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SECTION E

The Washington Times

Black Georgetown

By Gail A. Campbell
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When Pauline Gaskins Mitchell and her lifelong friends walk the streets of Georgetown, they see beyond the chic shops and expensive homes that shelter a white elite.

These children of Georgetown remember a bustling small town with "a black business on just about every corner," a lively, diverse community splintered by real estate speculation that began at the close of World War II.

"The black people in Georgetown do not refer to the houses here as belonging to the present owners," Mrs. Mitchell said. "We think of them as the residences of the original black families."

"We say that's the Jones' house or the Wharriors' house or the Gaskins' house," said Morgan Brown, a robust man born on 26th Street NW in 1918.

His most vivid memories and those of 50 current and former Georgetown residents will become images on the silver screen tonight when a 30-minute documentary premieres on the Georgetown University campus.

The film, "Black Georgetown Remembered," is one of numerous events planned to celebrate the university's 200th birthday, said Kathleen Lesko, director of programming for Georgetown University's Bicentennial Committee.

"No one's ever done this before," Mrs. Lesko said. "Nobody's focused on the black community. Nobody knew how significant it really was." The university found itself uncovering a history of local and national importance.

The filmmakers began the project two years ago, interviewing 15 black families still living in Georgetown. They were able to locate former

Pauline Gaskins Mitchell, still living at the family home on P Street in Georgetown.



Photo by Ross D. Franklin. The Washington Times