

Tate, Georgia Black History Collection
Justin Davis Interview
Conducted by James Newberry
June 16, 2021

Full Transcript

Interviewer: All right. So, we are good to go. So, this is James Newberry, and I'm here with Justin Davis on Wednesday, June 16th, 2021, at the KSU Center at Kennesaw State. And I want to thank you for sitting down with me and making the trip. And do you agree to the interview?

Davis: I do.

Interviewer: Great. So, can you tell me your full name?

Davis: My name is Justin Jared Davis.

Interviewer: And what's your birthday?

Davis: I was Born June 12th, 1987, at R.T. Jones Regional Hospital in Canton, Georgia.

Interviewer: So happy late birthday.

Davis: Well, thank you.

Interviewer: I know it was your birthday the other day when we saw each other or right around that time. You said you were born at the hospital, that's Northside now.

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: And can you tell me, after you were born, Justin, what are your earliest memories growing up?

Davis: I just remember my mom, she was young when she had me, so she was... Like we talked about with the picture, she was a junior in high school and so my great-grandmother was still working, but she had just retired and stopped, she worked at people's houses. And so, she kept me until my mom finished school and she started working at a local daycare center. And I didn't want to go, so I stayed with my grandmother. And my earliest memories are just being at home with her and just playing with the neighborhood kids. We lived in an apartment complex in Tate, and I just remember her stories and her singing old spirituals and singing old songs and telling the stories of her childhood. She was from Washington County, Sandersville. And so, I just remember those early stories about life on the farm and just things like her early memories of... She'd show us on her knees where they were down picking cotton and what that included. And that's...

Interviewer: What was your great-grandmother's name?

Davis: Her name was Ruby Dawson Hampton. She passed away in 2002. She was 91, 92.

Interviewer: How did she end up in Pickens County?

Davis: She came with my great grandpa, Jule Hampton. Actually, I have some pictures of... I had one picture of him, now I've got a picture of both of them. And he came to work at the Georgia Marble Quarry.

Interviewer: What job did he do?

Davis: I've heard people say different names. I've never really known what the real name of it is. They described it as a ganar or gatling or something like that and some big machine. Because I think he was between maybe 6'5" and 6'7" she was maybe five foot at most and maybe 98 pounds.

Interviewer: Wow.

Davis: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, do you have any idea how he heard about the job?

Davis: Well, for years people had been coming from Middle Georgia, really, to work in the quarry. Colonel Sam would send people down to different places, especially down... I think it was because there was mining down there too. Kaolin

Interviewer: Kaolin.

Davis: Kaolin. And my grandma called it chalk, chalk mines and the different uses they used before. She was like, "We even made paint. We'd paint the inside of the house." And so, I think that's why he sent people down there to recruit. And they moved their whole family. I think my grandma was born, there were three children at the time, and they moved to Tate, to one of the company homes. I think she said it was three rooms or maybe four room house. And so, I guess the kitchen, living area, and maybe two bedrooms.

Interviewer: In what community was that?

Davis: Down in Smokey Hollow. The actual Hollow kind of in, I guess, the valley, I guess, down there.

Interviewer: I see. So, I want to get deep into that shortly, but to sort of come back to your immediate family. What is your mother's name?

Davis: My mother's name is Tara Davis.

Interviewer: Okay. And what did she do for a living?

Davis: Well, my mother she's always worked in retail. After I was born, she worked for the daycare center. I think she was going toward working in education, but then she just maybe decided not to because they closed the... I think it was a state funded daycare and they closed it. And then after that she started... Because I even remember going with her to some of the classes they would have to take to be certified to work at the daycare. And I think she even was certified to maybe be a substitute also. But her and the lady, that the head of the Pickens County Daycare would actually go to places. I'd go with them. Excuse me. She was a friend of the family and we've talked about the Collins family, we actually ended up renting a house from her and with Emma Julia Collins Washington. And then after that she worked in retail. They just built the Ingles in Jasper and she worked there for several years and was the manager of the bakery. And then next she worked a little bit in Atlanta at the Harris Teeter and the Publix just over here off of Wade Green. Basically, just in retail, she worked at RaceTrac, the RaceTrac gas stations for about 10 years. And now she works part-time again at Ingles. And then her main job is at the Dollar General. She works for the Dollar General.

Interviewer: Did she commute down to Wade Green?

Davis: I can't remember. Did she live down there? I think she was commuting at the time.

Interviewer: Okay. And I mean, thinking about your mom and maybe other folks that you've grown up around or that you know, maybe family members. What jobs have they done recently or since you've been growing up in Pickens County or elsewhere? Can you give me some examples, I mean, in addition to what you've just told me about your mom?

Davis: Well, my great aunt, my grandmother's sister lived with us. Well, we lived with them and my great grandmother. And like I said, my great-grandmother worked at people's homes for years and years and babysat the children. And she did that for many years till, I guess, she was in her late 70s when I was born, so until then. And then my great aunt worked for the H.D. Lee company, the Lee company. Lee jeans. It was the other big employer in Pickens County from maybe the '50s and through the '80s. And so, they moved the company, so a lot of people lost jobs. Right after high school I think she started working for them until the late maybe '90s, maybe 1990s when they moved. They moved once and then they came back, but the second time they closed the plant there. I think she was a seams... I can't say the word. Seamstress at the Lee plant.

Interviewer: I see. So, you were talking about growing up in Smokey Hollow, and it was an apartment complex?

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: And is it still there?

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: So, could you sort of describe the area when you were growing up? How many houses were there versus now? If any have been demolished or fallen down.

Davis: Well, down in Smokey Hollow, past the church where you drive down the hill, I think there were maybe four houses still left or maybe five or six. And then a couple of people were allowed to bring double-wide trailers in, so there were a couple trailers down there. There's one still down there. And my grandma on my dad's side, they had lived in the apartments too after, and then they moved back down there and they took one of the houses that was still standing and she remodeled it, and they still actually live there. Well, my grandma passed away, but one of my aunts lives there and we'd have family functions down there. It's right next to the church down there. And I remember there were actually three houses across the street and then there was a trailer. And then on the way up the hill, there was another trailer and a house way on the hill. It was in between kind of where the Tri-City, well now Head Start is in Smokey Hollow. And since then, one by one those houses have been demolished and I think there's only one house, that's the house that my paternal grandmother, Ruby Stephens had remodeled. And then one of the trailers is still down there. And then all the other houses in Smokey Hollow have been demolished. And there were some houses, I remember near the school, there were about two or three left and they've since been demolished. There was one across down the hill from Head Start and it's been demolished. And there's a couple of trailers that were out there. And I think one of them was still out there. I couldn't live out there because it's so lonely out there. I think he's the only person that lives out there. All of that is right above the marble quarry. Our church Mt. Calvary, if you just walk down the hill, the quarry are right there. And the apartments, they built in maybe 1970, early '70s. And I think maybe they moved in 1974, 75. My grandma and great grandma they lived right next to each other. Yeah. That's what I remember as far as housing. In the apartments, we lived in a unit, they had three bedrooms. We'd say they were four bedrooms, but it was just it had a really big master bedroom and then two bedrooms upstairs and then one smaller bedroom downstairs, and then there were two-bedroom units and then one bedroom unit. And they maintained them pretty well. It wasn't like we were living in the slum. I think people just missed living, being able to have their own yard and have a house. And so-

Interviewer: Who was the owner? Do you know?

Davis: It was the Jasper Housing Authority over there.

Interviewer: I see.

Davis: They built them.

Interviewer: So, you said that people were allowed to bring in mobile homes. Who allowed them to do that?

