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# FANNIE EBERHART AND CAPTAIN FRED HOWARD

## FANNIE EBERHART

Recording begins during introduction by JAMES MACKAY: . . . say that you've been right here for three-score and ten. Is that right? [MRS. EBERHART nods.] I know that's a secret, but you told me that was good to begin. And we have a lady here with an infectious personality, and she's in what I think is the greatest profession on the planet and that is that she is a schoolteacher. [To videographer, Howard Worley]: Are you ready, Howard? [To MS. EBERHART]: Now, you've got forty-five minutes, and you can go overtime if you want to. But I just warn you, if Mayor Andy [Robertson] jumps up and disputes you, don't be alarmed. He just does that.

MRS. EBERHART: He does? OK, thank you for [inaudible].

MR. MACKAY [laughing]: Just want to warn you. Go right ahead, and there may be some questions at the end. And when you finish, I will escort you into the courtroom; and we're going to have a little reception for you. [To audience] Ms. Fannie Eberhart.

MRS. EBERHART: Thank you, Mr. Mackay. And to the ladies and gentlemen of this great historical society, I don't think I need to introduce you no more than what Mr. Mackay has said; but I would like for you to go on a tour with me. How many of you like to go on tours? Good. Now, we are not going to get up and walk. We are going to let our minds expand out in the city of Decatur from 1916 to 1986. You know the story about Decatur being a pioneer village one time. That was way long, long time ago. Have you let your mind go back? OK, are you ready?

Decatur was named after Stephen DeKalb [sic], who was a navy fellow; and he received many honors for being famous. So they were trying to find a name for the town. So some say, "Well, why not let us name it Decatur from Stephen Decatur?" And that name was accepted. And so by then, you now been passed Stephen Decatur because he was killed by one of the navy commanders. And so he's dead now.

We are beginning in the year of December the tenth, 1823. A great city was born. And I wonder if you can tell me what was the name of that great city? [Pauses] It was Decatur. That was it, it was Decatur. So the town was made up of English people, Scottish, and Irish; but all of them were plain people. They wasn't these aristocratic folks that you would think that was moved in with us; but they were just plain, common people.

Decatur began to grow. At that time they had a population of 2,404 people. As the town grew, to Rosa and Eddie Moore a little black girl was born. Now we're up to 1911, and I happened to be that little black girl. Down on Herring Street, which is Trinity now, on the corner of Oliver and Herring. They named me Fannie Mae Moore. My grandmother on my father's side was named Fannie Mathis. She was a slave. She was fifteen years old when freedom was declared in Richmond, Virginia. So they came to Decatur, and there she established a home. She remembered when the courthouse first burned. She lived right on Herring Street, and I heard you call a name a while ago, Mr. Goodger [spelling?]. She washed for the Goodger family. And I was so afraid of that jailhouse, because I used to see Mr. Goodger carry people and put them in the jail. And I was afraid of the jailhouse, because we lived right down the street where you had a good view, and you could see everything.

As time rolled on, the city of Decatur thought about the education [inaudible]. So in 1902 education began in the city of Decatur. The first high school was where the Glennwood School is now. Of course, I don't remember about that, but—for its history, because I'm going to take you from 1916 when I can tell you something about. All right, as the time rolled, we're up to 1916. How many of you remember anything about 1916? Good. I have some smart people [inaudible] [laughter]. I'm telling you, Herring Street was a popular street at that time because it led right into the heart part of the Decatur. It wasn't paved; the roads were very, very muddy. If you tried to come down, it was here—a hill like. If it had a hard rain, you would just slide right on down and then get up and keep walking down to the lower end of Atlanta Avenue. Nor were there sidewalks. But you wouldn't want to see a cleaner city than Decatur at that time, because the people that lived in the homes all along Herring Street on one side, our senator, Mr. Leslie Steele, owned all of those houses, about two and a half blocks on the right-hand side as you would leave McDonough.

Then coming up from Atlanta Avenue back to McDonough you would see the old Oddfellow[s] Hall, which was owned by the black Oddfellows. That's where the public school for the black children started. And as you would come on up the hill, you would see St. James Presbyterian Church, which was organized in 1902. By 1917 Fannie was ready to enter into the private school there. They had a private school. I was the only child; and you know how your parents are—they were afraid somebody would beat me up in the public school, which was in the Oddfellow[s] Hall. So I went to St. James Presbyterian private school, which was run by the Northern Presbyterian people. Allen [spelling?] Augusta Wilson was the principal; his wife and two cousins, they ran the school. It was in the basement of the church. We had at that time about two hundred pupils. You paid twenty-five cents per week, or you could go monthly and pay monthly. My mother would pay one week, and my grandmother would pay the next week. So I attended St. James Presbyterian private school.

After I finished, I started—my grandmother taught me until I was seven years old, because you couldn't start to school until you were seven. And when I entered St. James, I entered at the third grade. So from there until the seventh grade I worked hard, because Reverend A. A. Wilson was one of those Johnson C. Smith [University] men from Charlotte. So they believe, you know, in working you. Not throwing off on any other denomination, but you know the Presbyterian people are very, very educated people; and they want their children and their schools to be up to par.

So after finishing the seventh grade there, I attended Washington High School in Atlanta. And I would come back home in the evening. And we had the trolley. At that time you paid five cents to go to Atlanta and paid five cents to come back to Decatur. After finishing Washington High, I entered college, Morris Brown. I had a scholarship from my church, which is Antioch A.M.E.; and one time Mr. Mackay was our lawyer for that church. So I finished the four years there.

Then I walked out into the world; and I thought Decatur was the most beautiful place at that time, because on the corner of Atlanta Avenue there was a beautiful brick building, and it housed the drugstore. And we could go there and get a soda or some ice cream. And then the top floor at the time was used by the DeKalb County for the superintendent's office, Mr. Rainey, W. E. Rainey. And there was a barber shop. You're on the right-hand side, now, going down McDonough. There was a barbershop there,

ran by Mr. [Austin or Alston?]. They called him "Red." And then there was a livery stable and a house where the Simmons [sic] lived.

Then you crossed the street, and you was at the jailhouse. The McCurdys were over the jailhouse at that time. Keep walking on down McDonough, you would come to the calaboose. It was the place where they used to put people in when they would be bad and disorderly—get drunk or something like that. They'd put you in there, and they had a big rock in the—on the side. Then you passed a store. It was [Unclear—could be "Judavis" or " Jude" or "Jew" "David" or "Davis"?] store. You see a little home, sitting back with the pecan tree—that's where Violet Brooks lived. ["Jude Davis"? See previous note.] started [inaudible—sounds like "palm garden"], which was on Cooper Street. It was a street going through towards the west; and that, on Sunday afternoon, was the place for the black people to go and enjoy after getting out of church. Going on, you come to the Decatur High School; and as you look, you would see the beautiful scenery of Agnes Scott College, which is a very, very beautiful campus in Decatur.

Now come on back towards the courthouse. You pass Joe Esco [spelling?] garage. Do any of you know about him, those that had cars? Then later on we had a hamburger place, and the children at the school couldn't hardly stay in school for going to the hamburger place. But they soon got rid of the hamburger place. And as you come up a little closer now, you're in a beautiful, beautiful building. It is the city hall, where all of the government was kept. But before that it used to be a place there where the fireman stayed. Most of the firemen at that time were the men from the various stores around. And if there was a fire, they'd ring that big bell, and all of the men would come out of the stores; and they would get on a little [inaudible] wagon, and one would be pushing it. And they would fly to the fire. Those men could run real fast at that time. Then we had this new city hall, which was so pretty, because it [was] facing Herring Street. And as you passed the city hall, Gallant-Belk [sic; actually Belk-Gallant] moved in; but later it was known as Belk Store. Then you had Mr. A. S. Turner funeral home. And from the funeral home there was a movie, and then the building that's on the corner of McDonough and Sycamore Street.

Now you're going down Atlanta Avenue. Atlanta Avenue, as I stated before, a big, beautiful, red-brick building was on the corner. When you passed that, then you would come to the *DeKalb New Era* publishing place for the paper. And right below it

was the Bailey Brothers Shoe Shop. My grandmother washed for Mr. Bailey, so I'd have to carry the clothes every Friday over to the Baileys'. And as you go across, you would come to Mr. Goodger's house, which was on the corner of Atlanta Avenue and Marshall Street at that time. And if you go on down, you see many historical homes of people, and you run up on the Stovall Tire Company. Go on down, you're in "the Bottoms," as they used to call it then. You would find a picture show. Also Tom Steele had a hotdog place, and the children would et these "big links" as they called them, you know, at that time.

