

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

***HISTORY OF THE COBB COUNTY BRANCH OF THE NAACP AND CIVIL RIGHTS
ACTIVITIES IN COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA***

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INTERVIEW WITH DEACON CLARENCE JASPER

COBB NAACP/CIVIL RIGHTS SERIES, NO. 18

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Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb NAACP/Civil Rights Series, No. 18
Interview with Deacon Clarence Jasper
Conducted by Crystal Money and Stephanie McKinnell
Thursday, 12 November 2009
Location: Jasper residence, Marietta, Georgia

SM: If you would first, tell us your first name and your birth date.

CJ: My name is Clarence Charles Jasper, and my birthday is March 25, 1931.

SM: Tell us about your family, your parents, growing up, what they did for work, things like that.

CJ: Okay. My father came from here, Marietta, but my mother came from a little town called Axon, Georgia. They actually met in the state of Pennsylvania. I was born in Pennsylvania in a town called Vandergrift. My father worked in the steel mill up there and my mother was a homemaker. There were four of us, three boys and one girl; all are dead now except myself. I came here in 1941 or '42. My father died—my mother died previous to that and she was brought back here and buried in Axon, Georgia and my father died a year later and he was brought back here in Marietta and he was buried in Marietta and my grandmother, who lived on Lawrence Street at that particular time brought us down here. The reason why she was on Lawrence Street, they used to live in a place called Jonesville, Georgia, which was right outside the city limits of Marietta, and during the War the land that they were on was sold to Bell Bomber, and Bell Bomber built the aircraft plant out there. They were forced to move here to Marietta, and so that's why they were on Lawrence Street at that particular time. From the age of thirteen I went to Lemon Street, well, it wasn't Lemon Street at that particular time, the high school was known as Perkinson High School and Perkinson High School was named after a doctor here in Marietta. The class I was in, we graduated in 1948. It was the last class that was called Perkinson High School. Right after that they renamed it Lemon Street and then it went out of business after integration came up. What else can I tell you?

SM: Tell us about growing up and living with your grandparents.

CJ: Okay. Growing up was, we went to school of course, I went to school at Lemon Street, and at the age of seventeen I graduated from Lemon Street and decided I'd go into the military. I went in the military at seventeen and I went to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky for basic training. After leaving basic training I went to Ft. Bliss, Texas. This was 1950 and I went to school there, was one of the first seven blacks to get a chance to go to guided missile school. We were handpicked from I think all over the country and there were seven of us and they picked us because we had math skills and all that kind of stuff. We went to that school and I got qualified as a missile person and after that I decided I didn't want that job, I wanted something else, I didn't like it so they asked me what I wanted and I said, "Well, I'd like to be in communications." So they sent me back to school and I went to communications and became a radio operator. There I started making rank. I

went from E-1, a private to a sergeant in nine months after I got out of radio school and they shipped me to Ft. Bragg. At that particular time I was the only black in the whole battalion. The whole battalion was white except myself. I stayed there for a year and I decided that I needed to move on. I came back from there to Ft. Bliss and stayed in Ft. Bliss till my time was up, my three year sentence was up—I call it a sentence because that's what it was—

SM: Ft. Bliss must have been the edge of nowhere then.

CJ: Well, Ft. Bliss at that time, I was sitting about eight or ten miles outside of El Paso. It was a great town, I thought, but I wanted to see some of the other world so I decided I'd leave. I got out of the service and I came back home. During that time I had gotten married with the girl next door to me. We sort of grew up together and we got married and this was in '51, and then I went to work at Lockheed for a short time, didn't like that, decided to go back in the army and I did.

SM: What did you do at Lockheed?

CJ: I was a riveter. I was in department 2113, all black at that particular time. That was the only black department they had at Lockheed and it was called 2113 and I didn't like that because of the fact that they were going to be unionized and I didn't feel like I wanted to be a part of anything like that so I said, "I'm going to quit." They said if I didn't join the union for that particular, I'd have to leave out of there. So they pushed me out. I didn't like where they put me so I decided to go back in the army and I did. I decided I wanted to go to field radio repair school so they said, "Okay, we'll give you a chance to go there," so they sent me to Ft. Gordon for six months. I graduated from Ft. Gordon radio repair school and then they sent me to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. Well, I got to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina and I didn't like that and I said, "No, I don't want to be here." So I was walking down the street one day and I see this sign blowing in the wind that says, get a college education. I said, "Well, what is this about?" So I went in and the guy says, "Well, yes, if you qualify we will let you go to college." So he asked if I was a high school graduate and I said, "Yes," and he asked whereabouts and I told him, "Marietta, Georgia" and he asked how big the school was and I said it wasn't very big, we were real small and so he said, "Well, I need some information from the school." So what I did, I wrote the school to Professor Woods, he was the professor at that time, he was the principal of the high school and he dug up the information I needed and he sent it. With the information I took, which was just coming out, something called the SAT. I never saw that thing before. They said, "Well, you're going to take this test."

SM: What year was this?

