

- Reneé D.: I am going here and I'm clicking here, so whenever you're ready. All right. So, um, Mr. Frazier, can you please, just to start off... Uh, can you please spell your name for us.
- Eugene F.: First name, Eugene. E-U-G-E-N-E. Last name, Frazier. F-R-A-Z-I-E-R.
- Reneé D.: Okay.
- Eugene F.: Mm-hmm.
- Reneé D.: Thank you. And then, we're gonna just get into the questions. Um, start off a little bit about you, and then we'll get into the-
- Eugene F.: Mm-hmm.
- Reneé D.: Broader context of James Island. So, I know that your family is from here. Can you tell us how long has your family been on James Island?
- Eugene F.: Started from slavery. My, uh... My grandfather on the maternal side was born in 1853 on the dill plantation on James Island. He was actually born in slave, during slavery. Uh, and some other family on the, uh... On that... Still on the pa- maternal side, uh, it's gonna be, if you had that book, it's gonna be on the, uh, [inaudible 00:01:22] side, go back to 1819. Or 1719. Uh, so w- we go back to the... Whether- whether it's the maternal or pa-... Or paternal side, we go back before sl-... During the slavery- slavery era, but over this country in sl-... In slave.
- Reneé D.: Okay. And, tell us your general context, can you explain to us what life was like growing up here on James Island?
- Eugene F.: Well, as a young, young boy, uh, understand as an African American, uh, during... My years growing up was in the '30s, the '40s, and up to the '50s right before I left James Island. Uh, it was... This area was actually really a rural area. It was, uh, before the road was even paved. The only paved road on James Island was the one called Folly Road that was, uh, paved back in the '20s and the '30... Began to pave, the '20s and '30s, was a two lane highway. It run from p-... From the peninsula to Folly Beach. A rock road, they call it rocks. And those were the only paved road... The only one paved road that run clean to Folly Beach. All these other road was actually dirt and trail when I was a young boy, six, seven, years old. All these road, uh, was trail.
- It was wooded area and there was n-... Farm land. These land was, uh... Was, uh... You know, uh, was proud and cultivated and the land was clear for... Actually for farming. And that's all we had here on James Island. Uh, one... Two or three stores on the whole island. Uh, you could... Have to walk to 'em because... And the... All the community, I- I think it's, uh, every community on James Island we... I knew people on there. Because when you... We connected by... From the young age, we go to these different plantation. For example, you had 17 plantation slave plant... Enslaved people on James Island. And we knew where the... I knew where everyone was, because you would

worked... When you were a young boy... We were young boy, young girls, men and women, worked on these farm.

And one farm was planting one thing, and then you'd help another. Well, the man who owns the farm, the farmers who owns these farm, comes round to the local community and asks for help. And, uh, they worked these farms as a... And as a young boy, I know where every- every farm was, and I know where every commun-... The name of every community was. You asked a while back about... For example, the, uh... The Honey Hill, uh, plantation, that was, uh... That was the, uh... What we call the Clock... The Clock and the Lawton plantation. That's where Honey Hill was in that area now.

Uh, then you got the [inaudible 00:05:04] Plantation in, uh... That's on [inaudible 00:05:08] road on Battery Island. And you have the Dill Plantation, which my mother was born and raised. And all that area there, there's several different parts of the farm, and the only thing y- they did was, uh, harvest tomatoes, cucumber, corn, uh, potatoes and, uh... Even before my time really was cotton on there, but particular... Mostly, like, for example on the... On the... On the dill plantation, uh, there was... They harvest the potato, corn, tomatoes. Uh, different plantation, uh, uh, harvest, for example, uh, the non-... The, uh, Hinson Plantation was... They raised turkey there. Turkey. Uh, on the plan they... On the Hinson Plantation. Someone f-... And there was, uh, the Morden in the... In... Was prior to the Morden time, they use horse and mule to cultivate the property, the [inaudible 00:06:28] Plantation.

And what the people was doing, uh, African American, were using... Men were using mule to plow the property and turning up the property. The women were using, uh, horse and rake to, uh, cul- cultivate the bed to plant the... The, uh, seed. Uh, after they, uh, was, uh, grew and that... They pick and... Pick the, uh, beans, and picked, uh, potatoes. Then they would, uh... The men would haul it off in cart before the truck days and put 'em in, uh, crates. And they would take... Then take that to the market in the city of Charleston. Uh, uh, this was... This was, uh, uh, some kind of hard time for people. Especially African American. Uh, and as a young boy during the time when I was growing up, seven, eight, nine years old, I tend... I was, uh, tending, uh, St. James Parochial School, which is a... Which is a predominantly black, uh... Black school, uh, controlled by the church.

