

Margaret Carrier
Tape: 12.24.00.3
Starts: 2:20:30

Born 1936

Q: Just give us the memories you have of coming to this house and the time you spent here?

A: Well, he asked me when I came first, I said since I was born in '36 I probably came maybe early forties maybe late thirties and my recollection is my aunt and uncle and this little house and we used to come down on Sundays and just play around in the yard and be with my...be with my uncle mostly, because, as I said, he liked children and he used to take us off in the woods and show us the trees and talk about his flowers and his plants and everything. And, my aunt always made wonderful cookies. Oatmeal cookies with raisins. And the house always smelled good. And...she'd have us to dinner sometimes or lunch on a Sunday. They'd come to our house. Also, as I grew older and was out of school and worked, I used to come down here with my parents on my day off. And that was when I really learned more about the property and my aunt and uncle and everything because he had his garden down here and he would give us a lot of the produce to take home.

Q: What kinds of things?

A: He grew...he grew blackberries and raspberries and different kinds of berries. He grew a spinach that was called a New Zealandian (sic) spinach. And it wasn't just a leaf, it grew like on a trail and you could cut it off and it would keep on growing and eat the leaves. It was wonderful. He grew cauliflower and broccoli heads, cabbage, wonderful tomatoes, peppers. He grew all these things. Onions. He had a big garden back in here. And he would load us up with this stuff to take home in a grocery bag. And he gave me a lot of his plants. Little pieces of plants here and there, took them home, planted them. He used to come to our house and help get the yard ready and planted and...plant the trees and things like this because this was his business. He knew this and he loved this. And whenever we came down here he would send me home with a sack of mulch from the leaves out here. He'd gather them all up and took 'em home and threw them in my

rose bed and they were wonderful fertilizer. They were great. Yes. I got a rose apple tree from the neighbor. He gave me a...she gave me some rose apples and I had a pit and I grew it in a can. And I guess it was about this tall when I moved to my house and I took it, planted it in the ground. I moved there in '64, the first thing I planted was my rose apple tree, and I lost it in '92, in Andrew. Uprooted. And it had enormous roots probably as high as this house is. It was an enormous tree. And lost the whole thing.

Q: So you think you got your love of all this from you uncle.

A: Probably, yeah. Because he loved plants. And, ah, I showed Rick (Ferrer) a orchid tree...orchid plant back there. He didn't even see it. He stepped on something and I looked down and I said " Oh, there's an orchid here." And when I looked up in the tree I said "I that's a vanned (?) orchid attached up there. And, a...but he loved his plants and he just knew so much about it. He used to take us to Fairchild Garden's and introduce us to everybody. And, a...he loved it. This was his life down here in this little property and this house. It a comfortable little house with the four rooms, two bedrooms and a bath and the kitchen and the living room. And it was comfortable. It was cozy, it was warm. It was nice.

Q: There was nothing else around here?

A: There was no houses around here. Later they built some houses back over in here. And he was very friendly with the neighbors. I was telling Rick, one woman had a sunken rose bed. She had the roses planted in a trench and then she could walk up on top, on the ground, she had it all rocked where she could walk on it and pick her roses and he used to mulch them for here and do all this. So he was a big hit with the neighbors for their plants. Helped them with their yards.

Q: So he was a popular guy around here?

A: Oh, he was. There wasn't anybody that knew him that didn't like him. you couldn't help but love Uncle Carl. And that story I told you about my niece. He used to love to talk and she said to him,"you talk a lot, but you don't say anything." He...he agreed with her. He said, "yes you're right. You're right, honey. I do, I talk a lot." And he'd laugh. He was a good natured man. Never saw him mad. Never saw him cross with anybody. And

he always called my Aunt Mary,"doll." She'd call him Carl and he called her "doll."

Q: Did they ever talk about things changing in the area. Did they ever talk about anything going on here especially.

