

2012.3.32

GUSSIE BROWN and DAUGHTER CHRISTINE BROWN [married name unknown]

Track 1 of Recording:

MODERATOR: Oral History Interviews: Gussie Brown; Scottdale, Georgia; March 21, 2007.

GUSSIE BROWN: We didn't have no lights, no water, no streets, no nothing.

MODERATOR: Oh, my gosh. Where'd you come here from?

MRS. BROWN: Madison, Georgia.

MODERATOR: OK. What brought you to Scottdale?

MRS. BROWN: My aunt worked for some—bought some land over there, right there on Green Street. It was Green Street then, and I don't know what it is now.

[*Seems to be reacting to a prompt, possibly from her daughter.*] Tobie Circle.

MODERATOR: OK

MRS. BROWN: And she—my sister came to take care of my grandma—my great-grandma—my grandma. And when I got nineteen or twenty years old, my mama and them sent me to live with [sounds like "Cetempe," a name of Muskogee or Seminole origin] and Grandma Judy [? could also be "Julie" or "Judith"]. And I stayed there until I was twenty-one. Then I moved over on to [unclear—sounds like "Alston Mill"]. And I stayed over there awhile; then I moved back to Green Street.

MODERATOR: OK

MRS. BROWN: And we didn't have no transportation here, no streets, no lights, no water.

MODERATOR: That's what they tell me.

MRS. BROWN: And no daycare center, no nothing. We just had churches. But we had plenty churches. But we didn't have nothing else—no other convenience but church.

MODERATOR: You guys lived a hard life. *Laughs* It's different now.

MRS. BROWN: My Aunt Cetempe, she believed in going to church. You had to go to church. Church and school--

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am

MRS. BROWN: --were two things that you had to do if you stayed in her house.

MODERATOR: Sounds like a smart woman.

MRS. BROWN: But she never charged or nothing to stay there. But her requirement was that you go to church, you go to school, and you respect old peoples, because she was old, and she was kind of old-fashioned, too. She believed in having respect for the old peoples and coming home and going to church.

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am. Where did you guys go to church?

MRS. BROWN: I went to Travelers Rest Baptist Church, over there in the housing project.

MODERATOR: OK. I know Travelers Rest.

MRS. BROWN: Right across over there.

MODERATOR: OK. Where'd you guys go to school at that time?

MRS. BROWN: Went to Hamilton over here.

MODERATOR: OK. So you went to Hamilton High School? [Inaudible conversation off-microphone, possibly with MRS. BROWN's daughter] Yes, ma'am. OK. What do you remember about going to Avondale—it was Avondale, called it at the time, and then now it's Hamilton. Can you tell me about going to school there? I don't know much about Hamilton.

MRS. BROWN: Well, I was out of school when I come here. I had finished the seventh grade. You didn't go no higher than the seventh grade then. It wasn't there. It was a little white, wooden school. Well, they tore it down and remodeled it. And we had a principal by the name of Hatton [spelling?].

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BROWN: Professor Hatton [spelling?] He came, and he brought school out here. He built the one that's there now. My husband was a veteran, and I went to school there to become a nursing assistant. Well, that's what I started school for, on a VA—GI--school, because I was too old to just go to school, so then I went to school there to become a nursing assistant. And then I went on to become Licensed Practical Nurse.

MODERATOR: Where'd you work?

MRS. BROWN: I did private duty all over Atlanta and Norcross and a little in Decatur. Not much in Scottdale or the mill village.

MODERATOR: So did you have any family that was younger than you that—when you lived in Scottdale?

MRS. BROWN: No, all my brothers and sisters was gone [inaudible]. They moved to—one brother moved to Chicago; the rest of them moved to Buffalo, New York.

MODERATOR: Wow, they moved far away.

MRS. BROWN: [Inaudible—could be “Nadine”?], my oldest sister, was in Buffalo. And many of my younger brothers went there, and they stayed there all their lives. [Inaudible—could be “B. W.”?], my older brother, he went to Chicago. Him and his wife moved to Chicago. After so many years they moved. We began to emigrate to different places [inaudible]. Got one daughter in Arizona and got one in California now.

MODERATOR: How many children did you have in all?

MRS. BROWN: Eight

MODERATOR: Wow! That’s amazing. And where did you meet your husband? Tell me about him.

