MODERATOR: Sam is one of the longest residents here. Some of the other people here have lived here all of their life also. But Sam did a proposal, kind of, on some historical thing, and I really enjoyed reading it, so that was one of the reasons that I asked Sam to do the little talk on "I Remember When" (sic). I hope that you'll enjoy his little talk today, and maybe you will have a few enlightening things that you remember at the same time. So, at this time I'd like to introduce Sam Knuckles for "I Remember When" (sic) (*audience applause*).

SAM KNUCKLES, *taking his place in front of the audience*: I do give her a hard time (*audience laughter*). There's three of us retired. My wife called us old codgers that go to the city hall to the council meeting and pick on you, I know. Pat asked me—Pat is our mayor. I don't know whether y'all know her or not, but I think most of you do. She asked me if I would be on the Historical—I keep saying "hysterical," because I'm making a joke of it—but Historical Committee to rewrite the history or make it a little more personal, eventually. And she said that the committee was not going to meet until later this year. But I got to thinking about it, and I got really intrigued and started making notes. And first thing you know, one thing led to another, so I ended up with a big pack of notes of sort of a "I Remember When." It mostly covers a short period of time. I realize that I was most intimate with our little village here, Stone Mountain, from year 1927 to '37—that's age seven, when I started feeling my oats, until high school graduation. After then, most of us did get away to school and work and so forth like this, even though I see so many of you besides myself that have lived here all your life.

I lost contact after high school graduation, to some degree, and was never afterwards as intimate as I was then. At that time, I felt very much a part of the town. My grandfather was mayor for a couple of terms, my great-uncle was police chief, and my mother was president of the PTA and a substitute teacher over at the elementary school, my dad was a deacon in his church; and I felt, that I, you know, the town was mine. I didn't think that I could run into very much trouble with all these people on my side.

I will have to consult these notes. I'm not a public speaker, as you will readily see. So—and I hope that I don't have to read them, but I do claim authority on that particular decade from '27 to '37. And luckily it was very easy to come up with these notes, because I had no conflict of thinking, "Well, after that, so-and-so happened," because I really was not aware of it. Hugh Jordan [spelling?], which most of y'all know, had read this and called me up to tell me I'd made some mistakes. And he said, "You know, after that and after that—" And I said, "Well, don't. I'm just talking about the ten years there." But I did make a couple of mistakes, even on those ten years; I left out two important places.

What I've done is go down the street, starting up at the corner of Mountain Street and Main Street, which at that time, incidentally, were the only paved streets in Stone Mountain. Everything else was dirt roads and dirt streets, a little bit of gravel on some of them. But rain, like it's probably doing outside now, had some mighty muddy streets around. In fact, even Main Street, which was a continuation of Ponce de Leon, ended being paved just out beyond Stone Mountain. It certainly didn't go all the way down to Redan or Lithonia [inaudible phrase]. And Mountain Street, if I remember—some of you may have to correct me on this. [*Laughing*] You know, they say old people are supposed to be able to remember things a hundred years ago, but they don't know what they had for lunch. But I do. I have the same thing for lunch every day, so I don't have that problem [*audience laughter*]. If I remember right, the paved street of Mountain Street went to the east to the mountain. But to the west, just over the hill, not all the way up to the motel or anything like that, it just went down to the creek. There's a creek down there, if you're not aware of it, down below the post office, that had a wooden bridge across it. And as far as I can remember, from the creek on, it was like a dirt road. But getting back to the corner of Main and Mountain Street, which is and was the center of town, there is a two-story brick building there. It was known then as a dry goods—it was Mr. Fred Miller's. It has Southern Artistry in it now. I don't know whether we'd still use the word "dry goods" or not, but it was Mr. Fred Miller's dry goods store, and it pretty much looks the same as it did, except for the merchandise inside, of course. But I remember it quite well. I believe there's a ramp in there, but there was a step up at that time, and I remember all the spools of thread on one side and the material on the other. And in the back there there was a big, oversized coal heater that heated up the whole place.