A: Well. especially the neighbors when they started building over here. You know. And she'd say "oh there's a new house over there." And he'd take me over to see the house when they were building it. And a...the builders and everybody know him 'cause he was around here constantly. That's why she had to have the bell on the back door. To get him home. And he would...he would wander all over the area. He knew everybody around here. And when they were building a house she'd say "Oh, Carl's gonna take you over and show you that new house today." And we'd go over there. We'd walk through the woods and go over to the people's property and he'd show us the house they were building and how far along it was and what was in it and everything and how much it was Donna cost and then later we'd meet the owners. And then they would take us through the house after it was furnished. They were up on what was going on around here. You know. Because they had lived here so long. I guess they knew all the neighbors, I'm sure.

Q: And this was one of the earliest families to come and settle in this area.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did they ever sit around and tell stories about pioneer days and the hardships?

A: I...I don't think so. My aunt one time didn't even think there was a depression. I mean they...they had an abundance. He had his garden and everything and they had an abundance of food. And he had a job, and she said "Depression, I don't remember any Depression." So, I mean, that's...that was how she related to it, you know. they weren't without, let's say. They always had, you know. They always had plenty of food. They always had their nice house. They always had their property, their family. They talked about the old homestead, down here. When it was built and everything. And, a...

Q: That old homestead was still standing when you came here?

A: Yeah. I never was in it. I don't know who owned it. I never got onto the property or anything.

Q: By the time you used to come here someone else already owned...

A: Yeah. They had bought it. We heard it was Donna be torn down and that they were Donna put condos in there. And that's what they did. First they put townhouses. And then they put condo buildings in there. but it was a shame when it was tore down and I never got inside, I never got to see it. We used to just pass it on the road when we would come down the highway and turn in the road down there, go past my Uncle Wilfred's and then come on down here. We used to park...we used to park the car up here. He had a hedge along here and we used to park the car up here and get out, and he had a pathway to the back door, and he had a pathway in through here to the front door.

Q: And what did this area look like?

A: This was all grass. Just like it is only better grass. He kept it cut. I was telling Rick he had a lot of...he planted a lot of the ferns over here. He used to have hibiscus bushes in here. And a, he had one that had several colored hibiscus on it that he grafted. And he had for ground cover back in here instead of losing his dirt where he couldn't plant grass, he grow a ground cover called wedelia. And I found some of the plants back there in the woods, and I showed him what it looked like. I said they used to have little yellow flowers and he planted it here for ground cover -- to keep from losing his soil. He knew a lot about -- you now -- conservation and what to grow, and how to grow it and how to take care of it and everything like that. He was good at this.

Q: There are several rock pits around here. Do you remember...?

A: The rock pits...I was never down to the rock pits. My cousin Judy was because they lived here. They lived just down the road. The fence was probably built by my grandfather and Carl. Because this went around the whole piece of property, I was told. And this...

Q: This rock wall...

A: Yeah. This is...this is the original. This is all Dade...Dade County coral rock. And from what I understand it surrounded the whole piece of the Carrier property. And all the boys used to say they built it. And my mother used to say "Grandpa built that. They didn't build anything. They all...they all claimed knowledge of knowing this fence and everybody built it, but she said no, "Your grandfather built that fence by hand."

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Q: Do you have any certain anecdote or story of something that happened here, that passed down?

A: On this property? I don't remember, outside of the fact of my brother going through the woods with a goat.

Q: That was a good story.

A: Yeah, and it was true.

Q: What about the post office. Where would they have gotten their mail?

A: Well, the area was originally called Larkins. And I suppose -- I don't know where the post office was here, but the post office must have been called Larkins -- and they didn't have like a post office box. So I guess you just sent it to the post office, general delivery, and all the letters we had at home from my father...from my father to my mother, the return address always just said Larkins. Larkins, Florida. And no post office box, no zip codes, no nothing, just Larkins, Florida and his name and her address on it. And it reached it. You know. It got to where it was going. So, wherever the post office was, I don't know. But, the must have brought the mail out, or you went in there and picked it up, I suppose. I noticed he has a box down here at the end of the lane. And I suppose once they got established in the area then they put up post boxes. But otherwise I guess they just went in to the post office and picked it up. I think when my uncles and aunts when they were young and lived in the family homestead up here, they used to go into town and pick up the mail, or whoever was working in town would bring it home with them.

