

CONSULTANT: Clarice Brown, a/k/a "Momma Bee"
AGE: 70
RESIDENCE: Durham, NC
OCCUPATION: Sells handmade bracelets
INTERVIEW DATE: July 28, 2016, approx. 2:45 pm
LOCATION: Durham Central Bus Station

I was standing in the waiting room at the Durham Bus Station with my microphone in hand, having just completed an interview (see Sharonda Arnold). Clarice Brown, a/k/a "Momma Bee," saw me and said, "Come talk to me!" So I did. Momma Bee is an elderly African-American woman. She was sitting behind a walker; the cross bar of the walker was ringed with beautiful, handmade bracelets. Momma Bee makes them. After general introductions, we began the interview.

What brought you to the bus station today?

Well, I ride the bus. I just got off the bus, waiting for another one.

Where are you headed today?

My theory is to go to Wal-Mart. *[long pause]*

Pretty simple [laugh]. Sounds good. Well, told you a little bit about what this is about; I don't want to tell you too much more, but I'm talking to people about people's memories from the turn of the century, when it went from the 1990s to the 2000s.

What happened and all that?

Yeah. So tell me, personally, what do you remember? Let's just start with New Year's Eve. What do you remember about that night? Or do you remember much about it, like where you were, what you were doing?

No, I don't.

Do you remember much about that time? Like, about when it changed from 1999 into the 2000s?

No, I'm sorry, I have a memory...I have problems with my memories. So I don't remember nothing.

[stumbling with words] **Oh, no, there's nothing wrong with – I appreciate you're talking with me. So given that, what do you remember from the 1990s? Does anything stick in your mind?**

No. I don't remember my...back down there.

I get the sense that Momma Bee still wants to talk, so I continue.

Okay. I hate to pry, but how far back can you recall?

Back in the day, it used to be better than what it is now, when I was coming through this world. That's what I *can* say. Wasn't none of what is going on now. Everybody loved, looked out for everybody. It wasn't a lot of killing and shooting. It wasn't like this. That's all I can say. It's terrible. God is soon...my Father is soon to come. Soon. Because of all what's going on around us. But when he comes, I'm going back with him. He protects me. They'll kill you in the daylight. It's a lot of stuff going on. I don't be out here at night; I watch my back when I'm out here in the daytime. And I don't associate with nobody. I stay to myself. I keep it moving and keep it real. That's all I can tell you. I'm waiting on the bus, me and my sister. I've got to get on Number 3 bus when it comes back in.

So it sounds like you think things were a lot better in the past.

It was. You could sleep with your door unlocked.

Did you live in Durham when you were a kid?

I've been here all my life.

What do you remember about growing up in Durham?

At this point, Momma Bee recalled her childhood and young adulthood in Durham. It was a fascinating and important conversation, but a full transcript of that section is beyond the scope of the Millennium project. She recalled picking tobacco, canning vegetables for the winter, sleeping with screen door open in the summer. She contrasted this with the problems in modern-day Durham. We discussed Momma Bee's bracelets and the color of her eyes (her irises are rimmed in a brilliant, royal blue).