

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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

**AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE HIST 4425 (ORAL HISTORY) CLASS AT
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL SEMESTER 2009**

INTERVIEW WITH CLARA M. MADDOX and ALBERT MAYES

COBB NAACP/CIVIL RIGHTS SERIES, NO. 3

CONDUCTED BY CRYSTAL MONEY and STEPHANIE McKINNELL

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2009

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb NAACP/Civil Rights Series, No. 3
Interview with Clara Maddox and Albert Mayes
Conducted by Crystal Money and Stephanie McKinnell
Thursday, 17 September 2009
Location: Home of Ms. Maddox, Marietta, Georgia

CrM: First we want you to tell us your names and your birthdays, if you don't mind.

CM: My name is Clara M. Maddox and my birthday is May 12, 1926.

CrM: Tell everybody who you are.

AM: Okay, My name is Albert Eugene Mayes, senior now, it used to be just Albert Eugene Mayes until after I got married. I was born in October 15, 1929.

CrM: Could you tell us a little bit about growing up, about your parents, what they did when you were growing up?

CM: Well, we were raised by a single parent. Our mother died when we were very small. He was sixteen months and I was four years old, so we were raised by our father with four other siblings. My sister was the oldest then, the rest of us came along under her, so basically she was our mother, at age twelve.

CrM: And you grew up in Marietta?

CM: Yes, we grew up in Marietta.

CrM: What area of Marietta?

AM: At that time they called it library.

CM: That's this section here by the library. We grew up over here.

AM: We were born at Westside.

CM: I told them about Louisville.

AM: She doesn't have that on tape.

CrM: Do you remember your address or where the house is or what street the house was on?

AM: It was on Black Street but I forget the address. We stayed at two places on Black Street, one down the street and later on, I think in 1947 we moved, yeah, it was in the '40's, we moved to 210, I remember it was 210 Black Street.

CM: Where we first moved to was right where Washington Avenue crosses the Fairground, we lived right there at that intersection across from the fabric store, that's where we, that's where my daddy moved after my mother passed, from Louisville, we moved there. Later on, we moved up on the corner of Black Street and Laurence Street. 210 Black.

AM: That house is still there now.

CM: Yes, the house is still there.

AM: That house is about a hundred years old now, it's got to be about a hundred years.

CrM: What were the different areas that you mentioned, the different black neighborhoods in Marietta that you mentioned in your paper?

CM: Oh, do you want those names?

CrM: Just tell us what you remember about them and the names.

CM: Oh yes, well, I don't remember too much about the Louisville area because when we were leaving that section we were very small but we grew up over here on Library but there was like I say, there was Holland Town, people just walked everywhere they went because we didn't have any cars, everybody had to walk, so they would walk from Holland Town to come to Marietta Square and they would do everything around the square. You paid your bills and bought your groceries and everything you had to do was right down on the square in Marietta. We used to love to look at the fish in the park, they still have those fish in the park there, we used to love to walk to see them and there were swings in the park. We just walked through, it was segregated though, we weren't allowed to sit in it, you just walked through there.

AM: We walked through there. I think later on we were allowed to sit down, I think they had benches where you could sit but most of the time most of the black folks didn't, you could come through there but you couldn't sit down.

CM: Didn't play with anything.

AM: No.

CM: 5 & 10 cent stores

AM: Well, they had some grocery stores too.

CM: Yes, I told them about the grocery stores.

CM: But anyway, there was McLellan's and the drug stores but you just went in there and bought, you couldn't sit, like the lunch counters we couldn't sit, you just go in there and bought what you want and then come out. But all around town that's the way it was.

CrM: It wasn't totally off limits, it was committed to your business and then you leave?

CM: Yes, you couldn't intermingle or sit and be served, you just did that. Then over here at Jonesville, before Bell Bomber Plant and Lockheed got there, those people used to walk from Jonesville and, well, they still had to walk to town but after the plant got started there they had to move from Jonesville and they moved to a different section of town. Most of the people, a lot of them moved over here in library and that's when the plant was started over there.

AM: The plant, it wasn't Lockheed at first, you know, it was Bell Bomber. After Bell Bomber plant then it was, they had another business in there, I forget, I can't recall it, but then Lockheed came in, I guess they got started around 1950 I imagine because they started hiring people in 1951. But they actually probably, I think they came in 1950.

CrM: Were there any black owned businesses on the Square at the time?

CM: Yes, yes.

AM: They had a little section off the square, this was Lawrence Street, and there wasn't a black business on the Square and then they had the café's and the pool halls and they had the funeral home.

CM: I told you all about that. Remember I read it to you.

AM: And that's all that was there at that little section there, right off the Square in the town. Then they had some businesses in a different part of town, like the Southside and the northside of the town where the blacks had their restaurants.

