



Linda Cox Oral History Interview

Ashley Minner Jones

October 21, 2024

Baltimore, Maryland

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Field Notes

Interviewee: Linda Cox [LC]

Age: 74

Sex: Female

Occupation: Clerk, Circuit Court of Baltimore City

Residence: Baltimore, Maryland

Tribal Affiliation: Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

Interviewer: Ashley Minner Jones [AMJ]

Location of Interview: South Broadway Baptist Church
211 S. Broadway
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

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Transcriber: Ashley Minner Jones

Key Words

Robeson County, East Baltimore, S. Ann Street, Pembroke, Lumbee, Elizabeth Locklear, Carrie Chavis Berry, Baltimore American Indian Center, South Broadway Baptist Church, tobacco, farming, Southern, cooking, Dixie Lee peas, collards, cornmeal, work, community, neighbors, Native American, pow wows, family, culture, Christian, canning, singing, preaching, Southern gospel

Abstract

Linda Cox (Lumbee) is a 74-year-old clerk for the Circuit Court of Baltimore City who intends to retire in the next year. She resides in Upper Fells Point, in East Baltimore, on S. Ann Street, at the heart of what was once affectionately known by Baltimore's American Indian community as "the reservation." She has lived in the area for over 50 years. Linda remembers growing up on a farm in North Carolina, what hard work farming was, and her realization that she came from a family and a community without a lot of financial means. Linda describes her grandparents who

helped to raise her and how they were excellent providers. She enjoyed all of the foods their farm produced and her grandmother's home-cooked meals. Linda explains that her grandmother played piano for their church and also played at home. As a child, Linda started singing along with her grandmother. She loves singing Southern gospel music and is a song leader at South Broadway Baptist Church, the Native American church where this interview was recorded. Linda recalls moving to Baltimore as a young person. She explains that her mother, Elizabeth Locklear, was a co-founder of the American Indian Study Center, which later became the Baltimore American Indian Center. Linda discusses Lumbee Christianity. She emphasizes the importance of teaching American Indian children in Baltimore to be proud of who they are and to keep their culture alive so that South Broadway Baptist, the Baltimore American Indian Center, and the community will continue to strive.

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- [00:01:33] Linda describes growing up on the farm and what hard work farming was.
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- [00:05:18] Linda recalls the hard work of her grandmother, Carrie Chavis Berry.
- [00:06:33] Linda describes her mother, Elizabeth Locklear, leaving for Baltimore when Linda was still a small child, and her own subsequent move to Baltimore as a young woman.
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- [00:08:33] Linda describes the Native American community she moved into on S. Ann Street, and the purchase of her home.
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- [00:18:18] Linda considers ways her speech and dress have changed as a result of living in Baltimore.
- [00:21:50] Linda explains Lumbee Christianity from her perspective.
- [00:23:20] Linda describes Lumbee culinary traditions and her practice of passing them on to her children and grandchildren.
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Transcript

Ashley Minner Jones [AMJ]: [00:00:02] Hello. My name is Ashley Minner Jones. It is October 21, 2024 and I have come to interview an amazing person for *Beyond Baltimore Street*, our oral history and photo documentary project that celebrates the vibrant, fascinating everyday lives of Baltimore [00:00:17] Lumbee elders. What's your name?

Linda Cox [LC]: Linda Cox

AMJ: And where are you from?

LC: Originally from Robeson County, North Carolina um... been in Baltimore now [00:00:32] over 50 years.

AMJ: And how would you explain who you are to someone who doesn't know you?

LC: Well, my name is Linda Cox and I'm a Lumbee Indian from Robeson County. Um... I live here in Baltimore. My mom was one of the founders [00:00:47] of the Baltimore American Indian Center. So my family um... has been involved in our community, know a lot of people, um... a lot of times when people are looking, trying to find people, I'll get that call to ask [00:01:02] me if I know so-and-so and... um... So I'm just... I'm involved in my community. Sometime I feel like I'm a telephone book.