So now you're coming back up to McDonough. On the square [inaudible—could be "Rick" or "Red"?] Dry-cleaning Company used to be on to my left, and across the street on [East] Ponce de Leon was a Furniture Fair place. We also had Woolworth ten-cent store on [East] Ponce de Leon across. And later Mr. Tabor, who was made manager of the Allen Wilson Terrace project, which this city bought, for twenty-five years, so that the funds would come back to the city. So Mr. W. F. Tabor was in the building. And as you go on down, you come to Candler Hotel, which was on the corner. As you pass that, you will see an apartment house, where a number of people lived in, and on up till you come to the Decatur Federal. You would see Decatur Federal. Later Decatur Federal purchased the apartment building and extended a parking lot. As you come on down the left-hand side, Neal Pope had a car place there; but later he moved out on to Buford Highway. And if you go along there now, you will see a different scene. You will not see the apartment, not the Neal Pope place. But you will see beautiful Decatur Federal.

Are you all with me? OK. Now, coming to the square: my doctor at that time, Dr. Houston, home was right across from the courthouse. And as you come on to the corner, there was a jewelry store, which has moved down on Clairemont. From the jewelry store you turn, and you'll be at a grocery store, and that grocery store was named Weeks Brothers. Do you know him? Any of them? You know all of them? OK, good. Well, you know he had a fellow worked in there was named Mr. Josey. And all of the black children loved Mr. Josey, because whenever you go to Weeks Brothers, they had some scrap candy; and you bought—if you bought anything, Mr. Josey would give you three or four pieces of scrap candy. And when your mother wanted you to go to another store, you would beat it to Weeks Brothers. And from Weeks Brothers, then,

we would go on down, and you come to Decatur Post Office and Mr. McManus's real estate place. And then there was a filling station on the corner owned by Mr. Tom Anderson.

You're on Church Street now. Coming back on the left you would see Shields brothers' store. And there was a fellow by the name of Mr. [inaudible—could be "Kiles"?] had a store. Coming on you would see the Paris [Parris?] brothers' insurance company. Now you're back at the corner again. You've been on a part of Sycamore Street. Sycamore Street was one of the famous streets in Decatur. Why? Because on that street we had the Presbyterian minister beginning right from Church Street a piece up the street, Dr. McGarity [spelling?], Mr. George, and across there was the Cooper home, where the Recreation Department is now, with those beautiful magnolia trees. We children of Decatur did love to go up there and sit under the big, beautiful magnolia trees. And Mrs. Cooper sometimes would bring us lemonade out. And we just enjoyed it so much. Also you would see now Decatur Hospital building, and across from there was Ms. Jeeter's [spelling?] home. And from there on up is the Decatur Methodist Church building. As you go on down, you would come across Mr. Charles McKinney's [spelling?] aunt, Mrs. Gash's [spelling?] home, which was on the corner. And as you pass the Gash [spelling?] home, then you begin to see other beautiful homes, and you see Dr. John H. Goss's [spelling?] home, which is still standing on Sycamore Street.

You come back, and as you come on back past the Coopers' home, you will see a new library. At that time, which we children used to play on the grass, because I played with the W. J. Dabneys' children; my mother cooked for him. And Dr. McGarity [spelling?], Grimm [spelling?] George, they were going to school, and we would get out at the same time and meet them on the corner of McDonough and Herring, and we'd come on. And you talk about having a free-for all on the lawn at the Presbyterian church, we would have it, because Herbert would always sell wolf tickets [i.e., would speak aggressively or provocatively], and he wouldn't fight. So Mary and Dorothy and myself, we'd have to take up for him. And we'd have one of the biggest fights there on the Presbyterian lawn, and then we'd go on up to the corner of [East] Ponce de Leon and North Candler. That was where the W. J. Dabneys' home was. And there we got

punished, because somebody would always call and tell we were down there fighting; but we were trying to help the boy out because he wouldn't fight [laughs].

Then, as you leave Sycamore, you go down Church Street. Church Street at that time there was a--on the corner there was a lady named Ms. Scofield. And you would also see beautiful homes on Church Street. Come on back now, stop, look, and you will see a great monument that was erected on the lawn here at the old courthouse. The years passed, so did the town grow, showing much progress. And look across, and you see a beautiful new building. I wonder who can tell me what that building is. [pauses] Your new courthouse! OK, that's where you are now. Mr. Bob Gould was [inaudible] where all of your government is [sounds like "transferred"—maybe "transacted"?]. Decatur is a place of beautiful homes, churches, and trees. I am glad that I was born and reared in Decatur. The people, white and black, knew how to get along. There were more Christianity in our city then than it is now. We didn't have any trouble with the whites. The whites didn't bother us; they treated us all [inaudible—sounds like "royally"?]. So I guess that's the reason I am still here. I've been all over the world almost; but there's only two places that I know of that I haven't been, and that's Alaska and Hawaii. Decatur is a wonderful place to live. A wonderful place.

Now, we done left that 2,404 people. We have a population in our city of 18,404. If that isn't progress, I don't know what you would call it. Don't be ashamed of Decatur. Stick your chest out. I don't care how far I go, they say, "Where are you from?" I say, "I'm from Decatur, Georgia, better known as DEC-a-tur, Georgia" [laughter]. That's the only time that I will deny Decatur's name. And so I have enjoyed my seventy-four years in the city of Decatur. Thank you. Is there any questions? [applause]

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: You said two places you've enjoyed—one was Decatur, and the other was Alaska. Well, what—

MRS. EBERHART: I said I haven't been to Alaska. I was to go one year, and one of the principals in the white schools in DeKalb came back and said he like to froze. And I know I'm cold-natured, and so I [LOUD RADIO INTERFERENCE—CB or HAM or EMERGENCY BROADCASTING OVER AUDIO FOR SEVERAL SECONDS. AUDIO RESUMES WITH MRS. EBERHART RESPONDING TO MR. MACKAY'S INAUDIBLE QUESTION OR

COMMENT.] At the beginning, my stepfather—my father died when I was three days old, and my mother remarried again when I was twelve. She married one of the [inaudible—radio interference] citizens of Decatur—Mr. Luke Ebster, which Ebster Park is named after his nephew. He ran on the road. And every summer he would give me a vacation. That's how I got to travel a lot. Then, after I got able to making money myself, I began to go different places. I like to travel. I like to see [inaudible]. So maybe someday I'll get to these other two places.

MR. MACKAY: How long did you teach?

MRS. EBERHART: I taught forty years in all. I taught three years in Gainesville, Georgia, and the remaining part in DeKalb County.

MR. MACKAY: Do you think that children have changed very much or that education has changed very much in that time?

MRS. EBERHART: Oh, yes. Education have changed. I tell you what I think that have turned children loose like they used to be. You remember when they said school was fun? You know, one time they had that as a slogan, "School is fun"—which it is fun in a way, but you got to work. And so children just took the slogan and had fun [laughs]. And so that's the way it goes. [Acknowledging audience question] Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: You mentioned St. James Presbyterian Church?

MRS. EBERHART: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: I remembered that right. And it was on Herring Street?

MRS. EBERHART: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: And you mentioned that it was a private school—

MRS. EBERHART: Yes, it was private--

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: --that operated as a part of that church?

MRS. EBERHART: Yes, it was run by the Northern Presbyterian people.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: And that's where you—

MRS. EBERHART: That's where, yeah, my elementary.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: When did it—it's not in existence any—

MRS. EBERHART: No, when they started building the Allen Wilson project—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Yeah.

MRS. EBERHART: They tore the church down because they had two Presbyterian churches for the blacks. The Southern was on Oliver Street, which is Commercial now—Commerce now. And they—it seemed as though the Southern Presbyterians had better contact with the people in Decatur than the Northern Presbyterians.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: When was this St. James Presbyterian Church torn down?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: She said when the projects started.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: When did the project start?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Thirty-five [1935].

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: I see.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Allen Wilson—

[Off-camera comments from various people, not audibly picked up on sound equipment, result in laughter.]

MRS. EBERHART [laughing, holding up her hand, addressing the two men who just spoke]: All right, peace.

MR. MACKAY [laughing, to MRS. EBERHART]: Call the class to order.

MRS. EBERHART [laughing]: Peace.

MR. MACKAY: How many different grades have you taught?

MRS. EBERHART: I have taught the primer through junior high school.

MR. MACKAY: Got any subjects you like better than others?