CM: In downtown we had, right on Lawrence Street, like I told you, there was the barber shop, Turner Chapel's Church, Hanley's Funeral Home, Marietta Café and there was a doctor's office there up the stairs and we had the pool room, remember the pool room that used to be up there, and Fowler's place right there, all of that was right on Lawrence Street, right across from Turner Church as you getting ready to go up to the Square, it was right there in that area.

CrM: Can you tell us something about the school that you went to?

CM: The school? Oh yes. The Lemon Street School.

AM: It wasn't Lemon Street.

CM: It was Lemon Street when I went.

AM: No, you graduated under Perkinson.

CM: I know but what I'm talking about, at first it was Lemon Street, she's talking about the whole history of the school.

AM: Oh.

CM: It was Lemon Street School.

AM: And then they renamed it.

CM: It was Lemon Street, then when I first started school it was Lemon Street when I first started school and then I graduated in eleventh grade so between that time it was renamed after a doctor, Dr. Perkinson and I graduated under Perkinson High School.

CrM: Why did you graduate in the eleventh grade?

CM: Because that's as far as the high school went. It was to the eleventh grade. Mr. M.J. Woods was the first principal there at the school so the elementary school was right across the street and as I told you, every Friday morning, both schools would come together and have a devotion prayer, in the chapel we would have, sometimes we would have plays, sometimes we would have just devotions, singing, poems, everything like that and the principal would give remarks after the service. Then everybody would go back to their different classes.

AM: You did have prayer service there too.

CM: Oh yes, we had devotion in the schoolrooms every day. All the rooms did devotion before we started the lessons and we would still sing and have prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the flag and different things like that.

CrM: What year did you graduate?

CM: '45.

AM: I graduated in '47. Now we, I just want to get to Zion, but we also, we went to school, I know I did, I don't know whether you did or not, but we went to school at Zion for awhile because they were building the new high school so we had to go to school at the old Zion church there.

CrM: In the old brick chapel?

AM: The old brick chapel, yes.

CM: When I was in the fifth grade we went to the old still church, they were building the new high school then so we went there for a while.

CrM: How many students were in it?

CM: In the whole school or just in our class?

CrM: How did the handle the different classes going into the chapel?

CM: No, we didn't have the chapel, we went to school in the little old church, the first church that the slaves built, we went to school there and there wasn't that many. In the fifth grade I guess it was about '50.

AM: Everybody didn't go at the same time, we went at different times, different hours that we went.

CrM: Right. Like part of you in the morning and part in the afternoon.

AM: In the morning time, I think it was just the morning.

CM: I don't remember that. I remember going to school because Ms. Usher was my teacher and we stayed there until school was out. I think they went to different places, the students, I think they had different places to go, different churches, but we went to Zion Baptist Church and Ms. Usher, that was the fifth grade teacher.

AM: Ms. Waters was mine.

CM: We stayed the whole school day until then.

CrM: So you've always been members of Zion?

AM: Yes.

CrM: Was your father also?

AM: Yes.

CM: Yes, my daddy was a deacon there.

AM: He was a member of the church for years until he died.

CM: And a deacon.

AM: And a deacon, yes.

CrM: So has your family always been from this area or how far back do you know?

CM: My dad moved from Wilkes County, Washington, Georgia, here but we never left Marietta, but my brothers and my sister lived other places because my brothers were in service and my sister lived in Virginia for a while after she got grown

AM: But my sister Clara and I was born here, we were born in Marietta. The other siblings, they were born out in Wilkes County, Washington, Georgia.

CrM: Did your schoolmates also go to Zion?

CM: My schoolmates? Oh yes. Well, not all of them but some of them.

CrM: What was the other church? Turner Chapel? What were the other black churches?

AM: Cole Street.

CM: Right down the street from our church now.

AM: I understand that Cole Street, I believe, they said that it came out of Zion and Zion came from the First Baptist Church.

CM: Then we had a little church named Marietta Chapel that was over in Louisville at that time and then it was a Congregational church down there off the Square. What other churches were there? Well, Pine Street.

AM: Yes, Pine Street over there in Baptist Town, I think they came later on and Mt. Sinai they came a little later on too.

CrM: Going back to Lemon Street, were there any athletic teams, did you guys play sports?

CM: We didn't but we had a basketball team.

AM: And a football team.

CM: And early, before I graduated, earlier they had a football team but they didn't have one when I graduated. It was just the basketball team.

AM: I know we used to play volleyball during recess time.

CrM: Did they play against other schools?

AM: Yes, the basketball team, they went different places and we had a good basketball team.

CrM: They were good?

