

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 GEORGE WILLIAMS

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Cobb NAACP/Civil Rights Series, No. 5
Interview with George Williams
Conducted by Crystal Money and Stephanie McKinnell
Monday, 5 October 2009
Location: Zion Baptist Church

SM: Just to start out would you tell us your full name and what year you were born?

GW: George Williams. I was born in Marietta, Georgia, February 22, 1935.

CM: All right. Did you grow up in Marietta?

GW: Yes, I grew up in Marietta.

CM: In this area?

GW: Right in this area, about two or three blocks over off of Page Street on Cole Street in the old part of Marietta. I was born over there.

CM: Tell us about your family, your brothers and sisters, what your parents did, things like that.

GW: My mother was a member of Zion, one of the older members of Zion for years and years and my father worked at the Brumby Chair Factory where you made those Brumby rockers, I know you've heard of that.

SM: They're comfortable.

GW: Yes, he did that for about thirty years. The family we had, there was ten of us, six boys and four girls, and I'm the only boy still living now and me and my sister, baby sister and I have another sister, two girls and one boy still living out of ten. We all grew up in Marietta.

CM: What was the house that you grew up in like?

GW: Oh, it was, well, the first house on Pine Street I was born over there on Pine Street in one of those old tin shacks with the roof, and I used to see Mama going in the yard and there was no grass, but we had chickens and stuff in the yard. You could look up and see the chickens running up under the house and things like that, and we had an old potbelly stove. We had an old fireplace, you know, to heat us up because it was cold during the wintertime.

CM: Did you have your own well in the yard or was there a city well?

GW: No, we didn't have a well, we used running water. We did have running water back then. We didn't have one in the yard back then but it was pretty rough, I did come up pretty rough then.

CM: It makes you appreciate what you have now.

GW: Oh, it really does. It's a whole lot different now, so much different now because see, when you come up the hard way, you had to, you survived, you had to go to church at Zion at an early age, in the old church over there, but that was when we moved from Pine Street. We moved to Cole Street, the next street down; there was this old place that my daddy bought that and he built there and that's the old home place where we like to get together and have family reunions. We still got the pecan tree over down there; we'd pick up pecans during the winter but there is a whole lot of memory there. Mama used to make us go to church and Sunday school, and I go to Sunday school now but Reverend Travis was on us all the time. He wants us to go to Sunday school and to Bible study, but Mama, she insisted we had to go to Sunday school, every Sunday morning. We were little toddlers, little toddlers, it was all ten of us and we were small then.

SM: Y'all would take up the whole pew.

GW: Yes, we'd take up the whole pew in the old church, but she carried us and yes sir, we were brought up in that old church over there and I never shall forget it. I'll never forget that place.

CM: What do you remember about the services when you were a child?

GW: As a child, well, I joined the church at an early age, but I'm seventy-four now, so I joined the church when I was maybe about ten years old. My mother and them used to sing in the choir, Ms. Hattie Wilson and all those Mothers would sing in the choir. I got a picture now where you can see me sitting there in front of the choir, so I joined the choir at an early age and I started singing in the choir. It's a wonderful feeling, knowing that you've been in the church all your life and when you're brought up in the church it's the only thing you know about, it's the only thing I know about. I was raised in the church. We stray away but we come back and everything, but it was a wonderful feeling. I sure appreciate it because I look back over my life and all the things that we had come, good and bad, through the good times and through the bad times. It's been good. The good outweighed all.

CM: Where did you go to school?

GW: I went to Lemon Street High School—Mr. Woods down there, everybody went down to Lemon Street, down the street, right down Lemon Street down there. I finished in 1955 so we attended school down there to twelfth grade. I stayed in the church and I finally got married after I finished school and then—it's a long story! But speaking back about the old church, after we finished school and everything I met my wife, Frances, and we've been married forty-eight years now. Reverend [Robert] Johnson married us, he

was the pastor. Have you heard about him? Reverend Johnson, he married us when he got here. Did some of the other men tell you about him? I think it was 1958 when he come here I believe, and we got married in '61.

