

**The Lemon Street Schools Oral History Collection
Marietta City Schools System, 2019-2021
Clara Bates Wingfield and Charles Wingfield Jr. Interview
Conducted by James Newberry
March 8, 2021**

Full Transcript

Interviewer: All right. This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Ms. Wingfield and Mr. Wingfield Jr. on Monday, March 8th, 2021 at their home in Powder Springs, Georgia. I just want to thank you all for joining me. Do you agree to this interview?

Wingfield: We do.

Wingfield Jr.: We do, yes.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. So, I think what we'll do is I'll ask the same questions to each of you and you can just answer one after the other. Mr. Wingfield, could you tell me your full name?

Wingfield Jr.: Charles Frank Wingfield.

Interviewer: All right.

Wingfield Jr.: But put Jr.

Interviewer: Mr. Wingfield, what's your birth date?

Wingfield Jr.: September 17th, 1945.

Interviewer: Where did you grow up?

Wingfield Jr.: I grew up in Marietta on Fort Hill Homes. I think it was 410 Robinson Court.

Interviewer: I knew there were separate courts. There was a Lee Court, Robinson Court.

Wingfield Jr.: Robinson Court was sort of in the center of the complex.

Interviewer: Okay.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ms. Wingfield, can you state your full name for me?

Wingfield: Clara May Foster Bates Wingfield.

Interviewer: Great. It's a mouthful. What's your birth date?

Wingfield: December 10th, 1946.

Interviewer: Where did you grow up?

Wingfield: I grew up in Marietta, Louisville. Wright Street and Greer Avenue, and the Wright Street Baptist Church was next door.

Interviewer: Wonderful. So, Mr. Wingfield, what were your parents' names?

Wingfield Jr.: My mother's name was Elzora Preston Holland. My father's name was Charles Wingfield Sr. Now, my mother married my father, they were divorced and then she remarried, my father remarried. Holland is my mother's maiden name, so that's pretty much my parents. My grandmother, Viola Evans, she lived on Lawrence Street. 618 Lawrence Street, I think it was. My dad lived in Page Street, and that was in the Baptist Town area at the time.

Interviewer: So, you were living with your mother then, at Fort Hill Homes?

Wingfield Jr.: I was, yes.

Interviewer: Did you have siblings? Brother, sister?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, it was six of us at the time. I had three brothers and four sisters. So, it was eight of us in all.

Interviewer: Wow. So, what did your parents do for a living?

Wingfield Jr.: My mom, at that time, she was working for a Mr. Noble. She was house cleaning. I think that was at Noble Cadillac, and she worked for those people. After that, she went with a restaurant called Davis Brothers. I think that was... What is that?

Wingfield: 41.

Wingfield Jr.: 41. Yeah. Highway 41. My dad worked at [Lindsey Gall] Furniture, but that's in Marietta in the square. And he worked at DuPre's, that's also on the square in Marietta at the time. I think he worked there for about 20, 25 years. He was there for as long as I can remember.

Interviewer: What did he do there?

Wingfield Jr.: He delivered furniture, and at DuPre's, he worked in package storage, and I think he did some house cleaning around the place. Mom, she did some cooking.

Interviewer: I see.

Wingfield Jr.: Yes. She worked in the kitchens. Also, she did some housekeeping too at Davis Brothers. But she knows the work in the kitchen, she did salads and fixed breads, things like that.

Interviewer: Wonderful. So, Ms. Wingfield. You grew up in Louisville. Can you tell me your parents' names and what they did for a living?

Wingfield: Sure. My father was Walker Foster. My mom's name is Pearly Mae Martin Foster. She worked for... What was their name? The Nunns, I believe. My father did construction work. She had some other people she worked for too. Not Clockwelders. I can't think of the name. I see the house on Powder Springs Street, but I can't think of...

Wingfield Jr.: This is in Powder Springs?

Wingfield: It on Powder Springs Street, just off Chestnut Hill Road, because we lived on Chestnut Hill Road later when urban renewal came through Marietta, Wright Street. We had to move, and we moved to Chestnut Hill. I'm trying to think of those people. I can see their... but I can't think of their name.

Interviewer: When you mentioned having to move, what do you mean? What happened in that situation?

Wingfield: Well, I may have been 11, 12, not over 13. Urban renewal back then would come through and deem this property of the area, I would say not up to par. They wanted to come in with roads and new houses, because my house at 618 Wright Street with just a red dirt road, and the side road was a dirt road. So, they came in, in other words, to renovate remodel, tear down and rebuild, just as they've done on Powder Springs Road in front of Marietta golf course. That type thing.

Interviewer: So, did your parents own the house that was-

Wingfield: My mom did, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So then after that, did she buy off Chestnut Hill?

Wingfield: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Let's talk about your apartment at Fort Hill Homes. Can you describe the layout? How big it was?

Wingfield Jr.: Wow. The apartment, it was in the center of the complex. The rooms, when you went into the apartment, you entered into the living room area. It was maybe about 14 by 15, something like that. Small. It was an opening that led from that living area to the kitchen dining area. To me, it was a little bit larger, maybe about 20 by 15, something like that.

The kitchen dining area at the time, we had maybe a stove, we had a little small stove there. Didn't have a washing machine, we had a little sink and we had a little old table there to the side, where we pretty much ate, and a closet, a little small closet where we stored our food. It was a little hallway, I'd say maybe about 15 feet by four feet, and it led back to the bedroom area. It was one bath, small bathroom, eight by eight or something like that. Maybe not that big. Then it had three bedrooms, they were probably about 12 by 14, something. They were small, had three of those. I never will forget; it was a big heater. That's the only source of heat that we had in the apartment, and it was in the living room area once you come into the apartment. It was a big black stove, gas. A gas oven, and that thing was maybe about three feet high and three feet wide, and it would have to heat the whole area.

Interviewer: Right. The bedrooms too?

Wingfield Jr.: The bedrooms too.

Interviewer: You kept your doors open in the winter, right?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. They had to be.

Interviewer: Yeah. To catch the heat.

Wingfield Jr.: That was the only source. Now, we could use the stove. The little stove would furnish a little heat there, but the big stove that was in the living room area was the main source of heat for the whole apartment, and it really did get cold. Didn't have any closets, so they had had a big... I'm not going to say big, but a little storage area there in the apartment, where everybody pretty much put their clothes in there as best you can.

Interviewer: I've heard many things about Fort Hill Homes that there were those in the community who considered it middle-class at the time.

Wingfield Jr.: Well, at the time, I guess you could say that.

Interviewer: Why do you think that people say that?

Wingfield Jr.: Well thinking about when we came up during those days, making do with what you had you, you appreciated it. You didn't think you were deprived of anything, there was just so many of us in the complex, we just enjoyed being with each other. It was like living in a bubble to me. You just enjoyed the people that was around you, and you just didn't really think about if you was being poor or elite area. But you just felt comfortable and everything was pretty much, in my words, was there that you wanted to do, that you needed. We had a little convenience store right there in walking distance. What was the name of that store? Ms. Candace. Ms. Candace. They had another little store right at the street called Mr. Marlin's. Little convenience stores there for all the cans and maybe little meats and stuff you might need.

Interviewer: Were those both Black owned or Black run?

Wingfield Jr.: Ms. Candace. Ms. Candace was a Black-owned store. Mr. Marlin was a white guy. Of course, his was better, but like I said, they were convenient, within walking distance. If we wanted to go to a movie or maybe go up on Lawrence Street, that's where we would go up at churches. Of course, Cole Street Baptist Church was there, Lemon Street. What was the name of the street coming down Lemon Street? You've got the church there, but it was right there, convenient for the Fort Hill complex.

Interviewer: What church did you attend?

Wingfield Jr.: I attended Cole Street. Cole Street Baptist Church.

Interviewer: And your family?

Wingfield: Wright Street was right next door to our house. Just the road in between.

Interviewer: So, you just walked?