AMJ: I think you're telephone book too a lot of times. [laughing] When and where were you born?

LC: [00:01:18] Uh, when? I was born 1950 in Robeson County, North Carolina, on the Shannon Road, where we lived. I was—I was borned at home. Dr. McMillan was my doctor! Out of Red Springs.

AMJ: And how did [00:01:33] you grow up?

LC: I grew up on the farm. Probably the...um... I'm not gonna say the whole time 'cause I didn't start working on the farm till I was probably 12... 13, but I... um, we grew [00:01:48] up on the farm, so I knew how to shell peas and put in tobacco and I knowed um... how to stay in the house and try to hide, too.

AMJ: Were you good at hiding?

LC: Uh, they found... they would always find you. [00:02:03] All she had to say is "LINDA GAIL!" [laughter] You knowed it was time to come up. [laughter] I hated farming.

AMJ: Why, what was so bad about it?

LC: The hard work! I mean, you'd get up at 4 o'clock in the morning...uh to take out a barn of tobacco, [00:02:18] to put in a barn. So... um and that's how they made their living, from the tobacco and cotton, but mostly tobacco was... was our source of income. So as a child, you don't know that because [00:02:33] you weren't allowed to sit in the room and listen to the elders talk. You didn't really know how poor you were... um because everybody around you was poor. But then, as you um... become an adult, you understood that we were really [00:02:48] poor.

AMJ: Yeah, how did you... how did you find out? Like, when did you realize?

LC: Um, as a—as a teenager, um... going to school, you got one pair... you got one pair of shoes and that had—they had to [00:03:03] last you all year. Christmas time... We were blessed. We were sharecroppers, so the farm that we lived on had pear trees, so... apple trees, we had a grapevine and we had a fig tree. And then in the woods from where we were at, [00:03:18] they were... we call them briar berries, but today they call them blackberries. Um...so we got, we had fruit... um... but other than that, we would only get fruit onest a year and that was at Christmastime. So you didn't... you didn't [00:03:33] go to town because you grew everything.

You went to town maybe onest a month to get flour. But cornmeal, they— I remember going with my granddaddy to the corn mill. Um... they'd take the corn over there and they grinded into meal. Um... but we grew everything from [00:03:48] potatoes, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, peas, string beans, collard greens, cabbage. And I remember when I was probably 12, um my grandmother would go to Chadbourn, North Carolina to pick strawberries. And then [00:04:03] a couple years later, I walked with her to the garden. We were going...we had, we had cabbage... um and... and turnips, we had turnips and mustard green. And I walked with her to the garden. We had strawberries! I'm like, man, we must have money! [00:04:18] We got our own strawberries! As a kid, you know, you wasn't allowed to listen to old people talk, so you didn't you didn't... you didn't know... um the finance problem. But the Lord blessed my grandfather. He lived by that almanac. And he [00:04:33] would always know when to plant and... and seemed like it was always the perfect time. So I never... can never remember us having a bad crop. So that's... and then we had, we grew, we um... we grew... He raised chi— uh chickens. Biddies, we called [00:04:48] 'em, but they're baby chicks. He would go get 100. And so we had our own eggs and then he raised hogs, so...um we had Hogs. So we always had chicken, and then when... uh I remember when we got our first freezer. She [00:05:03] would can, and then she would freeze, you know, put all the vegetables and... and stuff in the freezer. We ate good. We—we had 3 meals. She cooked 3...3 home-cooked meals a day and she'd either have biscuits or cornbread at every meal.

AMJ: This is your grandma? [00:05:18]

LC: That's my grandma, Carrie. Carrie Chavis Berry. Yep. She knowed how to cook and she knowed how to provide. So, you know, as a child, you just go to the table and sit down and eat, but you knew where it come from because... um... We never, [00:05:33] you know, never really went to town to eat. We always ate at the house.

