

Dr. T.O. Vinson, May 1988

Recording begins mid-sentence:

DR. T. O. VINSON: . . . but the important thing in my work was getting good people; and I had some of the best, because I had a good school superintendent to work with, Jim Cherry, and Scott Candler. I just wonder if any of you know that he was the first Boy Scout master in the state of Georgia? I didn't know that until just a few days ago. He had an interest [rest of comment inaudible; background noise].

We had to get ready to fluoridate the water; the children had it painted on down at Griffin. And we just had eleven dentists, I think, and about twelve positions. I'll tell you about them in a minute. But I went around to each of the dentists, and [inaudible—could be “got excited and approved it”], and each of the dentists approved it. So, Scott said, “Let's go ahead with it.” He said, “Go up to Charlotte and see how they do it.” So [Louis or Lewis possibly first name; inaudible last name, possibly something like “DeJohn” or “DeJongh?”], who was the chief engineer, went up to Charlotte, came back, and they had a standby Allen machine. And he put one part per million in the water, drinking water. But before they did, Dr. Buhler was the dean of the [Emory] dental school. He let us have all of his senior students, because we had to get a baseline of what the picture was, the dental picture. We were copying what they did in one county in Texas, had four parts per million and nobody had any dental caries. They didn't even have any dentists in the county [*laughter*].

We started fluoridating here, and a woman wrote a letter to Scott, said since she'd been drinking that water, she's nauseated and I don't know what all. So, I went and saw Louis DeJongh [sp?], the chief engineer. I said, “Go out and see where she's getting her water.” You know what water she was drinking? Atlanta water [*laughter*]. And then Scott got a postcard from a man who said his teeth were down to the gums and couldn't chew anything; but since he'd been drinking the good water, he could eat anything [*laughter*]. Me and Scott got a big kick out of that, too.

But that was--the medical society approved it right off the bat; and, of course, the dentists [inaudible] nothing to it [rest inaudible; background noise] [something about the Allen machine]. . . . You put one part per million, and then in five years the dental school and the dentists took their time off. They didn't have but eleven dentists here in the whole of DeKalb County. And later Dr. Buhler said that he'd let us have the senior students if [inaudible] dentists would supervise. They weren't doing anything, but just checking for decayed, missing, and [inaudible—“repaired”? “impaired”?] teeth, which they could do quite easily. At the end of the

year the caries and stuff had dropped way down, and so it's been in there ever since. You know who was the last one in the state to put fluoride in the water? [Inaudible word(s), followed by laughter] I used to kid Jim [last name inaudible—could be Agnew?]; he was my counterpart over there. He was scared of it at first, I think. I said, "There ain't nothing to be scared about. Just tell them what the facts are." So, I'm not going to get into this [rest inaudible]. But one of my buddies gave me a book, he and his wife, on Houston County, and the [several inaudible phrases] would come out at Oglethorpe, Georgia, way under the ground.

I'm not going to get onto that, but there are two or three things that we did here. And one of the things that amused me most, if any of you knew Scott Candler, you [rest inaudible]. And we was having trouble with mosquitos and other insects, so I asked if we could get a fogging machine. And I called Ms. Gould [sp?], his secretary, and said, "We've got one here, and Louis DeJongh [sp?] and I will ride this thing, and it'll fog this whole street. She said, "Just fog Mr. Candler when he comes to the window" [laughter]. So, we shot him up there, and he just give me a high sign to go ahead, so we got a fogging machine; it didn't cost much.

He was quite an interesting guy to work with; and, of course, it was hard to keep up with him and Jim Cherry. Both of them are built for speed. And I'm sure you knew it, about what Scott did one time when General Motors was getting ready to put big [inaudible]. And they asked Mr. Candler if he'd take them around and show them. They said, "When could you have an official meeting of the board?" He pulled them to one side and said, "The meetings are not official" [laughter]. He was the only man, you know. [Inaudible comment]

[Inaudible comment, inaudible phrase] looking for a site for the hospital, and Professor McCain was on the committee with Dr. Evans and two or three others. And when they said, "That's too much land out there. There's fourteen acres." Professor McCain said, "Don't worry about how much you can get—get it! We had more trouble at Agnes Scott trying to get some more property for people [inaudible] live [rest inaudible]. So, with that kind of help, fortunately we've got enough room over there, four more acres. But we built the new health center over there beside the hospital. And I notice they've got Rufus Evans Street and [inaudible] and several more. But it sure is good to have a hospital in your own territory.

