

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW WITH SARAH C. BROWN  
CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT  
for the  
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Kennesaw State University Oral History Project  
KSU Oral History Series No. 83  
Interview with Sarah C. Brown  
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott  
Thursday, 2 October 2008  
Location: Mrs. Brown's home in Powder Springs, Georgia

TS: Ms. Brown, why don't we just start, as we always do in these interviews, asking you about where you grew up and where you went to school and just a little bit about your background?

SB: Well, thank you. I'm excited to tell you that I have not moved very far away from the place where I was born on Burnt Hickory Road in the same house where my mother and her siblings were born. This was my grandfather and grandmother John and Anna Kirk. My father moved from the country with us several times into the city and did jobs as salesman and that kind of thing, and then we'd go back to the farm with an effort to make it, and then back again into Marietta. We lived at some time on Hill Street off Garrison Road and attended Olive Springs School when Robert L. Osborne was still the principal. Then we moved out on Whitlock, and I attended Waterman Street for junior high.

TS: Where about on Whitlock were you?

SB: Just beyond where the pavement ended when we moved there.

TS: That was about a mile out of town?

SB: Yes, it was. And then while we were there the pavement of the road moved for another mile out to where the cemetery is now, somewhere about there. But at that time my father had a furniture store. It was located where the Theatre in the Square is now. He sold it when he decided that he needed to have more education and took lessons at Mercer Extension and accepted a call to the ministry at that time. This was what was weighing heavily on him physically.

TS: What was his name?

SB: Carnes, George L. Carnes. The furniture company was Carnes Furniture Company. He sold it to—

TS: Is this where Lindsey-Galt was?

SB: It was. He sold it to Rhodes Perdue who then sold it to Lindsey, and then Lindsey and his son-in-law after Jean and he married—I don't know about the business of that, but in any event that is the location and the business. Out on Whitlock then the county school system did some kind of consolidation, and I finished high school at McEachern. And McEachern had at that time a college atmosphere campus-wise.

TS: It still looks like a college.

SB: It does. And some of the programs are a strong literary society and debates and that kind of thing, and I felt so very fortunate to have graduated there.

TS: Were you still living on Whitlock when you were going to Powder Springs?

SB: Yes.

TS: You had a long commute.

SB: Yes, it was a treat to get to the school every morning and back.

TS: Was that still on dirt roads to get there?

SB: A great deal of it was unpaved. We turned somewhere about where the Friendship Road goes off Dallas Road, meandering back through there picking up others.

TS: And that's where the dirt roads were?

SB: That's where the dirt roads were. I think the Dallas Highway was paved when I married in 1943.

TS: That sounds right. It was World War II.

SB: Then the other little roads, tributaries, were not paved. When I came out here as a bride to live on this farm, it was a quite interesting enterprise. My husband and his father had at that time three cotton gins; they had the country store; they had a corn mill, the preparation of corn on Saturday morning; they had a saw mill. They literally bought the farm for the timber on it, but they grew to love it so here that's how they came. As they cleared the land for the lumber that they sold to Stephens Lumber Company and Randall Brothers in Atlanta . . .

TS: Oh yes. Randall Brothers is a great old business.

SB: Yes. As they cleared the land then they developed farming activity, and we had people who lived on the farm who assisted with these enterprises.

TS: You're husband's name was Marvin Brown.

SB: Marvin Lane Brown.

TS: What was his father's name?

SB: Glen, and Smith—he was so proud of his mother's maiden name—Glen Smith Brown.

TS: You say they bought the farm, so it wasn't originally in the Brown family?

SB: No it was not. It belonged to a big tract of land out here. The Brooks family and—the name has just escaped me, but it's a part of that family, and it extended all the way down Hadaway Road beyond the creek—I think it's the Allatoona Creek maybe; I'm not certain of that name—but, and as I say, they bought it from Lumpkin. It was the heirs of the Lumpkin estate.

TS: So the Lumpkins had a lot of land then.

SB: They did. I would imagine that if it were written literarily, they would have said a plantation, I'm thinking. I don't know what they produced. I know that Marvin and his father planted cotton and corn and grains, and had animals, beef. Everything changed, and I think it was such a great and wonderful thing when Lockheed came, because wages provided a much better living than [before]. On the farm and at the store at that time it was amazing to me that they would keep a person's account open for them to use until the diverse crop of cotton came in.

TS: Well, farmers didn't have any money until then.

SB: That's right. There was a bit of bartering because I remember eggs and butter and rabbits were taken into Atlanta by my family when they bought other products. Isn't that amazing that in one lifetime it seems so archaic.

TS: Well, we've jumped through several stories, but I want to get back—your father went into the ministry?

SB: Yes.

TS: Could you say a little bit about that then?

