

Interview with Elma Payne

INTERVIEWER:

Interviewee(s): Elma Payne

Year of Birth:

Location of Interview: Panama

Language of Interview: English

Date of Interview: November 25, 2008

INTERVIEWER: Thank you so much for participating in this project. It will surely benefit the community now and in the future. The goal of this questionnaire is to produce as detailed and coherent a narrative of your story as possible. In light of that, I encourage you to feel free to provide us with an answer to this as in-depth or as long as necessary, that's exactly what we want. I realize you have already signed a consent form, however I also want to let you know that you can feel free to tell us at any time if there are any particular things you want, you say during the course of the interview that you would like us to keep out of the educational exhibition or presentation materials that we will be creating based on these interviews that we are carrying out. Let's start with the first question. Okay, tell me about your place of birth and what was going on there as you were growing up?

PAYNE: My place of birth is Panama and as I grew up I, I was grown up in very strict way and I enjoy, I enjoy my environment at that time, I really did enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about your environment at that time?

PAYNE: Well, my parents were very strict and used to, we used to gather in the evening and play a lot, the parents would be watching when we're playing and at a certain time we had to turn in, we had to go into our homes because we weren't allowed to stay out too late and the parents would stay maybe talking and they'd be watching us as we played. And going to school it was you know very strict the schools, you couldn't speak English, you would have to speak Spanish. If you speak English the teacher would be annoyed and but as we got out of school we would speak no English and then after we go sometimes to an English school in the summertime to keep up with the English.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of games did you play with your friends? What kind of childhood memories do you have, the fondest memories of games played with your friends?

PAYNE: Been so long, *Givia, Latta*, we used to skip and do the, those are mostly the game that I remember.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. Now tell me about your parents and grandparents. I'm gonna ask you first, where was each of your family members from, so let's do it this way for now. Where was your father and your mother from?

PAYNE: My father was from Barbados.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and your mother?

PAYNE: From Trinidad.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now what about your paternal grandfather?

PAYNE: What, I don't know really much about them, I know they're from the West Indies.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and your maternal grandparents as well?

PAYNE: Yes, yes, they were from the West Indies, that I know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. Now what about their professions? What was your father's profession?

PAYNE: My, my father was a painter, he used to paint and that's all I know about him really.

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about your mother?

PAYNE: My, my mother, she, really she was a, just a cook, very good at cooking.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I'm assuming you, you don't remember them talking about what your grandparents did back in Barbados?

PAYNE: No not, not really, not really. I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Alright.

PAYNE: I knew that my father, my grandfather and my father came to Panama leaving Barbados to come to work in the canal, that I know of that and he left his sister back in Belize, it was two of them he and his sister and they left his parents back over in Barbados to come to work in Panama and he would work and send money over there to help them, that I know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about your mother? How did she come from Trinidad to Panama?

PAYNE: When her mother came work, looking for working over here and she worked in a home taking care of the home.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What was school like, tell me a little bit more, I know you started telling me before, but tell me how and who were your teachers? What things do

you remember about that time in school in addition to being strict and you couldn't speak English, do you remember any anecdotes from your school time?

PAYNE: Well, I remember that I used to enjoy going to summer classes, then I did in Spanish, and she would have all the grades from small children to bigger children, she was a teacher for every, every group and it was very, very strict, very strict. But we enjoyed going to school here, we enjoyed going to school here, and the, and the Spanish school, no, the teachers were so strict that if you started to speak English they will just take the eraser they had, the eraser they had and would throw it at you, attack you mostly I...and we used to group up to the college area groups and then, and talk and but they were very, very strict, but at the same time they taught us well, they taught us well and beside that we were treated great only that we were prohibited to speak English.

INTERVIEWER: What was the name of your teacher in the summer, summer classes?

PAYNE: Stanley.

INTERVIEWER: Stanley.

PAYNE: Mrs. Stanley, Mrs. Stanley.

INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Stanley, okay. Alright, great. Now back to music again. What types of music did you grow up hearing? Who were your favorite singers and what were your favorite songs?

