

Annie Williams

Interview with Mrs. Annie Williams of Bulloch County, Georgia, conducted by Dr. Alvin Jackson, originally of Bulloch County, Georgia, now residing in Columbus, Ohio. Williams is a former educator of Bulloch, Morgan, and Toombs Counties. Topics addressed include the history of Mt. Zion AME church, the politics of Bulloch County's education system, and Mrs. William's experiences in Bulloch, Morgan, and Toombs Counties.

Alvin Jackson: Ok, today is April 7, 1994, we're in Statesboro, Georgia, at the home of Mrs. Annie Williams, who is a long standing teacher in Bulloch County, is a former teacher of Bulloch County. In fact, she was a former teacher at the Willow Hill School. I would like to interview her today to get some of her past recollections about teaching in Bulloch County and former years, and also some information on her background, her history and her education. Ok, Mrs. Williams, it's really an honor to be in your home and as I was saying before, I've been working on a project on the history of the Willow Hill School for quite some time, and over and over your name come up to me that your former students have talked about you as being one of their best teachers or their favorite teacher or what a good teacher you were. So, I really had it in my mind for quite some time to do an interview with you and get some of your recollections. Now, let, lets start, first of all, with your early life. Where were you born?

Annie Williams: I was born 12 miles from here. Out '24. In Bulloch County.

AJ: In Bulloch County?

AW: Yes.

AJ: And who were your parents?

AW: Rose and Riley Williams.

AJ: Rose and Riley Williams. And what was your mother's maiden name?

AW: She was Rosa Harris.

AJ: Rosa Harris?

AW: Yes.

AJ: And your dad was Riley Williams. Now where, are they all originally from Bulloch County?

AW: Yes. A church, the AME church out there? His grandmother was a slave, and the slave man, he let, let ground for a church. Mt. Zion AME church.

AJ: Oh...Mt. Zion AME church.

AW: AME Church, out 12. Out on 24.

AJ: Ok. And this is your grandmother or your...

AW: My great-grandmother. My father's grandmother was a slave.

AJ: Your father's...what was her name?

AW: Her name was...I can't recall her name just now. But it was given to, before, before she passed, he gave her all the records of the church, from the beginning to the end. And he has the number of ministers, and the number of superintendents, the number of pastors, the number of [unclear], and everything in that.

AJ: Ok, now this was your great grandmother?

AW: Yes. She was a Haggins.

AJ: She was a [overlapping]. Ok, what was her name?

AW: A. Haggins.

AJ: A. Haggins. Ok. Is that related to those Haggins who were ministers?

AW: No, not necessarily. Now, the Haggins in Savannah, they were relatives. The father was a Baptist minister, Reverend Haggins in Savannah.

AJ: Right. Now that's of the same family?

AW: Yeah. They are relatives. They were relatives.

AJ: Ok. So your mother was a slave, and she was a slave woman owned by...

AW: My great-grandmother was a slave, now, not my mother.

AJ: Ok. And who was she owned by? Do you know the white man's name?

AW: She was owned by Hearney. Hearney.

AJ: Hearney. Ok.

AW: Jack Hearney.

AJ: Jack Hearney. Ok.

AW: And he gave her that land for the church because they were going around slipping, praying and going on. And he caught them doing it. And so, all of them were 12 relatives. And he continued to let them do it. And so when Emancipation came, he gave them 1 acre, 2 acres for a church and 1 acre for a schoolhouse and they began. And the first church was a log cabin [unclear] and the next two were board churches, then they bricked it in.

AJ: Oh. Isn't that interesting. Interesting piece of history. So she was a Hearnen, and then she married a Haggin? Your slave grandmother?

AW: No. No, she was a Haggin, she was a Haggin.

AJ: Ok, she was a Haggin.

AW: She was a Haggins.

AJ: Ok, now do you know who she married?

AW: I don't know. That would be in the history. Because my grandfather, he didn't have that. [unclear]

AJ: Now so, your great grandmother, the line came through your grandfather?

AW: Haggins. My father.

AJ: Your father.

AW: My father. That was my father's grandmother. And before she died, he was a good boy, and he, she, I have some of the writings that she left for him. And it's in my file now.

AJ: Oh really? Isn't that wonderful?

AW: Yes. And he, she had all the minsters, everybody, the first people joined the church and everybody. Out of the history of it.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful?

AW: Of the church.

AJ: That's very wonderful. Now who was your mother's people?

AW: They were the Harrises.

AJ: The Harrises.

AW: Now, now they came from Virginia.

AJ: They were from Virginia.

AW: From Virginia. And she married a Harris.

AJ: Now how many, your mother, how many brothers and sisters did she have?

AW: Well, she had 2, 3 brothers and 2 sisters.

AJ: And 2 sisters.

AW: One brother lived in Savannah. All of the passed. And one in Kansas. And one in Virginia.

AJ: What were their names?

AW: One was named Sammy, Sammy Royals.

AJ: Sammy Royals.

AW: And Jenkins, Buddy Jenkins. And the others were Wrights.

AJ: Why did they all have different last names?

AW: Yeah, they all had different last names because those two were my, my grandfather's children. And then the Wrights, my, my grandmother. My grandmother was a Wright. So, she married and she had 2 girls. And then she married a Harris and had one girl. And then the Harris, after that person died, the Harris married a lady and he had 3 sons. So, it's, it's a long history.

AJ: It is a long history. Ok. Now, your, your mother, what was your mother's name again?

AW: Rosa Lee Williams.

AJ: Rosa Lee. Williams?

AW: Harris. Williams.

AJ: Harris-Williams. Ok. And, you said she had three brothers and two sisters.

AW: Two sisters.

AJ: Ok. Now, and your mother married...

AW: Harris.

AJ: Harris. And she was a Williams before she married the Harris? Ok.

AW: No, not my mother.

AJ: This is your grandmother?

AW: Now, my mother was a Harris before she married a Williams. See, because I was a Williams.

AJ: Your mother was a Harris before she married a Williams. Ok. Alright, now, how many children did your mother have?

AW: My mother had 5 children. She had 2 girls, who passed at infancy.

AJ: Now, what were their names?

AW: Rosa Lee was name and the other wasn't named. And then Veronica, my sister...

AJ: And she was the oldest then?

AW: Talmadge was the oldest boy. And then Veronica, and then me.

AJ: Ok. Ok. So those are all the ones she had. And then you're the youngest.

AW: Yes, I'm the youngest. And she has a, she raised another boy, called her son, W.R. Williams in Savannah. He's our brother, but he was adopted when he was 2 or 3 months old.

AJ: Ok. Now, do you know who his biological family is?

AW: Now they were, I don't know exactly. But they were, I don't recall.

AJ: Ok. Ok. Now, did your, were you, were y'all the first group that went to college or did your mother or one of them go to college?

AW: My mother and father did not go to college, but my Aunt Lizzie went to college.

AJ: Now, that is...

AW: That's my father's sister.

AJ: She went to college?

AW: She went to college?

AJ: Do you know where she went?

AW: She went to Savannah. That was Georgia State, I believe, or whatever it was. And she went to Morris Brown.

AJ: Ok, and you don't know what year she would have gone?

AW: No, it was a long time ago.

AJ: Ok, ok. And then so, what, is that where the inspiration came for you going to college, and Ms. Veronica?

AW: Well, inspiration came from my mother and father. They always wanted us to go. And then on the other hand, when we would go to Sunday school conventions, and at that time they would have essays, contests and so forth, and so when I was in high, when I was in junior school, junior high, the Bishop heard me speak and he said when I finish high, when I got through tenth grade, he'd give me a scholarship. So I spent 7 years at Morris Brown. 3 years in high school, 4 years in college. So, I have, I had a scholarship for high school, college, and 21 summers in summer school, and he would pay 2 summers in summer school.

AJ: Oh. Isn't that wonderful? Now, where did you go to elementary school? Where did you start off in school?

AW: Here. I went in Bulloch County. Out in the country.

AJ: What was the name of the school?

AW: Out in the country. At the church.

AJ: And that was at Mt. Zion? That was where you, that was the very first school you went to?

AW: Then I went junior high at Collins, Savannah.

AJ: Savannah?

AW: Through 9th grade. 10th through 12th, Morris Brown. They were having high school then. And from freshman on, 4 years, college at Morris Brown.

AJ: At Morris Brown.

AW: And then I began teaching, I taught 2 years in Screven, 15 years here, 15 years in Toombs County, and 10 years in Morgan. [laughter]

AJ: Oh. Well, you've been around! Now what was your, you was in English? What was your major?

AW: I was in English. But, after being in English about, maybe about 10 or 15 years, there was a scholarship for those people who wanted to go into counseling. At NYU and Chicago and anybody in the States. And so I applied. I applied NYU. Nevertheless, I'd had my Masters and 6 years specialization at NYU in English Education.

AJ: Oh, you went to N, New York University?

AW: New York University. Yes. And in applying, they wanted to put counselors in every high school. And I applied and there were over a thousand applicants at NYU and they selected me as one of the 30. One of the 30 to attend.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful? Oh, that's quite an accomplishment.

AW: But, I think the reason I was there, they said I was a good student. And one time they was selecting students to go certain places and they wanted to know what have you done? Not in the schoolroom. Something that, it could be from the schoolroom, but something that didn't have to do that you think you accomplished. And I told my instructor that I thought I accomplished something because I was a senior adviser of the high school and my students went to Washington in '54, and they were sitting in the Supreme Court when the decision was read.

AJ: [gasps] Is it true? They was in, in '54, your seniors?

AW: Sitting in the Supreme...no school were there but William James and Howard University. 2 schools were there. Yeah, we were sitting in the Supreme Court.

AJ: That's historic information. I never knew that. Isn't that wonderful?

AW: [laughter] You never knew that? [unclear] You know. Some of them have forgot it but the children were so happy. And coming back they were singing, oh we were all so tired, and they were singing, I

would have stopped them, but they were so happy. And see, there, we went to so many different places, now. You know, went to the White House, went to the Empire State Building, they went to Washington Monument, I meant the Washington Monument, not Empire, Washington Monument. And I told them, I said, "Now, don't walk up the stairs." But they walked up those hundred and twenty, whatever, stairs, walked up them and they were tired. And so, we, I rode up some of them, but they wanted to say that they'd walked up. But it was nice. They were tired when they came down but we still went on our tour.