I will, if I have time—in fact, if someone will remind me when I'm about twenty-five minutes, because I'll shoot the bull all day otherwise—so if you'll just raise up your hand when I—I'd like to tell you about some of the people; and Mr. Fred Miller and Miss Lenora would be two of the ones that I'd like to tell you about. They lived over on Ridge Avenue, three doors from West Mountain Street, right near his church. He was very important in the Methodist Church. And Miss Lenora was such a devoted wife. She even went fishing with Mr. Fred. They had a little wooden boat they kept down at what we call the "new" lake. There was two Venable Lakes in the park now. One was--we referred to it as new lake; it evidently was built at a later date, and on along the same creek, further along, was what we called the old lake. The lakes that are in the park now—I mean, this large lake was dammed up below where this stream met another stream, a healthier stream by the name of Mountain Creek. And that formed the lakes that are around there now. But at the time when I was born, there were just two lakes, the new lake and

the old lake. And I learned how to swim, incidentally, in the new lake. But Mr. Fred and Miss Lenora would go down, and they kept this little wooden boat down near the dam. And on a summer afternoon—not necessarily Sunday. I don't know whether they fished on Sunday; I don't think they did, because a lot of things we didn't do on Sundays we do now. But on a summer afternoon he and she would have rowed up towards the upper end of the lake. There was a sandbar there. And this was the same place that we boys went in swimming. And we would surprise them sometimes running down the hill, stripping as we went. By the time we hit the sand bank, of course, we were buck-naked, because nobody wore swimsuits. Even if you'd had one, you would be a sissy to use it. And Miss Lenora would—if they happened to be there, I can picture her now--she would kind of hold her hand over her eyes, because with this momentum, we couldn't have stopped, and she knew it, going across the sand bank anyway—the sandbar. And once we got into the water, there was no problem, unless they stayed there too long. Now, we usually had chores that we had to get back and do before sundown, and they just had to wait if the Millers were catching fish, because they didn't leave until late, and then we'd have to get out and go looking for your socks and underwear up the hill.

Getting on down beyond Mr. Fred's, I've written every store, but I won't possibly have time to get into it now. I'll skip on down about two stores to the bank building. It still has—I don't know what's in there now, but it still has a big stone block there that has "bank" written on it. It was known as the Stone Mountain Granite Bank with the reputation, or at least the motto, of "as strong as granite," but it, like so many others, folded when Roosevelt closed the banks and gave them a holiday to recoup and try to see if they were strong enough to reopen. The Stone Mountain Granite Bank, even though it was nice little bank and--it didn't reopen. I had accumulated a fortune of $86.00, and this wealth did not come easily. Part of it was from silver dollars on birthdays, but a lot of it was from job ventures that I had. And needless to say, I was devastated with the closing of this bank. Other people were jumping from windows on Wall Street. That didn't worry me. I was [inaudible] about having to start all over again. But there was no FDIC, of course, as you know, back then. The bank managers had to collect all their debts and sell what assets they had in order to pay off the depositors. Later on, that bank building was a post office for a while—for a short time.

Next to the bank building is a winding stair that went up to the Masonic Temple there. They're always upstairs. My wife asked me why, and I won't tell her. During those years that I remember pretty good, Mr. Tolmon Wells was the Worshipful Master. He was a heavyset fellow, very distinguished looking, gray suit, vest, gold chain [inaudible] to a watch probably, stub of a cigar. Mr. Tolmon was also the mayor, I think about '34 or '35 or something like that. This bank

busted—this bank, I think, happened, must've been about '33, because Roosevelt came in in '32, I believe. Anyway, Mr. Tolmon was mayor, and the reason that I remember him being mayor at that time, my dad ran against him. And Mr. Tolmon was a very popular man, and my daddy wasn't quite that popular and didn't have a chance in running against Mr. Tolmon. Another thing that—my dad was one of two Republicans. Back then you knew whether people were Democrats or Republicans, and he and Mr. Sexton—E. A. Sexton, who was a mail carrier, they had not only voted but they passed out buttons and literature and so forth for the Republican party, so Democrats were still pretty strong, very strong, even more so back then. And I kind of blame that for him getting as few votes as he got on that election.