MRS. EBERHART: Well, my main subject was social studies. I like reading, too. [Acknowledging audience question]: Yes? [points] OK.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: The postal guide indicates that there are twelve other Decaturs around the country. Were any of them named after this Decatur or after Stephen Decatur?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: They were all named after the same Admiral Decatur. [on-camera] But not after the city of Decatur, Georgia.

MRS. EBERHART: The only one that I know of is Decatur, Alabama. I've been there, so—and it was named from Stephen Decatur.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: In the sixty years that you've been associated with the school system, you have seen—

MRS. EBERHART: Forty years.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Well, sixty from your birth. You've seen a lot of change.

MRS. EBERHART: Oh, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Have you been for or against most of those changes?

MRS. EBERHART: Well, I have been for the changes because at the time that I entered the DeKalb County, there were seventeen schools for the black children. We had to make our own fires. We had a big pot-belly stove, and you would probably twelve or twenty-five miles from home, and you'd have to go in the morning, because they didn't have the buses at that time. You'd get there, and you'd make the fires, and then you had to put paper in the cracks to keep the wind from blowing you away and to keep warm. I am glad that the change from the old buildings to a modern building

to keep the children warm, which was good for their health. Of course, we got plenty of fresh air, and we wasn't sick [laughs]. And the subject area: I was tired of Dick and Jane. And so we got new books; and from that, new life began to bloom on.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Well, you didn't teach in the Decatur system. You taught in DeKalb County?

MRS. EBERHART: No, in DeKalb County.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Did you start under Rainey, or who was it?

MRS. EBERHART: [inaudible] Rainey, uh-huh.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Where did you teach in the DeKalb system?

MRS. EBERHART: I taught—well, the first school I went to was Hopewell. Mr. Jim Cherry at that time was a state man to check registers. Hopewell was located on Bouldercrest Road. In 1949 they consolidated Hopewell with County Line Elementary School, which was in the south part of the DeKalb County on Line Road at that time. Later they moved—built a new school—over on Line Crest Road.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Well, how did you get to the schools when some of them were that far away from your home?

MRS. EBERHART: We had to drive.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: You had to drive your own car. You didn't live in the neighborhood.

MRS. EBERHART. No, we didn't live in the neighborhood.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: You said twenty-five miles a while ago, and—

MRS. EBERHART: Well, some did have to travel. Those that lived in the city of Atlanta, going to other places. Because most of the teachers, except three at Lithonia, had to travel from Atlanta.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Did they go by train or drive?

MRS. EBERHART: They would drive.

MR. MACKAY: Since this is Black History Month, I'm interested to know whether you had any time to really dig into your roots. You mentioned your grandmother.

MRS. EBERHART: Oh, yes.

MR. MACKAY: Do you have any notion how long your family has been in this area or where it came from?

MRS. EBERHART: As I stated, my grandmother came from Richmond, Virginia. When freedom was declared, she came to Decatur.

MR. MACKAY: Do you know why she came to Decatur?

MRS. EBERHART: Boyfriend [laughter]. And my mother's family was reared right out here at Washington Park where Senator Steele owned land, too, and her father owned land right joining each other, Senator Leslie Steele. My father was born in Athens, Georgia, at that time.

MR. MACKAY: Any other questions? Excuse me.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Did you have to make more than seventy to pass?

MRS. EBERHART: In school?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Uh-huh. In high school.

MRS.EBERHART: Yes, ma'am. In high school? Oh, yeah. I never did believe in a "C" student. Because "C" students sometimes make the best students out in the world, but it was always my idea that—do the best you can. Give me a B, and I will let you get to the A. And so I tried to inspire the children, you know, keep their morale up. Because if--you find out that children will play you; and if they find your weak points, then that's where you won't have—you're going to have trouble with discipline in the classroom. So you have to be stern. You play, have a good time with your kids; but when playtime is over, it's work time. I tell everybody, "Come to school with your

tools, like your father and mother goes to work each day. They carry—you have tools to work with, and your pencil and paper and your head is your tools."

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: I kept waiting for you to mention, when you mentioned different places. Back years ago—probably the thirties—there was a [inaudible] market right across from the courthouse over here--

MRS. EBERHART: On Sycamore?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: --where that [inaudible] apartment along [inaudible]—

MRS. EBERHART: On Sycamore.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Sycamore.

MRS. EBERHART: Uh-huh.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: I remember one of the first jobs—I lived in Fulton County, but one of the first jobs I had [inaudible]. When I was fourteen years old, I came out here and worked for a man that had the grocery, the vegetable section in there, and I was pretty sure that that was—

MRS. EBERHART: That was Shields down below.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Well, it was [inaudible] Brothers Market, and they franchised out the vegetables—the grocery part—produce, produce department.

MRS. EBERHART: Produce.

MR. MACKAY: I think y'all will agree that she's done one of the finest jobs of just remembering. It's been most interesting to me. [Recognizing question from the audience] Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Jim, when did you say you were born, Mrs. Eberhart?

MRS. EBERHART: 1911.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]:1911?

MRS. EBERHART: July the fourth.

MR. MACKAY: That's patriotic. [Recognizing audience question] You have another question?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Not a question, but I want to say that I've been on some tours, too, but this is one of the best ones I've ever been on.

MRS. EBERHART: Thank you.

MR. MACKAY: If y'all will follow Mrs. Eberhart and me into the courtroom, you'll have a chance to chat with her there, and let's give her another round of applause. [Applause]

END OF EBERHART RECORDING

## CAPTAIN FRED HOWARD

Recording begins during introduction by JAMES MACKAY: . . . time that all of us got around here. Well, I guess he [inaudible] right after World War II. But he told us [inaudible] old DeKalb County Fire Department, how primitive it was then. And Captain Fred Howard was nominated—he came to our mind as the best person to in the profession of policing to reminisce about anything he wants to about his experience in DeKalb. He's welcome to talk about any [inaudible]. I told him he [inaudible], just tell us how it was. But I started practicing law in 1947. We had a very skeletal police department at that time. We had a little jail down here. I do have tremendous personal appreciation and pride in the growth and professionalism of the police department. These men--Captain Howard's one of them—have gotten into a profession where they're prepared to lay their life on the line for our safety and security. And he's seen officers lose their lives in service to this county. But we're just honored to have him here. [To Captain Howard] And we don't give you a flowery introduction—we will dub that in later. We want you to sit there and be relaxed, and

it's a pleasure to present to you Captain Fred Howard, who is the, I think, top man in terms of tenure of service as a splendid police officer in the [inaudible].

CAPTAIN HOWARD rises, an unidentified woman brings him a glass of water, and he begins his recollections: Well, ladies and gentlemen, I tell you, the police department has grown, right along with the fire department—of course, I'm not going back all the way back when it started in 1915, when the first police officer was hired. He worked out at Tucker. This was right after the legislature passed the bill where a county could have police officers in addition to the sheriff, but separate from the sheriff. But from 1915 on up to about 19-- the early '30s, I'd say '35—the department was up and down. They'd have from two to four, sometimes six or eight men. And turnover was great—names would pop up that you'd never heard before. And this situation existed until about 1935, when the county appointed a man named Dailey, J. T. Dailey, as chief. Some of you might remember Dailey. He was a hard man, but he was fair. Now, he brought some organization and stability to the police department. He organized the department into watches—that is, where it would work twenty-four hours a day. All over the county you had territories you were working in. And that was when it first began to look like a police department, in 1935.

But the biggest—I guess the biggest moment in the DeKalb County Police Department was in 1941. He appointed me as a patrolman. And I'll tell you how that come about. Back then, I don't know if you remember too well or not, but you'd take a job most anywhere you could get it. I was running a service station out here, wasn't making anything much, and somebody asked me, "Do you want to be a police officer for DeKalb County?" I said, "Well, I never thought about it." But it worked around and he finally put me to work. So I was up here on Friday, I believe it was, and he told me to come in on Sunday night. And I said, "What about a uniform?" Well, they didn't have much of a uniform back then [inaudible]. They gave me a cap with a little round badge on it—looked like a streetcar motorman's cap—and I said, "Well, what about clothes?" He said, "Well, wear light-blue shirts and dark pants." Well, I had some dark pants; they had a pinstripe in them. And I asked about a gun, and he said, "Well, I get you up one [inaudible]." Well, I had a pistol—great, big, old Spanish pistol. And I guess somebody must have done something like take it off a Cuban when they fought

the battle of San Juan Hill, because it was that old [laughter]. You'd shoot it, and as much fire would come out the sides as it did the front of it [laughter].