AJ: Oh, that's very wonderful. I'm glad to really get that history. Now, you taught for a short while at Willow Hill didn't you?

AW: Yes, I, how many years? I think I taught 3 years at Willow Hill. But anyway, when the English, see my major was English, so when they later left high school here, the superintendent asked me to come to Statesboro, and so I stayed in this county for 15 years. And then I went to Morgan County, and stayed there, I taught there 15 years. And 10 years I taught in Morgan County, and really, in Morgan County, I did counseling there. And one year, \$87,000, we got an \$87,000 scholarship for the students to go to college. That was before they integrated. There were 3 counselors there, and in integration they selected me to go to the high school. But the first place, I was on 2 agendas. One to be the assistant principal of a high school, of a counselor, and the community got with them, the Board had already elected me assistant principal, and said they didn't want me to be the assistant principal, to chastise students, they wanted me to be the counselor, where I could help students. [laughter] And I didn't want to be the assistant principal, for that was just work, the principal's work, you know, I didn't want to be that, so I was the counselor there. And then when I left, they had an Annie Williams's day, Morgan County did, for Annie Williams.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful? That is wonderful. Now, so, do you remember what year you finished at Morris Brown?

AW: '34.

AJ: In 1934.

AW: [echoing Jackson] '34. And I attended summer school 22 summers.

AJ: 22 summers.

AW: 13 at New York University, 1 summer at Georgia Southern, 1 summer at Middle College of Georgia, 2, 1 summer at Fort Valley, 1 summer at [unclear], 2 summers at AU, 1 summer at [unclear], 2 summers at the University of Kansas. [laughter] See, now, the state, if you were qualified, if you could get in, if they admitted you, the state would pay it, you see. The state would pay your tuition.

AJ: So they were paying your tuition when you was going to summer school?

AW: They were paying it at NYU, every bit of it. They paid the tuition, they paid every bit of it. And one summer, when I got the scholarship for guidance, that was from the government in Washington. They

gave that. And when you walked in the class that Monday, they gave you \$100. [laughter] But you had to pay for your room and board. But they paid for your schooling, the tuition, and your transportation.

AJ: Well, shoot, that wouldn't be much, to pay room and board, and you get all that paid. [laughter]

AW: Oh, no. And back then, it wasn't anything. And I was staying with my cousin. And she didn't charge me anything but I gave, I gave her a good bit. She gave it back to me, but when I left there, I just left it on the dresser. [laughter]

AJ: [laughter] Ok now, so when you first graduated from Morris Brown, did you, what was your very first teaching assignment?

AW: Screven County. Two years.

AJ: In Screven County. And what, you were teaching English there?

AW: English.

AJ: Ok. And then after you left Screven County, what was your very next assignment?

AW: Toombs, Toombs County. Taught English there.

AJ: And how long were you there?

AW: I stayed in that County for 15 years and one year the superintendent had to leave, and he wanted someone to present the certificates to the graduating, graduates of the high school, and he selected me.

AJ: Oh, isn't that wonderful? That is wonderful.

AW: I was surprised. But the principal say he wanted me because I had had a welcome [unclear] and he liked my speech and he wanted me to do that.

AJ: Now, so, you finish in '34, so about '35, '36, you was in Screven County. And then for the next 10 years you were in Toombs County?

AW: The next, it was 13 years. I was in Toombs, then I came back here and I went back to Toombs for 2 years and then I went to Morgan County.

AJ: Now I'm trying to figure out what time period were you at Willow Hill.

AW: Willow Hill. I was there when I left, when I left Toombs County.

AJ: So when you left Toombs, you came back to...

AW: Came to Willow Hill.

AJ: Ok. Now, who was the principal there at that time? Now, see that should have been about, that would have been in the '40s.

AW: Mr. Lawton was the principal.

AJ: Was Mrs. Dominics there?

AW: Mrs. Dominics?

AJ: Mr. Carter wasn't there, Mrs. Dominics, Mr. Wells, Mr. Hughes...

AW: Mr. Wells was there. And Mr. Wells and Mr. Hughes.

AJ: Well he might have been the principal.

AW: Mr. Wells?

AJ: Wells was the principal at one time.

AW: Yeah, he was...

AJ: Hughes was the principal at one time.

AW: Yeah. I was there, Wells and Hughes. Wells was there before Hughes. Hughes came and left and then Lawton was there.

AJ: Then Lawton came? So you was there during that time period?

AW: Yeah, uh huh.

AJ: Ok. Now, when you were at Willow Hill, they were in the old, wooden building.

AW: Yes, they were.

AJ: Ok. Where did you live up there? Did you come back to Statesboro? Or did you live in somebody's home?

AW: I lived, one year, out there, with the, I lived one year out there, but I commuted after, the next 2 years I commuted.

AJ: Ok. But one year you lived in somebody's home?

AW: I lived out there, uh huh.

AJ: Do you remember, and I know this has been so long ago, cause this was in the '40s, I'm sure. Do you remember any of the teachers there at that time, other than...

AW: Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Royals, Mrs....

AJ: Mrs. Ruth Hall was there?

AW: Mrs. Ruth Hall was there. And the lady who got [unclear].

AJ: Mrs. Eva Moore?

AW: Eva Moore was there. Wells, and Mr. Lawton was Ag teacher I think at that particular time. See there wasn't too many teachers there.

AJ: Mrs. Ramble wasn't there though?

AW: Mrs. Ramble.

AJ: She wasn't there.

AW: No, she wasn't

AJ: Mrs. Diggins wasn't there.

AW: Who?

AJ: Diggins?

AW: Diggins, no.

AJ: Ok. But Mr. Wells, Mr. Hughes. Mr. Carter wasn't there, was he?

AW: Mr. Carter. [noise of disagreement]

AJ: Ok. Alright, but you lived in somebody's home around there that first year, and then the next 2 years you commuted?

AW: Yeah, yeah.

AJ: Ok. Now were you living in Statesboro at the time you was commuting?

AW: Mmhmm. I was living in Statesboro.

AJ: Ok. So...

AW: I was living in Statesboro. I had a home in Statesboro. But I would go, my parents lived in the country, so I would go to the country with them.

AJ: Ok, they was still living, the Williams?

AW: Mmhmm. But they moved to Statesboro later on, after they got ill and couldn't care for themselves.

AJ: What year did your mother die? Approximately?

AW: It must have been about 15 years ago.

AJ: Oh, your mother lived a long time then.

AW: Yeah she lived a long time. She was 80 years old. My father was 80 some.

AJ: Oh, so they lived...

AW: My birthday is on the first of June, I'll be 86. [laughter]

AJ: Oh my goodness. You look wonderful.

AW: Ah, yeah, I'll be 86.

AJ: My goodness. I would have never known that. Your skin looks so good.

AW: 86.

AJ: You don't have the skin of someone, like, look...

AW: I'm 86.

AJ: 20 years younger.

AW: I'm not...I'm 85 now. First of June.

AJ: But you look, you look 20 years younger.

AW: [laughter]

AJ: Wow. That skin...looks good. My goodness. So, now, Ms. Veronica was your older sister.

AW: Older sister.

AJ: Ok, now, she went to college also.

AW: Yeah, she finished Fort Valley State College.

AJ: Now, she went to Fort Valley.

AW: And she had one year at [unclear] University.

AJ: Ok. Now, who, did she finish college before you?

AW: She finished after.

AJ: Oh, you went to...

AW: She began teaching before she finished college. You know, then, you could teach after you had 2 years. And she, she went on to summer school and got, you know, her degree.

AJ: Now, you never taught at any of them church schools like she used to teach at, did you?

AW: Yeah. Before, I taught at Noah's Ark.

AJ: You taught at Noah's Ark?

AW: That's after I finished high school.

AJ: Ok, so, oh. You taught at Noah's Ark?

AW: Noah's Ark. That building down there, and I forgot the lady I lived with, but anyway I taught one year, and then I went back to Morris Brown.

AJ: And then you went back to Morris Brown?

AW: Well, I got a scholarship but it was too late to, you know, go in and take it then.

AJ: So, you taught one year at Noah's Ark. Were you the only teacher there?

AW: Yeah, one teacher school, [unclear] most everywhere but here.

AJ: And then, your sister was teaching at one of those one teacher schools, too, so she [unclear] Free Chapel?

AW: Yeah, she was at Free Chapel, she was at Free Chapel, and some other school too I think she taught. But she taught here at William James too.

AJ: Now was there anybody else in your, did any of your other brothers and sisters teach school?

AW: No, no other brother [taught] school, no other brother.

AJ: Ok, ok. Now that, so then were, you were a counselor at William James in '54, and then you took the senior class to Washington.

AW: Yes.

AJ: And, when they read the Supreme Court decision outlawing desegregation in the Brown versus Board of Education decision, you were sitting in the Supreme Court when that was read?

AW: And my students. And Mr. Jordan, the principal. You remember him?

AJ: Mr. Jordan. I've heard of him and I know a lot about him, but I've never personally met him.

AW: [chair creaks, makes words unclear] It was so interesting. He came out and said "Mrs. Williams. I didn't understand what he said, but I know what he meant." [laughter]

AJ: [laughing] Oh, that was pretty good. Well, that, that is about as important a thing that could have happened to anyone and I can see how you could say that that was one of the high marks in your life because that decision alone really changed so many things.

AW: Yes. And that's the reason I was recognized at NYU, cause they were telling what they had done, and when I told what I had done, he just stopped, he said "That's it." And he remembered, he remembered this. He remembered the schools from Georgia and remembered that there wasn't but two schools there. The instructor, because he was an elderly man.

AJ: And that was Howard and William James? Isn't that interesting?

AW: And Howard was there. You know, they, their school was...

AJ: [overlapping] They were, they were in Washington. Yet you come from so far away. So, you got your inspiration for wanting to go into teaching from your mother?

