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COLONEL TOM HENSLER: . . . railroad to be built from Tennessee to a point south of the Chattahoochee River. That point turned out to be Atlanta. That railroad was this one right out here. That railroad is the one that started Clarkston. The railroad was completed in 1845, and sometime between 1845 and 1864, when it was destroyed by Sherman as he came through, we have records of two families living in this area. One of them is the Lester family, and one of them was the New family. Sometime in the 1870s Mr. Jacob New moved down, in order to repair the railroad after Sherman tore it up, I suspect, but I don't know that. At any rate, he came down and had to work on the Georgia Railroad in the early 1870s and settled here in Clarkston on what is now Church Street at the corner of what is now Mauk Street, right down here. It's that little blue house that's on the top of the hill. Used to be a great, gigantic oak tree right across the street from it. Just across East Ponce de Leon [inaudible—"at"?] Oak Street was where my Grandfather and Grandfather Hensler lived, also where my mother was born, same house. That was the first house that we [inaudible]. It was a log cabin. They say it's still inside that building—I don't know. I haven't been in the building. Till I'm able to get a key to it, haven't really pursued it as much as I should have. But if it is inside that building, we ought to try to get it on the historical documents somewhere and preserve it.

At any rate, he worked on this thing, and the Georgia Railroad built a siding right down here, the remains of which you can still see, right across the street from what is now Tiger Auto Parts and a liquor store. There was a huge expansion of the grounds out of there next to railroad; that was a siding at that time. And it was called New's [spelling?] Siding. There was several of them that was called New's [spelling?] Siding, and that was the first we know of.

The Lesters lived over close to Memorial Drive. So, do those folks, by this time, a couple of them who were still alive, were ex-slaves; some of them were not. Most of them were descendants of slaves. Today we've got one of the descendants of the Lesters in the direct line of those people who lived there, later moved to Clarkston, and became a family here with us today. Elisha Lester, Jr., [inaudible] *[audience applause as Mr. Lester is recognized]*. We have one of the relatives of the New family. Libba Ashworth couldn't be with us today, so I'm letting Rosemary Harrison stand in for her. Rosemary's uncle was also Doc Flowers, and Dr. Flowers was Mr. New's grandson. So, she's a relative by some marriage [rest of comment rendered inaudible by audience laughter], whatever.

At any rate, by 1970 [sic—means 1870?], the railroad was repaired; and the train stopped here day and night, going and coming. There were two stores across the street over yonder on what was then called Settlement Road, and over here on this side of the street was a little frame building down here that was a schoolhouse. That's all they had here. They had families living on farms up there, but those were the only stores around here in the 1870s.

Clarkston's one-room schoolhouse housed an awful lot of people, and an awful lot of people went to school there. Some of them were names you're familiar with; some are not. Some people I don't recognize at all in this list, but Mr. and Mrs. Tom Jolly, Mr. and Mrs. Frank McLendon, Mr. and Mrs. Alan [spelling?] Sidney [spelling?] Johnson, Sr., Mr. Tom Norton, Mrs. Laura Kimball, Mrs. J. C. Estes, Mr. M. C. White—all went to school in that schoolhouse at one time or another. And they're not the only ones who went to school in that schoolhouse, but they remember when it was a one-room schoolhouse.

In 1976 [sic—1876?] the Georgia Railroad, which played a big part in the history of this part of the country, designated the area on both sides of the railroad track what was called "New's Siding" to be called Clarkston. They did it in honor of a fellow named W. W. Clark, who was an official of both the Georgia Railroad and the bank in Covington, Georgia. Then the railroad was called the Georgia Railroad Banking Association. He lived in Covington, they named the town after him, and it's been Clarkston ever since. Same here, '76, the first post office was established by a fellow named J. J. North [spelling? Could be Norman?] was its first postmaster. About '76—I'm getting into oral history, now. I haven't got anything written down that'll back me up on this, but about in 1876, some people—Dave Pruitt, Joe Lester, [inaudible] Dickerson, Ned Aycock, and Henry Price—were part of a Christian fellowship who met, this fellowship met, in the homes here in Clarkston. They met together, and from their meetings came the First Baptist Church of Clarkston, which still sits down here and right now is being added on to. And also, at about 1879—in fact, in 1879—the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate* reported that a remarkable meeting had taken place in the old schoolhouse over here, one-room schoolhouse, amongst the people. Some Methodists who started that meeting with thirteen what they called "words of the promise" and ended it with sixty words of the promise and three hundred dollars for the building of the United Methodist Church. Out of that effort, which grew from a meeting first held in a [inaudible—bush?] arbor, about where this building is located, grew the Clarkston Methodist Church.

In the 1870s also, we have our first famous Clarkstonian, Mrs. Mary D. Bryan. Mrs. Bryan was a novelist, an editor, a women's rights advocate; she wrote forty-seven novels and published fifteen of them. The first one was written when she was eighteen years old. The name of it was *Manch*, M-A-N-C-H. I've never seen a copy. I'd like to read it. From what I hear of her writing, she

wrote romantic novels, which is pretty much in vogue, even today. But also, from what I've read about her novels, there was nothing immoral about them, but she didn't hesitate to call a spade a spade. She went to Louisiana with her husband, who was editor of a paper there, moved back to Atlanta, and was editor of two papers here. Moved to New York City. While she was editor of the paper in Atlanta, she lived over on Indian Creek Drive, across the street from what is now the Atlanta School for the Deaf. The house is still there; it's that brown house [rest inaudible]. She moved to New York and worked for Monroe Publishers, where she made a reported \$10,000 a year—in 1870-something—that's a pretty good salary. She returned to Clarkston when she retired from that in 1895, back to the homestead over there on Indian Creek Drive, and was one of the charter members of what they call—what we now call the Clarkston Woman's Club. Mrs. Bryan had a monument dedicated to her, and it's sitting right outside the front door. If it's not too cold when you go out, take a look at it. She was the grandmother of Mrs. Ada Johnson, who is Tom Johnson's mother. Tom's sitting right out here in the audience, too.