CM: Yes, that's when our principal told us that it doesn't matter whether you win or lose when they left but just how well you played the game. You could play the game well whether you won or not, you know, you still did well.

CrM: What did your father do for work?

CM: He worked, he was a farmer before he moved here and then he got a job at the Brumby chair company so he worked there and afterwards, later on when Brumby's shut down, my daddy, when Lockheed came he got on out there and worked. I think he worked there about five years before he passed.

AM: He worked there in '51.

CM: Well, he worked there for about four years before he passed.

CrM: As far as Zion, have you held any positions at Zion? I know Mr. Mayes, you've been a deacon?

AM: Yes, I'm a deacon and I was a chairman assistant on the trustee board for about twenty-five years. I also worked with the choir and I had jobs there, so I've had about sixty-six years in the choir. She has a little bit more than that.

CrM: Tell us a little bit more about when you helped, well, what part you played in raising money for the new chapel?

AM: Well, we—are you talking about the present chapel?

CrM: Well, the new ones in the '70s, I guess.

AM: The new ones in the '70s, okay, that's where we were then. We had to sign what you call a promissory note. Five deacons signed this note and agreed that they would be responsible if the church defaulted.

CM: I have worked with the little choir for over thirty years—that is Sunbeam choir. I still work with them and I am also in our mass choir and been there for over sixty years, I don't know the exact time!

AM: I keep up with her because when she joined, I started, she was in there about two years before I was and I have been a choir member sixty-six years, so she's been in there sixty-eight years. That's a long time but we've been members, I remember some of the original members when we were kids.

CM: Oh yes, we were in the junior choir.

AM: That's what the children was named when we were young, we both still sing.

CrM: Well, tell us about the '50's and '60's and integration and what struggles you remember. Did you participate in any thing or watch it go by?

CM: Well, I didn't go to any marches or anything but I just kept on watching the TV and everything but it was a struggle but we didn't have too much conflict here in Marietta

with riots and things. Most of that was out in the Alabama area, I guess. But I did know Dr. King because I used to be an Insurance Agent, so I would go to Auburn Avenue and that's where I met Dr. King and his brother. It was very interesting. He was a very interesting person.

CrM: Can you tell us about your impressions of him of meeting him?

CM: Of Dr. King? Well he was just very nice and courteous and his brother was the same way. In fact, his brother worked with the insurance company that I worked with and it was just normal people. At that time when I met him he hadn't started this . . .

CrM: He was just another preacher?

CM: Just another person at that time when I met him, yes, and he hadn't gotten famous then.

AM: I didn't get a chance to meet Dr. King himself but I met his father and mother too. I met his mom about three weeks before she was assassinated and I'll never forget because we had the program and she was standing behind me and I was looking at the church program and she asked me could she see the program and about three weeks after that she was assassinated.

CM: She got assassinated.

CrM: Talking about Zion, is there any like, anything that stands out in your mind since you've been attending Zion that has, how they have affected the community, how the community reacts to Zion because I know it's a big, big part of the community.

CM: Oh yes, Zion plays a big part in the community. We're a co-community church because we have a lot of activities going on and then a lot of the children of the community come in and they kind of interact with the church activities. And then we have the outreach service where they go from door to door and you know, and ask people if they know the Lord. We have a ministry that does that. They'll ask us for anything like if they need food or paying bills or something, the church does that.

AM: We always have been a really caring church for people, we help people.

CrM: Have either of you or what kind of—the word just went out of my head—what kind of racism have you personally experienced or what kind of discrimination?

AM: Well, I experienced, I'll never forget once when I was going to enter the drug store at the time, you know, we couldn't sit down at the counters and stuff like that and I didn't go in there to sit down at the counter, I needed some change for a dollar or something like that.

CrM: This was in a drug store on the Square?

AM: Yes, on the Square. So one of the waitresses came up whenever I walked in and she told me, "You can't come in here." I told her, I didn't want no service, all I wanted was to get change for a dollar or five dollars, whatever it was that I needed change for and she told me that, "You go back there and stand back in the corner then I'll wait on you." But I walked on out. I didn't do it. Because I have always looked at that, even if we came up in a segregated era, I look at human beings being human. Although we were poor, we were reared up in an integrated neighborhood. We played with whites. Back then we didn't have, back then we didn't have the nursery and kindergarten and some of the same people kept me. By mother being dead, my oldest sibling, well, they had to go to school so somebody had to keep me, different people, I had to stay with different people until I got old enough to go to school. We understand the whites, we played in the same neighborhood, played with them and didn't fear them. We were used to them. We'd always been used to them. But there was an incident that I recall that I guess has always been in my mind.