SB: Yes, I'd love to. He was the pastor of rural churches in Cobb County and Cherokee and Bartow. He had been so blessed. He had not the formal education that he wanted to have to present the messages and the service to churches, so having accomplished that he sold his store and other things and invested them, and it seemed, not that we ever became wealthy, but we became comfortable. In his day the churches very often would be presented with the greatest kind of love, products rather than money, and this pleased him tremendously because we didn't really need that, he felt, but he wanted to teach tithing, and he wanted to teach sponsorship of the mission programs of the church, and so received these monies. In today's exchange we would not think it much, but he would invest them in CDs in the church's name. So when they needed a new musical instrument or a new church they had some capital there. He was at New Salem. You may remember New Salem. He was at Mt. Zion, and then some of the churches in Cherokee, New Bethel, Mt. Harmony, Harmony Grove—all of those are old churches.

TS: I know in the old days ministers oftentimes had almost like a circuit where they'd be at one church one week and the next church the next week.

SB: And that was how it was. Some churches who wanted to have something other than the Bible study—he would go on Sunday afternoon every Sunday to those that needed it. But that was an interesting system. It really gave us an exposure to different religious philosophies because where I go to church now and have been all these years at Lost Mountain Baptist, that church had their services alternate Sundays to Midway Presbyterian, so we actually . . .

TS: Midway Presbyterian?

SB: Yes. And actually we went to church every Sunday, but one or two Sundays it would be at Midway, and then at Lost Mountain. The same thing happened with the Baptist church here on Mars Hill, Piney Grove and County Line. My father was involved with some of those too.

TS: So he was doing all those churches, and then what year was it that you graduated from high school?

SB: In '43.

TS: And that's the year you got married?

SB: Yes, it is.

TS: Okay. Did your husband also go to McEachern?

SB: He did. He was in school for a few months or years in Rockmart with his widowed aunt, who was going to teach him a bit of manners, I think. [laughter] It worked real well. But anyway, he got homesick and came back and finished up at McEachern.

TS: Were you all in the same class?

SB: We were.

TS: Did you graduate together and then got married right after graduation?

SB: Yes. And the ideal of the school became our ideal in so many ways because I had four years of home economics. I never had a study hall. I took something every period, and he did some of that same kind of thing. He was in FFA, and he could improve the farming activities. I was into home management, so we matured too quickly, perhaps. But we merged, I think, so well together because of our youthfulness. We enjoyed the children so much. Lane was born the next year, and Jeanne was born the next year.

TS: Lane is the first.

SB: Yes, and then our daughter Jeanne. It was so fun for them. For ten years we were independent and living from farming activities. Then we had in those years one or two years of drought. Then our tenants were moving into better jobs. All of this changed for us and for the better actually. Marv went to work at Lockheed in '53, and I suggested, and please don't repeat this one—

TS: Oh, it's going on tape! [laughter] You can edit it out if you want to.

SB: That would be lovely. It makes me sound so very, very aged, but anyway his days at Lockheed began in '53, so I thought to get us in the best possible position, I would like to work for a few months. A vacancy came in the office of Hubert Schraeder. So I suggested to Marvin, and I didn't promise, but he asked that I just do it for six months. But that six months became eighteen years because we enjoyed what it was adding to our family; it was putting together an educational fund for the children, and we became debt-free, and it just felt absolutely so good!

TS: What was Schraeder's business?

SB: He was an attorney, and he had the business of Blair—Anderson, Foster, and Blair. When they retired they left a marvelous legal library. It was so outstanding!

TS: So that would have been Rip Blair then.

SB: Yes it was. But neither Mr. Blair nor his family would have known me other than June—I can remember being in school at Waterman Street [School] at the same time. So after that I went to juvenile court and served as clerk of that court and as probation officer. This was during Albert Henderson's judgeship in the juvenile court. Then [G.] Conley Ingram came to the juvenile court when Judge Henderson moved up to the superior court. Then Conley Ingram moved up to the superior court . . .

TS: They both kept moving up, didn't they?

SB: And Sarah Brown went with him.

TS: All right! So you went to superior court with Conley Ingram?

SB: I did.

TS: All right! Well, we have an oral history with Conley Ingram.

SB: Isn't he wonderful? He is absolutely the most thoughtful, generous person—extremely smart, exemplary man. He certainly is a mentor to many people, and his wisdom, his humility is absolutely beautiful.

TS: He's a very fine man.

SB: He is. And I enjoyed Judge Albert Henderson as well. Then Judge Ingram left the superior court, did not run for re-election, maybe served two terms, I'm not certain, if we were there that long. Maybe we were. Then I went with him back to the practice of law with Bob Flournoy [Robert E. Flournoy, Jr.] in the firm of Ingram & Flournoy.

TS: I have an interview with him too.

SB: Wonderful. And now his son [Robert E. Flournoy, III] is judge. And Lark [S. Lark Ingram] is [a superior court judge]. Interesting.

TS: Conley Ingram's daughter.

SB: Yes. And he is back there serving as emeritus judge. They are serving out of the love of their heart. I think the budget was cut for the state there.

And then Marv's father—his mother had died—and his father came to live with us. I wanted it to be as meaningful . . .

TS: Were you living out here at that time?