[Holds up book.] In reading this, the ones that did this kind of stuff [inaudible phrase] that brought up to date [inaudible] hospital. We'd had a doctor when I was at Griffin, [name inaudible—sounds like "Heck Letic"?], and he treated you with herbs and other things. As far as I know, he had some of the best [laughs, obscuring or eliminating end of sentence]. I was going to mention two or three things, and I'm glad [name inaudible] isn't here, because my wife

worked with the nursery school and kindergarten here, all over Georgia, and was on the national PTA council as chairman of nursery school and kindergarten, I believe [rest inaudible]. And some funny things happened when they were going around over the state. One time they were up in north Georgia, and two women were I think going on to Athens, and they stopped at the motel, and two of the women, like I am, wanted to see where the fire escape was. So, they went around and saw a door and opened it, and a man was in there taking a bath in the tub [laughter]. He said, "What's the trouble?" [They] said, "We're trying to find the fire department [sic; means "escape"?]. One minute, he came running out of there with a towel around him: "Where's the fire?" [laughter]. That actually happened [inaudible]. They were some red-faced women, I think. I do the same thing when I go off somewhere. I want to see how you get out of this place in case it catches on fire.

But there are several things I wanted to just mention was—don't know how many years ago this was, but Horis Ward called me. He was a county commissioner and an undertaker. But this was when the ambulances, the undertakers that came, ran all over the place. And he said, "Let's go down to Jacksonville and see how they've got that program organized." So, we went down there, and they had a real good program. The day before, all the undertakers had come in with their sirens blowing and raising Sam because they didn't like the setup either. So, I take—it wasn't the fire chief, but one of the men went down there with us, and coming back, Horis says, "What do you think of this program?"

I said, "It's the best I ever saw. But," I said, "it ain't worth a doggone unless the medical profession approves it."

He said, "That's your job" [laughter].

Of course, John Hood was the president at that time, we went down the next week to see what was going on, and we were in there to see a fellow about like this gentleman here, was a cardiologist, one of the cardiologists. He was the anchorman for all the ambulances going out and giving cardiovascular resuscitation. And somebody said, "What class did you say you were in from Emory?" He told him. And he said, "Hell, that was *my* class!" [Noises from outdoors and inside the room interfere with audio.] So, coming on back, of course, the medical profession approved it wholeheartedly.

He got 9-1-1 out at [inaudible] somebody know how to take care of [inaudible] or whatever you got with your heart. I know I was next door, and they—that's before they had the [inaudible] fire department. Some little kid drowned up here just [inaudible] part of the county. They had dug a basement, and they had a big rain and filled it up [rest inaudible]. Fell in there

and drowned. So, one of the—they had an old A Model Ford—they didn't have a good truck [inaudible phrase] flat tire. And this fellow called me and said, "Will you go up there with me?" I said, "Sure." And I, as we were going through there, I noticed his brakes wasn't very good. I said, "The main thing for us is to get there." We finally got there, but you couldn't do anything [rest inaudible]. We took him to Grady, and Dudley, a great big old fireman, went with me, and that's the first time he met me. He went down, too, to this meeting down there. But we've got some pretty good protection now [inaudible]. The people now that operate the ambulances are not the undertakers but people who have special training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. So that was one of the things.

And I mentioned the fluoridation of the water, and the other was this thing where they—and the doctors backed it up wholeheartedly—having somebody that would go out that was trained in giving you—making you breathe. Because if you're not breathing, you ain't going to last long [*laughs*]. So, they all had special training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

I don't know whether I could talk all day long, but I expect you'd like to ask me questions, so I wouldn't shoot the breeze so much.

MODERATOR, *off-camera*: OK, we'll take a little break and [inaudible] just ask a few questions. [Inaudible] seems [interesting or interested?]. One of the stories that you told me a little earlier was about the rabies epidemic.

TOV: Well, when I came in here, we'd had trouble in Griffin. And I know one dairyman there, Dr. Stuckey, the head of the Experiment Station, he fussed at me about trying to get rid of these things. And this old dairyman says, "Dr. Stuckey, I'll pass across." This woman was taking one of the kids to school and waiting for the school bus, and she heard her little grandson holler, and she looked back there, and a dog had grabbed him back of the knee, had rabies. Of course, he had to have shots. What Scott Candler did—I didn't know it at that time, that he was the first Scout master in Georgia—but he ordered 2,000 steel traps. Now, these were foxes that were running around, fighting the dogs, and dogs fighting each other, and then biting the cows. You know, this used to be, I think, the biggest milk-producing county in the state. One of the big ones up here was Tuggle [sp?] up here; now it's a big shopping center. And they'll finally get the last Mathis down here, because when they finally offer him as much as the land would sell for, he's going to have to think about it, because--I almost went into the dairy business. My daddy almost got me in it, started in Macon. I said, "Well, I [inaudible] stay awake with human beings all night as a cow" [*laughter*].