PAYNE: What I, music I grew up hearing with, I would say in those days it was the Platters. The Platters. I, I can't remember much music at all, not really, not really, but as I grew a little older, my mother said to me to learn to play the piano and piano lessons, that's where then I began to write the classical music. So I mean I like classical music. I remember from school, from the Santa Familia school, I passed like a cemetery and I stay looking and listening and then I got to like classical music, but one of my brother he loved it so I was forced to listen to the classical music especially the piano. As I grew old, I even enjoy violin because my brother he loves it, but as it is I was forced to listen to it. I don't remember any special, I, I know Frankie Lymon in those days, but I don't remember any special number, favorite number.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the lyrics of any one of those Frankie Lymon or Platter's songs that you liked?

PAYNE: "The Great Pretender," that started that day. Frankie Lymon was "Baby Baby I Love You, Baby, Baby I Love You."

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about, what music do you listen to now and what are your favorite songs and what do you like about them the songs that you like today.

PAYNE: I listen a lot of religious music. I enjoy the music of priest, priest's music. I enjoy it a lot. Also I, I tend to listen to soft spiritual music. I guess it relaxes me a lot.

INTERVIEWER: And you say you also like plays right? Music from plays?

PAYNE: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Alright, okay. Do you have any favorite sayings and where or when did you first hear them? Sayings that your parents used to say to you or things that you say to your students?

PAYNE: Hmm. My mother she say so later on you'll understand this, she says you've got a lot, you don't understand me, but later on you'll understand and you're going to remember me.

INTERVIEWER: Next question. Okay, have you ever heard of Louise Bennett?

PAYNE: Let's see I know her name.

INTERVIEWER: Alright and have you ever heard of the Mighty Sparrow?

PAYNE: Yes, I heard of him last winter in Wisconsin and particularly jump part, I can remember landing. He was trying to get in to, yeah the Mighty Sparrow was.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? What else you remember about his performances? Are there any words or lyrics in particular that you know or remember from those?

PAYNE: No, not really, not really, but I know it was enjoyable to me in those days and I wanted, I was up front pushing with everybody to get in to listen to the Mighty Sparrow, you know but I don't remember those songs. Few, but I don't remember it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PAYNE: But I really, I really used to enjoy going.

INTERVIEWER: What about Sparrow do you think was so special? I lot of people really do admire him, what do you think?

PAYNE: Well his kind of singing is real singing, you know? He actually sing and the, the words and the lyrics in his song it was enjoyable and his timing, it's real singing.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did you play sports as a child?

PAYNE: Not really.

INTERVIEWER: No?

PAYNE: No.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about, what did you think about American culture when you were growing up?

PAYNE: When I, I figured out the American culture. I always figured that they felt themselves better than, better than the blacks because I, I remember working in a concert and they had a ballroom and similar, I remember those days very well. And for some reason they, it was kinda like separated you know? You couldn't drink water at a certain fountain you know? We had to drink it at another place. Things like that. So I always figured that they feel better than us. I had it in my mind and I remember my, my brother he got a reasonable pay so he could go in and go, go road, he could go and shop where the white man shopped and I would say, you sure, he say yes I can, come see, come. I say, no you can't do that. He say yes, I got a real pay you know I'm making more money and I have the permission to shop in this side, thing that I remember a lot of that and I felt that there were so different from most.

INTERVIEWER: So true. Okay. Did you ever go in with your—?

PAYNE: Yes I went in, but I was scared, I wanted to get back out fast you know? Wasn't comfortable, wasn't comfortable.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. That may have been the best part of our history.

PAYNE: And I remember even going to the mother's friend and go there where they go to church, the whites would sit on one side and the colored would sit on the other side, in the church they would do that. But I think too, well the church was there and maybe the colored could sit with the white, but they never did it. They, the coloreds sit with the colored and the white sit by themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Alright, now this question is about identify? What qualities, cultural behaviors or other things do you associate with being West Indian?

PAYNE: What qualities?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, what are the characteristics of our people? What would be things that would stand out that you would say, that's West Indian?