CM: I had an experience with the housing authority, Marietta Housing Authority, a lady was working with them and so she knew I had carried insurance so she knew that I knew something about keeping books and so they, you know, our people do, she recommended me to work with them—at that that time, it was a segregated company so they hired me to be the cashier bookkeeper so I worked there about two and a half years. I had to take care of 245 units in Baptist Town and the Fort Hill homes down there on Cole Street where that area was. So I was taking care of those two offices but they had combined it all into one so I had to keep the records of the money that I was paid or collected. I had to do two separate sets of everything, you know, for utilities and all that and just keep up with everything but then integration was coming into being.

SM: About when was this?

CM: This was the early '60s because I started in, I think I started there in '63, because I quit in '66. Anyway when they started this integration they built the central office. See they had an office over here on Waddell Street for the white tenants and they had an office over in Baptist Town for the black tenants so it was still segregated. So after they started they built the central office down here by the post office you know where the post office is? That was the central office, and so at first the lady that got me the job, she was the cashier first. They built the Johnny Walker homes and they didn't know they were going to have to integrate and so I was supposed to work under Ms. Williams and I was going to work for the Johnny Walker homes. I'd been working about six months and she died suddenly, she had cancer, so then they decided to build this, like I said, build this central office. So one day my administrator came over and told me that if they was going to build this office that I could go out and look for a job because they were going to use Houston IBM. So I said if they were paying me to go look for a job, okay. So I decided I would honor that but I didn't know that they just didn't want me there. But one of the cashiers came by the office where I was working and she said, "Clara where are you going to move?" I said, "Nowhere. They haven't told me anything. Where are you going?" She said, "Well, I'm going to the central office." And they left me the impression that it was

going to be one cashier. I said, "Oh really?" So it was three white cashiers and me. So they didn't ask because I was supposed to go look for a job.

I spoke to Mr. Holmes, the Hanley funeral home man, about it and so he said, "Well, you know, they're supposed to have a black person there, they can't just do you like that." So he called the mayor and I had a conference with the mayor and he said, "Well, they've got to have a black person there." So he called up the administrators so finally they let me go to the central office. But they wouldn't let me do anything, they had the intercom, you know, how you call from one room to the other, they wouldn't let me use the intercom, they wouldn't let me do nothing. I decided to fill out a suit application. I didn't do anything, I didn't collect no money, didn't do nothing, they wouldn't let me do anything, I was just sitting there. One day, the administrator came in the little office where I was and he said, "Clara, I want you to go in the cage and tell Denise to teach you the IBM machine because I don't want you to be a cashier but you'd be a good stand-in and I want you to learn it."

Well, I went on in there, the girl had started showing me about the machine and everything but there was another lady whose office was adjacent to mine, she heard the conversation and I just said that she told the lady that was over the cashiers because in a little while she came up the hall and she said, "Denise, come in my office one minute, please." So Denise went into her office but when Denise got back it was a whole different ballgame. So she looked in the drawers and found some old paperwork to sort from 1954, I will never forget, and told me to go into the little office where I was working and separate those. Well from then on, they never showed me anything, never took me in the cage or anything to teach me the machine, so I got to thinking, now, he wants me to learn this and nobody will teach me, I said, well, they'll say, if he says anything about it, that she didn't try. So I went and talked to the administrator. I asked him if he had a special time that he wanted me to learn it. He said, "No, I want you to learn it." I said, "Well, nobody will teach me." So he went in there and he told Denise, "I want you to teach Clara this machine."

Well, I guess that upset the lady boss so I was sick with flu, I got sick and I was off of work for about two weeks. When I got back to work this lady, Ms. Inderkin, she came into the office, she said, "Clara, Frank wants to see you in the conference room." That was our administrator's name. I went in there, he was sitting at the table in the conference room, all of the people were in there, the bosses that were in the different offices were sitting around the table and he sat there and told me that, "I'm sorry to tell you we don't have anything against your work but we can't afford to keep you because of the urban renewal is coming in and we can't afford to pay you." And they already had my check made out, they gave me two weeks pay and all of that and let me go just like that. I was shocked and I don't know, there was a lady—you know how somebody said that it was an act of God because when you're shocked, you're confused, you don't know what to do. But the phone rang and it was a white lady and I used to drive voters to the polls to vote. She told me she wanted to talk to me right that spur of the moment. I'll never forget she lived out there on South Cobb Drive, I don't know how I ever found the lady's house but I found it and she was the first person I told about that. I came on home

and I just couldn't sleep, you know, sometimes you just can't, you're in shock, and I didn't go to sleep so I laid right here in that living room and I just got down and prayed and asked, "God, take that off of me." I went on to sleep and it didn't worry me anymore but a black guy went by there and they said, "Why did you all let Clara go?" They told him that I couldn't do the work. I had kept the offices going for two and a half years, they didn't have any problems with the money or nothing but after they moved into this new office, they didn't want me down there. So I realized that.