Davis: I believe it was the Tate Estate. So, I'm not sure because they own all of that land down there where our church is and where the church in Smokey Hollow is. And even Tate United Methodist Church, they own all the land. Well, I don't know if it's in writing,

maybe it is just to make it legal that as long as the church is being used as a church, they could still use the land and use the building. And if it ceases to be a church, the land will revert back to the Tate Estates.

Interviewer: Do you know when that arrangement was made?

Davis: I'm not sure. It sounds like it was made actually when the churches... Maybe not when they were built, probably around the time when the Sam Tate probably passed away or sometime maybe before when all the land was kind of in limbo and who the owners were and between his heirs. So, I'm not exactly sure.

Interviewer: So, sort of thinking about specifically the Black community and how much of that was owned, I mean, all of it, I guess, was owned by the company and then Tate Estate sort of as the successor to that. If homes fall down or have been demolished, I mean, I assume in most cases, people have already moved out. Is there the acceptance that, I mean, I'm moving away so it remains Tate Estate? So that's left to them, whatever happens to the house or the space.

Davis: I would guess so because I believe the house my grandmother remodeled; I believe it was just sitting there. And she worked, actually. She worked for the company in the... I guess they called it the Calcium Division in Nelson and where they refinished everything. She worked there for several years. So, she worked there, they gave her permission to go ahead and do that just knowing that it's on our property and blah, blah. And so, she did all of that.

Interviewer: And that's your mother's grandmother?

Davis: No, it's my father.

Interviewer: Stephens

Davis: Stephens. Yes.

Interviewer: And is she still living?

Davis: No. She passed away.

Interviewer: Okay. And she was working in Nelson. What was her job there in Calcium Division?

Davis: I'm not exactly sure. I just remember seeing that on the sign that's there in Nelson when you drive into, I guess, Downtown Nelson.

Interviewer: May I ask your dad's name?

Davis: His name was Bobby Stephens.

Interviewer: So, it looks like then on both sides of your family, you had people in the marble industry.

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: And I mean, talk to me about the history of the Black community in relation to the marble industry. I mean, did anybody work outside of the marble industry that you know of? I mean, maybe people who worked in other people's homes or other types of jobs, maybe related to the railroad?

Davis: From what I gather from my, I guess, she was my great-grandmother's cousin. My great-grandmother's name was Frances Anderson Davis. You've seen pictures of Willie Mae Weaver. That's how I know a lot of the history. She said my great grandfather, John Anderson, actually, he didn't work for the company, but he was a blacksmith. I think because he was a blacksmith, they maybe let him... I think they lived somewhere, maybe not in Smokey Hollow, but you just crossed 53 across from the Tate house, it was called Sandy Bottoms Road. And there was a couple of more of the communities, they called [Lonesome 00:15:15] City. And I can't think of the other names of the... And I think they might've lived over towards Lonesome City. And he was a blacksmith. But I don't think he was directly related to the company. And that's about the only person I've heard that didn't actually work at the company. And then my great-grandmother, Frances Anderson Davis, she actually was part of the, I guess, the housekeeping staff. I think she helped in the house at the marble mansion and at the pink house. I've heard people call it that. Tate house, pink house. But at the Tate house. And her husband, my great-grandfather, Harper Davis, I think he worked for the company. Actually, I didn't know there was an article that my aunt and... You've probably seen her name, [Mimi Joe Butler 00:16:15].

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Davis: My great-grandmother Francis worked in their house. I guess they co-wrote a article about them. And she was saying that this man, I think it was Bearden something. He had a farm close to their house, which their house... Hill. They were Hills. Mr. Hill's house and Mrs. Hill's home is still off of 53 and there was a farm back there. And my grandfather was recruited to work in the marble mines by this guy, he worked on his farm. Bearden, I can't think of his name. I just know it was Bearden Because I only read it a couple of days ago. And she was just talking about how they talked about my uncle and my aunt and then my grandfather when they were born. And then another uncle, he was born when they were 50. My grandma was 50 and I guess my grandpa was probably 60, 61.

Interviewer: She had him when she was 50?

Davis: 50. Yes.

Interviewer: Wow.

Davis: In the 50s.

Interviewer: Man, so he may still be living.

Davis: Well, he passed away four years ago. And his name was Barry Davis, he lived in Calhoun. And then my aunt, her name was Georgia Davis Cook. Unlike the rest of them, they had a joint revival between Mt. Calvary Baptist Church and then the church in Smokey Hollow, which no one ever knew the name. But I think Miss Weaver said it was called Mt. Tabor AME. We know it was AME. Everybody doesn't think it was AME. They were like, "No, because there's..." No, it probably was AME because I read somewhere that they had the same pastor as the AME church in Canton, Saint Paul AME, which is still in existence. But anyway, they had a joint revival, and she joined the AME church and was a Methodist. And actually, now my cousin, Karen Cook, I don't know her married name, they actually moved to Columbus and that's where she met her husband, and they had my cousin Karen and she's actually a Methodist pastor actually. She's not in the AME denomination, she's in the United Methodist. She's a United Methodist pastor.

Interviewer: So, I want to talk more about the churches specifically the two there, Mt. Cavalry and Miracle Fellowship. But can you tell me the relative, I think it was Frances who worked in the pink house. Did you ever talk to her about that? Did she discuss what she did or specifically who she worked for? I mean, I know who lived there, but...

Davis: Right. I'm not sure because she passed away when I was maybe two or three. So, I didn't get to talk to her. And my mother and my uncles, they kind of listened, they weren't as inquisitive about history like I was. And so, I just kind of absorbed it all. And so, I'm not quite sure what she did at the pink house.

Interviewer: I see. So, let's move. You talked about Smokey Hollow a good bit and we'll talk more about it and Lonesome City. Can you think of any other of the Black communities and sort of their locations in and around the quarry?

Davis: Well, the Whippoorwill, that's where the school was. They had upper Whippoorwill, I guess because it was maybe up on the hill, then lower Whippoorwill, which was closer to the quarries. And my grandma and grandpa Mattie Laura Davis and Clyde Davis Senior, she said that they lived in Whippoorwill up. I don't remember if she said which one. And they were actually neighbors. That would've been my grandpa's great aunt and uncle, Willie Mae Weaver's parents. They're in... And I keep saying Lonesome city. Sorry. Whippoorwill. And she talks about how in Smokey Hollow they had well water. But she said, they thought they were big time because they had running water. It was close to the house, but they could just go out and turn on the faucet, the spigot, or whatever you call it. And she said they even had a shower where they didn't have to draw water and bring it up to the house. And so, she said they lived there the first part of their marriage. And that's where my Aunt Norma was born there. And then they moved to their house that they moved to in Smokey Hollow, which was one of those three houses. I remember because my grandpa was still alive. I think he died the next year. So, I remember him a little more. So, I was four or five and I remember going down to his house in Smokey Hollow. There were three houses. The one house where maybe he was, I think, grew up in and then there was another house in between, then his house. And they're across the street from where my paternal grandma and family remodeled the house. But they lived there and that's where my mom and her other two brothers were. That's where they lived.

Interviewer: What kind of houses are these?

Davis: They were the craftsman style. But I think they were kind of a maybe modified version maybe. Somebody explained to me how they would come in the box and everything. And I think most of those houses down there maybe they weren't as fancy as maybe the houses over off Newtown Road and around the clinic and closer to highway five. But I-

Interviewer: Those houses being white homes?

