THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
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Oral History Interview

with

Lonnie Rich and Marcia Cole

Interviewers: *Lonnie Rich and Marcia Cole*

Narrator: *Lonnie Rich and Marcia Cole*

Location of Interview:
Lloyd House, 220 N Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314

Date of Interview: *11/16/2022*

Transcriber: *Jaclyn Maraldo*

Summary:
Lonnie Rich and Marcia Cole interview each other about their pilgrimage to Montgomery, AL, and their reflections on race in America.

Notes:
Also present during the interview was Francesco De Salvatore.

Table of Contents and Keywords

General	Lynching; Poetry; Slavery; Civil War; Segregation; Police brutality; Black codes; 13th amendment; breeding farms; Reconstruction; Civil rights movement; White privilege; COVID-19 pandemic; White supremacy;
People	Dr. Susan Strasser; Audrey; Bryan Stevenson; Joshua Rothman; Pinky; Benny; Benny, Jr.; Mr. Sartin; Levi Miller; George Floyd; Derek Chauvin; Kenneth Stamp; Donald Trump; Linda Lowery; Michelle Browder; Dr. J. Marion Sims; April Hawkins;
Places	University of the District of Columbia; Maryland County; Equal Justice Initiative Museum; Montgomery, AL; University of Alabama; Franklin and Armfield; Baton Rouge, LA; West Tennessee; Alexandria High School; Manor Park; Gynecology Park

Marcia Cole: 00:04	My name is Marcia E. Cole. I am 73. Today's date is November 16, 2022. Location: Lloyd House in Alexandria, Virginia.
Lonnie Rich:	And my name is Lonnie Rich. I am 74. Today is November 16th, 2022. And we are at the Lloyd House in Alexandria, Virginia. And I guess I'm going to ask the first question, which is why did you decide to go on the pilgrimage to Montgomery?
00:46	**Initial Interest in Pilgrimage**
Marcia Cole:	**Marcia Cole:** Well, I decided to go because I have an interest in the subject of lynching and have had an interest for some time. And that interest goes back to when I was in college. I returned as a senior and in one of the history textbooks and the history class I took, I came across a picture of a lynched victim and I had not seen lynching pictures before. And it struck me. But what really struck me most about that picture was not just the alleged victim who was well-dressed and hooded, but the people around him, and they were posing. And I thought that was remarkable. So as is my custom, I will journal about things. And I wrote about that. And eventually I decided to see if I could write a poem about that to make sense of it. And I did. And there came up a College Language Association writing contest and I decided to enter it. So I wrote some additional poems on lynching and I submitted them with the help of a professor there, at UDC [University of the District of Columbia]. And as it turns out, I won first prize for my poetry collection. I called it "A Bitter Suite" and I thought that was a pretty good play on words. And I was just delighted that I won. And I continued to explore the subject. One day, someone who knew about my other writing activities told me about this woman who was doing a talk about slavery because I've done things on slavery, and she billed herself as “A White Historian Tackles Slavery”. So I said, "Well, let me go see that group," because it sounded pretty interesting to me how she framed that. And while I was there, as is my custom, I looked around at what people had on display. And she had written up that she was going to do a series, a program on lynching. So at the end of it, her presentation on slavery, I approached her and said, "As it turns out, I have these poems about lynching. Do you think you'd want to team up?" Well, she probably thought this is pretty interesting and bodacious, but she said, "Well, let's meet together and let me see what you have and maybe we can work something out." So we got together, had

	lunch, and she saw my poems and she really liked them. So we decided we could work together. She would do an illustrated talk, and I would do my poetry. Her name is Dr. Susan Strasser. So that's what we did.
Lonnie Rich: 03:47	This is the same Susan Strasser who was on our trip, right?