But I got—it took us a long time to get going, because you have to pick good people. And you can see one of them back behind me now. And Louis DeJongh [sp?] was one of the best public engineers I ever saw. And he was—and Sam Harris was my administrative assistant. He had been up at the Methodist Church that's up in the mountains, and he was in charge of the camp. He was a fine fellow and a lawyer also. So, about the only thing I did was pick good people. And I got the head nurse from Fulton County, she was educational director, and she had Dale Paxton [sp?] to do the training for the nurses; and pretty soon we had decentralized all over the county. We had three knocked off in [rest inaudible]. I have pictures in here where they were started. We had two or three commissioners from the county, two from Decatur, two from Atlanta--[inaudible] part of Atlanta's in DeKalb, and the county school superintendent, and [inaudible] grand jury [inaudible]. [Inaudible name could be "Green"?] I believe her name was. It's been so long ago that my memory's not too good, but Mel Turner, the undertaker, he was on the board, too.

What I wanted to mention to you, too, I came here in '50. And I happen to remember all the doctors' names; there was thirty. Jake Lester [sp?] was the only pediatrician; he was a classmate of mine. He's retired now, bless his heart. And they have—instead of thirty doctors in the DeKalb County Medical Center, they've got 230. I like to [inaudible] the other night just to hear Chief Hand talk to you, talking about drugs, which is a problem. [*Referring to book*] But they have listed in here what—let me see [inaudible]—page 88. We have now got eighteen cardiologists, thirty-six in family practice, twelve anesthesiologists, seven dermatologists—skin doctors. It's really gone pretty wild here. Internal medicine, we had one, Chet Moss [sp?]. Now we got sixty-three. So, you can see, we're pretty well covered with physicians.

The first year or two I think we all went over to Emory to eat. They invited us over there, and so I guess Mr. Woodruff's money's beginning to give out, so they [rest inaudible]. I notice one of his daughters sued him. I think she had some mental problems or something. And anyway, he didn't leave her a dime, and she sued him for her part; she got it [*laughs*].

But, folks, just ask questions, and I'll try to answer them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You're saying 230 doctors now?

TOV: Yes'm

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That doesn't include CDC and Emory and the hospital doctors. That's just private practice.

TOV: Right, I got the membership directory for 1988, and it is interesting, because—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Because they have that many at the CDC, don't they?

TOV: I don't know how many they got out there, but I've always loved going [inaudible]. When I was taking my national board, two Harvard professors were quizzing me up in Baltimore. And here comes one of the fellows walked in, and I spoke to him. I had known him while at CDC, he was head of CDC. And he started asking simple questions, which I could answer. They were asking bookish questions that you couldn't—you'd have to remember what was in the book. And he was asking, "What would you do in case of typhoid fever?" or "How would you—what would you do?" And I think I passed the exam.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Could you sort of give us a rundown of the first location of the health department in the county to where it is now?

VOT: Well, when I first came here, Dr. Evans was my predecessor. They had just put a building up on Clairmont and hadn't put it up yet. But I never did go into that, because they had a new building. And then they built another new building right next to the hospital, because they had four extra acres over there, give us, so we took it. But we had some of the best architects, Cunningham, Cunningham, and I forgot what the other's name was.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Barker

VOT: But they were a good bunch. They stayed with the nurses for two or three days to see what the floor nursing was in the building—where they took the X-rays, where they gave shots. That's a new building out there. We had a room set up, about half as big as this, soundproofed so we could do hearing testing. And, of course, whatever we had was available to the DeKalb School System. And Jim Cherry had an audiologist person that was—did the screening, who was very good. So, she had, instead of you trying to duplicate what we had, she just used what we had, and [inaudible] at a time when we needed it.

It was interesting about rabies. [Inaudible comment] But I think I told you we bought—Scott Candler got 2,000 steel traps, and we used senior Scouts. And I didn't know then that he had been the first Scout master in the state. All this was [inaudible—turkey?] to him. He just—Louis, the engineer, if you bring him two ears or a fox tail, he'd pay them two dollars. And they soon got rid of all the foxes. Most people I [inaudible] scared of a mad dog. I used to have a tree going down to the mailbox, a whole row of trees up to the house. I figured out I could beat a dog up any of those trees if he got after me [*laughter*]. But we actually had one rabid bat. One of the professors at Emory said a bat attacked him, and he knocked him down with a broom. He took it

into the laboratory at the state. He was rabid, ugly little thing. But if you've ever seen a little old bat, they're ugly things. But they'll give you rabies as quick as a dog will.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Dr. Vinson?

VOT: Yes, sir.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: We immunize our dogs and cats against rabies. Why don't we immunize children?

VOT: Well, that's a good question. I expect immunization would disturb them more than being bit by a dog. After the dog bites you, you can still take the anti-rabies shots; of course, you have to take a lot of them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Don't you have to take about twenty-one?