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Davis: And I found out that at one time, I think it's in some of the history, that Smokey Hollow was built, I guess, when people started moving here. More whites lived in Smokey Hollow and then the Blacks lived, there's a community called... It was right behind Tate School and behind the church, I think that's where [Mudhead 00:22:32] Road. And they say actually Blacks lived over there and then at some point in the early 1900s they kind of switched. So, I guess the houses were originally just built as houses for the workers. And I think more of the maybe skilled laborers lived over off Newtown Road where majority of the whites lived. But I just remember they were kind of at the house that my grandma remodeled, it has the living room and then I think there were two bedrooms and a kitchen, I think there's a dining room. And I think that was the basic setup for most of the houses. And I think some were larger depending on the family size.

Interviewer: I see. So, what can you sort of tell me about Colonel Sam Tate as you've heard about him and especially in relation to Black community? Because you've talked about him recruiting people from as far away as Sandersville, we have other stories that I'll ask about like Forsyth County. But what can you tell me? What have you heard? What do you know?

Davis: Well, what I've heard is from talking with Mrs. Willie Mae Weaver and another lady that was our everything in the church. She was the Sunday school superintendent, had been a Sunday school teacher, and her family was from Lumpkin County. Her name was Hazel Clark Buck. And she would tell us about, actually, with the houses, she said, some of the houses were considered Georgia Marble houses, and then some were Tate Estates like the ... and so I was like, "Okay, I guess I kind of get that." And then they said that Sam Tate would always make sure that they had like on 4th of July and maybe Labor Day, they would have big picnics at the school. And he makes sure that they'd have the meat. The barbecue was provided to the Masons, which actually they had a lodge. I think they were saying at the ... I know there would still want to take the Marble Tate elementary, but at their school, they call it Tate School too. But then at some point, I guess they start calling it Pickens County Training School because all the other two Jasper and Nelson schools consolidated with them. But just him making sure that they had teachers and that he was very ... he picked the teachers himself and that he made sure they had a place to live and they would live with ... they didn't necessarily have one house that was designated for teachers, but it kind of was like, there were two boarding houses and the

teachers lived there and they had ...Since I'm a musician, I know that she's always said that they had a music teacher and the other, excuse me. And they had a big auditorium in the Pickens County training school or at the time Tate School. And he just made sure that they were taken care of, I guess, his employees were taken care of and that they had the same things. Maybe not the same exact things or the same as that quality as his white employees. But they had the same things. They had school and they all knew who was the boss. They'd said they knew who was the boss. And I've heard a couple of stories about, they never mentioned any names. Of course, I wanted to know that if someone did something that he considered immoral or wrong, he would pack them up and send them back to wherever he recruited them from.

Interviewer: Do you know examples of what was being done that was wrong?

Davis: Well, like I've heard that a lady had a baby out of wedlock. If any of the girls have a baby out of wedlock, they were shipped out, the whole family. Well, maybe just them or, but I've heard it was the whole family. They got shipped away back to wherever they were recruited from.

Interviewer: Do you know, or do you have any examples of the same being carried out with white employees?

Davis: No, not heard any. There probably may be some examples, but I'm not sure.

Interviewer: There's a story that is told widely, at least by some of the folks we've worked with that vigilantes or KKK members may have been planning to drive Black residents out. But Colonel Sam said no and stopped that. Do you know anything about that story?

Davis: I've heard that same story. I've read about it, different articles like in the Pickens Progress and saying that they were headed toward Pickens County, and he said he put enough dynamite there. I guess there was a bridge between, I think they might've been coming from the Dawson County area between Marble Hill and the way I see marble hill and Pickens County and Dawson County and said he was going to load the, for lack of a word, the holler or wherever the bridge was crossing, it was enough dynamite to just turn them into mincemeat. I think I read that somewhere. And then I've heard that he sent to Atlanta for enough military rifles or rifles to help keep them off. And of course, they didn't come. And I've even read somewhere that he wanted to build like maybe a university or something in the area and that possibly he wanted to build something equal for the Blacks and he didn't do it because it caused so much uproar. But he said what he said when, it goes or went to at the time.

Interviewer: So, if you did what he said, then it would be relatively comfortable.

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: But if not, you might be sent away-

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: ... to where you came from. Can you talk to me about the Collins family, specifically George Collins, and then his son, Olin Collins, and their journey over? What can you tell me about that?

Davis: Well, from what I've read, well, actually, I've actually worked on the land he bought in Jasper, I guess, after he had ... they moved from Tate in his later years. And I worked for his granddaughter. And from what I gather that his family, maybe Olin Collin's grandmother had been enslaved for the Tate family. I think I've read that in the Pickens County heritage book and that they were working in Tate or lived somewhere in Pickens County. I believe it was actually looked at the census maybe in the Talking Rock area. I think that's where Collins family, maybe white Collins family lives. So, they might've been associated with them somehow. But the mother, his grandmother, I think it was Viola Tate. And so, somehow, I guess they ended up in Forsyth County, Olin's mother was from Forsyth County. I think I read that somewhere in that area and I didn't find their family in the censuses. But they were in the 1910 census for Pickens County though. So, I don't know if they moved back to or moved to for Forsyth County and was just there at that time when all that was going on. But at some point, I've seen in recent things where it said that they didn't know where they had originated from, but they originated from Pickens County. And so, I guess that's how they were able to get back to Pickens County. And I think the Tate's knew that it was a relation. So that's how ... I don't want to say that's how, they're probably very talented. They were George Collins. I think he ended up working for the Tate's and they hired him on to work after they came back from Forsyth County. And I think his wife actually worked in the mansion. I think she might've been maybe Ms. Flora Tate's housekeeper or personal maid. And then from there, they said, I think I read, I didn't know this. I've just read that Olin Collins had like maybe a lung issue so he couldn't work in the quarry. So, there was a store in Smokey Hollow. There's actually a picture of me standing next to it. And I wish I knew where it was. I think somebody else had it of a stand or maybe standing where it was. I don't know if it was still standing. But that was like the store that the Black community go buy anything. He had a barbershop in there. I think they could get anything except meat. I think the Tate Market that still there, it's like the three buildings. That was one with the post office and the building in the middle was like a Piggly Wiggly or the grocery store for Tate. And they sold the meat. So, they'd have to go there to get meat.

Interviewer: From him at the stand.

Davis: Well, no, from the whoever owned the Tate Market or whatever, or the Piggly wiggly, I think it was eventually a Piggly wiggly. But they'd have to go there for meat. But the Collins family, everybody kind of revered them and they were well-respected, and I think they kind of were like a liaison between the Black community and the Tate's along with the Roach family. And excuse me.

Interviewer: So, you talk about people revering them. That was true across the board, like Black and white?

Davis: I think so. I think so.

Interviewer: So, one of the things that ... the reason I brought the Collins up aside from wanting to learn all of that was that they needed a place to flee from Forsyth County and Pickens was it. But as we've discovered and talking to you and the research is that they had a history there, like you said. And so, it kind of made logical sense that that would be a place to return to, even if George, his wife had been born in Forsyth County. So, do you know stories of other Black families who migrated to Pickens from other places? I know your family, you said is Washington County and then the Collins or the Collins, do you know of any other sort of stories like that?

Davis: Well, I wish I knew where this was. One evening, I was reading about Pickens County history. I guess I was homesick or something. I was living in Savannah, and I read where it had some of the original Black families that didn't leave after slavery. And I think it was Collin's family. Then there was maybe the Langston family. And then the McClure family, like Karen's family, Karen McClure Benson. And my other side, I guess, on both sides of my family, I have family that of course came from middle Georgia from Washington County, Baldwin County, and Hancock County, I guess, too. And then like the people then there were people from Dahlonega. They would come from walk over from Dahlonega to work in the marble quarries. And so, the Andersons I mentioned, that's where they were from. Andersons, Greens, that's my paternal. My dad's mom was a Green and that's her dad was born over in Dahlonega area. And like I said, they would walk on Sunday evenings, I guess this was before they officially moved to Tate to come work. I think they would stay at a boarding house. So, from the Dahlonega area, and then a lot of the people in Jasper, I think some moved to Tate, they came from, I think it's a little over from Columbus, Georgia, like Phoenix City on that side.