Marcia Cole: 03:49	That's correct. And so that's what we did. And we've been presenting ever since then. And people have liked the combination of the hard facts that she gives and the way that I frame it and make it very personal with my poetry. Because poetry can do things that prose can't do. So anyway, the interest was there and we presented for Maryland County and also for Virginia. And that's how I got word of this upcoming pilgrimage. So I decided I wanted to go and I contacted Beth, I mean Audrey, and got it worked out that I could attend. And I did so because I said I would like to see if I can get more information for additional work. And that worked out very well. So that's how I came to go on the trip, because I wanted to go to the EJI [Equal Justice Initiative] Museum and all the other side trips sounded interesting and it was a good opportunity. So I went. What about you?
Lonnie Rich: 05:00	Well, for me, it also starts with a love of history. I was a history major in college. I've read history my whole life. But more specifically, I had read Bryan Stevenson's book, *Just Mercy*, when my wife bought it, I think it was being promoted at Starbucks, and she bought it. Just kind of in the spur [of the moment]. And we read it. And then we heard him speak at the National Library or National Book-

Marcia Cole: 05:39	Festival?

05:40	**The Whitewashing of School Curricula**
Lonnie Rich: 05:40	Festival in D.C., which we went to every year until COVID and he was one of the speakers. And his message was profound. And I was also on a personal journey myself, learning the rest of our history, if you will. I had learned history one way. I'm white. I grew up in the South. I don't specifically remember anything ever called The Lost Cause or anything like that, but I am sure that that is exactly what I was taught because there was so much in the history that I learned that was whitewashed, if you will, and there was so much left out specifically. Yes, they talked about slavery a little bit. There was the Civil War, and then everything was fine. It was whitewashed in another sense. We didn't really get an accurate history of our relationship with the Indians and the extermination of Indians and the Trail of Tears or any of the ugly part of our history. We had learned basically a happy version. And to me, history is the full story. Now, obviously, you don't know every detail about the full story, but you can have a balanced picture of what your history is like. And to me, that became very important. So it became important to me to learn. And in starting probably five or six years ago, I started reading about what used to be called African-American history. I prefer to call it now American history. And learning about Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction and the lynching and segregation and the black codes and all the ways that that we in the South basically converted our system from slavery to another system that just wasn't called slavery. It was very similar in effect. And that's when I heard about Alexandria going to participate in the whole EJI [Equal Justice Initiative] process. And we were going to address our own history, which I did not know about the lynchings in Alexandria. And there were two of them in the 1890s. And I just decided we were going to get involved. And so we did. And that's how we went on the trip.
Marcia Cole:	I agree. There was so much that I didn't know about history. And as you say, it was whitewashed and sanitized. And I had the impression for a long time that slavery was just about uncompensated labor, you know, it wasn't that bad. No, they didn't get paid, but we got over it and all that.

	And there was a whole lot I didn't know. And as I began to, you know, open my eyes to what was going on, I, too, decided I could seize control over what I learned and become more proactive and not just accept what was given to me, but go get, dig deeper. So I fully understand that and I could appreciate your efforts there.

Lonnie Rich:	And for me, I've also had a number of really aha moments in my personal study and this is something that occurred after the killing in Minnesota, Officer [Derek] Chauvin killed Mr. [George] Floyd. One of the things that I did not realize was that police departments in this country got started after the Civil War, mostly started in the South, and they were mostly instituted to enforce the black codes. The black codes were all the rules and little things that if you did something, you could be arrested, like not crossing the street when a white person approached, like not saying sir, like looking at a white woman, like being a vagrant, not having a job. There were a slew of these things that were applied to black people that weren't applied to white people at all, and vagrancy laws, all that kind of stuff. And so what they would do is they would arrest the violators, so it was a lawful arrest. And one of the exceptions in the 13th Amendment to slavery was except for the serving in a penitentiary. So the penitentiary became a big deal. And we didn't have penitentiaries before that. And we had jails, but not long term facilities. And it was used basically as a way for black people who were arrested for petty offenses with long-term sentences to be farmed back out or leased back out to the old masters who still had these farms that cotton needed to be picked and sweet potatoes needed to be hoed. And somebody had to do the work and they had this labor there that was legitimately enslaved through the penal system. And then I just finished reading another book, the book by Joshua Rothman from the University of Alabama, *The Ledger and the Cudgel* about the internal slave trade that occurred in the U.S. [United States] after international slave trade was abolished. And that occurred in 1808. Well, the Franklin and Armfield on Duke Street here in Alexandria got started right after the international slave trade was stopped because they were selling slaves from Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina to the Deep South, where the new cotton was being grown. And it's a terrible story, but it was just another example of something that I knew nothing about.
Marcia Cole:	Not to mention the subject of breeding farms. You know, that was something that people want to shy away from, but that was also a factor. In fact, I've done a poem about that, about someone who did not have autonomy over her body, and because it was deemed as though the offspring would have particular characteristics if you coupled a certain

