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Dot Hautman Interview

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Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series

Dot Hautman interview

Interviewed by James Newberry

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Transcribed by Amy Colleton

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Born in 1927, Dot Hautman finished her homework by the light of kerosene lamps until the passage of the Rural Electrification Act. After graduating from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Hautman moved to Albany, Georgia, where she got a job as a comptometer operator at Cudahy Packing Company. She married a veteran of the Air Corps in 1946.

Full Transcript

James Newberry: This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Dot Hautman at the Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State university on April 26, 2026, and Ms. Hautman, do you agree to this interview.

Dot Hautman: Yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: Thank you. So, please state your full name at birth.

Hautman: Dorothy Griffin. Hautman is my married name.

Newberry: And when and where were you born?

Hautman: I was born in Florida, Sarasota Florida in 1927, February the 22nd, 1927.

Newberry: And, what were your parents' names?

Hautman: Eldridge Griffin was my daddy, and Beara[?] O'Neil [?] Griffin was my mother.

Newberry: Well, tell me a little about them. Tell me about your father.

Hautman: My daddy—my daddy's daddy came to south Georgia and was given a big plot of land, and my-- all of my aunts and uncles got a piece of this land too--part of it, and so that's where they all lived. And so, I grew up there, mostly, but of course we went down to Florida for a while too, just before the Depression.

Newberry: Ok, and what was your father's personality?

Hautman: Uh, very sweet and humble. He was not as educated as my mother. My mother had gone to college and had taught school several years. Daddy

had to quit school right young so that he could help his daddy farm 'cause they had 11 children, and they had to eat and be providing for, so he had to help his daddy.

Newberry: And, do you know how your parents met?

Hautman: Uh, mother said she saw daddy walking down the highway one day- the road right close to where she lived, and he was whistling, and she thought "Oh what a good-lookin' boy." And, he fah- he wanted to go with Aunt Ollie, which was mother's sister. Mother said "She was a little bit prettier than I was," but finally mother got a date with him, and from then on that was it, that couple. And, daddy one time star—tucked a blanket around her legs- they were in the buggy, dating, and mother said "You gettin' fresh!" and all he was trying to do was tuck her blanket around her legs because it was cold in the buggy.

Newberry: [laughs] So, you said they were originally from Georgia-

Hautman: -Yes

Newberry: -and that's where they met and married, but they moved to Florida. Why did they move to Florida?

Hautman: Well, let me tell you something about their marriage first. Mother—daddy didn't—her mother did not have any money so uh—to fix up a fine wedding and all, so they sat in a buggy and went to the preacher's house and told him that they wanted to get married, so that's where they got married, and then when they had their fiftieth anniversary, all of us children got together and got a buggy and let them sit in it, and we got a picture of them. Fifty years later!

Newberry: And that would have been 1962?

Hautman: Yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: Because they were married in 1912.

Hautman: Yes, that's right

Newberry: So, you said you were born in Florida. They moved there, and what do you think prompted them or motivated them to move to Florida? Why Florida?

Hautman: Ok, my daddy had built a house. He was pretty good with lumber and building. He was right good, and he had built us a right decent three-bedroom home in the country there on that land that his daddy had gotten

from the government. But anyway, we heard that everybody down in Florida was on a boom, making a lot of money, so my daddy got somebody, his good friend to live in our house, and we went down to Florida. Now, this was—I was born in 1927, while they were down there. But anyway, the Depression came along, and everybody lost everything Florida went down like this, and my daddy had bought land and got nothing for it. He'd bought a store and lost that. All the people that boarding with mother and daddy in the boarding home, and mother was cooking for them and making a little bit of money, all of them lost that job. So, they had to pull up stakes and move back to Georgia, well I was about 2 years old when this happened, when this move came. I'd been born there in Florida, and they said as we were riding out of Sarasota, Florida, that I said "Hot dog, oranges," and that's the first thing that I remember them saying what I said, you know because I was just two years old at that time. And so, we moved back to Georgia on the farm, and my daddy started farming, and gradually getting where we had enough for everybody to have plenty to eat and a few clothes. We had a church right down the hill that we all went to every Sunday and heard about Jesus, and we had a store right down the hill-- that was my mother's sister owned that store. And so, we would buy things on credit because my daddy didn't have much money, and we'd buy things on credit. She'd write it down in a book, everything we bought, and then when we sold the crops, peanuts, and cotton, usually. That's what daddy would sell and make a good bit of money why—uh we would pay off everything we had bought down there. But, you know us children, we wanted some candy. We didn't even have money for candy or anything. Mother would give me an egg, and me and my sister could go down the hill and buy a little bit of candy with that egg.

Newberry: It was trade.

Hautman: That's right, trading an egg for some candy. [Laughs]

Newberry: So, how many siblings did you have?

Hautman: I had one smaller sister, and then I had two bigger sisters, Loverne and Vivian, and then one brother, Reuben.

Newberry: And, which sibling were you closest to?

Hautman: Jean, because she was two years younger than I was, and she could sing. She could sing, carry alto by the time she was three or four years old. And, I sang soprano, so we were little tiny girls, maybe six and eight, something like that, and we would sing in amateur contests, and we won several. All they'd do is clap for you like that—that was our grand prize, but anyway, we sang songs together and harmonized, and did right good with that.

Newberry: So, tell me about yours and Jean's personalities. How were y'all the same and different?

Hautman: Well, mother said I always tried to make Jean behave. She was not bad, she was the baby of all of us, and she didn't—was not crazy about work, well none of us are really, but anyway, I was always trying to boss Jean, and one day I was gonna whip her because she didn't do [unintelligible]. My mother said "Listen, that's my job!" so, from then on I didn't whip Jean anymore. [laughs] Jean was my baby sister, and I remember when she was—when we were that age, Shirley Temple was real popular. And, Shirley Temple's birthday was the 23rd of April, and Jean's birthday was the 22nd of April. We changed the date of Jean's birthday so she could have the same birthday as Shirley Temple had. She was a big star when we were children.