In 1880 Clarkston Military [sic—Militia?] District was formed, and it's still Clarkston Military [sic] District. It's still what we're in, right now. We had not many public roads in the city. We didn't have any in the county, as far as that goes. The one that we had in the city at that time was a road that goes to Lawrenceville. I got this from a piece of paper that Mr. J. C. Estes wrote a long time ago. That's all he said, "the road to Lawrenceville." I don't know—there's a lot of roads that connects Clarkston to Lawrenceville Highway over there. I don't know whether it was Montreal Road out by Sams Farm or whether it was Coolidge Road or Rockbridge Road. But the Lawrenceville Highway was a country road that went out about a mile south of town toward Stone Mountain, he says. The only road that could be is the cemetery road. My mom tells me that when she was young, they used to drive buggies and later on horses—I mean cars up there to just beyond the old cemetery and turn around and come back. That's as far as the road went there. That's now Northern Road [sic—Avenue?]. At that time evidently extended to the Clarkston cemetery.

Indian Creek Drive, of course, was there, Market Street. At that time Market Street had a well and a horse trough in it. And just to tell you how funny history can be, if you don't watch yourself--this was in the 1880s--Clarkston wasn't even here during the Civil War. The railroad was, but it was torn up. Clarkston wasn't, but there is an old wives' tale about Sherman taking the well bucket out of the Clarkston well so that Clarkston people couldn't drink. That's, you know, "How could he do that when he was here?" [Inaudible phrase] horse trough. It's interesting how history gets screwed up if somebody doesn't take time to write it down.

At that time, we had sixty-five homeowners and some tenants. The Georgia Railroad donated land for the First Baptist Church to be formally chartered in January of 1880. In January of 1880 they also donated land for the Methodist Church [*audience noise*] [inaudible] charter, and they were. The organizers of the First Baptist Church, as I told you, were Andrew Price and Joe Lester and Mr. Pruitt and two or three others. The organizers of the Methodist church were W. P. [inaudible—could be “Tuttle”?] and J. J. [could be “Long” or “North” or “Norman”?]. Also, in 1880 the first organizational meetings of the Clarkston Baptist Church, which is the one over here, were held in the one-room schoolhouse by Mr. James Singleton. It was formally organized in 1883, and once again the Georgia Railroad donated the land. The land that the Georgia Railroad donated in those days came with a caveat. If they donated the land to you for a purpose, you used it for that purpose, or they took the land back. And as a result, although, for instance, the Clarkston Baptist Church was given the land in 1883, they didn't finish building that church for a long time; but they did have something built. They built a little bit each year, so the Georgia Railroad couldn't take it back.

In 1882 the charter was granted by the Legislature for Clarkston. Clarkston was incorporated. Its dimensions were to be a half-mile circle, the radius of which went from the Clarkston Depot, which is right over there at the corner of Market Street and the railroad, between the railroad and East Ponce de Leon, half a mile in each direction, a circle. It was a pretty small town. It's different than that now. When I grew up, for instance, once again, our history people [inaudible], I heard it was a mile radius from the water tower. The water tower wasn't even built in 1882. It wasn't built for many, many years. It couldn't be from there. It's amazing how many little discrepancies you find when you start digging things up. When it was incorporated, we had about five hundred people in this immediate area. We had the two stores—Jolly's store over here on this side of Market Street, and Sheely's [spelling?] store, which was across the street from it. And we had the school building/city hall—a dual-purpose building, with a one-room schoolhouse and city hall. Later on, it also became a jail, but that was a long time later.

Mr. Hayes Jolly, who lived out on Indian Creek Drive—his home was where the School for the Deaf is now—was the man who organized the Jolly store. He operated it for a number of years, and then his boys—Tom and Clem—took it over. When Clem was more desirous of selling real estate and running for office and more public work, Mr. Tom Jolly bought him out, and he ran the store until 1949. And his son, Lawson [spelling?] Jolly, ran it until 1953, when he finally sold it. At that time the Jollys owned a lot of land there, here, all over Clarkston. I asked Lawson the other day, I said, “Didn't your son work in the store with you there, too?” I was going to try to say that four generations of Jollys had worked in the Jolly store. And he said, “Yeah, Tom, he worked there

with me. But he didn't want to. He'd much rather work in the electronics store next door, fixing televisions and radios." [*Voice faint; inaudible comment.*]

The late '80s, the 1990s, and the 1900s—a lot of what we—and I'm a newcomer to Clarkston, although I was born here, and I'm sixty-seven years old—what we called the early Clarkstonians came during the late '80s, 1900s [sic], and the early 1900s. The McLendons, who were cotton farmers, lived in a house between the two circles that form Milam Circle up here on East Ponce de Leon in a huge, old house. It was a pretty house, beautiful house, kind of in disrepair when I was growing up. Mr. McLendon sold it to some people who formed a school there after he left. It was called Lamar College, and it was kind of a forerunner of the Foxfire concept of teaching, in that children went to school, but they worked at the same time. The boys farmed and milked cows, killed pigs, and things like that; and the girls cooked and sewed and learned to do home economic projects.

The Hamptons—Mr. Chandler Hampton and his family—moved in, uphill on what is now Rowland Street, just the other side of what is now I-285. The old home is still standing right at the corner of I-285 and Church Street.