CM: How did you meet your wife?

GW: After I was in school I sang a lot and I met Frances. She was used to singing in a little group too. I met her over there in Winston, Georgia. You heard of a little town called Winston over there?

CM: Going out past Douglasville?

GW: Right, she used to sing with some ladies and I met her at the little church over there. Then me and my brother and all of us, we used to sing in a quartet, and we travelled a lot, so I told her, well, I got her phone number. A good friend of mine, Hoyt Kimball, he worked at Lockheed and he knew because he managed the group and so he introduced me to her and everything. I told her I was going to call her and I did maybe about six or seven months later, I waited about six or seven months before I called her.

CM: Were you shy?

GW: Yes, she was shy but I finally called her and then we dated for three years going back and forth, I was on the road and everything. Then we got married over here in the old church.

SM: That was kind of a haul driving to Winston back then, wasn't it?

GW: No, she stayed right there, you know where the Ford plant is down there?

SM: In Hapeville?

BW: No, no, right there where Life College is, it was there and I would drive there. I didn't have a car so a friend of mine, Charlie Hunter, Jr. [let me] borrow his car to go pick Frances up because I couldn't afford a car. My daddy and mama couldn't afford no car so I borrowed his car and we went down there and we'd pick her up and we'd go to the movies. Sometimes her daddy would bring her up and we'd go to the Strand Theater, but we would walk up there and then he'd wait a time and come back to pick her up about ten o'clock and maybe at 9:30. We'd go to a movie and he would come back and pick her up and carry her home. But it was a lot of fun.

CM: Was the Strand segregated?

GW: Oh yeah, we had to sit in the back, it was segregated, we had to go in on the side, yeah, the Strand was segregated and all. We had to go in the back and the water fountain was still the same situation, you had to drink water out of the park up there. The same as the stores, you know.

SM: Tell us about some of the other stores that were segregated and how you dealt with that.

GW: Okay, well, a little store right down the street from the Strand Theater, you turn a little corner right there, a little drug store that used to be right there, by the Shillings, that place, that eating place up there, there used to be a store and they'd sell hot dogs and things like that.

CM: Do you remember the name of it?

GW: I think it was Millwood, it was a little café. We could only go there and get a hot dog or something to eat. It was segregated then.

CM: Where were the black owned businesses in Marietta?

GW: Black owned businesses were on Lawrence Street, you remember right up there? Lawrence Street. Shine Fowler had a pool hall and they had a funeral home, Hanley Funeral Home. They had pool up there but those were black businesses up there.

CM: Were the businesses thriving?

GW: Oh yeah, it was good business and they were thriving. And the hospital was right there, you know, where the parking lot [county parking deck] is right there and they could go right over there. They had the hospital right there and downstairs they had the black section and the white section upstairs. Zion was right here in all of these struggles, we were right in the middle of all of right here. We had the black hospital over there on Hunt Street over there and Dr. [Wilburn] Weddington was in charge of that hospital over there, he was the doctor. The Weddingtons, he's in Columbus, Ohio, now but he's still living I believe, but he's got a brother in Dallas over there.

CM: How do you feel Zion has impacted this community?

GW: Oh gosh, Zion has impacted this whole community for years and years because Zion's been here 143 years and so many people have come through here of every walk of life. It came out of the First Baptist up there, you know, the slaves built that church and then they moved down here and built this one. You can see it's impacted the whole community because we had a good pastor, good leadership, we had good leaders in there. I came under Reverend [L.R.] Edwards; Reverend Edwards baptized me and he was there for a long while before Reverend Johnson came. And then Reverend [Jesse] Cook, those are the ones I remember. There's some more ministers before him, before Reverend Johnson come on here because Reverend Johnson was here about thirty-something years [1960-91]. But Reverend Cook and Reverend Edwards and Reverend Hamm, all them old ministers and they just got the ministry started and then Reverend Johnson started coming and when Reverend Edwards passed then Reverend Johnson come on and then after Reverend Johnson passed then Reverend Travis come on and we were thriving.