VOT: Twenty-one shots. And you finally give out of flesh to stick. You don't do that now. We don't have—I haven't—we haven't reported a case of rabies in DeKalb I don't know when, since the Indians [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Dr. Vinson?

VOT: Yes'm?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: We've been concerned recently about various forms of so-called tick fevers. Did you see any incidents of this when you were in the health department in DeKalb?

VOT: No, I didn't. Tick-bite fever?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Mm-hm

VOT: I don't believe we saw any. But it's hard to get a tick off when it gets its head buried in your skin. But a cigarette butt or something will make it turn loose.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That was what I wanted to ask you about, but I guess it was before you came that we had a spotted-fever scare. And I remember that we had to save to save the ticks off our dogs, and somebody from the health department came in Saturday to pick up the jar with the ticks in it.

VOT: You know, when I was at Emory, I almost--me and another boy almost [*inaudible*] dog loose that the medical school had. But I found out later, when I was—we had—I had a little dog I had done a surgery on and gave him to Roselle, who I married later. I said, "Now, we have fixed his gut so that when food went down, it would drop and go on in your gut." And I said, "Now, don't give him any bones, because if he gets stopped up, it's too bad." What I had done, the last operation was the amputation of a leg and put the dog to sleep. And [*inaudible phrase*] amputated his dog's leg, and he'd already amputated one, so he was going to put the dog to

sleep anyway. So, I gave Roselle this little dog. [Inaudible] came to me, a little fuzzy fellow. And about month or two later she called me and said it was vomiting every which way. I said, “Good gracious. I took him back down and put him to sleep, and he was full of bones.” We just put him to sleep. We had somebody here that worked with a Negro woman in [“the county”? “accounting”?]. And turned [inaudible] dog loose [*laughs*], [rest inaudible]. But I loved this dog just as much as she did. I won’t call any names [*audience laughter*]. But I’m just as fond of the dog or any animal back then. I had a German shepherd that I loved just like it was a human being. Only trouble [inaudible] when I’d go swimming, he wanted to climb up on my shoulders [*laughter*] [rest inaudible].

Do you have—what other questions do you have? We haven’t covered much.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What about the development of the immunization program through the years?

TOV: We started out with just the main health center here, and we moved and got—we’ve got them in Lithonia, Doraville—we got about ten [inaudible] health center: one at Scottdale, and the nurses there can give anything you can get here. I guess they’re still giving out, I don’t know. Dr. Bowen is the--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Let’s see, you had the polio inoculations in your regime, didn’t you?

TOV: Yes, we did, but they came out with the Salk vaccine, I believe, by that time, and pretty much wiped it out. But when I was in Griffin, my dentist’s daughter had—one of his daughters had polio. And maybe I shouldn’t tell you this, but it ain’t all good for the medical profession. The first man they called came over, a surgeon, said she had polio, and the next day he got a bill for \$75. And then he said, “I’d rather for him to stab me in the back” [*laughter*]. So, I called Dr. Bennett, who was in charge of the thing, physiotherapist, and he later came to—up to Emory, I don’t know where he is now. But I called him, I said, “Call Dr. [inaudible—sounds like “Mendit”?].”

He called me and said, “Do your nurses know how to give hot-pack treatments the way Sister Kinney did?”

I said, “Yeah, we’ve got blankets and everything.”

And he said, “Go on, start it.”

I give [rest inaudible]. And I think she did—she walks all right now, but she was crippled for a while. The hot packs reduced it. And her mother went over there and stayed with her at

Warm Springs. Said if she ever had to go anywhere, she'd go to Warm Springs and live. Said that was the sweetest place she'd ever been in, the way they treated you.

What are some other questions? There's so much, I didn't—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How big a dental program did you have [rest inaudible]? How did you change over the time that you were there?

TOV: We had a pretty good dental program. The local dentists cooperated and got so much an hour. Of course, we didn't have much caries, because after they started fluoridating the water, teeth pretty well cleared up. Because five years after we started, Sidney [spelling?] Glass came, in fact, the dean of the dental school, had daughter [rest inaudible]. So, we didn't have to argue with him; they came out and checked all the children's teeth [rest inaudible]. But decayed, missing, and filled teeth, back then, it went way down.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Dr. Vinson?

TOV: Yes, sir

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Do you have any idea of what the county spends to fluoridate the water?

TOV: No, I don't, and it's—they didn't have to buy any equipment, because they had a standby Allen [sp?] machine, and it—they just bought a big hundred-pound bag of—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Sodium fluorosilicate

TOV: Sodium fluoro—sodium fluoride, just one part per million.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Well, I know it's beneficial to the teeth, but I'll be that less than one percent of the water is imbibed, and the rest washes dishes and flushes toilets and--

TOV: What they drink is one percent. It's got—like they got in Texas in that county, and that's four percent. [Inaudible] brushing teeth.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Well, that seems like a waste of money to fluoridate all the water you'd wash your car or dirty clothes with.