The Republicans had to take the brunt of Depression. Hoover, of course, took most of the blame. I remember a sign down in the hardware store that—J. T. Hardware store was about two or three more doors down below the drugstore there, below the Masonic Lodge—had a sign, a motto-sized sign. And it said that—let's see if I can—I don't want to misquote it here: "Harding blew the whistle, Coolidge rang the bell, Hoover became president, and the country went to hell" [*audience groan*]. Now, this is the first time I'd ever seen that word "hell" in print, and I thought that this was a cussword, which was hard to understand. I would never have used it, even reading it, back then. But we always said something about, "Why can the preacher use this word, and we're not allowed to use it?" But Hoover did take the blame. And when my dad and Mr. Sexton had voted for him versus Al Smith, this lowered his esteem, because I think possibly later they realized that Hoover was the man.

Mr. Sexton lived in a brick house over at the corner of Forest [spelling?] Avenue and Poplar Springs, where Al Capagrossi [spelling?] now lives. He was deacon in the Baptist Church, Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, etc., had a boys' class—I was a member of it for a while, when I was a Baptist. I was Methodist most of the time. He was a very distinguished sort of a, I felt, English-looking gentleman who had bespeckles [sic], glasses, down on his nose like this, but not quite as stodgy as he looked. He built the first—they called it back then Tom Thumb Golf Course in his backyard. This is the forerunner of miniature golf or "goofy golf" that they have now.

Getting on down to the drugstore was—it is still but was even more so the center of activity in the business community there. Dr. Harris owned the drugstore and was pharmacist there. And Dr. Spinks was his assistant, a jolly fellow. One of the reasons that it was so important then was one of the two doctors had his office above there; Dr. Bill McCurdy had his office up above there. And everybody anywhere around Stone Mountain during those years certainly knew Dr. Bill. The other doctor was Dr. Wells. He had his office up in the brick building

where recently the attorneys' offices were, and now I believe their particular is Shirts 'n' Things that is the occupant of the office that Dr. Wells owned. But Dr. Wells lived on Ridge Avenue, near where the big columns are, the house with the big columns. You know, as a boy, and I've written this as a boy, because I remember it as a boy—you remember certain things about certain people. He had two automobiles. Had a little Chevrolet, about 1932, Chevrolet coupe that he used during the week; and he had this big old Packard that he used on Sundays.

The drugstore, pretty much as it is now. They did put a new front on it, opened up the window there some. And I can still see Dr. Bill McCurdy, incidentally, standing there, leaning against that front counter there, that white hair—he parted it, but it was always down and sort of had a limp or a shoulder that—he carried on a conversation with everybody that came in. The drugstore still has this tin roof, this molded tin roof—the ceiling, that is, that a lot of places had back then. Still has it, I see. The soda fountain's still the same as it was. Yet, beyond the soda fountain on the righthand side there, there's some sort of merchandise. At that time there were some tables and chairs, what we call "Coke tables and chairs" now, twisted iron, probably with marble tops, because most of those tables had marble tops on them. And you could get a fountain Coca-Cola with cherry added brought to the table for a nickel. In fact, I've often said that the greatest inflation of all times, I mean, we keep knowing about inflation and hearing about was when all those nickel items broke loose and went beyond a nickel. I think that that's when inflation really gained more momentum than it has before or since. You could also get a bottled Coca-Cola with a straw in it, or you could get an ice cream cone—that was those tissue-type cones that always got soggy, and by the time you got to the bottom, you had more ice cream in your hand than you had in the cone. They were a nickel also, and if I remember right, the only three flavors was strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate.

Beyond the partition—or rather—the partition is still there that they bring out for prescriptions, and beyond it, of course, the supply of that, but behind there it was very much then, still is sort of, a private club that the older youth, some of the men, shoot the bull back there, and they tell about these fishing trips and so forth. I didn't dare go back there until I had a paper route and started feeling well, I'm as big as some of them, so I'd go back in and listen to some of their wild tales.