Wingfield: We went to church all the time.

Interviewer: What were the weekly events at church beyond Sunday service?

Wingfield: Sunday school was every Sunday. And then periodically, there was revival, where out-of-town ministers would come. Then you would have your church meetings once a month, we called it church conference, which of course, kids didn't go to that. Then Mr... What was this man named? That taught us activities. He would come to Wright Street there was a schoolteacher. See, I forget names so quick. I think he came to you all's area. He may have-

Wingfield Jr.: Well, Mr. Adams, he used to work with the community.

Wingfield: No. But he would come to the church yard and teach us baseball. We did word games, tennis. I'll think of his name in a minute.

Wingfield Jr.: Mr. Walker. Mr. Walker, he lived up on-

Wingfield: No, it wasn't Mr. Walker. This was the short teacher. I may get the yearbook and see if I can find his name.

Interviewer: You mentioned Mr. Adams. Are you speaking about Aaron Adams?

Wingfield Jr.: Aaron Adams. Yes. Mr. Adams, and I mentioned Mr. Walker also. He was the first Black person that I know of that built a house from the ground up, and he stayed on Fort Street. I just admired him so much. We lived in apartments; we didn't know about

building a house from the ground up. We saw that going on and think, "He must be rich. He's got enough money to build a house from the ground up."

Interviewer: What was his first name, do you know?

Wingfield: Aaron Adams.

Interviewer: Walker?

Wingfield Jr.: Walker.

Interviewer: Not Lewis Walker?

Wingfield Jr.: I can't think. I just called him Mr. Walker because he put together our ball team. We had a little ball team called the Bears, and he would put together a group of guys for Boy Scouts. He just pretty much was the go-to guy when you wanted to get some type of extra activities for the young people. I can't think his first name at the time, but like I said, all I called him was Mr. Walker.

Wingfield: I'm wondering if we're thinking about the same man. I'm going to get the book and find his name.

Interviewer: Well, the man you mentioned, was it through the church that he was doing this, or was it just an informal community type deal?

Wingfield: I believe he just did it for the community. I believe he was a schoolteacher back then too. His wife still lives on Lemon Street. It'll come to me. But the people my mom worked for were the Marlows, who owned several businesses in Cobb County. He had a tire company, Marlow's Car Tires, and my mom worked for him. Also, I had an uncle that worked for him, and I used to babysit for her. That was probably my first job. But what they did was allowed my mother to work, and then they purchased the little shotgun house that we lived in, in Wright Street, because you could stand on the porch and look straight through and see the back, which was very small.

Interviewer: You mean on the shotgun house?

Wingfield: The shotguns, very small.

Interviewer: So, the Marlow family purchased the house?

Wingfield: Yes. And my mom paid them back by working for them, cleaning, cooking, babysitting, and then sometimes she would take us to their house, and they lived on Powder Springs Road. You know where the Dollar Tree is now?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield: They had this long brick house, probably I would say a skip and a hop from the Dollar Tree, and I used to babysit for them.

Interviewer: When you went to their house, can you tell me where did you go in? What was your interactions with them?

Wingfield: Well, you would turn into Chestnut Hill Road, and then there was a driveway that was just recently demolished, I'd say maybe within the past 10 years. Their driveway turned off of Chestnut Hill, and you'd go down the hill, and the house was there. But I was thinking, smiling, when Charles was talking about his apartment. Our house had no bathroom. Our bathroom was out the back, out the kitchen door. We'd have to go out there and clean it periodically. We didn't call it latrine. You go out going to toilet.

Wingfield Jr.: Outhouse.

Wingfield: Outhouse, that's the word we used. You had pots in the house that you used, and then the next morning you'd take that pot to the outhouse.

Interviewer: Like a chamber pot, under the bed or something?

Wingfield: Yeah. Under the bed or over wherever, covered up. My sister, Pearl and I slept in a double bed. My mom had a single bed in the same bedroom. Across the hall, my grandmom had her bedroom. My brother had a bedroom back to where the kitchen was. So that was one, two, three, four rooms and no bathroom.

Interviewer: I think that's what people pointed to when they talked about the middle-class lifestyle at Fort Hill Homes is there were bathrooms indoors, and many private homeowners did not have them, if they had maybe a shotgun house or something. So, going back, your mother worked, cleaning homes as a domestic worker, and your mother did. Was that your interaction with white people, or did you have other places where you would see white people and talk to white people?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, for the main, that was the only source.

Wingfield: That was the interaction.

Wingfield Jr.: Now, when we to a movie, we would occasionally bump into white people there, but Black too. If you know the area where Lemon Street School used to be at one time, it's a branch that runs behind that school, and on that other side of the branch was white neighborhood. I can't think what it was called.

Interviewer: You mean behind the elementary school or behind the former high school?

Wingfield Jr.: Former high school.

Interviewer: Okay.

Wingfield Jr.: It was a branch behind that, and on the other side of that branch, it was a white neighborhood. But saying that to say this, we would play in that branch. We would occasionally see a lot of the kids from the white neighborhood playing in the branch also. That way, we would get to know one another. We didn't do a lot of fighting because we were out running through the branch, trying to catch fish, frogs and whatever. But we would run across those same kids in the white neighborhood at the movies. Even though we sat in different areas, we would see them, as we came out of the movies, we would walk back to our individual neighborhoods together, and that was pretty much the only time that I had mingling with white people.

Interviewer: In the theater, it was the balcony for-

Wingfield: We call it the nosebleed section.

Wingfield Jr.: Where we sat, we were up high. It wasn't really that big, but we was up and there was a big...

Wingfield: Banister.

Wingfield Jr.: A banister.

Wingfield: Separating whites and Blacks.

Wingfield Jr.: The whites from the Blacks.

Wingfield: And we came in the side door, which was marked, "Color."

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: We never got to go in the front-

Wingfield Jr.: The front. Yeah.

Wingfield: ... until the integration, I guess.

Wingfield Jr.: That's still there. That little door is still there.

Wingfield: Yeah. The side door is still there.

Wingfield Jr.: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: So, the same thing too, like when you went to your mother's employer's house, did you enter through a front door or back door? How did you...

Wingfield: I remember going in probably the side because they had horses. I never forget, I may have been maybe five years old, six years, very young. My mom took me to their house, and I remember being lifted and put on a horse, and the horse turned around to look at me, and I remember just screaming. I had never seen a real horse that moves, I mean. Then another thing, they were always very nice to us and mom always would bring home clothes, hand-me-down that looked like somebody put it on, wore it once, washed it, and then, "Pearl, you take this," and she would always bring nice things from the Marlow's. Like I said, the Marlow. I think the ones in Marietta would named Nunns, N-U-N-N-S. I believe that with their name. But Charles speaking of being happy, we were happy because we had love, we had food. We had beans, we had cornbread, we had greens and chicken. One thing that my grandma did, living with us, she had chickens and she had a coop on the side of the house, which was where her bedroom was, and when it was time for chicken, she would get a chicken and wring the chicken's neck, and then they'd, oh, just frailing all in the yard. And then the next morning, Mama was like, "Come on, Clara, you and Willie. I got breakfast ready. I got your chicken." I could not eat that chicken. I could not eat it. There is a difference. You know that fresh smell?

Interviewer: Mmm.

Wingfield: And I've seen that chicken slaughtered. I can't eat it. And then my dad was a hunter. A lot of times he would come home at night with rabbits and squirrels. Make us get up out of bed, hold these animals while he skinned them. Then my mom the next morning, "Come on and get your chicken," And I'm saying, "Now, I know that's not chicken. That's a rabbit." I could not eat that. I was so skinny, James. I just didn't eat a lot of stuff if something had a funny smell in that fresh stuff that my dad would hunt for. I was so skinny, and my mom would buy Weight On. You ever heard of Weight On pills? These big pills were about this color. So, I would have to take those to gain weight. But we were happy. We ran, we played. We were warm. We had clothes. And we were just happy. I mean ...