PAYNE: Hmm. I don't know how, how to put it. I, one of the things that even with my, with my family, I remember that my niece came to visit my mother and they didn't know to, to speak in English at all. And only Morrell, I turned to him and I say, how is it, how is it your children don't know to speak in English? He say they don't but I said well Morrell you're supposed to know English, that's a must, I said you know the Chinese, they, they send their children back to China and learn. I said why don't you speak English? He said they don't want to, I say it not about they don't want, we are Morrell and

we should be speaking in English and changing their name to Morrell, I said well why are you doing that? We are Morrell, hold on to that, even in the church sometimes I remember they had to translate, had to translate for instance in English, the Spanish for them to, I said that's not right, here that bother me a lot. I said they should know English and I tell him I said you all have to learn English, English is important. Our parents come from Barbados, Trinidad and these are the places and why you don't want to speak English and no you have to try to do it. I tell you it's wrong and I see it today, I see that now today, I say remember when I used to tell you all, English is important and it would bother me a lot when they tried to pretend and change, they tried to change the name, I said they're not black, sorry brown and I said you don't have, you're black. Not brown skin, you have black. Why you ashamed to say that, that you're black? I said we are black and be proud about it, that I had clear in my mind. As a child I grew up, I knew I was black and I was proud to be black, that never bothered me in no way and I don't want to change my name, leave my name how it is, my father comes from Barbados, my mother comes from Trinidad and that's, but some of us would try to get your name change at all and that bothered me very much. I never liked that and I'm seeing today that many of those here that I spoke to, they thinking about these Americans, English is important. English is important and all the schools are trying to put in English. And the, and they are, people come to get, get classes in English because English is so important.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely, absolutely. Okay. Now, we have talked about the importance of English as you mentioned it to others, how in your specific life, how has knowing English affected you both positively and negatively?

PAYNE: Well, I would say knowing English, it has helped me a lot, knowing English and Spanish. I've been able to, to help myself in many areas knowing English and also knowing Spanish, which I've been very effective and I'm glad about that, I'm very glad about that, that I could, I could know enough English that I can help myself and talk in English, speaking English as well as speaking in Spanish and I feel very glad that it has been so with, with me, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You are not currently married, you're widowed correct?

PAYNE: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: What was your husband? What was his name?

PAYNE: Charles Payne.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you mentioned also that you do not have any children, correct?

PAYNE: No, no children. A lot of children.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, people ask me today, I say, no I don't have children, but I had 120, so. So, not yet, not yet. Okay, I wanna go here, do you have family that live overseas and if so, where do they live?

PAYNE: Yes I have family that live in, live in the states, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where in the U.S.?

PAYNE: One of them living right now in New York...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PAYNE: Yeah she come down here.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

PAYNE: My nephew's in California.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Okay, so in California we have a nephew.

PAYNE: In New York, in Miami I have a niece in Miami too.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Okay. Miami.

PAYNE: They want me to go see find an apartment, whereas I used to go often, I tell 'em no, I think it be very lonesome. I find it very lonely.

INTERVIEWER: That's how I felt cause I was in New York for a long time.

PAYNE: New York is very busy.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean I love New York, but it is very impersonal.

PAYNE: Yeah and I found that I'm very lonesome for Panama, I say I'm from Panama.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, well we are on the last page, looks like you made it through. When you're family that's in the U.S., when they come to Panama, do Panamanians treat them like they're American or like they're any other Panamanian?

PAYNE: Like they're Panamanian and they're not that, they're American, you know that they're still, they're still Panamanian.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that is?

PAYNE: I think that it is not the country, they've schooled, they were schooled here and I think a few relaxed and they're not to be because you have been born here, and meet the people and enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: I see. They come to visit often?

PAYNE: Well no, not very often, not very often. They haven't been able to come very often but when they come, they end up with their friend and they just love Panama.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent. Have you ever been abroad or lived overseas and if so, where and when?

PAYNE: I, I have been abroad, I traveled and made two cruise, I did that and they were very pleasant and I attend what I was able to do at that time. I go, I used to go to Costa Rica a lot, every vacation, I go to Costa Rica so often and then I will go to the states and Miami, I go to Miami. So I've traveled a bit, but I've never been to Europe which I wish I could have done that.

INTERVIEWER: And where were the cruises?

PAYNE: Oh, Nassau, Barbados, Trinidad, *HiChi*, Aruba, I can't remember, most of the places I end up at.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you go in Costa Rica?

PAYNE: In Costa Rica, I went to a friend's home and after... Family over there and let's see I go all the way around over there, that was my home in Costa Rica.

INTERVIEWER: Nice. So how would you say your experience was in those different places, particularly Costa Rica and Miami? Do you feel that people knew or knew about Panamanians or West Indians in Panama?