Newberry: So, tell me about Martha Coville [?].

Hautman: Martha lived next door to her when we lived down in Florida with us. And, I was just a baby at that time, before we moved back to Georgia, and Martha's mother and daddy got a divorce, well Martha was about twelve or thirteen, and she was playing with Vern and sister, and I was very small, and she got to coming over to our house all the time, and looking after me. She was kind of like my second mother. 'Cause my mother was busy cooking for boarders, because that was before the boom—the bust—the Depression, before the Depression happened. And so, Martha's mother had gotten a divorce. She didn't have—the mother didn't have enough money to keep her, so Martha, we just brought her home with us when we moved back to Georgia, and she lived with us six years, and was sweet as she could be, and mother [unintelligible] did for her just like they did for the other girls.

Newberry: Why do you think your mom and dad were willing to take her in?

Hautman: Cause she was so sweet and good, and they both loved her. And, they knew her mother did not have money to keep her. See, at the time I guess you didn't have to give alimony when you got divorced or what. I don't know what the—but I know her mother didn't have money to keep her, so we kept her for six years. She went to college and everything with my sister.

Newberry: So, tell me about the home your father built in Patmos Georgia.

Hautman: It was a good-sized home. We had three big bedrooms, and we had one sleeping porch, they called it. And, all of us got the itch one year. Way back then, you got itch in school, lice and itch, way back then. Don't ask me why they don't get them now, but [laughs] I guess they're cleaner or

something. But anyway, we had that sleeping porch out there, and when you had the itch we'd sleep on that special place out there. But anyway, we had a good life in Patmos. It was good everybody knew—I was kin to a lot of people. Kin to just about everybody, and then I would walk a half mile and go to school, and one time we had one of the schools right across from us. And, uh, I didn't mind the teachers. The teachers told us not to go behind where the bathroom—Johnny was—we called it the Johnny then, it was the outdoor toilet, and she said don't go back there and play. Well, I disobeyed. Me and my little friend, we went back there and played, and the teacher was gonna whip me. Well, I—my home was right across the street, and I ran home to mother and daddy, and daddy says—mother says “She doesn't need a whipping about that—does not need a whipping.” My daddy said “She's going to get a whipping. She disobeyed the teacher.” So, daddy took me in his arms, I was six years old, took me across the street, and I got a good whipping because I had disobeyed the teacher. Daddy was right, I can surely see now.

Newberry: So tell me about the way you got rid of lice.

Hautman: Uh, we had something that you bought at the drug store, because a lot of people had them. And, also mother would put a white paper right—and you would hold your head, and she would do like that [motions], and the lice would come plop, plop, plop, right down there. And so, mother did that and then we used this whatever it—I don't remember the name of the medication that we would put on our—mother said it's no shame to get lice, and it's no shame to get itch, which we got at school, but she said it's a shame to keep them. So, we combed and got them out of us, and then we put that—whatever I don't remember the name of the medication, but we put it on our heads to keep any more lice from coming in.

Newberry: I see, so can you tell me about the, um, the community of Patmos? What did it look like?

Hautman: It was a very, very, very small community, but we lived up on this high hill, and we never did get money to paint our house. All these years, a nice house up on a high hill, and daddy put a rock fence right in front of it that made it a little bit distinguished looking. But, my mother and daddy were good folk, so everybody respected us because we were good—went to church every Sunday right down the hill, and, uh, around me lived several of my kinfolk. Daddy's—five or six of his brothers and sisters lived within—I could walk there in three minutes, and then we all saw each other in church, and I got baptized right up—a half mile in the creek that we had there and had all my kinfolk, friends standing up on the shore singing “[unintelligible],” you know, that song that you sang as you was being baptized.

Newberry: So, do you remember noticing if there were people with more money or less money than your family?

Hautman: I don't remember as a child feeling any inferiority. My mother made me feel good about myself, and I did not feel inferior to anybody because they had more money than we did, uh-uh; no, I didn't have that inferiority complex, no.

Newberry: So, did you know there was a depression going on?

Hautman: Well, when we left Florida, I knew there was because that was the reason we left Florida. Everybody was going broke. My daddy lost his store, lost some land he had bought, everybody didn't have any money. So, that's when we came back to Georgia, and lived in the house that my daddy had built years before and let Mr. Campbell stay in it.

Newberry: Did people talk about the Depression? Did they say the word "Depression?"

Hautman: I don't remember as a little girl hearing it that much. I just knew people didn't have any money. Nobody seemed to have any money right then.

Newberry: Ok, so did you have electricity in the house?

Hautman: I remember when we got it. We had what we called an Aladdin lamp, and we used that, and it was really good, a lot better than just a little kerosene lamp, and we used an Aladdin lamp, and we'd take it when somebody wanted to read at night. I remember when we got electricity. I don't remember what year it was, but I remember—oh!—everybody was so excited about the electric lights and things that happened after we got electricity.

Newberry: How were they installed?

Hautman: I can't even remember because the men folks did all that, James, and I didn't fool around—I can tell you one fun thing that happened in that house. Arate [?] is a lady that helped us, and she loved us and we loved her. Well, our house caught on fire right up around the chimney, and it was wooden, you know, so the next day we were going to have graduation, my brother Reuben was going to graduate from High School. We were going up to Arlington eleven miles away, and we were going to go for the graduation, well we had already gotten all of our clothes out, what we were going in. Well, the house caught on fire, and I went in there and I got thinking I gotta get all these clothes out of here so we have something to wear tomorrow to the graduation. So, I went in there and started pulling them out. Well, Arate[?], the Black lady that was helping

us, she saw me and she said “Put down them clothes, and get water!” And I just never will forget, that is something about—she was so right and I was so wrong. So, I put down those clothes, and I carried water, and we put that fire out. House didn’t burn up.

Newberry: So, how did your family get the news?

