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## Galloway, Edith

Edith Galloway

Deborah Oden

Ishmael Lewis

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Gullah Digital Archive  
Mrs. Edith Galloway  
July 2012  
Chisholm-Galloway Funeral Home

Deborah Oden: Okay, Mrs. Galloway, I just want you to just kind of talk to us and just tell us about your growing up, life in the funeral home business, and anything else you want to share with us, and when you start talking, we will ask you questions.

Edith Galloway: Oh, that's fine.

Ishmael Lewis: [Off camera] Why don't you tell us about your parents, earliest memories and things like that?

EG: Okay, um, well, this funeral home was started by my great-grandfather, and the name of the funeral home at that time was Chisholm and son because my great-grandfather and he expected his sons to enter the business, so the name has changed several times since that time but it's always Chisholm. So it's Chisholm-Galloway home for funerals at this time. Okay. My great-grandfather's started the funeral business in 1908. That came about as a result of he was a, a, a coffin maker, so he would make caskets so eventually he decided, well, if I can make caskets for someone else, I can certainly make caskets for myself, so therefore he started the funeral home business, back in 1908 because he was a cabinet maker, cabinet maker, casket maker, so, that's where it all started and has come down through the generations, so his sons did enter the business, that was John Chisholm and Ben Chisholm, and it was passed on from the sons to the niece, which was my mother. And that was Helen Chisholm-Galloway, and so I'm Edith Galloway, as a result of um my mother marrying Allen R. Galloway. So.

IL: Where did you grow up?

EG: I grew up on Saint Helena Island, um, until I was seventeen years of age and then I went away to school.

IL: Could you tell us your birthday and then tells us about your childhood memories, like elementary school that you may have attended?

EG: Okay, I went to school, well, I started off in a two-room school and it was called, each, each plantation, or each community, we call them communities now, in those days we called them plantations, um, we all had our own school so I started out in a two room school and it was Oaks School, I don't know if we had elementary school on it or anything like that but it was always Oaks School so that's where I started out, and in 1953 that's when they consolidated all of the schools on the island because each area had their own school so, Penn School was the main center of everything but then, Saint Helena elementary school was birthed, and that was in 1953, so we left the community

schools and we all went to Saint Helena Elementary School, and then on to the high school. Mhm.

IL: As a child could you talk about some of the things, could you talk about your mother? Maybe some of the things your mother taught you or your mother and father taught you?

EG: Oh, okay, let's start with my, great-grandmother, um, who was, who, who basically reared me, and she was the wife of the owner of the business, that was Joe Chisholm, who was the owner, and my great-grandmother's Adiline Chisholm, who was, who was his wife. So we basically stayed with my great-grandmother, of course my parents were around, other than my father, my father was in the army so he was travelling back and forth basically near home he would be stationed in North Carolina at Fort Bragg or in Georgia at Fort Gordon, so he was coming home, he came home every, every weekend. And my mother um after my grand-uncle died in 1955, my mother had to take over the funeral business, right, and she was a school keeper prior to that time, she was reared by her grandmother, which was my great-grandmother and her uncles because her father, or my grandfather, Luther Chisholm died when she was about, about 5 years of age. And, and my uncle did not want her to have to work for anyone so he started a grocery store and they sent her off to college but she came home and she worked at the grocery store and also the funeral home and so after he passed away in 1955 then my mother took over the funeral business. Mokay.

IL: How old were you when you began working here, in the funeral business?

EG: When you say working, do you mean?

IL: Not official title, just...

EG: Well, as, as a kid, whenever there was a youngster who would have died then my mother have me to read the obituary I was probably about 12 at that point, you know, but, she did all of the, the adult services, but I would read the obituaries for the young people. Mhm.

IL: Could you tell us how the funerals, or the uh, the going home ceremonies have changed since you, your grand—

EG: My great-grandfather?

IL: Right, until now.