AMJ: Was she working the farm while cooking 3 times?

LC: She was. She—she would...she would leave, she would get up with my granddaddy. We would all go [00:05:48] to... before I got old enough, but she would get up and go with him. She would plow the mule with him before we got a tractor and then she'd come home. She'd leave, come make breakfast, and then uh... when breakfast was done, when it was time for dinner, when she was putting in tobacco, [00:06:03] she would actually leave long enough to come to the

house and... and cook. She cooked 3 meals per day and then she worked all day. Then she'd cook supper, too. My... my...um... aunt had died. So, she had... she had...um... She had... [00:06:18] let's see... 1, 2, 3, 4... She had 5 kids to feed.

AMJ: Wow. And your mom?

LC: My mom was in Baltimore. Um... and the story goes when my mom left that I cried. I don't even remember. [00:06:33] But my granddaddy and my grandmother would not let her bring me along. They... I had to stay with them.

AMJ: Why did she come to Baltimore?

LC: To work. For better, for better. She didn't want to be a farmer. Um... so she came for work.

AMJ: How old were you when she went? [00:06:48]

LC: Um... I was five.

AMJ: That's tough.

LC: But she came... I mean, she... you know, she came home a lot, but um... But it wasn't like she left and never came back, but um... But back then, grandparents thought they were the parents. So they... they took control. And that's [00:07:03] what happened with me.

AMJ: What brought you to Baltimore?

LC: Uh...my mom. Um... I was running away from a boyfriend, so I—I left and came here. And then once I got here, I—I stayed. I got a job. My first public [00:07:18] job was working in a factory. So um... and I just, I stayed from that. And then I started my family here.

AMJ: How old were you and what year?

LC: Um...1968, was 18.

AMJ: 18. Where'd you get a job?

LC: General Craft [00:07:33] out on Washington Boulevard. They were making these funny lookin' pocketbooks, so... and they had all these different things, different characters or animals on the outside. So uh... when they were assembled together... and pictures and they'd be in [00:07:48] a frame. But they was really pretty, but after working in it all day you weren't

interested in trying to make nothing, you would be sick trying to get off work. And I think I was making \$3.25 an hour.

AMJ: Was that a lot of money?

LC: No really. [laughter] But for me it was. [00:08:03] You know, by the time I paid taxes, I think I was able to... um... I was able to clear like \$52, if I remember correctly. \$52 after taxes. And then, you know, try to put \$10... at least \$10 in [00:08:18] the bank, and go down Broadway shoppin' and buy me a outfit each week. So the money was just gone after that.

AMJ: What was it like here when you got here?

LC: Well, when I came here... and being on Ann Street... um... They were [00:08:33] like, maybe 5 Native American families on the same street, so kindly felt some part of home, um... and bein... you know, still being around... um... not, not my family, except my mom and sis... my [00:08:48] my mom, dad, and sister, and my brother... uh... but we had cousins across the street. So... I fit in, I think, very well.

AMJ: What was your reaction when you saw the city for the first time?

LC: The first time I saw the [00:09:03] city was probably... I probably was maybe 7 or 8 and I thought, oh my God, this... I'm going to this big... This was like... gettin' lost in here. How are we gonna make it? My grandmother and I took the train here. Just looking around, [00:09:18] all you can see is all these real... to me, they looked like *giant* buildings. Um... 'cause wasn't used to seeing anything like that. Amazing! I'm just gonna say amazing.... um... to come here and see—see a big city [00:09:33] because all you saw then was, you know, a rural town. Not nothing like "The Big B."

AMJ: "The Big B." So my next question was where did you live, but I think you might live in the same place, right? Did you live in the same [00:09:48] house when you came here?

LC: Uh, no. My mother lived at 14.

AMJ: We're talkin' about S. Ann Street.