	man with a certain woman. So those kinds of things have far reaching effects and we're still experiencing the fallout from that. And you mentioned how the police were instituted after Reconstruction, but prior to that, there were the paddyrollers who were also on duty to make sure that the enslaved were where they're supposed to be and doing what they're supposed to be doing, the driver and the overseer, all these methods of control. And in fact, I think it was in Kenneth Stamp's book, *Peculiar Institution*, where he said, always to be surveilled, you know, that was an important part of control.
Lonnie Rich:	Especially after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831.

Marcia Cole:	Right. So there was a lot to chew on, a lot to explore. And I'm still learning and thankful to be in an area where there's a lot more attention being paid to this lost history now.
13:40	**First Realizations of Racial Difference**
Lonnie Rich: 13:40	What is your first recollection of the difference between black people and white people? I assume it's when you were a little girl.

Marcia Cole:	When did I know I was black? Well, certain things were internal, like not that I was black per se, but I knew that there were certain things that could be a little bit better. Like issues around hair, you know, getting your hair done and, you know, something was wrong with my hair the way that that the Creator made it. So we had to straighten it out, literally and figuratively. And there would be comments about the complexion, you know, between myself and others. So you began to see there were differences, but it didn't become really apparent until I began to go outside the community and interface with white people, white students. And it came into high relief then. And as you mentioned, there were certain things that you learned through osmosis that you don't do, like get too close to a white woman in the elevator and make sure your hands are visible so as not to seem to be a pickpocket. And watch where your eyes go. And I think I even recall the idea of stepping off the curb, was moving aside, but at some point, I decided to challenge that. I'm not going to move aside. We're just going to both yield to each other and those kinds of things. But it weighs on you and after reflection, I realize how much these kinds of things weighed on me. But over time, when I got older and began to work, I realized that there are white people who are of good heart and they, you know, when you interface with them, you give them the opportunity, an open hand to see how they respond to you. You try to go into the situation with a preconceived notion that they're going to treat you a certain way. You give them an opportunity to be their best selves. And so I developed some really wonderful relationships that have been long-lasting over time. And I'm very thankful for that because I learned a lot of things through those relationships. What about you?

Lonnie Rich:	Well, I was born in Baton Rouge, and my first recollection of the difference between black people and white people was we had a maid. Her name was Pinky. I don't remember how often she came to our house. It may have been once a week. It may have been two or three days a week, but it was when I was like four or five years old. And I remember one day I noticed that her skin was black and that her hands were white. And I asked her about it. I specifically remember [asking], "Why are your hands white?" And she said, "Well, that's because I wash them all the time." And what I don't remember is whether or not I had a follow-up question, well, like, why don't you wash the rest of your body? I don't remember. I just remember that there was a difference. There was a color difference. My next recollection occurred when I worked on my