Interviewer: Yeah. Alabama.

Davis: Chambers County. I see a lot of people say that they're from like, what is it, Camp Hill Alabama. And so, some of the families from that are in Jasper, Black families come from Alabama, from down in that area and near Columbus. But most families are, like I said, from the Dahlonega, Macon County area and from middle Georgia from Washington County.

Interviewer: Do you have like an impression of why the marble industry would draw them? And were there better salaries? Was the social situation better? Obviously in some cases, you've talked about how it was, but you know anything about this motivation?

Davis: Well, I don't know anything specific, but I believe that's one of the main reasons they move, because I don't think Washington County was necessarily harsh, but I don't think there weren't as many opportunities down there. And I think maybe he probably did offer them a better salary because I think a lot of them did work on cotton farms down there and then some did work in the mines. And then I think of course Lumpkin County was largely agricultural also. So, I think they just wanted a better opportunity and they promised them that they'd have schools for them. And they would have a place. I guess they were fairly new at the time, new homes for them to live in. And so, I believe that was the major factor for people moving from the areas they were recruited from.

Interviewer: And then, in general, can you talk more about the community of Tate? Because I know that Colonel Sam, you've sort of spoke about him and his relationship to the Black community. But what about other whites? Like the white laborers? Are they working alongside Black laborers? Because in all the pictures, it's Black laborers in one area and white laborers, and there's like maybe one picture where you have like the mule team and there's the one Black mule driver with like seven white mule drivers. That's the only one I've seen where it's like Black and white working together. Can you talk about that?

Davis: I've never heard that they worked on this side, or the Blacks worked on one side. I've never heard anything definite about that. Sounds like they kind of were in close proximity maybe, but maybe they took pictures like that just for the optics to make everybody say-

Interviewer: That's exactly what my next question is. Was that just like a promotional thing? Like we're not mixing, we've got jobs for both, but we're not mixing. I wonder if that was PR.

Davis: I think so. I think that was probably PR, but I do have a story from Mimi Jo Hill Butler that I think he was Ellijay telephone companies. They started buying up everything and they started to provide cable for everyone. So, they had their little local station and they started doing shows where they interview local citizens. So, they interviewed Ms. Weaver, Willie Mae Weaver. And there was an interview on there with people in Tate. And so, they interviewed Ms. Mimi Joe Butler, and she was telling the story about one day her father, I think JB Hill was like the, I guess he was the head. I don't know his official title, but-

Interviewer: Yeah. He did like the tomb stone design.

Davis: And so, she was taking him to lunch. I guess that was back when anybody ... they sit back then people would just walk in the quarry, walk around. No OSHA or anything like that. And so apparently Luke Tate fell in the quarry. My great grandma used to always say, "He swam like a diving duck." That's what she was saying. Apparently, he jumped in the quarry and brought Luke Tate up out of the quarry. And she said, she just saw my grandpa was like a super scene from Superman dive down and go get him out of the quarry and rescue him from drowning. And she's like, "It was just like he was bringing him up like he was Superman." She's like, "I just always thought that was the coolest thing." And then she said, Jule Hampton. I'm like, "Oh, that's my great grandpa." And then I heard another man tell the same story. It sounds like, oh, that's cool.

Interviewer: Do you know anything about those Tate siblings? Like Luke and Walter and Flora? Can you talk any stories you know about them?

Davis: My great-grandmother Hampton, Jule Hampton and Ruby Hampton said, that's funny. Jule Ruby, I never thought about, and I think his name was actually Julian, I think. And so, they were walking past the Tate house, and I've heard that Flora was kind of ... she was the old maid, and she was kind of mean and said, they just saw her pouring just ... I guess she had extra milk. Didn't give to anybody, just pouring it out the back door. And

she said, "There were people around that need food and need milk. And she was just poured it out and-

Interviewer: Wasting it.

Davis: ... wasting it." I remember that story about her. And then I do remember that story and I just feel like it kind of set the overtone how things kind of go in Tate. I don't know which servant it was or who it was working in the house said one of the grandchildren of the Tate. So, I don't know which Tate it was. Might know. Because Sam Tate, either none of them had children, those three and so maybe it was a niece or nephew said he was holding a, I don't know if it was Sam Tate again, I don't know. Sounds like it might've been Sam Tate. He was holding a silver dollar in his hand and he's like, he used another word. He used the N word. He's like, "Never let an N word have money," or something to that effect. It sounded like a direct quote when I've heard the story. So maybe not let them have too much. I don't know what it is, but I was like, "Hmm." And then that makes me think of ... and then people of ... you know how people, you don't have to say everything is like, "Yeah. They said that Tate said that a Black person will never own land and in the Tate area," that's been true. I don't think anyone's ever owned land in Tate.

Interviewer: That's where most Black residents have lived in Pickens County is in and around Tate.

Davis: Right. They've always lived in the company houses or, like I said, in those apartments that the Jasper City housing authority built.

Interviewer: And do you know of people like trying to get a mortgage and buy a house and being refused?

Davis: I don't know any specific stories. I believe when the houses were in such disrepair, they built those apartments that maybe people were trying or maybe buy the plot when maybe an acre or two acres at their home or half an acre that their home was on, but they wouldn't sell. But they were able to go, there were several people from Tate and then the people in Nelson, they actually were able to buy their home and buy the land at their homes was on.

Interviewer: Were these white people?

Davis: No, the Black people.

Interviewer: So, in other parts of the county.

Davis: Yes. Like in Nelson and just over of course Nelson's bisected by ... so in north Cherokee and in Pickens there, Nelson. And then for years, I think people in Jasper were able to ... there were several Blacks that own land, like Olin Tate, well, not Olin Tate. Olin Collins moved to Jasper. His land is still there, still in the family. It's off south main street and they built a house there. They have like maybe 10 acres. And now I think it's down to like maybe five or six acres. And so, they bought land in Jasper. And then I think the

McClures own land in Jasper and a couple of other families, but no one Black has ever owned land in Tate.

Interviewer: That's interesting if we're talking about like Colonel Sam being this noble sort of benefactor for the Black community, but still having that complete control. And so, does he still fundamentally believe in his family members and other community members like, "Well, we're going to be in charge," but I don't know, "If the business ends, these people need to move on out." What do you think? You talked about the overtones. What are you talking about when you say that?

Davis: Well, I guess the overtone that, "Hey, you all, we can't ever buy a house or buy land to build a house in Tate." The company did sell the homes that they owned of the white employees, they were all able to buy their homes and most of them own those little craftsman and bungalows up there in Tate in and around the Tate Clinic, in the cemetery. And so, I guess they were able to buy, I think it was like maybe in the '50s. But then I've heard my great grandma Ruby say that if they ever found marble on your land, on the land, even if you owned it, that means they could kick you out. I'm like, "Even if they own it?" But of course, then when the company owned everything, they owned it anyway.

Interviewer: Not to jump too far ahead because there's still a lot, I want to cover about especially the '50s when the company was sold. Was the '50s or the [crosstalk 00:45:47].

Davis: I think it was probably the '50s.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I know there was a period of which some people were moving away. But what is the legacy of that now? What is the situation in Tate now for Black residents who still live there? What is their impression of living there?