So I called the meeting and I asked if I could come and speak to them. Ms. Woods, that was Professor Woods wife, she went with me so I asked them, I said, I just want to really know why did you all let me go if I had done the work for two and a half years, kept up with the rent, though at that time \$5,000 was a lot of money, that was a lot of money to keep up with, so I said, "I've kept this going for two and a half years and I find out you said I couldn't do the work." So he was trying because he was the young guy, he was only thirty-eight years old and he saw what was happening and he was trying to do the right thing but I think they must have just got on him so hard until he gave in to them. I told him to call Mrs. Inderkin in too so she could hear the conversation because I asked her, I said, "Now, if I did this work for two and a half years and couldn't do it, why did you keep me?" You keep somebody if they're handling your money and everything and all of a sudden they can't do the work. So I told them I was going to have them investigated and I did. I went down on Peachtree Street in Atlanta, a government agency, went up there.

CrM: What agency was it?

CM: I don't remember now, but it was in the Peachtree 7th building in Atlanta and I went down there and I told them. The guy came up here and he went through the records and all my work and everything, and I had to go back to another meeting and he said that, "I don't find nothing wrong with your work." The books and everything was neat and everything. Every three months we had to send a record to Washington at that time and he said, "Everything is fine but they didn't want you there." But I realized that. He said, "But, if you want your job back you can have it." I told him I didn't want it back but I said I would like for some black people to be there and they started having a black cashier. Martha Blount is still working there, she's the manager but that's just the way that was but had I not gone and had them investigated they would have gotten away with it.

CrM: Did you ever work with the NAACP with that?

CM: No, I just went to the Peachtree, I went straight to the government with that and I figured they could do it quicker than anything. After they found out that there was nothing wrong with my work, he said, "But they gave you . . .". In fact, I had put in for Kennestone Hospital and he checked that to see what my evaluation was and he said, "They gave you a good recommendation to Kennestone." So see, it defeated their purpose and he knew that it was just that they didn't want any blacks there but since then they have hired blacks so it worked out good.

CRM: Did either of you ever have any dealing with the NAACP?

CM: No more than me being a member.

CrM: Just curious, we went to the old Zion Church today; does it look like when you were going there when you were younger? Did they do a good job of renovating it?

CM: Oh yes.

AM: Basically it's the same because I think the furniture, they did refurnish the furniture.

CM: They did but we still have the same chairs.

AM: We have the same benches.

CM: The same from when it was built. That's some good furniture.

AM: We were Baptists so we used to have a little pool back there for us to, I guess you might have seen it back there.

CrM: Well, the bathroom is back there, isn't it?

CM: Since then they've added a bathroom.

AM: That's where we were baptized.

CM: I was baptized there and we got married there, had my wedding there.

AM: Yes, she had her wedding there. I didn't have mine there because I married a lady in Dalton, Georgia so we got married up there.

CrM: Do you think Zion is active in the community and were they active in race relations?

AM: Oh yes, they really were. We had a pastor by the name of Reverend J.W. Cook. He was the one that really got the integration movement started in Marietta, GA, with some more people. I think the restaurant downtown in Marietta. They went in there.

CM: He was a mess!

AM: He was just up there and they wanted to hurry up and get rid of him because he was causing a lot of problems. But he was the one that really started it and I'll never forget he said, "Well, you might as well get prepared for it because it's coming." That's what he said, I'll never forget.

CrM: So Zion was pretty active in the community in race relations, y'all just didn't participate.

AM: No, we didn't participate that way but we've always been active. But like I said, all the relationships in Marietta and Cobb County have been pretty good. Like I said, you were just segregated in a lot of things.

CM: But Reverend Cook integrated this white washateria because we could not go to the white washateria. He just went in there one day and started washing.

CrM: That's all there was to it.

AM: But in this area, and it's changed when I think back when we were growing up, in this particular area, I remember they had the prison camp was all right down the street down there.

CM: Yes, Fairground.

AM: They had the prison. Right there almost at the end where you go up that little hill, like you're going to Lockheed, it was on the right there, I'll never forget.

CM: It's where the *Marietta Journal* is now.

CrM: Oh really?

AM: It might be where the *Marietta Journal* is.

CrM: When there used to be the big airplane across the street where the pool is.

AM: What now?

CrM: They used to have a big airplane sitting about where the pool is in Bell Park, right over in there.

AM: Yes, it was right around there.

CrM: When do you recall, or what age did something happen to make you realize that segregation was wrong or weird or when did it stop being just . . .