	grandfather's farm. He had many black people that worked on his farm. Some were sharecroppers, some lived in the city. It's a small town in West Tennessee. And he raised cotton. He raised sweet potatoes, strawberries, and what I remember is having a conversation with a little boy my age. We were like 10, 11 years old and we had stopped for lunch and we were sitting there eating our lunch under a tree beside the field. And I happened to have my ball glove and my ball with me and I was, you know, just throwing the ball into my glove. And I asked him if he played baseball and he said, "Well, no, I can't." And I said, "What do you mean you can't?" He said, "Well, I'm colored and colored boys can't play baseball." I've thought about this story hundreds of times over my life. And I don't remember whether there was any follow up. I don't know that I ever saw him again because I would work at my grandfather's farm in the summer, so I did it for 2 or 3 summers when I was 10, 11, 12 years old. And I didn't do it after that. And I never saw him again. His family lived on the farm. His father was named Benny, too. I don't remember their last name, but he was Benny Junior. And that's my second sort of experience. In high school, I was in Memphis at this time, I went to a segregated school. I knew no black people and had no experience with black people. They had their schools and we had our schools. I don't remember thinking about it one way or the other, but now that I have kids who went through the Alexandria School system, which is integrated, and my kids had not just experience with black people, but people all over the world. They all went to the Alexandria High School, which the last time I heard it has like 120 language groups. Languages that are the primary languages of the students at the high school. There's no majority. It's not majority white, not majority black, not majority brown. It is everything. And my kids had an amazing experience with that diversity and a positive experience. And I look back at my high school experience, and I didn't have that. I mean, I didn't have a particularly good or bad experience in high school. I remember it mostly positively, but I didn't have that. And it's something that I've thought about a lot, the difference between my kids' experience and what I didn't get.
Marcia Cole:	Well, when I was young, my parents moved into the last house that we owned. It was a brick house, semi-detached. And the neighborhood was beginning to be integrated. And I recall that the--
Francesco De Salvatore:	What was the name of it?

Marcia Cole:	Manor Park. And the neighbor on the detached side was a white family. And we moved in. And it wasn't all that long before they were moving out. And I remember the young boy next door coming to tell us that it wasn't because we were black, you know, they were just moving. But then there were others who began to move out of the neighborhood, other whites who began to move out until it was predominately black. But while it was still integrated, the junior high and the high school had certain things, wonderful things like a chorus on music and theater. But over time, these things began to contract and were no longer quite as evident. So some of the good things that we enjoyed left when the white population began to go away, and that's something I remember I was very sorry to see happen because I was in the chorus and it was wonderful to be in there. We got to travel a little bit around town and share, you know, your talents that way. But that was one of the fallouts of integration.
Lonnie Rich:	Well, I'm reminded of another story from growing up and this is when I was in, I guess I was in high school, and it was one of my jobs. I worked for a truck company and it was owned by a man at my church, Mr. Sartin, and it was Sartin Truck Lines. I was a lumper. I loaded and unloaded trucks which is hard work but I loved doing it, it was a great job. And on the main floor where you unloaded the trucks and put stuff, there was a white restroom and a colored restroom. There was a white water fountain and a colored water fountain. I'm a contrarian myself. I like things that are the opposite of what you're supposed to do. But it turns out that the trucking company was owned by two people. It was owned by Mr. Sartin, he had 50% owner. The other owner was Levi Miller. Levi Miller was a black man. It was unusual that they equally co-owned this trucking company. Mr. Sartin was the front office guy. He was the business guy. He did with the contracts and the customers, whatever. Levi Miller was even more important because he was the mechanic. He kept the trucks running. And you have to have trucks to have a truck line. And what was always so funny is that Mr. Miller, when he would go to the bathroom, he always went to the white bathroom. And when he went to get a drink of water, he drank from the white water fountain. Everybody thought was hilarious. Nobody said anything. It was an interesting interplay of the old days and old traditions, bad traditions, in my view and what was coming. This was ‘63, ‘64, ‘65. So it was the beginning of the national consciousness of the civil rights movement. Not that I was, but I was seeing people doing things contrary to the rules. I look back at it and I still marvel about the whole thing. I would love to know how Mr. Sartin and Mr. Miller became partners in this business. And it was a successful truck line.

