate here at Hobcaw Barony. It seems to be something that others recognize that have been studying medicinal herbs and midwifery, as well as conjuring to be something that would be a recognizable artifact from her association with the ability to conjure.

RJ: How might her ability to conjure have affected her relationship with others here in the village? Do you have any anecdotes or stories about her personality and her interaction with others?

LB: I don't remember a great deal being said about fear of Laura Carr. I think there was respect for her. I think her ability to bring babies into the world without as much loss of life, I think for those who remember a baby being born and the mother surviving would always speak very highly of Laura Carr. Her own descendants brag on her abilities and the stories that have come down through their family of her abilities.

We also know, again according to oral history interviews, that late in life Laura Carr cared for young children in her home. There's a photograph that we have that we believe is Laura Carr on the steps of her cabin with a young black baby. If people were leaving their children with her in order to go to work, could it have been that she was the only person available to care for children in the village while they worked, or more likely they did trust her with their children? That, to me, says they weren't as fearful about her or her personality but instead that she was to be trusted because of her skills and her knowledge.

RJ: How many former residents that you've interviewed in the past told you that she was the midwife for them? Did any of them say that she had performed that duty?

LB: No, and you know, in the 1980s I wish I had asked more questions. When I came

to work here in 1984, Prince Jenkins, who was born in the village, who went to school in Strawberry Village, who lived in the village until he and his family, his wife and daughter, were the last ones to move. He was so quiet and so introverted that there were certain questions I didn't ask him, and now so long after his death, I wish I had. He would've certainly known.

We do know there was at least one other midwife who brought babies into the world. Minnie Kennedy, who was born in this village, talked about Matilda Martin bringing her into life. We know that Matilda Martin also was a midwife in Georgetown in later years and worked at what is technically the first hospital in Georgetown which was operated by a black woman many years before the Georgetown Memorial Hospital was established in 1950. Midwives continued throughout the community, both white and black, because Georgetown is a very large, rural county.

I think especially many times of the midwives and the respect people had for them, again, because of the many deaths that occurred between infants and mothers during delivery and following delivery. Midwife was an exalted position among the people.

RJ: Take us through a birth, right. How would that process unfold? What would be the role of the midwife helping a woman give birth in these dwellings or dwellings like them? How does that work?

LB: Well, very often the midwife was not called until the last moment, until the birth was to occur, until the umbilical cord was to be cut and tied off. I think in the 20th and 21st Century, contemporaries of mine, we're in the habit of thinking that the minute the first labor pain occurs that we rush to the hospital and taken care of. Not only because these enslaved people, and later these emancipated people, were working very often right up until the day that they began to have labor and give birth, but also it was understood, I think, that the midwife was called at the last minute when her skills ... The midwife was called at the last minute when her skills were most needed at a time of life and death.

The midwife normally stayed with the young mother until she was settled and

probably could be turned back over to her own family members whether it was her husband, perhaps her mother had come and was a part of that experience. It might have been several hours if not 24 hours before the infant itself began to nurse. That might have been a time when the midwife came and checked and made sure that things were progressing well.

You have to understand, too, that in these conditions sometimes babies were born in shelter and without shelter. We know that women in various cultures have given birth outdoors as well as indoors. Also, women were made to have babies physically. Some women in the 21st Century consider giving birth, or being pregnant rather, an illness, a disability, but for many years giving birth has also been considered a great blessing and a sign of strength. So much so that some slaves were valued much more highly if they were believed to be good breeders.

RJ: Okay. Now, some of the census records have been really interesting for us. Laura Carr shows up in the census of 1900 as married. She apparently had a husband, Bedford Carr, several children and Minnie says that Laura Carr was her mother's step-grandmother. Can you tell us a little bit about the relationship between the Carr and Jenkins-Kennedy families? What can you tell us about how Miss Carr may have interacted with say Mose Jenkins or ...?

LB: Think of all the families in this close knit village, one of four villages that was active in 1850, and we would have to imagine those relationships, but they worshiped in the same church, the services alternated between Baptist and AME. We know that some individuals went to church every Sunday, regardless of who the preacher was that Sunday. They all knew each other. They all walked to work together. Many of them walked to the main house and worked in the laundry and in the kitchen and in the outbuildings, not just in the fields, in the ditches, with livestock and other work. They certainly knew each other and, as any neighborhood, as any community, some would enjoy each other's company and have friendships, and other would prefer not to speak. We know it was that same way with

various families and individuals in each family.

Laura Carr, again, I think because of her skills and knowledge, because of the fact that she was keeping other people's children in the home, was likely a popular person. Probably, because of her age before her death in 1935, was also respected simply because of her age.