Hautman: Uh, just heard it from everybody. Now, if we got a newspaper every day I don’t remember it, but at that age I wasn’t into reading the newspaper. Just from hearing it from everybody, and we did listen to the radio. We had a radio going, and I remember the first telephone we uh—I didn’t know how to talk on the telephone for a long time. In fact, I remember picking it up, and I was talking in the wrong end of it, you know. But anyway, I learned, picked it up, that’s when the telephone came along, we all would use that.

Newberry: So what chores did you have to do around the house?

Hautman: Anything that mother wanted me to do. Keep your clothes picked up, and you always had to study for school, and then always your Sunday school lesson. We had, uh, church every Sunday, and I had a good Sunday school teacher, and we studied that lesson, and that was the thing to do. Mother taught—and music. I taught—took music from my first cousin who lived right down the hill, and by the way, she’s still living, she’s 109, and she taught me music.

Newberry: What’s her name?

Hautman: Lois Cunningham, and she played recently, she played up at the Grand Ol’ Oprey, Josh Turner. That’s his—his wife’s grandmother.

Newberry: That’s right, did you have to clean up the yard?

Hautman: Well, we had some brooms made out of—you’d go to the woods and pick these—and then tie them all together, these—and then we had to sweep yards with that. We didn’t have a rake broom at that time. They either hadn’t made them or we didn’t have the money to buy them, I don’t remember what, but yest I helped my mother sweep the yards, uh-huh.

Newberry: Did you help in the fields at all? With the crops?

Hautman: Well, mother—my mother—we had four girls and one boy, and she thought girls were supposed to work in the house and cook, but not in the fields, but once in a while daddy would get us to pick some cotton, and you know back then they didn’t have cotton pickers like they have now, you just pick it with your hands and stick it in—and mother fixed me a little ol’ bag, and I put it back here, and you’d pick cotton and put—then,

they'd weigh it, and you'd get a few cents for how much you—how much cotton you'd picked, yeah, but Reuben mostly did the work in the fields.

Newberry: Yes, so tell me about picking blackberries.

Hautman: Oh, something terrible happened then. Me and my brother always picked—we had a whole fence row that had blackberries growing on it—all on it, and so every year we were the best pickers. We'd go out there and pick blackberries. Occasionally you'd see a snake, but we learned to watch for them and run away. Well, one year we were picking them—mother was going to make blackberry wine—blackberry nectar, and blackberry jelly, and two other things, anyway, she was really good in the kitchen, so we're picking the blackberries, and my bother said "I'm tired, I'm going to the house." I said, "Listen, I've got almost that dishpan this big full of berries." I said "I'm gonna pick one more quart, and then I'm coming with you." So I was out there right by myself finishing up the berries, and I looked round—an old cow had come up without making a bit of noise and had eaten every one of my blackberries, a whole dishpan. You can imagine how long it took me to pick them. Whole dishpan full of blackberries. I wanted to kill that cow [laughs].

Newberry: [Laughs] So, tell me about curb market.

Hautman: Well, when my sister got in college—now when Reuben and I went to college we went to college at ABAC¹ it didn't cost that much. I worked a little to help with the finances. But, my sisters went to Tift College², and that was a good Christian school, and yet it was very, uh, respected in everybody's area. It was a good college. So that's where mother sent Vern and Martha, the one that lived with us, and sister went up to Amherst [?] I think. But anyway, all of us got to go to college for a while. Now, Jean did not want to go to college. She wanted to take up bookkeeping, which she did. Right there in Albany she took a bookkeeping course and got her a good—in fact she wound up having a bookkeeping business and did real good with what she knew how to do.

Newberry: So, did you participate in curb market?

Hautman: Yes, I helped mother, because see she would clean chickens, and she would shell peas, and snap beans, and make jelly, all kinds of stuff that city people really wanted that fresh from the farm things, you know. So, I helped mother a whole lot. And, sometimes they would sell—when they would go and work all morning—we had these stalls where you put all your things out, and then the rich ladies that had a lot more money than we did would come in and buy things from us 'cause they knew it was fresh;

¹ Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is located in Tifton, Georgia. <https://www.abac.edu/>

² Tift college was a private liberal arts women's college in Forsyth, Georgia, that operated from 1849 until 1987.

they knew it was good, you know. So—and mother—they sold fifty dollars-worth, that was like 500 now. It's about that much. Fifty dollars was a lot of money back when I was a little girl, and most of it would buy us clothes and things like that that we needed like a coat, and just things that she wanted us to have.

Newberry: So, curb market took place not in Patmos but where?

Hautman: In Albany, Georgia.

Newberry: And how far away was that?

Hautman: Fifty miles from Baker County where we lived.

Newberry: What kind of car did you drive?

Hautman: I didn't drive until I hit sixteen or seventeen. I might have been older than that.

Newberry: How did you transport the vegetables and things to Albany?

Hautman: Daddy had a Dodge car, and then he had a pick up, and sometimes if we had enough we'd put in the back of that pick up and that Dodge car, and it was a very good car, and we'd go to Albany maybe once—I think it was every Saturday they would have it, and mother would make enough money to help pay for the college for all of us.

Newberry: So, what was the name of your church in Patmos?

Hautman: Patmos Freewill Baptist Church, and my great-grandmother started that church. She—they moved—they just leased this land—the government gave them the land way back when my daddy's granddaddy came and leased all that land. That's the reason so many of our kinfolks lived close around, 'cause they got land for all of his children, had 11 children, and his mother started the Freewill Baptist Church right down the hill from where we lived, and so naturally—plus there's a big cemetery, that's where my mother and daddy are buried. That's where my sister Jean, and her husband are buried, so it [unintelligible]. We got down there to a reunion every year.

Newberry: Tell me about that reunion.