MRS. BROWN: I met him right here in Scottdale. I had two, so I met both of them right here in Scottdale. [First name of first husband unclear—could be “Harry”?] lived over here in the mill village with his mother and father. That’s where I met him at, over there. And I courted and married him right there at Cetempe’s house—Aunt Tempe’s house. I called her “Cetempe.” That was my daddy’s sister. We emigrated from Madison here.

MODERATOR: So you said when you first came here, you guys didn’t have streets or street lights or anything.

MRS. BROWN: Didn’t have no street lights, no lights, no water, no gas, no nothing. We had coal and wood there.

MODERATOR: OK. And where did you guys—did you grow your own vegetables and—

MRS. BROWN: We grew our vegetables. Right there in Cetempe’s backyard, we always had a garden. Then I moved up on Glendale, where I live now, when I was nineteen years old.

MODERATOR: OK. And what year was that?

MRS. BROWN: That’s somewhere around 1939 or 1941, something like that. Of course, I’ve been there for fifty-five years. Same place, same house.

MODERATOR: Wow. It’s been a good house to you, definitely.

MRS. BROWN: I moved there when I had four children, when I moved there.

MODERATOR: You could probably use more space.

MRS. BROWN: My daughter [inaudible], she wasn’t a year old when I moved there. I moved there one Saturday, and the next Saturday she was [rest of sentence

and following sentence inaudible]. [*To her daughter, also present for this interview*]
How old is she, Christine?

MRS. BROWN'S daughter, CHRISTINE BROWN [? last name unknown]: Fifty-six.

MRS. BROWN: Huh?

CHRISTINE BROWN: Fifty-six.

MRS. BROWN: This is my second child, right there [*referring to her daughter CHRISTINE*].

MODERATOR: I've been reading about Tobie Grant. Did you know Ms. Grant?
Or do you know anything about her?

MRS. BROWN: I knowed her. She lived over [inaudible] when I moved here. She was living over there, Tobie Grant. I met her once or twice, and [inaudible] one or two times. But I never really, you know, got to know her. I just knowed of her. Because I know [inaudible] Scottdale [inaudible], because she was supposed to be a fortune teller.

MODERATOR: That's what they say.

MRS. BROWN: My mama and daddy didn't believe in fortune tellers, so I [inaudible]. They believed in praying. They believed in what you wanted, you asked the Lord for it, and He provides it.

MODERATOR: Of course.

MRS. BROWN: So he--my daddy didn't believe in no fortune tellers, neither did my mama, and neither did I. And my first husband didn't either. [Inaudible sentence] He was raised in Scottdale, but I was raised in Madison. I was nineteen—I think I was nineteen when I come here. I think I met [inaudible first name—could be "Paul"?] Green in 1940, '41? I can't remember. It's so long ago.

MODERATOR, *laughing*: You're doing pretty good, I think [inaudible]. Tell me a little bit about Travelers Rest, because I know that's a church that a lot of people find very important to the community. So tell me about Travelers Rest and your experiences there.

MRS. BROWN: Well, I joined there when I was nineteen years old--in 1939 I joined up there. The Friday night before the second Sunday in October 1939, I joined; and I've been there ever since.

MODERATOR: When was that church established?

MRS. BROWN: It was founded in 1939.

MODERATOR: So you were one of the first?

MRS. BROWN: Well, I—like I said, my—as Cetempe required that you go to church, and I went to church there. I do right now. And all my children joined there. Now, I was a member when I come here. I was a member at [inaudible—could be “Joseph”? There is or was a St. Joseph Baptist Church in Eatonton.] Baptist Church in Putnam County in Eatonton, Georgia. [Beginning of sentence inaudible] church, so I just joined there because my sister Doris, she was a church-goer; and she was a member there. And Reverend Hezekiah Smith was the pastor—senior pastor at that time.

MODERATOR: [Sentence beginning inaudible] and you came to Scottdale.

MRS. BROWN: Had to have a church—you had to go to church. My grandmama raised Cetempe and them like that. They went to church. We all went to the same church, [inaudible—could be “Joseph”]. We all was baptized-- me and my [inaudible]. I know, when—I know myself, that’s where I was a member. I joined there when I was twelve years old.

