Arbor Montessori
Mount Zion Oral History Presentation May 2006
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Tracks #1-2

STUDENT: What kind of a house did you guys live in?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I—first we lived in a four-room house there on—it was, like I say, was LaVista Drive, now Nelms Drive. We lived on approximately a full acre, a full acre of land. It was purchased—it was purchased from the Nelms[es]—one of the Nelms' [sic] uncles. And my father worked for a man in Buckhead; he took care of his yard. And he used—he paid, I think, two hundred dollars for this acre, acre of land. And my grandfather helped them build that four-room house. And my father had six kids in that four-room house. And it was built on field rock. The base of it was field rock. We didn't have any brick or block. Later on we replaced it with block, because the field rock started to settle. We had to put the brick under there. Right down off of Nelms Drive.

Well, when my grandmother was washing and ironing clothes for the people in the community, they had to walk with those baskets on top of their head, because it's kind of awkward to carry it on the side, because they're pretty heavy. They would walk all the way on North Druid Hills Road for a basket of clothes for about thirty-five to fifty cents.

ADULT VOICE FROM A DISTANCE: And they walked through the woods.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Through the woods, and most of the time, at night. It—dark would come on before they'd get to where they're going. But they would make the trip so many times, you know, it's just like radar. You know where to go. You had to heat the water up to put the clothes in, because you didn't have washing machines.

STUDENT: Right

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: And after that it was almost like a primitive type situation. We had a—what they called a "beating board." All it was was a cut stump. After you doused the clothes up and down in the hot water and all of the--drained the water off the clothes, you put it on this beating box. And you had a paddle—wooden paddle that had been used so much it looks fuzzy because the water has deteriorated it a little bit. You would beat the clothes--pound, pound—beat the water out of it; and

then you almost repeat that same thing till you get them clean. You just didn't sit there and scrub. Someday we got what's called a scrubbing board. That was a scrubbing board. They would scrub, scrub the clothes, scrub the clothes, till you get them clean, and then they would rinse them, wring them out, hang them up—had a clothesline. My grandmother had and my aunt had about four or five clotheslines, and each one run about fifty feet, full of clothes.

STUDENT: So when did this happen?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: When I was about—ever since I was about five or six years old. My grandmother died when I was about six years old. And that kept up until I was about—late teens, about sixteen or seventeen years old, until they were—they were gotten to the point where they were too old to go out there and, you know, and do these clothes. But my—I had an aunt that did it almost to the time she died, about two or three years until she died.

Tracks #3-4

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: My mother and dad was real wonderful people. My mother--I had a wonderful mother--oh, yeah, she was. My daddy was, too.

STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: They were both really—I didn't get a chance to go to school much, you know, like I would like to, because [my father during] about middle age, he took sick, and he lost his eyesight.

STUDENT: Oh, no!

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah. He lost his eyesight, and then later on he got sick again—real, real sick—one week. But we didn't know what was the trouble, what was wrong with him. And it [*clears throat*]—excuse me—and he had a ruptured appendix. You know that?

STUDENT: Oh, yeah—yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Mm-hm. Yeah, ruptured appendix. You know, back then, they didn't know what to do for them right then. You know, right away.

STUDENT: Yes

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: So but—that's when he passed away, with the ruptured appendix. We had that little small—that little small house that we had. That

was all we had, was that little small house. And the funny part about our house, we never could stop the leak of the roof. We never could stop the roof from leaking!

STUDENT laughs.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: We'd go to bed at night, you know, and we had a little small cot over in the corner, and it wasn't very large, and there was two--two of us at the head and one at the foot of the bed. Three people in that one little cot. One blanket—and it was a long blanket. They didn't make them wide. And it was long, but it was narrow. And if one turned over, we didn't have no cover on us.

STUDENT laughs.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT, *laughing*: There wasn't no cover on the next one, because they had taken the cover off! You'd be freezing. There you was in there, just shaking and freezing, and the blanket was gone. [*RESIDENT and STUDENT laughing so hard that the next sentence is inaudible.*] That was the funniest thing!

Track #5-6

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Now, why did I quit? Because I fell in love.

