

**The Lemon Street Schools Oral History Collection
Marietta City Schools System, 2019-2021
Dorothy Johnson interview
Conducted by James Newberry
February 12, 2020**

Complete Transcript

Interviewer: Okay. This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Ms. Dorothy Johnson. On Wednesday, February 12th, 2020. At her home, in Marietta, Georgia. And, Ms. Johnson, I want to thank you for sitting down with me. Do you agree to the interview?

Johnson: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: Could you tell me your full name?

Johnson: Dorothy Ann Johnson.

Interviewer: And, what's your birthday?

Johnson: 2/1/1945.

Interviewer: And where did you grow up?

Johnson: Marietta, Georgia.

Interviewer: What were your parents' names?

Johnson: Dorothy Winfrey and Ernest Christian, Jr.

Interviewer: And what did they do for a living?

Johnson: My father worked at Lockheed, and my mother really, she worked at [Dobbins 00:00:48], the what you call it? That cafeteria at Dobbins, at the bank. She worked there for a while. Then she helped Dr. [Weddington 00:01:00], a long time ago, when she was younger. She just worked different little places. Like she used to work on the polls, she did all that kind of stuff. She was very active.

Interviewer: What did your dad do at Lockheed?

Johnson: All I know, it was something about the planes. I really don't know what he did, but it was something about the planes. But he retired from Lockheed at 55 years old.

Interviewer: So he was there for most of his career?

Johnson: Yeah.

Interviewer: And, your mother, you mentioned she worked for Dr. Weddington. Do you recall what she did for him?

Johnson: Well, she must have been something like a close assistant, because he taught her how to give shots and all that. So she did do things like that, because she used to give me a shot when I had a cold, and stuff like that.

Interviewer: And, can you tell me Dr. Weddington's full name, and where his office was?

Johnson: It was on Lawrence Street. Dr Weddington. I don't know his first name. All I knew was Dr. Weddington.

Interviewer: And did he serve your family, as a doctor?

Johnson: Yeah, he served my mother and them. And, I was born in a house, so he wasn't here when I was born. He came here later on. My half-sister Janis [inaudible 00:02:22] that was her doctor. He was born with her.

Interviewer: What part of Marietta did you live in as a child?

Johnson: As a child, I lived in Louisville. Which is across the track, going toward...[inaudible 00:02:42] Louisville. You know where that is?

Interviewer: I do.

Johnson: Okay.

Interviewer: Did your parents have a house in Louisville?

Johnson: I lived with my grandparents for a long time, because my mother had gotten sick when I was small, so I start being with my grandmom and granddaddy. But my mother and them, and my father lived on this side. They moved to [Baptist Town 00:03:02], then they moved and bought house right here. Right here on Shepard Street.

Interviewer: Okay. And you're talking about the brick house? There, on the corner?

Johnson: It's wooden.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Johnson: Right here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: It's on this corner. But that used to be Shepard Street, but now it's Wood's Drive. That's what it is. But they lived there, even after I start going to private school, that's where they were living. So they lived there until I'm married, and moved, divorced, and my daddy built me this house.

Interviewer: Okay. So, how long, then, did you live with your grandparents?

Johnson: Off and on, probably... I basically lived with them all the time. I was so close to them after my mother got sick, they say I cried for my grandparents. So she let them just about keep me. But I was in private schools, because my mother wanted me to go to private school, [inaudible 00:04:01], so I was there there four years. But I would come home, and stuff like that, for the summer.

Interviewer: And, was this your mother's parents, or your father's parents?

Johnson: Father's parents.

Interviewer: And what were their names, may I ask?

Johnson: Annette Sorrells and Lynn Sorrells. S-O-R-R-E-L-L-S.

Interviewer: And what did they do for a living?

Johnson: My grandmother was just a housewife, and my granddaddy was a professional tree cutter. He cut down big old trees in people's yard, and stuff like that. That was his whole thing. That's what he did.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Until he retired.

Interviewer: So at that time, when you were a child, this is the late 40's, 1950's, what was your community like?