I'm having to consult this—I'm sorry that, like I say, I'm not a speaker, and I haven't memorized this, so I'll just have to go along. Mr. Bell [Bill?]—Dr. Bell [Bill], that is, lived in the two-story brick house which is on the corner of Mountain Street and Third Street. Funny enough, back then, they called it Main Street, Second Main Street, Third Main Street, Fourth Main Street. I don't know why, but finally we got around to calling it just Third Street and so forth

like that. But back then I remember the addresses all had several Main Streets. He lived back there. I didn't know Dr. Bill/Bell's wife, but I did know his sons and daughters. Dr. Willis, of course, Alice's husband, took over as doctor of Stone Mountain.

He also had another son by the name of Jim, who had become a doctor in some other town, died young in an accident. But I remember Jim especially. They had a big old dog, a German shepherd, tan and brown, named Mitzi. Did you know Mitzi? That was before you. Jim would come home, and Mitzi had a cancer or something, and Jim would come home from med school in the summertime and operate on Mitzi. Well, Mitzi finally died, but everybody said they didn't know whether she died from the cancer or from one of Jim's operations, but he got plenty of practice on poor old Mitzi. One of Dr. Bill/Bell's daughters, of course, still lives there, Miss Myrtice. She taught school and elementary school until she retired. She started in the third grade. I don't know if she stuck with the third grade, but I was in that third grade her first year. Next door to the drugstore was Steve Wells's furniture store. I didn't know Mr. Steve too well. I didn't have much need of furniture as a boy this size. He did kind of take over as unofficial bank. He did—he was the only one who had any money after the Depression, I think, and he did loan money there. But I didn't have any need of borrowing money, so I didn't know Mr. Steve very well.

Next to that, there's an alley going through, and the next building now—actually there's two buildings there. This brick façade goes around two separate buildings there. There was a stone building—correct me if I'm wrong—there was a stone building there, which was Mr. Bennett's meat market. And beyond that, there was a red brick building, painted red at one time, was the first chain grocer; it was Rogers Stores. I know you don't remember that. I thought maybe you remembered about the building [*laughs*]. I know you don't remember Rogers. Rogers was the forerunner, I believe, of—you remember Rogers Stores? It became Colonial Stores, I think, which is also deceased now, but this was really a revolution and the first step toward supermarkets. Rogers had bins with vegetables and fruit all lined up, clean windows and bright lighting—I mean, it was very unlike all the little grocery stores of Stone Mountain and everywhere else you went. Mr. Henry Vickery ran Rogers Store there, and their big day was on Saturday. All the farmers came to town on Saturday, and most people did their shopping on Saturday. Most of my buddies worked for Mr. Henry on Saturday. I never did work for him, but I did—I raised radishes and carrots and sold to him, and then later on I had a sweet potato crop down where the post office is now. Mr. Howe owned that land, and this is part of the money that I think I was putting into the Stone Mountain Bank. I paid two years two years to Oglethorpe off

of that potato crop. Later on, Mr. Howe sold it to Jimmy Venable, and later they had a horse track there; but I won't come up to the present date, but--

I go back to Rogers Stores. They were the first ones to think of slicing bread. Heretofore you would get a loaf of bread, and you had to do your own slicing. You might end up with a thick sandwich or a thin sandwich, but they had this sliced bread. They had a contest to name this bread, and I don't know what the prize was, but I do know that the name of the bread was Poncey. It was named after Ponce de Leon, because this was still the only way you could go to Atlanta, was Ponce de Leon. This is before Memorial Drive was ever thought of. I remember when Memorial Drive was put in, so then the name of this bread. And it was Depression, so you'll have to realize, but six cents a loaf is a little ridiculous, isn't it? I mean, six cents a loaf for a loaf of bread already sliced. Most of the bread here in Stone Mountain and in all small Southern towns was white bread, and my father called it "light bread." Or you could get some whole wheat, but certainly not all this good pumpernickel and rye bread and French bread that we get nowadays. But I think that was a historical moment when sliced bread was available. Rogers advertised in newspapers, and they started these big paper signs—some stores still do, you know, great big, do with a brush this big, signs on it.