Marcia Cole:	You know, I don't recall experiencing the white fountain, black fountain kind of a thing. Maybe I just blocked it out. But I don't recall having to do that. But I do recall that you would go to restaurants, begin to go to restaurants, and maybe the waitress will wait on you. Maybe she takes her time and try to identify the waitress who would wait on you because you were black, I think. But specifically about, you know, this bathroom and that bathroom or fountain or that fountain. I don't recall those things. I'm glad I don't. But there were other little nuanced things that you were aware of that. Like when you were out of your neighborhood, you were very careful how you conducted yourself because you didn't want to bring any negative attention to yourself. In fact, that was one of the things that as a young black person, you were told at the time is when you go out, you "represent," so to carry yourself a certain way, because when a black person does something, it's not just one person. It bespeaks all black people. You just can't be individuals. Your actions are for all black people, but not so for whites. No, whites can do things and they're individuals and not all white people do that. But for blacks it was. And that was really annoying. But yeah, we were very conscious of how we conducted ourselves in public, which doesn't seem to be so much the case today. You know, I see people who don't seem to be concerned about how they're presented to the public. And we would do well to get back to that kind of civility.

27:09	**White Privilege and Police Brutality**
Lonnie Rich: 27:09	Well, one of the sort of recent aha moments for me, and it's really because of sort of the police brutality, which has basically come to the public's consciousness, I think largely because of cell phones, because we have actually seen. Well, you think we're beyond that. You know, we've elected a black president. We're post-racial. You know, everything's good. But yet, with the telephone, we have seen so many instances where there's brutality, that it can only be explained in black and white terms. And for me, what I realized and what I learned from it was something that

	people have been talking about, which I've just in the last three or four years become more aware of. And it's white privilege.

Marcia Cole:	Oh, yeah.
Lonnie Rich:	I have a son. He's white. And between the ages of 18 and 21, he was arrested four times. It was all little peccadilloes. It was nothing particularly bad. It was just common juvenile misbehavior. It was wrong, but not the end of the world. Not once did I ever worry about him getting shot by the police. Not once. And what I have come to realize is that black parents don't have that same privilege.
Marcia Cole:	And I can attest to that.
Lonnie Rich:	Because they teach their children to be very aware of interaction with authority. I've never had to worry about that. You have?
Marcia Cole:	Yes, I have. I have a son, a black son. And so I can't say I specifically had "the talk," per se, but I did try to raise him in such a way that his conduct was above reproach. So I didn't want to tell him things that would make it impossible for him to have meaningful relationships with whites. And he has seen me with white friends. In fact his godfather is white and we have wonderful relations with him and his godfather, his wife and others. But I want him to be aware that certain things can happen, but not to be totally constrained because of fearful, because you can't live in fear your whole life. It wears on the body and the spirit to be afraid and see everyone an enemy all around you. So, I just wanted him to have his best life and to have relationships with those who shared his interests. And it can be a tough road. You know, it's a fine line to walk between awareness and then instilling, you know, undue fear or what have you. Because there's enough in the papers now and in the news to give pause. But you can't stay in that state. You really can't stay in that state. So I keep him in prayer every day.
Lonnie Rich:	Right.
Francesco De Salvatore:	How do you not stay in that state? What do you do to not stay in that state?