LC: We're... Uh... 14 S. Ann Street is where I lived with my mom. Um... and then... um... probably... I'm [00:10:03] gonna say maybe... maybe 10...12 years later, after I was married and

uh had... had a family, the house next door came up for property taxes, for back taxes. And the lady had died. And um... another neighbor knew [00:10:18] that family and nobody in her family wanted that house. So my mom bought that house for the back taxes and put it in my name and then I made payments till I paid her back for the house.

AMJ: Wow, what a cool mom.

LC: And it's in there now!

AMJ: How many years has it [00:10:33] been?

LC: Oh God, since... uh... We—We moved in there probably '75... '74... I think, 73–74 is when we bought it. So you have to have it... You're supposed to... Then, you can... had to keep it like six months before. And then keep... if you did any [00:10:48] work or anything you kept receipts and... and all that. And if anybody of the family decided they wanted it, they'd have to pay all the money we spent back. But nobody... nobody came forth and I'm still there today and I'm happy there.

AMJ: What was it like having your mom [00:11:03] for a next door neighbor?

LC: Of, it was wonderful. I loved it. Yeah, loved it.

AMJ: I think it would be remiss of me if I didn't ask you to tell us a little bit about your mom.

LC: My mom was Elizabeth Berry Chavis Locklear. [00:11:18] And she came to Baltimore. Um... she went to college in Pembroke and in going to college in Pembroke, um... we didn't have a car. So we lived on the Shannon Road. So she had to live with neighbors... with some [00:11:33] family members, not neighbors, but some family members in Pembroke to be able to go to college. And then she would come home on the weekends. But then when my mom came to Baltimore and... and started noticing that... how many Native people was around, [00:11:48] but we didn't have our own... our own building, or have... you know, something that we could call our own. And she started talking to people and people began to encourage her to... you know, Y'all could have own Indian Center, start [00:12:03] your own Indian Center. So um... between my mom and Herbert Locklear and Rosie Hunt, the three of them did a lot of volunteer work to make sure that that happened. They'd work their full-time jobs and then in the evenings, they would give a couple hours to start [00:12:18] Baltimore American Indian Study Center! Um... in

the back of 211 S. Broadway, right where we're at, right here! Uh but except in the back... and... and then, you know, over 50 years later, uh the Indian Center is [00:12:33] still... they changed names, but it's still in existence. It's still here. You know, we don't have all the programs that we once had, but hopefully one day in the next 10 years we will.

AMJ: Folks will notice a nice echo when [00:12:48] we talk. Where are we in 211 S. Broadway? Like, what is this space?

LC: This space is South Broadway Baptist Church, and this is... like I said, where the Indian Center started, but at that time it was a Methodist Church and the... uh... South Broadway ended up [00:13:03] buying it from the Methodist Church. It came for sale and uh... When we came here and started, it was a Native American church. Definitely was.

AMJ: Would you say it still is?

LC: Um, partly.

AMJ: Yeah.

LC. Yeah, yeah. Partly, not 100% [00:13:18] but... but still the majority. I would say today, majority. But it's changing and—and that's okay. But we still hanging on. We don't have much to identify as ours. Bro. James Millard Dial, he's the founder [00:13:33] of South Broadway... and [we have] the Baltimore American Indian Center. Um... so, you know... you still striving to keep our culture alive and a lot of people you talk to don't even know that there's Native Americans in East Baltimore. It's like we're here! We didn't... we didn't all go away. We're still here. And—and have an Indian Center and we have pow wows and we've been havin' pow wows now for... for 47 years. This is the 48th year. This—this year will be the 48 years.

AMJ: What are we doing [00:14:03] for 50?

LC: Something big and... but maybe competition. I was thinkin' that would be great to have competition, 'cause right now, we're just having socials, but it would be great to have competition again. Depends on the funding.

AMJ: What room are we in right now?

LC: This is the sanctuary.

AMJ: [00:14:18] What happens in the sanctuary?