Next to Rogers was a hardware store, Mr. J. T. Sheppard [spelling?] hardware. Hardware stores were pretty much like they are now, the small ones, except now they have all the little plastic bags and things that you have to buy, you know, if you want very many, you've got to buy—at that time, it was all in bulk, of course. I'm telling y'all, y'all remember this, I'm sure, just as much as I do. Besides buying nails and screws or whatever it is, having to weigh it up or count them and put them in a paper sack. They sold a lot of seeds. Seeds you could buy, of course, in packets just like we do now. But they also had a lot of bulk seed, because somebody was going to plant corn, they weren't going to get ten or twenty little old packs; they would buy it in bulk, so measured it up in bulk form. Some things that Mr. Sheppard had there we don't see in modern day, even in the smallest hardware, that's horse collars, coal scuttles, plowshares. I do remember—I mean, little boys will be little boys: There was two calendars back there that had pictures of girls in swimsuits, but compared to today's swimsuits, I mean, really [*laughs*]. But I do remember them [*audience laughter*]. Also, he had a coal heater there, too, like most people did. But I do remember Mr. Sheppard's coal heater had a two-by-four frame and sand in it, so if the coals dropped out, they wouldn't catch the floor on fire. All the floors back then, of course, were usually pine floors, and they put oil on them. They put so much oil on them that that's the reason, I think, when they had a fire, you know, things would go up like that [*snaps fingers*], because those floors everywhere would just—that is, with commercial—got so

oily. But anyhow, this had this two-by-four around and had that sand in it, but I found out that not only it was good for that, all tobacco chewers would practice their aim into that sand around there.

Mr. Sheppard also had a dairy down beyond Fourth Street and Pool Street on the southeast corner there. He had two sons that did most of the work at the dairy. His wife did, too, I remember. You'd take a hopefully clean bottle, and you would trade it for a full bottle of milk. I think milk—this was the Depression, and prices were very reasonable. I believe that sweet milk was ten cents a quart, and buttermilk was five cents a quart. I'm not sure, but this is approximate. And Mrs. Sheppard would make up these butter—half-pound butter in little molds that had a rose. You remember the wooden mold that you'd pack your butter in? She'd churn it and everything. So, Mr. Sheppard had a lot of good help on his dairy.

Next to the hardware was another drugstore, but without prescriptions and without medicine—mostly they—what we'd call a variety store now, but they called it a drugstore. They did have a large soda fountain there. It was Maddox Drugstore—Mr. Will Maddox—two brothers—and Mr. Fred Maddox ran it. In the Maddox Drugstore there there's a basement, and this is where probably—in fact, I would be venture to say not probably but the only Stone Mountain town band practiced. They had a brass band for the city of Stone Mountain, and my grandfather, Dan Jordan, was the leader of the band. And as far as I know, there hasn't been really a town band since then. He also was the one that I mentioned as having been mayor here. He had several businesses. He had a meat market one time, a hotel one time. He had a Gulf refining company, which is a Gulf agency, construction work, and a whole lot of other things. And the remarkable thing, he just had one arm, which I think turned out to be the challenge that he was able to accomplish much more than the average person. He played the French horn over at the Methodist church; they had a quartet there. And he also was a golfer. We had a golf course over on Hairston Road. It was only nine holes, but if you wanted to play eighteen, you just started right over again. I used to caddy over there some. And he was a good golfer. He had lost his arm handling a threshing machine when he was a boy, and he only had the stub left. But he would take his club and rest it there, and with a full stroke, just one arm, he would put it pretty close to the green every time. I have to brag on him. He lived in the house over on Ridge Avenue at Mountain Ridge, Sheppard Road, that building Mary Beth lived there. Now, of course, it's Hugh Jordan's father.