31:12	**Coping With Fear**
Marcia Cole:	I stay connected to nature. I love nature. I love gardening. When the pandemic hit, I would go out for walks in areas that I thought were life supporting. And where I chose in my neighborhood might seem surprising because it was a cemetery, but it was an old cemetery. And I learned in taking a class in a Master Gardeners program that old cemeteries are great places to go to see trees because there are no power lines. And so the trees grow into what they call their natural habit. So you get to see how they really would develop if they're not cut back and trimmed and all that sort of thing. And it was quiet. You don't expect a whole lot of carrying on to go on in one the cemeteries. So I would get up early and go for walks and watch the squirrels and the birds and the flowers, see the flowers and just stay connected, look up at the sky. And I began to, particularly in this period, for some reason, I decided to write haikus. I started writing little poems that weren't related to history, but that I turn my wonder of nature into poetry. And so I was writing haikus, and I began to take pictures of some things I saw, put the haikus on the pictures and share them with friends and they really appreciated that. And that helped a lot of them with their stress level during the pandemic time, because nature, we are a part of nature, and I insist on affirming that with myself and with others. And it has been a healing balm to always look up, look around and see nature. So that's what got me through and continues to get me through because I realize I'm a part of nature and there's beauty all around us. If we just take a moment to look. Nature's fantastic. That's how I got through.
33:34	**Recommendations for the Future**
Lonnie Rich:	Well, I guess maybe we should move to the last question about where as a country do you think we need to go ?
Marcia Cole:	Forward. I sometimes see it as though it's like Sisyphus, where he's pushing the boulder up the hill and you think he's going to make it and it rolls back down. Every time I think we've made a great change, then there's a hoo and a cry and a roar and a push back. And we're back in the same situation, it seems. Not much further along, with some progress, but not enough. And when I hear that the president before this one is planning to run again [Donald Trump] and the cheers that his announcement was met with, it makes me concerned because his thinking is not one that would be embracing of difference and progress, but would seek to roll the clock back. And I guess if he had his way, we would be back in the fields with cotton picking cotton again, because he sees any advancement of blacks or people of color as somehow taking away from the progress of whites. So if a black person has something that means a white person doesn't and white people should always have. And if there's anything left over for blacks then maybe some can have. But that kind of thinking is not forward thinking. And the world's too small for that. So

	we need to not allow that kind of thing to take over again, because it's very dangerous. I'm afraid of the danger that it may bring.
Lonnie Rich:	Well, I don't know that [Donald] Trump personally is a white supremacist, but he may be. Sometimes he acts like it, but he has unleashed a strain of white supremacy that has been there but been suppressed for a long time and has not spoken out as boldly as it has in recent years. And it's one of the uglier strains of American thought. That doesn't bode well. It's a concern. I think it's of concern to a lot of people. I personally think that what would help as much as anything would be for people to broaden their knowledge of actual American history. And get a clearer view of what our full story is. And it's not to say that we aren't a country that has done great things. We have. We have had great leaders. Most of our leaders are flawed people, just like we are. I mean, they all have their flaws. But they have moments of greatness and they do great things. Some of them do evil things. I don't understand the resistance to learning a full story, the good, the bad, the ugly, as opposed to a glorified version, a hagiography of our history. But the pure, only the good that's been done as opposed to understanding the costs sometimes of that good. And then there's another aspect of learning that I think would help people, and that is something that is happening on an individual level fairly recently. And it's the interest that more and more people have in their own ancestry. And I can tell you that I have now mapped [my ancestry] largely through my wife, who studied both her family and my family. And we've learned a lot of things that are of interest to us. I mean, one of the things that is very sobering for me is that on my side of the family, my family on my mother's side came to this country in 1620. But within 15 years, my family owned slaves and they did up to the Civil War. And it's pretty sobering. And I think that it would help if more people would learn their history. One of the things that I am trying to do is to find, because I am sure they are out there, that I have African-American cousins. Because if we owned slaves, that was a very traditional thing to do was that the masters had sex with their female slaves. I mean, they just did. And so I don't know that I'll ever be able to find them. But I would like to have a relationship if I can. And I think if more people did that, it would have an impact on their attitude toward African-Americans.
Marcia Cole:	So, one of the things you mentioned was you don't know why people are avoiding the history. And I think a big part of it is this country likes to think of itself as a spiritual country and full of good Christians, and they thump their Bible. You know, they hold it aloft and swear by the tenets of it. But then the actions that they actually perform do not speak well for their religion, their religiosity. So they don't want to talk about the reality because it exposes them as being hypocrites and they don't want to see themselves as hypocrites. So there's a resistance to that. They want to still

	see themselves as pious and whatnot. But a lot of the history is unpleasant, unattractive, and they will avoid it at all cost.