Hautman: It comes around the 10th of June 'cause that's one of my grandparents' birthday, and so the nearest to the 10th of June, and there were eleven of those Griffin children, and so what they do is go from child to child and let them sponsor it that year. And, they have to go buy the meat and the rest

of us bring food and whatever to go with it. So, we go down there every year your mother has been down there and sang a time or two, we all—you take what like—the year it was our—we all sang together and told them about what each family member was doing, and then we go in and eat a whole bunch and just visit and have a good time.

Newberry: And how many years has it been going on?

Hautman: I'd say at least fifty or sixty, at least that long

Newberry: Ok, and, uh, tell me some of the other sort of gatherings that took place at the church when you were a child.

Hautman: Well, one thing that I remember special because they don't really do it that much now; my grandmother was still alive, and I had to be little because my Grandmother Griffin died when I was real young, but Grandmother Griffin was there, and she was real heavy, real heavy, and she sat there and she put her towel right around her waist, and somebody sat in front of her, and she washed their feet. That was one of the rituals there and, you know, that's what Jesus did. He washed the feet of people. And back then, you know, they washed—and walked in sandals and their feet were really dirty, but that was something to remember Jesus and to remind us to be humble with one another, and that's what my Grandma Griffin did.

Newberry: So, when did you start singing regularly? When did you learn that you had a voice to sing?

Hautman: When I was about two or three years old. I just always—you know how some people can just carry a tune, and—and Jean could sing Alto by the time she was four or five years old. She didn't need any notes or anything. She could just sing Alto with me, and we sang in a lot of amateur contests way back—years ago they'd go to different schools and have amateur contest, and the one—you would stand up there, and the one that got the most clapping was the one that won, and Jean and I won several amateur contests. And, it's 'cause she could sing so good. I remember one time we sang something that was not appropriate at all. It was Daddy Has Gone, was the title of it, but we could harmonize real good on that song, so we sang Daddy Has Gone, in the amateur contest and won first place in that contest.

Newberry: Do you remember the words to Daddy Has Gone?

Hautman: No, no I can't remember the words, but it was all about how he had just passed away, and we don't have daddy anymore [laughs].

Newberry: Did you have any favorite hymns as a child?

Hautman: Uh, honey I—every Sunday now I work with internationals trying to teach them English, and I've learned all kinds [unintelligible] choruses. So, I—bringing out, doing right, loving Jesus, doing the right thing—like Sunday we did wide wide as the ocean, high as the heavens above, deep deep as the deepest sea is my savior's love I though so unworthy am still a child of his care for his love leaches me that his love reaches me for his word teaches me that his love reaches me everywhere, so that's what I taught them Sunday. See, they're trying to learn the English language, and they're trying to learn about Jesus all at the same time, and this older couple that are—both of them are retired teachers, and that's what we've got—uh probably sixty or seventy of them in there, and we've gotten—they have gotten their, uh, citizenship from going to this place because we also teach them what is necessary to pass your citizenship.

Newberry: Ok, so let's move on. Can you tell me—you had a young cousin who died young. Do you remember that?

Hautman: Hugh Linear[?]

Newberry: Tell me about going to see him.

Hautman: Hugh was my first cousin, and he lived maybe a half mile from us. I never had been to a funeral before—well I was too young really for—I don't know how old, five, six, seven, something like that, and we went to that funeral, and I told my mother “I wanna touch a dead person. I never have touched a dead person.” I don't know if she ever let me or what; I just remember how curious I was about death at that age, you know, after a while you learn [laughs].

Newberry: So, tell me about Itch Away Notch Away [?] Creek.

Hautman: Well, that's where I was baptized. It was about a half mile, maybe a little bit more, and that's where Grandma fished, and we'd take my mother's mother up there, and she dipped snuff, and I remember Jean was with us one time, my baby sister, and grandma though the window was down, so she spit, and it got right on the window, and I will never forget that. And, we were headed up to that creek for her to fish, 'cause she liked to fish, and catch fish, you know, she wasn't able to do a lot of things, but she could still fish.

Newberry: Tell me about the little girls that were drowning at Itch Away Notch Away Creek[?].

Hautman: Well, now this is when—ok, my daddy was probably in his thirties or forties, mother was still—she must have been carrying Jean then, because

I remember her saying “And here I was pregnant.” Several girls had gone out into Notch Away Creek[?] and they were swimming, and I don’t know what happened, if they went too deep or what, but one of them started screaming and saying “I’m drowning! I’m drowning!” Well, there were several people on the banks, and nobody—you know, they heard them, but they didn’t want to go in there and try to save them, but my daddy swam out there and saved that girl’s life, and here was my mother standing up on the bank—I don’t know if she was holding me or one of the children and was carrying Jean, and so she was afraid something happened to daddy, but he got that girl out of there and saved her life. So, every time we passed that creek—Flint river, we’d talk about it, think about it.

Newberry: So, you said—you talked about how your parents were different in regards to money and things like that. So, can you talk a little about that?

Hautman: My mother had more education than my daddy did. Daddy didn’t have a chance to go; he was busy in the fields working. He trusted everybody. He thought everybody was telling the truth. Mother was the one who said “Eldridge, they might not do that, be careful, be careful.” But, Daddy of course was a man so he usually went ahead—and they had a lot of disagreements about that. I slept in the—near there, and I could hear them going at it, you know. Daddy sometimes would go right ahead and do it, and—what he wanted to do, and they would take advantage of my daddy and take our money and all that. Mother would—I don’t remember her saying “I told you so,” but she could have said it because she tried to warn him not to trust everybody, you know, because everybody don’t want—they don’t want to do the right thing, so many people don’t. They take advantage of you; like Daddy, his first job after Mother and Daddy got married, he got a job in Arlington with this man, and this man was the wrong kind of man. He was making my daddy do all the work and he was doing just things he ought not to do, drinking whiskey and not coming to work, and mother tried to tell him “Daddy, he is not a good man; you ought not to work for him, blah, blah,” but Daddy didn’t listen to him. Daddy finally, finally—it finally dawned on him mother was telling the truth. I don’t remember him ever saying “Vera you were right,” [laughs] you know how you don’t want to admit you were wrong.