SB: Yes, yes, we've always been on the farm. We've been on the farm for these sixty-two years.

TS: Wow.

SB: We've lived at different portions of the farm and had different addresses.

TS: I was going to say I'm about the same age as your children because I was born in 1943.

SB: Yes. You were probably much too young to understand the feeling of the War among the young people. So many of my graduating class, the boys had volunteered for the Navy. I didn't know until a recent reunion that all of them went in the Navy, and I know that had to be volunteer.

TS: Did Marvin go in too?

SB: Marvin was called, went down and stayed two weeks at [Fort] McPherson while they examined a health issue. He came back with such a good feeling about himself. Being rejected was not the point. The point was that the person who delivered to him this decision said, "You are much more valuable to our country on the farm."

TS: That's true.

SB: So he came back with a good feeling about that, and I certainly did—happy.

TS: Sure, yes. So in the War years then you all were growing cotton and corn . . .

SB: And the lumber, producing the wood products.

TS: Did you have an old farmhouse? Is it still here?

SB: No, but his parents' home is still on the family farm. If you're going out of Brown's farm going west, it's the third house on the left. It was moved during Marv's parents' lifetime up the hill a little bit on Due West Road, and they built a little brick house. They thought they would be so much more comfortable. I think, maybe they missed those big rooms though that were in the farmhouse.

TS: I'm glad you saved the house.

SB: Me too.

TS: So you worked all the time that your kids were going through school, I guess.

SB: They were seven and nine years old. And they had the very best mothering with my parents and with Marv's parents. My children were just such great examples of what fun it can be to be parents. They were wonderful children, and they learned so much from Marv's parents and from my parents by having this special time with them.

TS: I guess we ought to put the names of the parents in.

SB: Yes. Marvin's mother's name is Lottie Holland Brown, and my mother's maiden name is Edna Kirk Carnes. My father's name is George Lemuele Carnes.

TS: A Biblical name. And we've got Glen Smith Brown, so we've got all the names then. Okay, so you worked for eighteen years, and then what happens after that?

SB: Marv's mother died. His father came to live with us. I came back home to sit with my husband's father in the afternoon, read to him, and when he'd go to sleep I read the classics all over again and got absolutely different meanings from all of them.

TS: I bet so at a different stage.

SB: Yes. And then I had such an appetite to learn more of the financial world and the business world. I subscribed to *Harvard Business Review* and *Forbes* and financial books. I would read these as he sat. I felt for him to have company in the afternoons was so important. He was accustomed to that with his wife.

Then in the area of—we are the Red Rock Militia District—and representing us on the board at Cobb EMC had been the Fords, George Ford and his father before him, Ben. Our friend George died, and that position was open.



TS: George Ford died?

SB: Yes. I applied for the director position and was accepted by the board. I think they considered two or three others and all of them very qualified. So it was the greatest compliment that I was selected by the board and then have run without opposition all these years.

TS: So this was 1979, wasn't it, that you first went on the board?

SB: It was.

TS: Maybe why don't you talk a little bit about Cobb EMC and what the board does and has done over the years. Of course, Cobb EMC goes back to 1938, and it's a beneficiary of a New Deal Program called the Rural Electrification Administration, which set up co-ops all over the country to provide electricity in rural areas. So why don't you pick it up from there?

SB: The most beautiful program, I think, maybe of the Roosevelt administration was the creation of the REA. Cobb EMC and other utility cooperatives in the state moved the acronyms to EMC to communicate to our clients that they are members and owners of the cooperative.

TS: Right. A cooperative membership corporation.

SB: Yes. And during the time that I've been on the board, of course, we've seen great economic strides in the county. We were just situated for growth. I think we could say that we have been visionary in a great many things that we have done. Always the focus has been on the mission goal, and that is to furnish reliable, safe electricity at a reasonable cost. That objective even in the modern corporation that we have become has still been the main focus. In this regard, I think, beginning with Conley Ingram, my eyes opened to a new world, and at the Cobb EMC my eyes were opened to a new world. I have served in various roles, served the Georgia EMC, which is a cooperative; it's not a holding company it is a . . .

TS: Kind of an association of all the EMC's?

SB: Yes, and was formed for its value as lobbying or representing us in Congress and in the [Georgia] General Assembly and in the public generally. In that capacity I served as a member of the board of *Georgia Magazine*, reviewed and overlooked its publication. Then various meetings among the state—I have made addresses and brought invocation, and so it's been a grand exposure. I once spoke to a national meeting of the NRECA [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association] which brings together, I would think, 2,000 or 3,000 people in that time, much more today. I spoke to the membership on communication and the need for it. The reason I'm repeating that—I thought it was so very interesting, two directors from the Northwest came up to me afterwards with kind words and then said, "How is it that you are interested in serving on a board?" They said

something to the effect, “Well, our wives are not even interested in what we do on the board.” I said, “Well, I think maybe I have never, ever thought about it being a difference for women and men.” My grandmother Kirk, when my grandfather moved the family to Atlanta in the early '30s, and he began a farmer's market right down from the Capitol, she opened up a twenty-four hour restaurant and was just really successful in it. My paternal grandmother, Ollie Carnes, really Olive Hairston Carnes, and my maternal grandmother, Anna Pace of the Pace [family] Kirk—both my grandmothers—were just quite [successful] businesswomen. My grandmother Olive Carnes reared her five children, and they were small when her husband died with the flu epidemic that went through the Burnt Hickory Road community.