MODERATOR: I’ve heard about Eskimo Heights as well. Eskimo—*[MRS. BROWN begins speaking at the same time; MODERATOR acknowledges her and yields the floor.]*

MRS. BROWN: See, when I come here, they had a big sign over there, “Eight and a Half.” You call it Eight and a Half. I don’t know why they called it Eight and a Half. It was halfway from Stone Mountain to Scottdale. And they named the bus stop Eight and a Half. And they had a big sign up there that said, “Eskimo Heights.”

MODERATOR: When did they take that sign down?

MRS. BROWN: I can’t remember. Somewhere when they paved the road, they took it down.

MODERATOR: OK. They probably widened the road? OK.

MRS. BROWN: There wasn’t no street; they were just wagon tracks. And they turned them into streets, you know, because we didn’t have no transportation in there but wagons and mules.

MODERATOR: And you guys had to walk a lot of that—

MRS. BROWN: Yeah, we walked. And that hill, that’s Rawson Hill, it’s a sprint to go there and by *[voice trails off]*.

MODERATOR: When did the streets in your neighborhood start getting paved, and when did you guys start getting street lights?

MRS. BROWN: We started getting street lights after somewhere about 1940.

MODERATOR: OK, yes, ma'am. And the streets were paved around the same time, or did it take longer?

MRS. BROWN: We got streets paved for some watermelon. It sounds strange, but we had a man, the Scottdale man, Mr. Scott. He come through there [inaudible] those crates [inaudible—could be “Paine Street” or “pastries”?] [inaudible], because [inaudible] people took in washing and ironing in here, and they hauled the clothes in the wagon and with a mule. And—wasn't called Scott; I don't know, but he was Scott. He owned the mill over in—and he come through here, and he said he'd give us a load of watermelon if we have somewhere, you know, to serve it, they'd give it to us. And we told him, “If you paid us, what would we want? We want the streets paved.” And so he said if he bring the watermelon, and he brought us the watermelon if we get somebody to come and eat them. So we did; we had it up at [First] Norman Grove Baptist Church. We had the watermelon cutting up there in the yard. And we served watermelon, and then he paved all of the roads. [Sentence about watermelon; inaudible]

MODERATOR: Interesting! [Inaudible] I've learned a lot about the mill village and about the mill. Did you know anybody that worked in the mill? You said that your one husband was associated with—

MRS. BROWN: My husband's mother worked there in the mill. I think he's up there. You know, [inaudible phrases] she called “sweeping the valleys,” [inaudible] you know, keep the lint off the walkway. And she worked down there until she retired. I mean—I can't think of his name, but I know he was a Scott.

MODERATOR: We're doing historic preservation in Scottdale, and I'm just trying to get a feel for things that the community feels are important. So if you were to see things preserved in Scottdale, what are some of the things you think would be most historically important to your community?

MRS. BROWN: The schools--Hamilton School and Robert Shaw. And they mean more to me because my children went there, and I went there. Well, I don't think [inaudible—could be “Carol” or “Cara”?], but Eddie did. All of them went to Hamilton. We had a principal by the name of Hatton—Mr. Hatton [spelling?]. He was a little man—little bitty fellow, but he was a powerful man. He come in and turned Scottdale around.

MODERATOR: What did he do for Scottdale that turned it around?

MRS. BROWN: He built the school, and he had a whole bunch of teachers, very-- teachers who was interested in children at that time. And we had a lot of teachers, very good teachers: Ms. Moss, who went to Thankful Baptist Church, and Ms. Reagan [spelling?], she came from Atlanta. And more teachers came from Atlanta; all of them dead now. But most of them—even to Mr. Hatton [spelling?—I mean they've all gone home. But they had Scottdale at heart.

MODERATOR: I've read articles about how, after Hamilton [High School] closed, Scottdale kind of went through a transition; and there were problems around here. And Ms. Lundy, [first name inaudible—could be Pam?] Lundy, she told me that she felt that was because Hamilton closed. What sort of held your community together after Hamilton closed?

MRS. BROWN: We had--well, it was people that live here. We had—we was interested in Scottdale, such as Dave Banks, myself, Doris Lundy, and Miss Daisy Bell Bigsby [spelling?], and Miss Lee—just a lot of people. We lived in Scottdale. Because their children and all them went to school over there. And we didn't have nothing but the school and the churches. That little Methodist church—I don't know whether you come by it coming this way, but that little Methodist church right there on Seventh Avenue—

MODERATOR: Was that St. Stephen's?

MRS. BROWN: St. Stephen was there when I come in. And it's still there. It's a Methodist church.