LC: This is where we have church! [laughter] This is where we come to worship the Lord and give honor and praise... um in the sanctuary.

AMJ: And uh... It's a pretty big room, but we're sitting [00:14:33] in a particular place. Why are we sitting where we're sitting? Where are we sitting and why?

LC: We are sitting on the front row! This is where I sit! I'm a song leader here. So this is where I sit on the front row in the middle of this church, all the way [00:14:48] at the end to my left here. This is my little spot that you can find me every Sunday, except if when I'm standin' up with the choir. It's special. It's really special to me.

AMJ: It is special. Alright. How [00:15:03] was it different living in Baltimore compared to how you lived when you grew up?

LC: Well, when I grew up, it was—it was dark. We didn't—we didn't have light poles in the yard to light up the... It...it was really [00:15:18] pitch dark when it got dark, it was real dark. But we had, I mean, we had electricity, don't get me wrong. But I mean, you only had a porch light that only went so far. So walking, if you went walking down the road or anything, you had to have a flashlight, especially in the summertime because you never know when [00:15:33] a snake is on the road or crawling around, um... But then coming here, everywhere you go in the city, it's all lit up. It was like just turning on the light and never turning it off, for me.

AMJ: Do [00:15:48] you still keep in touch with other Lumbee folks in North Carolina?

LC: Oh yeah, my family. I still have my immediate... my immediate family is still there. My mom passed away five years ago but my sister is still there on the home place and all my cousins that I grew up with [00:16:03] like sisters and brothers. Uh... 1 of them has... 2 of them has passed, 1 brother and 1 sister, but all the other ones is still there. So we... uh, yeah, we go visit. I have to go down there at least one... in the summertime to get peas! I can't get field peas up here! I have to go [00:16:18] down there and get Dixie Lee peas and putting them... bring back and put in the freezer.

AMJ: Yeah, tell everybody what are those peas?

LC: They're... they're snaps! They're... they're called Dixie Lees... and... and you... you pick 'em and... and... well, you used to have to pick 'em, and then shell 'em, [00:16:33] wash 'em, and...and blanch 'em and put 'em in the freezer. So now, they have pea shellers. So you go buy 'em, they're already shelled, and you have to buy the snaps, and, and we had... and it's good eatin'. Peas with cornbread and a tomato and [00:16:48] some okra. Aw man, I think I'm still down home on the farm. [laughter]

AMJ: Yeah, cause you can't get all the food in Baltimore that you would get in North Carolina. What other kind of groceries, do you get?

LC: Well, we bring back smoked sausage. Um... You can't get the smoke sausage [00:17:03] and the... and the Autry's [cornmeal] is 'bout goin' out of style now, but even cornmeal. Now that we have a Food Lion, you can get the 2 lb. bag of cornmeal, but what you pay for a 2 lb. bag here, um... you [00:17:18] can get a 5 lb. bag in North Carolina, so every time I go down, I always bring cornmeal back, sometime 2 bags.

AMJ: What kind of things did you pick up on as a result of having moved to Baltimore? Like, do you eat different things since you moved here?

LC: Aw man, we never knowed what [00:17:33] crabs was... crabcakes. We never had crabs or crabcakes. Definitely, definitely, Baltimore is known for crabs and crabcakes. So definitely, definitely... And we didn't really have shrimp when I was growing up. [00:17:48] We had fish, but we didn't have shrimp. And I never had what... we never had salmon, because they would go to the swamp and catch fish. Um... they would catch... um... they call 'em croakers here, and uh... spots, and [00:18:03] um... catfish. That was the fish that... that we had. But they could go to the swamp and... and get a mess of fish. Anytime they would have wanted fish, that's what they'd do. They'd go fishing and fish, come back with a... with a... um... with our supper.

AMJ: Do you feel like you [00:18:18] changed the way you talk since you moved up here?