AW: From my mother, and then from other people too. I'll tell you what, when I was in college, I wanted to go to Africa. I took all the education and everything in the AME Church, everything, along with English and Math, but after I started working, I eliminated that. But that's, that was my whole aim, was to go to Africa.

AJ: Ok. Now going back down to the AME Church and, and all, now when y'all were little children, whose place did y'all live on? When you were growing up as a child. You're daddy had his own place?

AW: I never lived on any other place but my daddy's.

AJ: Your daddy had his own farm?

AW: Own farm.

AJ: Mr. Williams had his own land?

AW: Own farm.

AJ: Now where did he get that? Through his parents or?

AW: He worked for the Hodges out there and he just made money, he paid down, he paid cash for it. But first, I think it was about, it must have been about 30, 40 years. And then they called it a big road, further out there, about 40 or 50 acres there, so he bought that.

AJ: And this was down toward Mt. Oliver?

AW: Oliver.

AJ: Oliver, Georgia.

AW: You know where Mt. Zion Church is?

AJ: Mt. Zion. I've heard of it. I've never been to Mt. Zion.

AW: Well if you go out 24, you'll find...

AJ: How far out there is it?

AW: It's 12 miles.

AJ: 12 out 24. Is it right by the road?

AW: Right on the road. Crossroad. Pavement, each way. Cross that way and that way.

AJ: Ok. And so y'all lived in that neighborhood?

AW: Further down the road about a half mile.

AJ: Ok. Now, your daddy's mother and father, that's your grandparents, you remember them?

AW: Uh uh. I don't.

AJ: You don't remember your grandparents?

AW: I don't remember them.

AJ: Now, your mother's mother and father, you remember them?

AW: I, now, I remember the father. But not the mother.

AJ: You remember your grandfather?

AW: My grandfather.

AJ: Ok. On your mother's side.

AW: On my mother's side.

AJ: Now tell me again what his name was?

AW: Harris.

AJ: Harris.

AW: Warren Harris.

AJ: Warren Harris. But he was not a slave person.

AW: No, he wasn't, he wasn't a slave, I don't think.

AJ: That's very, very interesting. Now, do y'all remember the Depression? Were you living during the Depression time?

AW: Yeah, that was, yeah I remember that.

AJ: The 30s.

AW: Yes, we did have, had to ration off things. Yeah I remember that.

AJ: But when you're living on the land, it makes it a lot easier cause you can grow food.

AW: It was easier, but still we had to ration, cause I remember sugar, they had to ration that. And see, we'd always liked drinks, you know. And other things that they would ration, but we had plenty. Cause we had good gardens, you know. [unclear] and canned goods, so it didn't bother us.

AJ: Ok. Do you remember the tornado of '29?

AW: Came through that, came through here?

AJ: Uh huh.

AW: Uh huh. It didn't get through us, but I remember my mother waking my father up, but my father didn't get up. And the next morning we went down, down and saw where it came through. It came near, about 3 miles from our house out in the country, cause it went to the riverside.

AJ: Did you know anybody who died in that?

AW: No, I don't remember. But I know some people did pass then. I don't remember their names. You know when you get older, you don't remember as well.

AJ: Oh, you're doing quite well actually. Your memory is good, your speech is good, and I think you're doing, I'm really surprised that you're 85 though because your skin is real smooth. And you know, I've always heard that the kind of skin you have does better, you just don't show age or anything.

AW: [laughter] But I'm that old.

AJ: That's wonderful. So you are able to cook for yourself and...

AW: Well, listen, my niece and nephew do the cooking.

AJ: Ok, and they bring it to you.

AW: And see they get here and say "I'll wash dishes. No, you..." I don't say anything. Let them go and wash the dishes. I don't, really I don't do anything, I can, I don't do anything since they do it. I don't do anything.

AJ: Do you drive?

AW: Yes, I drive.

AJ: Oh. Ok.

AW: But I drive. But I say I'm going to stop driving. You know, when you get a certain age, I think people should stop driving. That's what I think. Course I drive, I still drive. And I still have my, you know, driver's license.

AJ: License.

AW: And I still have my car. That's my car out there.

AJ: Oh, that's wonderful. Well you got a big house too [laughs].

AW: [laughter]

AJ: And so, Mrs...your sister died. When did she die?

AW: She passed about 10 years ago.

AJ: Oh, she's been dead that long?

AW: Yeah, she's been dead about 10 years, I believe.

AJ: Ok, so you're the only one alive? Of your brothers and sisters?

AW: Yeah, only my stepbrother in Savannah.

AJ: Your stepbrother.

AW: Uh huh, my nephew just called me before you got here, my sister's son, and was telling me about he's been ill but he's better.

AJ: Ok, and she's buried at Mt...

AW: Mt. Zion.

AJ: Mt. Zion Church. Ok and that's where all the membership has been.

AW: My great great grandmother was buried there. She was one of the first ones buried there.

AJ: Do you know where they grave is and all?

AW: Uh uh. No. No. Back then they didn't, and now, but they have them now, tombstones up over. But then, I know then, they were covered up. Lula Beaumont, did you remember her?

AJ: I don't know her.

AW: She taught. And somebody was trying to find her grave and they couldn't find that.

AJ: She was a schoolteacher?

AW: She was a schoolteacher.

AJ: Used to be down at Mt. Zion?

AW: She used to be in the county. When the superintendent passed, she could sing, and she sang at his funeral, way back then.

AJ: Lula Beaumont [?]

AW: Lula Beaumont [?]

AJ: Was a black school teacher. In the county. And when the superintendent died she sang at his funeral? Do you know which superintendent?

AW: I can't recall the superintendent's name but...

AJ: But it's a white superintendent?

AW: Yeah, yeah, he's white, uh huh. And she had a beautiful voice.

AJ: About what year would she have died?

AW: Oh, gosh, I was young.

AJ: You were a little girl?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: When she died but she was a school teacher?

AW: And she was mine, I went to school at 2 years old, she was my teacher when I was 2 years old.

AJ: You went, you went to school that early?

AW: Yeah. See my mother and father, working on the farm, and she taught at Mt. Zion, and see my sister was 5, she could go with my brother, and see my mother didn't want to stay there with me, so she just sent me on to school. I remember she gave me an almanac, and did you know I learned to read out of the almanac?

AJ: Oh really? Mrs. Beaumont, that gave you that almanac?

AW: Uh huh, that's my father's first cousin.

AJ: And she's your father's first cousin? What is her mother's name?

AW: Ellen Haggins.

AJ: Ellen Haggins.

AW: She was, she was sister to this other Haggins. My great grandmother.

AJ: Your great grandmother. And what did you say her name was? Your great grandmother?

AW: Her name, she was a Haggins, she was, I forgot the first name now.

AJ: Ok, but they were sisters?

AW: They were sisters.

AJ: Well, that's interesting. And your great grandmother was a slave woman.

AW: Oh yeah, she was a slave. But see, they, Kerney was very good to his slaves.

AJ: What's his name?

AW: Kerney.

AJ: Kerney?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Now, why would her name be Haggin, and he was named Kerney? Didn't they use to name the slaves after them or what?

AW: I don't know what happened there. But I can tell you this. My father, grandfather, and his brother, they, they were brothers and they were slaves. Grandfather. And I don't know what the name was but he went in, my great grandfather went in his master's name, and the other brother went in the other master's name. And so there was a Williams and a Garby. You've heard about the Garbys?

AJ: No, I didn't hear about...

AW: Well, Williams and Garbys. That's, one brother went in the Garbys, and one brother went in the Williams. That was the group. Way back there.

AJ: But they were brothers, and they both were slaves.

AW: [unclear, overlapping] Great grandfather now. After, after, the, they took them, one slave man, one, they took the children, you know how they...

AJ: Used to sell them to different places and all.

AW: And so that's what happened. So when they went there they had to take their master's name. They took the master's name. But I don't know what they would have been, if they had stayed together, I don't know what they would have been.

AJ: Right. Goodness. Who were some of your classmates down at Mt. Zion? Do you remember any of the names of the children you went to school with long ago?

AW: Yes, but most of them, Lottie Fennell, do you know her?

AJ: Uh uh.

AW: Well, Lottie Fennell is still living, and, who else is still living?

AJ: Well they don't have to be living, living or dead, who were some of your classmates?

AW: Oh, Lottie Fennell, the [unclear] Trembells, the [unclear], the Childers, the Robinsons, and oh just [unclear]. But not too many, now, Lottie is ill but she's, she's living. Uh huh, cause she is an active

member of Mt. Zion. She's living. And who else? Oh, Lucille. Lucille was not my classmate, she didn't, but because she came from South Carolina. Lucille Salve, do you know her?

AJ: Uh uh, I don't know her. I know...

AW: George Salve's wife.

AJ: Ok. I know her.

AW: She came from South Carolina, when she came there, so, she came there in her low 20s, I imagine, and she's been active there.

AJ: Is she related to Mr. Nelson Salve?

AW: That, Nelson Salve, you know, yeah, that's his sister in law. See, that's George Salve was Nelson Salve's brother.

AJ: I see. Is he still living?

AW: Who?

AJ: George, Mr. George...

AW: No, he passed last year.

AJ: Did he? He was pretty old then, wasn't he?

AW: Yeah, he was right old, uh huh. But he was still active til he passed.

AJ: Ok. Alright, so then, is the membership at Mt. Zion still pretty active?

AW: Yeah, it's still pretty active. We had, I believe, about a hundred people there Sunday.

AJ: Ooh, that good.

AW: Course, that was, that was Easter Sunday. But on the first Sunday, they're, they are pretty good.

AJ: Who's the mother of the church?

AW: I don't know. They don't ask for the mother of the church.

AJ: They don't do that like they used to do?

AW: They don't ask for the mother of the church, so...I imagine Lucille and I would be about the, we about, we the oldest ones there. Lucille and I. I don't know how old Lucille is, but we would be about the oldest ones, you know, active in the church there now.

AJ: Were there any other schools around Mt. Zion, that when you was growing up, any other little church schools near there, or any other schools? What about Jerusalem, was that near there?