CJ: In 1953. I said, well, gee whiz, what is this test? I looked at it and half the stuff I didn't know, especially the math portion. They had gone beyond what I knew in math back in '55. But somehow I stumbled through the test and I passed. They said, "Well, okay, we're going to send you to school." So what I did, we packed my bags up and we went

to a little place called St. Leo, Florida and that's where I went to school for four years. I got out of that.

SM: What did you go to school for?

CJ: I just went. I got a degree in human resources administration. That was the first one that I got. I never did anything with it, I just got it. Then I came back and in 1962 they decided they'd send me to Europe. So in the meantime, backing up, I decided again that I wanted to do something extracurricular so they said, let's go to airborne school so I said, okay, I'll try that. When I got to Ft. Benning, Georgia the guy took one look at me and said, "You won't last a day. First of all, you're too small; you don't weigh enough and take a good look around because you won't be here after tomorrow." I said, "Okay." So as a matter of fact I was an E-5 at the time, I was a sergeant. He said, "Sergeant, you're not going to make it. You won't be here at the end of the two week period." So I took that in good stead and I thought, "I'm going to prove him wrong." So the first day out for two weeks I did everything they did. As a matter of fact, I broke my wrist. But what I did, I taped it up because I knew if I went to sick call they would send me away, they wouldn't let me complete it. So what I did, I taped up the wrist, taped up the hand, did everything I was supposed to do and I graduated. We graduated four days before Christmas and then I would come home. I came back here to Marietta and in Christmas of '54 I went to the 82nd Airborne and I was off and on at the Airborne school. I want to back up again. In '55 I forgot that I went to Japan. I went to Japan and stayed there for three years in Osaka, Japan, I stayed there and in '57 I came back to the 82nd and stayed there for three more years and went to Europe and stayed there for three years. I came back and in 1965 they decided, the people in this little town, I'll think of it in a minute, they decided they wanted to revolt. Santa Domingo. Santa Domingo in '65 they decided they'd have a little revolt over there and they wanted to kick the dictator out so they kicked him out. Well, it was the job of the 82nd that was the area that we were responsible for. So they took us and shipped us out to Santa Domingo.

We stayed there until we got everything quieted down and we were there until November of '65. I got orders to go to Vietnam. I didn't even know where that was. I'd never heard of it. So they asked me, "Do you know where you're going?" I said, "No, I don't. Where is this?" They told me and I knew that the Special Forces and all those kind of people, they were going there at that particular time, but they didn't have any regular army troops there. They just had Special Forces there. I said, "What in the world will I do over there," because I'm not Special Forces trained. They said, "Well, we're going to send you to survival school," which is right there at Ft. Bragg. I went two months of survival school learning how to survive in the jungle. I got that completed and they said, "Well, we need to send you to a short school for language." So right there on the base I went to language school for three months. Supposedly I was learning Vietnamese, but that was a hard language. So I said, "The heck with it; I'll just do what I can with it and move on." I got to Vietnam in the month of January of '66, and they sent me to Saigon for whatever reason. I was just stationed there in Saigon. I didn't have a job. And they said, "Well, we're going to send you down in this little jungle area." Not knowing any better I said, "Okay, I'll go wherever you send me." So they put me on a jeep and they

drove me down in this little town. I got off and it was a place called Yong Tromand. Of course, I didn't know anything. They had what they call military advisory teams there. They were five man teams. They said, "Since you're senior corps, we're going to assign you to a five man team. You're going to go, and you're going to live and work with the 7th Vietnamese division. There's only going to be five of you down there, five American and everybody else is going to be Vietnamese." I got on the team and they flew me in the helicopter and lo and behold I get over there and I'm the only black person there. I'm looking around and there's a Spanish sergeant. There's two Caucasian American sergeants. Everybody on the team had to be a sergeant or better. They had to be at least six or better, and we had one captain and one major on the team. So we're there in this little village, and we go out with those people every day. Every day we go out. They go out looking for Viet-Cong because there were no real soldiers in that area. There were just guerillas like they're fighting in Afghanistan now. They would show up any time. You'd never know when they'd show up. They'd always wait till dark then they'd show up, and they'd bomb you or they'd mortar you at night, and we'd never get anybody. So we'd go around the next day looking for them. Of course, we'd never find anybody, so we never found anybody. So we did that for a year and in January '67, I left there and came back to the States and went back to the 82nd and got there and was there for thirty days. I was here for thirty days, got to Ft. Bragg, was there for thirty days and I got reordered, I got sent right back to the same place I'd just left. I said, okay, I'm here. So I stayed there for another year. Same thing. Then I came back to the states and in '67 I went back. They said, "You're going back." Lo and behold, I go back to the same unit I was in. I didn't know anybody but it was the same place. In the latter part of '67 in December we were celebrating Christmas and the Viet Cong decided they want to attack us. So they attacked us, and they did some damage. I got wounded; some other people got wounded. So in '68 they said, "Okay, you've had it." So they sent me back.

SM: So you had three tours by this time?

