

4-19-2021

2. Childhood Experiences

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Recommended Citation

Gibbs, Lance PhD, "2. Childhood Experiences" (2021). *Series 1: Family - Quotes*. 3.
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Childhood Experiences

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EVIDENCE OF MAINE'S BLACK FAMILIES from 1800 to the 20th Century



Mr. Edgar Anderson



"Well, being the second of six children and the only boy in the family, it was sort of different for me. Not having any brothers set up sort of how I was raised. My parents were divorced when I was ten, so I grew up in a house with six women: my mom and my five sisters. So, I learned to do everything that women traditionally do. I can cook, clean, sew, bake. I grew up doing all that. Clean house and doing all of those things."

Mr. Edgar Anderson (Male; age 51; born 1950 in Chicago suburb called Harvey)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Anderson, Edgar](#)

Ms. Beverly Bowens



"...And in evaluating it, I would say that I had a wonderful childhood here on Munjoy Hill..."

Ms. Beverly Bowens (born in Maine; age 67; left at 21 years old for about 35 to 40 years and then returned to Maine)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Bowens, Beverly](#)

Reverend Albert and Clemmie Jackson



"Neville Knowles who, ah – ah I met him. Ah, I was a teenager at the time and we lived next door. And, ah, him and his family was hardworking."

Reverend Albert Jackson (born in Slabfork, Virginia; age 61; lived in Maine for 43 years) and Mrs. Clemmie Jackson (born March 1948 in Marengo County, Alabama; age 55; lived in Maine for 3.5 years)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Jackson, Rev. Albert and Clemmie Jackson](#)

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Mr. James Mathews



"My father's name was Oscar Mathews, Jr., and he worked for the railroad. Not like a chef, but he was a cook on the railroad, and he traveled between Boston, Massachusetts, and Portland for a number of years. And my mother, her name was Llewena Hill Mathews, and she was one of the first graduates of Gorham Normal School which is now the University of Southern Maine. And she was an accomplished pianist, and she also was attempting to become a school teacher, but at the time Black school teachers were not hired."

Mr. James Mathews (age 59; born 1941 in Portland Maine; married with five children; lived in Maine all his life – lived in South Portland for over 26 years)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Selected Audio: [Series 1: Family - Recordings](#)

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Mathews, James](#)

Mrs. June McKenzie



Mrs. June McKenzie (age 72; born 1929 in Portland Maine; fifth-generation Mainer; lived in Maine all her life)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: McKenzie, June](#)

Mr. Rupert Richardson



"I think it was great. I know, I lived here. As I pointed out, you know, I was born and raised here in the city. And the section of the city that we lived in all the people got along famously. We were one large, happy family, in the west end. And to this day, those that are still living: you know, we're still one happy family."

Mr. Rupert Richardson (born in Portland, Maine; living in Maine for 71 years)

Keywords: childhood experiences, Black Families, Maine

Selected Audio: [Series 1: Family - Recordings](#)

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Richardson, Rupert](#)

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Mr. Richard Tarrence



“Good question. It certainly is different than growing up in the inner city. When I came to Maine I had a pretty difficult adjustment period. Just some of those cultural things that I’m used to are not here. It’s often difficult to get a haircut. You know, exposure that you would have normally in the inner city or growing up somewhere with your own population, it’s just a lot of little things missing—connections are missing. And, you know, raising my children is interesting in that as they grew older and as they noticed the very differences, they were starting to mix in very well. They were making friends, and, you know, they were involved in sporting activities and community.”

Mr. Richard Tarrence (age 57; born 1945 in Cleveland, Ohio; moved to Maine in October 1975)

Keywords: childhood experiences, children’s experiences, Black Families, Maine

Selected Audio: [Series 1: Family - Recordings](#)

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Tarrence, Richard](#)

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to our partners at the University of Southern Maine (USM) Special Collections, the University of Southern Maine Libraries for their support in digitizing and building the exhibit site, and the Osher Map Library (OML).

This site was built by USM Libraries and Digital Projects staff members **Mary Holt**, Library Specialist in Digital Projects and Special Collections with USM Libraries, and **Jessica Hovey**, Library Specialist in Digital Projects and Access Services with USM Libraries.

Nora Ibrahim, Digital Imaging Assistant with the OML and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, assisted with photographing the Talbot Collection and many of the images featured in the exhibit. **Sara Nazirli**, Digital Projects Assistant with USM Libraries, assisted with uploading images for the exhibit.

Shiloh Parker, Administrative Assistant with USM Libraries, and **Carrie Bell-Hoerth**, Library Specialist in Digital Projects and Access Services with USM Libraries, assisted with marketing and outreach.

Special thanks and gratitude are in order for **Susie Bock**, Coordinator of USM Special Collections and Director of the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, **David Nutty**, Director of Libraries and University Librarian, and **Dr. Libby Bischof**, Executive Director of the OML.

Dr. Lance Gibbs is the curator of this exhibit and served as the research lead for the project, providing historical background from news and scholarly references, and authoring the short contextual catalogue essay entries which complement the photos, written, and audio galleries. Dr. Gibbs is a lecturer in Race and Ethnic Studies and is currently the director of the Race and Ethnic Studies program at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Gibbs is also the Talbot Fellow for the Gerald E. Talbot and African American Collections. Dr. Gibbs' research interests focus broadly on the family, in particular in father involvement/fathering/fatherhood, among immigrant fathers from the African Diaspora. For more information, contact Lance Gibbs, at lance.gibbs@maine.edu



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