AW: You know, they had schools at all, most of the churches then. And up there, New Sand Ridge, they had a building up there, at New Sand Ridge. You know where New Sand Ridge is?

AJ: Uh uh.

AW: Well that's not far from Mt. Zion. But that meant, they had more teachers there. New Sand Ridge. But that was about 4 miles from our school.

AJ: Did you know any other teachers, other than Mrs. Boone, at Mt. Zion? Do you remember anybody else after her or before her?

AW: My aunt Lizzie taught there.

AJ: Lizzie Williams?

AW: Uh huh. That's my Aunt Lizzie, what went to Morris Brown. And...

AJ: Ok, and that was the first one that you know in your family that went to school, and this was your daddy's sister? And she was Lizzie Williams. Did she marry anybody?

AW: Uh uh, no, she didn't marry. She died young.

AJ: Ok. And, but she taught at Mt. Zion. Ok, now, would she have been there before Mrs. Boone, or after?

AW: She was there after I moved, because I was in school when she was there.

AJ: Now what year did Mt. Zion Church start, do you know what year the church started?

AW: 17, let's see, I have it here somewhere. 17 [papers rustles] all of this stuff here is where I made my study.

AJ: Now this is the Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church. Ok. 1870-1993. I'm going to read this so I can get it on my, on my thing, if you don't mind. I want to get it. "During the 121 years of Mt. Zion's existence, it has come a long way. Let the changes in the 121 years of history [unclear] by changes that were to take place in years to come but members as a whole were free to make plans for the future. The ex-slaves who started out on this Christian journey were conscientious people who believed that they lived lives of righteousness. God was just they believed, but would punish evil doers. The church was the center of the social life. They wanted to worship in their own way, but all of them had one thing in common. They had a dream of a new life and a freer life. These freed slaves finally became accustomed to certain rights which they had. They began to build homes, churches, amid the dangers and hardship of an unsettled wilderness, strengthened by love and freedom. During the 121 years, most of the members were stern and God-fearing men and women. they had great influence on the ex-slaves." Alright, "The beginning of Mt. Zion, organization of Mt. Zion AME. During slavery, the slaves of Mr. Jake Kerney, K-E-R-N-E-Y, would hide in their little houses, go to the woods, or in a secluded place and have prayer meeting and worship God as they had seen in the white churches. Mr. Kerney found out that

they were doing it. He decided to let them continue, although it was a custom for them not to gather in groups. Being of the same family of relatives of 12 on his plantation, he let them continue to serve God. Shortly after emancipation in the year of 1867, the colored people had been converted on the plantation of their master and had a good view of worship in the church. Mr. Jake Kerney opened his heart to Mrs. Florida, Mrs. Floria Haggins, the choice spot for which 3 acres were given. 2 acres were given for a church and 1 acre for a school house. These 12 relatives, along with some other ex-slaves, began having prayer meeting on the spot. They continued praying and serving God as they saw fit. They continued this vision for several years. During this time, quite a few had joined the 12 relatives. This group asked Reverend Shepherd and Reverend Williams to come and organize the church. Thus the Mt. Zion AME church was organized March 2, 1872 by a few faithful Christians who were devoted to God and the principals of righteousness. These few God-fearing people living in this unsettled wooded area of Bulloch County were devoted in their Christian beliefs. They believed in God, in the crucifixion, the resurrection and the redemption of man. With this belief, the pioneers were continually seeking a way to serve. Reverend Shepherd and Reverend Williams were ministers from Savannah, Georgia, who organized the Mt. Zion AME on March 2, 1872. The first thing on the agenda was what denomination did they want to affiliate with. Mrs. Haggins, for who the acres were given stated that we, that "We wanted to be AME's." All the groups accepted. This group had heard about Richard Allen and they were very impressed with what they had heard and read about him. Next on the agenda was the naming of the church. One man got up and said that he had heard the name Mt. Sinai [? unclear]. People thought he meant Mt. Zion. This was the oldest man in the church so all agreed to name it Mt. Zion. Later the church had a revival, and this particular old man, Mr. Eason, E-A-S-O-N, heard the visiting minister preach about Mt. Sinai [?]. He told them what he, that he enjoyed the sermon, it was not until then that the pastor and members understood what he meant. The name was never changed. Until this day it is Mt. Zion AME Church. Mr. Eason was never told of the mistake. Reverend Williams, the first minister, did much to shape the course of Negro religion in the Mt. Zion AME Church. He came in a time when a large number of Negroes were being converted to Christianity. The past had played a very significant part in the social and religious development of Negro life. Preaching was an outlet for leadership ability. It did much to keep aspiration alive in Mt. Zion. The pastor was able to communicate religion to the freed slaves in a useful and intimate form. Being one of the people, and suffering with them, he could make religion not only a discipline, but also a living hope, a living realm of hope. His preaching was very hard. While reaching to the ex-slaves, he could not attack slavery, at least openly. Although they had been freed, the pastor was closely watched as a principle source of rebellion. Nevertheless, he kept alive consciousness that the slave system was wicked, kept alive the hope of a good and just God, and the wicked and brutal system under which they lived would have to go away. The Mt. Zion AME Church has been built 4 times. 1) Bush Arbor. 2) Log Church. 3) Board Structure. 4) Board Structure. The church was remodeled 3 times. 1) Asbestos sliding. 2) Brick-in. 3) Floors, carpet, and covered roof. Number one, Bush Arbor..." This is an excellent history. Excellent. I'm just enjoying this so much! I'm just really enjoying this! "Bush Arbor. The members of Mt. Zion were not able to build a modern structure, but they were determined to have a place of worship. So they got together and build a bush arbor. Since they had to work hard for a living, it was only on Saturday that they could work on their church. Their ex-slave master gave them trees, nevertheless, it took them a long time to build the church. Here at this church, they began serving, giving praise to God in his Highness. It is unknown how long they served in

this bush arbor. The second church was a log cabin. This structure, it is said, coped with the times. The members were very happy about their new church. During the times that they worshiped in the log cabin, their membership increased so fast. Later, they decided to build another church. The third church was a board structure. The members rested assured that they were keeping up with the times. It was a very nice church. It stood for a long time, until a storm came through and blew it down. The fourth church also was a board church. The members were not prepared for this incident and many hearts were saddened. But they had some energetic young men who belonged to the church. The young men had a baseball team and they would play ball on Saturday afternoon, and sell peanuts, sandwiches, drinks, and ice cream, in order that they would have money for the church. When the senior members of the church found out what was being done, they were very proud. The young people had \$250, and that \$250 went a long way. With \$300 they began building a new church. Finally, it was finished. The seniors of the church entertained the young people because they realized without them, the church would not have been built so quickly. It was said that the stewards of the church let the young people, with the advice of the pastor and senior members of the church, organize a Mt. Zion AME Church building fund club. Later, members put asbestos siding on the church and later bricked it in. Most recently, the church has wall-to-wall carpet and the roof was covered. It must be noted that the ministers of Mt. Zion and other were also responsible for the success of Mt. Zion. They labored night and day to accomplish their goals. One minister, Reverend McCormick left \$4,000 in the church treasury to buy approximately an acre of land next to the church to build an education building. Other ministers had been raising money, in order that they can build an education building, namely Reverend Roberts, Reverend Wilson, Reverend James, and Reverend Hays. Some ministers would give their monthly salary to help meet the needs of the church. Bishops of Mt. Zion AME Church: 1) Thomas Meyers Decatur Ward, 2) J-A-B-E-Z Pitt Campbell, 3) William Fisher Dickerson, 4) James Alexander Shorter, 5) Wesley John Gaines, 6) Abraham Grant, 7) Henry McNeil Turner, 8) Charles Spencer Smith, 9) Joseph Simian Flipper, 10) William Alfred Fountain, 11) Robert Richard Wright, 12) Sherman Lawrence Green, Jr., 13) William Reed Wilkes, 14) Ernest Lawrence Hickman, 15) Richard Allen Hildebrand, 16) Harold Urban D-E-A-R-D-E-N Dearden, 17) Frederick Hilburn Talbat T-A-L-B-A-T, 18) John Hurst Adams, 19) Donald George Ming. During the 121 years, 5 bishops have visited Mt. Zion AME Church. Bishop Henry McNeil Turner, Bishop William Alfred Fountain, Bishop Harold Urban Dearden, Bishop Frederick Douglas Jarden, Bishop John Hurst Adams. Bishop Turner and Bishop Fountain spent many weekends in the rural community of Mt. Zion. Presiding elders of Mt. Zion: 1) Reverend Drayton, 2) Reverend Taylor, 3) Reverend Strickland, 4) Reverend Stokes, 5) Reverend Lawton, 6) Reverend W.O.P Sherman, Sr., 7) Reverend W.T.N. Smith, 8) Reverend B.M.S. Taylor, 9) Reverend Powell, 10) Reverend B-E-M-O-R-Y, 11) Reverend Singleton, 12) Reverend Sampson, 13) Reverend Alexander, 14) Reverend R.V. Branch, 15) Reverend J.L. Lindsey, 16) Reverend A.W. Woods, 17) Reverend R.V. Branch, 18) Reverend A.L. Sampson, 19) Reverend W.O.P. Sherman, Jr., 20) Reverend J.L. Butler, Sr., 21) Reverend A.J. Johnson, 22) Reverend J.S. Edge, 23) Reverend J.S. Bryant, 24) Reverend A.B. Wilson, 25) Reverend J.L. Butler, Jr., 26) Reverend L. Strickland, 27) Reverend J. Snowden, 28) Reverend R.L. Palmer, 29) Reverend T.J. Kent. Mt. Zion has two father-son presiding elders of the church, Elder W.O.P Sherman, Sr., W.O.P. Sherman, Jr., Elder J.L. Butler, Sr., [tape cuts off] Continuing with the history of the Mt. Zion AME Church, and I was just saying that the Mt. Zion had two father-son presiding elders of the church. I had spoke of the Shermans and then was talking about Elder J.L. Butler, Sr., and Elder J.L. Butler, Jr. "Pastors of Mt. Zion: 1) J.W. Williams, 2) George