[Inaudible] Sidney [spelling?] Johnson moved over to Northern Avenue. Mr. Albert had a store down here in Clarkston. Used to love to play bridge and carried his pistol with him when he played, so nobody cheated [*audience laughter*]. Miss Ada was just as feisty as he was. She had owned and operated the first automobile in Clarkston.

The John Kilgores moved in across the street from Hays Jolly. They lived there. The house is still there. They have moved on out of Clarkston. The only relative they have left around here is Jim Childers, I think, who lives down in Lithonia.

Will Kilgore is my maternal grandparents [sic]. Moved into Clarkston on East Ponce de Leon, Old Stone Mountain Highway, Settlement Road—whichever one you want to call it—down there on the other side of Clarkston, where Fortenberry built their first apartments, when they started building apartments here. My mother, her brother and sister were born in that house before Mr. Will died and had to leave.

Mr. George Beacham [spelling?] and his family moved here. They also operated a store over here on Market Street, a big, two-story building that you remember as Fortenberry's and before that, Cofer's. Before that it was Beacham [spelling?]. Their son Melvin also operated a store over there later on with my dad. Didn't do too well, evidently, because they both quit. I think—the story is told, at any rate, that my dad quit because he married my mother and got him a steady job [*audience laughter*]. [Brief, inaudible comment]

Then R. S. Sams moved in over on Sams farm, which is across the street and back down Market Street. Back in those days Market Street hit what is now the shopping center down there. All that started as Mr. Sams's farm.

The Spiveys moved in over on what is now Cemetery Road up there. I mean, what is now Norman Road, then Cemetery Road. All these people came about that time. Also, at that time the Dawsons came and moved in right down here off of Smith Street in Clarkston.

Let me tell you, it got kind of complicated. These folks all lived here, but they commuted, or a lot of them did, to Atlanta or Decatur, to work. For instance, my grandfather, Mr. Will Kilgore, Mr. J. C. Estes, and Mr. Ben Burgess got together and formed a partnership peddling syrup and produce from a store that would go door to door here in Clarkston. Later on, Mr. Estes and Mr. Kilgore got together and formed a partnership for the [*Tape skips.*] in Decatur and commuted back and forth to work on the train that came through.

All these families I've just told you about, most of them intermarried. So, then it got rather complicated here in Clarkston, Georgia. Later on, in the 1940s, I was beginning to—I was running around a little bit to see what was going on with the opposite sex [*audience laughter*]. Gene Hampton and I would complain vociferously that it didn't make any difference where we went in Clarkston, we always ended up with a cousin [*audience laughter*]. [Inaudible comment]

Mr. J. C. Estes's home was built in 1897. The first people to live in it were the McLendons. Mr. McLendon built a little home. The little home is right back of it now. I think it's used as a contractor's office or something. It's a little frame house. When I grew up, the Allens lived there. Mr. McLendon built that house back there for his two maiden sisters. One of them was named Miss Lizzie, who taught my grandmother, Mrs. Kilgore, how to sew when she first became a widow and helped her immensely getting those three children raised. Mr. Estes moved there in 1900 and lived there until—well, he or his family lived there—until it was torn down just a little while ago—what, two or three years ago.

In 1893 we had about six hundred [sic] people here in Clarkston. It's grown from two families to about six hundred folks now [sic]. And sometime around then Clarkston got a nickname. It was called "Goatville" then. It was still called Goatville when I was in school, and that was a long time for one nickname to hang around.

A Clarkstonian was considered a nobody back in the late 1800s and the early 1900s if you didn't own two or three goats. We don't know what kind of goats they were, but we've always maintained, for the pride of the city, that they were Angoras [*audience laughter*]. This article said that you were a nobody if you didn't own fifteen or twenty goats. Now, you can imagine what happened if we've got six hundred people, say that that's ten to a family. We had big families back

in those days. But if sixty families by themselves had ten to fifteen goats, good granny! No fences, open range—we must've had some fun. Goats must've been everywhere. They say they had to run them out of the schoolhouse before they could teach and run them off the train lines so the train could come through, had to get them out of the streets so the horse and buggies could go down. It was just bad, so people from other towns—Lithonia, Redan, and so on, now Decatur—started calling us Goatville. Well, that peeved the local population, who as you imagine didn't take to it very well. The younger men—and I'm going to leave names out of this one—the younger men would actually drag these folks off the train when they'd come through and yell, "Baa! Baa! Baa!" [audience laughter]. The young men would go on the train, drag them off, and beat the socks off them, put them back on the train, and send them [audience laughter] [inaudible]. They didn't always win those fights, as you can imagine. But it must have been fun. As the town got bigger and larger, the nickname gradually went away. I don't hear anybody now refer to it as Goatville, except once in a while my brother says he lives in Goatville. But other than that, most people call it Clarkston. The only remaining emblem of those days, I guess, is the Clarkston goat from Clarkston High School. They're not called goats; they're called Angoras.

Along about—sometime around in here we had a new school built at Market and DeBelle [spelling?]. It was an old brick building, and it stood over there across the street from where Mr. Dewey [last name inaudible—sounds like "Count"?] lived. And it was built—I can't find out who built it or when it was built, but it was there, because the school population had just outgrown [inaudible] school. The new school was to accommodate grades one through nine, and that's pretty good. Nine was as high as we went back in those days. If you wanted to go higher than nine, you had to go to Decatur to go to high school, and very few people out of here did. In the 1900s I doubt seriously if anybody went to high school from Clarkston. They may have; they might have. But the school population outgrew that pretty quickly, too. My mother, for instance, by the time she was born in 1907, by the time she got around to going to school, she went to the first grade in this clubhouse building, and then went the second through the ninth in that building over yonder. City hall was not being used as a schoolhouse anymore. It was being used as a city hall.