LC: No, be— Some. Not enough because people always say, "Where are you from?" And when I say, "North Carolina." "Oh, that's where that that accent's from." So I still...I'm [00:18:33] still country.

AMJ: But after you went back to North Carolina, after havin' lived here for a while, did anybody tell you you talk different?

LC: No, but they did... Yeah, they did say that I talked different, but they still can [00:18:48] hear that country, I think.

AMJ: Did you change the way you dress at all?

LC: No. Well, yeah. Um... growing up, we didn't have... we didn't wear pants. And I wondered why we didn't wear pants. It was not a religious [00:19:03] thing. We didn't wear pants because they couldn't afford to buy dresses and pants. So we wore dre—we had to wear dresses all the time. We had pants to play in, but nothin'.... We—we couldn't...we didn't wear... we didn't even get to wear them to school.

AMJ: Yeah and...

LC: We didn't have 'em!

AMJ: [00:19:19] And now you wear both.

LC: I—I wear both. I love pants. I wear pants to work every day, dresses on Sunday.

AMJ: So... um... You still live in the neighborhood that was "the reservation," so you didn't leave, but most [00:19:34] of the other Indian people who lived here did. Yet, you're still in touch with most of 'em. How do you keep in touch?

LC: By phone, by functions that we have. Pow wows, the different... uh... things we have at the Indian Center, like we have [00:19:49] Community Day, we have... um... kickoff for Native American [Heritage Month], we have meetings, we have cultural class... um... cultural class...um... We don't have much elders, but basically by phone. They need something, they call me, if I need something, [00:20:04] I call them, kind of things. But um... We don't visit a lot, but we do stay connected. Uh... somebody dies or something happens in North Carolina, uh... people do get the word [00:20:19] out. And we just... sometimes just call to say hello and how you doin' and it's just a social... have a social talk.

AMJ: Do you notice any influence from Baltimore in North Carolina when you visit now?

LC: Can you say it again? [00:20:34]

AMJ: Like anything that you could say came from Baltimore that shows up in North Carolina, like any habits or ways of dressing or speaking, or eating...?

LC: Eating... um... someone in Raleigh... uh... that was from here [00:20:49] started to bring... have crabs. And... um... different people at different times has tried to make Baltimore subs. A hit and a miss.

AMJ: [laughter] I'd say miss.

LC: Yeah, hit and a miss. Um...but for dressin', [00:21:04] I'm gonna say uh... now, in North Carolina, especially... um... There's so many of the ladies now that wear ribbon skirts. You didn't see that hardly ever, even here. I mean, we... you know, for the [00:21:19] dancers they've always had to have a regalia if you goin' dance in the pow wows. But I'm noticing now that they're teaching it more, and so many more like the singers now, the gospel singers, our Native gospel singers are dressing in... in [00:21:34] ribbon... the guys in ribbon shirts and the ladies in ribbon... uh ribbon skirts. And I think that's... I think that's cool. I think they've really found out that it's ok to... It's really ok to portray who you are, being Native American and not being ashamed.

AMJ: Yeah, because that's been [00:21:50] like a... tension I noticed growing up around being Indian and being Christian. Like, can you be both?

LC: You can. I am both. I'm a borned again... I'm one of them borned again believers. So uh... Christian is... is being Christ-like. [00:22:05] But, when you think about it, some Natives that's on reservation might worship differently. They might not believe in God himself, but just the Creator, um... but we acknowledge that He's Lord... Lord Jesus Christ. [00:22:20] Our Lord Savior is Jesus Christ, not the Creator. Uh... He, you know, you can call Him, you know, whatever you uh... desire. But for me, He's Jesus. He's my Lord. Um... and we don't worship...we don't worship... [00:22:35] even though God... uh... hung the moon and the stars and... and I believe that... and it's still hanging because He's saying for it to hang, but we worship Him as bein' someone who... who left Earth and went to heaven [00:22:50] and is preparing a place for us. We don't worship the animals and... and... and we don't, you know, we don't do a lot of things that's not Bible-oriented. What we do is we... we're following the Bible, so uh... when other

people come and [00:23:05] say what they're worshiping, that's between them and their Lord. But for me and my house, we gonna worship Jesus.

