

Recording begins during the Moderator's introductory remarks.

MODERATOR: I must apologize for our surroundings, but we're getting better all the time, believe it or not. We're starting renovations. Our speaker for today is Judge B. J. Smith. He's been in DeKalb County for quite a number of years, known some of the movers and shakers and some of the more colorful characters in the legal system and otherwise. So for the next forty-five minutes or so he's going to keep us riveted with tales of DeKalb County. Judge Stone—Judge Smith, I mean.

JUDGE B. J. SMITH: That's all right, George, next time you [rest of comment inaudible; elicits laughter from audience].

I'm B. J. Smith, and [inaudible] here, I thought for a moment, I said, "I've been in DeKalb County since 1952. That's a long time." And, of course, I know some people that's been here much longer. And when I came here, Mr. Bailey [inaudible], I believe, over here in a little shop, we used to drive down the street here and park in front of your shop there. But they've stopped that—progress has stopped driving, you know, not merely by closing the street [inaudible] too many cars. But you were talking about surroundings here. This old courthouse has a lot of memories, indeed it does.

Some of the framers and some of the leaders of this county came through this courthouse. Judge Guess was here for a number of years, and we had a judge here, Judge Poolie [sp?] Hubert, was in this courthouse. [Inaudible] Morgan was in this courthouse. I can only recall two district attorneys—three or four now, that DeKalb County had—and that was a fellow named Leathers that was here, and then he was succeeded by a fellow named Richard Bell. And most of you know Richard Bell. Richard Bell was a district attorney in this county for over twenty years and started in this courthouse. He used to be a Representative in the House of Representatives, and then he was elected district attorney. Now, he ran against Clarence Peeler, who later became a judge himself. Clarence Peeler was appointed by Governor Carl Sanders. Clarence Peeler, before he was appointed, was an assistant district attorney, prosecuting cases. So you could say that neither one of them really had to work [*chuckles from audience*], but I kid them that way.

Judge Peeler is now a senior judge in this county, a senior Superior Court judge. You know, a Superior Court judge of the state of Georgia never really retires. He just attains senior status and hears cases and works to keep the calendars up to date. But Richard Bell remained as district attorney in this county for over twenty years, and then he retired and became executive director of the State Bar of Georgia, a position he stayed in for about three or four years. And then he—I could tell Richard had a yearning to get back into politics, so he came out

to talk with me, and he practiced law with me for about two years. And then he wanted to run for Superior Court judge, and I encouraged him to do so. I felt like he would do a good job, and he's a man who I think is probably the most honest human being I've ever met. He ran and was elected and then subsequently was elected to the Supreme Court of Georgia in the position he occupies today as a justice of that court.

When I came to DeKalb County there was a circle here; we called it the Square. And we call it the Square now, but it's been closed up all around. [Inaudible name] Levy's men's store used to be over here where the courthouse is. Al Means Ford used to be right down here, about where this glass building is behind us here. Shields Buick used to be down the street—O'Shields or something like that. And then Shields Market used to be right down the street, across from you, I believe, Brother Bailey. But progress comes, and progress changes things. Or they say it's progress; I don't know whether it is or not. The MARTA came along and caused us to close our Square up, and the Historical Society and the City of Decatur's done a remarkable job in beautifying this area. And this courthouse—this old courthouse is gradually being renovated, refurbished. And they have plans to do more for it, so that it can be enjoyed by not only the citizens of this county but visitors to come to this area; and that's something that I'd like to see expanded, is more tourists coming out here to see our area. We have a lot to offer in DeKalb County.

I lived in the northern part of DeKalb County for the most part. I live now in the Creek Park-Leafmore subdivision—Spring Creek Road. I live on the same street with Manuel Maloof and "Boss Hogg"—Sam Hogg [inaudible]. I file taxes [inaudible phrase] on my property [rest of phrase inaudible], because I live on the same street with Manuel Maloof [*audience laughter*]. At that would certainly be cause for impressing [inaudible—the market?]. We got a lot of laughs [inaudible]. North Druid Hills Road, when I moved here, was just a two-lane road. And now the overpass that we have now there, where the country club Mr. Pollard and I belong to—Hidden Valley Driveway, that's our country club that we belong to—had railroad tracks there you had to cross, and there was farms all out in that area. We had an old dairy farm up there that was later bought by Pet Milk Company; it was owned by Tullie Smith and his wife. And Executive Square [sic] there, where you got all the shopping centers now, was just pastureland—all back in there was just pastureland. And Westminster Presbyterian Church, they moved their church from the corner of Ponce de Leon Avenue and what is Boulevard on one side and Monroe Drive on the other. You know, it's amazing to me how streets have to be changed every once in a while. You know, the street will be a named street for years and years and years, and all of a sudden it becomes necessary to change the name of it. And it confuses me, because I guess anything