STUDENT: Oh

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Love has a way of changing the whole direction of people's lives. And I fell in love with a girl who was graduating in 1950; I had graduated in '47. She was the valedictorian of her class. She had won a scholarship to Morris Brown College—earned a scholarship to Morris Brown College. But her mother had passed away when she was fifteen years old, and it left her—her mother was, see, she was the anchor for her family. And since her mother had passed away, just—the family just sort of fell apart. Nobody decided that "we have to pick up where Mama left off." So she was just destitute, my wife was. She was a teenage girl, just destitute. So she thought when she graduated, the best thing for her to do was to get married. And she told the principal, "Give the scholarship to some other deserving student. I'm going to get married. The thing for me to do is to get me a husband." I guess she thought that that was the way for her to get some security early in her life. But that was the wrong decision on her part. And then it was mine. I felt like since she didn't have a home, a stable home to live in, I felt like I wanted to provide that kind of environment for her to grow up in.

STUDENT: So did you know Mr. Nelms when you were young?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Oh, yes. The senior--Bill Nelms, Sr. Not talking about Wallace Nelms, you might know.

STUDENT laughs.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Wallace is his son.

STUDENT: Right

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Bill Nelms—Bill Nelms, I call him an ambassador of the community. Bill Nelms knew just about everybody, and he never met a stranger. If you met him, you would love him, because he had the type of personality that was so open, and he makes friends right away. And I—I like to say—I like to pattern my church life after him, because he was a big church leader. He was the one up front leading devotion and singing hymns and bringing all his—bringing everybody together, making everybody feel good before the preacher comes out. That's what you call building the spirit before the preacher comes out. He didn't have to do it all, because it's already there before he gets there.

Tracks #7-8

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: We've always had pretty much a good relationship with our neighbors. A lot of neighborhoods, people do not even know who lives next door to them. They drive in their carport, let the carport door down, and they never speak, they never socialize with their neighbors until an emergency or something happens. Then they don't know who to go to because they have not been kind or neighborly to the other people in their neighborhood. But here, everybody knows. We wave, we speak, we talk; and it's always been whereby we were able to correspond—relate to one another. It was never about who was who. It's the individual, the person themselves.

A lot of things, perhaps—more or less verbally, not physically. You had the slangs and what have you. Of course, I can say, the "n-word"—you had a lot of that. People hung out of their cars. But as far as being attacked physically, no. And though—let me say that. And that was not the people here in the community; that was people passing by. Because everybody—that—at that time everybody knew each other, so that was nothing—that was not important. The color of your skin is not what's important; it's what's in your heart and who you are inside. That's what matters.

Track #9

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: This church was originated over on Lawrenceville Highway, and it was called Rocky Knoll A.M.E. Church. So the thing is that—and I take it—I been told it was there somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty-five or so years, and then they moved, you know, in this location here. So that's where it came from. But as far as going back, you know, to the first church, you know what I mean, they built it out of whatever. And we can always say the first church was built like—a foundation was something like what you say—a log cabin was. And when I say that they built—the sills—what we call sills now, you know what I mean, the large sill was like whole trees, whole trunks of trees cut and stripped of the limbs and built on that.

Tracks #10-11

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: We didn't have any electricity--

STUDENT: Wow

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: --there. We had water. We had—what we had—we didn't have any water—any running water. We had a spring—a spring across LaVista Road in the woods right behind my house where I live now. There was a spring down there. And the spring is still down there, but that's where we got our water from.

STUDENT: Wow—wow

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Well, but that's where we got our water from. And we had to carry it across LaVista Road in buckets. Most times we'd have—try to bring—two so we'd have enough, you know, to carry.

STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: But we had—we got along fine, yeah. It was good water.

STUDENT: Yeah

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: And it was cold, cold, good water. We had one girl that—a member of Mr. Zion Church here—

STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: --who graduated from the high school, and she wouldn't give up; and she made a teacher.

STUDENT: Wow

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah, she was a teacher. And she was a wonderful person. Nelms—Willie Maude. Wallace Nelms, I think all of you all Wallace Nelms, don't you?

STUDENT: Yeah

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: It was his sister. His sister. She was—she made a school teacher, a real wonderful school teacher. And all the people in DeKalb County knew her, you know. And she was the one who would go to DeKalb County and ask them—told them, "We need some gas out here on the—down here. We need some gas heaters. We're cold!" *She and the student laugh together*. And she would talk to them about bringing the gas line. She was the one that got the gas lines.

STUDENT: Oh, wow

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yes, she did. And she got the gas lines, so we got natural gas. We got the natural gas, and I can't think who got the water—got the water. I imagine it all came together—you know, when you get—

STUDENT: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: --the water. So we got a meter to our house—a meter to our house, and then we had to have a plumber to come and connect up a spigot—what you call a spigot. You know, outside.