Beyond Maddox Drugstore there was a large stone building. Now it houses two or three gift shops. I don't know the names of them, but it's a big building that really spanned a generation even before me. It was a feed store; Mr. Ben Davis had a feed store there. This, I

felt, was old-fashioned even in my era. It had big barn doors on it, big wooden doors that opened out onto the sidewalk, and the sidewalk went right down to the street. I guess you could pull a wagon or a truck right on into it. I don't remember one going in there, but I do remember these big two-wheelers that they would carry bales of hay or big tow sacks of corn, chicken feed, and so on like this. One day they would have cotton-seed hulls and cotton-seed meal for the cows. And every time I think about a cow having to eat the cotton seed, I could choke on just the thought of a cow eating cotton-seed hulls. Have you ever seen cotton-seed hulls? But definitely the cows liked it, and they would throw in a little meal for dessert, I guess. But the cotton-seed meal was pretty much like flour meal and sort of an orange color. But that store, it seemed like old-fashioned, even back then.

Next to that was an active, three-chair barbershop, complete with a shoe-shiner and a bathtub in the back. Kind of like the old cowboy movies, if you came into town and you needed a bath, you'd see Mr. Gillam [spelling?], and he was the owner and main barber there, and arrange to go back in the back. They had this big bathtub and towels and whatever. Instead of coming into town on a horse, most people that used it were people that did not have hot water or running water at home. The water system started, I remember, very small. Most people had wells. I mentioned I have just been on a camping trip with one of my sons, and I mentioned well water, and he wanted to know, "Well, how did you get it out of the well? A pump?"

I said, "No, you drew it."

"You *drew* it?"

Well, "drew it" doesn't go with him, so I had to explain to him all the deal of, you know, how I had crank like this, and there was a log in it and rope went over, pulling it out like this. [*Laughing*] I mean, he's a fairly intelligent boy, but "drew it" didn't register of how you get well—but most of the people did have wells. They also, there was no sewer lines whatsoever until way later. Most people had these little five-by-five houses that we called "outhouses," usually on the back side of their lots. Practically everybody had gardens, some people had chickens; we had both. Some people had cows; some people even had some horses or a mule either to pull the wagon or to do some plowing. I remember there was a Black fellow that lived along the ridge in Sheppard that did our plowing for us whenever we would plow the garden. So, they didn't come riding into town and want to know where the only bath was in town. The ones I used it, like I say, were using it probably people that wanted to take their Saturday bath, and they didn't [sic] have a bathtub, but didn't have the hot water like was down there at Mr. Gillam's.

A shave and a haircut, as far as I know, was twenty cents and fifteen cents, or you could just stop in there to read today's newspaper or some magazines he always had. He lived up on

Main Street. I mentioned Dr. Spinks being in the post office. He was in the first house, and Mr. Gilliam was in the second house there, where the Crystals' [spelling?] house is now.

Next to Mr. Gillam's was probably Stone Mountain's first fast food, Pete Beauchamp's [spelling? Could be Beecham?] lunchroom. Now, Pete Beauchamp was the first grown man that I ever called by his first name. Everybody called him Pete Beauchamp, so he didn't seem to mind it, and I felt big about calling him Pete. He had the usual [inaudible]—hotdogs and sandwiches and so forth—but my favorite, I think, his specialty, was a dressed wienie on an oval-shaped plate that you can eat with your hands, or you could ask for a fork, if you wanted to be particularly polite. But it was in Pete's that I first realized the inequities of race relations—not as much as I do now, but I'd be handing my RC Cola or something I guess, because that was a bigger drink than a Coca-Cola, sitting on a stool, and an elderly Black man would have to be standing back against the wall to have his. I didn't think too much about it at the time, even though it was kind of strange. And since then, I have realized that, even though it was not Pete's idea, it wasn't my idea, certainly, but it was just done, and we just took for granted that this is the way life is. And I have written some stuff in here—I won't go into it—about race relations in a small town, only because I don't have time. But I do feel that we do need to air our thoughts. I don't know whether other people have the same thoughts as me or not. But I used to play baseball with the Black boys—we called them "colored" at the time; they called us "white boys." They ran our socks off, I'm telling you; the best ball player's I'd ever seen. They had a semipro team down there that played on Saturdays, sometimes on Sundays. They had uniforms and everything. So, I had no animosity whatsoever, never have had. But I do feel sorry that I did not recognize the fact that part of God's children were being cheated. And I think that when we do realize this, and even being denied some of the things that our Constitution calls for, at that time we just took it for granted. I think that now any animosity or any relationships that are not as they should be, usually practiced by what I consider uneducated--we'd call them "rednecks" or something like this. And they give all of us Southerners a bad name. But I do feel that we should at least recognize that we were often naïve to have lived through that and not at least realized it if not said something about it. I won't do anymore on that, but it was Pete's place, I think, that brought that out to me.