Interviewer: Where did you shop for things like clothes or groceries?

Wingfield: Oh-

Wingfield Jr.: Well, for me, for the groceries, the biggest grocery store was called A&P. It was on the-

Wingfield: On the square.

Wingfield Jr.: It was on the square.

Wingfield: Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield Jr.: And for clothes, we would go out on the square, so it was a store called Lieters.

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield Jr.: Lieters is a Jewish guy. We would get that. And what's this shoe store? Coggins.

Wingfield: Coggins. That's where we got ... Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Coggins Shoe Store. And Joanne's.

Wingfield: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Joann's, on the square. And what is that called? It's just a little hardware store that we used to mess around with. What's the name of that? It's a restaurant now called what? [crosstalk 00:30:47].

Wingfield: Dupree.

Wingfield Jr.: Not Dupree. No, it was up, there's a little ways down from the Strand Theater. We ate there one day. Ate hamburgers in there.

Wingfield: I don't remember. It's down from the Strand.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: Going toward the church, Marietta Baptist Church, or going the other way?

Wingfield Jr.: Nah. Going the other way. Yeah. Yeah. It's ...

Interviewer: I only know the ones on the opposite side, like that Taqueria Tsunami or whatever it is today.

Wingfield Jr.: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Could you enter those stores? Go all through them when you were children?

Wingfield: Well, yes, you could. Periodically, Mama would shop, like, now, Easter and Christmas. She would buy us the pretty frilly dresses. I guess she saved to do that. And you could enter. Blacks were not restricted entering because you're going to buy. But, now, another thing is going ... Let's say I want a hamburger. You go into the drug store, and I believe it was Dunaway Drug Store.

Wingfield Jr.: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield: And there was another one on the other side. You enter, you stand at the counter. You place your order with the waitress, and you stand there and wait. You could not be seated on the stools.

Wingfield Jr.: Stools.

Wingfield: I remember when integration was passed. I remember going to the square, sitting on the stool, ordering what I wanted to eat. It was just a feeling that's kind of hard to describe. I think about it now, and it's so funny. And when I talk to kids about it, they like, "You mean you couldn't go in and sit?"

Wingfield Jr.: mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield: "Order and sit and eat?" No, we couldn't. It's kind of hard for them to understand it.

Wingfield Jr.: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield: But that's the way it was.

Interviewer: Did your families, did you, as children ever travel out of Marietta? Go to Atlanta? Go to other places in the state or beyond?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, for me, we went to Chattanooga. Chattanooga, to Lookout Mountain. But that was the farthest that we traveled anywhere, really. We went to, well, we loved to go to Allatoona Lake. That lake [inaudible 00:33:42] east of here.

Wingfield: Oh, yeah. That wasn't the place to go to.

Wingfield Jr.: ... a Black area.

Wingfield: When you're a teenager.

Interviewer: Carver Park, Carver Beach?

Wingfield: No.

Wingfield Jr.: Carver Beach, no. No, that ...

Wingfield: Well, now that's the proper name I believe, but we just called it "We're going to the beach."

Wingfield Jr.: [crosstalk 00:33:57] to the beach.

Wingfield: We didn't use the proper names.

Wingfield Jr.: The proper name.

Interviewer: And it's the only one, right?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Right.

Wingfield: Yeah. Yeah. It's still there. The farthest I went was probably Rome, Georgia because we had family in Rome. And Atlanta, I remember getting in the car, driving to Atlanta, and my mom, they would say, "Oh, we're going to the ... " What did they call it, Charles? Because Cobb County was dry. You could not have liquor.

Wingfield Jr.: Going to the river.

Wingfield: Going to the river.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Going to the river.

Wingfield: Mama said, "Get in the car. We're going to the river."

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: And I remember looking over, you could see all that water. But that was an adventure for kids to get in the car and just ride.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Wingfield: But that's what they called it: We going to the river.

Wingfield Jr.: I drove my dad down there plenty of times.

Interviewer: Just to go right over and make a purchase?

Wingfield Jr.: Make a purchase.

Wingfield: Yeah. Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Get back on the ...

Interviewer: You did.

Wingfield: And you better not get caught. I'm so glad our parents never got caught with liquor in the car because Cobb County was dry. You're not supposed to have a liquor bottle in Cobb County.

Interviewer: Period.

Wingfield: Period.

Wingfield Jr.: Period. Yeah.

Wingfield: I don't know if anybody ever told you this story, but there was the family at Charlie Hunter's. Has anybody talked about Charlie Hunter's restaurant?

Interviewer: I know that name. Yeah.

Wingfield: Because we lived in Lewisville most of the time, but a few times we moved to Baptist Town. And this guy ... It's been so long ago, and I'm glad I can't remember his name. But he lived across the street from Charlie Hunter's in a nice, big, pretty brick house. To me being young, brick, I mean, it really meant they had money or something. I understand he disappeared, which to us was so frightening. They never could find that ... was its Kilgore, Kil-something?

Wingfield Jr.: Something.

Wingfield: And the word was that he was working for maybe the police or somebody bringing the alcohol in for them to sell and something went wrong. I don't think they ever found that man. Never.

Wingfield Jr.: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Well, Charlie Hunter's, they ... Has anybody spoke about Charlie Hunter. That was the only Black restaurant in the area that you could really go and have a fairly good time. You can sit at the ...

Wingfield: Yeah, you could order a burger and sit because he owned it and he was Black.

Wingfield Jr.: Old greasy hamburger.

Wingfield: But then March Street. Remember? There was a beautician.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yeah.

Wingfield: There was a Black doctor. I can't remember his name.

Interviewer: Weddington?

Wingfield Jr.: Wellington. That's right. Yeah, Wellington.

Wingfield: Weddington. And then Cole Street Church was on the left because we walked from Lemon Street School a lot of time going home to Wright Street or Lewisville. And we sat on the steps and played a while. When we'd continue our journey to get home. But there was several other Black businesses on the left and on the right. But then the Black businesses would end where the courthouse is.

Interviewer: Right?

Wingfield: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Pool halls was up there, where they did a lot of gambling. Have barbershops up there. Yeah, but what else was up there?

Interviewer: The taxi stand? Taxi stand?

Wingfield Jr.: Taxi stand. Yeah, East Side. East Side Cab. Yeah.

Wingfield: Oh, yeah. East Side Cabs.

Interviewer: Was that Richard Roberts? Richard Robbins?

Wingfield: See, what is his name?

Wingfield Jr.: I have no idea.

Interviewer: Hadley Company Funeral Home.

Wingfield Jr.: Hadley. Yeah.

Wingfield: That's right. Hadley Shelton, and one-

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. It was one in Baptist Town too.

Wingfield: They moved to Baptist Town across from the cemetery. I think that's the Confederate cemetery.

Wingfield Jr.: Nah. This one here. Okay. What was the name? Effinger.

Interviewer: Oh, Effinger.

Wingfield Jr.: Effinger.

Interviewer: Bradley Effinger, yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: That Effinger, yeah. Now they was in that-

Wingfield: Well, see Bradley Effinger and Hadley went in together, weren't they?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yeah.

Wingfield: And then they separated.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: One bought the other one out or something.

Interviewer: And Effinger's still in ...

Wingfield: Cartersville.

Wingfield Jr.: Carterville.

Interviewer: Okay.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. They moved to Cartersville.

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Okay.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, I had a question about, if you went down to Atlanta did anything strike you about that? Was it different than being in Marietta, the social situation?

Wingfield: Oh, yes. Yes.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:38:53].

Wingfield: My aunt lived in Atlanta on Johns Avenue, and I was very young, but my sister and I would go. She'd come and get us, and we'd spend the weekend with her. I remember the trolley cars I'd never seen, with the wires and when the car moved, then all of this moved. And I'd never seen that. All the lights.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. The tall buildings.