I come to work that Sunday night at midnight. I come through this little alley down here. King Hardware was on the corner. And you left the jail and come through a alley back here. Well, I went through there. I parked back there because I didn't want to park up on the square because [inaudible]. And I come out of that alley, and a man stopped me. He said, "Hey, where are you going?" Policeman. I said, "I'm going to the county to go to work." And he looked, walked all around me, said, "Well, they scraping the bottom of the barrel." And it was Coot [spelling?] [Luther] Spinks [laughter]. And he was later made chief [of Decatur's city police department], and he was a good friend of mine. But I left, and I kind of felt let down, and I come on over to headquarters, and they told us, "Well, you must have met Coot [spelling?] Spinks" [laughter].

But when I come across that courthouse lawn [to] the basement of this courthouse—we worked out of the basement back then—where there's a boiler room here on the back side—with that big pistol, dressed like a policeman, I thought—I was as dangerous as a SAM missile [laughter]. I'm telling you what's the truth. I knew nothing about the law and knew less about how to enforce it. But we went to work. I did, and it was [inaudible]. I worked with some old people--older people who didn't let me get in trouble. But policing back then was a little bit rough. It had rough edges. In fact, it was crude. We had no--like I said, didn't anybody know too much about the law. We didn't have ordinances; we had to work under state laws. We worked nine hours a day, every day in the year except ten days' vacation--if you were lucky, you got a vacation. And I asked [Chief] Dailey one time, I said, "Why do you work us so many years, nine hours a day?" He said, "Well, you take thirty minutes to eat; there's two of you, working two men in a car, thirty minutes each, each one of you takes up another hour." And we worked every day, like I say; you didn't get to take off at all. And that [inaudible phrase], I believe, until 1944. And from 1944 for the next several years the turnover of chiefs was rather heavy. A fellow, Sutton, Ed Forrester—I believe Ed Forrester come after Dailey, then Sutton. There were several in there before it ever settled down.

Finally they moved us out of the basement of the courthouse down to the new DeKalb building [on Memorial Drive], and we was flying high. Had three or four rooms down there. We had a little radio transmitter about that big, and we could talk—it was two-way. We thought that was a great step. For many years we just had a receiver. Our calls were sent to us through the City of Atlanta. If you needed a police officer, you called our office. He, in turn, would call the City of Atlanta radio operator. He would give us the call, repeat it three times, and if you got it, good. If you missed it, you just missed it, because there was no way to find out. And the equipment was sorry. You couldn't hear down in Stone Mountain and Lithonia. We missed calls, stayed in hot water all the time. This went on for several years, till we finally got a two-way radio system. We were flying high. [Inaudible sentence, ending with "without heaters"] Now, you take fifteen- or twenty-degree weather and working on a call without heaters, it got a little rough when you're working about eight or nine hours. We'd play it kind of smart. We'd find someplace with a heater and a telephone and tell the operator where we were. We said, "We'll be here. If you need us, call us."

I believe it was in 1956—'55 or '56—I believe Mr. [inaudible] was commissioner. And the police department had to grow; there was no question about it, it had to grow. And along about this time, we began to hear a lot about civil rights. Like I said, when I come to work, I didn't know anything about the law at all. Civil rights, I didn't know what it meant. And little about anything. But we began to hear so much about civil rights, and there were three people in this department prosecuted in Federal Court for violation of a fellow's civil rights. We began to wake up. Now, some people in this department—some of those old fellows—never did change. They wanted to do it the same old way. But I began to feel like, as well as some other people—and we began to have seminars, go to school, have instructors come down. We'd have good lawyers and people from all over the state [inaudible], we'd come in, meet with them and listen to them. One of the speakers we used to have, old Schley Howard—if you know how Schley was. We used to [inaudible] Schley a good bit. But it order to know more about what we were doing, we had a heck of a time trying to convert from that old style of policing up to what we knew we had to do. We began to get better.

And then, I believe, in 1958 they brought Recorders Court in, where we could write a ticket. Up until that time, if we made a case against you for anything under the

sun—run a stop sign or speeding—we had to lock you up, bring you down to Decatur and lock you up in the jail, have a wrecker pull your car in, and all this stuff, and then you'd go back to [inaudible—sounds like "state"?] bond. Your punishment was greater than any crime you could have committed in an automobile, almost, before you got out of jail. In the court--you take a man, let's say he lived in Gwinnett County, and he come through DeKalb County. Lot of people work in Atlanta [inaudible phrase] work at Sears-Roebuck. Everybody stopped [inaudible] Gwinnett County worked for Sears-Roebuck out there on Bankhead Highway. But he come into town and maybe had an accident on the way home, had some little wreck or something, and we had to make a case against him. We brought the man to jail, had his car pulled in by Esco's garage down here on McDonough Street, the man went up to jail and finally called somebody to come and make bond for him, got him out of jail, he had to come to our office again to get a release on his car, go to Esco's to get his car out of [inaudible]—maybe the man doesn't have but a couple of dollars with him, and [inaudible phrase] foreign country—in jail, no help, and by the time he got somebody to talk to Esco to let him have his automobile and got home, his wife is mad at him, everybody's mad at him—this man's had too much punishment to start with. So you know what, we didn't make too many cases. We just [inaudible]—sort of have to, [inaudible clause], should we have had ordinances like we have now in DeKalb. But when they [inaudible] ordinances, municipal court in DeKalb County, called it traffic court, we started issuing tickets. Had to, to control traffic in DeKalb County.

DeKalb County was growing by leaps and bounds, and the [public safety] department was not growing as fast as the county. And I forget—maybe it was in 1950, that we began to have a good many people. And I asked the lady down here in county headquarters the other day, I said, "How many people do you have in your police department now?" She said, "We have 547 sworn personnel." That doesn't count your support people like secretaries, record clerks, accountants, bookkeepers—all the people it takes to run a police department. It takes a lot of them. When I went to work in October 1941, I was number twenty-two. That's over five hundred and twenty-something people more than [inaudible over coughing in audience]. And it still—they still don't have enough [inaudible]. You go down and talk to Bobby Burgess [inaudible] and say, "I need more men." Well, I know, and I wouldn't doubt it, because I know what the situation is, how many men it takes to run a police department. If you

ever thought—stop and think that opening up one position in a police department, you've got to hire four people. You say, "I want to put a position on the morning watch." You can't just go hire a man; you've got to hire four, if you fill the position as should be. You've got to have a man to work—he's going to have to have a day off every five days—four days, now, forty-eight hours, he's going to have a day off. It'll take from three to four people to keep that one position open. And it's a terrible thing. It's an expensive thing.

And people used to have the idea that the police department was a necessary evil. But it's changed now. If you were stopped today by a police officer in DeKalb County or talked to him, you would be dealing with what I think are professionals. Those people are well-trained, they have the best equipment money can buy, they go through twenty weeks of rigid training before they can even become a police officer, and then they're on probation for twelve months. For that twelve months, anytime that his supervisor decides that he can't cut it, they can tell him so. They'll call him and say, "Look, we advise you to get into some other profession. You just can't make it here." And they've got to be [inaudible] about it, because after twelve months' probation, you can't do it without cause.

That's what the merit system—the merit system in 1956—the dates are [inaudible]—'56 or '58, the merit system in DeKalb County, that's what settled the police department down. Up until then, they could say what they wanted to; there's a certain amount of politics get into it. The new regime would want his chief in. The chief would want his people in, and you can't tell me it didn't have some effect on them. As long as Mr. Candler was commissioner, we didn't have any problem, because, you know, he was commissioner a long time. So we didn't have any problem as long as Mr. Candler was commissioner. But up until Mr. Candler was here, you had to be very careful. You had to be careful what you said, who you locked up, everything. But when the merit system was brought in, we began to feel like we were on solid ground. And we, I think, began to police like it should have been done.

As I said a while ago, this civil rights business put us in a bind. We didn't know how to handle crowds or riots or anything else. We started going to school, and I spent several weeks with the Continuing Education Department at the University of Georgia studying riot control, crowd control; and fortunately we didn't need it too

much in DeKalb County. The most trouble we had was Ku Klux; we had a little bit with them once or twice. But you know the blacks were a minority here—I don't think about twelve percent, so we never had a problem with them for a long time—didn't ever have much with them. But the Ku Klux were always trying to stir up something. We had a little problem with them occasionally.