TS: Oh, in 1919.

SB: Perhaps, he died a little before that so it could have been a fever epidemic. I would walk with my grandmother from where we lived on Whitlock Avenue on Saturday afternoon, this would be Olive Carnes, and she would be on the street corner and the businessmen would be listening to her. You know, I thought of this as an ordinary thing that women would be interested in business as well as creative [activities].

TS: Which one of them had the twenty-four hour restaurant?

SB: Kirk. And my grandfather was John Kirk.

TS: So Anna Kirk is the one with the restaurant?

SB: Yes it is.

TS: And John moved into Atlanta?

SB: Yes. He operated a farmer's market down from the Capitol. Gene Talmadge was governor. At that time he was doing truck farming on the Burnt Hickory Road home place, going in with loads of vegetables and things. I think the governor said something like, “John, you could make so much more money if you would rent this vacant lot right there.” Maybe he wanted to get him off the street. But in any event, he took his advice. He rented that spot, and then other farmers came in. So that was how it was that they were there. They lived on Crew Street. I don't know if that was the nicest street or not, but it was comfortable, and it was quite remarkable to me because it was three stories. I thought this is [special] to visit my grandparents there. And then my grandmother Carnes had a little country store out there on Burnt Hickory Road and a farm that she developed.

TS: Where was it located?

SB: Mount Calvary Road at Burnt Hickory.

TS: How about that? How long did she run the store?

SB: Until they moved into town. They moved into town because the two younger girls went to work at Holeproof [Hosiery], so they moved into some of the Manning Property there close to where I was reared. We moved to the Whitlock address when I was ten. It is so fascinating to me, the memories of the Burnt Hickory Road from my father and my grandmother. I was interested in hearing the “Foxfire” stories that they had experienced. Then my grandmother Carnes was friends to Miss Lucindy [Lucinda] Hardage, who knew all of the Civil War stories. So I grew up with a deep appreciation for a story-teller rather than a book reader at nighttime, which was what we were put to bed with.

TS: Right. Well, that was the way it was in the old South with people sitting on the front porches and telling stories.

SB: And valuing the publications that we got such as *Progressive Farmer*. My father and mother would get some publications from the Baptists but I’m not sure what the names of them were.

TS: *Christian Index* and such as that?

SB: Yes. And on Whitlock, the family of Hedges—this was Mrs. Hedges and the daughters—they were Presbyterian, and they got much more printed material than we did. So we visited and Miss Liza would give us magazines to take home, and we valued and read every one of them through many times.

TS: Now that’s where the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is today?

SB: It is.

TS: So you were near there where you lived?

SB: Yes, a couple of houses maybe west of them on the opposite side. Where I lived is now the Firestone tire company, and next door to the Cupboard restaurant. The Cupboard had Mr. and Mrs. Worley who lived there. She taught school. Her husband farmed. A ritual with them for us was the reading of the newspaper. She read the newspaper to Mr. Ladston Worley, her husband, and when we would hear her reading, she would say, “Please come over.” So we had the value of hearing her. Then most times there was this delicious coconut cake. The Cupboard, when they operated as a restaurant, had that recipe I’m sure, because it was so good, and it was so neat to visit there.

TS: How about that? I guess you all always had electricity living on Whitlock Avenue.

SB: We did.

TS: But out in the country it was a big deal when they got it in 1938.

SB: I can remember visiting girls from the churches my fathered pastored who didn’t have electricity, and I could see a great contrast there in having and not having. Marv’s

family had electricity earlier because his father had provided a generator of some sort for their home.

TS: Delco battery type?

SB: I think that's probably what it was. I think maybe it furnished electricity for a refrigerator and lighting, and that probably was it. But the boon of electricity—and I have strayed away from the subject, which I do so often—

TS: That's all right.

SB: But having met the Roosevelt's grandson—I believe his name was David—Marvin and I once were invited to dinner with others who had him. He was meeting with the EMC to promote the museum for his grandfather.

TS: Oh, at Hyde Park.

SB: But also at Warm Springs.

TS: Oh, that one.

SB: That was the connection. But he was absolutely so interesting, but not like ever knowing how real people lived. He was fascinated with Marv. I knew Marv's stories. I wanted to hear more about [the Roosevelts], and about all that I gleaned from that afternoon and evening being with him was his respect for both grandparents and especially for his grandmother's ability. He said something that may be just a grand family story, but that his grandfather understood that his grandmother had this great, great mind, that is Eleanor, and he would appropriate some money for her projects, and among them was the Appalachian people project. I'm wondering, Tom, if the appreciation for country music didn't really get a great boost by the programs that she provided and the housing for programs in the Appalachian mountains. So David was really proud of both grandparents and what they had been able to do. The younger Roosevelt said most of his work had to do with the Foundation that his grandparents created. So I imagine he got a great deal of feelings of gratification in doing that.