STUDENT: Yes

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah, so one day it was—we had our bucket out there, underneath the spigot, getting water, and one of my sisters said, "Cut that thing off! You're going to set it where it won't go off!" *She and the student laugh together*. They said, "Well, you can cut it off." But we was getting water—

STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: --from that—from that—to the—till the plumber came and put us a line in the kitchen.

STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Finally got a kitchen sink and have that. And that made life much better.

Track #12

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I didn't ever rock the boat, because I wanted safety for my kids, and I wanted—I'm just not a—I'm not an activist, you might say. I guess I put all my trust in God. I think that God loves people who love people, and I love everybody. And I just feel like it will all work out some way. He is for justice and fairness, and I am, too. If somebody wants to treat me wrong, then they've got that to live with.

Track #13

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: School segregation in my time was the blacks had their teachers and had their schoolhouses, and the whites, of course, had theirs. It was kind of hard. And when I said "hard," it was like we were constantly trying to, as I said, fight for or allow for teachers to come, you know, in the neighborhood and our schools. And we didn't have what we call a set, assigned teacher to teach us from day to day. We might have one teacher for, I say, a month or two and then another teacher would come in a month or two. And it was all based on—it was all based on the limited--limited, I'd say, the acquisition [sic] of the county being able to help the black students. And it's a separation there—you know what I mean? There's quite a bit of separation. And they called—it's supposed to be separate, but they said "equal." But it was separate and was not equal.

Track #14

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: The price that people paid—especially black southern people who had property—you could be very adversely affected if you were an active participant in the demonstrations and that sort of thing, because you didn't have any power in the county courthouse. You didn't have no elected officials who could help you, so you had to be a very low-key person if you even gave lip service to the civil rights activities that was being perpetrated.

Track #15

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: You know, this area out here, where we all are, around here in this area here? We have never had any trouble. Never. We had no trouble with schools and us going to school with, you know—

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: --the white kids.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Never. We had—you know, back when I was—when we would have revival, we would have it five nights. Five nights. And the white families would come and help support the church with donations. They would come and bring their money and help us along.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: That's great.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: So we never had any trouble. None of them. And that means—that starts from Toco Hills back to Morningside, every—all around here.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: All back--start from Tucker—all areas. We've never had any trouble.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

Track #16

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: So where did you go to school throughout grade school and high school?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Well, grade school here, we had a one-room schoolhouse down on LaVista Drive—it's really Nelms Drive now—LaVista Drive. And we had—went through first grade through seventh grade, and we had one teacher to teach that one through seven grade. I attended that—the school here at Mount Zion until—I think it was somewhere around '48, '49. Then I went to Mount Moriah—Mount Moriah School, and that was two rooms there that had two teachers, a teacher per room. And so that's where I—up until the seventh grade. And after that I went to high school.

Track #17

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: And we walked long distances to school what—where we did go, and that was past Toco Hills. [*Apparently showing student a map or other visual representation of the area*.] There's Toco Hills.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: You get right there at that light at Toco Hills, and you take a right and go down to a little section they call Mount Moriah. That was a little colored section down in there, and it was Mount Moriah. And then after that you started back when you left that school—

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: See, that was a little grammar school.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: That was a little grammar school. So when you would, you know, graduate from there, well, you would go to high school. And the high school was back over here off of Memorial Drive called Scottdale.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm. Uh-huh.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Mm-hm. Scottdale. And the kids who went there would have to walk, you know.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah, they'd have to walk through Nelms Drive all the way through those woods and go across that railroad track.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: You know, you hear that train--you hear that train?

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah, well, that's the track that they would have to go across, that railroad track, and keep going a long distance from there to that school over there.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm—yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Yeah. Mm-hm. That's where they went to high school.