TOV: It's just one part per million.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You ever see a car with a cavity? [*Laughter*]
[*Another audience member repeats the joke for those who missed it.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You mentioned the water system. There were a few areas in the county, I believe, did not have indoor water. Did you ever see any cases where there was something in the water that affected the health of a large group of people? Did you go there?

TOV: They only checked the children who were drinking county water, which was—I don't know if Lithonia was tied into this or not, or Doraville. I'd even have painted it on my kids' teeth. One of them's a great big old husky fellow, about six-foot-three, teaches up at Washington & Lee, and his teeth look mighty good to me. And mine, I ain't going to say anything about my teeth [*laughs*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I think the other part of the question was did you ever see any epidemics or outbreaks of disease caused by polluted water when you were in the health department?

TOV: Well, we got a lot of samples of water. I'd hate for you to drink any water from the South River, though [*audience reaction*]. It's polluted. [*Murmurs inaudible comment.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: In the early days a lot of people didn't have—I mean, they had wells [*inaudible*]. They didn't have indoor plumbing. So at least you had some—

TOV: Well, if there was any question, we'd take a sample of the water and take it to the state, and they would check it for us. But it was a lot of fun dealing with people that were already sold on it—Scott Candler and Jim Cherry. I had to run to keep up with them [*laughs*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: We lived in a place—we lived in an area where it was naturally—the water was naturally that way, and our children's teeth were very good. They hardly ever [*voice trails off*].

TOV: Well, we [*inaudible*] Dallas—not Dallas, Texas, but somewhere in Texas—had four parts per million, didn't [*inaudible phrase*] of any kind.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Really? [*Rest inaudible*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How about the nursing home program [*inaudible*]?

TOV: Well, I've been in a nursing home—not a nursing home, it's Wesley Woods [*inaudible*] Tower, one of the nicest places I've ever been in. And I went to a medical meeting, and they stuck a thing on here [*indicates jacket pocket*] with my name, and I said, "Now, if you'd just put the name on the front of somebody and not on the back, about twice the size of mine, so I can know who's who here." Everybody speaks to everybody. It's the friendliest place I ever saw. But one woman, I got to talking to her, she was from Gainesville. I said, "Do you know Ed Shannon? He lived across the street from me, and he sure was a bigmouth" [*laughs*]. I used to play tennis with him in Griffin; he was a [*inaudible—could be proctologist?*]. His son is an ear, nose, and throat fellow. But it has been a lot of fun working with people. You don't have to—
Recording #1 ends abruptly.

Recording #2 begins mid-sentence:

TOV: . . . [inaudible] and what tickled Mr. Candler so, that story I told you. This woman said she'd been nauseated since she'd been drinking this stuff and upsetting her. And I asked Louis to go out and check and see whose [inaudible], and she was drinking Atlanta water [laughs]. It was all in her mind. And this other fellow had his teeth down to the gums, and you could imagine how he chewed. But he wrote a postcard to Mr. Candler and said since he'd been drinking that good water, he could eat anything [laughter]. All in his mind.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did the fact that Emory is here with the medical school have an effect on what you did?

TOV: Well, the first two or three years I was here, our medical society, we didn't have but about twenty-five, mostly made up of [inaudible] you folks up north. I knew nearly all of them, I missed a few. [Refers to paper.] I wrote them down. The first ones were Homer Adams and Bob [Anthony?], John [inaudible last name]—of course, John [inaudible phrase]. And Ed Cunningham, Dr. Duncan, who was a beautiful piano player, incidentally. And then J. Rufus Evans. Old Dr. Flowers was up at Doraville. He owned all that property up there, and he used to practice on a horse [laughter]. Now, Dick Smoot was the first president that I [inaudible]. I tried to get some information from the local medical society and couldn't. So, I called Medical Association of Georgia, and they sent me a copy of all the stuff I wanted. I didn't want to get a name wrong [voice trails off]. Just to see how much they have grown, while we had thirty then, now today we've got 230. So, you ought to be in good shape.

But one of my neighbors where I did live was walking by, and I was working in the front yard, and he stopped being an orthopedist. And he said, "You know how much my malpractice insurance [inaudible]?" [TOV's response inaudible] He said, "\$85,000 a year." And so, he retired.

I asked my brother in Fort Valley, who is a GP, a general practitioner, I said, "How much malpractice insurance you got?"

He said, "None. Nobody'd sue me down here."

I said, [response inaudible] [laughter].