Newberry: Right, well, tell me about your first big trip to Texas.

Hautman: Well, that trip, that was before I had ever talked on the telephone. In fact, they were just really coming in a good bit, and I never had talked on the—and I went with my cousin who lived across the street, and he was going out there to see his girlfriend. He was probably twenty-five—I don’t know how old Morris was, but he said “I want to take Dot out there with me.” Well I was just thirteen, maybe, or fourteen, something like that. Anyway, that trip really educated me about a lot of things. I tried to use that

telephone and this lady said, “You’re talking in the wrong end.” So, you know, you strip your ignorance every now and then [laughs], and I stripped mine in a lot of places.

Newberry: And what else new did you see on that trip?

Hautman: Well, I just saw a lot of different things. I think I saw electric lights for the very first time, and anyway I came back a little bit more knowledgeable about the world, and Morris was real good to me. He’d buy me an ice cream cone. I was about thirteen when this happened, so-

Newberry: How did you travel to Texas?

Hautman: In a car, in his car. See, he was going out there courting this girl, this woman, and I guess he didn’t want to go by himself, and they lived right across the street from us. That was Aunt Mary’s son, my daddy’s sister’s son. And so, I guess he kind of liked me and thought I was—I was out of school; it was in the summer, so that’s the reason I went.

Newberry: Did you go to any restaurants or anything like that?

Hautman: We would stop and buy something to eat, but you know I was so ignorant about everything. Whatever Morris wanted to do suited me, ‘cause he was grown, you know, so whatever he wanted to do—and he seemed to have a lot—enough money to spare to get me a coco or whatever.

Newberry: So, let’s move ahead. In 1941, there was the attack on Pearl Harbor, and what are your memories of that event?

Hautman: I remember walking down the street, and we had evidently heard the news, or somebody had heard, and I said, “I don’t even know where Pearl Harbor is,” and I really didn’t. I didn’t know exactly where it was. So, the war gradually dawned on me, how bad this is, and I was actually in college over at ABAC when Roosevelt declared war, because I remember standing in hall in the dormitory, and somebody said, “Roosevelt has just declared war on Germany.” And, I remember hearing that, and actually being involved deeply, I was not except that my brother went and served time and told me about—he landed on—anyway, a lot of people got killed the very day that he landed over there to fight, and he brought back a bunch of silk from Japan. Mother made my wedding dress out of that silk. He got it real reasonably, and he brought that, and mother said “We can’t have the wedding until Reuben gets back. He’s gonna bring you some silk.” And, mother made it for me, my wedding dress.

Newberry: And that silk came from Japan?

Hautman: That's right, extra good silk, and it didn't cost that much over there.

Newberry: So, where did you graduate from high school?

Hautman: Arlington, Georgia, and I just went to the reunion. I graduated in 1943. We had eleven people in our graduating class, but all—the principal was real good and I remember I liked this one boy so well, but this girl liked him too, and she wouldn't let him look at me, and he was scared of that girl [laughs]. He wound up marrying her [laughs]. So—and I think both of them are dead now. Anyway, they were not at the reunion the other day. 'Cause I got over him—'cause Jemaine Smith[?] got him.

Newberry: I see, so why did you go to ABAC? Explain that again.

Hautman: Well, mother—I think that school did not cost quite as much as other others. See, it was just a junior college at the—plus, you could be there in an hour from Albany, just ride on over to Tifton and so mother—Reuben went there and graduated after two years, and I went there, and I would work—I cleaned the offices of the president of the college, and, you know, dusting—to help with the tuition, 'cause we never were wealthy, you know, so mother did all she could to be saving.

Newberry: How did you travel from your home to Tifton?

Hautman: In a car. Mother would carry me other, and the first car Daddy ever bought was a Dodge. He liked Dodges. He thought they were the best cars of all.

Newberry: Well, tell me about the ABAC campus. What did it look like?

Hautman: It was nice. It was nice. Mr. Pete Donaldson was Dean, I believe they called him. He wasn't President of the college. He was the Dean, and he would—me and two other girls sang together, and he would take us to all the civic clubs trying to advertise ABAC, and get more people to come to ABAC. So, I enjoyed that. I still—one of those girls I know is dead, and I don't know if the other one is dead or not, but I'd like to find out. 'Cause she could play the piano and sing too, and we had a ball.

Newberry: Did you sing hymns or did you sing popular songs?

Hautman: Chattanooga Choo-Choo [laughs]. We didn't sing hymns usually because it was at civic clubs or something, it wasn't—now, I did sing in the Tifton Baptist Church some and the choir there, yeah I did that, but...

Newberry: So, what did you study in college?

Hautman: Home Ec., Home Ec.

Newberry: So tell me about Home Ec. classes.

Hautman: Well, actually I didn't have my mind on it enough. I should—the best thing I learned was how to set the table, some of the cooking recipes, and where you supposed to put the fork and the spoon and all that kind of stuff. Which I didn't think—I guess I was thinking about boys too much then—I wasn't greatly interested. I wasn't paying attention—I just kinda wanted to get married when the time came.

Newberry: Did you do theater?

Hautman: Did I what?

Newberry: Did you participate in theater?

Hautman: We had plays, and I participated in every play that they had at ABAC, yes.

Film Crew: [unintelligible] back in the chair.

Newberry: Yeah, grandmama, if you can just sit back a little bit for volume.

Hautman: I'm sorry.

Newberry: You're good, ok; is that good? Ok, so, um, you said you participated in some of the plays?

Hautman: Yes. I can't remember the title of them, but I enjoyed working—acting sort of in plays and things.

Newberry: And, who did you date?

Hautman: His name was Logan Lewis, and we'd go to the library and we were supposed to be studying, sit down together—we'd just talk about everything but studying. We'd go on bus trips to different places, and I remember one time—the first boy I ever kissed, and I kissed Logan a time or two on that bus. Nobody was looking. We would sit way back in the back [laughs].