Through the EMC I finished a program that NRECA provides for directors. I don't think it's important to anybody but you and me that I was the first one to do that on the Cobb Electric Membership board to receive the certification. Then I received some certification from Oglethorpe Power in a class they did for directors—"Functioning with Excellence." I learned a great deal about parliamentary procedure. I had already this marvelous quest and answers to law being with Conley Ingram and others in the legal profession. So the operation for Cobb EMC, I had the experience of serving with Paul Weatherly as the CEO and then with Dwight Brown. Both of them exemplary—men of high integrity.

TS: How long was he the director?

SB: I have not the years but I would think maybe '68 coming there for Paul Weatherly and then Dwight Brown in about 1994.

TS: Weatherly was there for a long time at any rate.

SB: He was.

TS: And Dwight Brown's been there a long time too.

SB: He has. Our main goal as directors when Dwight came, we were just on the cutting edge of all technology that could be provided, and we were really interested in what measures we could take to better serve our customers, our clients, how could we make life even more convenient for them, and how could we keep the price under control. So we began to think of ways, and Dwight Brown is a visionary, a genius, highly moral, you have to really know him on a daily basis to see all the great potential that he is. We were so fortunate to get him. He was already there; Paul Weatherly had employed him in the engineering department operation. [Regarding our current operation], I think we did the right thing at the right time for the right purpose.

TS: Are you talking about the creation of Cobb Energy?

SB: Cobb Energy, yes, and as a business goal it was the right thing to do. So I've gone with confidence as have all other members of the board. It has been very gratifying to see the support of our employees who are behind us.

TS: Great. What are you proudest of of your service on the board of Cobb EMC?

SB: Every now and then I have come back from a meeting of Georgia Electric Membership Corporation [Georgia EMC] and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association [NRECA] that I have learned something that I thought would be of value to the board. Being the only woman on the board and being chatty as I am, I made my reports to the Director's meetings in writing. I suggested if the board pleased I would like these reports to become a part of the minutes. I think that my coming on the board at Cobb EMC [helped open doors for] other women and [persuaded other] EMCs in Georgia to elect women directors. I think we may have about thirteen now.

TS: I'm surprised that there's not more.

SB: Yes.

TS: But you were the first in Cobb County or the first in the state?

SB: So far as I know the first in the state. At that time there was no one else serving. If anyone else had ever served I didn't hear of it. I think that I was overwhelmed with the business opportunities that this gave to me. I served as the first woman on the newly

created Cobb County Elections and Registration board, and then I have served since 1980 on the Cobb County Farm Bureau as a director and as their legislative leader. I served on Georgia Farm Bureau on their women's committee with focus on legislation for two terms. So the business practices of Cobb EMC as used by the members of the board have been most enlightening. I've served with some of the most genteel men, and now we have Kay Anderson. I am so thrilled. She is the director of DFACS [Division of Family and Children Services] in Cobb County and serves in various roles across the state in that capacity. So she brings a lot of personality and knowledge to the board, as do all members of the board. I think the combination of experiences that we have are tremendous.

TS: Why don't you say something about that—the diversity of experiences on the board?

SB: Well, thank you. Don Barnett is vice president of Lummus Lumber and Materials Company; Dr. Frank Boone is Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and a business man. Almost all members of the board serve on some committee with some authority. Then we have David [H.] McGinnis who is president of Security Exchange Bank. Johnny Gresham has his own consulting business and served also on State of Georgia boards.

TS: Right. He's been on the State Transportation Board [1989-2007].

SB: And is an invaluable member of the board. Al Fortney owns his business, and it's become a family business, that has to do with machinery parts, I think—it's a regional company. Henry Balkcom, III, is in the lumber business and is serving us from the Patula EMC; he's a member of the board from the Patula EMC. Let me think, there are ten of us.

TS: Well, let's see, you've named eight.

SB: The other two are David Herndon and Larry Chadwick, who is retired from business: Chadwick's Hardware.

TS: And your point is that they bring a diversity of experiences from the business world.

SB: We've got ages probably from fifty through my age.

TS: But none of them are farmers any more.

SB: Isn't that interesting.

TS: I guess when you came on in '79 there still were some farmers weren't there on the board?

SB: Paul Lovinggood.

TS: Oh yes, I've got an oral history with him.