that's changing confuses me. But that's [Westminster Presbyterian Church] where Peter Marshall had his ministry in Atlanta before he went to New York. And that was the Westminster Presbyterian Church, and they built a big church over there in our county on Sheridan Drive, and the church is still thriving. All on North Druid Hills Road you've got now homes and condominiums and condos and cluster homes. Used to be a sign out there years ago, WPLO was about the only thing you saw out there, except vacant land. Going on up toward Lawrenceville Highway or on Lawrenceville Highway towards Tucker, there was a famous store there most of you remember called Hello World. That was a landmark by which you told people how to get to this place, Hello World. A man and his family—I believe his name was Fisher—who ran that store. And his family, I saw his children grow up, as he saw my children grow up.

I have three children, and they all graduated from the DeKalb County school system. And that's another thing that we all saw change in this county was our school system. We went from a little, small community; starting in about the 1950s, we mushroomed into a big metropolitan county. And with that, we had the school system; and we had the influx of population coming into DeKalb County. And where we had probably ten, twelve schools in this county, throughout the county, we ended up with over a hundred-and-something schools, both elementary schools and high schools. Right in the northern part, north DeKalb, Shamrock High School was built during this period of time. Of course, Druid Hills High School, which is located over near Emory, is, I think one of the oldest high schools in this area; and it was at one time the most respected high school. It had a very high scholastic standing, and it graduated some individuals that went on to college and did extremely well.

In the city of Decatur, they have a separate school system. We used to have separate—they had Boys' High School and Girls' High School years ago. That was all changed with the '50s because of the influx of people and the cost of educating people and the cost that goes along with maintaining the governmental facilities. I know we had consolidation schools all over the city of Decatur maintain their own schools [inaudible]; they do the same today. I don't know whether that's good or bad. I think that we have in this county today some twelve separate municipalities. I'm speaking of little cities like Pine Lake, Clarkston, Avondale, city of Decatur, Doraville, Chamblee. And the cost of maintaining those municipalities is extremely high. The cost of maintaining the city of Decatur is extremely high. There's some talk about consolidation; I'm sure there's arguments for and against and advantages for good and bad, I don't know. When I came to DeKalb County, we didn't have a police department, not as such; we had a sheriff's department. And later we established the DeKalb County police department. Our jail was located right across the street from the courthouse.

Of course, we had nothing like the criminal problem we have today. But our jail was built at that time, it was something like forty years old, and it was obsolete, too small. And when Kelly had the private property down at Memorial Drive and 285, that whole tract of land out there, it was felt it was best to build the jail out there. I think there's been some second thoughts about that now because the cost of transporting prisoners to the courthouse. I've always been of the belief that the jail should be near the courthouse, so you can just get them from one place to another through a tunnel, and you don't have the cost of transporting them every day and double-housing, if you will. But that's something that we don't have room down here near the courthouse; and it's required that the county seat be in Decatur.

Of course, most of you know that we had nothing like these expressways back in the '50s; that's when it all started. But that was interesting to me to learn that I was of the opinion that the expressways that we have were built by the Department of Transportation, but [inaudible phrase] built by the Department of Defense. And it was built for the purpose of transporting people in the event that we had an attack. And that was done under the leadership of President Eisenhower, who had a great knowledge about warfare and spending and preserving freedom. And I really think he had foresight in doing that, not so much for moving troops and so forth, but now for moving people. [Interstate] 285 was not even thought about at that time. And Interstate 85 came up just outside of the DeKalb County line; 75 was not even thought of, going to Atlanta and Stone Mountain. Of course, 75 didn't come to Atlanta by DeKalb County. Now we have all this freeway, this Interstate 285 going around the entire metro area, and they're talking about a further perimeter going outside of 285 to be built. And that's going to cause a lot of people a lot of problems, because it's going to displace a lot of people from their homes they've had a number of years, just as it did in this area. And it's going to reach up into Dawson County and that area, down as far as the southern part of Henry County.