But it has been really a lot of fun to work with somebody that you didn't have to say [inaudible]. I didn't have any trouble in Griffin saying anything.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: As a Historical Society [sic], I'm interested in early, early medicine, like Dr. Chapmon Powell. Did he have any kind of a degree, or did he just—do you know anything about the history around there?

TOV: Well, there were two or three. I knew one of them that was good enough [inaudible] here from cowslip and cobalt—that's the cobalt, in the hospital they use cobalt machines [*laughs*]. And I got another one that was—I'll have to bring that little book with me in case I could pin down. It was—what was the name of that book that starts with a V, I think. I never could remember it. [Inaudible phrase] it was put out here, that--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It's called *Vanishing DeKalb*.

TOV: Yeah, what was it called?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: *Vanishing DeKalb*

TOV: *Vanishing DeKalb*, but I noticed that, when I got here, it was exploding [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It had already vanished.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I think some of those early doctors [rest inaudible].

TOV: Yeah, I was—you know, some of this stuff here was—they had the same trouble where I came from [inaudible phrase]. We could treat Indians. Of course, I always took up for the Indians. I thought I was part-Indian myself, but [inaudible] just imagination. But this brings it up—the [inaudible] brings it up to the Indians and all. [Inaudible phrase] saw arrowheads.

MODERATOR, *off-camera*: Well, do we have any more questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I had one. There was a time in DeKalb's history when a lot of the children had ringworm or headlice in the schools. Was that very prevalent during your administration?

TOV: I don't remember seeing but very, very little ringworm in DeKalb.

But we stole some good people from—Mary Lee Anderson came from—she taught down at Milledgeville, at GSCW. She was a health educator. And we had a psychiatrist, and the way I picked him up, I had taken a bunch down to Milledgeville there, and Katherine [sp?] Mann was the ordinary then. Bless her heart, she and [first name inaudible—sounds like "Betty"?] Jones were the sweetest things, because it shook me up when they lock them up—you know, the jail used to be right over here. I think it was right over there. [*Receives affirmative response, followed by laughter.*] And I'll never forget going over there one night in the jail, and I said, "Is that catacombs?" I went back there in the dark. I said, "Didn't you go to Emory?"

He said, "Yeah."

I went back and told Katherine [sp?], I said, "That fellow's a big man on campus, mentally sick, and here he is locked up in jail."

So, Ms. Jones, Millie Jones and I—Katherine [sp?] let us go out and see him at home, and he wouldn't have to be locked up. But to me it's horrible to be locked up in jail just because

you're mentally sick and you can't help it. What shook me up the worst was in Griffin, when I was standing in front of the courthouse, and here was this mother, and they were taking her little girl away from her, and she was going to Milledgeville. I was as upset as she was, if possible, because I could identify with the both of them. And so [inaudible first name—Millie? Betty?] Jones and I would go out, because they had to have a doctor on the Lunacy Commission. And, of course, Marion Guess [inaudible phrase], just wanted kindness [inaudible].

But it's real rough there. I know of two sisters—we were over there in the jail; I went to see them, both white women from Scottdale Mill. And they were embarrassed, being locked up in jail, and were mentally sick, too. So, we—Ms. Jones and I would go out whenever we could to offset that. It's trauma enough to be carried down there. But the first time I went there with Katherine [sp?] Mann, we went to the door, and they locked it, and when they banged the door, she said, "I'm ready to go back" [*laughter*]. But I picked up the head psychiatrist who was down there. And the way I judged it, we were in a meeting, and this old woman was mentally disturbed, walked right in the middle there, and he got her, put his arm around her, just in the middle of her back, [inaudible] somebody. Most doctors would say, "Nurse! Get here quick! Get this woman!" He just got her, put his arm around her, and [rest inaudible].

Later on, we had trouble. We had a workshop up in the mountains. I won't call any names. When we got back, the chairman of the board told me to fire this psychiatrist. I said, "You can fire me, but you can't fire any of my staff." He did, but [rest inaudible].

Anyway, it was a lot of pleasure just to work with the school system. I know I sat down to eat over there one time. Mrs. [inaudible last name] said, "You know who this woman is?"

I said, "Of course, I know her. She used to teach at Druid Hills High School [rest inaudible]." Found out her daddy was a country doctor way down in south Georgia, almost to Florida. He learned to swim in the Ocmulgee River.

If there are any other questions, we had a health educator who was a trained teacher, [inaudible name]. And Ann Butts was—we got her way back, you know, head of psychiatry, and finally got Dr. Anton.