And the police department—I can remember the first woman that ever worked for the police department, was a Ms. Langley. I don't remember if you remember old Judge Langley or not, used to be down on Marshall Street. He was a J. P. [Justice of the Peace] before Judge George [spelling?]. And Ms. Langley—when Mr. Langley died, she wanted a job, so [Chief] Dailey asked us, several of us, said, "I'm going to put Ms. Langley to work." So, well, we didn't like it, you know. We said, "When people call the police department, they don't want to talk to a woman. Want to talk to a man" [laughter]. Now we felt that way about it. But he put her to work, and it was the best thing he could have ever done, because she was a jewel in that department. She could type good, she could spell [laughter], all these things—she brought something to the department, and we began to realize it.

No blacks. The first black was a man named Oscar Adams. This happened, I'm guessing—I don't remember. It was in the '50s, I believe. But blacks and women—that was taboo for a long time. The girl that worked for me the last four or five years in the department, my secretary, and I don't think I could have lived had it not been for her. She was a beautiful young girl, and she come to my house seven—six or seven years ago. And she said, "I put my application to become a police officer. What do you think about it?" And I said, "I don't think about it." I said, "Reba, what in the world do you want to be a police officer for?" She said, "The money." She's a small girl, and I wondered what would happen to her if some big buck objected to her and tried to run over her. And then I got to thinking about it, and I said, "Reba would shoot him. I know what she'd do" [laughter]. And so she went on and went through the school and was accepted, and she's an excellent police officer. And I told the man in charge of the detective department, I said, "If you're smart, you'll get Reba Thomas in this detective department." And he did, as soon as she got the probationary period over, put in to the police [detective?] department; and she handled rapes and child abuse and that sort of thing. And she was perfect for it. They have lots of women down

there. We used to [inaudible] go for nine hours, thirty minutes for each officer to eat. We'd go home and eat. And one officer would listen to the radio while we'd go and eat, and [inaudible clause], and he'd go and eat. I've often wondered what my wife would have done back in 1942 or 3 or 4 or 5 if I'd pulled up in front of my house with a good-looking woman in the car, eat supper, and go work till about midnight [laughter]. It's an accepted thing now, no problem. And most of them are doing a good job. I told Reba last time I talked to her, I said, "Well, I'm proud of you, Reba. You made it." She said, "I wouldn't take nothing for it."

And it's a wonderful life. A police officer can have a rough time, but I have lots of memories, arthritis, and a bad case of ulcers [laughter], but I handled the things with most of the headaches for years, I was in charge of the administrative division. That's do the buying, handling personnel, handle the budget—and that is a problem, when you go after the budget—and fingerprinting, communication—everything that's a headache on the inside, I had it for about ten or fifteen years. And money is what it takes to operate a good police department, and DeKalb County has never pinched pennies too much on the police department. And that's the reason we've got a good police department today. It takes money.

Now, when Johnny Crunkleton took the job as chief of police in Gwinnett County, he come to me and talked and said, "What do you think?" And I said, "Well, John, if those people in Gwinnett County want a police department, you can have one. If they don't, you can't. If they'll put the money up." And he said, "Well, let's say they'll come with the money." And he did pretty well with it. They've got another DeKalb County man, Shelldecker [spelling?], now. I got to go by and see how old Shelldecker's [spelling?] doing now. I know he's got some headaches.

But it takes a man with a lot of common horse sense, a lot of training, and DeKalb County's lucky to have a man like [Police Chief] Dick Hand. Now, I said when he first come to work down there that he ought to have been a fireman instead of a police officer, because he wants to go to every fire they have [laughter]. And he loves to drive an automobile. He scared me half to death. We were down on the south side one day, and they had a fire, I don't know, Northlake somewhere. And he had a car with lights on both ends of it, and he's flying up [Interstate] 285 and got up close to where we were going to get off. And there's a lady driving—driving like she should

have been driving. She turned off right in front of us, right in the middle of the ramp, going up. Chief wanted to get around her, so he had to get way over in the grass, with the siren going, all the lights, and he slammed on the brakes, and he said [inaudible]. I said, "Chief, we don't need to talk to that woman. We don't know what [inaudible]. She's driving like she wanted to." And we went on out. He would scare you to death in an automobile. [laughter] But he'd get there.

I know once--he had a rule for several years that staff officers, one of them would be in charge on the weekend. I don't care what happened, you were it; you were in charge. And I was the officer one weekend, and we had a burglary in a store, small store. So I got a man handling the store out in Tucker. Well, that's the kind of call everybody wants to go on—"get him on the nest." That's what they call it, burglar in the store. Well, there was a young fellow that was with me, and we left headquarters, and I was driving. So we went out here and finally got on Brockett Road, and I was going toward Lawrenceville Highway, just wide open. And this fellow told me, said, "Hey, you know, Decatur's back that way." I said, "Yeah." He said, "You know who lives in Decatur?" I said, "Dick Hand." And I slammed the brakes on, and [inaudible], and I promise you that man [Dick Hand] went by just like a bullet, [inaudible phrase], with them both lights going on both ends [laughter]. I said, "Chief," one time, "what do you want to light the back for? Nobody could catch you" [laughter]. But he's in the right position, in charge of the fire department and the police department. Dick Hand is a smart man, got a lot of sense, lot of training. And I think he's done a wonderful job with both departments, fire department and police department. But I sure thought he should have been a fireman instead of a policeman when he first come down there.

But he began to get money for the police department, and it began to grow, really grow. They have the finest communication system in the world, I reckon, our police department. You should go down there and see them. They're fixing to redo it over. I don't know how much that system [inaudible]. But I start thinking about those old things we used to work with and what they have now, I think a DeKalb County police officer is a computerized professional, I think that's what he is. They depend on computers. And I was the first one begin to recognize what a computer would do for a police department. I ran out here into a fellow with the FBI, a fellow named Tomlin. I was in a seminar with him one time. He said, "Why don't you put stuff in the

computer?" I said, "They're too expensive." He said, "You've got the finest computer in the Southeast there in the DeKalb building." Well, I hadn't thought about it until he called it to me. He said, "You can put anything in it that you want to." He said, "But you want to put your accidents in it." So I come down and the fellow [inaudible—Deaton? Dayton?]'s in charge of it, and talked to him, and [inaudible]. And he said, "Sure." So we started putting stuff in those computers on an experimental basis, and now everything is done through those computers.

It's a wonderful thing; it's the most wonderful thing to happen to law enforcement. Well, you can key anything you want to in that [inaudible]—record check [SNAPS FINGERS] is that quick. You can be behind a car on the highway and key in the tag number into the system. And the system will check it all out for you—who owns the car, if he should be wanted—it'll tell you right quick, and you can do that, a lot of times, before you stop the car. You can see what that would be worth to an officer. He would have a little idea who he was dealing with when he got out of the car. And that helps. We used to, we worked two men to a car. I just—it took me a long time to accept the idea that one man could be out in a car at night by himself. But it works out fine, with the communications they have.

But back when I first started to work, with the old system we had, it was dangerous for one man to be out—and two sometimes. We would stop a car, and a fellow named Cloud—old "Stormy" Cloud—working [inaudible], first time I'd worked. First car we stopped, he said, "Just ask him for his driver's license." So I got out, and I walked to the car, and I [inaudible] on Buford Highway. Cloud got out, and he looked at everything, and he handled it from there on. And [inaudible] and went on. He [Cloud] said, "Let me tell you what the first thing you done wrong." He said, "You walked right up in front of his door, didn't you?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "And he was parked right on the side of Buford Highway." I said, "Yep." He said, "He could have took that door and knocked you out into the middle of the street." Well, [inaudible] C. M. Cloud—they called him "Stormy"—was one of the reasons that I ever made it as a police officer because just such as that he would teach you. And he would take tag numbers, and he'd keep that stuff, keep a record of it.

And then—Cloud was sort of like I was. He was a firm believer in a record. I think, to know where you're going, you have to know where you've been, especially a

policeman. A well-run police department, like the one in DeKalb County—their record rooms are something out of this world. They can tell you anything you want to know about just about anybody, especially if you've ever been to jail or had a case or a ticket or anything [inaudible]. They've got it. They just keep your name in the system, that's it. And [inaudible—sounds like, "It's amazing" or "As mayor"], I'll go over there sometimes now, people call me and ask me about things, and I say, "Well, it's no problem. The police department can get it for you." And the written reports that we've made back in the early '40s, some of them are still on file.