In addition to the two stores that I've already talked about in Clarkston, by 1910 we had two more stores, a bank, a drugstore, a shoe repair store, and a hotdog stand. The last two of these, the shoe repair store and the hotdog stand, belonged to the Lesters. The shoe stand was right backwards from Tom Jolly's store on Market Street. The hotdog stand was right down here on the corner of Norman Road and Church Street.

In 1903 Mr. Tom Jolly sold a lot to the Lester family, at that same corner. That's the reason he had his hotdog stand on the corner; he owned the [inaudible] [audience laughter]. That lot ran

from the Baptist church—First Baptist Church down there—up to Cemetery Road. Mr. Tom always had a good working relationship with the blacksmiths. He hired Henry [inaudible last name], for instance, to be one of his—I don't know exactly what kind of employee you'd call it. Henry went around in the morning from door to door and took orders for groceries or whatever in a one-horse wagon, and that afternoon he delivered them. And you know, you don't get that from the supermarket [*audience laughter*].

Typically, the people here were mostly, primarily, farmers. They were cotton farmers, produce farmers, or dairy farmers. But we also had a lot of construction going on in this area. Construction skills come to the fore—painting, bricklaying, carpentry, stuff like that. In 1912 the women in Clarkston decided enough is enough. They got together and founded something called the Progressive Arts Circle. That became the Clarkston Woman's Club that they hosted in the afternoons. It's the third-oldest federated club in the state, and this building, built in 1913, is the second-oldest clubhouse—club-owned--facility in the state. Once again, Georgia Railroad gave them the land to do it. The clubhouse itself was being used for a number of things besides a women's clubhouse. The Methodist church met here while their first church, a frame building, was being constructed. The school system met here early on and later on, as you'll see. The Civitan Clubs met here, the Home Demonstration Club met here, the Girl Scouts have met here, the Boy Scouts have met here, the Presbyterian Church that's now on Memorial Drive over here—that great, big old church—met here from 1953 till 1956 while they were organizing that church.

In 1914 we got a big boon in Clarkston—the Stone Mountain Streetcar Line was under construction. It became operational in 1915, with Mr. Brown and Mr. Saxby being the two conductors that I remember. Of course, there were others; but those are the two that I remember. They used to come through here. It was a real boon to commuters. They even—the streetcar pulled trailers. Some of those trailers were passenger trailers, and some of them were cargo trailers. The passenger trailer would sometimes have to pull as many as two, were always full of commuters, going and coming from Atlanta. The flatcars carried packages that were to be delivered in this area and were off-loaded into what was called a car barn right down here on the corner of Rowland and Market. Well, you've got a whole bunch of office buildings now. I don't know why they called it a car barn. I never saw a car in it in my life the whole time I was living. But it did have a lot depot-like activities in it, and packages were held there, and Mr. McLesky [spelling?], who lived on the corner next door, was the car barn manager, and he kept us [inaudible] packages got delivered.

My grandmother built a house on Rowland Street, which stands in the middle of a parking lot down here right now. It was a gray house that was right across the street from us. In 1913 she

negotiated for that house because it was going to be on the car line—she knew that car line was coming. So, did everybody, and the fellow who sold her the property knew it was coming, and he charged five hundred dollars in 1913 for a lot that's, what, half an acre? That's a lot of money in 1913. The streetcar line was [inaudible], and so she bought it and built a house.

Churches continued to grow. The Clarkston Baptist Church met on the first and the third Sundays during all this period. The Methodist church met on the second and fourth Sundays during this period. First Baptist Church met every Sunday. I don't know whether it was that Mr. Lester and his folks had more money than we did, had more faith than we did, or maybe their preachers didn't need as much money as ours did [*audience laughter*]. But at any rate they met every Sunday while we only met every other Sunday. And the story goes—and I know it's true, because my mama told me [*audience laughter*—that after BYPU or whatever they called it in the Methodist Church on Sunday nights, you know, we used to go any church. I mean, everybody went to church every Sunday; it didn't make any difference which church it was. We just went to whichever one was open for services [*audience laughter*]. As a matter of fact, Jerry and I joined the Methodist church when we were going to church years ago. But they straightened us out and put us back over in the Baptist church with the grownups [*audience laughter*]. But after those evening meetings at those two churches, the young people with their teachers would go down to join the Black church. And they would go through the service together. And then, after that service was over—and Ma said sometimes their preacher was better than ours—they'd come back up to the corner to Mr. Mac Lester's [spelling?] hotdog stand and have hotdogs and then go home, about ten o'clock at night. Ma says that those were the best hotdogs she ever ate. Said she could still taste them [*audience laughter*]. Just a little bit of chili [inaudible] to make them taste just right.

The Clarkston Elementary School was the Black school in this area, and it was founded on about that time. It was on Smith Street, right off of Montreal Road down here. And I suspect that in the 1900s, 1912, 1910s, there was no high school for the Black people in the community. Later on, there was; it was called Colored High School. It was in what I call Avondale and what some people call Scottdale, but it was Hamilton High, which most of you have heard about it. Years and years later I came back to this [*Tape skips.*] [inaudible] and ran a hotdog stand myself over in Tucker. And during that period Sonny Lester, big brothers Eddie and Freddie Lester worked for me. And they also went to Hamilton High School, and their chorus at Hamilton High won honors throughout. They probably had the best chorus [inaudible].