Johnson: Well with me, it was wonderful. Because, that's all I knew, was my little community. And my family, everybody knew each other. My granddaddy was well liked. He was kind of on the mean side, so didn't nobody mess with him. Especially the boys, didn't mess with my granddaddy. And my grandmamma just always quiet. And both of them went to church. They went to different churches, though. My granddaddy used to go to Cole Street. And my grandmother went in Baptist Town, at Holesly Chapel. That church down there, right there. It was just a little fun family.

Interviewer: Why did they go to separate churches?

Johnson: I don't know. I think probably when they first met, I guess my granddaddy was going to Cole Street, and my grandmother, all her people more or less went to

Holesly Chapel. So I guess that's the reason they never did just... one was a Methodist, and one's a Baptist. So they just let that...

Interviewer: And did you go to one or the other?

Johnson: I go to Holesly Chapel. That's where I went with my grandmother for a long time. Yep.

Interviewer: Did your parents go to church?

Johnson: Yes. My mother, her and my daddy both went to Holesly Chapel. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Did your parents take part, or did you family take part in any social events in the area?

Johnson: Yes, all the time. And then you know like the Marietta Homecoming, have you heard about that?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (negative). Tell me about that.

Johnson: People hear about the Marietta Homecoming? Well, it wasn't people just from Lemon Street. I think it started out saying Lemon Street Homecoming. But, basically it was people older than me, that had never went to Lemon Street. They went to, I forgotten the name of that school. It's not here anymore. My mother and them all went there. And Mr. Scott, he would know about it. He definitely would know about it. And Ms. Jenny Hill, she would know about it. Because she was the on that committee, too. But it was nice. They would have a Homecoming every year. Every year they'd have a banquet, a picnic, and they still do. They do it now about every two or three years. So, it's something to just really recognizing people that lived in Marietta. That's basically.

Interviewer: Are you referring to the high school that was torn down?

Johnson: Yeah. But it really wasn't the high school. That's what I'm saying. I'm trying to think of the name of that school. If you talk to anybody older, they'll remember it. I can't remember right now. But my mother's sister went there. All of them went there. And they were all on that committee. Because Lemon Street started getting into it later on. The people like Priscilla, myself, we all start joining and helping out later. I think they start calling it the Lemon Street Homecoming. But, that wasn't where it started out, basically.

Interviewer: What is Priscilla's name?

Johnson: Slade. I think you went to talk to her. Priscilla Styles, or Slade.

Interviewer: Okay. I may need to get her contact information from you.

Johnson: Yeah, I got her number.

Interviewer: I haven't spoken with her yet. Where did your family shop for clothes, and groceries, and things?

Johnson: Well, basically, they probably shopped for clothes on the square. JoAnn's, and places like that when it was back there a long time ago. JoAnn's been on that square. But grocery wise, I think probably that's been so long ago. I don't know what they... I can't remember what the grocery stores were then. Because they not here now.

Interviewer: Did you go on the square?

Johnson: Yep. I would go up there and shop. Uh huh (affirmative). I would go on the square.

Interviewer: What were your interactions with white people, at the time?

Johnson: I really never had no trouble. I do remember McClellan's, and we would have to stand at the counter, and order and leave. But I never had no problem with nobody. And then when we went to the picture show, the Strand Theater, we had to sit up in the balcony. That's where we sit.

Interviewer: And how would you enter the building?

Johnson: From that side door. Where they still got a side door.

Interviewer: Did your parents ever comment on that or where you conscious of the difference?

Johnson: Not a whole lot then. Mm-hmm (negative) not a whole lot. We just, I guess at that time, by your parents not really... back then they didn't demonstrate or they didn't do none of that. So we just accepted whatever it was.

Interviewer: Did you ever go down to Atlanta, or go to other places?

Johnson: Yeah I would go with my parents. They went to different things in Atlanta. We had a lot of people in Atlanta, too. So we'd go visit, like that. But as far as going to shows or something like that, Fox Theater, no, we didn't go to there. I was grown when we start going there.

Interviewer: So and-

Johnson: Excuse me, but my mother was active in things like the Eastern Star. My daddy was, I'm going to say it in a minute, Mason. Was high in the Mason. And they were active about things like that.

Interviewer: So, what age were you when you started school?

