

Hospital in Baltimore, Md. Within three months of his birth, the Taylor family moved back to their hometown of Lincolnton, N.C., a small town shaded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, cattle, tobacco and cotton farming. Lula Mae Miles, born in 1928, was living on her family's farm in Maiden, N.C., about 9 miles to the north of Lincolnton.

"We were happy," he said. "We had strong, loving families and everything you would need, except freedom. The South was segregated and no matter how you slice it, it was still segregated."

As Step'n Feicht, the lazy uneducated wrongly stereotyped Black character, premiered on film and the stock market crashed, the Taylors grew up peacefully while attending church and school — the foundation of their lives, they said.

They were aware of the racism that surrounded them, but choose to ignore it. They couldn't know that the "Black Muslim Movement," Duke Ellington and the big band era, "The Harlem Review" and the National Council of Negro Women's Organization were planting seeds for freedom elsewhere in the nation.

church. The following year, he was drafted into the Army and sent to Europe. In 1945, out of the Army, he used the G.I. Bill and enrolled at Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn.

That same year, Mrs. Taylor's mother died.

"She passed away and it was terrible," she said. "After that, I guess I just got my priorities right. I knew I was not going to milk cows or pick cotton for the rest of my life. That was not for me. I graduated from high school and went to beauty school and opened my own beauty shop and did very well. After all, they needed somebody to do black hair."

The Taylors said that right from the start of their adult lives, they were involved in their communities. They organized events for charity, worked for their churches, sponsored softball teams and other recreational activities for children and adults. They met one summer, as coaches, when his team played her team.

"We bear them good," Mrs. Taylor said.

The next thing they knew, they'd fallen in love. "I just knew there was something about him that I liked. He really had something."

Tennessee or we can go to Jamestown," he told her.

"I wasn't going to go to no Tennessee or Georgia or Alabama or anyplace in the south. If I did that, I might as well stay right where I am," she said. "They were lynching people in some of those places and I was not going anywhere near there."

The couple said it didn't believe it would happen for them at that place and time. The decision to move to Jamestown was difficult because they didn't want to leave their families and friends, but the works they wanted to do and the opportunities they needed to have could be attained if they went to Jamestown.

"We were willing to work hard and volunteer to help the cause of social change," he said. "We just couldn't live in segregation any longer."

Even though Mrs. Taylor had a successful beauty shop and Vivian had become a military veteran and an educated man with employment opportunities throughout the south, they chose to move.

"I even had acquired a 'white benefactor' to provide funds for a softball field since Negroes could not play ball," he said. "Say it like this, we got to the point where we felt it was just silly to live with this segregation. It was not for us."

In October 1950, Taylor left his wife and got a job in Jamestown. In the meantime, Mrs. Taylor sold her beauty shop and made plans to follow her husband as they had planned. By November, she



their daughter, Layton, in 1952, with relatives who came from North Carolina and family and new friends in Jamestown.

"We would spend all of the holidays together," they said. "We had the best times."

"We had wonderful friends and neighbors," he said. "That year, the Supreme Court ruled through the Brown versus Board of Education case, that 'separate but equal' schools were unconstitutional. The cases ignited a firestorm throughout the nation, for a variety of reasons. The Taylors already knew their children would go to school with all of the children in their neighborhood."

attend their school, the Taylors bought the home where they still live at 31 W. 18th St.

They were neighbors to the families of Geneva Mitchell, Marcus Lynch, Thomas Enzinger and Raymond Woods. Richard Dubois lived next door and he was one of only three people on the block with a telephone. His number was 885. When the nation was stunned by President Kennedy's assassination and Medgar Evers, the leader of the Jackson, Miss., chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was murdered, Dr. Martin Luther King led a 200,000-people march on Washington. He later received the Nobel Peace Prize.

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Above is Vivian Taylor when he graduated.