RJ: How might Laura Carr have responded to say church services here in the village? If she's a practitioner of these kind of African traditions, would she have attended church? Have you heard any stories about whether she might have ...?

LB: I haven't heard any definitive stories on that but I'd like to think, too, that if she had become a Christian and was worshipping, that she may also believe every word in Genesis because who gifted her with the plants, who gifted her with the things that provided, and who provided the ability for her to know how to use what we might say were God given plants, God given roots, God given supplies for her work. I like to think that she, even with her African heritage restored, retained, that might also use some of the new Christian religion. I say that likely because I am a Christian and I believe that God made this world and provided us with the plants, the trees, the roots, the nuts, but maybe there's another blending of that story as well.

RJ: Let's talk a little bit more about this idea of extended families. I've seen a lot of overlap in the census records between families here and, say, Arcadia, a little bit further up the Neck from Friendfield Village. How commonplace was it for individuals to court, say a young man or young woman at Arcadia? Do you have any examples of these families overlapping and what does that tell us about this idea of these communities as being isolated? Does that challenge that a little bit?

LB: Well, when I first started studying Hobcaw Barony and particularly with an interest in these villages, I studied Friendfield Village, then I went and studied Strawberry

Village, Alderley Village, Barnyard Village. I was certainly studying them in isolation. I wanted to know the families that lived in this village and I thought of each village as its own community and its own town. Then bit by bit I realized not only was there a relationship as we spoke earlier of working together and moving down the roads together, but also it was not unusual for one family to live in one village and then move to an empty house or better yet a larger house in another village.

Then I began to notice people's conversations in oral history interviews where they would be friends, or better yet marry, someone from Strawberry. Sometimes they would talk about their cousins or siblings that lived in the other villages. Then I began to broaden my awareness of oh, they not only knew each other, but they were sometimes unrelated and married each other. Then before long I began to realize when I visited cemeteries on nearby plantations further up the Waccamaw Neck, that Arcadia Plantation, and within Hagley Plantation or Litchfield in Willbrook, there were last names that I recognized and sometimes there were living members of those families that I could ask questions of.

Many times I heard people say, "Oh, well my people came from Hobcaw. My people lived in Friendfield Village but my momma married somebody from down there." Then I began to realize there's a whole bunch of movement along the Waccamaw Neck and how much easier it is geographically to move from Hobcaw to Arcadia to Hagley to Litchfield than across to Georgetown. Geographically Georgetown is closer, but no bridge until 1935.

We know, too, that there are large cemeteries at Arcadia, once a large undisturbed cemetery at Hagley, and several cemeteries actually at Arcadia. The idea that sometimes their life, if they lived at Hobcaw and then married an employee in the 20th Century of Arcadia, that they were buried at Arcadia instead of here because most of their living family members were there.

We also know from Francena McCants, whose son died as a very young adult, but he was not buried here at Hobcaw even though Francena and her husband Charlie McCants, Jr. lived here on this property, but instead their son was buried at Arcadia at a plantation called Rose Hill. I asked her why and she simply reminded me that during the time that her son died Miss Belle, Belle Baruch was in charge and no longer wanted any burials at

Hobcaw. So it wasn't a question of where they lived at the time of their death, but sometimes who was still receiving burials and who wasn't.

There was an exchange and more of a sense of mobility, dare I say freedom, to travel, to visit, to marry, to live, or to be buried on various plantations of the Waccamaw Neck. As separate as many of these communities were I think there was a thread, I think there were connections between the communities of blacks on the Waccamaw Neck.

RJ: I'm just going to say a few names and I'd like you to just kind of give us some information about some of these former residents. Let's start with William Kennedy.

LB: William Kennedy, the father of Minnie Kennedy, was born in Darlington County we believe. We know that his father and he were here long before he married and before he had several children by Daisy Kennedy. William Kennedy was a border according to early census records. I think it's interesting that he was listed as a border and later became one of the most respected employees. As Minnie herself has said about her father, Mr. Baruch's right-hand man, William Kennedy.

RJ: How would a boarder have made that transition do you think?

LB: Well, I like to think that he proved himself, not by birth but by work, that he was a proven laborer. We don't know what his job was in that year of the census, if he was listed as border. I'm not sure it said anything besides laborer. He worked hard, he proved himself, and I like to think that he proved himself so much so that he was given a certain level of responsibility which by 1940 was a great deal. He was authorized to buy and sell automobiles. Bernard Baruch wrote to William Kennedy and said, "Purchase a truck. Do the paperwork with Mr. Ford in Georgetown."