PAYNE: Well in Costa, in Costa Rica, yes. Where I went I know that they did, but then in Miami, it was a difference altogether. Just with my niece.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so you saying in Costa Rica people knew about West Indians?

PAYNE: Yes, yes. In Miami, no because I never got in with many people where they let you go...you know? But and if I do go out and there's people from Panama, my niece will take me there.

INTERVIEWER: Now this is one of the last questions, what specific message do you want the younger people of the community to know? What, what would you like to communicate to the younger people of the community?

PAYNE: I would like to, really like to emphasize that they need to know most of all that there's a God and that God loves them and to try to learn to read God's words because God's words have direction for their lives and if they read God's words and look to God and believe in the words that they're reading, God will lead them in the right path and I know that they need to, to try to educate themselves, now to educate because I feel that the moral standing right now in the world is going down, morality is going down and they should be careful, to be careful because God created us that we will, that we will look to Him because He has a purpose for our life and our purpose is to serve Him and as we serve Him and love Him, you love people, you love people that's around us, we love our families, we love people in our community, then you want to do, when you want to do good towards them and that's an issue that I would want to leave for, especially, especially the young people. Seek God, seek God and God will help them to live a much, much richer life. It's not money, but something that is much more, more than money, it's a peace that God gives, a joy that God gives us, the word God gives today and I would advise them of that.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any other information you would like to include that I have not yet touched upon?

PAYNE: No, not really because really I've touched, this last part is, is that the spiritual part because I, I've seen what God has done in my life, where I was and how he has brought me through, because having this school is practically of God, where we started this school. God is who helped me right through and that's, as I grow older I see and I know that God is the answer and that and I really wanted to touch that spiritual part, because it's very important. I don't know if you agree with me.

INTERVIEWER: No I do, I do, absolutely, absolutely. Well thank you, thank you so much for participating with us and as I mentioned before, feel free to contact us if you have any questions or anything even that you want to add to your contribution that you think about later, oh, I should've said, you can feel free to tell us.

PAYNE: Okay I will do that.

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INTERVIEWER: Thank you so much for participating in this project. It will surely benefit the community now and in the future. The goal of this questionnaire is to produce as detailed and coherent a narrative of your story as possible. In light of that, I encourage you to feel free to provide us with an answer to this as in-depth or as long as necessary, that's exactly what we want. I realize you have already signed a consent form, however I also want to let you know that you can feel free to tell us at any time if there are any particular things you want, that you say during the course of the interview that you would like us to keep out of the educational exhibition or presentation materials that we will be creating based on these interviews that we are carrying out. Let's start with the first question. Okay, tell me about your place of birth and what was going on there as you were growing up?

PAYNE: My place of birth is Panama and as I grew up I, I was grown up in a very strict way and I enjoy, I enjoy my environment at that time, I really did enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about your environment at that time?

PAYNE: Well, my parents were very strict and we used to, we used to gather in the evening and play a lot, the parents would be watching when we're playing and at a certain time we had to turn in, we had to go into our homes because we weren't allowed to stay out too late and the parents would stay maybe talking and they'd be watching us as we played. And going to school it was you know very strict at the schools, you couldn't speak English, you would have to speak Spanish. If you speak English the teacher would be annoyed and but as we got out of school we would speak no English and then after we go sometimes to an English school in the summertime to keep up with the English.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of games did you play with your friends? What kind of childhood memories do you have, the fondest memories of games played with your friends?

PAYNE: Been so long, *Givia, Latta*, we used to skip and do the, those are mostly the game that I remember.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. Now tell me about your parents and grandparents. I'm gonna ask you first, where was each of your family members from, so let's do it this way for now. Where was your father and your mother from?

PAYNE: My father was from Barbados.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and your mother?

PAYNE: From Trinidad.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now what about your paternal grandfather?

PAYNE: What, I don't know really much about them, I know they're from the West Indies.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and your maternal grandparents as well?

PAYNE: Yes, yes, they were from the West Indies, that I know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. Now what about their professions? What was your father's profession?

PAYNE: My, my father was a, a painter, he used to paint and that's all I know about him really.

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about your mother?

PAYNE: My, my mother, she, really she was a, just a cook, very good at cooking.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I'm assuming you, you don't remember them talking about what your grandparents did back in Barbados?