And this—speaking of the legal profession, DeKalb County used to consist of—it was the Stone Mountain Circuit and still is. But at that time it consisted of DeKalb County, Rockdale County, Newton County, and Henry County—not Henry, Clayton County. And it had one judge, and he traveled all over the circuit. And he had a district attorney and one assistant and had a secretary. Richard Bell would hunt and peck and type out his indictments, and Roy Leathers would prosecute it, and then Clarence Peeler would do the same thing. And they would go to these circuits periodically. They'd have the grand jury meeting, and grand juries have always been something that in the rural communities—which we were—everybody waited to see what the grand jury did. Now in our county the grand jury meets about twice a week, whereas it used to meet about once about every three months. So instead of looking at the J. P. [Justice of the

Peace]'s court records—you know, J.Ps. used to be elected, and some were appointed by the grand jury; and they made their fee as a result of what they charged on the fee system. And there was a lot of corruption in the J.P. system. And everybody said it was a J.P.—system of justice for the plaintiff. I don't know.

I first became acquainted with the legal system in 1950, and most of you here probably remember we had a J.P. Court that was held down on Mason [Mayson?] Avenue. Now, that's in DeKalb County, but it's in the City of Atlanta. And the person that was holding that judgeship died, and they needed to appoint a judge. And Governor Herman Talmadge at that time appointed J. Oscar Mitchell. And Oscar didn't live in—you have to live in that militia district in order to be a judge in that militia district. It's what they call a J.P. district, it's a militia district.

And Judge Mitchell told him, the governor, said, "Well, I don't live in that."

And he [Talmadge] said, "Well, you can hang some clothes out there, can't you?"

Which he did, and Oscar was appointed. And he stayed—that court was later changed into the Civil and Criminal Court of DeKalb County. And Oscar Mitchell and [inaudible name—sounds like Colonel Alston?], Colonel Alston was his clerk, right up until his retirement. And Oscar's retirement was clerk and judge of court, and they later moved it to Decatur by legislative act and made it have county-wide jurisdiction, rather than just that militia district. And Oscar was reelected—well, he served thirty years and seven months on that court. He was probably more instrumental in the lives of more younger lawyers than any other person that's ever been in the state, because most of the cases that the younger lawyers tried was tried in Oscar's court; and that's what they called it, "Oscar's court." It was started in here in the old administrative building, which has since been torn down. It's where the Callaway Building, the warehouse-looking outfit down here, is now. And Scott Candler, who was "Mr. DeKalb," he had a sign put in, painted and hung down there that says, "Oscar's Court."

And Oscar ruled that court, but he was criticized by a lot of people. But I think that history will be kind to Oscar, in that he helped a lot of people; he helped a lot of young people. He probably was responsible for the collection of more child support than any human being I've ever known. He believed in people paying for the children they'd conceived and not making them a ward of the state. And he was a very colorful fellow, very colorful fellow. Not a real educated man, but he was—in the sense of the world of academia, but he had probably the most common sense of any person I'd ever met. And it's been my great pleasure to have known him for a number of years. And as I've said, he's argued before [*Tape skips.*] Whenever [sic] the President, John F. Kennedy, was seeking office, Judge Mitchell had incarcerated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for probation violation. And Robert Kennedy called him and asked him to

release him, that it was causing a severe problem in the presidential election, because Dr. King could not get out and speak for John F. Kennedy, who was an advocate for the Civil Rights Movement. And Oscar released him, and as a result, a lot of people attribute John F. Kennedy's election to that act. In fact, I was explaining to a lady who came in and talked to me that back seven or eight years ago, Judge Mitchell was in my office; and he was working [inaudible] he was there. And we got a call from Mike Wallace on *60 Minutes*. He wanted to come down and interview Oscar about this segment of history, and Oscar got me on the phone, and we both had a conversation with Mike Wallace, and we set the guidelines and the ground rules up for this interview, a very interesting interview. And it was later shown on *60 Minutes* and one other program that CBS put on. But that's another individual that helped formulate this county. He had tremendous impact upon this county, as did, as I mentioned, Jim Cherry.

Jim Cherry guided this county from an educational standpoint during one of the greatest growth periods that any county's ever known. I loved Jim Cherry; I respected him. He dealt with some of the most difficult times in education, which was brought about by the Supreme Court's decision in 1954, declaring segregated schools unconstitutional. Then we had to really get on our—try to establish schools, and we've had nothing but problems since that time, as you know, not as a result of desegregation, but I think it's primarily a result of people not knowing what they wanted to do. What they wanted to do twenty years ago, thirty years ago, they don't want to do today. But it's always been my experience that people do what they want to do, and they can justify any kind of conflict they have.