Wingfield: Because Marietta didn't have that. And of course, Lewisville didn't have any streetlight. Did Baptist Town have streetlights?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. They had a streetlight.

Wingfield: Did they?

Wingfield Jr.: But not on every street. Like on the corners they had a streetlight, yeah.

Wingfield: Huh. And see, that was to me, now, when Mama would move to Baptist Town, to me, now, that was upscale living. There's a bathroom, the heat kicks on. And there were two bedrooms upstairs. There was the living room, a kitchen and a little hallway, but ... And then there was a skating, it was a place where the kids could skate, which we couldn't

do in Lewisville because we had red dirt. You couldn't skate. So, I almost learned to skate staying in Baptist Town.

Wingfield Jr.: Now, you talking about the spray pool, we called it. On Fort Hill Homes, it was a big old concrete pit. It was-

Wingfield: Well, see, I was in Baptist Town, and we didn't have a spray pool. We skated.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you about that because it was sort of between the housing and the school. Right?

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We come-

Interviewer: I mean, several people have mentioned the spray pool.

Wingfield Jr.: Spray pool. It was a fountain, really, but it never seemed to work.

Wingfield: Well, they had water.

Wingfield Jr.: It never worked, but we started skating.

Wingfield: Well, I had to skate on the sidewalk.

Wingfield Jr.: Well, we skate on the sidewalk, rode bicycles, whatever we could do. We made use of it.

Interviewer: Well, so you said you're born in '45, so you would've started school around '51, '52?

Wingfield Jr.: '51, yeah.

Interviewer: So, the elementary school was brand new.

Wingfield Jr.: It was. It was brand new, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you go to the other one before it?

Wingfield Jr.: Did I go to that? I started off on the, I think the old one. I was starting off in the wooden-

Interviewer: The wooden building?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, there was a, yeah.

Wingfield: The wooden building.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, it wasn't Lemon Street then. It was called Tray, with a T ...

Wingfield: I can't help you with that. I never saw that one-

Wingfield Jr.: It had another name before Lemon Street, I think it was ... I forget.

Interviewer: Oh, well, I know that Woods Drive, it was Shepherd Street, and that's sort of at the end of Lemon where it curls around.

Wingfield: Yeah. Uh-huh (affirmative).

Interviewer: Professor Wood's house.

Wingfield: Well, see, you started in '52. I started in '52 with Ms. Patterson, because I have our pictures somewhere, but I can't find. Because you said your mom.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, she was in the old, where it started at.

Wingfield: Your mom told your teacher to not let you go to the second grade.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: So that's why you were in the first grade with me.

Wingfield Jr.: First grade. Me. Yeah. Okay.

Wingfield: With Ms. Patterson.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. And Ms. Patterson was in the newer part, wasn't she?

Wingfield: Yeah, I never saw anything. Oh, and I-

Wingfield Jr.: Well, I-

Wingfield: ... I remember the first grade because being torn away from my grandmom, and I'm told, "You're going to school." I remember sitting in that class just crying.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: And I was five years old. That was so traumatic.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. It was tough on me to get started to school. I didn't want to go. And I-

Interviewer: Why did your mom tell the teacher to hold you?

Wingfield Jr.: Because I was sort of like a mama's boy. I didn't want to leave my mom. I just, and school was just a whole new, different ... It was a different world to me. I just, it took me a time to ...

Interviewer: You wanted to be with your mom, and I wanted my grandmom.

Wingfield Jr.: For me to get adapted to that. It just took a while.

Wingfield: Because I sat and looked at all the kids and I wondered what am I doing. I'm crying and I'm crying.

Interviewer: "I don't belong here."

Wingfield Jr.: [crosstalk 00:43:41] Yeah.

Wingfield: I remember that at five years old.

Interviewer: Those feelings stick with you.

Wingfield: Yes.

Interviewer: Like the childhood impressions.

Wingfield: Oh, yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, so Ms. Patterson in the brick school, the new one, was she the first door on the right if you come in from sort of at the end?

Wingfield: Yes.

Interviewer: Not the front door.

Wingfield: As you come down the steps. The annex was in the back where we went to the sixth grade.

Interviewer: Right.

Wingfield: It started from the sixth through whatever, 11th. And then we came over. No. Or the sixth through the eighth, maybe, because then we went over to the high school.

Wingfield Jr.: High school. Yeah. That was from the ninth, wasn't it? Or the eighth?

Wingfield: Maybe it was the ninth through the 12th, high school.

Wingfield Jr.: Ninth through 12th. Yeah. Yeah.

Wingfield: Well, we can look at the book and verify it.

Wingfield Jr.: But Lemon Street, it was a name for that old school. That old school.

Interviewer: There was Perkinson.

Wingfield Jr.: Perkinson!

Interviewer: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: That's it! Perkinson. That's it.

Interviewer: Perkinson High.

Wingfield Jr.: Perkinson High.

Interviewer: Yeah. And it was only Perkinson for maybe five or six years.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yeah. That's it.

Interviewer: Named for the one of the school board members. And then they changed it to Lemon Street, in like '48.

Wingfield Jr.: Okay. Yeah, that was it. That's where my mom went to school, at that Perkinson High. Yeah.

Interviewer: But did both your parents attend the schools there on Lemon Street?

Wingfield Jr.: My mom did. My dad, he didn't. Dad, he didn't. I'm trying to think. Did he go to ... I don't think he even went to Lemon Street in Cobb County.

Interviewer: Were they-

Wingfield Jr.: My dad came from St. Louis. He came from up there and he got down here. From what I understand, he pretty much just worked. Working, I don't even know if he ...

Interviewer: What age did he come down from St. Louis?

Wingfield Jr.: He maybe, probably be about 19, 18.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Oh, wow.

Wingfield: That's Cole Street. Charles is in there.

Interviewer: This is the church?

Wingfield: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Interviewer: Oh, the boys and girls.

Wingfield: His mom is in there. And my previous husband is in there too.

Interviewer: I'll have to scan that one as well. I mean, I figure you walked to school.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. I did.

Interviewer: And how did you get to school?

Wingfield: I think my mom or somebody in the family would take us to school because I never rode a bus. And then my uncle, Howard Zachery, who always had a car. I always remember him having a long car, so he would take us. I can't really remember who would pick us up, but at a certain age, we walked from the school through the square to get home at Wright Street until my cousin got a car. And then of course we were able to just get in that car and ride.

Interviewer: How long of a walk was that?

Wingfield: Well, it's hard for me to estimate mileage. What is that?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, it's probably, oh, I bet it-

Wingfield: Seven or eight miles.

Wingfield Jr.: I'd say maybe about 10.

Wingfield: 10 miles.

Wingfield Jr.: About 10 miles. It was a good little hike.

Interviewer: Not every day.

Wingfield Jr.: Not every day.

Wingfield: Most of the time, unless we had a ride. Unless somebody in the family came to pick us up. But it was joyous. But let me tell you what happened, James. On the corner was the First National Bank of Cobb County, and they always had the drawers out with papers, bank deposits and whatever. I don't know what possessed us kids one day. We took all of these papers out, bank deposits and whatever, and made a mess on the square. We thought we were going to jail. I remember my mom saying, "Don't ever touch anything

on the square. Don't ever touch any papers anymore." But being kids, we just, oh, we made a mess. So that's like the gifts that was traumatic. Oh, my goodness.

Interviewer: That's [crosstalk 00:48:28]. Well, in the facility there, the Lemon Street Elementary, do you remember some of the teachers, the administrator? Just talk some names, personalities.

Wingfield: Okay. My favorite teacher was ... Excuse me. I want to get the book. I want to make sure I didn't get my ... Mr.-

Wingfield Jr.: Mr. Scott. He's first teacher that comes to my mind.

Wingfield: Louis Scott.

Interviewer: Louis Scott.

Wingfield Jr.: Louis Scott.

Interviewer: He's still living?