Johnson: Talking about elementary?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: Oh, I had to have been six. Yeah, we started at six. First grade.

Interviewer: So, what school did you start out in?

Johnson: Lemon Street Elementary.

Interviewer: And, was this the building that's there now?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: The brick building?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: So, you were starting... answer?

Johnson: If it ain't no... mm-hmm (negative) that's St. Jude's.

Interviewer: You were starting right about the time it was built. Because it was built in 1951.

Johnson: Well, that would've made me six, yeah.

Interviewer: And-

Johnson: I was born in '45.

Interviewer: ... how did it appear to you, when you were first going there?

Johnson: Well, it was a nice school. You could tell it was brand new. You could tell that. But I liked it. I liked it. I liked all my teachers, and everything. Never had any problems and my sixth grade year they built a annex in the back of that. And that's where I went. My teacher was Mr. Calhoun. I remember him.

Interviewer: Could you describe sort of a typical day. How would you get to school, and-

Johnson: Well, by me living in Louisville, my granddaddy would drop me off at school. Because we ain't have no bus to come pick you up, or nothing. So they would drop me off, and come pick me up. Because I lived over in Louisville, so it was too far for me to walk by myself. But that was about it.

Interviewer: What was the sort of layout? I've been in the building, but I'd love to hear your description of the layout of the building, and a typical day of...

Johnson: Well, as you come in the door, the office was on, I think the left hand side. And you just go on down to the left, and you turn into different classrooms. And we used to go out to recess a lot, in the back. We'd go to recess. That was before they built the annex. Because the annex hadn't always been there.

Interviewer: And you mentioned Mr. Calhoun. Who were some of your other teachers?

Johnson: First grade I had a teacher named Ms. Edwards. Second grade was a lady named Ms. Edwards, but they were different people. One of them was tall, and one of them was short and I thought she was so pretty. She had pretty mixed gray hair. I just loved her to death. And then Ms. Jackson was my third grade teacher. And I was trying to think my fourth grade teacher, but for some reason I don't know, I can't remember her. But my fifth grade was Ms. Candy. A lady named Ms. Candy. I don't know why I can't remember that fourth grade teacher.

Interviewer: What subjects did you learn?

Johnson: We all had math, reading, English, history, geography, stuff like that.

Interviewer: And what kind of-

Johnson: Art.

Interviewer: ... materials did you use?

Johnson: The tablets, the old, old tablets that they don't even use anymore. They were the old tablets.

Interviewer: Did you have textbooks?

Johnson: Yeah, we had textbook. They were old textbook, but we had them. Used text books.

Interviewer: Right. And as a elementary school student, where you involved in any extracurricular stuff outside of the classroom?

Johnson: No, I wasn't. I was kind of shy, like I didn't participate too much. I was more or less kind of inwardly. Mm-hmm (negative).

Interviewer: Who were some of your friends at that time?

Johnson: Well back then, it was like... I don't even remember. Well I know Tommy. I knew Tommy. Priscilla, that was one of my friends. And a girl named Martha Florence. We were close. And [inaudible 00:14:17] Sexton. Cassandra Sexton. They were

sisters. We were all going to the same schools. And guys like Richard Raglan. I was very close. We were very close. Like brothers and sisters, really. And we grew up, not grew up together, because he didn't go to private school. But at least we were close when I got back to Lemon Street. And let's see who else I was close to. Boy named David Watts. I was just close to a lot of people from Powder Spring, different ones. I was friendly, but I wasn't no person to just go get into like basketball. I never wanted to play basketball, because I just didn't think that was me. But I would participate in they have talent night, or something like that. Priscilla would always try to get us together and do some kind of little dance, or something. And a girl named [Alla 00:15:13] Jones, I was close to her, too. Because she lived in Louisville with me.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that there were the public housing projects in and around the area. That's where a lot of students were coming from.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: But, most of them are no longer here.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (negative). A lot of them gone. Period. And then the rest of them is you done bust out or, not bust out, but they had vouchers to move different places, so you don't even know where they are. You don't know where nobody is now.

Interviewer: And how many years did you go before you left for private school?