- SB: He was a neat man, wasn't he? He has a wonderful family. Can you think of other things that I might bring?
- TS: I was wondering, when you were talking about being a director of the Cobb County Farm Bureau, we don't have a whole lot of farmers left in Cobb County now.
- SB: We really don't but we serve in, I think, a great capacity as liaison. We have some educational programs that we get into some of the schools that teach Ag—agriculture—and it is surprising, you would not think the amount of just fifty years would bring children who really don't know about milk and think vegetables are at Publix, so we have a fun thing with that. And then we also talk with legislators about family needs and we talk to different clubs about the cost of groceries and how every effort is made to deliver them as fresh as we can and as inexpensive in the marketplace.
- TS: Right. I'm taking my class out to the Hyde Farm Saturday after next.
- SB: Oh, how wonderful! That's going to be such a joy!
- TS: It's going to be a great service, I think, to the county school system, or the whole metropolitan area, if the school kids can go out there and see how a farm used to be operated.
- SB: That is true. Something I would like to include in this if it is something that you find appropriate is the great satisfaction that I have in the fact that my four great-grandfathers lived within a five-mile radius—Burnt Hickory and Villa Rica Road. The one on Villa Rica Road, my great-grandfather, was justice of the peace, probably I think the first. I think the *First Hundred Years* [by Sarah B. G. Temple (1935)] names him there. My memory of that is very vague, and I cannot be sure that I'm remembering stories or the event, but he had a building dedicated for the service of justice of the peace and settled issues and so far as I know was never appealed, which could have been emotionally difficult when you are dealing with property line disputes. Now, can you envision that property lines are measured by satellite, and if there was an exact science I'm sure that we don't have one now.
- TS: Right. Well, you've had a chance to witness the transition from West Cobb being farm country to West Cobb being increasingly suburban.
- SB: It is so wonderful. Let me tell you, our church, my own at Lost Mountain, I would say maybe 50 percent of our congregation members are thirty to fifty. It is absolutely wonderful to have these young people with families.
- TS: And these are newcomers to the county?
- SB: Newcomers. And they want to be a part of the community. The ideology of wanting to belong, I think, is some of that generation, especially coming from somewhere else.

They are bringing their vision of what they would like in the church for their children and for themselves. So our church is growing by leaps and bounds, and we are so happy. And now, look, we have the library [West Cobb Regional Library], all of the things, I mean, five minutes away, your choice of restaurants, shopping opportunities, and then fire departments. Marv and I carried a petition around, probably forty or fifty years ago, for water because we wanted fire departments. We would run into that one isolated situation where, "I'm not going to sign it because I don't want my taxes to go up." Well, it's the greatest way to get services through the shared revenue of taxes. That was our objective. Long before we reconciled selling the farm for development our philosophy was the greatest thing is people. God made us, if you believe as I do, on His best day. Yes, and transitions; beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. I believe God is involved with the technology, I do.

TS: So you found a smooth transition in your church then from the old-timers to the newcomers?

SB: Yes. Of course, I'm probably the oldest, you know. I went to hear Greg Mortenson last night [at Kennesaw State University]. Did you hear him?

TS: No, I didn't.

SB: He's coming back to you [KSU] on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. Wonderful, wonderful opportunity for looking at ways to bring peace in the world other than killing each other.

TS: Yes, but killing each other brings peace in a fashion.

SB: Less people anyway! [laughter] A control of population.

TS: But not the ideal way.

SB: Not the ideal way.

TS: Where was he speaking last night?

SB: He was in the Convocation Center [sponsored by KSU's Department of First-Year Programs], and it was filled. I was so happy about that. His venture is Three Cups of Tea and setting in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He identifies with you early on in his book with his feat of mountain climbing, his attempt to climb K2 and how it introduced him to little hamlets along the Himalayas there. Absolutely beautiful.

TS: By the way, before we leave Cobb EMC altogether, I might mention that I use Terry Kay's novel *The Year the Lights Came On* in my Georgia history class all the time.

SB: He'll be so pleased to hear that! He's a novel person, isn't he? *To Dance with the White Dog* was unique too.



TS: We're using that this semester.

SB: Isn't it wonderful? Are you also reading Flannery O'Connor's books?

TS: We do some of Flannery O'Connor's short stories; "Revelation," I think, is the only one we're using this semester.

SB: Amazingly ahead of time.

TS: Yes. She generally is regarded as the best Georgia writer of all time.

SB: I should think that would be accurate. Contemporary, Frances Mayes.

TS: I'm not familiar with her.

SB: Frances was reared in Fitzgerald. She wrote of the Atlanta area with her first novel, and it was entitled, *Swan: A Novel*. The books now that I like so much that she's done are *Under the Tuscan Sun* and then *Bringing Tuscany Home* and *A Year in the World*, so you can see that she and her husband have grown to love Italy and have built at their home in San Francisco a villa that she thinks is Tuscan. It's interesting.

TS: Well, maybe it's a good time to talk about how you got onto the KSU Foundation. I know it's 1996 that you joined the Foundation; how did that come about?

SB: Well, I had been not really involved, but prayerfully thoughtful of the growth. Dr. [Hoarce W.] Sturgis came out to our community club which was a great focus in the community at the time.

TS: The Red Rock Community Center?