CM: Thinking back when you were younger as a child, what kind of, I guess they didn't call it outreach programs but how did the church help, you know like we have now with so many different groups, but how did the church help the community?

GW: Well, we had the missionary societies. Back then they had the missionary societies and on Tuesday night we would, young men and young boys, I had to go to the missionary society. We had to go. Each Tuesday night they had it in a different area, different people's homes and everything and then eventually it sprung out from that and when anybody in the community would get sick or something or get down and need help, those missionary societies would come in and they would go in and fix food and clean your homes and things like that. Back then they did all that. It's a totally different thing now.

CM: It's like an extended family.

GW: Right. The outreach now is a totally different thing. I was used to going and helping, but it's getting back now because we have some of our elder people in the church here now, The men's ministries here, they go out and do, you know, clean the yards and if some of the members need their house roofing we've got all types of people in this church that can do electrical work and any kind of work, if they need help they do that and they go out and do all that. It meets on Monday night and as a matter of fact they meet tonight, but we do that now but back then it was a joy, I loved it, I really did.

SM: When do you remember realizing that segregation was wrong or did you have an "Aha" moment?

GW: Well, at an early age, you know, you look at it and you can see it, you can look and you want to do things but you couldn't do it. You wanted to go places you couldn't go and then you're in the back of the line and you couldn't do that or you go to separate bathrooms. I never will forget, me and my brother and all of us, we was in some part of Indiana and they said, once you cross the Mason-Dixon line you're free, so we went to this little town in Indiana and we was travelling on a tour, and we went to a little club place up there to get coffee and all and we said, oh, we can go in here, it's free, we've we crossed the Mason Dixon line then we can go. So we went in there and they said, "Did you bring your pot with you?" You know, the waitress said that, "We don't serve blacks," and we thought just across the Mason Dixon line everything was all right but that was worse than the South. It was worse because we said, gosh, we didn't think that, we thought over there... But it's worse than the South. We thought we'd get a coffee free up here and you can go in here and sit down and drink your coffee, breakfast and everything, but no way, we couldn't do it. It was in a little town up there, I forget the name of it. But I never will forget that. But you can look back and you observe things and that's what I did when I was coming up because I couldn't do it but I knew there would be a better day, I know the Lord wasn't going to bring us this far and leave us alone, I know that. So you look at your faith and you look how he brought you and you just keep on working, put your trust in Him and it'll work out. And it has. Speaking of school with Dr. Siegel, I never will forget this, since we're talking about Kennesaw, I was working at a school group there and I was on the campus one day. I was working up there with Dr. Pete

Silver and Melvis Atkinson and all of them who were up there and, “I heard Deacon Williams from Zion Baptist Church was up here, Dr. Siegel wants to see him”. So she called me to the office, Dr. Silver called me and told me to go, that Dr. Siegel wanted to see me so I went to her office and that’s when she first come there, she’d been there about two years I believe and she wanted to know how could we get more minorities to come to school because there was very few blacks when she first came up there. So I met with her and we talked about the college coming to the community, bring the college to the community, so we talked about it and Dr. Silver and about four or five—Julia Collier and Melvis Atkinson and about four or five others, how we’re going to do this so we set up a program that every year Kennesaw comes down to Zion. We set that up, Reverend Johnson and I did and Dr. Silver and about three or four other people. But this is the thing with change, you can do it if you want to do it. So she was insisting to get more minorities on the campus and you see how now how the school has grown so much, it has grown.

CM: It’s huge.

GW: Huge, like a city. We did all that, we worked with her and we put that program together and they come to Zion, as matter of fact they was here last year, as a matter of fact, they may probably come back this year. Dr. Papp was here last year with the program and Dr. Siegel. So the college comes to the community. Dr. Oral Moses and all of them come down all the time.

SM: When the schools in the city were beginning to integrate you were a young man. Where were you working then?

GW: Well, I was working, after I got out of school, I went to my cleaning service, I had a cleaning service, I cleaned up banks.