CM: Well, we knew it was wrong but at that time the movement hadn't started so there wasn't anything we could do so when you grow up with something you just accept it. But we didn't like it. We didn't like it but there wasn't anything you could do about it.

AM: I have always, it's been my firm belief that people are people. Your color doesn't make—it's what you think in the heart, you see, and if your heart don't change you don't change. Your mind might change but you've got to change that heart.

CM: Education doesn't change the heart, you've got to want to. They'll go by the law but . . .

CrM: So you think Zion is still involved?

CM: Oh yes, very much so.

CrM: In race relations in the community?

CM: Reverend Johnson was very involved.

AM: Yes he was because he was there right before Reverend Travis. I guess Reverend Travis probably told you he was there about thirty-one years. As long as I've been a member of Zion I don't recall but five preachers because Reverend Johnson stayed there thirty-one years and Reverend [A.G] Belcher was the first one I remember was Reverend Belcher and then Reverend [L.R.] Edwards and Reverend Cook and Reverend [R.L.] Johnson and Reverend Travis.

CM: Yes. That's as far as I remember. Because they stayed a long time. Well, they were good pastors, good leaders.

AM: Yes, they sure were.

CM: Reverend Johnson and, what's the lady's name at Kennesaw State?

AM: She retired.

CrM: Betty Siegel.

CM: Yes, they were real good friends because Kennesaw State used to come to our church once a year for service and she would always come and make a talk. She and Reverend Johnson were friends, that was years ago, wasn't it? Probably over twenty years ago that they got that started, the communication with Kennesaw College and Zion church.

CrM: What kind of church activities do you remember from you were little kids?

CM: Oh just like Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and BYTU, we had three services.

CrM: What's BYTU?

CM: Baptist Training Union for the Youth. They had two services, one at 11:00 and one at 7:00 at night. We had a night service you know.

AM: We'd usually have a night service.

CM: BYPU was at 6:00. The children studied scriptures.

AM: And if you weren't there you know you better be back there at BYTU.

CM: You had to go to BYTU.

AM: You're in trouble if you were not there.

CM: You already had Sunday School so they'll put you back with some old teacher.

AM: I wish we had all that now, I think the kids would be much better, I believe they all would be.

CrM: It sounds like Zion is doing a lot for the community, they have lots of services and it sounds like there's something for everybody.

CM: They have a lot of ministry going on and they're doing a good job with the youth, very good job. Every time you look they've got another ministry for them and that's really nice. We need it, they need it. Because now they have one for the young guys and they have one especially for the young girls, they got that started here recently. They talk to the young girls about life and everything so I think that's really nice.

CrM: So you worked for the Housing Authority and in insurance?

CM: Yes, and then I worked at Kennestone for thirty-two years. After I left the Housing Authority I went to Kennestone and I retired, I've been retired ten years.

CrM: What did you do at Kennestone?

CM: I was a nurse tech.

CrM: What about your husband and your family?

CM: Well, I didn't have any children but my husband, he's deceased so he's been gone four years now and he used to work at Slater Systems at the plant down there before they closed it. Then he went to the Presbyterian church, that's where he retired from in Marietta.

CrM: How did you meet him?

CM: Well, he was in service and he came to visit his niece.

CrM: Oh, so you waved at him on the train?

CM: [laughter] No, I didn't see him on the train but he was in service and his nephew had married a girl up there and I knew her, well, we were just neighbors and he would come and visit them and after he got out of service he came here and was staying with them and her mother told him he ought to try to date me, that I was a nice girl and stuff. But anyway, I had a car and I wasn't married at the time—I had a flat tire and I had called my

girlfriend to tell her husband because we all grew up together, will he come and change my tire for me? She told me, yeah, he'd be over there. So my husband's name is Lundell but I call him Johnny, well, he knocked on my door and he said, "What are you going to do? Is that tire going to stay flat all day?" I said, "Well, somebody's coming over to fix it in a little while." Then he said, "Do you mind if I fix it?" I said, "No, you can fix it if you want to." So after he fixed the tire, he said—see he had been watching me and I didn't know that. He said, "Well, what are you doing this evening." I said, "I'm going to a shower, a bridal shower later on." He said, "What are you going to do after that?" I said, "Oh, nothing." He said, "You want to go to a movie?" So we started going to a movie and then we started going together. And then later on we got married, but we were dating about two and a half years and then we got married.

CrM: What year did you get married?

CM: '63.

CrM: What do you think is your fondest memory of Zion?

CM: Growing up, listening to those people sing those hymns and they didn't have any music, stomping on their feet . . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

CM: Oh, they had a beat and we sang acapella all the time. That was really neat, I tell you. Those people sang.

CrM: What's your favorite hymn?