EG: Well, you know I wasn't around when my great-grandfather was here, but,

IL: I understand that, but, I know that, but

EG: Well, traditions since I've been home, I've only been in the business as a director for the last twenty years because I went to New York and then came home after my mother had a stroke and really could not manage the business as well as she would have, would liked to have and then I came home to help take care of her after the stroke, and of course, the business as well. When I initially came home, one thing that we did frequently would be to take a young child, two people would be, on opposite ends of the casket, and they would take a young child across the casket and that was to prevent the spirit from haunting the child or anything like that so the spirit would not be with the child and the child would not be afraid so that was one custom that we had in those days. Also, we would, families would like to take a loved one back by the home prior to burial, so we would be back behind the hearse and we would drive back by that individual's home before taking them to the burial spot. We still do that on Warsaw Island, that's another location on Saint Helena Island, and we still drive the entire island before the burial.

IL: How do they determine where the person will be buried?

EG: Depend on where you lived. Just about every community has a cemetery. Or, well we call it a cemetery but it is actually a graveyard, those who do not wish to be buried in their community cemetery, would buy a spot buy a grave plot. But most people are buried according to where they lived.

IL: Do they have to pay for that? The actual location?

EG: In most cases, no. But, in recent years, a couple of communities have organized and they have become associations so they do not ask for a specific amount other than if, if your family helped to keep the cemetery clean then you do not have to make a donation. But, if you moved away, if your family's moved away and the body is coming back home, then they would ask for a donation because there are those that keep the cemetery clean and they should be compensated for doing that. Most people, when they go away to the city, like to New York, or wherever, usually they come back home for burial. You don't want to be buried in the city, you want to be buried where your mother is, or where your father is, where family is, so that's still a tradition. Most people when they go away, they come back home for burial.

IL: So what did you end up doing after high school?

EG: After high school I went to Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina and then I went to New York. We could not go anywhere that we didn't have a relative. So, my brother, my oldest brother lived in New York at the time, so I went to New York for a number of years, worked as a social worker, or, they call it, it was the welfare department at the time, so I worked for the Welfare Department and later it involved social services. After that, I worked for the Department of Probation, so I did juvenile cases, in most cases, yes.

IL: Somehow you still managed to come home, huh?

EG: Oh, you always come home! You know you, it's a tradition, you go away to learn what you can, to better yourself, but the aim is always to come back home. I probably would not have come home as early as I did, but because my family needed me, because my mother had the stroke and I was the chosen person to come back and take care of her and then of course, taking care of the business.

IL: Could you tell us more about your grandmother?

EG: My great-grandmother.

IL: Great-grandmother

EG: My great-grandmother was Adeline Flatsy Chisholm, who was educated at Penn. When she got older, after she graduated Penn, then she became a teacher at Penn School and Penn School, it was a private school at that point and you had to pay to go to Penn School. Payment I don't think was very much, it may have been five dollars, or two dollars, for the year, tuition, but that's where my great-grandmother worked, that's where she was employed. She went to school there and then she turned around and was —

DO: What about your grandmother, did she work?

EG: My grandmother, I don't know my grandmother that well because my grandmother lived in New York, so I was here with my great-grandfather's side of the family, not my grandmother's side of the family. I said earlier that my great-grandmother and her sons took care of my mother, and my mother had a sister as well whose name was May. May Chisholm Haywood. But May spent most of her time in New York. I mean they went to school here, they went to Penn, then they went to Voorhees, well my aunt went to South Carolina State, as well. But then stayed in New York, wherein my mother after college came back to Saint Helena, back to Beaufort.

IL: When were you in New York did you ever come back for holidays?

EG: Oh sure, well you have to come home!

IL: Could you tell us about some of those celebrations, and the type of things you all would do, what kind of food you would cook?

EG: Oh, okay. I don't think the food has changed so very much but anyway. You always came home for Christmas, if you could make it for Mother's Day you came home for Mother's Day, and sometimes Easter. But definitely for Christmas. So at Christmastime we would have a big meal, turkey, of course, and of course you always have to have fried chicken, even though you have turkey. So then we would have collard greens, and candied yams, potato salad, a lot of starches, I guess that's why we're so fat. But anyway, it was well, we would have, well, some people would have like chitlins, and ham-heart in

the greens, and all stuff that's supposedly not so good for us now, but in those days that's how we ate.

IL: How about seafood, any seafood? Do you all eat a lot of seafood?