RJ: Now, he ended up living the remainder of his life at Arcadia, right? Isn't that where he's buried today?

LB: William Kennedy did not live at Arcadia but he is buried there. William Kennedy and his wife Daisy lived at Hobcaw, outside the back gate of Hobcaw House. Then they moved to a home previously occupied by Joe Vereen. Then, when they left Hobcaw about 1940, they moved into a house in Georgetown. Their grave sites, both William and Daisy and some of their children, are at Arcadia. The gravestone itself was provided many years later by their daughter Minnie Kennedy.

RJ: What about Charlie McCants, Senior or Junior?

LB: Charlie McCants, Sr. was photographed in his... he was a large man, and he was photographed in a large white apron with a large white hat holding a horse. It was actually a postcard, so that means lots of postcards with Charlie McCants, Sr.'s photograph on it were printed and, I hope, utilized. The caption says, "Charlie the Chef." It was great fun to interview some of his descendants and find out that that was indeed Charlie McCants, Sr. who was a cook for many years at Hobcaw House and is referred to sometimes in the guest books under the comments section. Also, Charlie McCants who was tall and large and had a booming laugh.

Charlie McCants, Sr. who also had a son, Charlie McCants, Jr. who was much loved by his co workers but also much loved by Francena Green, who was one of the few residents that came from Williamsburg County to live here. She came to care for children in the McClary family, fell in love with Charlie McCants, Jr. They married and lived together in a room of the McClary home until the McClarys moved out and then Francena McCants and her husband Charlie Jr. took possession of a cabin here, in Friendfield Village.

RJ: Okay. We made a recent find that had Charlie McCants, Sr.'s name on the cover. Can you tell us a little bit about this new acquisition that was made a few weeks ago?

LB: Bernard Baruch, in his autobiography had referenced a Bible actually, in his recollection, given by his wife, Annie Griffin Baruch, to the Friendfield Church. We were not

aware of the Bible itself except for that reference and not too long ago a woman discovered it in an antique store, the actual Bible from Friendfield Church, purchased it and gifted it to the Belle Baruch Foundation. It is a large, what is called a Presentation Bible, a large Bible. It's in surprisingly good condition. I don't think it was left out in the weather and I don't think it was left in the church unattended for any length of time. It's been well cared for.

It was presented in 1940. According to the inscription on the front of the book by Bernard M. Baruch 1940, which is two years after the death of Annie Griffin Baruch, it was given in memory of Moses Jenkins and Charlie McCants. I like to think that both of those individuals led services. Moses Jenkins is often referred to as Reverend Moses Jenkins, as a minister. That terms that contemporaries use, that broadaxe preacher, self-taught broadaxe preacher. Charlie McCants must have been, in my mind, a lay leader, a reader. I don't know of any special training he had but for that Bible to be dedicated in their memory both of them were likely leaders at least among the congregation.

RJ: Is it safe to assume that they may have both passed in 1940 or around 1940 because of the inscription? Neither show up in the 1940 census.

LB: We probably know when Reverend Moses Jenkins died. I would also assume that the Presentation Bible presented by Bernard Baruch in 1940 could also have been a replacement for the Bible that Annie Griffin had given during her lifetime. There might have actually been two Bibles that were given by Mr. and Mrs. Baruch during a period of time. Mrs. Baruch died in 1938 and according to her husband had presented a Bible during her lifetime to the church here in Friendfield.

When Bernard Baruch gave a Bible in 1940, not only did he dedicate it to the memory of two deceased members of the community, but also it says, "Hobcaw Plantation, Hobcaw Church," not Friendfield Church and it also has his name embossed in gold on the front. Mr. Baruch was never someone you could call modest, but he was always generous and very often was an anonymous giver. On this one occasion with the Bible presented to the church at Hobcaw Barony in 1940, his name is also on the cover.

RJ: Myra Palmer. What can you tell us about her? From the census, it appears that she lived next door to Laura Carr for almost 30 years. Mr. Shubrick said that the last resident that he remembers living in this dwelling was Mocking.

LB: Mocking Myra Palmer was a well-known resident in Friendfield Village. Myra Palmer was a well-known resident here in Friendfield Village. Her nickname Mocking, like a Mockingbird. I always think about, when I say that nickname, it reminds me that Minnie Kennedy always said that everybody seemed to have nicknames. That had given names that were tossed aside. Seems like everybody had a nickname.