Johnson: I went from Lemon Street, my first grade to my sixth grade.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: And then I went to private school my seventh grade to the tenth grade.

Interviewer: Okay. And so that sixth grade year you were in the annex, you did not go across the street, until you came back for eleventh grade?

Johnson: Right.

Interviewer: Okay. So let's talk about the private school. How did you become aware of that and want to go there? What motivated you?

Johnson: I really don't know how it really started. All I know is that it was a lot of people from Marietta going to private schools. So I asked my mama, I said, "Can I got to private school, too?" And she just said, "Well, do you think you'll like it? You never been away from home like that." And I said, "Well, I just like to try it." I just want to go because everybody else is going. You know how that is. And then I did like it fine. I liked it all right. But my eleventh grade year, that was a part of your grade. You have to get up and speak in front of the gym, the audience, and

I knew I couldn't do it. Because I was very shy. And I just felt like I would've fainted up there. So I asked my mother, "Mama, can I come back to Lemon Street?" She didn't know why I was saying it. But, I finally told her, "I can't do that. I can't get up and make a speech up, and then sit up there and present it." I couldn't do it. And she just let me come on back. She did. She let me come on back.

Interviewer: So, where was the private school?

Johnson: Bogg's Academy. It's in Keysville, Georgia. That was the name of it. Bogg's Academy.

Interviewer: Can you spell that?

Johnson: B-O-G-G-S.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: Academy.

Interviewer: And how far is that from here?

Johnson: That I don't know. You don't know where Keysville is? You never heard of-

Interviewer: Well, I can look it up.

Johnson: Keysville and [inaudible 00:17:48], Georgia. But I'm sure it was about three hours, at least.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: Three or four hours. I'm sure.

Interviewer: And who ran that private school?

Johnson: It was ran by the Presbyterians. But I don't know, what was that teacher's name, I mean the principal. What was his name? Mr. Stenson? I think it was either Stenson, or yeah, I think that was his name. Mr. Stenson. And actually, to me, favored my granddaddy. He ran it, but I think a Presbyterian churches, it was their school, I think. And I'm trying to think of somebody still living that you could ask about that, too. Because they were down there. Everybody just about... I'm trying to think. Well, I know. A guy named William Head. William Head. Now he graduated from there. Because like I said, he was from Marietta, and before he went there, he did go to elementary here in Marietta. But he lives on Edwards Drive. William Head. And he lives on Edwards Drive now. But he definitely, because he graduated from there. He definitely did. And the other

people that I know. They either not here, they moved away, or they died. I just can't think of nobody else right now. Not right off hand.

Interviewer: The families who sent their children there, did they have more money than other people in the community?

Johnson: I don't necessarily think so. I don't know. None of us was considered rich. No. No, nothing like that. But I guess at the time, they could just afford it. They could afford it for some reason. I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you know how much the cost was?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (negative).

Interviewer: And I assume it was a all black private school?

Johnson: Yeah. At that time it was. Yeah. Yeah, it was all black then.

Interviewer: Did you have a-

Johnson: But it turned over. White people, after I moved away, and come out, white people could go in there, too.

Interviewer: Did you have to wear a uniform?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (negative). Wear your own clothes.

Interviewer: What... you lived there all the time?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: And there were dormitories.

Johnson: Right.

Interviewer: Okay. How big was the campus? And how many buildings?

Johnson: I think it was pretty big. Because it had a lot of farm land on it. We didn't have to do nothing, as far as farm land. We had our duty work. Like some people have to clean the bathrooms before going to school, or they have to work in the kitchen, or whatever. And I would always have to clean the bathrooms. I never worked in the kitchen, or nothing.

Interviewer: You [inaudible 00:20:53]. So, you mentioned the speech, and not wanting to do the speech.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (negative). Couldn't do it.

Interviewer: Okay, so that got you back here.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: And when you came back, did you just slip right back in, or tell me that process.

Johnson: It wasn't no problem, because like I said, I was home every Christmas, every holiday. So I was always around, and like when I come here, if basketball season was in, or football season, I would always go. So I was always around the people that I grew up with. So it wasn't no problem. Only thing about I was caught up with everything, but they noticed that my eleventh grade year that I hadn't had the history that needed to graduate here. So I had to take American History and World History in one year. I had to do that. But Mr. Scott taught me both of them. So he was real sweet.