EG: Oh yeah, we live on a river, so we have, oh yeah, seafood was very important we would start seafood with breakfast, actually. My mother would always make shrimp and grits, sometimes we would have stewed fish or fried fish with gravy. Basically, seafood, it was basically shrimp and fish, later on when we got older and grown we got into like lobsters and that kind of thing. And clams was always very popular, in those days... so, yeah... well seafood is, well we live on the river. So, we ate by the river.

IL: Did you... when did you learn how to fish?

EG: Do I fish?

IL: Yeah, or did you ever learn how to?

EG: Not really, no, but we, because there are so many people that go to the rivers and they would just bring you, they shared whatever they caught, just like the gardens, whoever, back in the day it was really simple: if you killed a hog, everybody got some meat. You know, you would share with your neighbor, everybody shared, it was one community and we were all family. Everybody just shared whatever they had. If they had chickens, you know they would bring you a chicken, or bring you some eggs, so it was easy and simple and good. In those days, yes.

DO: So if somebody, when people they had someone deceased did they always just pay in cash? You know with money or did they ever—

EG: Oh they barter.

IL: Could you tell us about that?

EG: Well I can't find the book now, but my mother kept a book with everybody for funeral services, and you go back to the book and you can see that funeral services back in those days you could get a funeral for maybe like 500 dollars or 600 dollars. People basically did not have money, or did not have all of the money so they would give you some money and something else. And they'd give you a couple of chickens, and they would give you a few eggs, or a few things out of the garden, collard greens or some okra, so. You know everybody helped everybody, in those days.

IL: Did you ever work in, plant gardens or work in the fields? Growing any crops? Or were you primarily in the funeral home business?

EG: No, you know, a student, I was basically at home. Most of my friends worked on the farm, you know, during the summer, so one day I snuck off from home and went on the farm, and I picked tomatoes. I had a wonderful time. You know, and they paid you according to how many buckets of tomatoes you picked and I came home with a couple of dollars. I had to explain myself, but that was fun, that was good. But, actually, I was not supposed to go and work, work anywhere.

DO: So was your family considered middle class?

EG: I suppose.

Deb: Growing up?

EG: I suppose.

IL: Were young ladies allowed to date? Without supervision?

EG: Well, uh...

IL: Could you tell us about that?

EG: Well, according to my father... Now my mother, my father met my mother in college. And he came home to visit her, of course, he rode with another person from the island. Of course, my great-grandfather would go and pick my mother up from school. But she was not allowed to date as such. And my father could tell you some stories about my great-grandfather telling him "Young man!" [Shakes her head and laughs] "Where are you going?" You know he was telling me that story just a few weeks ago. But no, we were not allowed to date. When we were allowed to date, I think my sister, who is slightly older than I am, when someone came to visit with her, my mother would be in the room, or in the next, you know, in the next room, so... We were not allowed to, at that point.

DO: So did the young man have to ask the father for the hand in marriage?

EG: Oh back when my great-grandfather was alive, yes, absolutely. Yeah my father had to ask for my mother's hand. But that's no longer a tradition I don't think. In, another tradition for funeral services, and I'm not sure why this is, but the men would wear a hat, and they would wear a band around their arm, a black band. The women would wear a veil with their hats, and we would be in mourning in black. Black everyday for six months, some for a year. Yes. If the person wasn't very close to you then you would mourn for six months in black and after that you would wear gray or navy or white, to indicate that you were in mourning.

DO: So if your mom died you wore black for...?

EG: Yeah, or your husband or your wife would die, you would wear black for six months, or for a year.

DO: So when they were in the casket they would have the hat on or the veil?

EG: No, no, no, not the deceased person. The mourners.

DO: Oh the family members?

EG: The family members would wear a veil and a hat.

IL: How long would the mourning process take? Say for instance if someone passed away on Monday, would they be buried right away?

EG: Oh no, because you would have to wait for your family members to come from New York before the burial. So we would wait, 7 days? As soon as they could get home then you would have the funeral, but you couldn't have the funeral until the family members came home. So that may be 7 days that may be 10 days.

IL: Did you family have heirs property?

EG: We still have heirs property.

IL: Could you tell us about?

EG: Heirs property? Well, the tradition is, you do not lose your land. You pay your taxes. And you do not lose your land, you hold onto your land, that's your property, you hold onto that. So, that's something that we would do. We have property that was passed down from my great-grandfather, to my mother, and then to me. You pay your taxes, and you do not sell the land.