Mocking would be a well-known person mentioned by several for a couple of different reasons. Mocking lived a long time. She was living when the Baruch family was here. She also was living here when Ella Severin came to live with Belle Baruch in 1951. Ella Severin often spoke of Mocking. Children, later grown, that told me in oral history interviews they'd come to the village and Mocking was often sitting on the steps or on the porch of her cabin with her back to the street and she'd look over her shoulder with a menacing glance their direction when they walked past, when they ran past. Robert McClary remembered that he did not ever want to cross her or get in her way.

One day I was sitting on the porch of the cabin where Mocking, we believe, had last lived and I was talking to third graders. The sun was so warm and I realized that I turned and the sun on my back made my back feel so good. Then I laughed and I told the children about Mocking Palmer sitting with her back to the street and looking over her shoulder at the children because it occurred to me at that moment maybe why she sat that was not to appear menacing, not to appear antisocial, but simply because she had a bad back and that winter sun felt good on her bones. Think of all the people we know that absorb that sun and enjoy sitting in the sun on a cool day.

Mocking might also have suffered from dementia. From other accounts that are given to us cranky, irritable, evil, all of those nicknames have been applied to her by people that I knew who likely were young when they knew Mocking Palmer. I think it also could have been dementia that caused her to react the way she did to children and even to other

adults. We know a great deal more about dementia and Alzheimer's now, we're much more patient, aren't we?

RJ: Francena McCants.

LB: One of my favorite people to have known. Francena McCants was a very young woman when she left Williamsburg County to come and work for the McClary family here in Friendfield Village. Francena Green lived just outside of Kingstree and she was being courted by someone in Kings Street that she didn't want to marry, that she didn't want to date and so the McClary family was in touch with her family and said, "Could she come and work for us? Live with us and help us take care of the children?" Francena jumped at the chance. She enjoyed her life here as a young woman with the McClary family. They greatly respected her and enjoyed her. She was almost like a big sister according to Robert McClary.

There was a time when her suitor, so to speak, from Kingstree got all the way here to Friendfield Village and was asking around to see her. The word got back to Francena in time and she said she went off in the woods and hid from him. In short order she and Charlie McCants from Hobcaw fell in love and got married and lived in the cabin that the McCants moved out of and raised their children.

In 1950, when their children were stairstep and still young, the McCants family decided that they would move to Georgetown, primarily for better jobs. They both got jobs, both Charlie Jr. and Francena, at the Georgetown Country Club just north of the Historic District in Georgetown. Francena was cooking at the Country Clubhouse. She had a good job and she enjoyed it but she was homesick. She was homesick for Hobcaw.

In later years she asked for her job back, sometime after 1951, and came and worked here at Hobcaw. She was picked up every day for work. When I began working here in 1984, it was Prince Jenkins that drove into town and picked up several people that were on the payroll. Francena reported to Bellefield Plantation and continued to be a cook and a maid until she retired about 1996.

I and several others continued to visit her on Alex Alford Drive in Georgetown at her home. She continued to share memories and copies of photographs with us for our archives and our exhibits as we began new exhibits in 2009. In the summer of 2009 she died. The family was good to keep in touch that final week and was able to attend her funeral on behalf of the Belle Baruch Foundation. The following day her children and grandchildren came to the dedication of our new Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center, came to see the exhibits that included their matriarch, Francena Green McCants.

RJ: Now, this is an interesting kind of dichotomy, right, between how Minnie reflected upon her experience living here and how Francena really longed to return. Can you kind of expound upon that a little bit? What might have explained these differences and how does this kind of ... What does this tell us about the way that black families kind of viewed this experience living here?

LB: I think one of the things that we understand as we visit places and begin to have conversations with people is that we think we get a picture of how it was, and then we begin to individually interview people and collect different points of view. As we got to know Francena easily because she worked here and we worked here and we saw her on a near daily basis, it was easy to talk to her often. Francena said to us, as well as in a taped oral history interview that became part of our orientation film, "I loved it here. It was wonderful. We had everything we needed. We had a schoolhouse, we had a doctor's office, we had a place to live. It was wonderful." You write all that down and you assume that's how it was for everybody.

Then about 1986 Minnie Kennedy, retired and living in Georgetown, came to the property for the first time to meet me and talk with me. We visited Friendfield Village and visited the cemeteries where some of her extended family was buried. Minnie began to talk to me and she said, "It was horrible. It was terrible. In the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, we were still living as slaves. We had to freedom. We had no right to make our own decisions. We couldn't come and go as we wanted."

I asked her questions and I thought about it and everything she said was true but I also knew that everything Francena had said was true. Even in our third grade programs we present both of these perspectives and ask the third graders, "Who's telling the truth?" It takes the third graders a while to debate and discuss what was good about it and what was bad about it and, by the same token, they come to understand both of those women were telling the truth. It's a different perspective because each one of the people we discuss are simply individuals.