Davis: Well, they're still living on the hoop. Well, I guess the Tate Estate now own land that people live. I think there's, like I said, only two homes left in Smokey Hollow. I guess they just know that they are able to live there, and they don't actually own it, but I think there's nothing ... they're able to do with it whatever they want. Maybe not build any more or do anything drastic. But I guess it's just like business as usual. It just hasn't really changed in the fact that they can live on this land, but they don't own it.

Interviewer: Do you know if they pay rent?

Davis: I'm not sure. I've always wondered that too. I've never, you know ...

Interviewer: So, let's talk about the 1950s because the company was at its height in the early 20th century. My impression from what I've seen, and I think in talks with Kelly, who's done a lot of the research, is that many Black residents migrated certainly out of Tate, but many out of the county as well. Why was that? And where did they go?

Davis: I think a lot of it's because the company was declining and I think I know that just because before the church at Mt. Calvary, we didn't have homecoming. I think that's the

time they started having homecoming because so many people had started moving. So, give them a chance to come back and see everybody and we're actually having that Sunday coming up. And I think it started maybe the late '40s, people started moving away. A lot of people move to like the Columbus area, Cincinnati, Ohio, and some people just moved as far away, as close by as Tennessee. And then several people moved to Atlanta. And I think it was just because the marble industry, they didn't have the support system they had when the company was at its height and maybe not the income and maybe they were looking for better opportunities, I think. Because I think, of course, they still had the school. Sometimes I don't know this to be a fact, but from when I talk to people, I feel like when the company, Georgia Marble Company, the Tate's had something to do with like the school. That they had a more active role and they actually put more into it than when the Pickens County schools took over. Because I think they cut like... I don't think they cut many teachers, but they didn't have many special programs. I don't think they had music anymore, just extra stuff like that. Of course, they had really good basketball teams from what I hear, but they built a new school to Head Start, but they didn't build the gym for this good basketball team to play in. And actually, I was talking with someone the other day, they said that they only went to the old school, Pickens County Training School, like maybe a year when they were first or second grade. And seems like it was so much bigger, like maybe four or five more classrooms, that it was two levels or maybe three. And it had a big auditorium and when they built Tri-City, which is now Tri-City at the Head Start, it was smaller. And she says, she remembers having like two, three grades in one room. She's like, it wasn't a big... there wasn't like overcrowded, but it just seems like the school was like smaller. They made it much smaller than the old school, no auditorium, and they didn't have a gym anyway. They didn't build a gym for them. But it was a new school, I think they just built it just because. I think it was maybe 54, 55, like... Talmadge, I don't know maybe which Talmadge would it have been. Herman Talmadge, could it be?

Interviewer: I know Eugene was dead in 48. So, I think it'd be Herman.

Davis: Yeah. That was when schools were trying to integrate and they actually-

Interviewer: Right. They would build new schools.

Davis: Yeah.

Interviewer: The equalization schools.

Davis: Yes. And so, to say, okay, they've got a new school, so they won't have a reason to say, oh, our school's not up to par. So, we don't really care if we would go to the white school or wherever.

Interviewer: So, they tore down the wooden school to build this newer school that was inadequate to meet the needs of the sports, academics. I mean the whole range of things.

Davis: Well, I think it met the very basic needs.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So, that was Tri-City. And so that was only in operation then for-

Davis: 10 years.

Interviewer: 10 years. Can you walk me through integration? What you know of that, how that played out.

Davis: Well, from what I know, that Ms. Lelia Brown was the principal. And I think the school board approached her about choosing some of the students she thought would do well. A couple of students that she thought would do well, like a year before they decided to fully integrate. So, I think she chose maybe five or six students. And then they were to send to Tate... Well actually, I think it was just in Jasper, the students from Jasper. So, they went to the Jasper Elementary and to Pickens High School. And then I think all the students in Jasper had to go to school up there and then eventually I think they moved everybody in by 67, 68.

Interviewer: Do you know any of those first kids that were selected?

Davis: Yes. Karen, I think she was in second or third grade. Karen McClure Benson, and then Sandra Collins is the one I worked for and that's one of Olin Collins' granddaughter. And then the grandson Michael Collins. I think she was in second or third grade and Michael, he was almost maybe 11th, 10th, or 11th grade. And then let's see who else. One of my neighbors, I think along elementary, Stephanie Pitts. There were several and I can't think of all of their names.

Interviewer: You've just named like six. I mean, that's incredible. I mean, what was the reception of them?

Davis: Well, they said there were little things caring. I always tell the story. She was our Sunday school teacher about remembering. A little boy was like, is your blood red or... Little things like that. And I don't think there was anything big. And I remember, I think it was Michael Collins. He was in Kathy Thompson's. She interviewed him and his mom, Emma Julia. And was just saying that it was just a pretty smooth transition, besides little things. There weren't students out in the hall and teachers out in the hall calling them names and throwing stuff. I think they said, they remember there was a police guard first day. When they got off the bus and then they went in and just went to class and said it was pretty normal. And then from there, I think after that there was full integration, but nothing big. And it was just a smooth transition, I think.

Interviewer: We've done some work in Marietta and the church there, the Zion Baptist church. There were members and a Reverend there, and the pastor there in the sixties who like, wrote a letter to the school board, and said, we would like to see integration and if not that better textbooks. Do you know of any efforts there in Tate prior to, on the side of the Black community to push for that? Or what were the feelings about... Were people wanting that or were they leery of that?

Davis: I've heard from both sides. Kind of heard a member of, when I was used to music director of Tate Methodist and one of the members, I think his name was, I can't remember his name, Brad White, that's his name. He was saying that he heard this, he was in school at the time, he was in high school. He heard that a lot of the Blacks said they didn't mind, they liked where they were and really didn't want to integrate. Didn't mind either way. And then on the Black side, I heard that they kind of would rather stay at their school anyway and finish. And just because they liked their environment, they liked the teachers and they felt like they were getting... they only knew about what they were getting there. They knew that they were getting hand-me-down textbooks, but they felt like that they liked their school, and they didn't really... they weren't adamantly opposed, but they were fine with, excuse me, going to Tri-City and not integrating. So, I don't think there were any efforts from our pastor. I think they just helped with the transition when it arose and our pastor at the time, he was there for like 20 years. And I think about it now, because of all the stuff going on with the Southern Baptist Convention. He actually worked in the Southern Baptist Convention. He left Mt. Calvary to be the director of Black relations for the Georgia Baptist Convention, which is an extension of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Interviewer: The director of what?

Davis: Black relations.

Interviewer: And what was his name?

Davis: His name was Edward Davie.

Interviewer: And you're saying he was pastoring in like the-

Davis: I think from 59 until like 81 or something like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Is he living?

Davis: No. He passed away from 80s or something.

Interviewer: The schools are always like the clearest example of where integration took place, but do you know of businesses allowing Black customers? Like when was that happening? Or maybe they allowed Black customers, but when was this sort of equal treatment enforced or seen?

Davis: Well, I'd always heard about-

Interviewer: When is it?

Davis: Well, I think pretty much, I've never heard anybody saying that they had to go in a different door or anything in the stores in Tate. So, I think it was kind of just understood. Like with the Tate, they talk about the Tate drug store that you didn't eat at the counter. I've never seen any pictures or heard anybody say that there were signs, colored here,

and that. I just think they were able to go in and get their food in Tate and maybe leave. Or maybe they had a spot formally, I'm not sure. But I've heard of examples in Jasper. Like with the theater, the door, I thought about it the other day we went to this restaurant called 61 Main. It used to be the theater and there's this little door, now I think it's like a hair salon. And I'm like, hmm, I bet that was the colored entrance to go up to the balcony for the theater. And I asked someone what it was, and then they said... And the hospital, it was right on the main street at the time. It was called Roper hospital ran by the Roper family. And mostly, maybe like there were three or four rooms blocked off in the basement. It didn't have a sign, but you know that's where women had babies. They would mostly be in that room, down in the basement, those set of rooms. And then, I guess the most vivid example I remember hearing about is this restaurant. It was called Champion's restaurant. It was in downtown Jasper. And they had a place where, I guess that was one of the bigger restaurants, you could eat in the kitchen. They had a little spot, two or three tables where you could eat in the kitchen, but you had to go in the back door to be served. But they said most people just went there and got their food and went home.