CJ: Yes. Three tours. The third tour was the charm because I got myself hurt and they said, "Well, we're going to let you go back." So they sent me back and I said, "Well, I hope I never come back." And I didn't. So in January of '68 I came back to Marietta. My wife was sick and I was here a week, maybe two weeks and we had to put her in the hospital. On the way to the hospital she died, going to Kennestone up there. So that changed my whole lifestyle. I could not go back to the 82nd because I had three children and they were all minors at that particular time with no mother. So my mother-in-law came and she said, "Well, I'll stay." So my mother-in-law stayed and we raised our three kids. So I did all my time at Ft. McPherson from '68 to '74 and that's when I retired in '74. In the meantime I said, "I might as well go back to school." So I went to Georgia State and I got a degree in history.

SM: Oh, you're one of us!

CJ: Yes, I got my history degree so I got the degree and I applied for a teaching job. I just wanted to do anything. They didn't have a job at any particular school up here, they didn't have any jobs up here in Cobb County at all and I got a call one day and they said,

“Well, if you really want to go to work, we have a job for you.” It was at a little school, not a little school it was a big school, actually, it was Carver High School in Atlanta. This was in '75. I joined them in 1975, and I stayed there for thirteen years, same classroom, taught my classes. I got tired of it. I said, “I want to do something else.” So I decided I'd retire from that. We went to church that morning, Sunday morning and I came out and I stopped over there on the street and I got a newspaper—wasn't looking for anything in particular. I just got a newspaper, and in it was a want ad for a police officer. Well, I wasn't a police officer. I said, I told my daughter, I said, “I'm going to put in for this job on Monday.” She said, “Dad you're not a police officer.”

SM: By this time you were fifty-something.

CJ: Yes. I said, “I don't care, I'm going to put in for this job.” So the next morning I called East Point and I said, “You still looking for a police officer.” They said, “Yes.” I said, “Okay, I'll come down there.” So I went to personnel and they told me, “Okay, let's go over here and we'll have your interview.” So I went across the street to the police station and the assistant chief and the station sergeant interviewed me. I wasn't thinking I was going to get the job, but as the interview went on I talked to the assistant chief, I talked to the sergeant and they said, “You wouldn't mind taking a test would you?” I said “No.” So they brought this test out there, a written exam, and they said, “You've got about forty-five minutes to do the test.” I said, “Fine.” So I opened the test up and I started smiling, what is this, kid's stuff here? So I took the test and handed it back to them and while they were grading it the assistant chief was talking to me. When the sergeant came back, he was smiling, and he said, “Hey, we'll see you next Thursday.” “I said, “See me next Thursday?” He said, “Yes, because you need to take another test. You need to take a psychological test.” I said, “Okay.” So I came back, and when I came back on Thursday, this test was quite extensive. He says, “There's no pass or fail on this test but there's a trick, to it. Whatever you start out with, you're going to need to finish up on that.” If I started out saying yes to something then I need to be consistent throughout that test. So I sort of got the gist of it after about the third or fifth question on there. I said, “There's a secret on this. There's no pass or fail.” So I took the test and apparently I must have passed it because they said, “We'll let you know.” So about a week passed and I didn't hear from them and so I said, “Let me call these people and see if I failed that test or not.” I called the police station and I got a chance to talk to the assistant chief and he said, “No, we're just waiting for a date for your physical and then we were going to call you.”

Wow. I said, “Okay.” He said, “If you pass the physical you'll be okay.” About two weeks later Personnel called me and said, “We have a date for you to go take a physical.” I had to go to Riverdale, Georgia, and take a physical. That physical took me approximately two weeks to do because I had to go several places. I had to take a lie detector test; I had to go take a stress test in one other place and then take a written exam in another place and then do a lifting up with things in another place. So it took about two weeks to do that test. At the end of it—and the last test I took was one where they had this tube about that long and it was water with a bubble with a little ball on it and they give you this tube and you blow on it and you want to keep that ball level at a certain

height. I took that test and the doctor says, "Congratulations, you're a police officer." I didn't realize I was. After that I went to school, I went through the academy, got mandated, and I didn't like it after I got out of there. It's a lot different being a police officer than what you think it is. You got to take all kind of nasty talk from people. They insult you. After about a couple of years of that I said, I'm tired of this. I'm not going to put up with that. My sergeant was retiring from the station, and he was station chief. He says, "Tell you what; how would you like to go to work in the jail?" I said, "Sure, I'll go to work in the jail." So I went to work in the jail, and I liked that kind of work because all I did was go there and push buttons in the tower and let prisoners go up to smoke—at that particular time there was smoking in the jail—and we had a modern jail, brand new jail and we'd let them go to the top of the jail on the roof and there was a place out there where they could smoke. We did that. We took them out to work if they needed to go out to work; we made sure they had showers and all. That was the easiest job in the world.