Interviewer: And can you describe Mr. Scott as teacher?

Johnson: He was a very good teacher. Very good teacher. I loved him. He was a very good teacher. And he loved history. He loved it. He loved it.

Interviewer: So you spent the last two years, then, eleventh and twelfth grade, at Lemon Street High. Can you tell me about that building, your memories of the building. It's no longer there.

Johnson: No, it's no longer there. Let me see, I'm trying to think now. Most of them, when you walk in, you're on the floor where the office is. So I think it was on the left, too. Yeah, I'm pretty sure it was. And it wasn't... and they had a big ole yard where we go have recess outside. That's probably where the annex and all that is now. That was where we had recess. And they had a big field. We had football games, and all that. It was a nice school. They kept it clean, they had a nice gym. It was real nice.

Interviewer: Did you do any sports?

Johnson: At Boggs Academy, I ran track for one year, I ran track. And when I came back up here, somebody told my teacher, Ms. Jenkins, she was like a what you call, a athletic teacher, or something. And she said, she didn't really know me, because she come there after I had left. And she said, "I heard you ran track. You want to run track for us?" And I said, "No. I don't want to run no more." She couldn't understand why I didn't want to run. Down there I was all right running. Up, like I said, I was shy. And I probably just didn't want to be in front of my people up here and run. So I wouldn't do it.

Interviewer: Did you go to the football games and...

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I would go to football games. And I was a majorette in the sixth grade. I was a little majorette in sixth grade. I did do that.

For that year, then I went onto Boggs Academy. But my mama would be wanting me to do that stuff. My mama got me into that. Majorette, and stuff. I didn't care nothing about all that stuff.

Interviewer: Where was the football field at that time?

Johnson: The football field was, you know where the annex is? It was probably, no but it's up this way more. So let me see what's sitting in there. Ain't nothing sitting there. It's just a open field. It's a... you know where the homes are down there?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: Well, it's still some space right in there. That's where the Marietta High was. And the football field would've been right there, by that annex down there.

Interviewer: Okay. What were the football games like? Describe a...

Johnson: They had wonderful... oh, we've had some talent. I don't know why people haven't talked more about that. They've had some talent come out of Marietta. Boys could play some football. They would go on to start college. But, I guess I don't know what... like Jackie [Minifie 00:24:58], you need to talk to Priscilla about that, because she had a baby by Jackie Minifie. And he went on to pro. But I don't know what happened to him, what his eye got put out. I don't know. But anyway, he had to come back, and you know Dell Ellis, from Marietta. I don't think Dell went to... no. He didn't go to Lemon Street, but he was from Marietta. Philip went to Lemon Street High. He's dead. But he was a good football player. They just had [Cecil Blunt 00:25:29], the one Tommy was talking about. He was a very good... they just had a lot of talent come from Marietta. They really did. As far as sports is concerned.

Interviewer: Did you date in high school?

Johnson: A little on and off. Yeah, a little. Not much. Not much.

Interviewer: How did your parents feel about you dating?

Johnson: My mother was a little more lenient than my dad. My dad, he just didn't think that I wasn't ready for boys back then. He wasn't ready to see me with no boys back then. And then if you did date, you didn't have no car, or nothing. All you could just do is go walk to the park. Or go to the movies, or something like that. It wasn't that often. Mm-hmm (negative).

Interviewer: Tell me about Ms. Lemon Street.

Johnson: That was just a thing that they had every year, like during the Homecoming. They always crowned Ms. Homecoming, and by Ms. Lemon Street being the school name, they would have somebody to run for that. And there again, my

mother wanted me to run for that. So, I did. They would raise money, and stuff for it. And whoever probably had the most money, that's who won, I think. That's what it was, if I remember correctly. And I did win that. And Ms. Homecoming, I think they did the same thing. I think a girl named Gloria Kite won the year I was Ms. Lemon Street. And she lived in Smyrna. Gloria Kite.

Interviewer: Was the Ms. Lemon Street competition outside of school? Or...