Interviewer: So, I know you were born in the late 80s. Do you remember any situations in which you faced racism?

Davis: Not that big, just little name calling back and forth. And the biggest thing I remember is there were these... I think they still make these.... ridiculous, Dixie Outfitters shirts. And I think that was a big thing. I think Cherokee had a rougher time with integration and stuff like that, the Pickens County. But during this time, I just remember one student wore one of the Dixie Outfitters shirts and it had Black people on the back picking cotton or something like that and there was a scuffle and that's the only thing I remember that's kind of being like a school-wide thing, people talking about it. But other than little name calling things and little scuffles about that, nothing really sticks out. Except, I take that back, now that they were talking about what's the prince? Which prince married-

Hoomes¹: Harry?

Davis: Harry? Did he marry Markle-

Interviewer: Meghan.

Davis: Meghan. They talk about skin color. I remember one of the students, she was a student leader in the band and for some reason they didn't have her for a day. And I, in my little eighth grade mind going to ninth grade, I was so excited. I missed the whole next week. But even though it was just one day I missed. And so, I was late, so I didn't get to know anybody. She was like, are you from here? You are darker than the rest of the Blacks around here. I'm like, what, are you from South Georgia? And I was like, no. I didn't think, and I was just like, oh. And then now that I think about it, I'm like, that was kind of bad. Kind of terrible.

¹ Kelly Hoomes

Interviewer: Yeah. Just out of the blue?

Davis: Out of the blue.

Interviewer: And you're in eighth grade at the time?

Davis: Well, I was in ninth grade.

Interviewer: Okay. So that was like 2001.

Davis: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Okay. Wow.

Davis: And then one more. I didn't talk to them. But they were sitting behind me, and they were talking about, I don't think it was Martin Luther King Day, but it was before Martin... It was something about Martin Luther King in our morning announcements. And one of these people, I thought they were my friends. They were like, the principal made a quote or said something about Martin Luther King, and somebody said, well, who cares about Martin Luther King? And the other kids were like, I guess Black people. I was like, oh, we do, and you should probably too. So just little things like that, nothing big. And I guess, things I've heard about race really didn't hit until I moved in college. And people were talking about different things that they had experienced. And I was like, oh, okay. I'm like, I'm from the little Pickens County. One of the only Black people in Pickens County. And we didn't have problems like this. And just seeing from both sides where there was an influx of Black students at Shorter college at the time. They had just started some new athletic programs and different programs and it drew a more diverse population. And it was just like, kind of a them... No, it wasn't a really them versus us versus them, but you could just see some division. They were like, what? Music department, it was mostly girls, and they were mostly white. I was just sitting with people, I was supposed to sit with just the Black people, or they were like, well, why don't you hang out with us more often? They've done this and I've seen this and blah, blah, blah. Oh, and then saying, some of the white students that were kind of, you could tell that they were maybe prejudiced or maybe not necessarily racist and they would make little comments. I'm like, I'm not used to that.

Interviewer: Well, I mean, that's a question that's sort of lingered in my mind is the fact that it is a very small population of people of color, period, in Pickens. And do you know people say in... Or have family members or friends in Cobb County or in Fulton County where there's a larger population of people who aren't white, I mean, where it's a different experience or you've ever sort of thought about that or talked about that?

Davis: We've had some of that. And then I have family and some of the Blacks moved to Detroit and a lot of my family did. And they were just like, I'm going to come out of those woods, and they've come down and they would say, where are the Black people? I'm like, y'all moving away. But some of them, I guess, they're just not used to seeing so many whites at once or going where they're like, we go to school.... We're pretty much

cordial to each other. We go to each other's houses and things like that. And they were just like, that's just strange to us. And I'm like, okay.

Interviewer: Did you ever visit?

Davis: It seems like people mostly visited us.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, go ahead. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

Davis: Yeah. So, we never really... Everybody, I guess, they would come to see my great-grandmother. And so, we never really visited, like going to see people in Cobb, mostly in Atlanta. One of my uncles, great uncles lived in Atlanta. They would always come up here. We did go down there once, but it was just maybe once or twice, and we just played. But that was the biggest thing they noticed. Of course, the population difference. And they were just like, we're not used to that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Let me check my time to make sure we're not... oh, no, we're good. So, as we move towards the finish, I want to talk about the churches in the Smokey Hollow and learn a little bit about those. And then we'll finish up learning about your education and graduate education and career. Can you tell me about the churches in Smokey Hollow? Their history up to today and just sort of the general history.

Davis: Well, I'll start with what I know the least about, which is the Church of Smokey Hollow. I never knew the name before. I knew that they had a little sign out there when it was called, Miracle Fellowship Holiness Church, but I'd always heard it had been like say the Methodist Church or the Church at Smokey Hollow. And I didn't know they were all like the Tate Methodist and then the Church at Smokey Hollow and Mt. Calvary, were all kind of built at the same time. And in the histories and articles that they all kind of helped each other build the churches and that while there were fewer Methodists, Black Methodists in the Tate area, than they were Baptist. And so, I think of course that's how our church has kind of kept going for, since I think it was 1886/87 when those churches started being built and that they would go to church down there on the second Sunday and Mt. Calvary had church the third Sunday. And then they would travel to Jasper, to Friendship Church on first Sunday. And then the fourth Sunday, they would go to the church of Nelson, Pilgrim Baptist church. And I always hear the name, Reverend Curtis, that he was one of the pastors. He tried to keep the church going, but people started moving and he would come. I think they said he would have service a little later because I think he was the pastor... Actually, he was the pastor at the AME Church in Canton, like St. Paul AME. And so, he tried to keep the church going as long as he could. And then I don't think it was for as long as people say, like the 40s. Because I've talked to people that they might've been born in the 40s, but they remember actually going. It must've been in the 50s, going to church with Reverend Curtis having led to services down there and they would remember that. There'd been more people from other churches than the Methodist. And then when he stopped coming, that's when like the Holiness Pentecostals started coming in from Marietta to have service. And then there's an article, I think Kathy did it, or some Kathy Thompson or someone did it, about they interviewed sister, Mamie Moss. Pastor, Mamie Moss, she was the pastor down there, I guess it was in maybe the late 50s, early 60s. She had a vision. She said she had a vision

of a church with checkerboard windows. They used to have red checkerboard windows, red and white. And then she came up with a group of people that were having service in there. And she said, this is the church. And she started having services down there and got different people in the community to donate different things to help build like the pulpit and things like that. And people would go down there, and she had a kind of smaller congregation than the other churches, but they would have service more Pentecostal type. Holiness services and people from the different churches would visit down there. And so, I think that went on. I'm not quite sure when she... I think her husband passed away or something, so she moved. I'm not quite sure where she moved, maybe North Carolina or Texas. I don't know why it sticks out of my mind. But then maybe the early 2000s, she moved back to Pickens County and for several years she had service and maybe the people would go down and she'd have service. And she actually lived... she would come back because she knew my great-grandmother. I think she would go down there to service, and she'd come, and they'd talk, and she called her. Well, my grandma didn't go to the senior citizens center, but she did. And the lady I've mentioned earlier, Ms. Hazel Buck, they would go to the senior citizens center. And I, myself, I don't think I've ever been in the church. I think I've peaked in when I was down there at my grandma's. I went there and peaked in. And so that's as much as I know about Miracle Fellowship or Mt. Tabor, I believe that's what Ms. Weaver said, the name was Mt. Calvary. And then Mt. Tabor AME-

Interviewer: What's the condition now?