CM: So you worked for yourself?

GW: Yes, I worked for myself and then I left that and then I went to Lockheed and worked there for eight or nine years at Lockheed and then I went to Southern Poly University and worked over there. But I had my own cleaning service.

CM; What did you do at Southern Poly?

GW: Clean up, janitor.

SM: Reverend Travis was there.

GW: Right.

SM; Were you there about the same time?

GW: Same time, Reverend Travis was there and I was over there too.

CM: What did you do at Lockheed?

GW: I was a janitor.

SM: You're a professional then.

GW: In the flight line over there. Then my wife, she runs a daycare center and she's done that for thirty-two years, her and my daughter, so they went into that business. But, other than that, it's constant with three kids, you know, all of them grown, all of them married.

CM: Two questions together here: What do you remember about integration in Marietta and Cobb County and how did Zion play a part and what was their part in that?

GW: Well, Zion played a part, you know, because I know in integration, especially if you played on a school football team and everything, I remember we couldn't get the equipment and things and we would get the leftovers, they would send them from the white school, Marietta High.

CM: Hand-me-downs.

GW: Hand-me-downs, they sent them down to Lemon Street and I remember all of that for years and years because I played football but we got it.

CM: What year did you graduate from Lemon Street?

GW: In 1955.

CM: From the twelfth grade?

GW: Yes.

CM: Because they hadn't had a twelfth grade for that long, right?

GW: No. Lemon Street was sitting back off and then they had a little old tall building there that they tore down and then they built the library in there. But no, it wasn't long. I remember all that. But it's so much different, you can look back and see the way you were brought up and just thank God, it ain't like it used to be because I didn't want my kids to come up like we did then. They don't have to do it now. They've got the opportunity. You don't have to say I can't do it, I can't do it, no that's no excuse because you got the opportunity. Back then you see, we didn't have the money, we were sharecroppers back then. You can look back and everything but there's no excuse now, you got an opportunity, you can do it. When you look like you've got a black president now, so you know there's no excuse. You can do it, you can do it.

- SM: Why do you think Zion has grown so much? Why do you think they've stayed a strong presence in the black community?
- GW: We decided years ago I think they wanted us to move, you know, move to the suburbs on the outside, but Reverend Travis [thought] after Rev. Johnson passed, Zion is a city church now, he wanted Zion to stay where it is. He constantly told us that that he didn't want to, because we tried to buy some land next door there over there and we tried to get some land and then we started buying land all down the street. But Zion wanted to stay in the city, and it's been an impact on the community. Of course, we relate with all the churches around up right on the square here we do all things together. Years ago you wouldn't have thought of that. You wouldn't have thought of that all the churches working together as a team but we do. United Methodist, I go over there to sing and visit and worship with them and they worship with us. It's an impact for the community because Zion has been here all these years so it's a community church and everybody looks forward to Zion, when the people come in town the first thing they ask you do you know where Zion Baptist Church is because it is known, it is really known.
- CM: Since you grew up in the old chapel how did you feel about it being restored?
- GW: Oh gosh. When you go and talk about that old church, oh . . .
- CM: It's like home? Do they ever hold any services over there or is it strictly the museum?
- GW: It's the museum now but we went back over there, I think one time we had one service over there, but it's just a building.
- CM: It's a beautiful place.
- GW: Gosh, the acoustics and the sound, you don't got to have no microphones up there, everything in there is just like you left it.
- CM: So they did a good job restoring it?
- GW: They restored it and everything. It is awesome. I just wish we would have maybe once a year, twice a year have service over there but the church has grown so big now you'd have to have two or three services. But I would just like to—because some of the new members haven't been in there, haven't had services in the old church, it would just be good for them to get a little taste of what it used to be years ago, the sound, stomping on the floor, you pad your feet on the floor, you could hear the sound and when they'd be singing you could hear the foot tapping and the clapping hands and everything. But it's just awesome.
- CM: It seems like that would mean a lot to older members.
- GW: Oh gosh, it really does, because I was part of that. When we moved to the chapel here it was, we outgrew that over there. That's when Reverend Johnson come on the scene so

there was six of us we put up our homes and went to the bank, United Federal Savings & Loan and put the . .