Johnson: No, it was all involved in school. Yeah. We'd have a parade, and you'd be... like that. Everything was on that field, like May Day, and all that. It was all on the football field and stuff.

Interviewer: And where was the parade?

Johnson: They would go up like on the square. On the square and come back around.

Interviewer: And as Ms. Lemon Street, did you ride in the parade?

Johnson: Yeah. You would ride. Yeah. You rode in the parade.

Interviewer: What did you wear for the ceremony?

Johnson: I remember I had to wear a long evening gown. I do remember that [inaudible 00:27:47] blue, but I did have a blue evening gown. I do remember that.

Interviewer: How did you raise the money?

Johnson: Oh, I didn't. I had to wear, I forgot. Oh, my mama always talking about I raised it. I didn't raise it! My mama raised it. But I'm talking about my attire. She bought it, and then I was in home economics class, so I made my outfit for the parade. It was a blue suit. Blue suit, with a white collar. I remember that.

Interviewer: That's the colors-

Johnson: That would be in that book, if you got it from Tommy. The yearbook.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: All that's in there. You'll see it. Macy's.

Interviewer: They're ringing you to death.

Johnson: This phone is, I told you. This Macy's. [inaudible 00:28:34] about Macy's.

Interviewer: And those where, that blue and white, was the school colors?

Johnson: Yeah. It was. It was a pretty blue suit with a white fur, that I made it. Well, my teacher, really, helped me make it. But it was wearable.

Interviewer: So, what sort of... I want to finish out your time at the high school. What kind of a student were you, in terms of grades?

Johnson: I guess... maybe little above average. Above average. Because I feel like I could've probably done even better. I don't blame my mother and them, for letting my grandmama and them keep me, but I was spoiled. And they didn't make me do nothing. I'm just going to tell the truth. They didn't make me do nothing that I didn't want to do. But every time they would try to let me stay my mama and them, they say I just cried, just wouldn't... she just say, "Well just let them keep her. Let them keep her." But they were always there. Every Sunday they were down there eating with my grandmama, when we lived down on the other end of Lemon Street, they were down there every Sunday eating dinner and everything. So it wasn't like I didn't know them. Very seldom would I come up here and spend the night with them.

Johnson: But every now and then, when I come from Boggs Academy, I would bring a girlfriend home with me, or whatever. And she would stay up here with me. We would stay with my mama then. And she would be happy, because I would stay with her. Because her house looked better. My grandmama and them had old stuff. So I would never come up here with her. And her name... she was from Florida. Delray Beach. Apparently she was all the way from Delray Beach. We had people down there from New York, everywhere, at Boggs Academy. But her mother talked to my mother, and she let her come up here and spend the Easter with me. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: So when you graduated, what were your goals for after high school?

Johnson: Well, I went to Tuskegee. I did go to Tuskegee a year.

Interviewer: How did you choose Tuskegee?

Johnson: I think a friend of mine, a girlfriend of mine that was going to Tuskegee, I think she talked to my mama and said, "Why don't you let her come down here?" I didn't know nothing about Tuskegee. But anyway, that's where I ended up going. I don't know why I couldn't, just look like I couldn't adjust to it. I just... I don't know. And I should've been used to not being at home, because I was at Boggs Academy. But I just couldn't adjust to being down there. And then one bad incident I remember. We were coming from a movie, and a boy had got on campus and either his girlfriend, or his wife, or whatever he must've heard something bad about. He came on there with a gun, and running everybody every which way. And I went on to some bushes, trying to get away. He wasn't at me, but I'm running, too. That was scary. I was about ready to come home then. But anyway, didn't nobody get hurt, but he was just saying, "What y'all running for? I ain't running at y'all." But still, he had a gun.

Interviewer: Why do you think he was coming on to campus?

Johnson: He was coming on campus because he was looking for his girlfriend or wife. I don't know. You know a lot of people are married and whatever. But he was looking for the ladies. But I don't know if he saw her. Everybody saw the gun, you know they panicked. Then everybody just start running. I saw everybody else running, I saw him, I ran over into some bushes, [inaudible 00:32:15] everything. Oh Lord.

Interviewer: And was that within the first semester there-

Johnson: Yeah.