Q: And so what is now called South Miami was the little town...

A: Yeah.

Q: ...of Larkins?

A: And then they changed it to South Miami. And they...I don't know what they called this area, if they ever...if they referred to it as South Miami or just...The address we use when we would write to them or send them a card or something, was just Miami. So I guess they were just an unincorporated part of Dade.

Q: Most everybody can relate to and knows about Dadeland. So what did Dadeland, the area where the Dadeland Mall is now, what was that?

A: Rocky ground where they grew tomatoes. Just fields. That is all that was down there. I imagine when they dug, they dug out a lot of rocks like this because that is all that was in that area. And it was just fields, there was nothing on the other side of the street off of Kendall. Was nothing around -- no buildings, no businesses, no nothing out here. We have pictures where you can see an old car going down the road, nothing around. Just open fields where they would plant their tomatoes and pick their crops, and...This whole area in here was a big farming area. Wasn't very...wasn't built up at all. I mean...he tucked this back in off of the road and there was a lot more trees around here than there used to be because you could never see the road out here. When you would walk out in through his woods, you could never see road with the cars passing by and all this. You hardly even heard any traffic because of all the bushes and the brush he had around here. As I said, he had a hedge along here -- a high hedge --and this grass was kept short and he had a lot of...bushes and trees and things in the front yard. Seemed to be a lot more than this. And when I would come down when I was older and I would come down on my day off and bring my parents, we'd sit out here if it was nice and he'd throw a blanket on the ground or something and he and I would lay on the ground and talk and my mother and my father and my aunt would sit on chairs out here and we'd all sit around and talk. And she'd say, you know, "Oh, Mary, do you remember, you know, this?", or "Mary do you remember that?" and then they'd laugh and they'd talk about the good old days, you know. And my uncle and I we'd always lay on the ground on a blanket or something. He'd throw something on the ground for us, instead of sitting in a chair. And, he was a wonderful man, he really was. He knew so much. He very knowledgeable.

Q: And he built this house?

A: Yes he did.

Q: With his own hands.

A: Yes he did. He planted everything in here. Anything that was the...you know, all his palms and stuff that didn't grow up naturally like the oak trees. He planted all this stuff in here. He had a wonderful garden back in there. He had a lot of flowers. He had big nasturtiums. Had to be this high. He used to get the...Women over here owned horses and he used to get the manure from that and he used to fertilize. He had them in a big...he had something around it like a little wall or something around the garden to keep it from the grass and everything getting in it.

Q: Sounds like he knew what he was doing?

A: Yes, he did. Yes, he did. He knew dirt. He knew soil and he knew how to grow things. And he kept all this trimmed and really neat. I don't know what he cut it with, I never was down here when he ever cut the grass but it was always cut and the lawn always looked good. You didn't see all this bushy weeds and stuff growing up around here.

Q: You wonder how he found time to all this?

A: Well, when he retired he had more time, but I guess even when he worked in the garden (Fairchild) he probably did this on weekends, or something.

Q: And how did he get up to Fairchild? What was his transportation?

A: Oh, he had a car. He and my aunt had a car. They used to come to the house and see us on Sundays when we didn't come down here and they would come up to the house. And they'd come in...they had an old black Ford, I guess, or something like that. And they would come up to house. We used to have reunions. We didn't have any in this house 'cause it was too small. but we had them at my uncle's house. And my other aunts, they had big houses. And we'd go to their houses and we'd have these family reunions, anniversary parties, or birthdays, or whatever. We held them at our house, too -- when we lived up in the northwest section, at 51st street,

we had parties and things. We had an enormous back yard and we would have a big picnic table out there, just a high standing table.

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