CM: Because you were one of the ones that put up your own house, right?

GW: Right, I was one of the ones. My wife . . .

CM: What did she think about that?

GW: Well, it's a funny thing, Mother [Annie Mae] Solomon, the mother of our church, I went out to Marietta Federal Savings & Loan to see, right now where Wachovia used to be there used to be Marietta Federal, Mr. Wilder Little was the president and Mother Solomon, she raised him and she told me that, he called, "Annie, come here," because I was sitting in the car. He said, "Come here. Y'all can't pay for a new church because y'all are not making enough money." And she came out to the car and told us, she said, "George, I want you to hear this," coming from the president of this bank so Mr. Wilder Little told us, he said, "Mr. Williams, I heard y'all don't make enough money to pay for no church. Some of the members told him. I won't call no names, but some of the members said y'all can't afford to pay for the church." I said, "Yes, we can. We can do this." So Mother Solomon called me and she said, "God has got you in the plans. You can't get out of it." Because I was about to become the chairman then, I was chairman for twenty-eight years, and I was just coming on the scene and she said, "You're in the picture. God got you to do this job and you can't get out of it." So I did, when Mother Solomon told me I went home and told my wife to call Mr. Wyman Pilcher down at United Federal Savings & Loan down in Smyrna, I knew him because we did a lot of work for him and we sung at the United Methodist Church for him over there, see I knew him because me and my brother sung over there and we know them personally. So we made an appointment, my wife made an appointment, with him and we bought our home through United Federal Savings & Loan so he told me to come down there so I went down there and I told him what we wanted to do, what I wanted to do and he said, "We will help you do it. Print you out some pledge cards where everybody and get them out and fill them out and send them back to me." In about three months time, four months time we had about 300 or 400 pledge cards filled out to the church. Then we were breaking ground over here.

SM: This is what year?

GW: In 1977, I got some pictures.

SM: This is the groundbreaking ceremony?

GW: The groundbreaking ceremony.

SM: Are you in any of these?

GW: Yes, I'm the grey-headed one, I'm white headed now but back then, okay, that Mr. Felmer Cummings. I'll show you, I was chairman of the deacon board.

CM: That's the old chapel.

GW: That's the old chapel right there.

SM: That's how it looks now. You should label all these.

GW: I just picked them up because I know I was coming up here this evening, I know that I was coming up here. See right there and here's me right there. See that big old Afro! So, this is when we left the old church over there, and this was the cutting the ribbon and coming to the chapel down here, this was in 1977.

SM: Wasn't there some controversy surrounding that with necessarily a split but . .

GW: No, no, there was a controversy because people said we couldn't do it and everything but I said we could do it.

CM: So it was a split, but not necessarily anybody who completely disagreed with the move.

GW: No, no, because after we got over here we had to put in a whole lot of more money because of the drainage system in here so we had an architect come in here to work with us but everybody, no, we paid it off in seven years, the whole thing off. But we went through the process.

CM: In seven years?

GW: Yes.

CM: That's fast.

GW: And the chapel is right down there.

CM: Were you married in the old chapel?

GW: I was married in the old church over there, yeah, Frances and I were married over there. If you see that big wedding picture on the wall there, that's me.

CM: Oh that's you.

GW: Yeah, that's me, that picture on the wall there. Yeah, that was me and my wife on the wall there. And Reverend Johnson married us in 1961; we've been married forty-eight years.

SM: Do you know or can you guess how many members were at Zion at the time that you moved into the new chapel?

GW: It was between maybe 300 to 400.

CM: Yes, that's too many for that little church.

GW: Yes, we outgrew that over there and that's when we built this chapel here. We outgrew the little church.

CM: How many members are there now?

GW: We're up to probably about a little over 1,000. It's growing, it's really, really growing.