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am. That's something I'm trying to get some information on, because Ms. Lundy had said that that was really important to the community. So we're trying to get some historical information. Do you know of anybody I might could talk to about St. Stephen's and the past and—

MRS. BROWN: Let me think. Well, we never had much dealing with St. Stephen because they was Methodist, and we were always Baptist. But we fellowshipped with them a little bit [inaudible—sounds something like “during Reverend Robert Smith”?] time. I don't know who you could talk to about St. Stephen. You might get something out of Grace Lewis—she might know.

MODERATOR: OK. I'm supposed to meet with her next week; so hopefully she will. OK, we're getting there. Well, let me ask you, Christine [MRS. BROWN's daughter, who is also present]. Did you go to Hamilton High School? Did you go to Robert Shaw? [CHRISTINE BROWN answers off-mike.] OK, what can you tell me about going to school

there? Because I was able to speak to Ms. Lundy, but she says she didn't go to Hamilton. She just knows a lot about it, but just trying to get a feel for the history of the schools and what it was like.

MRS. [GUSSIE] BROWN: She went to school—[inaudible; could be “North Academy”?] down in [*voice trails off*].

CHRISTINE BROWN: Robert Shaw started. I started there—[inaudible]. And Hamilton really was the school, and it's because of our parents that Hamilton really grew, because they were really concerned about us having what we didn't have, you know. I think Mama and them formed the PTA, and we had—and they made sure that our school was taken care of. You know, we had—everything we got was hand-me-downs from other schools, but that was fine. They made sure that we got the—if our school didn't have curtains [on the stage], our parents—they made sure that the stage was covered, the PTA. We had a Parent-Teachers' Association that—Mom was president, and Doris was president, and Mr. Baker. We had three presidents when I was—and I went to '63 [inaudible]. And they made sure we had band uniforms—the things that you wouldn't—normally black people wouldn't have, and they made sure we had, even up to the books that we got. Even though they [the books and uniforms] were from the other schools, they made sure we had what we needed and made sure the teachers were doing. And we never knew when they were dropping in, because she dropped in all the time. The teachers knew her, and we knew not to get into anything, because we knew we had to go to school. We walked to school—it was probably about two and a half miles. We walked in the cold, rain, snow—you name it, we did it. And we came up that hill—Mama went to work in the morning, and we'd literally get up and go to school. It wasn't that staying at home, playing hooky from school, because the teachers would report, and she [MRS. BROWN] may just drop in. No, that was not it. We had to go to school.

MODERATOR: So you guys were really united as a community. [Inaudible]

CHRISTINE BROWN: Our house was the meeting place for all the kids in the community. That's where everybody gathered, between Mama and Doris. All of us met there, and we played, and they made sure that we had a place to go. At the program at the recreation center, they had a lot of [inaudible] for the community. And I think that's where Ms. Tobie Grant came in, giving us all—giving us the land so that we could have—that's how she got involved [inaudible], [the center] being named “Tobie Grant,” because she gave all this land so that we could have something. That

was where we went, the center, so we had, like—they made sure we had [inaudible] nights and things like that. There was just a lot of things. They took care of us, made sure we had—stayed out of trouble. And there was no trouble. I mean, you could really walk the street; we could sleep in the house with the doors open, unlocked. We slept out on the porch—no problem. It was just like, you could walk away from home and leave your doors open—no problem. Can't do it now.

MODERATOR: Well, I talked to Ms. Lundy, and that's what she was saying. She was sort of indicating that when the school closed, that's when things sort of started to change.

CHRISTINE BROWN: I guess it's because a lot of people start[ed] transitioning out of the community. You know, you're getting new people in, people going in and out. And with us going to this school, people going to that school, it just kind of like pulled the community apart. I think the school was one of the things that really held us all together, because we had kids coming from Ellenwood, Avondale, you know, all up. I've never understood why people from Ellenwood would come way up here, passing Avondale High. You know, you pass--they passed a lot of schools to get to our school. I think Clarkston—all us was right here in this little area [inaudible]. And that—really, that's about the [inaudible]. I know our school—like she said, the schools didn't have [inaudible] that building. We had a wooden school at first--a little white, wooden school.

MODERATOR: And when did that change? I'm trying to get a feel for the building. It was originally built in '42, correct?

