

Victoria Pope

I am going to start with the reflection first because it feels like it makes more sense to me. For this interview I had questioned my 70 year old grandmother and it was somewhat difficult due to the fact she was perming her hair and puttering about around the house cleaning. She had trailed off several times and forgot she had told me certain information. She also started new conversations with me in the middle of the interview and had got completely sidetracked. Everything aside the interview had a rhythm and it was easy to produce follow up questions. It was interesting to listen to recite family history and the way of life she had before coming to the U.S. Some of the customs she had kept like growing our own food had been passed on to us even though now we live in an apartment. The way she lived still reflects on the way she lives life here even 34 years after being here. Doing this interview you never really forget your roots, it's inherited unto others.

Q- Where were they ? Where did they live?

A- The countryside of West Bank Demerara Guyana.

Q - Who did you live with ?

A - I lived with my mother, aunt and uncle : they lived next door to each other.

Q- What was your daily routine ?

A- we woke up and cleaned, then we fed the chickens and let the ducks out. After we would wash our clothes and pick them off the lines and get water from the trench to water my flowers.. Then we would wait for the vendors to come to buy food. Then we would cook and eat. We would pick fruits. Then we would go to the shop and buy oil and rice. After that we go back home and weed and clean up the farm. Then we would play rounders and cricket until dinner was ready.

Q- What kind of work did you guys do?

A- farming was major for everyone and fishing. Bookkeepers , house cleaning, and shopkeepers, also taxi men.

*She then lists off all fruits she had on the land which were coconuts, tangerines, pears, cashews, yams, bananas, plantain, and oranges.

Q- Was the cost of living expensive?

A- It was very cheap. 25 or 50 cents you could have bought a lot of stuff.

Q- Did you have electricity?

A- No, we had oil lamps and candles.

Q- What were your expectations for the future ?

A- Finish highschool , get a job and be a nurse.

Q- What was popular then ?

A- The drive in movies, dancehall, rumshoppe, and cookshoppes (restaurants). The music was kenny Rogers , Englebert Humperdink, and Otis Redding

Q- What type of clothes did you wear?

A- long cloths * she shows me where the length was past her knees by her shins*
Dresses and skirts, we didn't wear pants back then.

Q- What were some major events ?

A- Riots and civil rights uprisings many were killed.

The queen of england visited in 1996

The demolition of the train tracks in the L.F.S.Burnham era. They were sold off there might have been a political problem.

*She didn't want to elaborate any more on that specific subject.

We were governed by England until 1966 and then we gained our independence.

Q-How was your family affected by the political uprising ?

A- Ma (her mother) was trapped in the city for 3 days during the riots there were no steamers or cars , we thought she was dead until she came back.It was based on race and they couldn't go into the city because they would get beat up. A classmate and two others were killed in the front. Soldiers from England had to come and bring back the law and order.

Q-Did you experience any racism ?

A- Racism didn't affect me because we lived in the country it was mainly in the city. We were all one people; we traded cassava for cocoa and yams with our neighbors.

Q- What type of community did you live in?

A- It was a farming and fishing community. There was a big canal that ran through the village.

Q- What was the role of religion ?

A- There was prespetarian, Batist, 7 day adventists , Hinduism and Islam. When we went to church we were cursed at because we worshipped Christ. Christianity was not coolie it was not accepted.

Q- What were the prominent figures?

A- Cheddi Jagan he was the prime minister of Guyana.