SM: Well, tell us something about modern Zion. What kind of programs you have and what kind of services you have.

GW: We've got a wonderful service.

CM: Because one day this will be history.

GW: Oh yeah, we've got a wonderful service now with Reverend Travis on the scene and he really got it stretched out, we're on a growth program now and he got us going to the Bible study you know and all men's groups and all ladies groups, just busy. If you come by Zion, practically every day it's busy there. It's just like a little city in there. It is busy in and out. We've got the nursery, we've got the daycare thing going and the church is growing. It is really, really growing.

CM: Yes, we've heard there is something for everybody.

GW: There is. When you come in we tell you, everybody is somebody in Christ, that's what you tell us. Then when you come you feel free and you just—I love the program, a wonderful program. Good board of deacons, choir, good singing, good preaching. That's what draws you.

SM: Do you have children?

GW: I have three kids. Ken, do you know Josetta Walker? My son married her daughter. As a matter of fact, she's in Dallas today, she left and went to Dallas on her job. Then I got Freddie, my youngest boy, he married Cassandra and she works for Xerox and my daughter Missy, she works at the daycare and my wife runs that.

CM: So they live around here? Do they go to Zion also?

GW: Yes, well Missy, my daughter goes to Pastor Carl A. Moore's church up in Woodstock, Allen Temple. She goes to Carl, and then my other son he goes to his wife's church, he and his wife go to another church. But Ken and Tricie go here now.

CM: Are there a lot of multi-generational families here?

GW: Oh yeah.

CM: Do you think that adds to the strength of Zion?

GW: Oh yes, it does, it does. Y'all ought to come visit sometime. The choir has excellent musicians, we really good. Our youth choir, the Sunbeam choir, we've got something for everybody.

CM: What's the Sunbeam choir?

GW: That's the little small kids.

CM: That's cute.

GW: The little small kids.

SM: Is that as fun as watching kids play t-ball?

GW: Yeah, t-ball, everything, so that's a lot of fun. We call it the little Sunbeam choir. Ms. Clara Maddox—she's been over that choir for ages, and she hounds those little kids. All of them go to Miss Clara from the age of about three on up to about six or seven. Then they go to the youth choir. Reverend Travis wants to get a—as a matter of fact the ladies started off in a 100 voice choir, the ladies, we got that. Then we have the men, the men wanted to do it, the men have 125, we had to outscore the ladies! Then we had the Sunbeam choir, all those kids.

CM: Well, let's go backwards again. Tell me what you remember a typical service being like when you were a young child.

GW: A young child, oh gosh, I had so many of them because in the old church we had, oh gosh, in the old church we had, you just get in there and you just praised and all, you just praise and just praise and give Him all the glory, that's what we did. That's all we had to do because once you get out of the church and you go home and that was it, you go to work the next day and then come back to Bible study Wednesday night and then Sunday school and back to church and just praise your Lord, just praise your Lord, and that's it. I've done that all my life. I was brought up in that and I sang so many places, sang at the Roswell Street, that's when Dr. Siegel and all those, they were out there at a prayer breakfast. I sang at two or three prayer breakfasts so I did all that. Last month I went over to the United Methodist church over there and did a video with them on U-tube and we sang hymns and if you go on U-tube you'll see George Williams, Marietta, Georgia,

and the United Methodist Church choir and it's on U-tube. But you can go on there and you can see that. But that's how we did that. You know, in the old church building and coming over to the chapel here [the 1978 building], we'd do the same thing in the chapel, you know. We have most of all of our films down there in the chapel because we hadn't had a film in the new church. But most of the same, everybody just praise the Lord, just giving to God's glory and where he brought us from and we just keep on doing that. He first come in our life and put Him first and everything else will fall into place. That's what we have to do. But we have to give Him the glory. It's all about Him, it's all about Him. It's not about us, it's about Him. That's the way I look at it, that's where all my help come from. When I look back and think what He's done for me and everything, seventy-four years old, you know, pretty good mind, you know, and the Lord has blessed me, so I give Him all the glory. Wonderful family and a wonderful wife; I can't ask for nothing better. Nobody but the Lord do it. He paid it all for us. So you look back and you just thank Him through the good times and the bad times. No one knows, it's hard sometimes, it was rough, sometimes you didn't know if you were going to make it. When you wake up and you look up and you see the sky then you look back, now you got running water, now you got hot water, back then Mama used to heat the water on the stove. When you get baptized and she bathes you in the little tin tub; now you got your own bathroom, you got two or three bathrooms. But it's nothing but His grace and His mercy and we got it now and He gave it to us. But He's come first.