IL: Do you know how he acquired the land?

EG: My great-grandfather?

IL: Yes.

EG: He... I can't really say. Well, I know he was employed before he owned his own business, so I'm assuming he that bought land. Some may have been given to him by his [air quotes] "master" but the land remains in the family until today.

IL: Do you have a lot of relatives that live on the property?



EG: No, most of the relatives have gone to New York. And most, a lot have passed away. So the property, the land is there but there isn't, there aren't necessarily a lot of people living there.

DO: So are you living on the land?

EG: So my father bought land, I'm not living on my great-grandfather's land because each generation we buy land. So, I live on my father's land. Not my great-grandfather's land. But we still own my great-grandfather's land.

IL: Coming up, do you remember any home remedies?

EG: For colds? Like I need a home remedy right now because I have a cold?

DO: For my shoulder!

IL: Any aches and pains?

EG: Okay, yeah, whenever we were ill, you know back in the day the doctors would come to the house, you know but now we have to go to the doctor's. Okay, home remedies, my great-grandmother would prepare what we call life-everlasting. It's... now it's a drug, and it grew wild in the woods, in the fields. Now, they have banned it, and say it's a drug so we're no longer allowed to grow it. But you know it just grew wild. So life-everlasting it's a brown weed, my great-grandmother would pull the brown weed, and boil it, and give it to us to drink. We could add, she made, we would add lemon to it. Or honey. Or sugar, To make it palatable. There's also another weed, I can't think of the name of it right now. But home remedies, we always got castor oil. For colds and anything else. If you got a cut or splinter, the splinter you would take a palate and beat it out or a needle, and you would burn the needle to sterilize it and then pluck it out. If you had the mumps—[laughs] this is funny—they would get a piece of fabric, called a rag in those days, and get sardines from the cans, sardines. And tie it around [gestures around her neck]—you know it's the mumps, you know what the mumps is?

IL: No, I don't know what the mumps is.

EG: Oh you don't know what the mumps is? Okay, it means your face is swollen, so they would sardine in the fabric and tie it around your head so the mumps would go down. If you got a nail stuck in your foot, they would get a piece of fat-back. Do you, you probably don't know what that is either. You're too young. Fat-back. And they would tie the fat-back and the fat-back was to draw the poison out of your foot, or wherever the injury occurred. Ho-hung is the other drug that I was thinking of, it was a home remedy it was called ho-hung and would make a tea with it. She would also boil pine needles, that helped with your cold, as well. There was always, always a weed, or a bush, to help get you well. Yeah, because you know doctors were not readily available and everybody had a home remedy anyway. So, it's all good.

IL: Did you all... What church did you all grow up in?

EG: It depends on where I lived. When I was with my mother we went to Ebenezer, where I still am. Ebenezer Baptist Church. When I'm with my great-grandmother we went to what is now called Oaks True Holiness Church. So it just depends on who I was with at the time. Because up, my great-grandmother's house was not very far from my mother's house, so it just depends on where we were at the time.

IL: Did you ever have to go to a praise house service, or, have you ever worshipped at a praise house?

EG: Well, where we lived, well where my house is now on the island, there was a praise house right on that, on that property. That praise house no longer exists, so I have gone as a child to that particular praise house

IL: What was the difference between the services?

EG: Which services?

IL: Between the praise house services and the normal Sunday church service?

EG: Well it was smaller because, well, almost every community had a praise house, so, you could not go to church every time you wanted to worship. So that's why we had the praise houses. So you would go to the praise houses during the week, ok, and then you would go to the big church on Sundays. So, the group was small at the praise house, where there's a much larger group at the church building.

IL: Do you have any hurricane stories?

EG: Well I was a part of Hurricane Gracie. That storm was back, I believe it was 1958. So, that storm took the roof off of our house. That was on a plantation. That plantation was called Fuller. So that storm took, took the roof from the house. Fortunately only one person was killed during that particular storm.

IL: Do you have any other stories here from your childhood? Like how was elementary school here and transitioning into middle school did they, was it integrated, was it segregated?

EG: Oh, my entire experience, school experience here was segregated. Right they, the schools were integrated after I left, after I left home.