Christburg, 3) C.C. Hutcherson, 4) Isaac Godwell, 5) Jim Brown, 6) J.C. Collins, 7) Russell Young, 8) Darrell Duncan, 9) Abraham Martin, 10) Jay Reed, 11) W.M. Jefferson, 12) Gene Martin, 13) Harvey Rice, 14) N.A. Farmer, 15) L.D. Shellman, 16) P.D. Davis, 17) G.W. Davies, 18) E.P. McCray, 19) C. Johnson, 20) J.W. Moultrie, 21) J.W. Robinson, 22) D. Felder, 23) R. Brady, 24) S.L. Solomon, 25) S.R. Dinkins, 26) A.R. Cooper, 27) G.W. Grant, 28) H. Holly Brooks, 29) C. Burke, B-U-R-K-E 30) E. Edgefield, 31) T.J. Ison, 32) J.M. D-R-U-G-L-E, 33) A. Fosler, 34) J.W. Mincey, 35) A.J. Barnett, 36) J.S. Bryant, 37) J. Walker, 38) W.M. Floyd, 39) R. Allen, 40) M. Connick, McCormick, 41) Marcus Burke, 42) J. Wilson, 43) J.A. Robert, 44) J.L. James, 45) J. Snowden, 46) E. Hayes. Local preachers entered the ministry at Mt. Zion: 1) Reverend Martin, 2) Reverend Steve Keller, 3) Reverend D.L. Walker, 4) Reverend S. Handy, 5) Reverend Steve Garby, 6) Reverend E.D. Bailey, 7) Reverend G.W. Bailey, 8) Reverend J.S. Bailey, 9) Reverend C.A. Moore, 10) Reverend Willy Rawls, 11) Reverend J.H. Young, 12) Reverend Jesse Lundy, 13) Reverend Ogletton Childers, 14) Reverend Theodore Childers. Reverend Theodore Childers is the only minister living today. Superintendent of Sunday School at Mt. Zion: 1) L. Walker, 2) J.M. Bailey, 3) G.W. Bailey, 4) L. Ward, 5) A.J. E-D-M-A-N-S-O-N, 6) J.S. Bailey, 7) Elliot Bailey, 8) Jules Stapleton, 9) L.W. Bailey, 10) F.D. Williams, 11) Selena Williams, 12) Eliza Childers, 13) Rosetta Benjamin, 14) Lottie Fennel, 15) Lizetta Hayworth. The following are stewards, trustees, and officers of Mt.Zion when the church was organized: Maya Eason, George Wilson, Silas Night, Flora Haggins, C. Wilson, J.N. Kenny. During the history of Mt. Zion, there have been 19 bishops, 29 presiding elders, 45 pastors, 14 began their ministry at Mt. Zion, 15 superintendents and more than 200 stewards, trustees, and stewardesses. These are members of Mt. Zion AME Church whose relatives were among the organization of the church, namely: Arnette Tremble, Olivia Corker, C-O-R-K-E-R, Beulah Walker, Rosamae Trember, Annie A. Williams, Agnus A. Young, Will M. Young. Conclusion. With this great history, the members of Mt. Zion should strive for higher heights and continue to strive in this rich history interpreted from their forefathers, who like Richard Allen and others, placed the church as a solid foundation. They should build their standards high in order that they can reach the skies and success will be waiting to carry them to their victory." Wow, that is exceptional. "They should think that the dreams and hopes of the last hundred years were good, but they must also realize that they were not good enough. One writer has well said, 'I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do somethings. What I can do that I ought to do, and what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do.' " Oh, this is totally exceptional. It was so good. Once you start reading you can't stop. [laughter] And I wanted to get it recorded. This is very, very good.

AW: I didn't think, I thought you was just going to read the introduction.

AJ: Oh, no ma'am. You know, if I start reading something and it's good, I'm not going to stop, because I want to get that history here. It was so well done. It was [unclear]. In fact, I've read many histories of the church, and I have to honestly say that is the best one I've ever read. It is well put together.

AW: Somebody, you know it was sent to the state cause we were going to have a history of all the churches. And some of them say this was one of the best that they'd gotten yet.

AJ: It was.

AW: Because of the fact we started from the beginning at slavery.

AJ: Absolutely.

AW: And some of the churches just start, we start building the church. That's what I was told. And some things, that were minor, I left out. Some minor things I left out. But, you see, you can tell most of those things were from what my father had. And see, he kept all the bishops and everything. And the fun of it now, when I started writing history, I had to go back and name those other people myself, cause I hadn't kept up with it. But I knew them, see, cause I was here. But he had, before he passed, he had all of them.

AJ: Now was your daddy the history of the church person? Was he...

AW: Every Founder's Day he would tell the history of the church. He would talk it, he wouldn't, you know, he would tell it. But he still had it written down, like the bishops and so forth. He had it written down. But he would tell it. And see, because they, really the land was given to his grandmother, grandmother, the land was given to his grandmother cause she asked him, you know, and he gave it to her, because she was somewhat educated. She worked around the house and see, the children went to school and some of them went to college, you know, whatever, higher education. And she got everything that they learned, and she knew, and she was the first secretary of the church. So by her being the maid, and she had to see after the children, when they go to study, she was right there with them to study. And everything they learned, she learned too. And she was very well educated.

AJ: That's wonderful. Oh so you really come from a strong tradition of education in every sense and that's why, well you've certainly meant a lot to a lot of people, like I've said, I've certainly heard your name many many times. And, you know, they were saying way back there that you just stood out because your teaching was so superior to what a lot of the other teachers were doing at the time.

AW: Yeah, I would see that they'd get it, and I would explain it to them, you know. But now some of them didn't like it because I was too hard on them. [laughter] But when they got out...

AJ: They liked it then.

AW: Said, "Mrs. Williams, you know I thought you were hard but you were right." Because one student went to college and took English, they said she was one of the best in the class. Because of the fact of the background.

AJ: Exactly. And they, sometime folk don't like it then, because it's hard, but when they look back they say, "Oh, that was just what I needed."

AW: But, I've always been just a scientific evidence, even in college. That's the reason Bishop, Bishop Fountain, when anything went wrong, I know one time they were having, you know, [unclear]

AJ: No, no it's alright, no problem.

AW: We were having meetings and, [unclear], and Bishop Fountain was just wrong, he was just wrong [laughter] and, anybody asked, "Bishop Fountain!" "Alright, little Annie." I just told him. "You been against me?" I just told him, "But that's wrong Bishop Fountain!" [laughter] And everybody had a laugh. Say "I'm going to whip you!" [laughter] And every, every time a scholarship, I would get it, everything, I would get it. Now when, when I graduated, there were two places I was accepted in Atlanta, but I didn't want to teach in a large place. And Screven and Vidalia. So, I went to Screven, but later on I went to Vidalia, cause the man asked me, kept on begging me to come. And, and there was a conference there, during Bishop Fountain's time, so I read the history, I read the welcome from the school and the president wasn't there, and the president came and he said, "You should have been here to hear little Annie read." [laughter] But I tell you now, yeah, I was a little mischievous in college, want to know why? Because everything I do here...One time, I know one time, we were just dancing, and you know there was a lot of people who danced, oh we were just dancing, and you know I like to waltz, [unclear] came back to find up waltzing, dancing. He went over there, so we had to meet the committees. We had to meet the discipline committee. You know they were tight at that time. And I sat on the end, I sat right on the end, "What did?" "No, we were just so-and-so." "What so-and-so?" "We were just so-and-so." When it got to me, I say, "Come on President, let me show you how we were dancing!" [laughter] And President, let me tell you now, President say, or the Committee say, "You little devils you, get on out of here!" They start running, and then one person say, "Walk slowly!" I walk just as slow, just as slow, everybody was out downstairs, and I walking so slow. "You come back here!" I come back walking slow. Say "You running. Don't stop running until you get over there to the, to the dormitory." I ran, I ran downstairs, right by Bishop Fountain, went down by Bishop Fountain's office cause I know he was going to take up for me, ran over to the, he say "What she doing?" So the children told him what had happened. And he told them, "Don't ever take little Annie like that. Don't ever do that again!" And what did he want to say that. And I, we had, see that was our little game. And when get in the gang, I'd always get them out. I wouldn't tell a lie now. They knew I wouldn't tell a lie, but we had a bunch of fun. We wouldn't do anything bad. But just little mischievous things, you know, cause dancing they didn't like, they didn't want us to dance. They'd want us to prom, but not to dance, but we were dancing. Uh huh.

AJ: Well that was very interesting. And that's why he took, only because he knew you would tell the truth, and you were a straightforward type of person. [laughter] That's funny stuff.

AW: And he was, he was my favorite Bishop. Naturally though, because he was responsible for my getting scholarships, and you know it was the time of the Depression then, and people didn't have any money.

AJ: Now you graduated in, what did you say '30-what?

AW: '34.

AJ: Ok, now, there was some others, the Clarke and Morehouse and Spellman, all those was in it. Did y'all ever interact with any other campus while you were there?

AW: Oh yeah, my schoolmate was a Spellman, a friend of mine, I'd go over there and she'd come over to see me all the time.

AJ: You remember what her name was?

AW: Alma, what was this child's name...Alma Floyd, I believe. Alma Floyd. We finished 9th grade in Savannah. She went to Spellman and I went to Morris Brown.

AJ: Ok. So you finished in '34. Now did you know Mrs. Maynell Dixon? She went to...

AW: Maynell Dixon?

AJ: Yeah, do you remember her?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Now she was up there in Atlanta sometime around that time, I don't know if it was around the same time.

AW: Uh huh, Maynell Dixon. She wasn't up there at the same time but I know her.

AJ: You know of her?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Now you remember Mrs. Julia P. Bryant?

AW: Oh yeah. Mrs. Julia Bryant.

AJ: Now, do you, you ever heard of Jeanes supervisor before?

AW: Uh huh. I know, I know, when [laughter] now this was a long time ago, when they had the teacher of the year, and, someone wanted me and someone wanted her, I think, or something. But anyway, they selected me as Teacher of the Year.