40:44	**Highlights of the Montgomery Trip**
Francesco De Salvatore: 40:44	Speaking of that history, can you both describe moments from the trip that stand out to you?
Lonnie Rich:	Oh, yes, I can. There were two things that stood out to me. The first one occurred on the first day when the representative from the mayor's office and the representative from the Chamber of Commerce came and spoke to us and basically described how Montgomery, as a city, has taken a horrible story, their horrible past and converted it into something positive. And they've made it a tool of economic development that has benefited downtown Montgomery and the suburbs around Montgomery to bring [tourists] because I think businesses and people want to go to a city that is honest with itself and is trying to do better. And that's what the, you know, the Legacy Museum and all the efforts around telling the civil rights story is doing and it reflects an ugly part of our history. It's about an ugly part of our history. But it is telling it in an honest way and addressing it. And that was my first aha moment. The second one was I thoroughly enjoyed our tour guides. They were great. They were all older African-American women. They were knowledgeable. They were sassy. They had strong voices. And they had walked the walk. They had experience. One of the tour guides, her name was [pause as Lonnie searches for her name]
Lonnie Rich:	I'll get her name here in just a second. Her name was Linda Lowery. She was the youngest person to walk from Montgomery, I mean, walk to Montgomery from Selma and in the march with Martin Luther King and others. Another of the speakers, tour guides, was Michelle Browder. And she is the artist and owner of Gynecology Park, which when I first heard we were going to Gynecology Park, I thought, "What in the world are we doing that for? That sounds kind of offbeat." But what it was, she was telling the rest of the story of Dr. Mills, Dr. Mims, [Lonnie is referring to Dr. J. Marion Sims] who was the so-called father of modern gynecology. The rest of the story is that he was using enslaved women against their will without anesthesia to operate on them for basically rape-induced conditions so that they could get back to being available to their masters. And it's a horrible story. But she [Michelle Browder] did these sculptures of three women who were representative of those enslaved women who had been, I would say, mistreated by this doctor. And that was all very interesting to me. How about you?

Marcia Cole:	Well, one of the most powerful things for me was the dinner we had on the Saturday before we departed. And the young lady, I think her name was April Hawkins, she spoke and she was very powerful. But at each place setting was a plate. And when you came in there for dinner, you wonder, what is this? Because of this little thing, looked like a baby carrot and a little bit of greens, a little bit of cornbread with some black-eyed peas. And there was also on this setting a boll of cotton, and there were other things. But we were invited to sample these things and it was talked about, there was a sugar cane in there. And the history of all these foods and things, how it impacted our history, black history. But it was the cotton bowl that we were asked to remove the seeds from. And that exercise alone, I only did one section, and that exercise alone was very, very powerful for me because if you hold a cotton bowl, you see how prickly it is. And if you are to pull the cotton out of those bowls quickly and you are to remove the seeds and the cotton is weighed, how much does cotton weigh and how much do you have to pick to meet your requirements? And so of just one section, I think I got eight seeds and I recall reading that if you didn't get enough cotton off the seed, if it was deemed that you left too much cotton on, the seeds, you were punished. So that was a real, you know, powerful come to Jesus moment. I said, "I imagined myself out in the field. Trying to rapidly pick cotton and this long sack behind my back." And so what that did for me was to appreciate those who went before, because had they not survived, I wouldn't be here. So Holocaust survivors will have said that surviving was resistance because somebody had to survive because nobody would believe what had happened if someone didn't survive and tell it. So I became very thankful for those who went before and what they endured so that my direct ancestors would have an opportunity to be and give me a chance to be. And so that was something I really, really appreciated and plan to use in the future for programing that I will be doing about slave clothing, because there's a whole lot of history, even just what the slaves wore. You know, they didn't just wear clothes. There was a reason why they had a sameness about them. And even in the clothes, there was supposed to be a distinction between what they wore and what the white people wore and the free people wore. And every distinction should be made, what they ate, what they wore, what they had on their feet, all these things. And I want to talk about that, include that cotton bowl in the presentation so they can see not to take anything for granted. Don't take anything for granted. Everything has a history. So that's my biggest takeaway.
48:04	**Closing Remarks**

Lonnie Rich: 48:04	Thank you. I've enjoyed this.

Marcia Cole:	Oh, good-
Lonnie Rich:	I've learned something. [Marcia laughing]