Davis: It's pretty bad. Pretty bad. Someone actually sent a picture, and it looks like the window was falling out. They're trying to get on the-

Interviewer: National registrar?

Davis: Yes, but like places in-

Interviewer: Peril-

Davis: Peril-

Interviewer: From Georgia Trust.

Davis: Yes, but then there's another one. Like they just go around taking pictures of rural churches. A lady emailed Kathy Thompson about it, and she sent the emails. Oh, I guess I didn't send that email to you. Huh? I thought I sent that. But anyway, it's in pretty bad shape. It's in bad shape. And then with Mt. Calvary, it was actually... I read; I think Ms. Weaver wrote this article. It was saying that the Tate family, they were all Methodists. That's why the Tate Methodist thing. They were so involved in Tate Methodist Church because Sam Tate's brother-in-law was a Methodist pastor. So, he built the church for him. And then he built Mt. Calvary for his chauffeur, well, no butler, his valet. His name was... I think the story goes, Sam Tate, he was never married. He was kind of a philander so to speak. And they said he got in a kind of, I don't know if it's bar room. I think it's a turned off scene, a fight with someone's, I think it was a husband of a lady, one of his

lady friends. And he sliced his neck and Mimi Jo pointed this out in something. Or maybe that interview that after that all of his pictures, he was wearing an ascot and he always had an ascot on or a scarf or something. And-

Interviewer: The other guy?

Davis: No, Sam Tate.

Interviewer: Sam Tate got his neck sliced?

Davis: Yes. And his valet, Jeff Strickland, which I think he's maybe a great-great-uncle of mine, I think. I believe if I read that right. And he was his valet, it said he was a big guy. He was maybe over six foot tall, and the guy said, the quarrel is not with you. So, he kind of moved him out of the way and that's when he slit Sam Tate's throat. But I think he was able to get him where he needed to, and he's credited with saving Sam Tate's life and so he was always very close with Sam Tate, so he built... Since he knew that he was Baptist he asked for a Baptist church to be built because I think most of them, they would all have... I think it was since Sam Tate their family was Methodist, the services were more Methodist and so they built... He asked for Mt. Calvary to be built a church for the Baptist and then they built the church for... There was probably some relations or something, I think I've heard the name, it was like Josh Tate or something and he was one of the leaders in the Methodist church, AME church and then Mt. Calvary I think roughly 1886 and goes on and we've had... The church was actually on the opposite side of the road near the railroad tracks coming up from in the hollow. And it was actually bombed or dynamited by the vigilantes, they don't necessarily say the Klan, but they say white cappers. I don't know if that's another name for the Klan and while Sam Tate was out of the country in Europe looking at new projects and I think it's documented, it said in Kathy Thompson articles that it's documented that in the... One of the constitution or the Atlanta journal that this happened, that the Black citizens of Tate were being terrorized by a group of vigilantes and like the early like maybe I think it was like maybe 1905 or somewhere in the early 1900s and so they dynamited some people, some of the houses, the worker's houses, and the church. And then there was a school right next to it, there was the church and then the school and then the new church, at the church we are at now, I think it was built maybe 1910 by one of the pastors that was a pastor for Mt. Calvary. I think he had been the pastor at friendship also, but he built the church and so in its present location and then from there just the church been... It was very active in the convention back then, I guess probably the National Baptist Convention. And I think it had some ties with the Southern Baptist Convention too but probably mostly the National Baptist Convention and the different the Baptist churches that have the association, the Black association actually it's called Kennesaw was called the Kennesaw Association. It's still called that the Kennesaw Baptist Association and our church would for many years was a part of that association, now we're kind of more independent and...

Interviewer: Why is that?

Davis: One of our pastors he didn't like some of the things that were going on with the convention, he felt like they weren't addressing social issues and were kind of

standoffish and we just kind of followed his lead because before him there wasn't anything going on. But then before the Reverend Davie, the one I Edward Dave he was heavily involved and they would go and participate in different convention activities and sending delegates and to the different meetings of the Kennesaw Association but after that kind of fell off and then they talked about getting into it again and the pastor at the time, Reverend Leland Jones he didn't really like being involved for us so we just followed his lead and didn't really... We still don't really participate with anything with the Kennesaw Association.

Interviewer: So, you talked about Miracle fellowship being more Pentecostal, what was a Calvary service?

Davis: Well, my great-grandmother, she was more... I guess more charismatic than a lot of people. I think at the time people... You think of people, especially in Black churches talking back to the preacher saying, Amen, she said, not at Mt. Calvary she said, she, she was like I was kind of disappointed. Well, she said, she would say, amen and everybody looking would say yeah, your grandma, yes, she's sure. She gave "am", I'm like, what's that? I asked she's like, yup I gave "am", all the time to the preacher. She said, I think the preachers were pretty charismatic but as far as the... They said some people... They wouldn't talk back to the preacher; they said a couple people would shout but it was more I think I've seen a program was just still happening so he could put it in the collection from like 1940 something. And the service was very formal with... I think a lot of that had to do since it was right there and most of the teachers attended church there. I think they helped to shape the service to be more formal and there was singing of the hymns and the doxology and the whatever the Gloria Patri and stuff like that, very formal I'm like if Tate... And now we kind of strayed from that, we still sing hymns whereas some churches like in Pilgrim they just had a great gospel choir, and our choir was more like more... I think they were more traditional and I think all of these churches back in the days when people of singing schools like I believe the people that would come and teach in Pickens county and North Cherokee were from Cartersville area and they'd have a singing school and I think that still had a lot of influence singing those shaped note songs, those old songs like that in four-part harmony whereas more other churches were moving toward gospel music and...

Interviewer: How do you think that's impacted the church and in recent times is it held back its growth? Has it... I mean, how often do you meet? What's going on with the church now?

Davis: Well, the church now we still meet, we meet twice a month now. So, it's weird because most churches is either the first and third or second and fourth that meet like that. Well, we're second and third and still that influence of the church at Smokey hollow were meeting on the second Sunday so none of our other three churches in our little community have church on second Sunday so we just... Each church started having services on the Sunday that they'd been designated, the third Sunday was ours and then second Sunday. So, second and third and we've kind of like in the early 2000s you see with the pictures that there were a lot of young people, and they were starting to see like... And we're starting to see and hear a lot of things that... Current stuff, current music, and current worship styles but it's still pretty much stayed still in line with the

order of service that we'd always had. And so, I think it was... I don't think it really... Some people that were... We started seeing other people from like Canton come in and Marietta they'd come to church up here. They didn't necessarily have any family ties. Well, they did have family ties so that's why they started coming to church. Some of them were like, oh, we don't like the style of worship and we need to move, it wasn't much of it but there was a little bit and I think it didn't have a huge bearing on our numbers now, but I think what... I think it's just what's had an impact on our numbers now is more... I don't know... Not necessarily our style of worship and style of doing things but I think it's just more people that have moved away and then some people... Church attendance is down anyway for even large churches.

Interviewer: How many people per the second and third Sunday?

Davis: Oh, my goodness, this Sunday because we had a baptism that was about maybe 30 people and on home... We'll probably have over a 100 or 150, used to have probably like more 200, 300 on a homecoming Sunday but on the second Sunday maybe 20, 30 people and then the third Sunday, our main Sunday we'd have maybe 50 to 75 but now it's probably like maybe 20 sometimes less, it's been less but even before the pandemic it was less the look outside, there's only like five people out there.