The Board of National Mission in New York sent... Uh, was supporting the school prior to- to it... School being... Prior to African American be... Uh, being educated on the Island. That school... That church that you talked to down there is the first place that taught African American to read and write. Uh, as a matter of fact, that- that church was teaching Blacks to read and write, uh, it was built... The- the first church was built, uh, in 1868... '66, and completed in 1868. Began in '66 and- and complete in 1868, and they used that through the week days to teach the kids to read and write, and on the weekend, then they held church. And, uh, I told you earlier that, uh, there were no high school on James Island during those times in the '20s, the '30s, the '40s, for African American.

And, uh, in 1949 was the first year that African American was allowed to ride school bus. Other words, we had to walk, I don't care where you live. If you live one mile, or eight mile from the school, you walked to school. You start off early enough in the morning... Uh, if- if it's rain, and was... The road was... The little trail was muddy, it was too bad, you had to walk and go to school. And that was the only school during that time, until the 19... Uh, early 1900. And that's in South Carolina, the Charleston County School Board decided to build a one room board school for African American in each community. Matter of fact, if you look in this book, you'll see that the first school was built was the Cut Bridge School. The second school was the Secessionville School on Secessionville Road.

And all... Both of 'em... All of those were one- one room board building school. And the third one was, uh, on Sol Legare. Sol Legare there, what they call Mosquito Beach down there, uh, one b-... One room board school, and then one on Fort Johnson Road on the other side of that place called Honey Hill. That was a school... The Three Three School.

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: Call that the Three Three School. And those schools were one room... Matter of fact in the book I got a picture of the actual Cut Bridge School in the book already, you're probably seeing that.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Uh, in African, uh, American had to... Probably, again, no matter where they live, unless they live on the Dill Plantation, they go to the Cut Bridge School. All that area, Riverland Drive, the whole Dill Plantation, you go to Cut Bridge School. If you was, uh, from, uh, the, uh, Grimball Plantation, mostly people on Grimball was attended the- the St. James Parochial School. Which was not connected with the county. But they, uh, had an option to walk... To walk to Secessionville Road and go to the- the school on the Secessionville Road. And, uh, then you got the one on Sal Legare for that plantation.

Reneé D.: So, I know in your... Okay, because you said Sal Legare, Cut Bridge School... Okay. So, I know in your book, especially the one on top, you had James Island broken down by the different plantations.

Eugene F.: Yeah.

Reneé D.: And then you... Or people would mention, um, we left Dill Plantation and-

Eugene F.: Mm-hmm.

Reneé D.: Moved to, I don't know, Grimball- Grimball or-

Eugene F.: Yeah.

Reneé D.: Different things. What was happening...

Eugene F.: What would happen during those times... For example, if someone, uh... This is where [inaudible 00:12:41] started. If a young man on the Dill Plantation got involved with a young lady doing the farm in the area, and liked a young lady on McLeod Plantation, that family married into that person on the McLeod Plantation and they would move to Mc-... The family would move to McLeod Plantation. Vice versa.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Uh, so, that's why it started to have the interconnection between one plant-... They moved from one plantation, it was because of [inaudible 00:13:18] marriage, and building. Mm.

Reneé D.: Okay. That makes sense. So, you were telling me about some of the different historic neighborhoods on Johns... Oh, sorry, James Island. Would you be able to tell me what was the name of the neighborhood that you grew up in?

Eugene F.: Well-

Reneé D.: Or the community that you grew up in.

Eugene F.: Basically, I grew... I grew up, born and raised on the Grimball Plantation-

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: That's my father. That's where my father was from, the Grimball Plantation. But my mother was from the Dill Plantation. And so, I was familiar with the Dill... With the Dill Plantation. Because my mother would take us there, walking me... I walked with her there. And I spend the night over there to my grandmother's, which was... You have to... You think... You have to think about the '30, now, we're talking about '30 and the '40s again. So, I would walk with her over there, and then she would stay sometime overnight. Keep me overnight to my grandmother house on the Dill Plantation. And so, yeah... And so, between the Dill, I was actually born and raised and knew about those h... And the houses that you saw... See on the McLeod Plantation, each one of those plantation had houses built for African American following slavery.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Mostly in the 1840s, '50s, built houses on them. And they were lined up just like you see in the one at McLeod. And so I'm familiar with those houses, I sleep in those type of house. Each plantation had several houses in a row, in a line, that you see like the McLeod. All of 'em. And, see, that's... That way they didn't have to pay to, uh... They didn't pay no, uh, uh, rent... Have any money to pay the rent, because the white farmers only give them enough to survive.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: And then later on, that same era, the '40s and the '50s... The '30, '40, and the '50, they had what you call, "Sharecropping." Even when they get on the... Get enough where... After Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, free the slave, they either had to get off the pro-... Get off the plantation. The one who would save enough money. And they're allowed the plant-... The- the property that they were living on. But, they had to split the property, split the profit, if they say they got, uh... Pick, uh, a field of tomato. And they had 10 basket of- of tomato. Three basket of corn. Well when the man... When they took it to downtown, to the s-... To the market. Vegetable market. If they get, say, three dollars a basket for the... This basket of corn. The master took half, they would split it in half. Oh no they would. And there wasn't anymore... So you're in bondage, but there wasn't slavery, they still had to split it in half.