Wingfield: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Yes. Yes, he is. Yeah, he's always just so friendly to everybody. I mean, he had the type personality you just ... I mean, you just get accustomed to. I mean, you get comfortable with just being around him, even though he tried to be more strict with us but it just didn't work.

Wingfield: He was fine. He was fine.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, he's just, I ain't going to say funny, but he ...

Wingfield: And everybody was Miss or Mister. We were all Miss or Mister.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: You mean he would call you that?

Wingfield: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Or Miss, Mister. [crosstalk 00:49:51].

Wingfield: "Miss Foster, have a seat. Sit down," and then he would add something to it. Yeah, he's still living.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Wingfield: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: But my favorite teacher was, he taught social studies. I don't know why he's not in here.

Wingfield Jr.: Williams?

Wingfield: Mr. Williams? His office was next to Mr. Ruff's office.

Wingfield Jr.: Office. As you went into the high school, his room was to the left.

Wingfield: To the left.

Wingfield Jr.: Is to to left.

Wingfield: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Interviewer: So that's the principal's office.

Wingfield: Yeah. The principal's office.

Wingfield Jr.: Well, the principal office was at the left, but Mr. Williams' room was like a little further down the hall on the left. So he was, but at another room there too.

Wingfield: This yearbook.

Wingfield Jr.: Ms. Carter. Ms. Carter's room was over there.

Wingfield: Her classroom.

Wingfield Jr.: Her classroom's on the left.

Interviewer: Is that Frances or Juanita Carter?

Wingfield Jr.: Frances.

Wingfield: Juanita.

Wingfield Jr.: Juanita. Juanita Carter. Yeah. Had Juanita ...

Wingfield: But he given me a good citizenship award, and I think one of my children. That, to me, it was so precious. It meant so much to know I'm a good citizen. I got a gold badge with the red, white, and blue. This yearbook.

Interviewer: Which year is that?

Wingfield: That's '64. But I don't know where my book is, and I've been trying to find '63. We moved, and it might be still ...

Wingfield Jr.: There's this guy. Now, Ms. Fred. Ms. Fred was like a home teacher, so when we'd get to school in the morning, that was her. Her room was to the right as we entered the building. And that's where our day would start off pretty much in her class.

And with Miss, was a T, Ms. ... Teacher's name ... Let's see. Let me see about this. Oh, boy. The teacher may be ... Oh, I'm missing some pictures. I lost some pictures in my book. Clara, what was our English teacher's name? Light, skinny lady lived up on the hill.

Wingfield: I think about her all the time. She was rough too. Ms. Dyer.

Wingfield Jr.: Ms. Dyer.

Wingfield: Dyer.

Wingfield Jr.: Dyer. That's it. Ms. Dyer.

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: What do you mean rough?

Wingfield: Mean.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, she was tough.

Wingfield: You couldn't play in her room.

Wingfield Jr.: Just Ms. Dyer.

Wingfield: I mean, it was strictly class. No talking get your work done.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: What were the outside activities, like sports and the band. Were y'all involved in any?

Wingfield: Yes. I played the flute. I was in the marching band, the concert band. And those are our instruments in the piano room.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Wingfield: And Charles was in the marching band and the-

Wingfield Jr.: Concert band.

Wingfield: Concert band.

Interviewer: What did you play?

Wingfield Jr.: Baritone. A baritone bass horn.

Wingfield: And what was the other one?

Wingfield Jr.: I played the trombone.

Wingfield: Trombone.

Interviewer: Who was the director when you were there?

Wingfield Jr.: Stoops. Leo Stoops.

Wingfield: And do you know I found my grade cards from Mr. Stub. I found them this morning going through another.

Wingfield Jr.: Oh, wow.

Interviewer: I need [inaudible 00:54:23].

Wingfield: Oh, A student. I was an Honor Society. I loved algebra. I loved mathematics.

Wingfield Jr.: Oh, that wasn't [crosstalk 00:54:34].

Wingfield: But when it came to geometry, I could never ... I mean, because I couldn't understand why should I prove that this line or side is the same as that one? And you had to remember what were those theorems and what is the algorithm?

Wingfield Jr.: Algorithm.

Interviewer: Not my strength. Not my strength.

Wingfield: I couldn't get it. Now, my best friend who's deceased, there were Sybil Avery, me, Felica Wilson, Harriet Johnson. There were five of us, maybe one or two other girls of the Honor Society. So, we helped each other. Now, I could do the trig and ... But they would have to help me with the geometry because I just couldn't get it, but I made passable grades.

Interviewer: Well, and as members of the Honor Society making good grades, what did your teachers, your mother, your family and friends, what did they expect of you after high school? What was the plan at that point?

Wingfield: Well, continuing your education, and I did. I had a scholarship to Tuskegee, one to Morris Brown. And you know what? I messed up, James. I just wanted to be an adult. I wanted to be grown. And in college for me to be in this room and want to go to the end of my property and mail a letter, I had to go to the front office and sign my name. I'm walking out at 5:05 but I'm back at 5:07. It was just so strict. I lived in Marietta, but I couldn't come home on the weekend and I was so lost. So, I just decided, I'm not coming back to college. That was a mistake. I think really my biggest mistake. I regret. I should've taken the scholarship to Tuskegee. Because that way I wouldn't have been around all my friends. That were about four or five of us that went to the same college. Being young, you think, well, I'm just tired of being told, "You can't do this." Because my mom was very strict. That's why we went church every Sunday. Sunday school and whatever they had during the week or whatever. But that was a mistake. I should've just accepted what was said. But you young, you want to get out. You want to live. You want to be free.

Interviewer: Well, tell me about you in high school. What were your plans for after high school? Did you have plans? Were you thinking about that?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, I did think about it. I thought about college and I thought about... Well Morris Brown was pretty much the college to go to. I had another influence, a guy that lived on Fort Hill Homes he was in the military. I would talk to him occasionally. He would come home with his uniform on and I said, "Wow." That really pretty much made my mind up. At a early age I want to just go into the military because I just liked being in that uniform. He spoke so eloquently. He just had a nice way of talking to you. He was comfortable to be around. I just wanted to be in the military. When I finished high school, I just had my mind made up pretty much that I was going to do that, I was going to make that move, go into the military, which is what I did. But I did have a lot of little jobs on the side before doing school. Therefore, I was really signed into the service. I had a couple jobs then. I worked until I was called, then I went on into the military. That's what.

Interviewer: Who was the guy, may I ask? The guy who-

Wingfield Jr.: The influence on me? His name was Fraser. Charlie Fraser. On 4th Street. In fact, he stayed in the house next to Mr. Walker. The guy that I just mentioned about building the house from the ground up. We used to see him a lot coming home. He drove a red Lincoln.

Wingfield: A red Lincoln.

Wingfield Jr.: A red Lincoln. He was the only guy that... It was a convertible. A red Lincoln convertible. I would see him drive; he had his uniform on. He was a policeman in the Air Force. I just wanted to be like that.

Interviewer: Well, I know you had in laws that are military. Mr. Freeman.

Wingfield: Uh-huh (affirmative) Oscar, Air Force. My son in law is a Navy. My brother was Army, Johnny Martin. My father never went into the military. I had an uncle too, I found his picture going through things, I believe he had on an Army uniform. I can't think of anybody else that was in... Oh, my uncle Jim who was a, I guess you call it a port man on the Amtrak who lived in Washington DC. He would come periodically to see us. He had been in service because he was there with the flag.

Interviewer: Did you have relatives that had moved North?

Wingfield Jr.: No. Not that I can remember. My family pretty much came from [crosstalk 01:01:42] South Georgia. South Georgia. Yeah.

Interviewer: Where in South Georgia.

Wingfield Jr.: [McDonough 01:01:50].

Interviewer: Sort of South. I'm from Macon and I say middle Georgia.

Wingfield: Oh, you're from Macon. Okay.

Interviewer: Because everybody always says, "You think South of Atlanta is South Georgia."