SB: Red Rock. He gave us a view of his role and goals and ambition. I was so thrilled that as many things as he had to do in the beginning that he cared enough about people's involvement to come and speak with us. From that time my ear was always focused toward the happenings there. And then I think Dr. [Betty L.] Siegel enlivened the whole state, I believe Southeast, even, don't you, when she came. Then I was invited to become a member of the Marietta Rotary Club, which I think is the professional highlight of my life to be invited to come. I love it, the focus of the Rotary Club. I met Jim [James A.] Fleming [former president of the KSU Foundation] there and so many other wonderful people.

TS: I spoke to the Rotary Club two or three times over the years.

SB: Well, I know they've enjoyed you. And by the way, and then I'll get back to Jim Fleming, my contact, I have your book, and I have so enjoyed it and the fact that you had autographed it through the history museum is where I obtained it; I don't know that I met

you there; I think if I had I would have remembered because you are a dynamic person of history.

TS: I don't know about that!

SB: Well, I feel so because you're dealing with the local, and that to me is the dynamic of it.

TS: It's absolute fun to work on county history.

SB: I received a call from Jim one day. He said, "Would you be . . . ?" I said, "Oh yes, I can't believe that I'm being asked. I'm the least likely person that I could think that would be of any value." It has proven to be just that. The meaning of being a member of that board is I receive much more than I've ever given. So I am most unworthy to be on it, but I believe in it. I believe in every vision that each chairman in my life there and before has had—inspired by the presidents, absolutely fabulous. I think Dr. [Daniel S.] Papp has brought just a slight bit more formality. I'm not sure if that's complimentary to him or not, but I think it is. I thought this is the time because now we've got this graduate school. And we've got much more to come. We don't rest; we move forward. The parade goes on. I want to be a part of that for as long as I live.

TS: In 1996 you went on the Foundation, and Ronald E. King was finishing two years as chairman of the Foundation and Ronald H. Francis coming on as chairman for the next two years.

SB: Yes, I'm remembering a great deal of Michael [J.] Coles [chairman from 1998 to 2002] too.

TS: He was there for a long time and then Tommy M. Holder, I guess [2002-2007], and of course, Norman J. Radow has taken over now.

SB: And isn't he bringing something to it? He has a charm about him.

TS: I guess Mark R. Kirk on the board is one of your relatives somehow isn't he?

SB: He is. Now, I don't know that he recognizes that. In each of the branches of my family there have been those who've been smarter than my immediate ones, as proud as I am of them, but the name Carnes, when we migrated, I understand the smart ones stopped off in Carnesville and were involved with the university founding, and then the Paces, the smart ones stopped off in Vinings [laughter]. I say that because I can enjoy it. But Mark is a wonderful community leader, and Barrye [his wife] was a sorority sister of my Jeanne, or maybe not, maybe it was Junior League or ballet. Wonderful man and woman.

TS: Well, 1996 is the time when the Foundation is really beginning to go in new directions. I know a lot of people from the Atlanta business circles are getting on the Foundation at that time and beginning to do a lot of things for the university that hadn't been done in the past. I'm just wondering how much you were involved in some of those things that

took place like the residence halls and the parking decks and the expansion of the campus by buying new buildings and so on.

SB: It's just been terrific. The Jolley Lodge is one thing that I'm remembering that I served on a committee to do some landscaping there. Of course, most of that was done by [others]. I cannot take credit for anything. I have been a supporter of others who have been great leaders, but received absolutely so much invigorating experiences. The idea that Dr. Siegel had for the landscaping was to connect it with the Performing Arts Center in some way, so that you could catch the feel of it. It's been exciting to me to see all the many schools that have come there, buildings for schools on the campus. Isn't that the most interesting campus? It is just absolutely, to have seen where it began and to see in this number of years . . . but then it's been the life of several people, including the presidents. I think they've poured everything they've had into it.

TS: We've had three outstanding presidents.

SB: We have. And then all of you and the student body. Last night I think this young man—he may be the president of the student body—who stood to address us after Greg Mortenson's speech. [He said] that the pledge of the student body is to receive \$15,000.00 to give for more schools in Pakistan. For young people to think beyond themselves—Kennesaw State attracts people who want to be whole. They allow their spirit, their heart, their emotion, their mental—the young people who are introduced to us each year as the superlatives, they can compete anywhere in the world.

TS: They're remarkable, there's no doubt about it.

SB: And you're a part of that, thank you.

TS: Thank you, I appreciate it. Betty Siegel, probably about ten years ago, started asking in graduation each time for the graduates to stand up if they were married, and if they had a job while they were going to school, but then she started asking how many of you engaged in community service while you were going to school. It is remarkable how many will stand up.

SB: It is amazing. Another thing I think it was the last year or two that I've observed [in the commencement ceremony] is how many of [the KSU graduates] are mothers, young mothers.

TS: Right, there are a lot of them.

SB: When you are that mature—and mothering matures you—if you're that mature it must impact your study.