CM: What is your fondest memory of all your years at Zion?

GW: Oh my, traveling. When Reverend Johnson came we would go take tours. First time we went to Rockford, Illinois.

CM: Like a bus tour?

GW: Yes, a bus tour.

CM: Everybody would get on a bus?

GW: Everybody would get on the bus and we'd take two buses to Rockford. Reverend Scott, a friend of ours, of course, every time I would go visit another church I would come back, me and my wife would go visit where we know people and then we'd go visit another church and tell them how good a time we had and how the ministry was so I would tell them about it. We went to Rockford, Illinois. But up in Tennessee, up on Lookout Mountain between Nashville and Murfreesboro back out in the country back up in there, we carried two busloads up there and Aaron Cuthbert, one of the deacons, he carried us up there on those buses, we had two Greyhound buses, and we couldn't hardly turn the bus around and get in the buses. It's tight up on the hill. So we went up there and then we went to California three times, Reverend Henry Harnes out there out of Little Rock, California.

CM: You drove all the way out to California?

GW: We had buses.

CM: That's a long trip.

GW: We were gone for a whole week and everything. We went out there three times but that's the most, because we carried the choir there and we sung out there in the desert. If you've ever been to Little Rock, out of Los Angeles, out in the desert out there, the Mojave Desert out there, near Edward Air Force base out there, so he had a church out there, we visited their church, and you talk about fun, talk about fun, it was fun. So we went out there three times. We went by the Grand Canyon, carried a bunch of us out there, but that's just a lot of fun, for me and everything. A lot of kids would never get a chance to go because they'd never been to something like that. But the church did it with the youth and everything. I remember, Teresa, she was younger and she would talk about that whole trip and the little choir out there and we did it three times. Broke down two or three times. It was hot and I never will forget, we were out in Needles, Arizona, and that's the hottest place in the world, I guess 200 miles from Los Angeles, and the bus broke down in Needles. We had sixty-five people, young and old, and I'll never forget, there was a little old sanctified church in Needles where the bus broke down and they come by and we asked somebody if they know of a preacher and they went back to their preacher and said the church's bus broke down out there and they come back and got us out of there and brought us back to the church and put us up there that night and fixed our bus the next day and we stayed there all night, we slept and they fed us and then we had church there, I mean, we had a good time. That was a fond memory, I never will forget that.

CM: Did you sing for them?

GW: Oh, we sung! We had church that night. It was a little, small sanctified church out there in Needles. It was hot, it was hot. It was 102 degrees but they brought us back there to that church and we slept there and they fed us and they got the bus fixed and then we went on down to Little Rock, California the next day.

SM: What would you like to have on tape for posterity and for your kids and grandkids or future members of Zion?

GW: I just hope that everything prospers for them, I know it will, with the leadership that we've got going with Reverend Travis going now and everything and everybody working together as a team and putting God in front of it and everything will fall in place. It's so much different now, the economy's bad now but it's not going to be like this always, it'll eventually going to come through, and I definitely believe that.

CM: I do too. Everybody needs to.

GW: Oh yes, we've just got to be patient and we just have to work it out, let God work it out and He will do it and everything, so that's all we have to do. And everybody will prosper, everybody will get back on their feet and everything. I just believe that, I definitely

believe that, with good leadership and everybody working together as a team I believe in that. That's what we have to do.

SM: Well, we'll say this ends the official interview.

CM: Thank you.

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