Newberry: Did you enjoy that?

Hautman: Oh yeah, it was fun to kiss! It was fun!

Newberry: So, um, all during this time—you're in college from 1943 to 1945, there's the war going on, and do you have memories of that beyond knowing it

was going on? Did you participate in any way? Were there any sort of local fundraisers? How did you participate?

Hautman: I'm afraid I didn't have my mind on it much. A lot of the women worked at different things, but of course I was in school, and when I got back—after two years of college I went home to Albany and got a job in a tire company and worked there for a while, and I would hear about a lot of women working in jobs that they had never had before to help with the war efforts-

Newberry: Right. So, did you have to ration food and-?

Hautman: Yes, yes, the whole—everybody was rationing, and trying to eat sensibly and save and do things to help the war effort; yes, I remember that.

Newberry: But would you get ration books yourself?

Hautman: No, my mother did all that.

Newberry: Ok, and when you were in college, did you go to a dining hall to eat?

Hautman: Yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: So you didn't have to put up a ration card or anything?

Hautman: No, no, nuh-uh.

Newberry: Ok, so what can you tell me about President Roosevelt's death? Do you have any memories of that? When he died in Georgia?

Hautman: Uh, I've been to the very room where they said he died. At Warm Springs, and I went—I'm forgetting what year I went there right now—but, they carried me to this room. They said he came down there real often and bathed in Warm Springs, and it seemed to help him. I think he'd had Polio; that's the reason why he was in a wheelchair. Do you remember exactly details of why he was in the wheelchair? Was it Polio?

Newberry: Polio.

Hautman: And back then they didn't—they had not discovered a way to really prevent Polio or—I had a cousin that had to be in an Iron Lung for a while, Jimmy, Jimmy Nesbit[?], my first cousin. But anyway, the President would come there and bathe and stay awhile, and—they said he—I saw the very room where they said he died there at Warm Springs.

Newberry: Ok, so did you go to the movies when you were in college?

Hautman: Uh, I don't remember hardly ever going to the movies. One thing, I knew my folks didn't have a lot of money, James, and I tried my best not to spend money, and it would take a little bit of money to go to those movies, so I don't remember us college kids getting to go to the movies.

Newberry: So, you said you had one brother and he served in the Pacific during the war. What was your feeling about having a brother going overseas to serve in the war?

Hautman: Well, that's what everybody was doing, so I just knew it was his place to do that too,,and see the man that I married later was over there too. He was an airplane engine—mechanic, one that worked on the airplanes. That's why my future husband did in all that.

Newberry: So, do you remember the end of the war, Victory Day?

Hautman: I think it didn't—I had my mind on other things, I reckon. I wasn't married then, but I had met my future husband, and we were dating real—so I guess I wasn't thinking about the whole [unintelligible].

Newberry: Ok, so where did you go after you graduated from college?

Hautman: After I graduated from college I went back to Albany, and my mother said “If you want to go on to finish, we'll-“ but she let me know that it would really be a financial burden, so I went to work at a tire company, Dobbs-Adams Tire Company [?] in Albany Georgia, and I worked there a year or so. Then I heard of a better job at Cudahy Packing Company.

Newberry: But what did you do at Dobbs-Adams Tire Company?

Hautman: Kept books, wrote down who bought the tires—you know, such as that, and stood at the desk trying to sell tires and different things.

Newberry: So that was an office job?

Hautman: Yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: Were you the only woman working there?

Hautman: No, there was a woman that had been there for years and years. She was trying to teach me I'm sure.

Newberry: So you said you heard about a better job, and where was that better job?

Hautman: Cudahy Packing Company, which was not but about a half mile from where I worked already. But, this paid a lot better, and at this job I worked on a [unintelligible] keeping a record of all the sales and it was something like a typewriter a [unintelligible]. I don't hear about them much now. I don't know if they've invented things that are a lot better or what. But anyway, I was working there when my husband and I got married, and I met him at church.

Newberry: Ok, well let's talk a little bit about Cudahy, so what did the company produce?

Hautman: All kinds of meat products, bacon and all kinds of meat products, and they're out of business now, but that's what they—all kinds of meat products—and they sold them to different stores, and my job was to keep a record of it, you know, on the comptometer.

Newberry: What did the building look like where you worked?

Hautman: Not a real fine pretty building, it was long, and they had different products that they sold in different parts of the building. They had the restroom right here and the offices right here and then all the rest of it was where they kept the products that they sold.

Newberry: And where was it located in Albany?

Hautman: It was, you know where the main block in Albany is? You know where the Albany Herald is? Just one block down further south.

Newberry: So downtown Albany.

Hautman: Uh-huh, yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: So describe a typical day of work at Cudahy.

Hautman: Well, I had a lady in the office that had been working there for several years, and, uh, she and I would talk a little bit, and then I'd—she'd show me all the papers that I had to figure up, you know on the tele—and so that's what I would—get them and start working on that comptometer, and then turn in the final results of what I had gotten on the comptometer.

Newberry: Uh, how much money did you make?

Hautman: Not much, honey, I can't tell—seemed like it was \$37.50 a week but I could be wrong about that. I'm just not dead positive; 'cause I kept working there for a little while after I got married 'cause I remember I was expecting the first time—uh, we got married in '46. I met him at church,

and we got married in that church in 1946, and in 1948 I was carrying Terry, my daughter, my first born, and so I got so sick, and I went and laid down in the bathroom because they didn't have any place—on the floor I was so sick. And of course, my husband heard about that and he said I wasn't gonna work anymore, so I didn't work anymore. I stayed at home then, and that baby—my first baby came in 1948, Terry.

Newberry: Ok, so, you started going to church at where?