So for some reason or other, all they had was the sergeants in the office, and our chief didn't like the way they talked to people. People were complaining that when they come in sergeants wouldn't tell them what their people were in jail for, wouldn't give them any information about getting them bonded out. So the chief says, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to switch you people out. I'm going to take the sergeants out and put them on the street and we're going to ask for volunteers to go in there into the office to be the POI." I said, "Okay." So he asked me, "How would you like to go in there and work the office?" I'd get paid the same thing. So I said, "Sure." I went in the office. He took three of us off the street and put us in the office. So we liked that. What we did was we gave out information. We wrote bonds. We made sure that people that came in were taken care of. They got logged in. The equipment was taken off of them. Their equipment was locked up and secured and that's what we did. That was a good job. It was one of the best jobs I had. But again, I just got tired of it. After a while I got there one day and I said to myself, "I don't want to be here any more." I told the major and I said, "How long will it take me to retire?" He said, "It'll take a week or two. What, you want to start next week?" I said, "No, today. I'd like to go today." He said, "Come up to the office." So I went up to the admin's office and he said, "You're not serious are you?" I said, "Yes I am. I'm just tired of driving thirty-five miles down and thirty-five miles up. I'm just tired of that stuff." So he got my records and he said, "You know what, you've been here for thirteen years, and you've never taken a sick day." So I had every sick day that I had equal to one year. So he said, "I'll tell you what, you're going to draw pay for a year and at the end of the year then we'll retire you." So I left that day. I was here minding my own business . . .

SM: What year was this?

CJ: In 1999. I was here minding my own business. As a matter of fact, I was in here cleaning, and the doorbell rang. It was Strickland over here at the barber's shop. He came over and he says, "Hey, I got a job for you." I said, "I don't want a job, Strick; I've got a job. I play on my radio and I clean house and I go where I want to go." He says, "No, you're going to like this job. It's the bailiff job up at the state court. The judge is

going from traffic up to a different thing. He's going to be up there where he won't be doing traffic. He'll be doing misdemeanor crimes and he needs three bailiffs. I thought of you because you have a college degree and you know how to speak and you won't be up there harassing anybody. You have the background as a police officer; you're a retired school teacher; you're retired military; so this job will fit you." I said, "Okay, I'll give it a try. I'll stay a week or so, a month maybe." That was ten years ago and I'm still there. I am still with the same judge. I got three days a week, as a matter of fact. I went to Cobb County Veteran's memorial yesterday at the Civic Center and enjoyed that. I've been doing that for ten years; every year we go there.

Yesterday was kind of an exciting day for us because we had the legislators in our courtroom. They came in and they listened to the judicial proceedings that the judge goes through because yesterday was a day that people, they get in trouble so they hire lawyers. Most of the time what we have is DUIs and people drive. It's not illegal to drink and drive; it's illegal when you get caught. But you can drive all day drunk as a skunk but don't get caught. They have an idea that they can drink and drive then they can't hold the car on the road or either they're wobbling in the road which gets the attention of the police officer. He pulls them over and you wouldn't believe this but as soon as you roll that window down you're going to get a whiff of that alcohol. You'll get that and he'll ask them, what did you have to drink, and they'll say, oh, I had two beers—that's the norm, two beers—okay, step out of the car and they'll step out of the car and he'll ask them if they'll take a sobriety test. Some will say yes, some will say no. Now, if you don't take the test you automatically lose your license for a year and you're going to go to jail. All right, some of them go to jail. If you take the test, even though you pass it, you get a DUI and you're going to go to jail but you're not going to lose your license. People don't think that they're actually drunk, so they'll hire a lawyer. Lawyers think of all kind of things to get them off without getting a DUI on their record. So they do all these dumb things. They won't charge the machine that you blow in. They say the machine is not correct. So they'll bring a suit against the machine. Or they'll say that the police officer wasn't authorized to pull you over. They try all kind of things and that's what we were doing yesterday. That's all I've done. That's my life up until now. I have several jobs and my main job is I go to church every Sunday. I was fortunate enough to become a deacon in 1985. They thought enough of me to make me a deacon and that's . .

SM: What church is this?

CJ: Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. Actually Mt. Sinai Baptist church is the oldest black church in the city limits. Zion is two years behind us. We just celebrated the first Sunday of this month our 145th year.

SM: Zion was 1864?

CJ: 1866 and we were 1864. Our church came from Jonesville due to the fact that the Bell Bomber plant—we moved over here in 1941 and put the church up on the hill. It's the highest point in Marietta. It's where the water tower used to sit, but now they've got a

communications tower up on top of the hill now. Our church is 145 years old; the original church that was built actually by slaves. The church is the same one that we're in today. It's the original church that they built out there. They hauled it over here and they put it up on the hill and all we did was brick it and refurbish on the inside, but the building itself is the same church.

SM: How big is the congregation?

CJ: Congregation is about 155 because right now we had a lot of people leave because our pastor left. People have a tendency, when there's no pastor, they'll go to a different church. We have an interim pastor and they don't look on him as pastor. They say, "Well, he can't do anything." Well, he can do the same thing the pastor does; he's just not the real pastor and all. They have a tendency to follow a real pastor. As soon as we get one, and we're in the process of doing that now, getting a new pastor, but it's a process. It's a lengthy process, and we have to interview people and all that kind of stuff. Then the congregation has to agree. After going through all this hiring junk they have to agree to that individual. But that's the phase we're in right now. That's about my life.

SM: How long have you been attending that church?