But this is a real big problem out there, but I had two or three school principals, and I was just crazy about them. Mr. Dick was one out Bouldercrest. He was an old bachelor. I think he had a brother that was a banker. But if one of those kids got sick, he didn't call a doctor. He'd put them in his car and take them to the doctor. And he always invited me every Thanksgiving to come out and have turkey with them. I guess that's one thing that brought us close together. As soon as he'd do that, he'd bring the first grade into a room and put on a record, just pick up a

record at random. And they would do what they called “interpretive dancing,” which is pretty good. If you’ve ever seen that, [inaudible] know what kind of dancing that is, they’d just get to the music, whatever the tempo is. Not as bad as we did when I was—I [inaudible] grew up in the Keystone Class. I was telling Dr. [last name inaudible] because he played [inaudible]. I don’t see how this woman plays the piano with him blowing that thing. But I said, “You know, when we had revival one time in a little country church, I played a trumpet, and one of the other fellows played a saxophone, and we couldn’t—they call it soul now, the Black folks do—we just put out extra notes. And the pianist, we thought was an old woman, but she was about thirty-five” [laughter]. The preacher came out and put his arm around her and said, “Let’s don’t this no more” [laughter] [Inaudible comment] But we were putting soul in the music, I guess, they call it now. It was [inaudible] people enjoyed it anyway, more than we were his sermon.

Any other questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Can you tell us how you met Mrs. Vinson?

TOV: I met her my freshman year of medical school on the tennis court. And [inaudible name] was a pediatrician [inaudible phrase]. I guess he’s still [inaudible]. Most of our classmates are dead. [Inaudible comment] [Inaudible phrase] ran into a telephone pole one time and killed him [rest inaudible].

Anyway, I [rest inaudible]. And he called—this is when you had to wind the thing, you know, and get the operator and all that stuff. Got her on the phone, and I said, “I’m not going to talk to her. She’s [rest inaudible].” And she had told him that she had a date with one of my classmates, so I walked on home and called her, and she told me that John [inaudible] from Tate, Georgia. And so that’s where I met her. But every Sunday night I’d got up, she was the soloist in the choir, and every time we’d come out of there, Ms. [inaudible last name—could be Barton? Morris?] would play the organ—this was in the Presbyterian church—“The Wedding March” [laughter]. This went on for four years! And [inaudible] graduated [inaudible] school, because they rotated graduations. And I went back on up to the Presbyterian church, and we got married. And Ms. [inaudible last name] played “The Wedding March” and cried [laughter]. But she [inaudible] folks coming, because my line, living in Macon, was pretty old and [inaudible]. The only thing I had was my best man, old Sam Withers from [inaudible].

But don’t let me get started on my wife, because she is—I never could find anything wrong. The first date I had with her, I said, “Would you let your hair down?”

She said, “[Most inaudible; last few words “I could see”].” So, she told me later—she had the most beautiful wavy hair. It came down to here, and she told me that it used to go down to

her hips. But she cut it off because it was so much trouble. But anyway, when we got married, [inaudible] started [inaudible phrase] intern. I thought—well, I just assumed that she was Presbyterian, because she was qualified as a home missionary in the Presbyterian Church. And I said, “My folks over yonder are Methodist. It doesn’t matter to me what you do.”

She said, “It doesn’t to me, either.” She said it didn’t matter to her. I thought I’d say my granddaddy was a Baptist preacher [laughter].

But we really had an interesting life. We went out to a medical meeting in Jekyll; and Carl Sanders was governor at that time, and she’d taught him in the fourth grade. And he flew down in his plane; and when he walked over there where a bunch of us were, I said, “Governor, there’s a lady here that would like to speak to you.”

And he looked at her real strange-like, she said, “Think waaaaaay back” [laughter].

He said, “You are Miss Stanfield.”

She said, “That’s close enough. It’s Stanford” [laughter]. She was interested in meeting all them youngsters.

I had the best school superintendent. I used to go to Sunday school class [inaudible] over in Augusta. [Inaudible comment] But I said something about [inaudible name—Lawton?]. She said, “You know him?”

I said, “Of course I knew him. He was not only a good school superintendent, but he was a whale of a Sunday school teacher.

You meet folks from everywhere. I [inaudible] one of my classmates, old Bill Mitchell from down below Griffin. What’s that—[inaudible]? I went down there, and I said, “Did you know” Dr.—one of them, Lovejoy, practiced down there. He married one of Lovejoy’s sisters. But it’s a nice place. I’ve been trying to get one of my old teachers, Professor [inaudible], to come over there and stay—ninety-one years old and taught me at [inaudible] school and also taught me up here at Emory, taught me French up here and Spanish down there. One of the sweetest guys I ever knew. I said, “Professor, you know I didn’t pass French.”