AMJ: What kinds of practices from North Carolina do you see in Baltimore because Lumbee people are here? Like, what did we bring with [00:23:20] us?

LC: Well, we brought the cookin' [laughter]... definitely brought the cookin'. Um... you know, with... with the collards, my kids um... I have taught uh... my granddaughter how to cook collards. They didn't know. I've taught uh... [00:23:35] My son is now growing tomatoes in his front yard that don't have enough of space, but... but they just been uh... been bloomin'. So that's part of the farmin' that's... that's inside. Um... that you can take [00:23:50] a bucket, a 5-gallon bucket and fill it with dirt, and if that dirt um... is good dirt, that you can grow... you can grow veg... you can grow potatoes in... in there. I've seen Charles Edward to have tomatoes in the 5-gallon buckets and squash! And... uh... keepin' [00:24:06]... uh... our culture of cookin', Southern cookin'. You can't go to the restaurant and find the Southern cookin' like you can go to Fuller's and find all that Southern cookin'. Even though people make barbecue here... uh and that's... that's one thing [00:24:21] that was big with us. That's because we had hogs and people would, you know, always cook... make barbecue. That's one thing. But makin' sure that we know you don't go um... in July to the store and buy collards because [00:24:36] the frost hasn't hit 'em and they're... they're not good. So I'm teachin' my kids that you have to store up. Ok, uh November is coming. So we pick 'em a day in November, a Saturday in November that we havin' Collard Day! So we go get our collards and [00:24:51] start putting 'em in the freezer, preparing for the winter. So that's what we did in North Carolina. As the gardens produce, you put it in the freezer. You preserved it. So the winter comes, you got the food. A lot of us do that here. A lot of Natives [00:25:06] do the same thing. They got freezers and they're runnin' over because they store... they store up.

AMJ: I think we could say a little bit more about how church has come from North Carolina to Baltimore. Like, you can't go to another church and have the same kind [00:25:21] of experience you would here. What makes this place special?

LC: Because we're Southern gospel singers, we're country folk in a city. And the talent that God has given us, uh we use it [00:25:36] in singin' and praisin' and worshippin'. You know, I grew up with a grandmother that played the piano for the church. You know, and played at home, and she

played by ear. But here, if you go to a church and they play by music—not knocking that anybody can play 'cause it's a blessing—[00:25:51]but it's a totally different sound, a totally different beat, and for somebody that's used to... uh singin' by ear, it's like, you have to learn how to follow that, how to follow that key. I mean, you play, so you know what I'm saying. It's [00:26:06] totally different. I enjoy... I love Southern gospel music.

AMJ: Is the preachin' any different here?

LC: The preachin' is the same. When we get our preacher... South Broadway gets their preacher from North Carolina, and when we didn't have one for the last [00:26:21] uh... 1 year and uh... 10 months, we had two guys that lived here that actually came. And they're... they're tea... they're teacher preachers. And that's different 'cause our people like to hack and... you know, when they're [imitating the preaching style]... hackin' when they're preachin' and... [00:26:36] it's a different style.

AMJ: What do you like to do for fun these days?

LC: Oh, for fun, I like goin' to pow wows! I like... um... I like going to Ocean City. Ocean City... [00:26:51] watchin' the people on the boardwalk is one of my favorite things to do in the summertime. But I... but singin' is therapy for me. I love to sing.

AMJ: When did you start singing?

LC: When I was a kid. My grandmother played the piano, so we played and sing in the house [00:27:06] all the time.

AMJ: Does your whole family sing?