CJ: Well, actually all my life, since I was thirteen. My wife was a member; her family was a member; as a matter of fact her father and mother were members; and they came out of Jonesville also. Everybody that's in that church has some kind of tie to that church. My grandmother was a member of that church; my father's family were members of that church; and when I came here at age thirteen I came here and I went to that church. That wasn't the only church I went to. I used to go to Turner Chapel. I was one of those kind of guys that my class, we were all in different churches. I would go to Turner Chapel on Sunday evenings. I would go to Zion. And I would go to my church. A bunch of us would go to churches. My neighbor next door, we grew up together, we graduated from high school together. In fact the lady across the street, she was one of the ones that was in my class. All my class members are still alive, most of them.

SM: Tell us more about Lemon Street or Perkinson, sorry.

CJ: Perkinson High, well, it was....

SM: The teachers or the classes you had or your extracurricular activities.

CJ: Well, here's what we didn't have. We didn't have chemistry classes because we didn't have a chemistry lab. We had geography and we had history; we had math; we had shop; and I refused to take shop. I was afraid of those saws they had; they had those weird things down there. I went to shop one day and I heard all this noise and I went in and looked around and said, no, this isn't the place for me. So the principal—Professor Woods was the principal at that time—he said, "I don't have anything for boys other than shop. You can either be a brick mason or you can be a carpenter." Well, I didn't want to

be either one, so I said, “I don’t want to be here.” He said, “Well, the only thing I got is typing. We’ll send you to typing. You’ll be the only guy in there.” Fine.

SM: You meet girls that way, right?

CJ: Yes. I was the only guy and then I did a little home ec, I took that, we called it home ec in those days. I’d go in there and they’d try to learn how to cook and I was just in there.

SM: You were just there to eat it?

CJ: I just didn’t want to go back in the wood shop, I wasn’t going there. Of course, we graduated in 1948. I think there were twenty-three of us, that’s all we had.

SM: So the school had a training industrial kind of focus?

CJ: Well, it was sort of like that, yes, just for the males. The only thing they offered for females was business typing and cooking. That’s all they had there. For the males they had brick mason and wood work, that’s the only thing we had. It wasn’t like industrial like Carver High School was where we had everything down there. It was, you wouldn’t believe what that school had; it had everything. They had cosmetology; it had auto mechanics; you could be childcare; they had all this stuff in it. As a matter of fact, it was so large it took about four assistant principals; we had buildings all over the place. It was a great school, it really was. The thing about that school is everybody came out of Carver Homes; everybody was out of the projects. You’d think, well, we’ve got troubles, but we never had any problems. They weren’t the most intelligent kids, but we did have a few that were actually great students. As a matter of fact, I was privileged to get one in West Point. I got one in, up here in the military school at—what’s the name?

SM: In Dahlongega?

CJ: Dahlongega, yes, North Georgia [College & State University]. I got one there and one in West Point. I had several kids that I helped get in the military, and I got one went to OCS. As a matter of fact, when he retired he was a lieutenant colonel. The one that went to West Point, he is a full blown colonel at this particular time, and as a matter of fact, he got out two years ago, he retired as a full colonel. I meet these kids quite a bit. Every now and then, as a matter of fact, I had one knock on the door two weeks ago and he said, “I was in town and I knew where you lived.” I used to bring students home with me on the weekends. I had two boys here and those kids down there didn’t have a father, most of them didn’t have fathers, and I sort of liked a lot of those young guys. I never would bring a girl home because I didn’t want to get involved in that, so I had a couple of guys that were fairly great students, and I said, I’ll take you home with me and introduce you to a family. We would eat at that table right there, and my boys would teach them how to play tennis. Both of my boys played tennis and one, Gregory was a football player. Skipper didn’t like football. He ran track for Marietta. My daughter didn’t like any of that stuff. She went to Kennesaw one year and she decided that she wanted to go to a big school. So she took off and went to Connecticut and that’s where she went to school. I

tried to keep her here but she wouldn't stay. She wanted to go up north and go to school, so she went up there. Now, my granddaughter went to Georgia State. She decided she wanted to go to Georgia State. We tried to send her out and she didn't want to leave. I don't think she wanted to leave me, I don't know what it was, but she didn't want to leave me, so she went to Georgia Sate.

This is my daughter, that's my daughter and that's my granddaughter. She went to Kennesaw for a year and then she went to Connecticut and she went to Georgia State. Now she's a mommy, got one bad child, the kid is four years old and she reads. She's reading and she can write and last night when she was trying to get her to do her homework, she was rebelling. So she said, you've got one choice. You can either do your homework or go to bed. Well, Lyra doesn't like to go to bed so Lyra decided that she said, "Not only that, I'm going to call your granddad." So they called me and she said, "Lyra doesn't want to do her work." I said, "Let me speak to Lyra." I said, "What are you doing, Lyra?" She said, "I'm not doing anything." I said, "Don't you want to do your homework?" She said, "Not tonight." I said, "Why not?" She said, "I don't want to." I said, "You've got a choice. You can either do your homework or go to bed; which one you want to do?" She thought about it, "Well, I'll do my homework." So she did her homework and so she did her homework. This morning they wouldn't bring her by. They were going to punish her some more. She comes here on Thursday and we take her to school. I do have another granddaughter that I take to school who just got the Kiwanis Award. She's in her fifth year, and she is a honor student over at Westside. That's her mom and dad. She has been on the honor roll since she's been in school. She loves school. She really loves it.