PAYNE: No not, not really, not really. I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Alright.

PAYNE: I knew that my father, my grandfather and my father came to Panama leaving Barbados to come to work in the canal, that I know of that and he left his sister back in Belize, it was two of them, he and his sister and they left his parents back over in Barbados to come to work in Panama and he would work and send money over there to help them, that I know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about your mother? How did she come from Trinidad to Panama?

PAYNE: When her mother came to work, looking for working over here and she worked in a home taking care of the home. That she lived in.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What was school like, tell me a little bit more, I know you started telling me before, but tell me how and who were your teachers? What things do

you remember about that time in school in addition to being strict and you couldn't speak English, do you remember any anecdotes from your school time?

PAYNE: Well, I remember that I used to enjoy going to the summer classes, then I did in Spanish, and she would have all the grades from the small children to the bigger children, she was a teacher for every, every group and it was, it was very, very strict, very strict. But we enjoyed going to school there, we enjoyed going to school there, and the, and the Spanish school, no, the teachers, they were so strict that if you started to speak in English they will just take the eraser they had, the eraser they had and would throw it at you, attack you mostly, “solamente en Espanol.” And we used to group up to the college area groups and then, and talk and but they were very, very strict, but at the same time they taught us well, they taught us well and beside that we were treated great only that we were prohibited to speak English.

INTERVIEWER: What was the name of your teacher in the summer, summer classes?

PAYNE: Stanley.

INTERVIEWER: Stanley.

PAYNE: Mrs. Stanley, Mrs. Stanley.

INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Stanley, okay. Alright, great. Now back to music again. What types of music did you grow up hearing? Who were your favorite singers and what were your favorite songs?

PAYNE: What I, music I grew up hearing with, I would say in those days it was, it was the Platters. The Platters. I, I can't remember much music at all, not really, not really, but as I grew a little older, my mother said to me to learn to play the piano and piano lessons, that's where then I began to write the classical music. So I mean I like classical music. I remember from school, from the Santa Familia school, I passed like a cemetery and I stay looking and listening and then I got to like classical music, but one of my brother he loved it so I was forced to listen to the classical music, especially the piano. As I grew old, I even enjoy violin because my brother he loves it, but as it is I was forced to listen to it. I don't remember any special, I, I know Frankie Lymon in those days, but I don't remember any special number, favorite number.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the lyrics of any one of those Frankie Lymon or Platter's songs that you liked?

PAYNE: “The Great Pretender,” that started that day. Frankie Lymon was “Baby Baby I Love You, Baby, Baby I Love You.”

INTERVIEWER: Okay and what about, what music do you listen to now and what are your favorite songs and what do you like about them the songs that you like today?

PAYNE: I listen a lot of religious music. I enjoy the music of priest, priest's music. I enjoy it a lot. Also I, I tend to listen to soft spiritual music. I guess it relaxes me a lot.

INTERVIEWER: And you say you also like plays right? Music from plays?

PAYNE: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Alright, okay. Do you have any favorite sayings and where or when did you first hear them? Sayings that your parents used to say to you or things that you say to your students?

PAYNE: Hmm. My mother she say so later on you'll understand this, she says you've got a lot, you don't understand me, but later on you'll understand and you're going to remember me.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. How are we doing so far? You want to continue? [Laughs] Not too bad. Next question. Okay, have you ever heard of Louise Bennett?

PAYNE: Let's see I know her name.

INTERVIEWER: Alright and have you ever heard of the Mighty Sparrow?

PAYNE: Yes, I heard of him last winter in Wisconsin and particularly jump part, I can remember landing. He was trying to get in to, yeah the Mighty Sparrow was.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah? What else you remember about his performances? Are there any words or lyrics in particular that you know or remember from those?

PAYNE: No, not really, not really, but I know it was enjoyable to me in those days and I wanted, I was up front pushing with everybody to get in to listen to the Mighty Sparrow, you know but I don't remember those songs. Few, but I don't remember it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PAYNE: But I really, I really used to enjoy going.

INTERVIEWER: What about Sparrow do you think was so special? A lot of people really do admire him, what do you think?

PAYNE: Well his kind of singing is real singing, you know? He actually will sing and the, the words and the lyrics in his song, it was enjoyable and his timing, it's real singing.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did you play sports as a child?