Hautman: Vine Memorial, that's where I met my husband. When we moved to Albany from Baker County—and the reason my folks moved—my daddy produced milk, and he had a lot of cows and all, and there was a dairy right close that he could sell all that milk to, and then too he raised vegetables, and he could sell those in Harveys Supermarket, you know, so we really moved to Albany to be closer to a market, and so that's the reason why we actually moved. And so, we all started going to that same church, Vine Memorial.

Newberry: Ok, so tell me about meeting D. S. Hautman.

Hautman: Ok, uh, when I went to that church we had what you call a training union, and that would train the members to get to knowing the bible enough that you could be a teacher, that's what it was, it was training you to be a good bible teacher, and so my husband when to that place too, and we—evidently he liked me and I liked him, so we started dating after that.

Newberry: What impressed you about him?

Hautman: He was good. He was good. He was good. He was good to me, and he was a good Christian, and nice looking, but that was minor compared to the character. He had character, and I could tell he did

Newberry: So, can you describe his marriage proposal?

Hautman: Uh, yes, we—we sat out—right in front of our house—we had our house on Old Pretoria Road—we were sitting right out there-

Newberry: Your parents' house?

Hautman: Uh-huh, my mother and daddy lived there, and we were sitting there before I went into the house, and he asked me out there if I would be his wife. I said "Well I'm gonna think about it, pray about it, and talk to my mother about it and all that." Well, she knew he was a good Christian man, and so that answered her—what she wanted to know about him was that—if he knew the Lord and he wanted to do what was right, and he did.

Newberry: So you said he was a veteran of World War II, did he tell you anything about his service in the war?

Hautmand: Some, but not a whole bunch. His momma had warned him not to drink beer, and I don't think he did. He didn't talk about it much. I guess it was unpleasant. I think he landed on Normandy Beach right after they had a big battle, and he saw people dead, that was the most traumatic thing that ever happened to him in the service, but the rest of the time it seemed that he was not in a battle situation that much, so he—fixed airplanes, that's what his actual job was in the service, to repair and fix airplanes.

Newberry: And he was in the Air Corps?

Hautman: Yes, uh-huh.

Newberry: So, what did he do for a living in Albany?

Hautman: He was working—he came to Albany in the first place—after the war—because they'd had a tornado in 1942, I believe it was, or maybe '44, anyway, a big tornado—and it had torn up buildings everywhere. Cudahy Packing Company, that was f—just—and everything was torn up because of the tornado, and so his daddy sent him over here. He—had been—was at home at that time, sent him over here to get a good job—to clean up, clean up—there were jobs everywhere because the town had to be cleaned up, and so Daddy started working at Smith's Lumber Company, and he worked real hard, and they liked the way he worked. They liked the kind of man he was. They knew he was a good man, if we had a meeting of some sort, and someone would be sitting at tables and drinking, you know, he said "I'm not sitting at a tables where there's a whiskey bottle, I'm not sitting there." 'Cause he had a good name by that time in Albany, and people knew he was a good Christian man. And so, he worked at Smith's Lumber Company for several years, and finally the boss said "would you like to have a company over in east Albany?" He said "yes," but of course he didn't have any money, but they could loan him the money to get it started, so that's what he. That's the way he made a living for the next few years, until after our children were grown and gone to college.

Newberry: So, you said during your first pregnancy you were still working at Cudahy Packing Company-

Hautman: That's right. That's right.

Newberry: And then you had talked to your husband and you quit working.

Hautman: Uh-huh. I didn't feel like working [unintelligible]

Newberry: Tell me about your first home. Where was it located?

Hautman: Well, we lived on—in a little bitty apartment. We place—on Gillespie Avenue in Albany. We payed \$27.50 a month for that apartment, and it was cute as it could be, real small, but after we'd been in it just a short while, one night me and my husband woke up, and I said "Honey, something is biting me," and I was doing like this, and he said "Me too!" We turned on the light and it was bed bugs crawling everywhere. They had gotten into the walls of that apartment, and I'm telling you, D.S. took that whole mattress out and burned it in the field out there, and then we moved out of that apartment, went back with Mother and Daddy for a few nights, and they burned something that the fumes and all would kill everything—'cause they were in the walls of that apartment when we got there, you know, so they found a good place to get them a good supper and a good breakfast and a good—so they just ate on D.S. and I until we discovered them. So, we went out and stayed with Mother and Daddy a few nights until they had burned that—something that would destroy all the bugs in there, so...

Newberry: How did you decorate that apartment?

Hautman: Well, I didn't have much, James, but I got a lot of gifts when I got married, you know, so just—and the apartment was so little—just a few little things that people had given me at showers.

Newberry: So, um-

Hautman: When Terry was about two, we built—We got Abraham[?] to build a house. And so, Mother and Daddy gave us six acres of land right next to theirs and so he was at East Albany Lumber Company, that's where he was making our living and doing well with it. I've got some people that told me they knew him and what a good businessman he was. I knew he would work hard and try hard, but anyway, we—D.S.—we built that house. It was three bedrooms up on that high hill, and I thought it was real pretty. I've got a picture of it in my house right now. And, uh, Terry was two years old, our first child when she walked into that, and of course, before long we had Cindy, our second child, and then Dottie was our third child. We lost our little boy. We had one little boy.

Newberry: I want you to tell me about that. Tell me about your stillborn son.

Hautman: Ok, I had the Rh Negative Factor, and the—it was an incompatibility with Rh Negative and Rh Positive—D.S. was one or I was the other, I don't know what, but it was the incompatibility of those two bloods, and they did not know—the doctors didn't know what to do with it back then, and so they discovered while I was pregnant that that baby was dead, and so

when it was born that's what they said it was, blood, incompatibility between me and my husband. So, the World War II they discovered some—medication that they could give you to prevent that trouble, and so now everybody had pills if they have—their mate is one blood type and you're another blood type, and see that was what our trouble was, and that little boy was our only little boy. The next two children we had were girls, so we stopped after that.