SM: She got that love of learning from you?

CJ: I guess. Well, that's my daughter and she's a college graduate and her husband's a college graduate. As a matter of fact, we're all college graduates. We just, I guess they just took it after me. I don't know because when I raised them, my son started Georgia Tech. He went through Tech there for two years and then he said, "No." He gave it up and my youngest son went to California and went to cooking school. He's a chef now at Georgia Tech; that's where he works now. He's down at Georgia Tech and he's one of the, what do you call them, lead persons? He's in charge of running the food areas down there. My other son works at the children's hospital, Scottish Rite. He fixes trays for the surgeons. They don't tell him what they want. They tell him what kind of operation they're going to do and then he prepares all the instruments for them. That's what he does. And my daughter is one of the managers up at Kennesaw. My granddaughter is a manager at the store down here in, somewhere out there in Atlanta. She's a manager out there, and her husband is a lead man for Georgia Power. He climbs the poles for a living. This is the little girl that, she's four years old, just turned four. That's her, and she's the one that's reading and writing now. But she's a handful. She is. That's her dad. He doesn't let her get too far from him either. As a matter of fact he feeds her, he cooks actually he does the cooking in the house. My granddaughter, she doesn't cook, but she'll call him, and he gets off from work and she says, "What's for dinner?" And he tells her what's for dinner. He does the cooking. He even does the laundry.

SM: Nice.

CJ: I told him, you're the only man I know to do the laundry. I don't do laundry, I don't do cooking. I don't cook, I don't sew. I'll clean the yard, but it's been raining so hard I haven't touched that yard. He's going to come over and do the yard for me.

SM: Can you tell us, how important was church when you were growing up?

CJ; Church was mandatory. You would not get out of going to church. I mean, you could rebel all you wanted to, when Mama said you're going to church you went to church. She might have to drag you and sometime I've gotten whipped because I didn't want to go to church. She said, "Son, after I get through with you you're going to go." And she would beat us and we would go to church, yes we would. It's not like it is today. We give our kids now the option.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

CJ: We never had money, you see, we get allowances or anything like that. We'd work all week and didn't get anything for it. We may get five or ten cents to put in Sunday School. We got a couple pair of trousers for school, a pair of shoes and that was it. Christmas you got candy, peppermint sticks; you may get one toy and that was it. There was no lavish planning. Now, this four year old, for her fourth birthday she got a computer, a laptop, a pink one at that. She wants to come in and get on my computer. Oh no, you don't touch mine, oh no. There are no bugs on mine. She's got her own now and there's another. This is my other granddaughter; she's also on the honor roll out at Stone Mountain; that's her. And all of them take ballet except Lyra; she's too young. She's taking gymnastics with the county over here. She goes to gymnastics school. They're thinking about letting her dance when she gets to be five or six. But right now she's learning how to tumble and all that kind of junk; that's what she does. She takes her ever Tuesday. They go to school and then she gets out and she goes to nursery school during the day. She goes to a school called Kumo for reading and writing and math. She goes there two days a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Then she takes her gymnastics classes once a week so we keep our kids busy all the time. Kayla, she takes modern dance at the studio up here at Marietta on the Square; and London goes out in Lost Mountain out there somewhere; that's where she goes. That's about the extent of my life as it is. I go to church every Sunday, I do. Now, getting the kids to go to church is something else. They go but they go when they feel like it. I go every Sunday. I am the chief financial officer of the church.

SM; Do your kids go to your church?

CJ: Yes, they're all members of my church—when I can get them there. My daughter, she works on Sundays; actually both of them work on Sunday. That one right there is a vet

tech; she works at a pet shop down in East Point. She's on on Sundays, so she has to work on Sundays. Now I take Kayla with me a lot of Sundays because most Sundays she goes down to her aunt's. They go down there; she goes down there to spend the weekend with them because there are girls down there for her to play with. There are no girls up here and the only one girl is that one right here and she lives out in Paulding County. And I'm not going to be running out to Paulding County every weekend. I hate Paulding County. I don't go there very often. It's too far for me to drive. I don't like to go out there. And this one lives over there in Powder Springs by the new high school they just built over there, and I don't go over there very often either. Like I say, if you want to see me, you have to come over here, I 'm not going over there. Too much driving. I stick around over here. But they bring them over here all the time, and you'd think that on the weekends sometimes there are too many kids here, but they like to come here and they bring them here. But that's about the extent of my life. I've never drank in my life so I don't know anything about drinking. I just never took that nasty habit up. I couldn't understand how I spent twenty-four years in the military and didn't drink. I said, "Well, it was easy, I just didn't drink. Smoking, I tried that and I didn't like that, so I cut that out. I didn't smoke or drink and I don't go around people who do that. It's not that I think I'm any better than they are. It's just that I don't want to be involved in that kind of stuff. That's the reason why I quit the American Legion; every time we'd have a meeting they'd all want to go to bar. No, I don't want to go there. No, that's not my thing. I was asked the other day, when you coming back to the Legion? I said, "When are you guys going to stop drinking? Soon as you stop drinking, I'll come back. In fact, they asked the lady when are you going to go to church? She said, "As soon as they have a smoking area."