I think that some people are simply more ambitious. Minnie tells the story that when she was born she grabbed the apron of her midwife and demanded to know what was going on. Demanded to go back to where she was comfortable, in the womb. That she was always a rebel. That she was later always asking questions and wanting to know what was across the water, what was in the bigger world. Francina, like a lot of people living today, content to be where they are.

I think it's the same image of some people that prefer to live in a rural area, others that can't wait to go live in an urban area or the urban person who longs to live in the quiet country, the quiet country person who longs to live in a busy active area. I think that helped me begin to look at people individually. Not necessarily as a race. Not necessarily as one large community. Perhaps a part of a community, but I think instead as individuals, each with their own opinions.

RJ: We had the opportunity to look at a few of the photographs in the Georgetown County Digital Library and we stumbled across two that struck me as interesting. One of them was taken in about 1910 at Clambank Landing and it depicted a summer cottage, a hunting lodge, and then right in the middle of these two buildings was what appeared to have been a nineteenth Century dwelling. Are you familiar with any African-American villages or dwellings in that area, and what can you tell us about why folks would have been in that area?

LB: When we speak of Clambank, particularly Clambank Landing, we're speaking of

the easternmost reaches of Friendfield Plantation. All the plantations on the Waccamaw Neck generally stretch from the river to the sea. Literally, in the middle of the salt marsh on a piece of high ground was a mid-nineteenth Century summer cottage built by Elizabeth Blythe Allston ... Excuse me. A structure built by Elizabeth Allston Blythe and her husband Dr. Blythe for a summer escape.

They literally evacuated the plantations as most of us know, and when they evacuated to houses on North Island, on Pawley's Island, and particularly the plantations here at Hobcaw, they carried with not only furniture and food, chickens, milk cows, horses, but also they took with them their slaves. Before emancipation they took small or large numbers of their household, which included family members and enslaved laborers. If they're going to be living in a situation all summer, there has to be housing for them at those locations.

At Clambank, from very early photographs, some taken even before 1910, we see and have knowledge of the summer cottage as well as at least two other structures that we believe housed slaves. By 1914, we know that Bernard Baruch was using that former summer cottage as a hunt cabin. Also, by 1914, he had built a second hunt cabin that was described fairly in detail by the newspaper of all sources, 1914. It was from those two hunt cabins that Bernard Baruch and his guests could wake up early in the morning before a sunrise and very easily move out a few hundred yards to a duck blind and be in place before the sun rose in order to begin their day of duck shooting.

What would they need those smaller former slave cabins for? For housing their hunting guides or their black employees that cooked breakfast for them, that cleaned their guns, prepared their boats, and then upon return, cleaned the wild game right there in place at Clambank Landing. In an oil painting done we believe about 1916 by Aston Knight we see those two structures and those outbuildings at Clambank Landing. To the best of our knowledge those structures began to deteriorate but actually stood until Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

Then remnants of the two larger so called hunt cabins remain standing in a derelict fashion until they were dismantled shortly after 1971. I always thought it was interesting

that the hand wrought siding ... I've always thought it was interesting that the siding from that pre-Civil War structure was further utilized by the children of plantation managers in the 1970s as part of their treehouse that they built near the rice fields. Then when that treehouse deteriorated and those boards were on the ground, they were utilized by Bill Sheehan as picture frames. That wood continues to exist that was created, planed, and sawed by slave labor.

RJ: We also looked at another photograph near what was once the Old Relic. In the clearing where, I guess it would be where the outbuildings are near Hobcaw House, they're seem to have been several dwellings in that area. Have you heard anything or do you know anything about whether there was an additional series of African-American families living near the old relic at any point? What can you tell us about that?

LB: The Old Relic, which was built sometime between 1875 and 1890, was not the original house that stood on that bluff. That bluff is 25 feet above sea level and, to the best of our knowledge through archaeological observations and some map work and research by Dr. Susanne Lender, we feel now that that bluff was not only utilized by Native American families but was the site in 1729 of the very first plantation house created here at Hobcaw.

Certainly from 1729 until 1875, an eighteenth or nineteenth century structure that stood on that site would likely have had outbuildings. It is not unlikely that outbuildings housing a slave that served as a cook, as a valet, as a butler, those that were most needed in the house would have lived close by. We might not call that a village because most often I think about a village as not only apart but autonomous. In addition to those outbuildings, not only dwellings for those house slaves, but also a smokehouse, one of which still stands on the grounds of present day Hobcaw House, poultry barns, a cooling house ... I can't think of the word I want ... a spring house.