DO: Do you think you received a quality education in—

EG: Mhm, I do. Right, the, our teachers were very involved with us, and, it was like family. When the teachers came from wherever they came from, probably Orangeburg or wherever, they became involved in the community, involved with the family, they became community people. So, and they were concerned about you, they were interested in you and they wanted you to have the best quality education you could have. So, it was better in those days, as far as I'm concerned, from what I can see now, yeah, I think the education was good. People were concerned, they were interested, they wanted you to do well.

IL: Growing up on the island did you, was there a clear separation of the races, as far as, did the whites and blacks ever intermingle?

EG: Well, in the, in the early days, you know it was, it was the segregated south. So, there was black fountains, water fountains, there was white water fountains. Now, my father—my father was in the army—so anyway, the water fountains were in the local department store, which was Edward's Department Store, so my father went to the black fountain, had a drink, and then he went over to the white fountain, and had a drink, and he said "I don't see any difference in the water. You know, it all tastes the same..." You know... And even in travelling as a kid, because my father would take us on vacations, so we would vacation to my aunt's house in North Carolina. Along the way, you know you would stop at a service station, gas station, and there was one for colored and one for white. But my parents, they tried very hard not to let us be affected by that, by the segregation. And even the libraries, my father would take us to, to Parris Island, to the library there, as opposed to the local library; I mean the library at school, but if you had to go to a larger library to get more materials then we would go on Parris Island to get it.

IL: So because he was part of the military he was able to do more things and have more exposure?

EG: Oh yes, absolutely. Absolutely. It was good. I'm glad he went into the service. He's, my dad had, celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, a couple of weeks ago, so I feel very blessed and very privileged.

IL: Could you talk about your father? Give us some stories

EG: My father? About my father?

IL: Yeah.

EG: My father was very strict [laughs]. Very strict, meaning that, I guess once you become military you need things done in a certain manner, and so he expected things to be done in a certain manner. So, of course... you want to talk about the whippings and all that stuff? Oh, no, no, my father didn't truly, didn't really whip us so much. It was basically my mother who would whip us. And I guess that's because we were with her on a daily basis, where my father came on weekends. They had the strap. But we weren't

really such bad children that we needed a lot of whippings, you know, but every now and again we would get whipped.

IL: Do you have any funny stories of why? Anything that you—

EG: I'll tell you a story about my brother, who is a couple of years older than I am. He always thought he was in charge when my parents were not around, so he would have us marching like soldiers. Ok, there were four of us, I have an older sister, and an older brother, and a younger brother. So my older brother would have us marching like soldiers, he took us to the river, and he baptized us. And he would discipline us the way he felt we should be disciplined when our parents were not around. And you were supposed to listen to the oldest in the family, so we were supposed to listen to him and of course we didn't want to listen to him, so he would punish us. Maybe one of those baptisms was a punishment, I'm not sure, but he did, he did baptize us in the creek, across from the house. Yeah. Yeah, so. There are a lot of stories that I'll just hold on to.

IL: Oh, okay.

EG: Yeah, mhm.

IL: Could you tell us that your parents taught you that you'd like to pass on to younger people?

DO: Life lessons?

EG: Life lessons? Hold on to your property. Pay your bills on time. Definitely pay your taxes at all times. Cook. Keep your house clean. Cook. Wear clean clothing. Always make up your bed—because my great-grandmother would say “You know how your leaving home but you don't know how you're going to get back home.” The house should be straight. The bed should be made. Always entertain strangers. Always give. My grand... anytime my great-grandmother cooked, and that was all the time, we always had to look out for the neighbor because there was, there was an older lady named miss Tilly, and we were always required to take food for her. A life lesson was that you will not be paid for everything that you do. Because we would take food and went back home, “Mom, she didn't give us nothing!” [Shakes head] You don't get paid for everything that you do. You're supposed to give service, that's what she was saying, don't expect to get money or get something for whatever you do for someone. You do good, and good will come back to you. That was what she would always say.

IL: Got a lot of wisdom coming up there.

EG: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's good.

DO: So do you have children?