AJ: So Mrs. Bryant? [laughter] Oh did they? Mrs. Bryant didn't like that did she?

AW: But she was, she was, she was something. She was something, though I don't know what. Seems like she was Teacher of the Year one time though. But they did select me. And then I was Teacher of the Year in...

AJ: Toombs

AW: Toombs County. And I was one of the top counselors in Georgia in an integrated system. Because there's no school in Georgia who had got a scholarship for \$87,000 for the students. And see that was before integration. And I, we didn't have but 75, and almost 50%, almost 25% of those people went to college.

AJ: Oh, that's wonderful.

AW: And then I was talking to someone the other day, and out of that class, 15 are college graduates.

AJ: Wonderful. Wonderful. Now...

AW: And I have one, when I went to, went to Toombs County, there's a little fella there, lived back of us, you know, that time, you had woodstoves, and he lived back of us, and every time he's see smoke there after school, he'd come over there, he'd come over there and eat, you know. And he'd bring in the wood and coal and he'd ask us what to do but it, and we'd give him supper all the time but his mother had 7 children, and each one had different daddies. Uh huh. But the oldest girl had finished high school, and then she went to Florida and she graduated from college in Florida. But some of the others didn't do well, but this little boy went on, he told me, say "I want, shore want to go to college. But you know, I can't go to no college." He's going around bare footed anyway cause we had to get him something to [unclear]. So I say, "Listen W.T. You go and register for the Army right now. Go right now and register before school's out so when school's out, you can go." He did and he went. And now he's, he's in, he graduated. I had his...Let me see, I don't know where I can find his thing or not. But I think...so much junk here...see I been writing and looking...

AJ: Well, that's wonderful, just...

AW: Well I have his...somewhere here. Where he...[unclear]...where he went to school. Where he went to school and graduated. But anyway, he taught at Howard.

AJ: Oh, he taught at Howard? Was one of your students?

AW: One of my students. I wish I could find that thing.

AJ: Isn't that interesting.

AW: I know I had it.

AJ: And you taught him over in Toombs County?

AW: Uh huh. Toombs County. One of my first students. And I know I had that here somewhere. Well, they had the, where they had the, reunion. I didn't go.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful then? He was a teacher over at Howard University?

AW: [overlapped by AJ, unclear] Uh huh. But he's retired now. But I have that information here somewhere.

AJ: That's wonderful. Now you, which, you retired from what, Toombs County?

AW: Morgan County.

AJ: You retired from Morgan County. Now you said you worked in the integrated system?

AW: Uh huh, yeah, I worked in the integrated system about 9 years.

AJ: How did you enjoy that?

AW: Oh child, that's my best years.

AJ: Oh really?

AW: That's my best years. You know, say what you want, cause you see, I'm a person that vote for the right thing, and then do right, I'd go for it. One time, the man was teasing me, say "Ms. Williams, [unclear] go on the educational list there." I don't know where that thing is now. I sure don't but I would like for you to see it though. On the educational lists. And so he say, "Ms. Williams, I'm going to fire you." That's what the superintendent say, but he's teasing. I say, "Imma fix you." I say, "Superintendent, granted that would be perfectly alright. I can do better than this. See what I can, this little small town? No way." [laughter] He 'bout fell out. And he say, "Ms. Williams, you know I was just joking." I say, "You better be joking. You try to fire [01:05:37]me, I'll sue you and break the county." [laughter]

AJ: [laughter] So they, you got along real well with them over there, huh?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: And so, you were a teacher or a counselor at the, when you was in the integrated system?

AW: Counselor. Full time counselor.

AJ: So you had time to counsel white and black?

AW: Yeah. Uh huh. And some came to Georgia Southern. The man told me, said "Ms. Williams, I want you to help some of the black students." I say, "Well, I didn't come over here to help black students and not white students. I came over here to help students." I don't know where that thing went.

AJ: Uh huh. And any student who wants some help, you going to give them some help?

AW: Uh huh. I don't know where that is but I wish I could find it. It's somewhere in my junk drawer. It's somewhere here, I'm just looking over it. But anyway, this fella, he's retired. And he, he got his doctorate, and he taught, taught overseas, and he taught at Morgan, Morgan...

AJ: In Baltimore?

AW: In Baltimore.

AJ: You remember, what he name was?

AW: C.T.

AJ: C.T.? What was his last name?

AW: C.T....What was C.T.'s name?

AJ: But he was one of your students from Toombs County?

AW: Toombs County. The first person I ever helped. Cause I helped him, I told him what to do to go to, you know.

AJ: Uh huh. Now, what is the county's seat of Toombs County? What is the...

AW: Vidalia.

AJ: Oh, Vi...Oh, that's over at Vidalia, Georgia.

AW: Yeah, I had, that's here somewhere. I just wanted you to see it. But I can't find it so, [unclear].

AJ: Y'all ever have reunions up at Morris Brown?

AW: Yeah, you know what, we should have this 5th, of, this is...

AJ: '34, '44, '54, '64, '74, '84, '94. This would be the 60 year.

AW: Uh huh. [unclear] Aren't too many people, too many of them living. Cause I had a letter from Morris Brown in all, in all the, that had passed. Some of them could have been living though and didn't like the means.

AJ: Richard Allen. Well then, that was kind of unusual for, to have AME's in Georgia at that time, when they first started down there, wasn't it?

AW: Had what?

AJ: The AME's down in Georgia, when your, when your slave ancestors started that church. There weren't too many AME's around.

AW: No, they didn't have it in Georgia. See, they had heard about it and read about it. And see, this Bishop Turner, they had organized up the way, and they had heard about it. And that's what they did. They, after they heard about it, then they would, they, that's what they were doing when they said, when the man said he heard about it, and that's, that's it. And that's the reason they had the...and then too, I think too, that, I think too, that, here it is right here.

AJ: Ok. Dickerson Training School, Vidalia, Georgia. Second 1946 class reunion. Oh, they had that at Daytona Beach, Florida.

AW: Uh huh. And one of the students is a preacher.

AJ: Tribute to our late professor, a Mr. James Dewitt Dickerson, that what the school is named. And Professor James Dewitt Dickerson came to Vidalia, Georgia, in September 1904 and opened a school with 24 black students in the old fellowship hall on McIntyre Street. He was joined in the effort by his wife, Mrs. Gussie Hart Dickerson beginning in 1905 and the two of them struggled with the undertaking

but [unclear] the facility. Because of Professor Dickerson, [unclear], the local community raised \$6,000 and built in 1972 a two story wood school building, with 5 rooms, on an acre on 3rd Street. This was the first schoolhouse built for black in Vidalia. This school grew in population until a few years after occupying the new building, a nearby church was rented to accommodate the overflowing student body. This school also became a part of the city of Vidalia system, and was called Toombs County Training School. Professor Dickerson provided the leadership of the community to convince the WPA to build a large, modern brick building to accommodate the black school in Vidalia. This structure was completed in 1937 and contained 13 classrooms, an auditorium with a seating capacity of 500, a dining room, office, library, laboratories, restrooms and a basement. In honor of Professor Dickerson, the new school was named Dickerson Training School. We, the members of the 1946 class were indebted to Professor and Mrs. Dickerson for the influence they had on our lives." Oh, isn't that wonderful? And then they got the '46 graduating class [overlapping conversation] Oh. Isn't that wonderful? Dickerson Training School.

AW: I would have gone but I went someplace else that had, someplace else...

AJ: [unclear] class reunion. And so you were over there at Dickerson School round, in '46.

AW: Uh huh. Yeah I was there when it was dedicated.

AJ: This is the class of '46 here.

AW: That the [unclear] class, uh huh.

AJ: Ok. Class officers: John Prescott - President. Ok, you got the class roll, here. Class colors. The faculty: Professor J. Dewitt, Principal. Mrs. G.B. Dickerson, Assistant Principal. Mrs. A.A. there you are right there! Mrs. A.A. Williams. What does that second A in your name stand for?

AW: Agnes.

AJ: Annie Agnes.

AW: Uh huh. Agnes means holy.

AJ: Named for you, ok. W. Bryant. So y'all had a large faculty there? Maxwell Brown, Daniel Swinton, Coldpepper, Cooper. Hanson, Ray, Rutledge, Ferguson, Hays, Edwards, Bell, Brannon. Now were you the only one from Bulloch County?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: And most of these other ones were from...

AW: From other places.

AJ: From other places. Wow. Well, that's awfully nice that they keep a record. That's nice that they'd have a class reunion like that. And...

AW: These are the students now.

AJ: These are the students?

AW: Uh huh. The students that wanted to meet up.

AJ: Oh. Isn't that nice. Living all over the place. Somebody here is still in Lowndes, Georgia. And then we got this one in Miami, she lives in Savannah. Dr. William T. Howard, was he the one?

AW: That's the one.

AJ: Ok. Curriculum specialist, [mumbles] service and family practice. College of Medicine. Ooh. Howard University. Education: Bachelor's Degree, North Carolina A&T. Master's Degree, Specialist, University of Illinois. Doctorate, American University. Graduate of U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and Other Military Institute. Wow. Wow, he's done well hasn't he?

AW: [very soft, unclear]

AJ: He's done very well.

AW: And he was just a little barefoot boy, I'm telling you.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful?

AW: And I was so proud of him.

AJ: Has extensive experience in international affairs, working in Botswana, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Liberia, Indonesia, Nepal, Niger, Zimbabwe.

AW: [unclear] in Vidalia and at that time I think I went to California or someplace at the time they had that so he called over here and say he'd come and get me if I'd come and so they told him that I had gone on a trip.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful. That is so nice that he keeps in touch, you got, [unclear] Jackson, Director of Other Classes. Oh, they put together a nice program.

AW: I thought it was nice. I just wanted you to see the fella I helped.

AJ: Nice program.

AW: That's the first fella I helped, right there. That was successful.

AJ: Well he certainly became quite successful, didn't he?

AW: Quite successful. And just to think that, his home environment, you know you can come out of any environment, if you want to make something of yourself, you can.