CHRISTINE BROWN: Yes

GUSSIE BROWN: That changed—

CHRISTINE BROWN: --when they began to go to work, the parents. They wanted us to have something nice, like the white kids had. They wanted us to have something really nice, so they went to work. They did all kind of selling—you know, dinners and things—to get the money. And she [GUSSIE BROWN] stayed in Jim Cherry's office all the time. The board of education knew her. They knew her. This is how we got a lot of things, because they knew her. And it's because of her [that] Scottdale [inaudible].

MODERATOR: Absolutely

CHRISTINE BROWN: Because we did a lot without her [meaning that the children were sometimes without their mother, who was out working on their behalf]. She did a lot for the community, but we had to do without her because she was out trying to

make sure all the other kids, along with us, would have [inaudible]. And it's because of her that Scottdale is where it is now.

MODERATOR: Well, tell me a little bit about working with Jim Cherry and working to get the school improved. What was that like? What did you guys have to do, just talk a lot or, you know--?

GUSSIE BROWN: Talk a lot and walk a lot.

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am

GUSSIE BROWN: And sacrifice a lot. Jim Cherry was a good superintendent of schools. He—I think he had Scottdale--the black peoples--in his mind, and he was determined for things to be better for us.

CHRISTINE BROWN: Yeah, because [inaudible]. [*An inaudible exchange of comments and laughter ensues among the three participants.*]

MODERATOR: That's how you get things done.

CHRISTINE BROWN: [Inaudible] get things done. [*Inaudible comments among the three participants*] She had a lot to do with the daycare center going—getting started, yes, sir. And she helped raise a lot of money. Summer camp money. She'd go to a banker and come out of there with her money.

GUSSIE BROWN: We had [inaudible] this man down here. He—Mr. Gray—he [inaudible] right there on—

CHRISTINE BROWN: Mountain Industrial

GUSSIE BROWN: Mountain Industrial. I mean, he [*inaudible, as she and Christine Brown talk at the same time*]. He's still—Mr. Collier—he's still just as nice a man as he was when we met him down here.

CHRISTINE BROWN: That's right

GUSSIE BROWN: He's still Mr. Gray's [inaudible] farm and dairy community—

CHRISTINE BROWN: He still help us out.

GUSSIE BROWN: I've got to try to get Travelers' Rest back. They used to give the center fifty dollars [rest of sentence inaudible]. And Mr.—I mean after they built this fellowship hall, Reverend [inaudible; sounds like "Satin" or "Sallen" or "Saddler"? Rest of sentence inaudible]. You've got to have—you've got to be community-oriented. You've got to be interested in something besides just preaching. Now, preaching is good; but you've got to be in God in the community. And Reverend [inaudible] was good, but Reverend [sounds like "Connor"?], he wasn't an [inaudible]. I just think that we've got to get our church back involved in community daycare. You know, a

community's not very much of a community if it don't have provision for young children—I mean, for children, like a daycare center. See, when I started working with daycare centers, we would [inaudible—sounds like “hire houses”?] in the housing project. I didn't even know they was over there. They'd been there a long time, and I didn't know. Then [inaudible] got to acting up, and that's when I become involved in Scottdale's daycare center. [*GUSSIE BROWN and CHRISTINE BROWN laugh.*] And I'm very glad I did. [Laughter] If it hadn't been for [inaudible], I never would have knowed—I wouldn't have knowed it was over there. She come by my house one day and said, “Miss Gussie--Aunt Gussie”—she called me Aunt Gussie—“come on go with me over here to the daycare center.”

I said, “Where's it at?”

“It's over here in the housing project.”

And I went over there, and were—all I did was stare. In two rooms in the housing project--they let her have two rooms to have a daycare center. [Inaudible name] directed it, and she had just quit. I didn't know nothing about being no daycare center, nothing about—I know how to raise children, because I had five or six of my own. [Inaudible comment from moderator] Anyway, I [inaudible] got right in there and all of the—I hired--I didn't know nothing about hiring nobody. I never hired nobody in my life, never fired nobody. I didn't know nothing about that. Because, see, I was from the country. I didn't know nothing about working [inaudible] or nothing. I went to Beacon Elementary School in Decatur, and that's how I learned. I went there, and I learned how to set a table, that's what I learned. I learned a little about cooking. I went to a cooking school, and I went to Emory and got hired because I know how to set a table. And I had got hired out there. And I was working for Ms. Bush down on Geneva Street. I worked there [inaudible—could be “for a year” or “for three years”?], three dollars a week, seven days a week.