CM: Well, I like *Amazing Grace* of course, and some other songs, something I always liked, let's see, I forget it. I like all hymns but the one that I really like I can't think of it now but I really like that and *Amazing Grace* because all we sung was the hymns until we had this little guy, we had a little guy named Freeman, he was young—things were changing then—he was like fifteen when he started playing for our church later he went into the service. When Freeman came from service he was jazzing up that music and all of those older people weren't used to it, you know, Zion has never been the same. He recreated the music of Zion. He was good though. He was jazzing up that service. I don't know whether he played in a nightclub or what but honey, he could jazz up those hymns. It was really fun.

CrM: He played the piano?

CM: Yes, he was good.

CrM: One of those two that's still up in the chapel? You know those that are still in the old Zion?

CM: In the old one?

AM: I think one of them we had to rebuild.

CM: We had to rebuild all that. Didn't we get rid of the old one?

AM: I think one of them was rebuilt in there.

CM: Right then we might have saved one of them but they were something else. Yeah, he could play those hymns.

SM: What about you Mr. Mayes, what's your fondest memory of Zion?

AM: Well, basically about the same thing as her, just like I said, being in the choir too, you know, and that was a thrill. I actually recall that we had dedicated our musician, her name was Ms. Ella Wright and she taught us a lot of songs. And I used to watch those older deacons when I was little, you know, and I never thought that in later years I would be on the deacon board singing those old hymns like they did.

CM: And I love to hear that bell ring on Sunday morning, you could hear the bell all over town. At eleven o'clock it will be ringing and those ladies, you know, people used to walk everywhere but they could walk in those high-heeled shoes. They had some strong legs because they'd be stepping in the church with those high-heeled shoes on at eleven o'clock and the little man, I can't remember, but the bell was so heavy and when he pulled the rope it looked like he was just going to go up in the ceiling. It was so much fun, though, I tell you it's true.

AM: And one of my fondest memories, talking about one of the musicians, she played for what was called the senior choir and her name was Ms. Noble Summerlin. You know how kids would be, I was a little kid then, and after every song she had to hit that last key, "bing"!

CM: "Bing"! When she finished it.

AM: We would just fall over. It would tickle us so hard then, we had a lot of fun. And she would always hit the end of that key, it just tickled us.

CM: At the end of the song!

SM: Anything else?

CRM: Is there anything that you want to add that we didn't ask you about or you want to tell us about?

SM: Anything that you think that needs to be on tape for future generations to hear about Marietta or your life or Zion or integration or segregation?

CM: Well, I don't know. They may get a kick out of us running to the train station my girlfriend and I. I guess it would be dull to them but we made a pact that we would never tell anybody about going to the train station. Every Sunday we would go to town because the train was coming and we were so desperate to see some boys so when the train started blowing we would beat the train here, I guess it'd be up there by Elizabeth, but we would beat the train to the station down there and we were so glad to see those soldiers and we waved at them. They waved back at us and smiled but that was our highlight.

SM: You probably made their day.

CM: Ours too until a freight train came along.

AM: I tell you what we used to do too on Sunday. They had the street cars in Marietta and they'd go around the square and then you'd go to Atlanta. It'd take you an hour to get to Atlanta. We would, I really would slip off to go to Atlanta, but it was a thrill to walk and see the tall buildings because we didn't see any tall buildings in Marietta. We would go down and walk around in the tall buildings but like I said, we had to be back before BYPU.

CM: And the thing with that, we did experience segregation on the street car because we had to go to Atlanta and okay, if it fills up, had one seat for blacks to sit in, it was in the back, but if it filled up you had to stand up all the way to Atlanta, and you had to stand up all the way coming back home because I know during the years I was carrying insurance I had to stand because it would start filling up and the whites would start filling up from the back and if you came on then you had to stand up, you had to stand up and hold on to keep from falling.

AM: And I went to school in Atlanta for a while and a long time, like you said, at the bus station where I caught the bus, if it got filled up, either you had to stand up—and they would only let so many stand up, and then I don't care how long you had been waiting there for that bus then you had to wait for the next bus to come along.

CM: Hm-hm. It was something else.

AM: Now you might have been waiting on that bus forty-five minutes to an hour.

CrM: Where did you go to school?

AM: Reid Business College is where I went to school at down there in Atlanta.

SM: Long time to get home.

CM: Oh yes, sometimes you'd be so tired but you just had to stand up if you wanted to get home.

AM: I wouldn't take anything for the experience though.

CM: I wouldn't either.

AM: It was a good experience. The young generation these days take so much for granted because we older people know how we came up and sacrificed.

CM: But through it all we made it. We were happy. I don't hold any feeling in my heart against anybody because that was the way the life was in those days.