Interviewer: ... at Tuskegee?

Johnson: Yes.

Interviewer: What were you planning to major in, when you were there?

Johnson: I hadn't made up my mind, at that little time. I hadn't made up my mind what I really wanted to do. Because I know I didn't [inaudible 00:32:42] be no teacher. That's not me. I didn't want to be no teacher or nothing like that. Probably would've end up in some kind of medical field or something. Because that's what I... after I come back here, after I graduate and everything, and came back after that year at Tuskegee, I started just basically trying to do just job, just anything that make money. And then by the next year, I was getting married. Boy, that was a trip.

Interviewer: So when you came back, who did you live with?

Johnson: I still lived with my grandmamma. Mm-hmm (affirmative) .

Interviewer: And you were looking for jobs-

Johnson: Yeah. Just little penny ante jobs. I had my one time I worked at a dispatcher, one of the cow places right here off of Rigsby Street. It was a cow place right there. Mr. John Henry ran, then he let me be a dispatcher there for a while. And then the next year, I think, that's when I met my husband, and we got married.

Interviewer: What was your husband's name?

Johnson: Robert L. Johnson. You know the Pastor at Zion Baptist Church, Reverend Johnson?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: He's been there forever. Well, that was his father. And that's where we met, and we just got married. And out of that marriage I had five children. Four boys and one girl. And we moved to Atlanta when we got married. And we stayed together 12 years. We stayed together 12 years. And then I come back to Marietta. Because I didn't want to raise my children in Atlanta. I never really liked it. I never felt comfortable, because I was always scary. And he was a policeman. He started out being a police, then he was a GBI agent. He end up being on the railroad, he worked for the railroad, police on the railroad. But like I said, we came back to Marietta, and that's where I raised my children. Four boys and one girl.

Interviewer: Where did you live in Atlanta?

Johnson: Actually, hold on. Where did we live? We were like gypsies, we lived a good many places. But the last place I lived, was right off Cascade, on Rogers Avenue. We had bought a house. And we moved off Cascade on Rogers Avenue. That was my last place [inaudible 00:35:12].

Interviewer: Where was he a policeman? What-

Johnson: Atlanta.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Atlanta. And then, he joined... well, you know what the GBI is?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Johnson: So, that's what he did after he left Atlanta city.

Interviewer: And when you came back here, did you bring your children with you-

Johnson: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: to here in Marietta?

Johnson: Oh yes.

Interviewer: And where did you live when you first came back?

Johnson: Actually, let me see, now where did I live? Actually, Zion church had a parsonage, like a house that they rented out. And we moved there, me and my children. My grandmamma house, we lived out, across the street anyway. We lived on Norman Street. And she lived, that's where I was raised up right. But anyway, we moved in that parsonage, and after that, my daddy had start trying

to get this house built for me. He had started having this house built. And as soon as they got through, we moved here.

Interviewer: Did you live in the parsonage for Zion?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Was that-

Johnson: Not the parsonage, but they had a... the parsonage was still there. The old parsonage, which was a house, too. But they kept that for Zion people to... you know where they do on Sunday, when they go to the park. But they had a house on the left hand side. And they rented it. So that's what we rented it. And that's where I stayed. We stayed with my children.

Interviewer: May I ask if that had anything to do with your husband's father?

Johnson: Reverend Johnson?

Interviewer: Was he the Reverend at that time?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: So was that, renting that house from Zion, was that connected with your ex-husband being his son?

Johnson: Well, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think it's just the fact that whoever was doing the renting of the house, it wasn't the preacher. No. I forgot the name of it. But it was somebody in the church.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: But by me knowing everybody in Marietta, they knew me anyway, so. But, like I said, we stayed there until my daddy got through with this house.

Interviewer: And where did your children go to school?

Johnson: Marietta High. Mm-hmm (affirmative). They graduated from Marietta High, but they went to Park Street, they went to what is that school? Lockheed. Yeah. Where the Board of Education is now. Over there. Lockheed? That was Lockheed, I think. And I guess that was the two places they went.

Interviewer: And where do they live now, your children?