We know that in addition to cabins for slaves that served in the house it would have been any number of outbuildings including smokehouse, laundry, storehouses, spring house, that also could have appeared in a painting, a photograph, or on a map.

RJ: At what point would there no longer have been black residents in that area do you think? When would they have cleared out?

LB: It would be a guess on my part but after emancipation if there was some choice about where you might live, if there were absentee landowners, if there were superintendents, plantation managers that might not have cared so much about where you lived as much as whether or not you were on time for work, if you lived a distance from work but you could still be at work on time.

I think the only time I would consider it important perhaps, and again this would be speculation, would it be important for an individual like William Kennedy to live close to the back gate would be for security reasons. It was probably important for someone at some time on plantations to live near the main house to guard against someone coming by water and breaking in or visiting without notification.

I also know that for many years the previous owners to the Baruchs hosted hunters. The Donaldson family that owned the house on the bluff prior to the Baruch ownership hosted hunters who paid for the privilege to hunt here and services of paid laborers was needed. I think I would speculate that following emancipation freed slaves had more choice in where they lived and who they lived with and we might have seen a slow moving away from the main house to the four villages at Hobcaw.

RJ: I guess I'm curious about this because the census taker seems to have visited a series of dwellings after stopping at the four villages that we're familiar with so I'm trying to figure out where might he have gone or were there additional dwellings, say in 1900-1910, that we may not have counted.

LB: Well, it is likely to think that there were structures throughout the property. We know of at least one other structure that was lived in by the Jenkins family whose patriarch was nicknamed Mad, Mad Jenkins, the grandfather of a man I interviewed named Mose

Jenkins. Mose Jenkins talked about the house on the hill and it was only one house not far from later Belle Baruch's airport.

There were families, certainly, that chose autonomy in different sense, not only getting away from the big house, but chose not to live in a village among their community members. Remember what we said earlier, individuals making their own individual choices. There are several houses, including that one lived in by William Kennedy and Mad Jenkins, that stood apart from villages and served as residence for black laborers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

RJ: Reconstruction - we've talked about this off-camera quite a bit. What can you tell us about say that early period right after emancipation in regard to the black experience here on these plantations? Also, could you talk a little bit about that kind of chaotic period of land ownership just after the war? How many times the property changed hands and why might this situation have occurred?

LB: Following the end of the American Civil War, Georgetown County, particularly the city, is often heralded as being one of the best places for fusion government, for things being set up and running fairly smoothly within town. What I think is interesting the more we study is how very little changed here on the Waccamaw Neck. I think one of the reasons that so little changed is because rice planters and landowners, second generation and then third generation, continued to plant rice. Probably the big misconception is that rice cultivation ended with the American Civil War.

Also, upon emancipation, for many people living on the plantation the thought of paid work, paid housing, and a guarantee of food was a comfort to many people. certainly there was an opportunity to leave the plantations if you chose to, but what are your immediate needs? If you had a family, if you were the father of a family of, on average, five that lived in an individual cabin here in Friendfield Village, you had to make sure you had a job with money, a place to live, and food.

Many people, we know from the census records, chose to remain here and part of it

was because rice planting did continue, as I often say, in an ever declining market. There were some good years for rice cultivation and it's different on the Waccamaw Neck as far as sharecropping or tenant farming. Think of this instead as property owners with paid employees and employee housing. There were jobs on the plantation, there was housing, and when I say a guarantee of food, not only places to grow it, but also to fish, to gather oysters, clams, crabs.

Think also about the other opportunities that began to open up, lumber mills in Georgetown. The Atlantic Coast Lumber Company opened in Georgetown what they declared the world's largest lumber mill. Think of the ages of people that began moving away. As men came of age at 16, 17, 18, they moved and found paying jobs in towns like Georgetown. Also, if there was lumber and lumber mills, there were jobs along the docks as stevedores and handling ships. Think about all the related industries, in stores as delivery persons, working on trains as the logging trains moved in. It was important to realize that slowly but surely some other employment began to open up, but to pick up and move a whole family elsewhere took a great deal of money.

Some people were able to purchase land. Some blacks connected to the Waccamaw Neck were able to purchase farm land and became farmers. Certainly we know on Sandy Island right after the American Civil War, Phillip Washington garnered funds and they were able to buy over 1,000 acres on Sandy Island where they continued to plant rice individually, autonomously.