EG: I have one son, who is in Atlanta. His name is Eric Cordell Lawrence. I have a daughter-in-law, Denise Robinson Lawrence. I have two grandchildren, Elijah Cordell Lawrence, and Jared Russell Lawrence. Those are my two grandsons. They live in Atlanta, they'll be home this... this weekend. And you stay in touch with your family. Always stay in touch with family.

IL: If I ask you, what is Gullah?

EG: Gullah. I suppose, Gullah is the way we speak. Is that what you're speaking of? The language?

IL: Whatever it means to you.

EG: I think, to me, I'm speaking English, and I think I've always spoken English. It's a term that has come about in recent years. We're now very popular because we are the "Goolah People" or the "Gullah People." Because, I don't know if you've met Reverend Bryant, who is a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, who would always take visitors to Miss Mathilda Milton—who passed away on Saturday—to her home, because I guess she spoke more broken English, but Gullah has become very popular in recent years. Even though it's the way we've always spoken people are now finding it very interesting and relating us back to Africa. We think we speak the king's language, but you called it "Gullah" and that's okay.

IL: Another thing we learned is... do you have a nickname?

EG: Yeah.

IL: And what's your nickname and how did you get it?

EG: My nickname is dim. D-I-M. Now from what my mother told me, my sister who is only eighteen months older than I am, when my mother brought me home, my sister said... I guess she was trying to say "them" because it was my mother and myself, right, but somehow they got "dim" out of that, so that's what they called me: Dim. That's my nickname. If anybody, if I'm in the city of New York and someone say "Hey Dim" I know they're from home. Yeah, so... that's good.

IL: Any last words that you might want to say?

EG: Well, thank you very much for allowing me to be interviewed, I appreciate it.

IL: And thank you again. This is—

DO: Debra Oden. Ishmael Lewis. July 16, 2013.

IL: Thank you.

**[End Clip 1]**

**[Begin Clip 2]**

EG: Are we going back to funerals?

IL: Yes, tell us about some of the traditions you said about money

EG: In those days when someone passed away they was traveling, you know, it's a traveling soul when they leave so you don't know what they may need, so you would always give them a coin or two to help them along the way in their travels, and they don't do that much anymore but you would always give the deceased a few coins. Even know they will sometimes put a few coins on the grave in the earlier days people were buried in pine boxes, you know, I said to you earlier that my great grandfather would make coffins, made from wood, and in those days they were buried in pine boxes. Of course today we have caskets and vaults and all that so we've come a long way. The name of the deceased is now on the vault, and in those days, earlier days, we had a littler metal plate, well sometimes you didn't the grave was there, it was unmarked. And sometimes we would bury someone on top of someone else because we didn't know they were there, now we know how to prove to find out if there is anyone in that particular grave spot, but in those days we didn't know so one person would get buried on top of another person. Graves were not necessarily marked, or they were marked by a tree or a stump or something in the cemetery to identify where your grandma was buried, like for example, there was a big oak tree and she's right at that tree. Another thing is the body would always go back to the house, in a casket, but you would always, the person would always go back home, and that's where you would have the sitting, and you would sit-up at the deceased person home for the night, before the burial the next day.

IL: So the body would be in the house?

EG: In the house, yes.

IL: During sitting in what would you be doing?

EG: oh you're just keeping the family company. You just talk about the deceased, talk about what's going on in the community, just talk and make sure the family members were not by themselves. So friends and neighbors would gather and would just sit, sit with the body and sit with the family.

IL: Would people bring food to the family?

EG: Oh yeah, they still do that, food was always important so when someone died, I'm grieving so you wouldn't expect me to cook, right, so you would bring me a dish, so everyone in the community would bring a dish to the deceased home, and we would sit

and eat and talk, you know, reminisce, and we still do that, not necessarily to the home anymore, it depends on whether or not the family is receiving gifts at the home or at the church, because neighbors will still cook and bring meals for the repasse.

DO: We've seen graves where they have glass and different things on top of the grave, what are those symbols of?

EG: I'm not sure, you may find glass, you may find flowers, you may find money, you may find cups, you may find anything, because whatever is important to the family and they want to put on the grave they will do that, yeah. Oftentimes, well, things are a little harder now, but, sometimes family member will put things that they like in the casket itself, they may send a candy bar, I know when my cousin died, I put his famous, his favorite candy bar in there, because it's just something you want to do for them, you know the last thing you wanna do for them, yeah.