Johnson: Actually, my son, my oldest son, he just now moved to South Carolina. His job and his wife, both had got a job there, and they moved there last year. They just now moved. That's Bob. He's the oldest. And my daughter, she lives in

Douglasville now. And my baby son, which is Reginald, he's also a police on the railroad. He's doing real good. And he lives here in Marietta. And Randall, my third son, he lives in Marietta. Yeah. And Rodney lives in Acworth.

Interviewer: So they're all R's?

Johnson: RL, they-

Interviewer: Robert, Reginald, Randall.

Johnson: Daddy named them RLJ. All of them. I didn't have nothing to say.

Interviewer: Did you name your daughter?

Johnson: Raquel. I forgot. Raquel live in Douglasville. And then all my grand, great-grand baby. Grand babies and great-grand babies named that. I got 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grands.

Interviewer: Wow.

Johnson: All of them be RL, but one.

Interviewer: You going to run out of R names.

Johnson: I'm already out of them. Because I can't remember. You know I be calling they name, and they say, "mama I'm not." Well, you know who I'm talking to. That's what you have to tell them.

Interviewer: So, just to finish up, can you tell me a little bit about how this community, which you've lived here a good deal of your life, how has it changed since you were a child?

Johnson: Well, most of the people that's around here, I never did, even though I lived up in this area, I never knew a lot of people, like my half sister and them did. I don't know if they were nosy, or what. But I never did try to know older people like they did. They knew everybody. I would just know the people that's closer to me, that lived right here. Like the Goldbergs, Gradys, Captain Grady and them. She had a beautician house right there, down the street. And Harriet Carter, I knew them a while. Ms. Carter, she was a French teacher, too. She taught me in school. Taught me French. Wait a minute, let me answer this girl. My daughter. Hey, Kell. Talking to the guy that was interviewing me about Lemon Street. So I have to call you back. No. He's here. Bye. She works for AT&T.

Interviewer: Why do you think the history of Lemon Street matters so much to people in the area? And elsewhere?

Johnson: Well, I could see how it would matter, but I just always thought it should've been done a long time ago. They waited until everybody deceased, or gone, or whatever, or forgot, before it happened. Hell, what you want? Huh? Hell, I have all the information that I can give. The only thing I can give is stuff on the top of my head. Did you have some work to do? Yeah, Hell, Yeah. I know. Yeah, okay. Bye bye. She want to know do I have your information and know you are who you are, because my son Reggie, the one that's at the railroad, told her to check in on me, because I was having an interview. That's what I have to deal with.

Interviewer: I can give you my card.

Johnson: That's what I have to deal with.

Interviewer: Well they're just watching out for their mother. That's a good thing. Well-

Johnson: Like I [crosstalk 00:42:02] it's changed a lot. Because like I said, the people that I did know, they was right here in this area, close by. And I don't want to answer that. And the swimming pool, we used to have a swimming pool right down there, were the police department thing is now. See that was our swimming pool. That was the only pool we used to go to. It was run by Ms. Porter. Her name was Ms. Elizabeth Porter. And that was a just a wonderful thing that we have, and now they don't have it anymore, and we start going to the one over by Marietta High. What was it, Brunby?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: Brunby. They tore that down. And I don't know why the thought this was going to be something special, now that they put Eliza Porter over here. That little play area they got over there, with the water? But it's not a swimming pool over there. It's just water sprinklers. I didn't see really the sense in that. But anyway.

Interviewer: Are you a swimmer?

Johnson: Mm-hmm (negative).

Interviewer: So would you take your kids down there, or?

Johnson: I've carried my grandchildren. Talking about down here?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnson: Oh no. I didn't have kids then, when that swimming pool was all there.

Interviewer: Okay.

Johnson: But I have carried my great-grand childrens over here. But it's just [inaudible 00:43:24] that much to me.

Interviewer: Would you-

Johnson: It's nothing for them to be done. Hmm?

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:43:30].

Johnson: It's just nothing for them to really do. I don't know.

Interviewer: Well, would you like to add anything else today, Ms. Johnson?

Johnson: Well I can't think of nothing. No, I really, really, really can't think of nothing.

Interviewer: Well, I appreciate your time.

Johnson: Okay. I appreciate you.