Wingfield Jr.: But from my momma side. This my dad. He come from St. Louis. But I don't know anything about his people up there. He never talked about his people. Not even his mom. She was down there. She lived pretty much right there in the square. Right there at the railroad track where [Dupree 01:02:33] used to be. It used to be a old church.

Wingfield: Really?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. It used to be a old black church there. They stayed behind that church. Always used to be a little chicken house back there.

Interviewer: Was this called anything? Is this happy flat or-

Wingfield Jr.: No.

Interviewer: I'm trying to think what the area is.

Wingfield Jr.: No. It was just pretty much two Black families stayed over there in that area. I just call it uptown-

Wingfield: Uptown.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Uptown area, right next to the Dupree.

Wingfield: Wow. You do know that a street can come North and South and where the Blacks live, the street has one name. Where the whites live, they simply changed the name of the street. I just found that out years ago reading an article in, I think, The Journal. I'm thinking, oh my God, that's why stuff's so screwed up.

Interviewer: Yeah. In Atlanta you'll be driving along, it's the same street and suddenly it's-

Wingfield: Yeah. It just switches.

Interviewer: Yeah [crosstalk 01:03:48] to Randolph Street is one of them.

Wingfield: And they did an article in the AJC too about all the peach tree. They were trying to explain [crosstalk 01:04:02] it. I'm still reading it. I couldn't figure out why it's so many peach trees.

Interviewer: That's a good question. So, tell me about going into the service in your four years.

Wingfield Jr.: Four years, yeah. And two years in active duty. Well, I went into the Air Force in, I don't remember, it was like, '64 after I was out of high school. Went to Lackland Air Force Base. That's where you do your basic training. I was there for about four months. Then I was stationed to McCoy. That was my base station. McCoy Air Force Base. That's in Orlando, Florida. I had trained in the transportation squad. Then I had training in culinary... Cooking. I had some courses in cooking. But I was a driver for most during my whole time in the military. I spent maybe most of my service time was in Orlando, but we shipped out too for temporary duty to Guam. Guam, and I went to Hawaii, we stayed there for maybe about a month or so. Went to Colorado and came back to [MacDill 01:06:15] in Tampa, Florida. But it was a tour. I traveled more in the military than I ever traveled. But I met a lot of people while I was in the military.

Interviewer: What was the process of leaving the military?

Wingfield Jr.: I got to a point where I wanted to be more so like on my own. When you're in the military, you're like you confined. You have to abide by their rules and regulations. I just wanted to get away from that. I wanted to get back to society. Just do what I wanted to do. That's why I didn't want to reenlist. But that was pretty much... I just got just tired of being I guess too much confined to the rules and regulations of the military.

Interviewer: And what did you do after?

Wingfield Jr.: Well, after I left the military I... Let's see. I put in some applications for jobs like Lackey, General Motors. Now, let me say this, before I was inducted into the Air Force, I worked part time at the Kennestone Hospital. When I was released from the military, Kennestone, they did ask me back if I wanted to come back. I didn't accept. I had my applications out for General Motors and Lackey and the post office. So, I said the first one to call, the first response I get, that's where I'm going now. General Motors was the first one to get back with me. And I said, "Yeah." "We'll try for 90 days." They really put you on trial period for 90 days. I didn't particularly like it, but it was a job making money like that. I said, "Wow, that's a lot of money." I took the job and I struggled. I struggled for the 90 days and beyond that. Because then like I said, you're getting them big checks and we got paid every week. In the military you getting every two weeks. But yeah, took that job. I never did hear from Lackey post office. And I worked at the post office when I was in school for about... It was on a trial basis period. The schools would help get you a job to, I guess just trying you out in a certain job. So, I did work there for a short period. Maybe about six months or something. Maybe not even that.

Interviewer: What did you do at General Motors?

Wingfield Jr.: Okay. I started working out on the line. Yeah. I used to assemble air conditioning parts and put them into the car. Our plant, its own assembly line type setup. You had a certain amount of time to do your job and move on to the next car that's coming down that line. Some of those jobs are really tough. When you first starting you... They not going to give you the best job on. They going start you off on those tough jobs. Was what they did to me. I had to get down on that car as it's moving down the line. I had to, they call it a air conditioning duct, I had to tuck it in under the IP panel. I had to fit that duct into the air conditioning system on that IP panel. Where you adjust your air on these sides of the IP panel, okay, I had to adjust that duct into that small space so your air could flow through that. And I had just a few minutes. Maybe about a few minutes or seconds to get that thing duct up, put in and go back to my next car. But that's where I started, air conditioning ducts, putting them in the car. I did that for maybe about, I want to say I think, maybe about a year. Yeah, I got to be pretty good at it. Because once you just doing that repetitive work, you going build up your speed and [inaudible 01:12:29] shortcut. But I did that for about a year. And then I moved on up to the, they call it the cushioning room at the plant. That's where they made seats. You had to pack those leather coverings with Styrofoam, cotton, whatever it takes to get those cushions be firm enough to put in the cover. That was my job. I was building up seats for the cushion room. Once I get the built up then I had to put them in the car. The way it's set up now, the cushion room, you build up your cushions. Your cushions are on a ramp that goes back down into the hooks that's in a conveyor line. They go back down into the main plant where they are installed into the car itself. So, I did both of those. I worked in the cushion room, I built up the seats, and then... I think I did that for maybe about maybe a year on that building those cushions up on the seats. And then I transferred back down to the floor, main floor and put the seats directly into the car as it came down the line. Okay, I did that for a couple of years. And then I went into inspection. That's where I

inspect work done by other installers. I was inspecting the exhaust systems and the steering mechanisms. I inspected the parts of the heating system in that too. There were some cables. It was once you put in the steering column system there were some cables that goes into a little computer setup that goes on the front of that car. I had to inspect that. I was in the inspection department for I think probably about 10 years I did that. But when I was in the inspection department, I did other inspections for different sections of the plant. We had the paint department, they had the tram department and then I had the final area, that's where the cars are pretty much finished as they drive them off the line. Oh yeah, I used to drive those cars off the line too. That was an inspection job. So, I was there for a while. Okay, once I finished that inspection, I went into the hollow department. That's where you drive your forklifts and a bit heavier equipment to move materials to different parts of the plant. I pretty much did that for about 15 years there.

Interviewer: We're at 30 years now.

Wingfield Jr.: I worked there 38 years.

Interviewer: When did you retire?

Wingfield Jr.: I retired in 2004. 2004. Because they closed the plant down in 2008. I retired in 2004.

Interviewer: Have you been retired since?

Wingfield Jr.: Retired?

Interviewer: Have you done other jobs since then or mostly retired?

Wingfield Jr.: That was it. Yeah. When I finished General Motors that was it. Honestly you paid your dues.

Interviewer: 38 years with GM. So, Ms. Wingfield, tell me about your career after college.