Slowly but surely even Bernard Baruch as owner beginning in 1905 writes about that slow exodus. Visitors that came back in the 1940s and 1950s reflected on the fact that the villages seemed so much emptier, that there were few people living on the property. Certainly by the late 1950s very few, according to a visitor of Belle Baruch, Varvara Hasselbalch described the property as deserted and empty and overgrown. I think that says a lot for the continued moving away. In so many ways to the culture you might consider it a loss, but what a gain for progress of the people to have opportunities elsewhere.

RJ: D.W. Jordan. Have you heard that name before? Are you familiar with him at all?

LB: D.W. Jordan is a name known to me, primarily through Wachesaw Plantation further up the Waccamaw Neck, almost the northern reach of the rice planting on the Waccamaw Neck.

RJ: We stumbled across a series of labor contracts between Jordan and freed people on Marietta, Friendfield, and Strawberry Plantations basically outlining their duties, their responsibilities to continue the plantation system. How might someone like Jordan have gained control over labor here?

LB: Men like Mr. Jordan were routinely hired to be what you and I would think of as labor managers, as plantation managers, as crew chief, and that was important because think of all of the absentee landowners. Again, second and third generation that had chosen to live away from the property. Think about how many farmers, even today, produce products but don't live on the farm. Many of the plantation owners in Georgetown either moved into Georgetown or moved to Charleston, Columbia, or literally moved out of state. We have a great deal of knowledge about that.

D.W. Jordan is probably somebody who made himself available, made it known that he had this ability and could do it. It's not unusual for these contracts to be let, particularly because we do now that rice production continued and that the money from successful crops went into the coffers of the landowners and those employees were paid as opposed to that sharecropping or tenant farming that we see in other areas, particularly with the rise of the tobacco in the 1890s in South Carolina.

RJ: Can you give us a description of this decline that you've spoken about a couple of times? At the height of this rice kingdom, how much was produced compared to its ultimate demise by the twentieth century? Give a sense.

LB: Without giving you numbers it's easy to remember that Georgetown County alone was the world's second largest producer of rice. Georgetown County grew more rice

than any other place except the area right around Calcutta, India. Also we know that the Georgetown District went from being one of the wealthiest areas in the nation prior to the American Civil War to one of the poorest. A great deal of that is simply because of the emancipation of what was considered property. It wasn't the loss of the land, but to those slave owners it was the loss of their property of human lives. One of the wealthiest areas involved in so much rice cultivation.

Think of the major problems facing a farmer, a rice planter, following emancipation. The cost of labor, labor cost, of course we know competition from other states, other areas that were growing rice. Even if you had a good year, the return on the crop wasn't as high. Then weather events, a series of hurricanes, floods, and droughts that affected the success of the crop. That decline of rice was affected by a number of things but nothing more powerful than labor cost.

RJ: Okay, so let's talk about the process of migration. How did the village empty out? Where did folks go? What can you tell us about the ultimate decline of the population here in Friendfield Village?

LB: In the early twentieth century we began to see declining numbers in the village even though there were some families that moved in here and lived here like the McClary's and like Francena McCants who moved in. we see a slow decline in the population in the twentieth century since Bernard Baruch's purchase. The Baruch family themselves began to come less and less, wildlife declined, and, again, other opportunities elsewhere.

We know also that Bernard Baruch provided some opportunities to the black employees and their children. It's a well-known fact that he offered to pay college tuition and to arrange for jobs. We know that there were families who on their own arranged for their young people to secure jobs in New York and New Jersey, also in the city of Philadelphia. We've interviewed different ones that migrated out to those places and still live there. Some have lived there until retirement and then have sought to come back to Georgetown County or at least sought to visit here.

We know also that there are a great number of families that simply moved into Georgetown. They moved into Georgetown for jobs. They moved into Georgetown for schools for their children because as the population declined here there were fewer and fewer students on a daily basis that attended Strawberry School. In fact, it was the motivation for the very last family that lived in Friendfield Village. Prince Jenkins and his wife Rosa decided that they would move into Georgetown and the house that he secured at the very opposite end of Front Street still stands. It is still owned by his daughter who rents it but says that when she retires from her job in New Jersey, she plans to live in that house at the far end of Front Street.

I look forward to her moving because she's one of our last links, one of the last persons yet to be interviewed. Whether or not she remembers much about living here, moving out when she was about five years old, or if she simply can talk to us about her father's sincere love of the property, so much so that even though he moved away in 1952 with his wife and daughter and had other children, he continued to work here every day on the property until he retired in 1997 I believe.