[Inaudible—could be, “Guess you do, too” or “Yes, you did, too”] [laughter]

MODERATOR: I think if there aren’t any more questions, we usually end up with a little social period and talk with people informally. This is going to be our last “I Remember Hour” for the summer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How come old Jim Mackay’s not here?

MODERATOR: I suspect he's probably somewhere in or near a courtroom. I understand he was planning to come tonight. I don't know what happened. He rarely misses one, and I'm sure it's something pressing.

TOV: He's a great guy. I used to [inaudible] Rotary Club and see him. Somebody made a crack about the legal profession, and you look around and there's Robin Harris, over here's John Wesley Weeks, [inaudible]. [Inaudible comment] But I was always scared to open my mouth [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: When will our next meeting be, then?

MODERATOR: It will be September—the fourth Thursday in September.

TOV: I didn't know you'd have this big a crowd. I'd be glad to join this bunch, because [inaudible].

MODERATOR: It's always the fourth Thursday. [Most of comment inaudible], always an exception. Most often it's the fourth Thursday; most often at four o'clock.

TOV: I tell you, it's exciting to have two people like Scott Candler and Jim Cherry to [most of the rest inaudible] were on the board, too, and Professor McCain. We'd gone over there when they opened up something new over there, a new kitchen. Don't quote me on this, but I told a girl, I said, "This is one of the fanciest kitchens I've saw, but you still going to have food poisoning." And oddly enough, Dr. Evans's daughter and Dr. [inaudible name] daughter were over there and then got an intestinal upset. And we—I said "we"—the CDC and state ran it down, and one of the fellows, every time he'd serve something, [inaudible], but he had intestinal flu. So that thing, I told them, I said, "You can still have all this stainless steel, and you can still have problems if somebody gets careless." But they got all right. [*Loud background noises interfere with audio.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [*First few words inaudible, due to background noise.*] Some of the people Mrs. Julius Scott, Laverne Scott, she's had a massive stroke; and she's in the health center at Wesley Woods.

TOV: Who is?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Mrs. Julius Scott, Laverne Scott

TOV: I'll have to go see her, because I [inaudible] nurse out there [inaudible] preacher's daughter, going to be a missionary, but she had cancer of part of her stomach or gut but it cleared up all right. But I sure would go look her up, because—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: She can't respond, but she opens her eyes, and I think she understands.

TOV: [Inaudible] they got three buildings over there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: She's in the fourth floor of the health center, next to Budd Terrace, in back of Budd Terrace, the health center.

TOV: Well, that's—I went over there to see one of my best-loved teachers at Emory [inaudible name]. Put my hand on his, he took it off. He didn't know who I was. [*Inaudible comment from audience member*] I told some of the staff, I said, "This ain't going to help, son. This is the place where they go to die." But another one of my fellows at Emory, went to clean off the gutter at his—[name inaudible]. The ladder slipped, and he fell off and broke his neck. And somebody said, "Better come go over there and see him, because he can't talk back to you." They had to go in there, and he finally died at the health center, as we call it. We [inaudible] Budd Terrace, those of us that are in the towers [inaudible]. And it's one of the nicest set-ups.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: She was in the geriatric hospital. We used to take her to church, and she'd point at that hospital, and she'd say, "That's where they experiment on us old people." But that's where she landed at first, but she—

TOV: Well, I did go out—they got four buildings over there: one for Alzheimer's disease, one for mental illness for old people, and—

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: She lived in the medical part.

TOV: Well, they've got Dr. [inaudible—sounds like "Omadark"?] there—I'll get a picture here [*consults book; makes inaudible comment*]. Her name is—she is over there now, because I went out one day to see—I know they called me one night, and one fellow said, "Will you take Mrs. Whatcha-Call over to--" he said, "My doctor's grounded me. I can't—my blood pressure's up" [*Laughs; inaudible comment*]. And so, we went over there [inaudible] Dr. Baker, took her over there, and nobody over there but a nurse. But now they've got [rest inaudible]. [*Consults book.*] I got her picture in here somewhere. Back [inaudible], her husband's an ophthalmologist, and [inaudible]. [*Continues leafing through book.*] I can't see well without my glasses. And then there's bifocals [inaudible]. But she went to school to help somebody like that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Well, is the geriatric hospital part of Wesley Woods, or is—[inaudible] as far as—

TOV: It's the same thing as being connected with Emory, the whole medical school, because if something went wrong—here she is, this is Virginia Staton [sp?], who's a woman doctor that was in charge at that time. She's as sharp as the dickens. Most of the people there, they didn't need anybody to check them, because what she would do is talk to the family doctor,

and she [inaudible], because this woman needed somebody that could follow her up, not just see her sporadically.

MODERATOR: Well, if you'll lead us into the courtroom [inaudible], refreshments and a good chance for informal discussion. *Audience applause.*

END OF RECORDING

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