IL: Anything else you can remember or recall?

EG: Oh, I'm trying to recall, I was sitting up at the house, ok, in the earlier days, before vaults and all the mechanical devices, it would straps, ropes, to lower the casket into the Earth and sometimes the casket would just go directly into the earth and not into any kind of container, and then we had the box, and now we have the casket being lowered by devices and into a vault. The casket protects the body and the vault protects the casket and the body. The better caskets now are called sealers, wherein its airtight, meaning the body will be preserved a very long time. You remember when they, brought, open, Mack Evert's and he was very much intact, and that's because he was in a good casket, a sealer, and a vault, allow it to preserve a lot longer now.

IL: Is there any significance in the location of the cemetery, since all these plantations have them?

EG: Well, they're all on the water for the most part, beautiful property, for the most part. And now you are finding that people are building homes in the cemeteries because the cemeteries are beautiful. They are on the water. In the earlier days they said that our slave masters gave us cemeteries on the water so that we could float away. So most of our cemeteries are on the water, and it's very nice, prime property now.

IL: Have they marked all the locations of the cemeteries, because some churches have graves?

EG: Yeah, some churches do have graves and you would get buried in the church yard, if that was possible, or you would get buried in your local community cemetery, or graveyard. Or now you can buy a plot if you wanna be on that section of the island.

IL: Because of the geography do you have to a lot of burials on hills? Because aren't you all below sea-level here, all around is marshlands

EG: (laughs) No, but we are being buried in vaults, so we're pretty safe, we're not gonna..

IL: Float away?

EG: Yeah, (laughs) so we're pretty good, I'm trying to think of anything else that.

DO: Cremation, have we always done cremation or is that just --

EG: We still don't do too many cremations, and yeah, cremation is becoming more popular now, especially because of the cost factor, because it's a lot less expensive to be cremated than to be buried. But traditionally here in the South, very rarely are we cremated, every now and then.

DO: Did they always embalm bodies and try to conserve the bodies, or?

EG: As far as I know, yeah, schooling, you would have to go to, embalming school, and that course is usually a year and a half, and you have to observe an apprenticeship under a licensed funeral director, licensed embalmer, to become a funeral director.

DO: Did you have to go through that process?

EG: No, my mother was a licensed funeral director so I did my apprenticeship under her, under my mother.

IL: Could you tell us some of the challenges in running this?

EG: In running a funeral home? Oh there are many. Well, hmm, challenges, you need to know the various religions, and the customs for that particular religion, you need to know the pastors of the churches and their particular idiosyncrasies, everybody likes to have what they like to have, and you have to get to know all of them and their likes and dislikes, in terms of the family's, family's very c=much care about their loved ones of course want everything to go well, and owning a business you also want everything to go well and you don't want to put any additional stress or grief upon the family so you do your very best to accommodate them in anyway that you can, it's just a matter of loving what you do, and loving the people you serve, and to always remember that you are a servant, you serve, and you want to serve well. It means a lot of times not getting a lot of rest, it means not being able to actually plan vacations, because you take it very personal and you want to be available to the people who call on you. I went to North Dakota a number of years ago to visit with my sister, and someone died and wanted this funeral home to service them, so I got on the first plane and came back home so I could service this family. That's the difficult part of it, because you know, you want to be thee. You feel that is important. You want to serve, and you want to be available for those who are



requiring your services. I'm not clear that I would do that today, but I probably would. So I never plan to go anywhere for more than three days because if someone passed away today it's going to be at least three days before we have the service.

DO: So do you do the embalming?

EG: No I have someone to do that for me.

DO: Have you ever embalmed anyone?

EG: You can't, you can be there to observe, but not to do the actual work, you have to have a license to do the actual work.

IL: Any other?

EG: Well we can always come up with something else (laughs)

IL: Whatever you want

EG: We just try to meet the needs of the family, and not make it a cookie cutter thing, so they can have what they want, you know. It's a tradition but it's always a little different. And once you turn this off I'll probably think of something else.

IL: We would like to thank you once again for your wonderful interview.

EG: Ok (laughs)

**[End of Clip 2}**

**[End of Interview]**