Newberry: So, where is that little boy buried?

Hautman: He's buried in the old, old, cemetery in Albany, right there on the river there.

Newberry: And, how did that make you feel to lose him?

Hautman: Well, real sad. D.S. wouldn't even—my husband wouldn't even let me see him. He said he thought that would not be good for me to see him, but he said he looked very much like Terry, my first baby, our first baby, and so I never even see him, but they had a regular funeral, and several people from our church went out there to the funeral for our little baby boy.

Newberry: Well, tell me about your time in the hospital after your second daughter, Cindy was born.

Hautman: Well, she had the blood incompatibility too, and they had not discovered medication to cope with it, but they started giving her blood transfusions and doing what they could, and she had to stay there [groans] several, several weeks really. And, daddy said "we are gonna bring that girl home." Sand, so they had done all they could do in the hospital and she was doing—and I guess they just set about changing your blood type or something---I don't know exactly what they did, medically speaking. So, we brought Terry home and from the time we brought her home she got along real good, and then we had another one and the doctor advised us we better not have any more children, but we had one more, and Dottie got along real good, she didn't have—didn't have any problems there when she was born.

Newberry: What was it like to go into the hospital and have children in those days?

Hautman: Well, you didn't go until you were having birth pains. You didn't go until—and Doctor Holman, that still comes to visit me, was my doctor, and when you begin to have pains, you knew that baby was coming, and you'd go to the doctor and call your doctor and say you're here, and he'd come sit beside you. I'll never forget; I wanted to kick him in the face 'cause I was hurting so bad, and he was sitting over there reading the newspaper. Well, he knew it would take a certain amount of time for the

baby to get there so it didn't worry him. He'd delivered probably several thousand babies, and that baby still visited with Granddaddy just before he died, he sure did. He's visited me since!

Newberry: What was the hospital room like?

Hautman: It was—I'm sure it's—Sidney Putney—It's still standing there, and I'm sure it was something of nature like it is now except they keep improving and getting it bigger and bigger and bigger, but they looked after you and loved you and did what was necessary.

Newberry: Did you want to have any more children after your third daughter came along?

Hautman: I think we thought three was enough. I don't remember discussing having anymore. We lost our little boy, and I guess we just decided three was enough.

Newberry: So, you said you had the home on Old Pretoria Road, and what did you name that home?

Hautman: We didn't actually name it; it was just our home. Old Pretoria Hill or something.

Newberry: It was named after your three daughters. Do you remember?

Hautman: Terrac—Tecido Tecido.

Newberry: So you took the first two letters of each of your daughters' names

Hautman: Uh-huh

Newberry: To make Tecido Hill.

Hautman: Yeah, yeah that's right.

Newberry: Who's idea was that?

Hautman: I don't know if it was mine or D.S.'s. I don't know. I don't remember exactly

Newberry: So, were you a gardener?

Hautman: Not much of a gardener. D.S. was not much of a gardener either, but my daddy was. Now, D.S. raised a little bit, but daddy was raising—in fact he

was out picking peas when he had the stroke and never did—that stroke is what killed him eventually. They lived right next door to us, you know.

Newberry: And how long did your mother live?

Hautman: She lived almost a hundred. Daddy died when he was 93, I believe it was, and mother of course lived next door, and she would have a cousin occasionally come to spend the night with her, and I'd take her to the doctor and buy her groceries and things like that. Her brain was sharp right up to the very last. She was a smart, good, godly Christian woman. I've still got a lot of books that she bought and read and have got something written in them, and I've still got a lot of them I had a good mother. Mother lived almost a hundred. She was up at my house when she died, and we knew she did not have long, and so she was up at my house when she died, and Gail was there, and I believe Cindy was there on the side of her bed when she—and she just—her feet began to get cold, and I knew from that the circulation was not going down in her feet, and she just closed her eyes and died.

Newberry: So, you were married over 67 years.

Hautman: Mm-hm.

Newberry: When your husband passed away two years ago-

Hautman: That's right.

Newberry: So, what did it feel like to lose him?

Hautman: Well, I still feel it. You wouldn't believe how I still miss him. He had a stroke seven years before he died. Well, that impaired him because he couldn't do as much with his right hand, so I would help him a lot. He used to like to work out in the garage building things. In fact, he built some bookcases for each one of the grandsons, and I've got one sitting right there with a cross on the end of it that he built and he wrote them a letter telling them to look at that cross and remember Jesus, you know. But, he was a good husband. He let me do exactly what I wanted to do, and then I tried not to do anything that he wouldn't approve of, you know.

Newberry: So, where do you live now?

Hautman: I live in an assisted living place. My—after D.S. died, the girls decided I would be safer there because all three daughters lived out of town, and they thought there you don't have to cook, and it's a safe place, you know. So, that's where I am, the Century Pines in Albany.

Newberry: So, how many grandchildren do you have?

Hautman: My goodness [laughs]. I've got a lot of them. My first daughter has got—James, I should have written that down. My first daughter's got three grandchildren, that's right, from John, her son, and then my second daughter's got eleven grandchildren—or nine—it's nine grandchildren, yeah my second daughter—and she lives—that's where we're headed up—we're going to Saturday, but anyway—and then Dottie—she's the one—this year all her children—her daughter's got one baby, and each one of her sons has got two sons, and so she's got seven grandchildren.

Newberry: So it's eighteen great-grandchildren.

Hautman: Uh-huh, that's right.

Newberry: So, what's the most important thing to you in life?

Hautman: To love the Lord and do what's right and teach my children and grandchildren to be right with God because that's where we're all gonna wind up. We're going to be in heaven or hell, and I aim to go to heaven with Daddy and be up there with Jesus.

Newberry: Ok, well, I think that's—that's enough, so is there anything else you want to add?

Hautman: I love grandson James like it's history, and I love somebody that loves history [laughs]. My mother loved it too.

Newberry: Well, thank you Dot Hautman, and we will end there.