RJ: What can you tell us about the reaction of the next generation? Folks, when they've visited with their parents, right, say Prince's daughter comes back. What examples can you give us of how say the children of Bob McClary, or the children of Joshua Shubrick, or Minnie Kennedy's relatives, how they've responded to some of the stories you've shared and some of the memories that their loved ones have shared?

LB: When former residents, their children, and grandchildren return, what I find over and over is wide and varied responses. When Minnie Kennedy would come and visit she often spoke of the hardships of living here. When Robert McClary came back he spoke of things that he remember that were good and bad. I think what impressed me most about Robert McClary beginning to come in 1999, it took about 10-15 years before he came back with his wife who just happens to be white and his daughters by a previous marriage who came for the first time fairly recently, they said, "Daddy, why didn't you ever bring us here

before? Why did it take you so long to bring us here?" As they stood inside a former slave cabin that was lived in by his family for so many years, he got quiet and simply said, "I was afraid you wouldn't understand." They said, "Understand what?" He said, "Understand why I loved it here so much."

There was a grandmother, Elizabeth Shubrick, who came and brought her children here. As we came into the village that day she was speaking of her grandfather, Timothy McCants. She was describing for her own grandchildren her grandfather who was a loving and important man in her life who also had a very large garden and shared things with, not only his extended family, fed his family, but also shared tomatoes and potatoes and okra and watermelons and gourds and squash with members of the community. As we walked towards his garden she saw that remnants of his garden were still coming up and blooming. It was the garlic that he grew and was so famous for. She pointed that out to her grandchildren.

That particular day her grandchildren weren't real interested. They were hot. The bugs bothered them. They were sweaty. They were ready to get back on the air conditioned bus and go to Myrtle Beach and do what they had planned to do upon coming to a trip to Myrtle Beach.

I remember Hercules Shubrick who came from New Jersey, not once but twice, and brought different children and different grandchildren. Hercules was so enthusiastic about remembering that I and another volunteer were writing as fast as we could. When Hercules Shubrick came, we were taking notes about everything he said and we were far more enthusiastic about his memories than his children or grandchildren were. He fussed at them. He said, "Someday you're going to regret not listening to me." I thought it was interesting. It was important to us professionally to get these stories down but it was so important personally to him that his children and grandchildren pay attention.

There are a lot of different reasons individuals might not be as interested in coming back to a plantation and listening to granddaddy's stories as if it was all wonderful and good. We know from local real estate agents that some of their clients who are black would never be interested in buying property in a gated community called Heritage Plantation.

Other black clients say, "Well, why wouldn't I want to go see that property? I love to play golf."

Again, it gets back to seeing people as individuals, interviewing them as individuals, and also understanding that there are mixed emotions among individuals, mixed emotions within individuals.

RJ: I guess my last question. We recently had some flooding in the area and I know you guys have done a great job preserving the dwellings. What can you say is the value of preserving these spaces? Then how concerned/unconcerned are you that these will continue to be preserved to share these stories with future generations?

LB: Well, when Belle Baruch died in 1964, her goal for the property was that the entire property be preserved, to be set aside as a research reserve, but her primary interest was science. The structures that had been lived in, many of them until the 1950s continued to stand, but it was not until the 1980s and particularly by the late 1990s, that the trustees made a commitment to the structures. We talk about conservation, conserving the structures so that they will not deteriorate further so that they will stand as some of the largest artifacts that reflect the history of this property.

We do use outside funding, separate from the trust that Belle set up for the maintenance of the property. Beyond regular maintenance, keeping a good roof or a good foundation on a structure like these cabins in Friendfield, we go to outside gifts and grants, outside sources for the conservation of these structures.

We've been able to use the villages, the one-room schoolhouse, and other buildings from the nineteenth and 20th Century as part of our school programs, field studies. Then also the idea that we have the opportunity to use, again, these artifacts for those students as well as for undergraduate and postgraduate research.

Each one of these structures certainly could be a victim to a hurricane, to a flood, to a forest fire. It's because of scholars' work that we also are grateful that these structures have been photographed, measured line drawings have been made by College of Charleston

students under the direction of Ralph Muldrow. The opportunity that if we did need to simply use the drawings, maps, photographs of the structures to study, or that if we ever chose to recreate what had been here, we could do that with those new documents.

We're very excited since about 1990 that the Smithsonian has a replica of one of the cabins here as they created an exhibit on rice plantations of Georgetown County. Think of the millions of visitors to the American History Museum, on the mall, in Washington that have learned not only about rice cultivation and slavery, but also of the story that Hobcaw Barony can tell. It's an important story and these structures tell a real role because we're a visual nation and if we can see objects in front of us that remind us of the past, it is a great victory worth preserving.