PAYNE: Not really.

INTERVIEWER: No?

PAYNE: No.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about, what did you think about American culture when you were growing up?

PAYNE: When I, I figured out the American culture. I always figured that they felt themselves better than, better than the blacks, because I, I remember working in a concert and they had a ballroom and similar, I remember those days very well. And for some reason they, it was kinda like separated you know? You couldn't drink water at a certain fountain you know? We had to drink it at another place. Things like that. So I always figured that they feel better than us. I had it in my mind and I remember my, my brother he got a reasonable pay so he could go in and go, go road, he could go and shop where the white man shopped and I would say, you sure, he say yes I can, come see, come. I say, no you can't do that. He say yes, I got a real pay you know I'm making more money and I have the permission to shop in this side, thing that I remember a lot of that and I felt that there were so different from most.

INTERVIEWER: So true. Okay. Did you ever go in with your—?

PAYNE: Yes I went in, but I was scared, I wanted to get back out fast you know? I wasn't comfortable, wasn't comfortable.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. That may have been the best part of our history.

PAYNE: And I remember even going to the mother's friend and go there where they go to church, the whites would sit on one side and the colored would sit on the other side, in the church they would do that. But I think too, well the church was there and maybe the colored could sit with the white, but they never did it. They, the coloreds sit with the colored and the white sit by themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Alright, now this question is about identity, no? What qualities, cultural behaviors or other things do you associate with West Indianness, or with being West Indian?

PAYNE: What qualities?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, what are the characteristics of our people? What would be things that would stand out, that you would say, that's West Indian?

PAYNE: Hmm. I don't know how, how to put it. I, one of the things that even with my, with my family, I remember that my niece came to visit my mother and they didn't know to, to speak in English at all. And only Morrell, I turned to him and I say, how is it, how is it your children don't know to speak in English? He say they don't but I said well Morrell you're supposed to know English, that's a must, I said you know the Chinese,

they, they send their children back to China and learn. I said why don't you speak English? He said they don't want to, I say it not about they don't want, we are Morrell and we should be speaking in English and changing their name to Morrell, I said well why are you doing that? We are Morrell, hold on to that, even in the church sometimes I remember they had to translate, had to translate for instance in English, the Spanish for them to, I said that's not right, here that bother me a lot. I said they should know English and I tell him I said you all have to learn English, English is important. Our parents come from Barbados, Trinidad and these are the places and why you don't want to speak English and no you have to try to do it. I tell you it's wrong and I see it today, I see that now today, I say remember when I used to tell you all, English is important and it would bother me a lot when they tried to pretend and change, they tried to change the name, I said they're not black, sorry brown and I said you don't have, you're black. Not brown skin, you have black. Why you ashamed to say that, that you're black? I said we are black and be proud about it, that I had clear in my mind. As a child I grew up, I knew I was black and I was proud to be black, that never bothered me in no way and I don't want to change my name, leave my name how it is, my father comes from Barbados, my mother comes from Trinidad and that's, but some of us would try to get your name change at all and that bothered me very much. I never liked that and I'm seeing today that many of those here that I spoke to, they thinking about these Americans, English is important. English is important and all the schools are trying to put in English. And the, and they are, people come to get, get classes in English because English is so important.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely, absolutely. Okay. Now, we have talked about the importance of English as you mentioned it to others, how in your specific life, how has knowing English affected you both positively and negatively?

PAYNE: Well, I would say knowing English, it has helped me a lot, knowing English and Spanish. I've been able to, to help myself in many areas knowing English and also knowing Spanish, which I've been very effective and I'm glad about that, I'm very glad about that, that I could, I could know enough English that I can help myself and talk in English, speaking English as well as speaking in, in Spanish and I feel very glad that it has been so with, with me, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You are not currently married, you're widowed, correct?

PAYNE: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Who was your husband? What was his name?

PAYNE: Charles Payne.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you mentioned also that you do not have any children, correct?

PAYNE: No, no children. A lot of children.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, people ask me today, I say, no I don't have children, but I had 120, so. So, not yet, not yet. Okay, I wanna go here, do you have family that live overseas and if so, where do they live?

PAYNE: Yes I have family that live in, live in the states, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where in the U.S.?