Judge Hubert had a very profound effect upon this county. But I guess when you get to who had the biggest effect upon this county, I guess you have to say that Mr. Scott Candler did, because he brought industry into this county. And he was responsible for the growth of it. And most of you probably know the story of when General Motors came here, they wanted certain things done, and Mr. Candler told them that it could be done.

And they said, "Will the county commission have to meet?"

And he said, "They just did" [*audience laughter*].

He got things done. I think he will probably go down in history as one of the greatest leaders in this county. That's not to say that additional people who were later elected did not have a tremendous impact on this county. I can recall when all of our streets in this county were just so narrow and full of potholes, and everybody criticized our county because of our streets. And when they paved anything, if and when they paved it, it was about like a pizza crust, you know. And I remember that, and we had a county commission chairman, Brince Manning, he paved a lot of streets, did a lot for this county. And we didn't have many county commissioners

that succeeded themselves in office. That's always a position that they didn't seem to hold but only one term. Brince Manning didn't hold it but one time, and then he was, I believe, succeeded by Mr. Gould, if memory serves me correct. And then Walt Russell—Walt Russell, fine person. And then Brother Maloof, who's been in there probably longer than he wanted to be, because it's a very hard job. [To audience] Did I miss somebody?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Clark Harrison

BJS: Yeah, Clark Harrison! Clark was a—you couldn't find a more honest man than Clark Harrison. Very dedicated person, and I--and we all miss him, Clark.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Wheat Williams and Charlie Emory

BJS: Yeah, Charlie Emory was elected before Brince Manning, yeah. And I liked him. He did a lot for this county. He was an educator, I believe. It's kind of hard to get a handle on county property. He wasn't used to people playing as rough as they do. I can recall the campaign between he and Brince Manning, and Brince would say, "I'm not going to get up here and talk about Mr. Emory doing so-and-so and so-and-so." Wasn't any truth to it, you know? Of course, in politics, they don't ever tell the truth exactly. But it's not anything [inaudible phrase], [inaudible] more so today.

This building next door was not here. Going down here, we used to have the Plantation Restaurant. Down here on the right on Ponce de Leon and the funeral home [inaudible phrases] where Philips Towers is now, Mel Turner's place. I never did want to go there [audience laughter]. And then they moved on over—DeKalb General was built during this period of time, this hospital. All these events that came about were just highlights that I can recall. They were significant. I have had the pleasure of working in this county for every judge, part-time judge, for some fourteen years. I've seen a lot of changes. We're now fixing to build another new jail. I just hope that it will be adequate by the time we get it completed to house the people, because we're getting a criminal element [rest of comment inaudible]. But we're going to build it out here near the present jail; it's supposed to be ready in two and a half years, I think. I hope it'll be sufficient; if it's not, we'll have to adjust and do something else.

I'm sure most of you remember when you first moved here, as I do, taxes on homes was about \$320; now it's about four or five times that much. And you still own the same house you did, and everything goes up, and it's all caused by inflation, and you don't have any control of that. People that's retired years ago, it's really tough on them because they're on a fixed income. I don't guess anything can be equitably divided that way; everybody has to pay. We have now in this county, I think it's nine Superior Court judges; but for years we just had one, then we had two. We have five Superior Court judges where for years we just had one, that was

Oscar Mitchell; we have two. It was only in 1976 that we added a third State Court judge. And then later we added a fourth and another fifth State Court judge. They just handle misdemeanor cases in criminal and county ordinances and—*First recording ends abruptly.*

Presentation resumes with second recording:

. . . with that and civil cases. Magistrate Court was created in 1983 to take the place of the J.P. Courts. The Magistrate Court heard civil disagreements or controversies or lawsuits up to \$5,000 without the intervention of a jury. We are fortunate in this county that all of our magistrates are practicing lawyers. In a lot of counties you don't have that; they still have people who are holding court who are not law-trained. And I'm not saying that despairingly [sic; means "disparagingly"?] against other people, but it's much better when you have people that are trained in the law, though all of our people who serve in Magistrate Courts are members of the Bar and law-trained. And we have to go to school [rest inaudible]. Of course, I had the great pleasure—one of my great pleasures in my career is having taught law school for some twelve years at night, at the same law school I went to school. And many of the lawyers that I see in our county today are former students of mine, some judges that are former students of mine, and they don't seem to hold it against me [*audience laughter*].