Wingfield: Well, after college, I married and I started to work, back then it was called Southern Bell. I started to work in 1968. I was a telephone operator. We had a board. You walk in this big room and board would go from the front porch all the way back. It's just a million little lights. You come in, you go to your position, you pick up your headset and you go to whatever position the supervisor assigns. Back then, that's the way calls were made. If you were making a call, you dial a operator, you give the number. It used to be, you could say, "Oh, I want 2238." Then I take the plug and plug you into that. There were not many lines. People would have party lines. It could be two people on the line with you. There could be four people on the line with you. I did that probably about five or six years and then I was promoted to a service rep. A service rep involve billing. Talking to customers about the bill or transferring the service from one location to another. Then in '83, Judge Greene, the federal judge said, "AT&T is too big." Customers complained all

the time about the charges. We can't do this, and we can't do that. This is what a service rep does. You listen to the complaints. But what can you do about it? You try to appease the customer. So, Judge Greene at the federal level said, "I'm going to break up AT&T. I want to break up all the bells." He sent the baby bells to go to be separate somewhere else and then Southern Bells, at some point the name was changed. But I enjoyed that work. I did that on Whitlock Avenue. I think the church next door now owns that building that used to be Southern Bell. At some point I decided I want to go to the parent company which was AT&T. That involved driving 285. But I said, "I'm going to like that." Guess what, that was a terrible mistake. Because I spent all my work career on, let's see... There's Power Spring Street where the railroad track is, that's where the operator building was. Then when I became a service rep, I went to Whitlock Avenue to that building. In 1986 I think, I decided to retire. I think I spent about 20 years Bell South, Southern Bell and AT&T altogether. And then I got a nice, quiet job working at Macy's. So, I did that, and I loved that. That was a good career. Still interacting with customers. Being at the phone company I got a lot of skills of selling. I've sold so many things and always been real successful because I like to talk, and I like to meet people. So, I've left Macy's probably two or three times. Because I worked on South Cobb Drive was the first, then I went to Cumberland, then I left Cumberland and went to town center. That was in between me having my own business. Because I was a decorator. I sold decorative accessories. They would let me work contingent. I could tell them, "Okay, I want to come to work on a Tuesday and a Thursday and I'll maybe give you five or six hours." And in some of the locations they were fine with it. And then the supervisor I had at the town center, when I met Charles living in Decatur, I said, "I want to work one day a week." He said, "Okay, pick the day you want to work and pick the hours." Boy, that was good. But just the joy of seeing new clothes, new things coming in, I enjoyed that. But I think my work career is over.

Interviewer: You enjoyed your time. How long did you live in Decatur Mr. Wingfield?

Wingfield Jr.: Okay. I lived in Decatur, let's see, maybe about 20 years. I think maybe about 20 years. Let's see. I moved in Decatur in 1970. 1970 because I moved from 70-

Wingfield: Because you had a couple of different addresses. [Carlevie 01:23:59] was born in '72.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. I moved this-

Wingfield: ... in '72.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah-

Wingfield: Right-

Wingfield Jr.: ... yeah, yeah-

Wingfield: And we moved-

Wingfield Jr.: I moved in South Dekalb County, moved from South Dekalb County to North Dekalb County.

Wingfield: But that's still Decatur.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, it's still Decatur. But it's 20 years, I'll say right at maybe about 20.

Interviewer: Was that more convenient to work?

Wingfield Jr.: No. Well, yeah, it was. It was convenient at a time because they had just finished working on 285 and that was a straight shot from where I lived in South Dekalb County to Doraville General Motors.

Interviewer: Okay, okay.

Wingfield Jr.: And that 285, boy, that was a straight-

Wingfield: Straight shot-

Wingfield Jr.: ... straight shot to the plant, right in front of the plant. But when I moved to North Decatur, North Dekalb County that was even better because I would go out Lavista Road and hit 285 and right there at it, too. So, it was a 20 to 25-minute drive from South Dekalb to Doraville General Motors. More so than maybe about a 15-minute drive, maybe less than that, no more than a 15-minute drive from North Decatur to Doraville General Motors.

Interviewer: I see.

Wingfield Jr.: So, it was a better drive.

Interviewer: So, to finish up as we approach the end of our time, I'd like to ask y'all just about your families. So, I assume I'm correct that you both had previous spouses?

Wingfield: Yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, Ms. Wingfield, can you tell me about your first husband?

Wingfield: Yes. I married David; well we were childhood sweethearts because he lived in the community in Louisville. We went to the same school, and he played football. And we married in 1964, no, 1965. Okay, and we went to the same church. I left Wright Street Church and joined his church. We had two daughters and they joined in 1977. So, I became a member of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church which is on Whitlock, in '77. And I've been there ever since. And David was a deacon. And he had scholarships to a couple

of colleges, and he took the one to Morris Brown. And he stopped playing, because he had a scholarship for football and baseball. And then when he left school, he got a job at Lockheed. So, he worked at Lockheed for, let's see, he retired, I think it was about 40 years that he was at Lockheed. And he worked in the chemical maintenance department where you mix chemicals and they drop the parts of the airplane down into these chemicals. He was a, I think, chemical processor. And he retired in 2009 because I remember him always saying, "Now I'm not going to stay at Lockheed forever because what happens, a lot of guys retire and then they drop dead." And he retired in 2009, No I retired in 2009. But he worked 40 years and had 10 years to spend of being happy and doing what he wanted to do. And surely on that 10th year, in 2015, he passed. He had a heart attack, had been in the hospital for just a little bit.

Interviewer: But he was only about 70.

Wingfield: Yep.

Interviewer: And David Bates.

Wingfield: David Bates. He did not have a middle name.

Interviewer: Okay. And Mr. Wingfield, can you tell me about your first wife?

Wingfield Jr.: Okay. Her name was Verdine, Verdine Jett. We married in 1970, and we lived in South Dekalb County. And she worked for Social Security. She was a claims representative for Social Security at South Dekalb Mall. There used to be a Social Security office over there, she worked there. And I think she worked there and retired in 2006. Yeah, she retired in 2006. I retired in 2004. Well, let me tell you this. My daughter, we had one daughter, name was Laviche. She was born in '72. And before she retired, she start to having problems with her, I'm going to say, some type of infection, had a stomach infection. And she was back and forth from the doctor with that. And when she retired, seems like it just began to get worse. And when she retired it got to the point where she couldn't do anything much but just maybe sit around and look at a little TV. But as far as driving she just couldn't do anything. I pretty much had to help her with her doctor's appointments and all the procedures that she had to go through for this infection she had in her stomach. And for a while there we thought that it seemed to be getting better. But it seems like everything just fell in. We had to put her in a hospital. And she went from one hospital, then they said they'd done all they could do. They put her in a little home, a rehabilitation home. And then it seemed like she would do a little better and they'd let her go home. Okay, she got home. It seemed like she was doing better for a while. She'd just fall back in that same old rut, problem with that stomach. And we put her in hospice care, and she seemed like she was going to do better with that. But she did okay but she couldn't get around. So, after she was in there for maybe a month or two, seem like she just fell down. Seemed like this particular time she just fell really low. And they took her to the hospital and the hospital told us that they've done all they can

do, ain't nothing else they can do. So, we took her back to the hospice and that's where she passed in hospice care, on June 30, 2009.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing. And how did you two meet?

Wingfield Jr.: Well-

Wingfield: Well, our class periodically would have get togethers. We would meet at a restaurant. And this particular time the class of 1962 at Lemon Street had a party off of 41. What was the name? They still use that hotel.

Wingfield Jr.: Was it Marriott?

Wingfield: Marriott, I think. And David had been dead two years, I think. And our class of '64 always had a table together. So, we all came. I think I came in last with a girlfriend. Charles was-

Interviewer: All right. This is Interviewer and I'm still here with Wingfield and Mr. Charles Wingfield. And so, Ms. Wingfield, can you respond to my question about how you and Mr. Wingfield met?

Wingfield: Yes. Periodically, our class of Lemon Street 1964 would have functions where sometimes we would meet for a dinner. A lot of times we would go to Caper's which is in Kennesaw. And we tried to keep that up once a year or every other year, just come together and see each other and reminisce. So, this particular time it would have been 2016 that the class of Lemon Street 1962 had their reunion at-

Wingfield Jr.: Marriott.

Wingfield: ... at Marietta ...

Wingfield Jr.: It was the Marriott wasn't it?