MODERATOR: Wow

MRS. BROWN: And I walked a many a day from right there to the bus stop in Decatur.

Track 2 of Recording:

Opens with inaudible comments from MODERATOR and CHRISTINE BROWN.

CHRISTINE BROWN [mid-sentence]: . . . we didn't have lights, running water, inside plumbing, nothing. [Inaudible sentence] We did everything—I mean, it was nothing. We had to haul-- we hauled water. It hasn't been easy.

MODERATOR: And you guys just changed all that through the community, just working, right?

CHRISTINE BROWN: Working together. I think any community, it takes people working together just for their benefit. But it's been rough. And I can—God help her, I mean, she [MRS. BROWN] raised four of us without a father. She was a mother and a father. She had to go to work. She had to be—to take care of the house and whatever. But she did it. We didn't have no—I mean, hauling wood— You can't imagine the things that we've gone through to get to where we are now. And that's why kids [inaudible] appreciate [inaudible]. The kids today, they don't know. That's why they don't appreciate what they have, because they haven't seen really hard times. They think they're having a hard time. But that was hard times. That was hard. We may have--but like I was telling Mother the other day, I said, we really didn't realize we was poor, because she made sure that we had things that other kids didn't [inaudible] to have. She made sure that we had things. I mean, we didn't know. I mean, we didn't have a whole lot of toys, but we learned how to make toys. We took something like a Coke bottle and took straw and tied things, put things in it and made dolls out of them. We made our own dolls, we did everything, and we played marbles. We played our own games. We had fun. We wasn't bored. When kids get bored, they get into trouble. Well, we knew not to get in trouble because [inaudible].

MRS. BROWN: Mm-hmm

CHRISTINE BROWN: Standing around, we knew. It was just—it was hard, but we turned out pretty--I think we turned out well. I really do.

MODERATOR: Have you lived in Scottdale your entire life--

CHRISTINE BROWN: Mm-hmm

MODERATOR: --or did you come back? OK. And the community seems to keep people--

CHRISTINE BROWN: I moved away when I got married in '68—I left in '68—but I'm here every day.

MODERATOR: OK. In terms of Hamilton [High School], Gale (Gail?) was saying that they did—like, it was built in '42, but then they did renovations around '65 or— was it '65? Somewhere around there when the new building was—

CHRISTINE BROWN: That's when--yes, when we left, because I left in 1962. They redid the whole thing, the school. They kind of updated it.

MODERATOR: OK

GUSSIE BROWN: Mr. Cherry and Mr. Hatton [spelling?]-Dr. Hatton—he made sure that the school was built to specifications. He had a whole lot to do with it, because they respected Mr. Hatton; and we did, too. And the children did, too, because Mr. Hatton—you know, there's some men, just to see him, just to see him walk the street, the men stopped—

CHRISTINE BROWN: It's how you carry yourself.

MODERATOR: Absolutely

GUSSIE BROWN: He was a real businessman, and he carried--when he went to the street, everybody said, "Here comes Mr. Hatton." They respected him. And the children, the grown people, and boys, they did. They respected Mr. Hatton because he carried himself like that. And Mr. Cherry did, too. "Here comes Mr. Hatton."

[Jim Cherry said], "What can I do for you?"

He [Mr. Hatton] said, "We don't want no more second-hand books. We want new books."

And next week we had a bus—a truck come there and brought us books for our children. New books.

MODERATOR: Wow. A step up in the world—that's great.

MRS. BROWN: And everybody respected, because we had a man teacher with morale. I mean, you name—it was just like now, if we went on here, we come around to a road here, everybody's bowing and lift their hats up. "Here comes past Mr. Hatton"—I don't know what his name is now; I can't remember. Because we called him "Mr. Hatton," "Professor Hatton."

MODERATOR: He sounds like a great man.

MRS. BROWN: He was.

MODERATOR: Very important man.

MRS. BROWN: He made Hamilton what it is right here. Because they had a shop over there. My older son, he played basket—football over there. He was determined to play football. And my sister Doris paid for his insurance for him to go to school; and I didn't want him to play football, but he wanted to play, and she paid his insurance in football, paid [inaudible]. But all my children played in the band.

MODERATOR: Me, too. I played in the band, too.