As I go out throughout the state—I've been in every county in the state at one time or another—and I see former students practicing law and raising their families and being a real credit to their community and helping their community. It appears to me, from my experience in my life in public service, in my life in trying to make a living for my family, that every major problem in this country eventually gets to the courts. We are called upon to resolve oil spills, school problems—we had federal judges operating school systems for years. I just read in *American Bar Journal* in Kansas City, I believe, some fellow judge had been trying to operate the schools for a number of years. And after five or six years and \$375 million, it was no better off than it was to start with. You say, What is the answer? Get back to the basics as it was back when—and I know you can't go back, but you can take what was good in the past, and you can bring it to the future. When you had families who stayed together, and they prayed together, and the mothers were home with the children, and they taught the basics of what kids needed to know, and teachers wasn't tied up with all kinds of reports—the only report that you ever got from the teacher was when the child told you that they got a whipping at school for something, and then they got another one when they got home. The educational system was much better then, in my opinion.

I see people now in the eleventh, twelfth grade in high school who are illiterate, can't read. I never saw that back in the '50s. I never saw that in the '60s. That came to life really in

the '70s and '80s. I think that morality is returning to this country from what it was in the '60s and '70s, when we had the permissive society. Drugs are a problem, but incarceration for those offenders is not the answer to that. And I don't like to say that—"rehabilitation" is a word that I don't particularly like; I like "behavior modification," because you inculcate in those individuals a sense of self-esteem and the desire to better themselves and return to some spiritual values in life, because this country was based on the quest to be able to worship whatever God a person understood. But we've gotten away from that. We've built a lot of churches in this county, but some of them are struggling to stay afloat. But it doesn't make any difference how big the church is; it's what's inside that counts.

We've got as fine citizens in this county as any place I've seen. We've got the most loving, caring people, both in public service and in the private sector. But we've got to get our families back together if we ever hope to have it, so we don't have to walk around with guns [rest of comment inaudible].

That's about all I have to say. I don't know how long I've talked. [*Glances at watch.*]

MODERATOR: This is where we usually take a few minutes, if there are any questions that people might have. And we have some light refreshments in the—

BJS: I've got to leave shortly, because I've got to go to Dublin, Georgia, because I'm speaking down there tonight [*laughter*]. That's close to my hometown, Cochran. You know where Cochran is? [*Inaudible audience responses.*] Is that right? Uh-huh. That's a nice place. No, I'm from Cochran, Georgia. You know [inaudible name] then, yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: The only place in Georgia that's Dublin [doublin'] all the time.

BJS: Dublin all the time [*laughs*]. Yeah, it is. Makes sense.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What's the B. J. stand for?

BJS: Ben [inaudible—Joe? Jones?] Southern name.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And you're from Cochran?

BJS: That is correct.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Where did you get your education?

BJS: North Georgia College and Woodrow Wilson College of Law. [*Audience member asks inaudible question.*] Pardon me?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible name—could be Altman?], Dr. [Altman?] down there.

BJS: Yeah! He was president of the college [inaudible]. Leo Brannon [sp?] was president for a number of years, and then Dr. [Altman?] came in later.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Most of question inaudible] Parks?

BJS: Yeah, I know where that is. [*Audience member's next comment inaudible*] That's right. [*Inaudible exchange between audience member and BJS*] Uh-huh, yeah. I remember where [inaudible] is. [*Another audience member's inaudible question about Woodrow Wilson Law School*] Yes, sir. In fact I worked with Dean [inaudible] as part of his faculty.

standing, with back to camera:

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Best teacher I ever had.

BJS: Did you go there? [Inaudible response] Dean Gilbride [sp?] was one of the greatest men I've ever known.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He was a fine fellow.

BJS: He was, and he was a teacher.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah, he [inaudible] Governor Walker.

BJS: Yeah, Governor Walker, Clifford Walker started that school. And the school, we stopped the school because of the increased standards for admission to the Bar would cost the students too much to go to school, and we had to increase the tuition. Some [inaudible] couldn't afford it, and that defeated the purpose of starting the school, which was to allow people who could not afford to go to major universities an opportunity to obtain a legal education. And some of the best lawyers in this state and judges in this state are graduates of our school. But rather than put it through that turmoil, we just chose to—in fact, we were going to merge with Georgia State University; and that didn't work out. But the school served a lot of purpose.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah

BJS: Yes, indeed

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Is Atlanta Law School still [inaudible]?