<u>Tracks #18-19</u>

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They closed all the black schools.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Oh

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They didn't have any white children going to—they didn't have any white children coming to a black school, you know. It was always the other way.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Oh

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: We always had to go to a white school. They closed my high school--

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Oh

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: --which was Avondale High School [inaudible], but it was called Hamilton by then. And they [African-Americans] had a new school near Lithonia and had a new school in Lynwood Park, which is in the Brookhaven area; and they had a new school in Stone Mountain. But they closed all of those schools. And they bused all of the black children from those communities to surrounding white schools in those areas. So they had built several brand-new black schools in DeKalb County to sort of appease the black people—

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: --so they probably wouldn't be wanting to go to those—the white schools, so to speak, but still black folk wanted to come to Lakeside and wanted to go to—they thought they would get a better education if they were going to schools with white kids. They thought that the materials that were given to white schools were better and that the quality of the teachers was better. But I think that we were misled on that line, I think. We had a lot of dedicated teachers in our segregated schools, and I think a lot of black children who went to integrated schools suffered a great penalty. Because I don't think many of the teachers who were teaching them understood black culture very well.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: So I think the segregation, to some extent, was best for some black kids. Of course, some smart, very smart, black children who went to Lakeside from this community did very well, some of who graduated and went on to very good schools like Ohio State and to—what's the Catholic school up north?

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Uh . . . .

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I can't think of the name of it.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: [St.] Pius? *Laughs* I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: No, there's a Catholic college that had very good football players. [May mean Notre Dame?] Anyway, but we had people who went to a lot of good schools that graduated from Lakeside, and they're doing quite well in life even now, who grew up in this community. But we had other black children who

wanted to come to a white school who were not as well-prepared as our students were, who did not do as well academically when they got to Lakeside.

During the civil rights era schools were segregated, and very few black children went to school beyond the elementary grades, many of whom did not even finish elementary school. I came to school right here in this church in the elementary grades, and many people in our community came. They never went as far as the seventh grade; that was when you left elementary school.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Oh

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They didn't finish even the seventh grade. I finished the seventh grade and then went to high school.

Track #20

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They built the [new] school [for black students]. And just for an example, they had a lab, if you want to say that. And they built the lab—beautiful lab, everything we had. We had fountains and different things—laboratories and all—but no water was ever used, and we didn't have not one microscope. If you want to do biology, and you didn't—what I mean, those kind of facilities, we didn't, you know, we wasn't furnished that. So the thing is that we had a beautiful building, if you want to say; but inner infrastructure as the academic materials was coming up short.

Track #21

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They didn't provide no kind of transportation for black students at that time. They provided transportation to white students to Druid Hills High School from this area, but they had no transportation for black students going to elementary or high school.

Track #22

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Our school supplies came through the county, and—came from the county as to—we had a distributor from the county to bring us our school supplies, but most of the supplies we received from the county was used supplies, used books or things of this nature. And, well, it was like third-grade white this year but third-grade black next year, used—you see what I mean? The same supplies, I say, books, so to speak. We very seldom ever received what they call a new

book, a book that hadn't been used. Most of the supplies were—unless it was somewhat—a library book. Sometimes we would get, you know, a new book there, but it was somewhat of an academic book or a reader, math, or things of that nature. You—it was a used book.

Track #23

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: I was in an all-black high school, and my senior year they gave me the option to transfer, because Lakeside had been built. Yes. And because I was a senior and had gone all those many years to school with Hamilton High School--it still remains an alternative school for DeKalb County. It's still there. It's in Scottdale, Georgia. It was the black school, and your high school—white high school at that time, and it's still there—Avondale High School. Yes, right down the corridor from that. I did not transfer, but a lot of the kids did that when—in the lower grades—because that being my senior year, I wanted to finish out there.

Track #24

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: My kids started in segregated schools, but they were the first blacks to go to Oak Grove and some of the first blacks to go to Lakeside.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENTS: Aw, cool

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: And Coralwood, too; some of them went to Coralwood when it was an elementary school. Yep, they had wonderful experiences there, my kids did, because—that was before M-to-M [the Minority-to-Majority program], when they had busloads of black kids come in to Lakeside--and I don't know about Oak Grove but in Lakeside. But when they finished there—and my kids, my son he was on the—he was—he got a scholarship to Georgia Tech, so that says something about his academics. My kids didn't have any problems going to Lakeside or Oak Grove. I remember the day that they first went to Oak Grove. The bus man—bus driver came to pick up my students, and there had been rumors that the Ku Klux Klan was going to keep them from coming, and people sitting in my back yard, you know, kind of hiding behind bushes to see what was going to happen; but nothing happened.

My daughter that went to Stetson, the one who was in music, she had a hard time because she wasn't a very outgoing person. So whenever they had to do little games, nobody would hold her hand; and she was hurt about that. She had—but

teachers, you know, teachers have ways of identifying situations like that and rectifying them, so she would find teachers who cared about her. So she became—but because of that she became more reclusive; she spent a lot of time by herself. Because when you are a minority, nobody's going to come over and hold your hand, nobody's going to play with you, nobody's going to sit with you in the cafeteria. You kind of feel alone and left out. But my boys, they were gregarious; they were outgoing, and they didn't have any problems adjusting and finding friends.