AJ: If you really want to.

AW: Uh huh and he did. But that, that Army helped him because he wanted to go to college, and see he went in the Army and see they paid for the college, his college education.

AJ: Uh huh. So you told him to go straight to the Army, huh?

AW: Straight to the Army. A week after graduation he left.

AJ: And he took your advice. Oh, he done made Colonel. He went high in the Army. So, it seems like everywhere he went he just rose in the system.

AW: Yes, that's the first person that I have helped, who did good.

AJ: That is wonderful. Morgan State University, professor of education. Director of Institutional Testing and Programming, Doctor Willy T. Howard, Jr. He lives in Landham/Seabrook, Maryland, 301459-57724.

AW: [in background, unclear]

AJ: The Division of Community Service and Family Practice, College of Medicine, Howard University. Well that's wonderful. My wife is from Maryland. You never know, you might run into him.

AW: Where are you living now?

AJ: I live in Columbus, Ohio. Yes ma'am. So, you never know...

AW: [unclear] Her brother went to Columbus, didn't he?

AJ: Hazel, you mean? Well, that was, maybe they were talking about me, because she didn't have a brother go there...

AW: You left here?

AJ: I left here and went there.

AW: You know, I remember you.

AJ: You do?

AW: You left, you was slender!

AJ: Yes ma'am, I used to be real slender.

AW: Yeah, I remember! Listen, you know, [laughter] you know, I remember you. You left, up there on the highway.

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: You were a little fella.

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: And you left and went up there?

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: I always ask about you. But you know I didn't know, I didn't know.

AJ: Yes ma'am, I used to be skinny. [laughter] I gained weight.

AW: Uh huh. I didn't know, surely I know you. Uh huh.

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: And ever I asked about here, cause I would always ask about you when I see her sometimes.

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: And did you know my grandmother or her mother, Bonnie Lee?

AW: Well, yeah, surely. Uh huh.

AJ: You remember her?

AW: Oh yeah, uh huh.

AJ: And, yeah, that's, yeah I went up to Columbus, Ohio, and that's where I am, up there working.

AW: Uh huh, well that's good.

AJ: Well, you know this has been very special and I really enjoyed that...

AW: If you come down here again, you let me know before you come, and I'm going to let you speak at my church.

AJ: Well, I'd be more than happy to do that.

AW: What area are you in?

AJ: I'm in medicine.

AW: Medicine.

AJ: Yeah, yes ma'am. I have an MD degree.

AW: Good. Well when you come down again, you tell me 2, 3....

AJ: I'll try to certainly do that, in fact, I'd certainly like to talk to you again because as I go back and listen to the tape, there's going to be more questions.

AW: [laughter]

AJ: And I can tell you, that history is the best history I have ever read of any church in Bulloch County. And I can say that without anything. It's so clear, it goes way back to the slavery times, and then it just brings it all the way, dealing with the buildings, the bishops, the ministers.

AW: But a minister told me, say "You oughtta have something that the minster's did." I say, "Now listen, all those ministers, I didn't want to leave anyone out. And I did say everybody helped." I say, "Because if I'd put one in there, another would say I didn't put them in there." But I did McCormick in there, you know why? Because he left \$4,000 to buy an acre of land, see...

AJ: That's part of the history.

AW: That's part of the history. But see, other things I didn't, you know, everybody did something good, but you just cant put, because when you start doing that you got to go back there. And see, my daddy didn't put what, you know, what they were doing, what everybody did. We just put that the church, you know, the people did it. So that's, that's the reason I didn't, but I did know some things that they did good, that I remember. But see, I was afraid to put it in there, afeared that I'd skip somebody. Uh huh. So if one person say, "Well I did this and they didn't put it in there." So they can't say a thing about that. Cause they have the names in there and I have everybody did something to improve the church, so, nothing happened.

AJ: It's so beautiful, I don't know how anybody can say anything about that, what a good job it is. It certainly is a good job. Well I'm going to go and visit Mrs. Young...

AW: I bet she wondering why you over here [laughter]

AJ: Well, hey, when you get good information, you don't move too fast [laughter].

AW: And I just now know who you were. You were a little, slender little boy about that high.

AJ: Little ol' slender something.

AW: You got taller too.

AJ: Yes ma'am.

AW: Uh huh, yeah, I remember you.

AJ: Yes. ma'am.

AW: Uh huh, no surely I remember you.

AJ: My grandmother raised me..

AW: Yeah, Mrs. Bonnie.

AJ: Yeah, because my mother, my mother got burned up in '51 up there.

AW: Uh huh, I remember that, uh huh, I remember that.

AJ: And, so after my mother burned, and we was raised by here, and I don't remember my mother too well, and of course that's why, my Aunt Hazel, we all lived in the house together because my grandmother was raising us.

AW: Now you mentioned Hazel, I say, "Well you must be somebody." You know. But I just thought to ask you about the little boy. I called him the Little Boy, I called you the little boy.

AJ: Yes ma'am, that was me.

[both laugh]

AJ: Yeah, got it, Granny and I have 4 children, my wife from Baltimore. She got a PhD from Ohio State and I finished medical school at Ohio State, and so, you know, we work up there, and we count on a vacation, and when I come on a vacation, I like to come around and collect history about blacks in Bulloch County and so I've been working on...

AW: Well, when you come again, you let me know a month ahead, and we going to have you at our church.

AJ: Well, appreciate that. I certainly would be more than happy to do that. I will certainly let you know, and that's one of the other projects I was very much interested in. That's why when I see somebody put some history like that together, that's good information because so many times, our heritage has been lost, it's been lost. And I'm working on this one on the Willow Hill School and I want to do a little bit of writing on the church schools like Mt. Olive, Noah's Ark, and Scarlet Grove, and all those kinds of places that have been lost, where blacks were educated in the early years.

AW: Uh huh, yeah that's right, uh huh.

AJ: And so, I went down to the board of education today and the only records they've so far been able to find, they can go back to 1938. So, they are pulling all those together for me, and they've got a list of all the church schools back then.

AW: Uh huh, that's good.

AJ: So, I'm real excited and they said they'll send it to me next week, they're going to mail it to Ohio.

AW: Uh huh, that's good, that's good. Well when you get it written up, you send me a copy.

AJ: Oh I would be more than happy to do that. In fact, you, you wouldn't have any old photographs of the Willow Hill School, would you? When you was at Willow Hill? Pictures?

AW: I don't think I do. If I do, I'm going to, there's something, some here. When you go, I'll look for something. Seem like I had some students, I don't know. If I can find them, when you go I'll look for them. If I find them, I'll call you and you can pick them up.

AJ: Ok. Ok. Yeah, now and what I do, I make copies of them and I give them back. Now see, anything you got on Willow Hill School. Any old programs, any pictures, anything, I would just like to get copies of it. I surely would.

AW: And if not now, then I'll send them to you. But I'm going to look in here, if I have anything, and then later on I'm going to look back here in this place where I have all my junk. Programs and everything and I'll send them to you.

AJ: Sure. I would be more than happy. Ok. And you can either get that through Mrs. Young's, I call her Mrs. Young, or my Aunt Hazel up there at Bulloch County. Anything on that, I'd be more than happy, cause I'm trying so hard to preserve this history.

AW: Well that's good, that's good, uh huh.

AJ: Well, this has been a very very special time...

AW: Well, I'm glad.

AJ: I really have enjoyed this, this is really great for me.

[both laugh]

AJ: Just to get a chance to talk to you.

AW: Well, I just enjoy, really I enjoyed my teaching here, but just as I said, you see, black principals don't like you to succeed too much, some of them. Now, Dickerson was right pushing me. But, this Hamilton, he pushed me out.

AJ: Did he really?

AW: Well, he didn't push me out, he was so terrible until I just left. I just left.

AJ: He wasn't a good principal?

AW: No. I tell you, I was a counselor there, and, you know, there was a girl, she came and she told me her problems and he was going to send the girl home. And I tried to tell him to wait until school was out, don't send her home now, she lived out in the country. And he sent her anyway. See, she had a stepfather and her stepfather was liking her and I told him, "You don't have to tell me 'bout..." but that's what I'm to do as a counselor, to keep the child from going...But anyway, something happened out there. I don't what happened, I haven't seen the girl, she left, I haven't seen her, you know. But, it, he shouldn't, he shouldn't have let her go.

AJ: No.

AW: Uh huh. So I say, "Well, if I can't be a good counselor, I just..." you know. So, at Morgan County, one time they had, I was on the administration committee, and everybody was for this boy remaining at school, this was a white boy, and I wasn't for it because the white boy had come, and oh he told me all

about the devil he'd done and what he's going to do if so-and-so do something. I say, "Sure enough?" "Yeah so-and-so, you don't know. So-and-so, so-and-so." You see, I smiled to get it out of him, and I got all, everything out of him. But I had both doors open cause I was scared of him, myself. So, in the meeting, I told them, "I think it would be best to send him off to a place where he could get straight." And so all voted for him to stay there, all voted for hiim to stay there. And a week after that, he and his daddy got into it, and if the daddy hadn't got behind a tree, he'd a killed him. Uh huh. And after that, anything I said, if I said it, it went. [laughter] Anything I said, it went. Anything I said because there was a white boy, 2 white boys. One boy was a doctor's son, but anyway they brought drugs to school. They wanted to expell the other white boy but the white boy who was a...

AJ: Doctor's...

AW: Yeah, they didn't want to do it. They said, "Well that boy ain't nothing. He ain't going to be nothing, no way." And so-and-so-and-so-and-so. I say, "Well we are here to help make him something. Make him somebody. And so they talked on, and talked on, and talked on, and talked on, and so I say, "Now, if you going to send him home, send him out, you got to send both out." I say, "Now, that's that. Both got the same thing, and he brought the drugs from his daddy's office." Uh huh. And so they decided to let him stay there, so one of the teachers, "You don't know. That man doesn't like black people. That boy's daddy doesn't like black people." And child, he came out there, he heard that I was the one responsible for his staying there, and he hugged me, say "Child, you the best teacher out here!"