Wingfield: The Marriott right off of 41. So, me and a girlfriend had gotten their late. And when we got there Charles and our other classmates were there. Because the Class of '64 would always have their own table. So, we went around and spoke to one another, and greeted one another. So, at some point Charles and I spoke. And the Marriott was remodeling so you had to go out of the building and go to another door to go to the entrance to the restroom. So, Charles had to go, and I said, "Well I've been so I will show you where to go." So, he and I walked out and we walked past a lady, she said, "Oh, you all are the most beautiful couple." And he and I looked at one another. I'm thinking, "We're not a couple. I'm just showing ..." I said, "Thank you." So, we went ahead, and I showed him the restroom. And me being a deaconess, we have functions at our church, and I didn't want to go by myself. So, I said, "Charles, would you be able to maybe go with me to a function at my church?" And he said, "Sure, I'll be able to take you." So, we went back, and we sat and we talk. And I remember looking across at him, and he

looked at me and I felt palpitations. And we talked about it later, I said, "Charles, did you feel anything?" He said, "Yes." And we just laughed. We say well, "What happened? Is that when we fell in love?" So, he walked me to my car that night. Like I say, that was-

Wingfield Jr.: Between 2016 and '15-

Wingfield: ... '16. And he called me to make sure I got home okay. And we talked, I think, till about 2:00 a.m. We talked on the phone about two hours. And we laughed and I giggled about all of the things that had happened in our school. And we talked about our classmates. So that was just the beginning of a love affair. And we talked every day after that, for hours, on the phone, just some of everything. It didn't matter what. And then we got serious and he talked about his wife and I talked about my husband. And we both agreed that we had fallen in love with each other. And he said, "Well, will you marry me?" I believe that was the terminology. And of course, I had been thinking of it because I didn't want to be alone. And I knew I had fallen in love with Charles and I said yes. So, that was the beginning of a romance. And about two years later we married, 20-

Wingfield Jr.: ... '18-

Wingfield: ... '18.

Interviewer: So, going on three years.

Wingfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And I lived in Decatur a year and he said he wanted to get me back to Cobb County where I was happier. Because I couldn't find the things I wanted like parks, and I walked at Mud Creek. And my church friends, I just had lady friends and I would have parties with them all the time. But I couldn't really do that in Decatur. So, when he said, "I want to get you back to Cobb County," I thought, "Oh, God," because I didn't really want him to know I didn't like the beautiful house he and his wife had built. I couldn't see myself saying, "I don't like this." So, I found this house and we moved over here. Now I'm just so pleased to be back in Cobb County. I love it.

Wingfield Jr.: Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Returned home.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Interviewer: Born and raised in Cobb.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, she began to having problems with her stomach. She got really sick, we had to rush her to the hospital.

Wingfield: Once in Decatur.

Wingfield Jr.: So, after that, I just start thinking about it, "Oh, goodness."

Wingfield: See, he was thinking deja vu over again.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. So, I made some changes and I'm glad she stayed on the computer looking at different places around here in the Cobb County area-

Wingfield: Finally-

Wingfield Jr.: ... found-

Wingfield: ... found-

Wingfield Jr.: ... this place-

Wingfield: ... a house-

Wingfield Jr.: ... around. So, this one here suited our purpose with things. It was comfortable and it felt real homey, just like it was built for us and here we are.

Interviewer: Oh, and I love that because it seems to be a robust culture of getting together of alumni and students from Lemon Street. You may have met any way, but I like that that's what brought you together. And that's a concrete story-

Wingfield: Yes, yeah-

Interviewer: ... of the Lemon Street heritage bringing people together.

Wingfield: Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Well this has been wonderful, and I appreciate y'all's time and sharing so much. And do you have any other contributions you want to make to the interview before we finish up?

Wingfield Jr.: Well-

Wingfield: Are you a lover of trains?

Interviewer: A lover of trains?

Wingfield: All trains.

Interviewer: We got a train lover on our hands?

Wingfield: James, his father gave him a train and all of his life he's been working on a train that goes from that room to about right here. And it's amazing. He's got McDonald's, he's got the ... down at Centennial, the Ferris wheel.

Interviewer: Oh-

Wingfield: He's got-

Interviewer: ... like a whole-

Wingfield: ... trees-

Interviewer: ... a set-

Wingfield: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh.

Wingfield: And he built the mechanism that makes it work. And I said, "Oh, God, we're going to move. Now he must really love me to move something that massive, that big, from that place to this place."

Interviewer: So, did you have to take it apart?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: Yes.

Wingfield Jr.: Every-

Wingfield: James-

Wingfield Jr.: ... section-

Wingfield: ... you'll have to see it.

Interviewer: I think I will.

Wingfield: Because tedious little wires, little trees and the buildings, and the pieces. And he took all this apart for me.

Interviewer: That's love.

Wingfield: And then the process of assembling it. I know.

Interviewer: I wondered, when you were talking about your work it was so detailed that I was thinking you must have that engineer-

Wingfield: He's a mechanical-

Interviewer: Yeah-

Wingfield Jr.: Oh-

Interviewer: ... that is so foreign to me. I'm a history person. I can't do math and machinery. That is amazing.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, I'm still assembling it now. It's going to take some time because I still got a lot of wiring to do.

Wingfield: Oh, boy, yeah.

Wingfield Jr.: And some more little accessories got to be put up. But I just pretty much do it when I feel like it.

Interviewer: And your dad started that?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yes, yes, he started that. He had a little layout on the floor, and he would take his little engine and run it around, around and around, and had a little man come out his little house with his little lantern and flash his little light out. I just got a kick out of looking at that thing. And over time he would collect those little pieces for his layout there. And that's where it got started. When he passed, he left all that stuff, left it to the boys of the family. And that was me, Michael, Jerry. Well Johnny, Johnny was my youngest brother and he wasn't in the family at that particular time. My dad was a Wingfield. Johnny's family was a Hudson, it's his dad. My mom divorced my dad and she remarried into a Hudson and he and two, a girl and a boy, was born from that reunion right there. So, in all it was eight of us. Now I don't say stepmother, stepchildren. I just say brothers and sisters, but it was eight of us. But anyway, my dad left the trains to myself, Jerry and Michael. And they wasn't interested in it.

Interviewer: So, you got the whole thing.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. So, they decided to just let me have the whole thing and that's where it got started. I just kept it going.

Interviewer: Well the big question, who are you passing it down to?

Wingfield: His nephew, he say.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So, there's someone interested?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah.

Wingfield: And your dad only left how many? How many cars did he give you?

Wingfield Jr.: Oh, he left me, it was three engines and maybe about 15, I had about 12 or 15 cars that go with those engines, along with some accessories. But his layout was about like this rug here, about like this rug.

Wingfield: Half of the rug.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. See what he did in the apartment, he built a panel on the wall in the bedroom now. When he wanted to play his train, he would pull it down, put legs on the panel and put his trains on top of that thing.

Interviewer: Like an ironing board type-

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah-

Interviewer: ... deal, but bigger.

Wingfield Jr.: Like a ironing board, but he had it up on each wall, it would come down.

Wingfield: You don't have 15 cars on it now, though.

Wingfield Jr.: No. No, no, no, no. They still up there.

Wingfield: In the box?

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. They still in the box.

Wingfield: God, I didn't know you had 15 more cars.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, see I can't put all of them down, now.

Interviewer: So that's been what, you'd call it a primary hobby?

Wingfield Jr.: That's my hobby.

Wingfield: That's his hobby.

Wingfield Jr.: Yeah, that's what I do.

Interviewer: And you, you've done decorating as a business. Do you have other hobbies that you do now in retirement?

Wingfield: I'm a seamstress, I sew. I used to make my clothes and of course, with my girls, I'd have about this much left, I'd make skirts and do the monogram. But basically, when I went into decorating ... I really loved that; I did that for Home Interiors about 10 years. That was in between Macy's and sometimes working at Macy's. And that was a love of going into other ladies' homes and selling pictures. Of course, that's not Home Interiors, but I do have, still, some of the accessories in my home that I sold. Then I start selling Black art. That's some of the art that I sold. But I love to decorate-

Interviewer: I can see that.

Wingfield: ... put different things together, yeah.

Interviewer: This has been the pleasure of this interview, is just enjoying the space. So, I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording.

Wingfield: Okay.

Interviewer: And I want to thank y'all, once again.

Wingfield: Surely.