TS: There's no doubt about it. Kennesaw has always been different in that regard, I think, that we've had the non-traditional students. We're beginning to go the other way now a little bit with the residence halls, but there's no doubt, particularly in history classes and

literature classes, that they bring so much to the classroom because of life experiences. And because by the time they come back to school they're really committed to doing well.

SB: Exactly. I am convinced, compelled, I think, to believe that commitment is the most important thing to success in your own life. Once you've made a decision, make it work, move it, don't look back, except to learn. I think you all give the students that time to do that.

TS: I've always thought that we've had superior students, and it doesn't necessarily show up in what their SAT score is because that's just the entering freshmen right out of high school. We've had all these students who have come back, and regardless of what their SAT score may have been, by the time they come back in their thirties, let's say, they have learned a lot, to say the least.

SB: My daughter had an experience with Kennesaw State. She had graduated from the University in education and taught the early grades, second grade mostly and fourth. Then her son—when he was born, she had determined not to go back to school, and when he was in his high school years she did. So she came back to Kennesaw for refreshment. She noticed, she said, just such a great difference in the way of teaching. Those interim years, thirteen years, made such a difference in the classroom. She retired when her father died to take over whatever. I was open for her to do that, the business that we have, and she came to live here and made this wondrous life for me that I've just described. But she's a teacher; she will be a teacher forever. She has a little five year old grandson next door, and he visits two or three times a week. They have the most wonderful time because she's got the greatest collection of children's books and games, so fulfillment comes in many ways with your vocation, doesn't it?

TS: It does. Let me ask you just a few more questions about the Foundation. You were on the landscaping committee for the Jolley Lodge, you said. Did you have other committees? I'm not real sure on how the Foundation structures itself; do you divide up into committees?

SB: Yes, and I think that's at the president and the chairman's discretion. A good bit of the time that I have been on the board my husband was terminally ill. So I appreciated the fact that I could be the recipient of all the good things that were done for and with directors and trustees without responsibilities too much. I now serve as emeritus, but they are so good to me, I am invited to everything, and every time I can I do go.

TS: Right. Since 2002 you've been emeritus. But you are still involved in everything anyway.

SB: I am.

TS: That's good.

SB: The value of prayers has become one of the most important functions of my life now, and I am constantly remembering with gratitude to God for all of you.

TS: I appreciate that.

SB: You're welcome.

TS: The Foundation has done a tremendous amount of good for Kennesaw, I think.

SB: I know so.

TS: Particularly in the last ten years or so more than ever.

SB: So if presence is of any value, that's been . . .

TS: That's your role. [laughter] Do you have any thoughts on the Newt Gingrich crisis? I know there were a number of years when you first came on the board where the tax-exempt status of the Foundation was up in the air until that all got resolved.

SB: I think it did.

TS: Oh it did get resolved.

SB: Yes, it did. As a matter of fact I did a coffee for Newt when he first ran for public office before all of his bad choices came along, and I was really impressed with his background in history. He was a guest speaker, and this doesn't answer your question, but he was a speaker to a family reunion of Marvin's family and spoke on monetary exchange and that kind of thing. I respect him, but his choices have kept him from being as important as he could have been to us, I think.

TS: Right. The Foundation has been acquiring a lot of property in recent years too, and in fact right now we're in the process of getting that ninety acres below Chastain Road, across the interstate.

SB: I've been reading about that and hearing about it. What use will they do with it?

TS: It's going to be athletic fields for intramurals primarily, a lot of soccer fields, and it's potentially property on which a stadium can go too.

SB: How wonderful.

TS: There's talk about maybe professional soccer and other stuff too.

SB: Well, when the time comes I will make some kind of pledge toward that if I can.

- TS: That's great. With all the Foundation has done I was surprised the other day—for the longest time we always described our campus as 152 acres, and then I was shocked the other day that they said 240 acres, and I don't even think that includes this new land that they're acquiring.
- SB: It may not include, we may have disposed of the bequeath of the Bagwell family property in Bartow County; do we still have that?
- TS: I think they've sold that.
- SB: I had really hoped that we would get some revenue from the Hall property on Stilesboro Road. That property was left in a trust, and the trustees of that trust were to make the distributions. But it was to be shared with the colleges and universities in Cobb County and West Georgia. I feel that the owner of that tract would like for KSU to be a recipient.
- TS: Why don't you tell me about your family?
- SB: My greatest blessing was my husband, now deceased, Marvin Lane Brown, Sr. My son is Marvin *Lane* Brown, Jr., and his wife is Lulu. Lane is a pharmacist retired from WellStar Kennestone. My daughter Jeanne Brown Mayes is a retired teacher. My grandchildren are Harvey Luke Mayes IV, an attorney; Ruth Lavinia Brown Mathis, a teacher; and Amy Brown Holcombe, also a teacher. My great-grandchildren are Carnes Mathis, Davis Mathis, Eli Mayes, and Max Mayes.
- TS: I think I'm just about out of questions.
- SB: It's been a delight to be with you.
- TS: Thank you very much.

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