Track #25

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: When anything like that happens, it doesn't happen immediately. It always is a kind of gradual rate, you know. When you make friends, you don't always make friends, like, "Hey! You want to be my [inaudible—sounds like "cut"?] buddy from now on?" *Resident and student laugh*. So it's a slow process, which I think is good.

Track #26

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Like I mentioned, when we—when I first started to work, we—I had instances where being black was a deterrent. You—they knew this by not your writing it on your application but by flagging your application with a dog-ear on the upper left-hand corner to let the interviewer, not seeing you, know that you were a black person.

Track #27

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: So there were certain positions in certain areas that blacks were not involved. See, when I grew up, when I grew up, just as far as jobs for the sake of concern, even though some of the mediocre jobs—when I say "mediocre jobs," the jobs that normally—like a postman or a policeman, things of that nature, black people would not—you couldn't be a policeman. You couldn't be a postman. You know, I mean, you were not hired as a postman, I'll put it that way. Not that you couldn't be, you were not hired in those positions. So usually, what I mean, in a case like that, you were more or less manipulated as to whatever status these people in a position would allow you to be.

Track #28

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Well, the civil rights movement, I have to say, if there was an effect, it was like—I was a—I guess I was somewhat—not skeptical of it, but I was a little curious about the movement as to how it would go and the success it would bring without it involving a lot of hurt and a lot of negative thoughts toward that—between, I say, the two races. And I've always—I've always been—tried to make things work as smoothly as possible, rather than, you know what I mean, rubbing against the grain.

Track #29

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: [*Recording apparently begins in middle of sentence.*] . . . but to see beauty in a plain leaf. I've been drawing since I was eleven years old. I've been a professional artist since I was seventeen.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Wow!

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: And I'm still doing it. That's part of it right there. [*Perhaps shows some of his artwork to student*?]

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Oh, wow!

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: OK, so I'm trying to just keep on doing what God gave me, and that is—that was a gift that I'm very proud of and thankful for.

TRACK #30

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I had a night job. I couldn't—I couldn't—I should have—I should have taken less hours in college. I was trying to carry a full student load. That was just too much for me, and I was making failing grades. So they asked me if I couldn't bring my grades up to withdraw from the institution. So I just withdrew from the institution and decided to just give General Motors my whole heart, which is what I did. My teacher—my sister, in the meantime, was teaching over in Carroll County. And General Motors had just built a new plant in Doraville, which they're fixing to close now. And my—I was earning, I guess, close to $5000 a year, which was a lot of money back then. And my sister was teaching. She had gone to college and finished all her required courses; she was only earning $3600 a year. I said, "Hey! I ain't going to teach, because I'm making more just working at GM." I did not realize that teachers, their pay was just going to keep going up and up and up. I

made the wrong decision. I should have went back to school and got my bachelor's degree and got me a master's. But I didn't do that; I went— We did pretty well, though, my wife and I--

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Yeah

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: --in what we decided to do.

TRACKS #31-32

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I also had the opportunity to have working companies, you know, that did production work. And that's mostly what I, you know, what I worked with at the time.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: And were these jobs higher pay than doing yard work?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: They were a little higher than the—just—just for instance, I worked for Lay's potato chips when they were in Chamblee. I don't know if y'all remember that, right where Lowe's is—I think it's Lowe's there now, on Peachtree Industrial--

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Yeah

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: --in '57 through '59. I started working there at $1.05 an hour

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: A five-cents increase

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: A dollar and five cents an hour. And when I left in '59, I was making $1.07 an hour.

When I was attending high school, I'll put it—I'll say that, my parents were not making a lot of money; and there were six of us kids. And by my dad not making a lot of money—when I say "a lot of money," making enough money—I felt obligated to help him. And so that's one of the things that I guess college was not so much as a primary thing in my life at that time because of the—I'd say the struggling that we had sometimes to make what we called "ends meet," you know. And so I went to work.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: And where did you go to work?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: Mostly doing what he did, pretty much. Doing yard work and day work and things of that nature, you know. There wasn't too much there. And it wasn't anything—it wasn't anything highly paid. Jobs was mostly domestic-type work, yard work and mostly whatever that type work. That's what it was. And usually it was—if you made a dollar a hour, that's just about what you

would—you know what I mean—that's just about tops on most of the jobs that was made. Because when my daddy—my daddy worked for years in doing that type work, like yard work and things of that nature—his salary never got over fifty dollars a week. And he had to work—he had to work something like six days a week. You know, Saturday was not, you know, a day he could think about taking off. And that was—that was—that's the way the pay was then, even though he was working for one of the richest men in Atlanta. But his salary was never over fifty dollars.