And you know as well as I do that it's the people who make history, so I'm going to mention some names now. Now, I don't want anybody to get their feelings hurt if they're not mentioned. In 1912 the McGehees came to Clarkston—that's M-C-G-E-H-E-E, Mr. Matthew

McGehee and his family came to Clarkston. In 1916, the Armsteads and the Henslers moved to Clarkston. Sometime around then—and I haven't got a firm date on it; couldn't find it anywhere—Mr. Wimpey, Colonel Wimpey and Mr. P. R. G. Clark moved to Clarkston. In 1920 the Livseys moved to Clarkston; in 1921, the Perrins and the Rays. The Cowans [spelling?] moved in sometime around then, too; but I don't know when. I can't find any record of that. Most of these dates I got out of church records. And I know that the Cowans were churchgoers [inaudible], but I can't find anything in there to give the date. I mentioned these families because, as you will see as I go on down the line in this presentation, that those families in particular helped in some way the growth and what little fame Clarkston has.

1920 came in on a bang. World War I was over, and all the boys were coming home. My daddy was one of them. He came up, he got out down here on East Ponce de Leon, where he thought they was living. They'd moved up here [audience laughter], completely on the other end of town there. We were [rest inaudible]. When he got out down there, he had to lug his gear all the way, over a mile, [inaudible] to get home. But be that as it may, he got there. Those of you who remember—I don't, but most of you probably remember they called those the "Roaring Twenties." And it turned out that the Roaring Twenties was really the boom before the bust. Prohibition was in full swing; this area had its share of bootleggers, speakeasies. Many families made their own whiskey. When I was in the second grade, I guess, my dad made all the beer for the Hensler family. And I think somebody's brother made all the liquor, but I'm not going to tell you [inaudible] [audience laughter].

Charlie Hampton, who's one of the older living old Clarkstonians, told me a tale about bootlegging, and I talked to him getting ready for this. He said there was a fellow named Carroll [spelling?], had a still back up here, woods back of Scottdale Mills. And he came to Charlie one day and said he'd got a lot of trouble. He said [inaudible] get whiskey out of the still. He said [inaudible phrase] and had a good feeling that somebody was stealing his liquor.

Charlie said, "Well, let's go back over there and take a look at it." So, they did, went back over to the still, Charlie went along, calling his dog. [Inaudible] let his dog keep up with him. He didn't have the dog with him, he was just calling him pretty loud. He got over to the still and looked, and sure enough, there wasn't any whiskey coming off that was supposed to be running out. He said, "OK." He took a rag he'd brought with him, an old, tan-colored rag, and he reached down in that mash and stuck it down in the pipe. [Inaudible phrase] on back up. He and Mr. Carroll went walking on out, still calling that dog. Got over to the closest neighbor's house and saw him sitting on the porch. Charlie asked him, "Have you seen his dog?" Charlie described it to him, described him as being the same color as that rag. Couldn't find that dog anywhere, so he invited

the gentleman, he said, "Come on, let's walk back down there toward that old still and see if he's down around there." They called him, and they got down there, and Charlie got a stick and reached down in the mash and pulled out that rag and said, "My Lord, the poor thing's done [inaudible—could be "rotted"?]" [*audience laughter*]. They never had a bit of trouble with stolen liquor after that [*audience laughter*].

The schools—well, let me talk about society at the time first, because it was changing, you know, country-wide, not just in Clarkston and not just in DeKalb County. For instance, we had this huge, gigantic change. Women were allowed to vote, and that's heresy. I don't know how we ever did that [*audience laughter*]. Big league baseball was beginning to be [inaudible]. Babe Ruth was beginning to knock all those homeruns [inaudible phrase], really beginning to be business [rest inaudible]. I can remember over here at the old schoolhouse we used to play—I don't know what kind of ball it was, but they got a league out here that traveled as far as South Carolina to play. And I don't think it was any degree of the ball like we've got now, but it was some kind of baseball, and people who liked to play, they played it. My dad played second base. And I used to sit on that red-mud bank over yonder, slide down it—and I imagine I got paddled several times because of getting red mud all over my britches, but that's the way it goes. The reason I bring this up is because my daddy holds a record over there. He hit a baseball for a homerun over Sally Price's house, which sat down right on the hill across the street from that [inaudible].

In 1924 the school population outgrew that old building over there again. They were now again holding classes in city hall and in the Methodist church, with sixth and seventh grade coming over here. So that school was running one through five. It was just too small. So, they got together, Mrs. Tom Jolly, who was president of the PTA, she instigated the move for the new school building; and they built it. It's the one we thought—or I thought—the old high school building, it's a red-brick building. It's now the adult education center. It sits over on College Avenue. It was started in 192[*Last digit inaudible; audience noise*] and finished in time for the class of 1925 to graduate there. It was supposed to hold grades one through eleven.

1925 was a bad year. This area, at any rate, was kind of signaling to Wall Street, "You better watch out," because DeKalb County went bankrupt in 1925, and the schools closed. And Mrs. Tom Jolly went out and beat the bushes—actually I imagine she organized a whole bunch of people who went out and beat the bushes--and raised enough money for those eleven schoolteachers to be paid for the rest of the year, so Clarkston could continue [inaudible] class. A whole \$278 to pay for eleven teachers for the rest of the year [*audience laughter*]. That's a whole lot of money. It was one of two schools that actually completed the whole school year that year.

The fellow who told me this story and the papers I read about it don't mention the other school, so I don't know who it was.

The first graduating class had, you'll notice, eight girls and two boys. The two boys were sons of the people who were farmers. You'll notice that even then farmers' sons quit school to work on the farm. That was in the 1920s. In 1924 Mr. A. P. Milam, who was the son-in-law of Mr. Matthew McGehee, one of the families I told you had an impact on Clarkston, was a contractor. He managed to secure a contract from DeKalb County or the state—I'm not sure which—to pave Old Stone Mountain Highway, the one that runs parallel to the railroad on the other side. It's now East Ponce de Leon. He paved that thing, and until the 1950s it was still the original pavement and in good shape. He did a good job. It was the first paved street in Clarkston and one of the few paved streets in the county at the time.