BJS: It's still going, and it will probably operate, I would say, until probably 1998. That, as I understand it, is the date they have set for all schools to be accredited by the American Bar Association. To be accredited by the American Bar Association, you've got to have so many full-time faculty members and such a big library. It's just too expensive to operate with part-time teachers at night, and you can't get accredited. And if they can't get accredited, you're not doing the students a full service, because—you can still get a legal education, but you wouldn't be qualified to sit for the State Bar to practice law if you so desire. Of course, we've had such an influx of lawyers, we sometimes, people say we have too many lawyers. But I always tell them it's just like cream that rises to the top, good lawyers rise to the top. And if you have a sincere desire to serve the people rather than make money, you can enjoy life. You won't get rich, but

you'll enjoy life. You can help people, and there's many people that need help. Problems, problems, problems.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Who are you speaking to tonight?

BJS: Well, it's a group of drunks.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Similar to this one.

BJS: I can't answer that [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: AA?

BJS: That's right. Yes, I've been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous [rest of comment inaudible]. [Inaudible] but I don't stress on that. I've been a member of that fellowship for seventeen years. And of all the things that ever happened in my life, that's greatest move that ever happened. It was after that move was made in my life that I found out how to live. In living one day at a time, I'm realizing that I'm just passing through. In fact, that reminds me of whenever [sic] we had Robin Harris's funeral—had a private funeral, but I was invited. And we were standing there, when Robin's funeral was over with, this fellow turned around to me and said, "B. J., we're going to miss Robin."

I said, "We are."

He said, "I wonder what Robin left."

I said, "I guess he left it all."

I guess he left it all. But he'll be remembered for the great things that he did, for the leadership that he had in this county, and he did have leadership in this county and this state. And I'm very close to [inaudible]. He was one of my best friends, and I miss him. I miss him. I miss his kind.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Can you tell us a bit about your family before you leave?

BJS: My family? Yes, sir, I live with my daughter and grandchildren around out there. That's a pleasure. I have two grandchildren, they're both boys, and I have three children. One of my sons live down in Rockdale County, and one of my sons lives right around the corner from me, and my daughter and her two children live with me. I'm not married. I'm not opposed to marriage, it's just that sometimes things just don't work out. I have two brothers and three sisters in my family; I'm the youngest of the six. And my father was a farmer and a merchant. In my younger years of my life I spent plowing a mule and tractor in a rural area in Bleckley County, Georgia.

The reason we migrated to Atlanta was because my mother was an asthmatic patient, and I saw her suffer so severely, and she was advised by her physician in Macon, Georgia, to

relocate to either Denver, Colorado, or Atlanta because of the higher climate. And, of course, none of us wanted to leave our home state, so we moved to Atlanta, DeKalb County, and she got along splendidly. And it was good to be able to see her live without having that condition. And she passed away seventeen, eighteen years ago; and my father died some forty-two years ago. And you always miss the counsel of your mama. Nothing like your mama. [Inaudible] I remember her wise words, and I try to follow them today.

Any other questions you have? [*Audience member asks inaudible question, off-camera.*] I didn't make any notes; I just, you know, spoke from what I felt. And it's been a pleasure being here. Mr. Bailey, I can't [inaudible] shoes fixed to save my life [*audience laughter*]. [Inaudible comment] [*Audience laughter, followed by applause*]

Thank you all for being here. [*To audience member, off-camera*] Virginia, it's good to see you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It's good to see you again.

BJS: When did Mr. Kirkpatrick [inaudible; referring to his death]? About three years ago, four years ago?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: About four or five

BJS: You know, Jed Levy's been dead almost five—ten years, now. Time just flies. [*Inaudible question from off-camera audience member*] Yeah, yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And [inaudible] name died.

BJS: Yeah, yeah, mm-hm

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You said something a while ago that reminded me of this: this man was passing through a small town and stopped and asked if there was a criminal lawyer in town.

BJS: Mm-hm

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The man says, "Yes, we suspect that he is, but we don't have the proof" [*audience laughter*].

BJS: [*Inaudible opening words*] this fellow came in and said, "Where is the Church of God?"

This Black fellow standing on the corner and said, "Well, let's see now. Dr. Whipple, he owns the Baptist Church. Mr. [inaudible name], he owns the Methodist Church. I don't believe God's got a [inaudible]" [*audience laughter*]. And that's about the way it was. Yeah, thank you very much.

Recording continues, with people greeting each other, BJS thanking audience, as everyone leaves the room.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by CGS