Track #33

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I would spend all day on Saturday cutting grass. But that's in—just in the normal [inaudible]. We very seldom had time to do a lot of fishing, you know, or—the main thing we was trying to was—my—when I was coming up—was trying to help my mother and father with simple things. And I remember right now our water bill every month was $2.50. *Laughs* That will give you some idea of how things were. I usually worked for a man up here above the church named Mr. Chester. He owned that property on Richard Stokes Drive, this side of Richard Stokes Drive. And he owned the property, but a family named Olin [spelling?] lived on it. They had [inaudible—could be "live," "wild," or "a lot of"] birds. And on Saturday morning I would go about 7:30 and take care of those birds. When I said birds—parakeets, finches, and all that [inaudible] house and take care of that. He had a hawk, he had rabbits, he had ducks—he had everything. I fed and kept them. I worked there on Saturday morning till about twelve, and I'd bring home maybe three dollars.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: For all Saturday morning?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: And I'd be making three dollars on Saturday morning, and I'd take it and give it to my mother.

Track #34

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Certain acts like the sit-in down at Walgreen's years ago—that was something to think about, that had quite a few people to go, from this neighborhood to go do that. That is actually what brought about the changes, little things that began to happen, things that should not have been in the first place, in fact. The stigma was torn down. The barrier was torn down little by little. But as far as this area being a target directly, we didn't have that.

Track #35

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: Did you or anyone you know participate in anything having to do with the civil rights?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Not directly. Indirectly, after it started, we would go downtown and probably trey to sit at the lunch counters; but other than that, nah.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: What was that like?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: It was interesting, to the point that you knew you weren't going to get waited on, you just sit there, you know.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: And so how long did you do that for?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: We did it on the weekends. My girlfriends and I, we would go down just to sit at the lunch counters to order a grilled cheese sandwich. *Laughs*

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: You say there was something that happened at Walgreen's. Was that a sit-in, or what happened there?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: That was just, like I'm saying now, just going down, ordering, knowing that the waitresses were just going to ignore you and just sit there.

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: So when you did the sit-ins, were there people around you who were really disrespectful?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Of course. Mm-hm

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENT: And what was that like?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: Oh, that was rude! I mean, these were the waitresses. These were the people behind the counter that were—didn't want you to sit there. And they would just ignore you. It didn't matter.

TRACK #36

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: I registered to vote—I registered to vote, if I'm not mistaken, somewhere in the neighborhood of [nineteen] sixty-, I think, sixty-three. Yeah, I think it was around '63 that I was registered to vote. And ever since then, you know, I've been, you know, active in that, you know, voting. But before that—this community [inaudible] with some activities—governmental activities, so to speak, was not so much as [inaudible—could be "prevalent"?] or known to some in the area. And I

say this because I was one sometimes that--and it just—we were so concerned about making a living, sometime we—you see what I'm saying?—and those kind of things didn't [inaudible] our minds as to things of that nature. But since then, we've—you know what I mean—since I registered at the time that the—what I mean—I've seen that those—the activities of the different state levels and governmental levels was very important.

TRACK #37

UNIDENTIFIED MALE RESIDENT: A lots of time the communication in a community won't necessarily start with grownups. Start with you guys. You intermingle with kids in school, talking to each other, learning each other's—if there's any culture difference, you'll learn that, how you do things. We had a class to come about two months ago just to sit in our [church] service to see how we conduct our service. And they were doing something similar you guys are doing, writing a paper on how different churches have different way of carrying on service. But with you being in school, you're intermingling with different people, you get to know and to be able to talk with you. If you be able to talk to them, and they talk to you, they get to know you, they get to know how you—how your life is and how their life is, and what difference [inaudible], a lots of the time you find out it's not a whole lot different. Not a whole lot.

TRACK #38

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE RESIDENT: We have a rainbow—not [inaudible] a rainbow, all different. Even identical twins, to a degree, they're different. God made a rainbow. We're all His bouquet. We should learn to love.