PAYNE: One of them living right now in New York. (name: Milka Morreros?)

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PAYNE: Yeah she come down here.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

PAYNE: My nephew's in California.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Okay, so in California we have a nephew.

PAYNE: In New York, in Miami I have a niece in Miami too.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. Okay. Miami.

PAYNE: They want me to go see find an apartment, whereas I used to go often, I tell 'em no, I think it be very lonesome. I find it very lonely.

INTERVIEWER: That's how I felt cause I was in New York for a long time.

PAYNE: New York is very busy.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean I love New York, but it is very impersonal.

PAYNE: Yeah and I found that I'm very lonesome for Panama, I say I'm from Panama.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, well we are on the last page, so it looks like you made it through. [Laughs] Let's see. When you're family that's in the U.S., when they come to Panama, do Panamanians treat them like they're American or like they're any other Panamanian?

PAYNE: Like they're Panamanian and they're not that, they're American, you know that they're still, they're still Panamanian.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that is?

PAYNE: I think that it is not the country, they've schooled, they were schooled here and I think a few relaxed and they're not to be because you have been born here, and meet the people and enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: I see. They come to visit often?

PAYNE: Well no, not very often, not very often. They haven't been able to come very often but when they come, they end up with their friend and they just love Panama.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent. Have you ever been abroad or lived overseas and if so, where and when?

PAYNE: I, I have been abroad, I traveled and made two cruise, I did that and they were very pleasant and I attend what I was able to do at that time. I go, I used to go to Costa Rica a lot, every vacation, I go to Costa Rica so often and then I will go to the states and Miami, I go to Miami. So I've traveled a bit, but I've never been to Europe, which I wish I could have done that.

INTERVIEWER: And where were the cruises?

PAYNE: Oh, Nassau, Barbados, Trinidad, *HiChi*, Aruba, I can't remember, most of the places I end up at.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you go in Costa Rica?

PAYNE: In Costa Rica, I went to a friend's home and after that [...] Family over there and let's see I go all the way around over there, that was my home in Costa Rica.

INTERVIEWER: Nice. So how would you say your experience was in those different places, particularly Costa Rica and Miami? Do you feel that people knew or knew about Panamanians or West Indians in Panama?

PAYNE: Well in Costa, in Costa Rica, yes. Where I went I know that they did, but then in Miami, it was a difference altogether. Just with my niece.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so you saying in Costa Rica people knew about West Indians?

PAYNE: Yes, yes. In Miami, no because I never got in with many people where they let you go in deep talk, you know? But and if I do go out and there's people from Panama, my niece will take me there.

INTERVIEWER: Now this is one of the last questions, what specific message do you want the younger people of the community to know? What, what would you like to communicate to the younger people of the community?

PAYNE: I would like to, really like to emphasize that they need to know most of all that there's a God and that God loves them and to try to learn to read God's words because God's words have direction for their lives and if they read God's words and look to God and believe in the words that they're reading, God will lead them in the right path and I know that they need to, to try to educate themselves, now to educate because I feel that the moral standing right now in the world is going down, morality is going down and they should be careful, to be careful because God created us that we will, that we will look to Him because He has a purpose for our life and our purpose is to serve Him and as we serve Him and love Him, you love people, you love people that's around us, we love our families, we love people in our community, then you want to do, when you want to do good towards them and that's an issue that I would want to leave for, especially, especially the young people. Seek God, seek God and God will help them to live a much, much richer life. It's not money, but something that is much more, more than money, it's a peace that God gives, a joy that God gives us, the word God gives today and I would advise them of that.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. Is there any other information you would like to include that I have not yet touched upon?

PAYNE: No, not really because really I've touched, this last part is, is that the spiritual part because I, I've seen what God has done in my life, where I was and how he has brought me through, because having this school is practically of God, where we started this school. It is um... God is who helped me right through and that's, as I grow older I see and I know that God is the answer and that and I really wanted to touch that spiritual part, because it's very important. I don't know if you agree with me.

INTERVIEWER: No I do, I do, absolutely, absolutely. Well thank you, thank you so much for participating with us and as I mentioned before, feel free to contact us if you have any questions or anything even that you want to add to your contribution that you think about later, oh, I should've said, you can feel free to tell us.

PAYNE: Okay I will do that.