MRS. BROWN: You did?

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am. I played clarinet. I loved the band. That was the one thing that got me through high school, was the band.

CHRISTINE BROWN: We had a marching band [inaudible]. We had a marching band, a concert band—real good, real good. We exceeded all the other bands. We would give all the other schools a hard time.

MODERATOR: Great!

CHRISTINE BROWN: We stayed on top. We was on top all the time.

MODERATOR: Nice. Did you guys play schools around this area? [Answer inaudible] OK. Great.

MRS. BROWN: We played Decatur. Decatur.

CHRISTINE BROWN: Lithonia

MRS. BROWN: Lithonia. Redan and all them. All-state conference. We had children out there. Glenwood Park, all of them come [inaudible]. All black children in DeKalb County come to [inaudible—could be “Adams”? “Avondale”? or something else].

CHRISTINE BROWN: We played Cartersville, Marietta—we went all up [inaudible]. Wherever black schools were [inaudible].

MODERATOR: OK. Oh, the senior center. [To MRS. BROWN] You go to the senior center at Hamilton, correct, now? When did they open the senior center?

MRS. BROWN: I can't say. It's been open about ten years. It come out of Tobie Grant. It come out there when she moved to Avondale, about—I believe it's been about 1939. [*Inaudible exchange between MRS. BROWN and CHRISTINE BROWN with regard to center's opening*]

CHRISTINE BROWN: It's been about ten years. It's been open about ten years.

MRS. BROWN: I moved to Arizona state, then I come back. But I had been to be center before I went to Arizona.

MODERATOR: OK. Well, I thank you for talking to me, MRS. BROWN. This has really helped me out, anything I can learn. One of the things Miss Louise Burrows [spelling?] had told me a little bit about a man named Mr. Joe Hill and another man named Mr. Gibbons. Do you know anything about those men?

MRS. BROWN: [Inaudible] I lived next door to Joe Hill. And I used to tote water from [for?] [inaudible] Gibbons. He lived right up the street from me. His house is still there now. And Joe Hill, he's dead for years, but his children are still there. His son lives next door to me, Ebony Hill.

MODERATOR: They were [inaudible] at Norman Grove, did they? [MRS. BROWN agrees.] That's what I thought. OK. All right. Yes, she [Miss Burrows] was thinking maybe a monument to commemorate what they've done for the community would be a nice idea, because they were very influential.

CHRISTINE BROWN: I don't see that Mr. Joe Hill's done any more for the community than all of us.

MODERATOR: Really? That's pretty much what Gale [Gail?] said as well, so I'm sort of trying to—

CHRISTINE BROWN: [Inaudible statement]

MODERATOR, *laughing*: Really?

CHRISTINE BROWN: And being [inaudible] Norman Grove, that was all--that's all that man ever done. He really done nothing for the community, I think. Now, my personal opinion. But everybody--he was known because he [inaudible].

MODERATOR: That's what [inaudible].

CHRISTINE BROWN: That's why he was known.

MODERATOR, *laughing*: She does not [inaudible].

CHRISTINE BROWN: I know. He would not allow her to go in the church.

[Inaudible sentence]

MODERATOR: Oh, no! Ouch.

CHRISTINE BROWN: He was mean. So I mean, I don't know how she come up with that. That's the only way—I mean, the only way—I wouldn't say anything about him, building him up? Mm-mm. No.

MODERATOR: What about Mr. Gibbons? Anything there?

CHRISTINE BROWN: He was a quiet man, and he was nice. But I don't see—I mean, there's nothing that he's done for the community.

MODERATOR: OK. OK.

GUSSIE BROWN: [Inaudible sentence]

CHRISTINE BROWN: I mean, it's fine. Joe Hill's just known for [inaudible] everybody getting [inaudible]. That's why he's known. I mean, [inaudible]. I don't see it.

MODERATOR: OK, well, that's good. I'm glad to know, because I really don't know anything about it.

CHRISTINE BROWN: Yeah, you know more about it than [inaudible] would tell you. It wasn't like he gave money to the community or did anything to help build it up, no more than the rest of us, and we lived next door to him.

MODERATOR: Yes, you would know. [*Inaudible exchange follows.*] Well, this has been very interesting. Thank you guys for speaking with me. I appreciate you taking out your time. I know it's hard for you to get around and stuff, so thank you very much. I do appreciate it.

Transcribed by CS