[both laugh]

AW: So the lady say, "You, that old white man hugged you?" I say, "Well, I didn't know whether he was white or black when he was hugging me."

[both laugh]

AW: But I really enjoyed it, I really enjoyed it there.

AJ: There are quite a number of experiences that...

AW: Yeah I really enjoyed it because of the fact, things that I said, you know, and I tell you what there, having given so many scholarships, I tell you what, those students could just be cutting up in a class and I could walk by there and they stop, just quiet. Uh huh. Cause they know I would tell them to come there, I say, "Now don't come in here to me if want to go out there and play the devil. Don't come in here to me to help you out." But I'd always help them out when they'd get in trouble. [laughter] Even when they get in trouble and they know they're wrong, they come and tell me everything just right, uh huh.

AJ: Now, let me ask you this, just one other question. When you was making the class trip for them to go to Washington, I guess that was in '54, did y'all have to rent a bus?

AW: Yeah, we got a bus.

AJ: And then, this would be part of the senior class...

AW: Uh huh. We got a bus, rented a bus, Greyhound, and we, rode, and got a place to stay and knew how much it was. Uh huh.

AJ: And then so, you got a driver, and then y'all would drive there and spend, what did y'all stay there, about...

AW: Now, now, they furnished the drivers, the bus driver, company. See we got the company.

AJ: I see, I see.

AW: Uh huh. And they drove us around, where we wanted to go. You know, to see.

AJ: It was like you chartered the bus.

AW: Chartered. We chartered, uh huh. And you know in our looking, going around, the chartered bus would take us where ever we wanted to go. And see, this is, I forgot the man's name, but he was a state representative in Washington. And he outlined everything. That's one reason, he thought that would be there and he put us there, it was on Tuesday, I believe. He put us there at the courthouse, at the Supreme Court. But he outlined everything. Where we was to go everyday, he wanted to know how long we would stay there, when we would get there and everything.

AJ: How did y'all get in touch with that person in Washington?

AW: He lived here.

AJ: Oh, he was from Statesboro.

AW: Uh huh, he was a representative, state representative, Georgia state representative.

AJ: But he was from Statesboro?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Do you remember what his name was?

AW: I can't remember that man's name. But he was from here. Uh huh.

AJ: Uh huh. Now, Mr. Prince Jackson, was he ever the principal when you was at William James?

AW: Yeah. Uh huh.

AJ: What kind of principal was he?

AW: No, he wasn't a principal.

AJ: He wasn't a principal?

AW: No, Jordan was the principal. He left along with Jordan. Lord, he said when he heard that thing in the papers, say he wanted to know whether we were in there, whether we were in the courthouse, in the Supreme Court, when that happened. See he was teaching there.

AJ: Ok.

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Now what kind of teacher was Prince Jackson?

AW: He was good.

AJ: He was a good teacher?

AW: You know Mr. Stephens?

AJ: I remember him. Where is Mr. Stephens now?

AW: He's in Savannah. You know his wife passed about 2, 3 weeks ago.

AJ: I didn't know that.

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Mrs. Stephens. Mrs. Franki Stephens.

AW: Uh huh. Passed, and she, suddenly.

AJ: Just suddenly. And, but he, is he retired now, Mr. Stephens?

AW: Uh huh. Yeah, I think he retired. I know she's retired.

AJ: Ok now, were you, you were teaching around the time they all were teaching.

AW: Uh huh. We were teaching over there together.

AJ: Mr. Jordan was teaching.

AW: Mr. Jordan.

AJ: Where is he now?

AW: Mr. Jordan was in Florida.

AJ: He's in Florida.

AW: I hadn't heard from him recently, but he was in Florida. Uh huh. But he came here after he left to give an address to a group. But he hadn't been back since.

AJ: And then, so Mr. Prince Jackson, where is he?

AW: He's still in Savannah.

AJ: What is he, is he teaching?

AW: Well I haven't heard from him but Mr. Mr. I can't recall the name, but he's on tv, radio, and Jackson told him to come here so I could talk about the trip to Washington on TV. So I did, he came. This fella, Mr. Jackson told him, so he came to me, and I did talk on the radio about the trip to Washington.

AJ: Oh, isn't that nice. Now Mr. Hamilton, how, he came as principal after Mr. Jordan?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Now, how did he get the principalship? Was that...

AW: He came after Mr. Jordan.

AJ: Where did he come from?

AW: He came from Eastman, I think, Eastman, Georgia. And he and his wife separated after he got here, and he married a Brandywine girl.

AJ: Oh, he was already married to somebody when he came.

AW: Uh huh, but they separated.

AJ: Oh. And he married...is he still living?

AW: Yeah, he's still living, uh huh.

AJ: And then, now you worked for Mr. John Lawton up at Willow Hill?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Ok that was when you was up there.

AW: He was good.

AJ: He was a good teacher?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: He's in Atlanta now.

AW: Uh huh. Well, Hamilton is the only one who actually gave me a good bit of trouble. Uh huh. So I just went on and left, I just left.

AJ: So you made the decision to leave after that?

AW: But I tell you what, see they didn't have social security. Then you'd work but you didn't get social security in this county.

AJ: In Bulloch County?

AW: No, you don't get, I mean teaching is what I'm talking about.

AJ: Teaching.

AW: Teaching. Just teaching now. So I went, I went, I had 2 years in Morgan, Toombs County, and 10 years in...

AJ: Morgan.

AW: Morgan County. 2 years in Toombs, 10 years in Morgan County, social security. Uh huh. And see now, I get between \$800-900 social security every month. But if I'd stayed here I wouldn't have got nothing. Not one thing. And so it was good that I left here. Uh huh. So you know, \$800-900, when this other, when we get a raise in July I might get \$900. Uh huh.

AJ: Isn't that wonderful. That's wonderful.

AW: See I stayed there the maximum years, 10 years. You got to have 40 points to get it. And they give you four a year. Uh huh.

AJ: So that's more than enough to take care of you.

AW: Yeah, that's, uh huh. Along with teaching retirement, teacher's retirement.

AJ: Oh so you get that plus something else?

AW: Plus teacher's retirement.

AJ: Oh that's wonderful. That's exceptional because then you, you would not have even gotten the social security if you hadn't...

AW: I would only be getting teacher's retirement. But I go everywhere. I spend it, don't worry, that, I spend it. Last year I went to Columbus, Ohio.

AJ: Did you?

AW: Meetings. Church meetings.

AJ: Ok. Where was the meeting held at?

AW: Columbus, Ohio.

AJ: What was the church name? Was it first, first...

AW: At the AME Church.

AJ: First AME Zion Church.

AW: No just AME, African Methodist church.

AJ: Yeah but that was, you know, was the the one on Brighton Road?

AW: It could have been, yeah, uh huh. I believe it was.

AJ: On Brighton Road?

AW: Cause you go across, upstairs into the other building, from the, from the, where we lived, the hotel where we lived, you could go across to the Civic Center. Up...

AJ: Ok, so you were at the Civic Center?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: And that's where y'all had the meeting? Downtown?

AW: That's where we had the meeting.

AJ: Downtown at the Civic Center.

AW: Downtown. And I went to Texas, I went to Detroit...

AJ: That's a shame. I wish I had known. I live right there in Columbus, Ohio.

AW: Really? That's where, you live in Columbus, Ohio?

AJ: And I live right next door to the AME Zion Church. It's called First African

AW: Oh, Columbus, Ohio.

AJ: First African Methodist Church. And they just had a, Odenga Maddox used to be the pastor there, and then before him, Cameron Jackson was the pastor there. And they just got a new minister at this one in Columbus.

AW: I was wondering, I say, "Wonder do I know anybody in Columbus, Ohio." Some of these places I know people, and I...

AJ: But I live right there. That little boy from Portal.

AW: And you from. I just went there last summer.

AJ: And I was right there last summer.

AW: Columbus, Ohio.

AJ: Well ain't that a sin. I sure would have come downtown to see you and taken you around and had you to my house for dinner and all.

AW: Uh huh, that would have been nice, uh huh.

AJ: Well, next time, if you come back, now we'll know. [laughter]

AW: Ok, ok, ok. Well I didn't know, I didn't know anyone from Columbus. Uh huh.

AJ: Well, I'm gonna move on and talk to you, your niece. But I tell, this is wonderful, and I really enjoyed it. Now, this is your nephew, where is he now?

AW: That one?

AJ: Yeah.

AW: He's in Washington. You know he works for the government [unclear].

AJ: I didn't know that.

AW: He's retired.

AJ: Ok. He used to teach school?

AW: No, he didn't. This the one that teaches, Bill, that's the one over here, [unclear]. And this is my sister.

AJ: Ok. Yes I remember her.

AW: And this is Talmadge, the oldest son, and his wife. And this is his daughter, she finished Tuskegee. And this is Harold's son, he finished Hampton, and he's going now and graduate and work and Madison University. And this is Harold's wife, she passed.

AJ: Oh, did she?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: Oh ok. Now where does Mrs. Young live? What was her address?

AW: What? Oh.

AJ: Mrs. Agnes

AW: Agnes. I tell you, go down this street...

AJ: This way?

AW: Uh huh, to the end of the street, you turn right, and then go down to that street, and the house is on the corner of that street you go down and another one. Right in front of the school house.

AJ: Is it right in front of, what, Julia P. Bryant?

AW: Right in front of Julia P. Bryant. But it's on the corner. Of 2 streets.

AJ: Ok. And, you know what the number is?

AW: [unclear]

AJ: I'll find it if it's right in front of the school.

AW: Well, well, well, you go down this, and turn here...

AJ: Ok, go straight, make a right...

AW: And go down here...

AJ: To the next corner...

AW: And the house on the corner of that street there and this street here. It's right on the corner.

AJ: Ok. I'll get it. Well I certainly do thank you. I didn't know that she had built another house. I thought she lived here.

AW: No, she's been there several years.

AJ: Now who lives there with her? She and her brother?

AW: She live there by herself.

AJ: Oh, she built the house on her own?

AW: Uh huh.

AJ: And he...

[tape ends]