LC: Yes, yes. My sister doesn't sing, but... but all the girls that um... my grandmother raised, we all sing. And she tried to teach us to play and none of us... I would say, "You play and I'll sing!" [00:27:21] And I... when Bro. John tried to teach me, I'm like, "You play and I'll sing!" and he was like, "One day, you gonna need me and I'm not gonna be here," and that day has been here. Oh, God it's so... here and I'm so sorry I didn't learn.

AMJ: You could always learn [00:27:36] now.

LC: When I retire, maybe. I have plenty of time to try.

AMJ: Are you going to retire soon?

LC: Soon, I'm hoping. I'll know next month for sure when. I'm hoping by the end of December, the 1st of January,

AMJ: Do you have a favorite song that you like [00:27:51] to sing?

LC: I guess *Thank you Lord for Your Blessings on Me* is kind of like... Somebody pointed that out as that that was my signature song, and I never thought about it like that, but I do like that one. I like *Amazing Grace*, um... but there's a new [00:28:06] contemporary song, *If I've Got Jesus, I've Got it All* that I'm learning. I haven't got... got that yet.

AMJ: Do you feel like singing a couple lines of something? You don't have to.

LC: Ok, I will. [singing] *While the [00:28:21] world looks upon me as I struggle alone, they say I have nothing, but they are so [00:28:36] wrong. And in my heart, I'm rejoicing, though I wish they could see. Let me thank you, Lord, [00:28:51] for your blessings on me. There's a roof up above me. I have a good place to sleep. There's [00:29:06] food on my table, Lord, and shoes on my feet. You gave me your love, Lord, and a fine family. [00:29:23] Let me thank you, Lord, for your blessings on me. Let me thank you, Lord, [00:29:38] for your blessings on me.*

AMJ: So beautiful. It's gonna go in the Library of Congress forever and ever.

LC: Oh, geeze. [laughter]

AMJ: Did you ever [00:29:53] want to be a singer? Like a professional singer?

LC: Uh, I never thought I was good enough.

AMJ: Seriously?

LC: Seriously. I never thought I was good enough to be a professional singer. I just like to... I love to sing. I just love to sing. Never... um [00:30:08] you know, always second-guessing... Do people enjoy my singing? And I have had a lot of compliments that people do like my singing. But I just never felt like that... I was anything special.

AMJ: Second career?

LC: [00:30:23] Uh...maybe. [laughter] Wouldn't that be something?

AMJ: I think you're very special and I think you're an amazing singer. You totally... I mean, you're—you're pretty locally famous, and you're tribally famous, and I guess regionally famous. So... [00:30:42]

LC: Wow, all them—all them famouses? [laughter]

AMJ: Yeah.

LC: Wow. I never looked at it like that, Ashley.

AMJ: What do you think the Indian Community in Baltimore will be like in 10 years or 20 years?

LC: If we don't continue to push: be proud of who you [00:30:57] are, keep your culture alive, don't let nobody tell you who you are, stand for what you know that you are.. And if they do that, the Center and the church will keep striving. But it'll die if we don't [00:31:12] uh... teach our kids that it's ok to be who you are. Don't never be ashamed of who you are. Uh we're not a bunch of savages. We are real people.

AMJ: What do you hope for the Indian community in Baltimore?

LC: That we [00:31:27] arise above trying to be like crabs pulling each other down as we go up the basket, but that we can get along, work together, and keep our culture alive.

AMJ: Is there anything you'd like the young people [00:31:42] of our community to hear from you?

LC: I would like to say go to school, get an education, be somebody and then help somebody else to be somebody. Keep—just keep passing on, just passing that torch to say, hey [00:31:57] my time's up, here's the torch, you run with it. But keep—keep our culture alive. We're here. We're here to stay.

AMJ: And is there anything else you'd like to tell the world?

LC: I just love Jesus and I hope when you listen to my story that you [00:32:12] enjoy it, you get something out of it.

AMJ: That was perfect.

LC: Okay, thank you.

AMJ: Thank you, Sis. Linda.