In 1925 Tom McGehee, Mr. McGehee's son, decided that it was time Clarkston had its own waterworks. So, he came to this artesian well that used to be right down here—it could still be there for all I know—and built a water tower over it and sunk a well and put a pump in it so that Clarkston now had its own waterworks. That water tower was a landmark for years, and one of the rites of passage when I was growing up was to climb that water tower and walk around the rim. It's not very scary unless you looked, and I was looking when I did it, and it was kind of scary. [To audience member, off-camera] How about you, Dick?

OFF-CAMERA AUDIENCE MEMBER, presumably "Dick": I never looked [audience laughter]. All the way to the top.

TH: Back in those days we didn't have any TV, very little radio, not many movies. We did most of our entertaining for ourselves, so that city hall became the place where plays were held and get-togethers were formed. Later on, the auditorium in the new school building took over that part, and that's where I can remember having plays over there. They were funny, and the whole town turned out for them. It didn't cost very much money to have fun back in those days, really. So, everybody did have fun.

Mr. Wimpey who lived down on the other end of Clarkston in a huge mansion—it burned when I was a boy—on [inaudible reference to land] back over there, on the old Stone Mountain car line all the way back around to Norman Road. And he built something he called Crystal Lake on the Cemetery Road over there and up through [inaudible] Creek. We now call it Clark's Pond. He built it and had what he called Erskine Park back this way from it, and we had picnics and boating and rowing and swimming and waving, whatever you wanted to do—it was all free. So, it didn't cost much to have fun.

Sams Farm was by now a big business. Eddie Lester, when I talked to him the other day, told me that he could remember his forebears being plowboys for Mr. "Big Sam"—Mr. Robert was "Big Sam." He also had a relative who was a barber for people who worked for Sam [sic]. And one of his relatives who lost a leg in a plowing accident over there was given a job by Mr. Sams—Mr. Robert Sams—to trim his wild blooming hedge. How many of y'all remember that wild blooming hedge down there? That thing was the biggest—woo, man, you couldn't get to it to save your soul. Fronds on it about that long, and he always kept that thing trimmed just as nice and pretty as anything you've ever seen. I don't know how he did that with [inaudible—could be "just one leg"?]. My daddy took a little sprig of that thing and put it between my house and his on the creek over there on Northern Avenue, and I can't hardly trim it now! Be that as it may, it was trimmed then.

In 1927 Miss [Mrs.?] Sara Ray and Mrs. A. B. Milam thought that the boys and girls were getting a little too raucous, didn't have enough to do after school, wasn't enough work for them on the farm and one thing and another, and they said, "What this city needs is a park. Let's find us a place where we can have a park." And they went back down here across the street to Clark's Pond, back over there, to see if we can get this piece of ground, get the city council behind us, and we'll do it this way [inaudible]. They went to the city council, and those two ladies and Mrs. Tom Jolly persuaded the city council to put up the money to go to the city park down there, provided they could get the land. The wording in this is funny to me, but Mr. P. R. G. Clark made it legally possible for the city to get that land. What do we mean by "made it legally possible"? Did he donate it to them? Did he steal it? What did he do? [*Audience laughter*] I don't know what he did, but he made it "legally possible" for Clarkston to have that park. It was a big park—still is a big park, about four acres. Had over an acre there that had a ballpark, still has a ballpark; had a couple of tennis courts, still has some tennis courts; had a swimming pool that was fed by a spring at that time; it no longer is, though it's still there. And it had this big grove that was filled with playground implements, and people could just go out there and picnic and play and have a good time. That's been important to Clarkston, because it was the first public park in DeKalb County.

In 1929—well, before I go into that, let me go into this. This was the era, as I said a while ago, of the speakeasy. And we had one close to Clarkston, down at the corner of Idlewood Road and Stone Mountain Highway; it was called Glen Echo [?]. Two or three years later, across the street from it, they built a park called Idlewood—had a huge swimming pool, picnic tables and one thing and another. It was great, and I enjoyed it immensely when I was a boy. Had a great, big old shoot-the-chute on a rail. You'd come flying down that thing across that swimming pool, and it was just great.

But Glen Echo was a different thing. Glen Echo was [rest of sentence inaudible] It was a very popular place for young singles as well as for young marrieds in Clarkston and in Stone Mountain and Lithonia and everywhere else around there, I suspect. And they used to hold dances down there. When I was oh, four, five, six years old—probably five--four or five, somewhere [inaudible], I can remember when Jerry and I used to sleep in the backseat of that old Pierce Arrow when Ma and Pa'd go to dances down there. And that was back before you needed a babysitter. You didn't have to worry about people stealing your kids out of your car if you left them; you could just park them in the parking lot. We'd just lay out there and snore and snore [audience laughter].

During that era [inaudible phrase], probably the most famous policeman we've ever had, a fellow named Ned Walden. And Ned was a strict cop, there's no getting around it. Clarkston under his tutelage probably came awful close to being the Ludowici of the north [audience laughter]. We were a speed trap. But the story I want to tell you concerns, once again, Charlie [inaudible last name] and Ned Walden and Glen Echo. One time, Charlie says that they were sitting around up here talking, doing nothing much. I think they said they were in Spivey's garage up there, doing nothing much. And Ned said, "Come on, let's go down to Glen Echo and see what we can find."

So, he and Charlie jumped in the car, and they drove down to Glen Echo, got down there, and didn't see anything, so Ned says, "You go that way, and I'll go this way, and we'll meet around back."

So, they did. Got back in there and Ned says, "Did you see anything?"

Charlie said, "No. You?"

Says, "No." Ned says, "Man, I smell whisky."

And they go to Charlie, and says, "You been drinking, Charlie?"