And I'm amazed at the details that even we put into them back then. And when Mr. Bell was solicitor here, we had a fellow that was killed on a railroad track down at Stone Mountain back in about 1942 or 3. And along with Bob Anderson I answered the call down there. Well, the man was run over—the train got him. Well, the [inaudible] accepted that it was an accident. Johnny Jones investigated, he investigated the case and [inaudible] said it was an accident; the train hit the man. Well, this rocked on for about twenty years, and the State Patrol got a letter from a man in Milledgeville [Georgia's state mental hospital], said he'd killed a man and put him on the railroad track. Well, they sent the letter to us; and I went to Richard Bell, and Bell said, "Well, why don't you and [inaudible name] go down and talk to the man." I said, "Well, what we need to talk about?" He said, "Find out what his problem is—he must have a problem somehow." Well, I searched back through the files and found our report and also found Johnny Jones's report—the investigator, and it was pretty thorough. So we knew what to talk to the man about. We took those reports and went down to Milledgeville and got the superintendent to bring him in to us [inaudible]. We started talking to him, and asked him, I said, "Did you write this letter to the State Patrol?" He said, "I sure did, but," he said, "I didn't kill Mr. Wingo." I said, "Well, why did you write the letter?" And he wouldn't tell me, and the superintendent said, "I can tell you why he wrote the letter. The man's been down here for about fifteen years. When he come in here, he had about three hundred dollars in money. We've doled it out to him all these years, a little bit at the time, till the money's gone. Nobody comes to see him, he doesn't have a friend in the world, and he thought that if you come down here and he told you that he killed Mr. Wingo, you'd carry him back to DeKalb County, and they'd try him, and he'd get to see his people, and he'd enjoy himself for a while" [laughter].

Now, you know, that's what happened. And the man who—the superintendent, said, "Now, somebody could get a fine man here for work. He's uneducated, but he's just as honest as the day is long. He wouldn't harm a fly. But he got all right about eight or ten years ago, but nobody would come to see him." And some writer—don't know who it was--for the *Journal* or *Constitution*, one, put a piece in the paper about him. And it wasn't very long before everybody wanted to do something for this old boy. They got to sending him money, they sent him tobacco. I think I made a statement that he said he couldn't get any snuff; lot of people sent him snuff. And I got in touch with his brother here in DeKalb County and told him, I said, "Somebody ought to go see that fellow." He said he was going to. Last we heard from him, the old boy was doing fine. But that's one thing you're police records will do, your written records. You can't beat them. And when they put them in the computer—they've got it, I guess, I don't know [inaudible phrase] threw the old file away [inaudible clause].

That's one of the things that have made DeKalb County great—the records, the communication, and the attitude of its people, the policemen. That's the biggest change in the whole situation, from beginning to end, is the attitude of the DeKalb County Police Department. Like I said, they're professionals. You can go down there with one of those fellows, don't try to hem him up in a corner somewhere, because he can outdo you. He's familiar with all the tricks of the trade, just about it. He's never put on the street till he knows most of them.

When I come to work, like I said, you just went to work with your gun and badge. I knew right from wrong, and that was about the extent of it. And when this thing, habeas—not habeas corpus, but, let's see, the *Miranda* decision come along—everyone, I reckon, is familiar with the *Miranda* decision; Mr. Mackay is, I know. That's where you have to tell the man, "You don't have to say anything [inaudible], it's going to be used against you; if you don't have a lawyer, we'll get you a lawyer," and all that. That like to ruined us. We just couldn't see it, period. And we began to arrest people, and I tell you, some of these old boys [inaudible] arrest [inaudible], they wouldn't tell you the time of day.

Johnny Jones, an old investigator—an investigator for years, he was very thorough. And I was in the detective department. We had a [inaudible] stolen automobile, and [inaudible] in DeKalb County, so we got him. And we talked to him,

and he wouldn't tell us anything. And Mr. Jones asked me, "What did he tell you?" I said, "He wouldn't tell us anything." He said, "Maybe he'll talk to me." He said, [inaudible]. So I brought him down to the jail down in [inaudible]. Mr. Jones started questioning him. He said, Mr. Jones said, "What's your name?" He [the suspect] said, "What am I charged with?" And Mr. Jones, he flared up and he passed [inaudible] a few times, and he said, Mr. Jones told him, "You're charged with stealing an automobile." He [the suspect] said, "I got nothing to say." Again, that sort of thing began to have an effect, and we just—we were lost. We couldn't understand why even the Supreme Court would even fall behind a law like that. But it's all right—there's nothing wrong with it, if you learn how to use it.

The *Miranda* decision takes care of a lot of people. I still despise it! But when you arrest a man out here, say you catch him, a burglar, or stealing an automobile or something, and the first thing you do is read him his rights, right then, you've got him. [Inaudible], I've got him; I'm not going to say anything. And you better have the goods on him before you start putting the pressure to him, too. And if you've got the goods on him, [inaudible phrase] most of the time. And that's where a lot of your cases are solved, in the interview—interrogation. This case that just broke in Atlanta, murder—that fellow Newkirk must be a terrible [sic] good man to interview people and interrogate them, because that's where most [inaudible]. You get to question the man, if you ever get him to talk, you got it made.

Used to be a man named [George] Manning, a lawyer in DeKalb County. He used to tear us up. If he didn't have much of a case, he'd [inaudible—sounds like "jump strap"] the police, he'd harass us on the stand. I always loved Judge James C. Davis. I don't know if you knew Judge Davis or not, but he was a stern man on that bench in there. You didn't—there wasn't anything out of line in his court. Well, when Manning, George Manning, started to rip you up one side and down the other, Judge Davis stopped him. And I always liked Judge Davis. But George Manning said if he could get anybody on the stand, especially police officers—he said, "If I can ever get him up there and he gets to doing his hands like this [wrings hands to demonstrate], I can make him swear there's no such thing as heaven and hell." And he was just about right. And he'd get some people on the stand, and he'd, oh, he'd just tear them up one side and down the other. He repped [represented] everybody, [inaudible]. And he done a lot of good,

but I used to hate [unclear—sounds like "getting on the stand" or "him on the stand"] [inaudible] him as a lawyer.

But that's part of the system. I think we have the finest system in the world. I've heard it said that the democratic form of government is not perfect, but it's the best. It's the only thing we believe in. A man told us one time at a seminar over at the University of Georgia, he said, "If you'll remember just a few things in that police department, the basic rights of a human being in the United States." He said, "The right to habeas corpus, and the trial before twelve jurors, and he's innocent until proven guilty." He said, "Until--as long as those three things are here, you're all right. You'll never have to worry about that." But he said, "If you ever break those three things, then we're ruined."

And we used to lock people up here, charge them with investigation—hold for investigation. There was no more—it was just as illegal as [inaudible]. Investigation for what? We'd pick them up out here on suspicion, put them in jail, and hold them for investigation. We had the assumption that you could hold him for forty-eight hours, put him on the ground, put him right back in there, and hold him for forty-eight more till we learned a lesson about it. You couldn't do that. The man had a right to a hearing, right quick. And they finally got around to telling us that you bring a man before a magistrate. If you lock him up tonight, we're going to put him before a magistrate in the morning. If you don't have a case, don't lock him up to start with; but you better have a hearing on it. And that began to slow down a lot of things. And it kept me from working a lot of cases and I hate making cases sometimes by going about it in a left-handed way, but we get it done.

But the methods have changed, the system have changed, and it's different, altogether different. They tickle me down at headquarters. I hear a lot of the people talking. They want to make twenty-five years and get out on a pension. Well, when like [inaudible—names and gestures to off-camera audience member; could be "Wilkins"] and myself come along, we enjoyed the work. I worked for thirty-five years, and I guess [inaudible name] worked more than thirty-five.

OFF-CAMERA AUDIENCE MEMBER, whom HOWARD just referred to, I worked the same amount, basically.

HOWARD: But I retired dead on the money, sixty-five years old, thirty-five years a police officer. I come out just exactly right. Those people down there start fighting for their pension the minute they come in there, some of them [laughter]. Try to get a pension cut to twenty years' straight service—say they want to make twenty years and then retire. I said, "You'll never do it. It's too expensive." I said, "You can have any kind of pension you want if you pay for it." I said, "A flat twenty-year plan in this police department would cost a billion dollars." I said, "There's no way." And they must have [inaudible phrase]. But you can't—they just don't—we'll keep on, I don't know what it is. But I think most of them want to get out and go somewhere and get a job as police chief in some small town.