SM: Can you tell us about Ft. Benning?

CJ: Ft. Benning—yes. It's a three-week event actually and it's all physical. It's physical training from dawn to dusk. You're running; everywhere you go you run; you don't stop running. You wake up in the morning and the only time you walk is when you're in the barracks. One you exit the barracks and you go outside, your feet have to be moving at all times, and you don't look time at no time, you always look this way. When you're running you're looking like this. It's all physical. It's physical training all day long. You go through your jump school things, like repelling and all that kind of stuff—you have to learn all that stuff. You have to fall on the ground, jump on the ground, and then they've got what is known as the 250 foot tower down the and they pull you up. That's where they separate the men from the boys, and that's where they said they were going to get me. They didn't get me, I graduated. When they put me up on there, yes, my heart was racing like crazy but I said, I'm determined, I'm going to go up to the top of this thing and they're going to let me go and whatever happens, happens. And nothing happened. I made it through. That's just a constant physical thing. You have to be in great shape, if you're not you're not going to make it. Now, what they do now, they train them a couple or three weeks before they even go because it's such a physical thing that the average kid, when they come in, they're not used to all that physical fitness and so they're not in shape for that stuff. You don't go from basic training to airborne school

because you're not going to make it. You might try but you won't make it. They sort of get you in the mode of doing physical fitness.

Of course, the army is known for physical fitness anyway. You get up in the morning, it's a physical thing, before breakfast, when I was in the service we ran. We did physical training, what they call PT. We did all that whether it was snowing, whether it was raining, whether it was 100 degrees, you were out there; it didn't matter. When we got to North Carolina in the 82nd there would be snow on the ground and we would strip to t-shirts and we would run five miles; that was the norm. Once a month we did a twenty-five mile run. You did twenty-five miles with a full backpack, weapon, the whole works, and you did that and you come back and you were off. But you had to do that and in several hours, you're back on the trail. We'd run half of it and walk half of it; that's how you did it. You had to be in physical fitness or else they'd find you stressed out there somewhere on the road. Then they'd leave you. You get back the way you got there. If you fell out that's where you would be. They weren't going to pick you up. You want to get there, you get up on your own and you would go because I fell one day and broke two ribs but I made it then. When I went to the doctor, the next morning I couldn't get up, so they sent me over to the sick bay and they said, "Hey, you know you got some busted ribs?" They taped me up and sent me back out. I didn't go to the hospital. Just tape me up, told me what I wasn't supposed to do, don't do this, don't do that and you'll be fine. I didn't do that. No running, no PT for a couple of weeks, after that we'll take the bandages off and you'll be good to go, and sure enough I was. You don't get out of physical training in the Airborne Special Forces; you are physically fit.

If you're not physically fit, and I admire those young guys over there now because they are physically fit and we have a great army right now even though it's a young army and it's a volunteer army. It's not like the army I was in, but it's still the army. They do a good job for what they're trained to do. Of course, they're fighting a war now that they don't see the enemy; they don't know the enemy because the enemy doesn't wear a uniform. The only thing out there with a uniform on is them. The guy they're fighting is wearing a towel wrapped around his head with a piece of cloth around it with a weapon underneath it, and as he walks by he may take out two or three of them. See, they can't—when I was in the army I knew who my enemy was because you wore a uniform. He wasn't afraid to face me, but now that's not war. The war they're fighting now is a war of guess who I am. I may see you, I know who you are, you don't know me and as soon as you pass I'm going to let you have it. That's the way this war is fought nowadays; that's the way they fight. They won't face Americans face to face. Bravest army in the world, bar any. There's no army like the American army. The Americans are gentle people, we are. It's kind of hard to make me mad, but when you get me mad I might do anything to you, you just never know. In combat we all stay mad with the enemy and we're ready to go out there and do whatever it takes to win. We're going to win. That's the American way. We're going to win regardless, whatever. It doesn't matter if we have to climb a mountain, we're going to climb that mountain and we're going to go on the other side and we're going to get you. So if you're over there your best bet is not be there when we get there because we're going to take care of you when we get there. We've done that on several occasions and I've been places I can't talk about and I've

done some things that I can't talk about, we're not supposed to talk about, but we talk about it among military people, but I've done things that you wouldn't believe. I've been places where you wouldn't believe.