Charlie says, "Yeah, you told us to come down here and see what we could find. And I found mine!" [audience laughter]

In 1929 Mr. Marion E. Flowers moved to Clarkston and started a drugstore. There had been a drugstore here before, but he started one probably my generation and a couple more, maybe one on the other side and one after it. It's the most famous drugstore. Everybody gathered at the Flowers Drugstore. He moved into what had been the old bank building on the corner of Market and Old Stone Mountain Highway, put a drugstore in. He used the money [inaudible phrase]. This was 1929, the crash. People don't have any money. But he had wisely saved his money [inaudible] World War I and used that money to start a new drugstore and everything nice and cheap. Brilliant move, and good businessman.

And in the early '30s the churches all expanded. The Methodists completely remodeled. In place of that old frame building was brick and still sat facing—the brick building sat facing this way, and they extended the—what do you call it?—out that way. The Clarkston Baptist Church expanded by putting in a baptismal pool. So, they had before that—all three churches—well, not all three; the Methodists sprinkled—but the two Baptist churches did their baptizing in Peachtree Creek and waited until a big rain came along and swelled up the creek, just like it does now, and they'd go down and baptize everybody right quick [*audience laughter*] [rest of sentence inaudible]. After Clark's Pond was built, they started baptizing down there. And my dad was baptized in Clark's Pond. He and Jack Kilgore, my mother's brother, Lawson Jolly, and Lou Johnson, a very famous lady around Clarkston, all were converted at the same time and went to Clark's Pond to be baptized together. And they waded out in the pond and waited for the preacher to baptize them. And my dad says to Lou, "Look out for that snake, Lou!" Scared her to death; she almost came straight up out of the water [*audience laughter*]. Rose up and said, "Oh, Lordy!" Everybody on the bank thought she'd [inaudible] and cheered and [rest inaudible] [*audience laughter*].

In 1934 that old school building over yonder burned down. We started one school in the Woman's Club and the Methodist Church and city hall. I was in the fifth grade, and I finished the fifth grade right here in this building, and for the sixth grade and part of the seventh grade in the city hall and graduated from the seventh grade [inaudible] in the NEW elementary school over there that's [rest of sentence inaudible].

The things I remember during that period—and this is a period [inaudible phrase] school was—first grade I didn't find to be a problem. I enjoyed it, I thought it was fun. I did homework before I came home, so I always had plenty of time to [inaudible]. One day [inaudible name] Chandler and Harry Hensler and I decided we needed some colored chalk to make Indian faces on ourselves. So, we broke into that old schoolhouse [inaudible phrase] colored chalk. Mr. R. W. [last name inaudible] came in with a pistol about that long [*audience laughter*], the barrel looked about that big around. And [inaudible] Bert Adams Camp, and we were assigned the task of washing dishes. They were aluminum—metal—I don't know what they were, really. They were metal dishes. Had a big old trough probably as long as from here to the end of the wall over there. We were [inaudible] dishes [inaudible]. [Inaudible] came along and said, [inaudible] called our mamas and daddies and [inaudible] went home [inaudible].

I played on the first football team in Clarkston, Georgia. It was a six-man football team. Basketball was a big sport here then. The football team was in 1942. Prior to that the basketball team of 1940 was a championship. We only had eleven members on that team. That's amazing. All the substitutes and everything, waterboys and managers—everything included, there were

only eleven people on the team. One of them's here today, Dick Spivey. The '42 football team was our first attempt at it. And we played preseason games, trying to learn how to play football. We won every preseason game we played. In the regular season we lost all but one game. [Inaudible sentence]

The roads here were mostly dust or mud, depending on the weather. On Northern Avenue, where we lived, was a muddy road, deep gullies on each side. Red mud, it was called "red hill." It was not good. Where they [inaudible—caught? called?] right in front of my house and my mama's house is now, where that creek is, was a ford. You just drove through the ford, right on past [rest inaudible]. WPA came and changed all that later on.

We all learned to swim in Peachtree Creek. Sometimes it was coeducational, and sometimes it wasn't. Most of the time it wasn't. When the WPA came through, they clipped the curbstones down and graded all the street [inaudible; audience noise] and paved about three or four streets here. Northern Avenue wasn't one of them. Either the money gave out or we went to war; I'm not sure what stopped it. I've read accounts where Clarkston didn't get its streets paved because asphalt was needed for the war effort. And when asphalt was again made available, the county [inaudible] paved it.

Pecan orchard was subdivided [inaudible phrase] where Hill Street is now, [inaudible] Long Street—all that was [rest of sentence inaudible]. And that was subdivided in the late '30s and early '40s. Town's growing fast, real fast. I believe we even had a hamburger joint out here. Louis [spelling?] Pendleton ran it, and it was a joint with a pool table in the back. It was kind of rough in there. My mama doesn't know I went there, because if she'd known, she'd have paddled me. That's where I learned to cuss. That's where my uncles taught me to cuss [audience laughter]. Hamburger joint.

This was Depression time, too. Folks were having—some folks were having a hard time. Most folks were having a hard time, come right down to it. And Mr. Tom Jolly did a creditable job, I thought. Looking back on it, he must have been a really fine person. He gave everybody in town [inaudible] credit on groceries, just kind of carried us until everybody got back on their feet. As far as I know, he didn't lose any money on it. He gave me my first job, clearing land and cutting grass at fifteen cents an hour.

Mr. "Mink" Livsey lived over on Indian Creek Drive. He was another one that had been to the hamburger joint, teaching me how to cuss. He used to carve walking sticks, and he carved rings around the top of the walking stick. And when you find one of those, they're a real treasure now, but you can't hardly find them.