I never did want to do that. I think I should have got out of this business years ago, and I'd have been much better off probably financially; but I wouldn't have had near as much fun. I sweated a lot; like I say, I had ulcers; but I've enjoyed every minute of it. I wouldn't take a million dollars for it. With the experience I've had, sometime I get to thinking about some of the things that went on back then, and I just can't believe it; but I know it to be a fact.

Used to ride around this square, around here, Decatur Police did, they had a light on down there, their headquarters. And if that light was on, he'd come in and ask the operator, "Whatcha need?" That's the way they got the call. A lot of times we'd have a light back there that would flash. We used to get under a telephone down at Emory, at Oxford Road, a great big telephone that had a big bell on it, and we'd tell the operator we were going to be under the [inaudible]. Well, he rang that bell and wake us up [inaudible phrase] three in the morning, get on across. That was the wrong attitude, but we had it. I don't know whether they give you the chance to go to sleep any now or not. I think they go to work now. When they go to work at four o'clock in the afternoon, it's just [inaudible] all night, one after the other [snaps fingers repeatedly]. Back then, we [inaudible phrase] calls. Some of them went [inaudible]. We had a fellow—a [inaudible; sounds like "break"?] operator used to talk—out-talk people [inaudible] calls [laughter]. They'd call up and say, "[inaudible] the back of my house!" He said, "Ma'am, it's probably just a possum in your garbage can" or something like that [laughter]. He said, "The officers are going have to go a long way down there. Are you sure? Look out the door." All this sort of thing [laughter]. Now

they don't look back. You could get two or three cars before you know it now. An officer goes out now, he can get there because he's got that little two-way radio hung on him. And he can call anybody from anywhere in the county with that one little radio thing. He's got his automobile communication, everything. It's wonderful. If you don't think you've got a good police department in DeKalb County, you go down and look at it. Go through there. They'd be tickled to have you. You all need to go look at Chief Hand's office and the communication system. That's something out of this world. And especially communications. [Points to off-camera audience member, acknowledging question.]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Major, how about giving us just a brief rundown on the [police] academy? You was instrumental in starting the academy. DeKalb County has its own academy.

HOWARD: Oh, yeah. They've had their own academy for several—a good many years. We started out by—I think the first one we had was in the old Decatur Library building, years ago. Ms. Trotti let us have a room. I know we had Schley Howard to kick it off, and we got some fellow from the University of Georgia. And that thing has grown—we've pushed it till now they've got most people twenty weeks—sixteen to twenty weeks—of school instruction and field instruction, see, it all goes along together. And I mean, it's not a hit-and-miss deal. You better know it; and if you don't know it, they'll kick you out. Lot of them never make it—they just don't. They've got some men down there—and women, too—that'll kick you out that far if you don't make it. They don't think you [inaudible]. No harm done. And that's one of the finest things—that academy now, I don't know how many people it's staffed with--but this young lady, I said my secretary of five years, Reba Thomas, she's in the academy now. [Inaudible sentence] They teach those people everything about—they're almost lawyers when they get out. [TO MR. MACKAY] Excuse me, Mr. Mackay. You know a policeman can't become a lawyer [inaudible]. [BACK TO AUDIENCE] They think they are sometimes [laughter]. They know so much now that they didn't know several years ago on account of that academy. The State Patrol has a good academy, but it just wasn't fast enough—they couldn't take enough people. They'd take five from DeKalb County—maybe we'd have thirty-five. So we started our own academy. They've got a fine facility. As a matter of fact, they moved them out of it [inaudible] used it

[inaudible] some building up there off of Memorial Drive and Kensington Road. They keep, I reckon, twenty or thirty people in that school all the time. The turnover is more than it should be. And they keep people ready for it—to keep that academy going all the time. And it's just what it says—it's an academy. It's a teaching institute. And the state has a big one down in Brunswick, Georgia. They get into the deeper end of it. That's for riot control and these sort of things. They really have a school down there that a few people can go to, but they're sort of limited—they can't send a whole class down there.

But those people in the DeKalb County Police Department know their business. Now, you can get bad apples in anything. DeKalb County hasn't always been a bed of roses in that police department. There have been bad apples in it. There have been problems in it. I went through several of them myself; I know this. We caught some out-and-out burglars one time—three of our own men. And this sort of thing will pop up, and there may be some down there now. But as a rule, you have no problems in the DeKalb County Police Department.

MACKAY: Will you speak to the unlawful conduct that you have observed in this county, particularly in more recent years, that concerns you. In terms of grading the unlawful conduct--criminal conduct in this county, what are the major concerns that you have, that you've observed?

HOWARD: I think that the biggest thing—we've got several areas. Traffic is a big headache—that's a big headache for any department. Traffic in DeKalb County—if you don't believe it, trying going down Memorial Drive where those eating places are about 11:30—especially on Friday. You just can't make it. Traffic is a big problem. And your common thefts—that's where your problem is. Theft, traffic, burglary, robbery, rape—it's all in here. But you get as many people as we have in DeKalb County concentrated together, and as much money as there is here, you're going to have a problem. I don't care what kind of county it is. But DeKalb County—I still say that when you can go to bed at night and know that your children are out, you're not worried about them, you think they're going to get back home all right in DeKalb County, then your police department is being effective. If you're going to lay there and worry about somebody's going to knock them in the head and rob them, maybe there's something missing. And, of course, that can happen. But the people—Mr.

Mackay, the police department has to get along with the people. And we have pushed that for years. Every man [inaudible] public relations [inaudible]. We try to get [inaudible] and put them in the academy. As long as the people are with you, you can get it done. If they're not, you can't. It's just that simple. We used to want something done, we'd go to the Chamber of Commerce or a civic organization. That's where we'd go. We'd say, "Look, we need so-and-so." And first thing you know, we'd have four or five people in that organization—you keep pushing, and you get what you want.

MACKAY: What about the experience—if you watch TV, the suggestion is that the court's turning everybody loose. I don't observe that, myself; but how do you think the police feel about the DeKalb County courts in terms of backing up the police that prosecute the cases made?

HOWARD: Now, you're going to hear some people say that the durn court has turned loose [inaudible]. But I don't think that's the case. I just don't. [Inaudible comment; laughter] But the court system just—in DeKalb County—is not that way. Even back when Mr. Walter McCurdy was in City Court—don't know how many of you remember Roy Leathers in the Superior Court—they pushed [inaudible]. They got it done. If a case come, they would do something with it. Now, of course, in court sometimes a judge will turn a man loose we thought he shouldn't have. But he probably knew some things that we didn't. We locked up a man here for beating his wife or stealing a sack of potatoes or running into somebody's haystack. Well, we thought he ought to have ninety days in jail and take everything he's got. But when he goes before the judge, maybe the man had a wife, four or five kids, and made a good living. And if you took him and put him in jail, the county will have to feed his family. Why not let the man back on the ground? Now, old Judge Phillips—[TO MACKAY] you remember? [MACKAY answers in the affirmative.] He was that way. He would go into the background. If the man had a family, and the county was going to have to do something for them, he wouldn't do anything with him—I don't care what you had him charged with—if he could help it. He'd figure out some way. And Oscar Mitchell. That's a character. Don't know how many of you know Judge Mitchell. That's a man I wouldn't take a fortune for [inaudible]. It takes a man like Judge Mitchell to run this court like we've had for the last twenty-five or thirty years. He's had to be--I won't use the word *mean*, but it don't hurt. Judge Mitchell had what it took. He was rough, and

his message didn't suit everybody sometimes; but he'd get the job done. And old Judge Mitchell, we'd used to try to go up there and [inaudible]. Every police officer that gets anything done in an investigative way has to have somebody to tell him. So most good detectives will have a man in—every second, [inaudible] tell him things [inaudible] each other [inaudible], make a case against [inaudible] stealing [inaudible] selling whiskey. I said, "Judge, how about putting him on the ground and give him to me?" Well, old Judge Mitchell would go with you. But that was a man that made the courts go. And if you've ever been before him, he was rough with it, but he'd get it done. I used to love to go up there and just sit in his court, listen to him get on to people, as long as it wasn't me [laughter]. Now, he'd get [inaudible]—he'd make Brady Knight—you remember Brady Knight? He'd make Brady Knight feel like two cents. He'd holler at him down the hall, "If you don't stop them police from doing something down there, I'm going to do it!" Brady Knight [inaudible]. But he was a fine fellow; I loved Oscar Mitchell. But the Judges like Davis, Guess, and Peeler, and solicitors like Roy Leathers and Walter McCurdy, I remember them all. I'll always remember them, because they made it go back when it was rough.