And they were told, "Either you do that, or find yourself another place to live." Yeah. And those were some trying times. Yeah. And so, I'd rotate from Grimball with my mother or father, to Dill Plantation, and then... More for the men, like my father during that time, were farm workers. And I had to... You see the little card in the... In the book where they have riding in the... In the mule.

Reneé D.: Yeah.

Eugene F.: Well, I rode with my father many time, go to the Dill P-... The McLeod Plantation. The, uh, Hinson Plantation. And so we know where... I know where every one of those plantation are located, you know.

Reneé D.: So, were there any boundaries for... I know you mentioned in the Dill Plantation... So... Uh, that there was like, um... Excuse me, just different neighborhoods. After it was no longer a plantation and people started to move about more, then what were... What were kinda the boundaries for the Grimball areas? So I know that you have Grimball Shores, Barn Hill, Carver, Scotts Hill, [inaudible 00:18:06] Hill, Grimball Farm-

Eugene F.: Well you see what happened was... For example, those plantation, they were owned... L- let me give you example.

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: Becau-... Uh, the- the Dill Plantation. Joseph Taylor Dill, the last owner of the Dill Plantation, born in 1822, died in 1900. That's the last man who owns the Dill Plantation. Now, that Dill Plantation was scratched from the Wappoo Creek Bridge, when you cross that Wappoo Creek. If you're on the South side, the Stono River is in the South. It was scratch. His plantation was scratch from the Wappoo Bridge, all the way to the Riverland Drive. Excuse me. Scratch the Riverland Drive. And, uh... I have to get some water. Can I get some water?

Reneé D.: Yeah. I can get it.

Eugene F.: I think I have, uh, some water in a... In a-

Reneé D.: Right here?

Eugene F.: Yeah.

Reneé D.: [inaudible 00:19:15].

Eugene F.: Mm. Mm. Now, uh, you're talking the boundary.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Excuse me. And that- that boundary... And it's still present today. That boundary... If you're talking about the Dill Plantation, when you come across that Wappoo Bridge on the South side... That Wappoo Bridge... If you come across the bridge... I wanna give you a location. For example, let's take the McLeod Plantation.

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: As soon as you cross the McLeod Plan-... The- the... That Wappoo Bridge, on your right... I don't know whether you've been to McLeod Plantation-

Reneé D.: Uh-huh.

Eugene F.: On the right, the McLeod Plantation goes toward the river.

Reneé D.: Yes.

Eugene F.: All the way to the other river. On the left, if you drive, if you turn right when you come off of the Wappoo Bridge and turn right, there's a road called Fleming Road.

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: You turn right, and on the left side it's a road called Fleming Road. At Fleming Road, in the Wappoo Creek, all the way to that Stono Bridge, that's where the river... The Dill Plantation end. In other words, that- that whole... From Fleming Road all the way across Riverland Drive-

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: All the way to the river, everything to the... To... Until you get to the Grimball Road and Riverland Drive, it's close together-

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Out there if you drive right out here now and go off of Folly Road and hit Riverland Drive, and Grimball Road and Riverland Drive come together, that's was the Dill Plantation all the way from that water, the bridge, Wappoo Bridge on the left side, the Folly Road, all the way up here.

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: Okay? The Grimball Road then kick off from where Grimball Road start, and go all the way to, uh, Barn Hill. That whole area, the Barn Hill area-

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Was the Grimball Plantation. And it's still called the Grimball Plantation, all the area still called the Grimball Plantation. Now, you say, "Well if you call it Grimball Plantation..." What it... What happened... Give you one example about the owners of it. In 18... Following slavery, in 1889... 'Cause that's where my wife f- family is from, the [inaudible 00:22:01]. This gentleman by the name of James [inaudible 00:22:03], if you look in that book he had... He bought 100 acres of land over a period of time during the 1800. 100 acres he bought over a period of time from the Grimball. From the Gr... From the Grimball. And then, that whole area called Barn Hill-

Reneé D.: Mm-hmm.

Eugene F.: Matter fact, if you go into the record section you'll find out he owns the property and he start... Uh, will it to his, uh... His daughters and son. He had so many daughters, sons, and that's why most of those people living is through marriage. But they're... Still, they're owned by James [inaudible 00:22:49].

Reneé D.: Okay.

Eugene F.: And he- he... But he- he came here as a Freedman. He wasn't... He wasn't... Uh, is that my s- grandson?

Reneé D.: No, it's a lady.

Eugene F.: A lady? Hello?

Reneé D.: Hi.