Interviewer: And what's the ratio of like local people to out-of-towners coming?

Davis: It's pretty equal now, it used to be a little more people from out of town that have moved like to Kennesaw down here and moved to Atlanta they would come back. They'd go to churches around here on the other two Sundays or other three Sundays and then they come on the third Sunday, so it used to be a more of a... There were more people coming from other places other than Pickens and locally.

Interviewer: I see. Well, to finish up let's talk about your high school and college. You graduated from Pickens County high school?

Davis: Yes.

Interviewer: And what year was that?

Davis: 2005.

Interviewer: And where did you go to college?

Davis: I went to Shorter college of 2005 excuse me until 2009 and I majored in music, I did piano pedagogy and that's going back to the church. One Sunday I said well, I guess it was a choir rehearsal, I said... Well, actually it was Mrs. Weaver she self-taught herself how to play piano, she played for all the youth activities and for the children. And so, she was like well, who's going to take over? She was probably 80 then you couldn't tell or 82 something like that and she's like, well, who's going to take over when I retire? I just... Well, why can't I? She was like, okay, we'll start you with piano lessons and so she calls Bill Cagle's wife and she's like, we have a student here who's going to take piano

and she's like... I was like I guess I can try it and I started, and they saw I was progressing, and I liked what I was doing, and I guess I had some musical talent. And so, I kept taking it then I took... She had to... I think Bill or somebody in the family had a work-related injury and so she didn't have anyone to keep their young children, they're like 20, 25 now and so she had stopped teaching private lessons for a while and so I started... Just took a little while off and then our church pianist who we've seen pictures of, she doesn't ever... I don't know why she got some great picture, she's very photogenic but she's not in any of our current pictures. She was our church pianist for the main Sunday, the third Sunday Mary Ann Roach her husband was Preston Roach and then there's three men and the three of them and then Karen's dad and she actually help get them kind of coached them along. But she taught me for a couple of years, and she was like well, I think he's about past me, she never... She was a person that took lessons and she played church in church, and she did really well but she didn't... She always felt like I'm not a professional musician and so she passed me along to the one teacher, she was really good. She moved on because of her husband passed away, Jan Moody and then I took before... During high school I took from a lady named Patti Adams and she started working on... I'd learned how to play hymns and certain music but working on music that it would take if I decided to major in music and so I did that and I was like well, I get to Shorter college maybe I'll major in music, so I took lessons and I took some new music classes that the other freshmen were taking and then I applied for entry into the music program. I'm like if I get in I'll major in music and if I don't I'll just maybe minor but I got in and so I did music education well, not music education, piano pedagogy and then I said, Hmm, I don't know what I could do with this, that teach piano at home and that doesn't really work unless you're an old lady with a husband that's a doctor or make's a lot of money and so I'm like I'm not... And so, I went to Reinhardt and got my music education courses and got music education degree and my certification from August 2009 to December 2010, did student teaching at Etowah high school in Woodstock and then I was a substitute teacher, seems like it was forever. It was only two or three years in Pickens County and in Cherokee county then I was hired to teach chorus and assist with the band at Lithia Springs high school and that was a real culture shock. Well, not really a culture shock just the kids were just... But anyway, so I taught there like I have a full year of credit, I only think about my retirement years for teaching there a full year because it was... I taught I was there until March and then I was like maybe I should look it up. Then I served for a while then I worked part time as a music teacher at the Murphy-Harpst children's home in Cedartown. And then I got a call, I don't even remember applying at a school in Savannah and they called me, would you like to interview Mr. Davis? I'm like for what? The music teacher, would you be our band and chorus teacher? So, I was like, okay, I'll come interview. So, I took a day off from the academy at Murphy-Harpst and I went down at... It's called Woodville Tompkins high school was technical and career high school and it was like their school where they used to send like they go to school like the regular high school and then come to Woodville for the vocational classes. But then they turned it back into a full high school where they had all the programs that they could attend there and so I started the band and chorus, and I did that for three years and then I guess now it's almost three years ago. I moved back to Jasper and got a job teaching elementary music at Cloverleaf elementary in Bartow County and during the time I was doing all the substituting and starting out I was getting a master's also, so I got my master's in music education at Reinhardt also.

Interviewer: Why did you choose, and did you seek to return to Pickens?

Davis: Well, I was thinking about it because while the school I was at in Savannah was very good for their school system. They have a really big school system, I think that's part of their issue instead of having like some places around you don't have the county then the city school system well, there was all one... There's 12 high schools and I just feel like it was just... They wanted the music program but they didn't give me the resources I needed to actually make it a viable part of the curriculum and so I was like, maybe I should look elsewhere and so it's kind of just again, fell in my lap and they were like we saw your application... Well, that was actually a music friend from Shorter, he had been in the Reserves and he was about 40 and he said his wife was a music teacher at the school I'm at before I got there and she was leaving to come...She was in Cobb, now I think she came back to Cobb before retirement and he was like your name just came across the principal's desk at Cloverleaf elementary, look for a call. I'm like, okay. So, she liked my reference's and she's like you've got really good references, and would you come up for an interview? So, I did, and I went to an interview and on the same day up in Chattooga County, Trion city schools and so I got the job at Cloverleaf and so I was like well, I guess I'll move back, I guess that's my sign, I need to move back north and so I did and so here I am now.

Interviewer: Do you envision yourself ever... I mean, would you be willing, or would you be open to moving from Pickens?

Davis: I've thought about it, I don't know if... I don't know... I feel like right now it's a good place to be, to live, one day I can maybe work for the school system I don't know. Just because with my job teaching music, music teacher gets in a spot unless they like it. If they really liked it, they stay there until they're done, 30 years, they're 30 years there and the other fewer positions. So, if I got an offer somewhere else not too far, I just don't want to go all the way to South Georgia again, but I'll think about it but I've... For right now, I think I would... Like my situation now leave Pickens County maybe commute maybe an hour because right now I was probably like 40 minutes but no more than an hour.

Interviewer: How is it different from the place you grew up Pickens County? Has it changed in any remarkable way? Of then like population growth and...

Davis: I would say it's changed a little bit in regards to of course population but I feel like it's a little more... I don't know, I can't think of a word... It's a little more less... Doesn't have the... I guess the home feeling, I guess anymore. I feel like it's kind of moving away where you know everyone, and I feel like the people that have come in they're not trying to... Of course, they want to be involved with their community, they don't really understand the dynamics in Pickens County how we didn't have like what's in... With race, we didn't have the problems just because our population was smaller. In my mind... I always in the back of my mind I'm like if we had a bigger population, I feel like it would have been different. I feel like they would have been like, oh, you know how things were done to keep people in control. I think more of that would have been done, of course none of that was ever really had to be done in Pickens County so I think it would have been different if we had a bigger population of Blacks in Pickens County.

Interviewer: And are you involved in local initiatives to save Black history?

Davis: I am... Yes, I'm currently on the... I guess the county has a board set aside for the restoration of the Tate Depot and so I've been asked to be on that board. So I'm on that board and I feel like they were saying from there the John Anderson who is the executive over that he's wanting to go from there to help restore the... Excuse me, the church in Smokey Hollow and helped put that on the historical registry and Mt. Calvary and so I think that's one small part of play just to help keep to help with making sure we get those things on the historical registry.

Interviewer: Are there any other stories or memories you'd like to share?

Davis: Let's see, not that I can think of right now.

Interviewer: Well, I appreciate it. This has been a great interview and I think we'll conclude there.