Everybody went barefooted, but my mama wouldn't let us [inaudible] until June. By then, the horseshoe troughs—the horse troughs was gone, water troughs—they had horseshoe pits over there instead. And on the 4th of July they'd dig pits over here between the railroad track and Ponce de Leon Avenue, barbecue pigs and make Brunswick stew [inaudible; audience noise].

World War II came along and changed everything. I graduated in 1942; Nick [spelling?] graduated in '40, I guess. In our classes, everybody went to war. We were just gone. Anybody who was physically able went somewhere and did something. We had thirty graduated in my class in Clarkston in '42. In '43 they started publishing *The Clarkston Clarion*. Mr. John Mamry published that. [Holds up a copy.] This is one of them. It's a really great historical piece. It keeps up with every—can't say "every," but 98 percent of the people who were here in Clarkston at that time who were in service. Keep up with the homefolks who [inaudible phrase] in service. People here had victory gardens and had to put up with rationing, "Meatless Tuesday," [inaudible phrase] war bond drives. Typically, they were asked to furnish \$5,000 in war bond drives and never failed to meet their goal. During that period, too, Miss Sara Ray started the Teen Club here in Clarkston, which never got a building, though, but which did buy the land for it. It was this entire block down here next to us. And they sold that some years later at a tidy profit. They bought it for about \$125 and sold it for about \$5,000. Put that money in the bank, used the interest on it from then on to support teen activities in Clarkston. It was last year or year before last that the whatever you want to call it, the trustees of that fund voted to donate the principal of that money to the Clarkston Library [Recording skips.] more children, more teens in the Clarkston area to enjoy that [rest inaudible].

We had Red Cross drives. My mama was in charge of the Red Cross bandage rolling. I tell you, for a two-week period they rolled 43,000 bandages—pardon me, 48,000 bandages. I can't believe that a little town like Clarkston could roll that many bandages in two weeks. She also made a service plan for the people who went to service from Clarkston church. It includes a lot of people in the whole town, not just the Baptist church.

In 1940 the county water system was started, and that was another big change for everybody. It industrialized DeKalb County so that when the war was over and people came home, industry moved into DeKalb County, and the boom was once again on, just like it was in 1920. The period from 1955, they tell me that there was a subdivision completed in DeKalb County every working day. Now, that's a lot of houses, so that's a lot of people moving out this way.

I came back here in '56 to work at Tom and Jerry's old hotdog stand in Tucker, and then went back in service and moved away again. Came back again in '73, retired in '78, and been

here ever since. In 1966 the Interstate took Sams farm and Turner's dairy. And Clarkston no longer—and hasn't been for some years—a farming community. The only people who have gardens now are the people who want to grow tomatoes and corn so they'll have good tomatoes and corn for supper. Nobody has a big farm around here that I know of.

Clarkston is still a small town. The 1990 census shows us to have 5,345 people. The city limits have been expanded and now run from this side of that circle up Rowland, up East Ponce de Leon to Interstate 285 and all the way back around to [inaudible—could be "Montreal"?] Road. And a couple of little places stick out [rest inaudible]. 56 percent of our population is Black, 37 percent is white, and 7 percent is Hispanic or Asian or Indian. The projection is that there are going to be more Asians, fewer Blacks, and whites will stay about the same in the next ten-year period. Who knows what's truly going to happen? The immigrants and refugees that have moved into Clarkston in the last ten years have moved here because the entry-level jobs are here. We have access to transportation, we have affordable rents, and above all we have [inaudible—could be "plenty of"?] people.

I told you I was going to tell you what those folks did—those families that I was talking about, so I'm going to tell you. The McGehees and the Jollys started the school, in public life all the time that they were here, really benefactors to the city. The McGehees were instrumental in the water system, paved roads, and the city parks. The Armisteads provided us with the city attorney, two city councilors, and a mayor. The Henslers provided us with two city council members—I think, but I'm not really sure of that—and two mayors. The Wimpeys gave us parks [recording skips; inaudible], Mr. P. R. G. Clark gave us the land for the city park, the Rays started the city park and the teen club, the Perrins gave us a mayor and the second famous Clarkstonian, and the Livseys gave us the third famous Clarkstonian.

The second famous Clarkstonian was Joe Perrin, Joseph Samuel Perrin, who served in the Air Corps in World War II and while stationed in Paris visited the Louvre. He was so enthralled with the paintings there that he decided at that time that he would become an artist. He came home, and he went to school with that in mind. He attended several colleges, went on and got his doctorate. He headed the art department of Georgia State University until he retired. He is world-renowned. He is the artist who decorated the MARTA station, he decorated the—donated paintings to the churches in the area, and he's donated paintings to the Masonic Hall. He tells me that he's busier now than he was working.

Our third famous Clarkstonian is Bill Livsey. Bill graduated from Clarkston High in 1947, I think, and attended North Georgia College, chose to remain in the Army after he graduated up there and make it a career, and went on to fight in Korea and Viet Nam. He retired with the rank of

general. He's a four-star general [inaudible phrase]. When Bill was growing up, he used to love his grandfather [inaudible] Old Man [inaudible], almost inseparable. And Bill just hung around him all the time, and Old Man [inaudible], as I say, he definitely learned how to cuss over here. He cussed like a sailor, I mean, it was every other word [rest of sentence inaudible]. Everybody in town says, "Oh, look at poor old Bill! Hanging around there with Mr. [inaudible]. He'll never amount to anything." Well, I guess he showed them.

It's interesting, I think, to go back and look at history as we've done a little bit today. And I've talked an awful long time and said an awful lot of things, and I haven't even scratched the surface. I just want you to [*two or more people talk at once; inaudible*]. Last thing I said before these last two famous Clarkstonians were that Clarkston is a little town with a big heart. Thanks for having me [*audience applause*].

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