I appreciate being up here. I tried—I hope I haven't bored you. I've never been a hand to speak. My wife says I murder the English language. I wouldn't make [inaudible] talk in front of that woman for [inaudible] [laughter].

MACKAY: We have a couple of questions from the audience. Then we're going into the courtroom. We've got a wonderful exhibit in there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: I don't have a question, but I really appreciate your [inaudible], your loyalty to the county. That is so refreshing, and it's a joy—

HOWARD: Thank you. I love DeKalb County. I wasn't born in here. I come from south Georgia. Ever hear of Whigam, Georgia, where [inaudible] rattlesnake [inaudible]?

MACKAY: Another question back there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: I was just going to ask you, did you ever arrest a character who turned out to be either a national or international crime figure or anybody in particular [inaudible]?

HOWARD: No, I don't remember one. I remember somebody in the department getting hold of one of these fellows with diplomatic immunity one time. He couldn't understand it. I don't believe I ever did. Everybody was local for me.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Somebody put Martin Luther King—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: --anyone exciting or dangerous?

HOWARD: I don't know—several of them. A man one time—I tell you what causes a police officer more trouble than anything else—and used to—it's these family squabbles. Peace warrants. This fellow named Spruill [spelling?], I worked with him one time. I was a captain; I think it was on the evening watch. And a woman—we got a call, a woman screaming, up off of LaVista Road--wasn't LaVista, it was [inaudible—sounds like "Goodyear"?] Road. We stopped there, and she was out in the yard. All the neighbors out there, [inaudible] in the morning. And she said, "He's got my baby in there, and he's going to kill the baby!" And I said, "Who?" She says, "My husband." And she [inaudible] a peace warrant for him, so we had to have her agree [for us] to go in the house. So we went up, I knocked on the door—Spruill on one side, me on the other. And I knocked on the door. He [the occupant] wanted to know who it was. I said, "The police. Open the door." He said, "I'm going to kill you if you come through that door." Well, I thought I heard him cock a shotgun. Well, I hit the floor right quick. This house was one of these houses where the windows come down about this high off the porch. Now, I laid on the floor and looked through the window, and the little fellow wouldn't have weighed 120 pounds soaking wet. And he was so drunk, he couldn't walk; but he was sitting on the settee, and the baby screaming and hollering in the crib over there. And I called Spruill, I says, "Spruill, look at that." Spruill looked at me, and he says, "Get out of the way." And he hit that door, and we went in and we got that little fellow and brought him out of there, and that man next door, he said, "Is that what was causing all the [inaudible]?" [laughter]

Now, most of my problems have been on that kind of a call. Man tried to cut me all to pieces with a knife in Lithonia one time. He'd kicked his wife and kids out the

door, and she went and got a warrant. It was cold. Big old boy named [inaudible] I worked with, a [inaudible—sounds like "Polak"?]. He didn't talk too good English. I told him he couldn't talk Southern, period. But we went in that night, the woman gave us the warrant to go in there, and [inaudible] got his feet and pulled him out of the bed. [Inaudible] reached in back of his head and pulled him up. I picked up his overalls and [inaudible] so he could put his overalls on. Well, what he did, he reached down and pulled a knife out of that [inaudible] pocket and jumped me with it. He was a much bigger man than I was, physically strong, powerful. We had a terrible time; we like to never brought him under control. And I think that's the worst three or four minutes I ever went through with the police over that. That knife was there; we couldn't get away from it. He bit me a time or two, but he never did cut me. We finally [inaudible] him down. We carried him over to Grady Hospital, and they sewed his head up after we got through with him [laughter]. We had to. We carried him down to Newton County, where he was under five years' probation. Judge Guess was judge at Newton County as well as DeKalb. When we presented him to him, what the man had done [inaudible], he [Judge Guess] asked this young man, this fellow, said, "Did you understand my sentence when I gave it to you?" He said, "Yes, sir. You told me I had the keys to the jail in my hand." And the judge says, "What do you think?" He said, "Look like I've opened the door." Judge says, "That's right. I'm going to revoke the whole five years." And the sheriff—I was sitting next to the sheriff of Newton County, and he said, "Now [inaudible] going to say something now." And no, he apologized to us old folks. Said he'd never understand why we didn't kill him. Those kind of calls. I got most of my trouble with them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Major, during your tenure of office, did you ever have any contact, or any member of the police department ever have any contact with any member of the Mafia?

HOWARD: No, not for certain—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Directly.

HOWARD: We figured they were here. You'll hear about organized crime. We have men who were nuts about that. They would go, "So-and-so from the Mafia down here." They might have been here, but I never did—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: I heard an awful lot about, but I never had any contact—any official contact—with members of the mob.

HOWARD: We had some good investigators several years ago, and they said they were in here. So we never did [inaudible]. [Recognizing another question from the audience] Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Did you ever do any mass arrests? What's the largest number of people you've arrested at one time?

HOWARD: My guess is about fifteen or twenty. This was after we had the ordinances. They were having some kind of party out here off of Briarcliff Road—must have been fifty or sixty young people down there, and I think they were smoking marijuana or something--we didn't know what it was. But we sent about three or four cars up there. And I didn't [inaudible] the initial call, but it wasn't five minutes before Captain Davis called me and said, "Bring us the keys to all the patrol cars up here." They had pulled up there, and there was a fight going on. They just left the car doors open, with the keys in the cars, and jumped out and tried to settle everything, and somebody went around and took all the cars [sic, means keys] out [laughter]. And I had all the keys at headquarters, so I carried them the keys. And when I got down there, they got two or three shotguns out of the car, and I asked Captain Davis, I said, "What you going to do?" He said, "Well, I'm going to go down and [inaudible] keys to these cars." We started grabbing—I guess it was about twenty we managed to get to jail for that. They were not too far out of line. They were just sort of mean. I wouldn't say they were mischievous, I tell you, they were kind of mean. The stuff they were smoking or drinking or eating or something, hey. That's what makes police life rough, and that's drugs. Man gets full of drugs or a little drink of whiskey; he's like a crazy person. [Recognizing audience question] Yes sir.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Did you have any experience with whiskey runners or--?

HOWARD: Oh, man, we [inaudible] from here. That's all we done. In the early 'forties—see, what would happen, if we'd catch a load of whiskey in a car and brought that car down, the court would condemn the car and sell it, and the officers would get half of the price of the car [inaudible]. So if you catch a little whiskey and the old car

brought a hundred dollars, you got twenty-five dollars apiece. So, man, we hunted whiskey. They didn't have a chance [laughter]. And this fellow Cloud, all he would do was hunt whiskey. If you got on the north side, the whiskey all came through from the north. That's where everybody wanted to go. Used to call it the long [inaudible—may be "shift"?] section. You get [inaudible] whiskey. Down here around Lithonia, Stone Mountain—looked like they done kept me down there for years and years. I told them, "All of my wife's people live in that territory, Chief. You ought to get me out of it!" He said, "Why?" I said, "I'd hate to lock some of them up" [laughter]. We did, we all wanted to work the north side; and that was the main reason, the whiskey. And it was something else [inaudible phrases]. Roy Hall [inaudible]. He kept a car that would outrun anything we had. We had good automobiles sometimes, but we couldn't catch him. He didn't want to shoot the tires down. He told me and Bob Anderson one time, "If you ever get in shotgun range, don't shoot my tire down. I'll stop." But we never did get that close to him [laughter]. [Recognizing audience question] Yes ma'am.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: We have you on video, but thirty-five years from now, in 2022, no one will be around that can ask you the questions, and you have suggested—you have just touched on a lot of [inaudible] stories that we didn't get to hear. Would you be willing for someone to interview you later, so we have that for our record in our Time—[HOWARD nods in agreement]. Good, because there are a lot of little stories there that we didn't get to hear yet. I don't know what's wrong with--

MACKAY: --[talking over question] Major a round. This has been a very great program. [applause] We'll be going into the Superior Court room, and we've got a special exhibit. [Inaudible name—sounds like "Ed Cummings"?] is chairman of our museum. Tell us what's special we got in there today.

RESPONSE FROM APPROPRIATE AUDIENCE MEMBER, OFF-CAMERA: Well, we have a—lucky to get a collection of circuses. One is the 1932 Ringling Brothers Circus as it was. We have been able to give you the museum and everything free of charge. But these two fellows are charging us a little bit. We're not asking to sell tickets to it, but we have a donation box up there. And you can put five, ten, twenty dollars in there, whatever you want [laughter]. But come over and look at it. We're happy to have you.

MACKAY: We have refreshments, and let's all go in there. END OF RECORDING