In Vietnam I've done some crazy things that I wouldn't do now. We were talking about it yesterday about this one guy that I know who was in Vietnam at the same time, my boss was in Vietnam the same time I was also, but he said, "I didn't want to be where you were because what I was, we didn't see soldiers. We saw guys and they were all dressed in black, or they may be out there working in the rice patties and they would see you and they would be real humble to you. And if you camped out at night they're going to visit you and they would do whatever they could to kill you. We sort of learned that, so we didn't trust anybody in Vietnam. Everybody was an enemy, even the little kids. I mean, he's the enemy as far as I was concerned because he might just shoot you as to look at you. He might walk up to you and throw a hand grenade at you. That's how they were. In Saigon it happened. A lot of times the American soldiers got killed in Saigon because some kid ran by and threw a grenade. That happened. So we didn't see the enemy; we didn't know who he was except up in the North where they were actually fighting people in uniform. They knew who they were fighting up there but where I was at in the southern part of Vietnam, no uniform. If you saw one guy, you didn't know if he was a soldier or just a farmer; you just regarded everybody as the enemy. That's the way we did it. Everybody was our enemy in the delta; I don't care who you were. You were an enemy. But the greatest army in the world is the United States Army and I'm very proud to have served with the army. I'd be in the army now if I was young enough, but I'm not young enough any more.

SM: Well, is there anything else you want to have on tape?

CJ: No. I'm just happy you came by. I may not do this again, but it's been an experience for me, I'll tell you that. I've never done anything like this before. It's an experience and I wish there was more that I can tell you, but there's not. My life has been very simple; I mean, mundane life; I haven't done that much.

SM: You've done a lot of exciting things. You've gone from occupation to occupation!

CJ: Yes, they always tease me about that right now. They say, "What other job are you going to do?" I don't know yet. I haven't decided yet. I may do something; who knows? If I decide to leave Judge Prodgers, I doubt very seriously I'll ever leave him.

SM: Judge Toby...?

CJ: Yes, Toby Prodgers, yes, he's my boss. Do you know him?

SM: I've just heard the name.

CJ: He's the greatest man in the world.

SM: I've never had any run-ins with him!

CJ: He's the kindest person; you wouldn't want to meet a better judge than him. He's the kindest person, the most sympathetic and he's the softest talking man you'll ever hear. He never raises his voice. Now he does raise his voice at lawyers when they get out of kilter; he will raise his voice. I've been with him for ten years and I say, "Okay, he's going to get that guy over there." And he does. He takes just so much and we go and tell those lawyers, "Look, you better cool it down because the judge is going to jump on you." We had this one lawyer in there one day and he was showing the judge how great he was, and the judge just sat there and he looked at him, and I looked at the other bailiff and I said, "He's fixing to pounce on him." And sure enough he said, "Come here." And he went up one side of that young man and down the other, very polite. He turned about two shades of red; he didn't know what to say. He came down and he looked at us and we struck our head because I knew that was coming. We had warned him you're going too far, you're taking leeways you shouldn't take. The judge would tell him to do one thing and he wanted to do it his way. Tangle with that and the bomb's going to drop on you. But Toby is one of the finest men I've ever known. He's a combat veteran also. He's a Vietnam veteran, and he likes to talk war, and we talk all the time about it. It's always a pleasure to go and see him because I make sure I go speak to him every morning because he's a great guy and of course, he knows how much we like him. I'm going to go buy him a little present this week; he lost his little combat infantry badge so I'm going to go get him one. We were talking about it the other day and I said, "I think I'll just go buy him one." "Would you?" "Yes, I'll go buy you one." I'm going to go get it for him this week and give it to him because he's a great guy. If you ever come to court, come to 4C; that's where we are on the fourth floor. That's Toby Prodgers' courtroom.

SM: Okay, I'll go ahead and stop this. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDEX

American Legion, 12

Bell Aircraft Company, 1, 7

Carver High School, 5, 9

Ft. Benning (GA), 3, 12

Ft. Bliss (TX), 1-2

Ft. Bragg (GA), 2, 3-4

Ft. Campbell (KY), 1

Ft. Gordon (GA), 2

Ft. Jackson (SC), 2

Ft. McPherson (GA), 4

Georgia Power, 10

Georgia State University, 4, 10

Georgia Tech, 10

Jasper, Clarence Charles

 Background, 1, 3

 Parents, 1

 Schooling, 1-4, 8-9

 Employment

 Enlisted in United States Army, 1-4, 13-14

 Lockheed-Georgia, 2

 Deployed in Vietnam, 3-4, 14

 Teacher (Carver High School), 5

 Atlanta Police Dept., 4-5

 Bailiff (Cobb County, Georgia), 6-7, 14-15

 Deacon (Mt. Sinai Baptist Church), 7-8

Jasper, Gregory, 9

Jasper, Skipper, 9

Jonesville (GA), 1, 7-8

Kennestone Hospital, 4

Kennesaw State University, 9-10

Lemon Street High School, Marietta, Georgia, 18

Lockheed Corporation (Lockheed-Martin)

 Dept. 2113, 2

Perkinson High School, 1, 8; also please see Lemon Street High School

Prodgers, Toby, Judge., 14-15

Segregation

Dept 2113 (Lockheed-Georgia), 2

Vietnam, views on, 4

Strickland, Winston, 6

Turner Chapel AME Church, Marietta, Georgia, 8

United States Military Academy (West Point), 9

Woods, M. J., Prof., (principal of Lemon Street High School), 2, 8

Zion Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia, 7-8

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