AM: And I can say that we had a good father, he was a father and a mother too because there were six of us and he didn't marry no more but he helped raised us with our relatives and the neighbors he raised six kids and all of us turned out to be pretty good. We didn't have no real bad reputation.

CM: I remember the first time my dad took me to see my grandmother, she was sick and I looked on her chest and I saw this raised place on her chest and I didn't know what it was so I asked him, I said, "What is that?" I think my aunt said, "Well, that's' where when she was a little girl, she was branded."

CrM: Your grandmother was a slave?

CM: Yes. She was a slave child taken away from her mother. During that time, I was a teenager then, yeah I did get hot over that, you know. And when people would be writing different things in the pulse of the public about blacks and I would answer it and I would write back but then something told me one day, it said, don't be angry because that was in her generation and it's gone. Those people had to pay for that and so I stopped. I stopped being angry and I can get along with anybody and I don't care what they say now, they can talk about Obama, whatever, it doesn't bother me because I got over that. I'm glad I did because when you hold anger it hurts you. Now it really did upset me because they did it for years I wrote, I mean I would write answers and talk back and all like that, but that's not necessary. You can get over stuff if you practice it and pray about it you will. So it doesn't bother me. People can say anything they want to, I know I'm not that so I don't worry about it.

SM: I think that would be a good way to wind it up.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDEX

- Baptist Training Union for the Youth, 14-15, 18
Belcher, A.G. (Reverend), 14
Bell Bomber, 3
Blount, Martha, 11
- Cook, J.W. (Reverend), 12, 13
- Edwards, L.R. (Reverend), 14
- Hanley's Funeral Home, 3
- King, Alberta Williams, 8
King, Martin Luther (Dr.), 8
- Lemon Street High School
 Name changing to, 4
 Prayer at, 4
 Offering class only until the 11th grade, 4
 Sports at, 6
- Lockheed, 3
- Maddox, Clara M.
 Background, 1
 On growing up in Marietta, Georgia, 2
 On segregation at McLellan's in Marietta, 2-3, 8
 On African American businesses in Marietta, 3
 On attending segregated Lemon Street High School, 4
 On their father, 5-6, 7, 19
 Helping the Sunbeam Choir at Zion Baptist, 7
 On the calmness of Marietta during the civil rights era, 7-8
 On meeting Dr. Martin Luther King, 8
 Racism during employment at Marietta Housing Authority, 9-11
 On being hired to work at Kennestone Hospital, 11, 15
 On the historic appearance of Old Zion Church, 12
 On segregation, 13
 On meeting and marrying her husband, 15-16
 Fondest memory of Old Zion Baptist Church, 16-17
 On their grandmother as a former slave, 19
- Marietta Café, 3
- Marietta, Georgia
 African American sections of, 2-3
 Segregation in the parks of, 3
 African American businesses in, 3

- The streetcars of, 18
- Mayes, Albert
 - Background, 1
 - On segregation in Marietta's parks, 2
 - On African American businesses in Marietta, 3
 - On attending segregated Lemon Street High School, 3-4
 - On being a deacon at Zion Baptist Church, 7
 - Helping to raise money for a new chapel for Zion Baptist (1970's), 7
 - On meeting and the assassination of Alberta Williams King, 8
 - On segregation in Marietta, 8-9
 - On the historic appearance of Old Zion Church, 12
 - On segregation, 13
 - Fondest memory of Old Zion Baptist Church, 17
 - Attending Reid Business School in Atlanta, 18
 - On their father, 18
- Perkinson, W. H. (Dr.), 4
- Perkinson High School (see Lemon Street High School)
- Summerlin, Noble, 17
- Travis, Harris T. (Reverend), 14
- Turner Chapel, Marietta, Georgia, 3
- Usher, Ms. (former teacher), 5
- Waters, Ms. (former teacher), 5
- Woods, Kathryn, 11
- Woods, M.J. (Professor), 4
- Zion Baptist Church
 - Providing classroom space while building the new high school, 4
 - As part of the community, 8
 - Activity in race relations and civil rights movement, 12-13, 14, 15
 - Reverend Cook integrating a "white-only" washateria, 13
 - Choir, 16-17
 - Church bell of, 17

This item is part of the following collection:
Thomas Allan Scott, 1943-
Kennesaw State University Oral history project, 1978-
KSU/45/05/001

The collection is held by:
Kennesaw State University
Dept. of Archives, Special Collections, & Records Management
1000 Chastain Rd
Sturgis Library Rooms 215-226
Kennesaw, Georgia 30144
(770) 423-6289
archives@kennesaw.edu

To request permission to publish, reproduce, publicly display, broadcast, or distribute this material in any format, you must contact the Dept. of Archives, Special Collections, and Records Management.