I do remember—and I won't give it up that quick—I do have some very fond memories of some relationships. All Southern towns back then had a definite—almost as if it were drawn on a map—area for the white people and an area for the Black people. It was almost as though "This is it," and "That ain't it," and that sort of a thing. You were used to it, and [inaudible phrase; recording skips]. Still, we do find this to some extent. But at that time, it was a whole lot

more—it was very definite. Stone Mountain had two such sections. We had one we called "Shermantown," the other we called "Steville [spelling?]," probably from Mr. Steve McCurdy, I don't know whether that Steville got named for Mr. Steve or not. But anyway, the two of them were in opposite corners of the town, and part of the so-called "white section" was in between. We happened to live on the dirt road that was then between these two sections. There was a lot of foot traffic up and down. Well, my grandmother lived with us at the time. When Dad bought the house, she moved in with us. And her father had had slaves down at the farm in Lithonia, but she had a lot of friends in the Black communities. And one of them, of I'd say mutual respect, was Preacher Woodson. I don't know whether any of you know Preacher Woodson—I see one nod here. Preacher Woodson was a tall, very distinguished-looking, gray-beard, black coat a little bit longer than usual, high-topped black shoes, sort of a Homburg hat, but very distinguished. And he lived over in the Steville section, and he would go down to the Sherman [sic] section, because his church was there, come by our house. And as he was coming by, he'd see my grandmother sitting on the porch in her rocking chair, and he'd come over and say, "Miss Nanny." Everybody called her "Miss Nanny." [*Clears throat.*] Y'all have to excuse me a little bit. This is really happy memories, and I do this every time I think of them. He said, "We're going to have a pretty good service this afternoon. Would you like to come?" And she'd say, "Well, let me get my shawl." She'd always have to get a shawl, and she'd go back in and come back out. So, the three of us—I was, I'd say, about five years; this is before my [inaudible phrase]. So, we'd toddle on town about three blocks to Preacher Woodson's church, and he would sit us right on the front row, on the right-hand side. On the left-hand side there, the first couple of rows, was the deacons of the church there—they called it the "amen corner." And he very politely would sit us there.

Most of the time, and in fact—we went several times. I don't remember any other white people being there, but I'm sure at different times there were; because there was never any bad relationships. There was just sort of a cut-and-dried separation was what it was. He would—I think about it often now, because I feel that our religions sometimes try to give us a guilt complex that we should not enjoy life too much now, we should wait till the hereafter. But I respect that Black Southern church of that era, because they enjoyed their religion. He would give them what we would call a "fire-and-brimstone" sermon, telling them all the things that they should change, but they didn't get that deep, guilty complex. They even egged him on. They would clap, and they would "amen," as if they were agreeing with him. And he and they would better accomplish whatever was to be. I thought later I don't believe that any of them—or not many of them, maybe some of them did—changed their ways as he was suggesting, but the

next Sunday they'd be there, egging him on, clapping, "amen," so forth, same as before. And every time they would line up and tell him, "That was the best sermon I ever heard." Every Sunday. And the ones that were friends with my grandmother, they'd come over and speak to her, and I would, of course, take in some of this, boosting my own ego, probably. But I do remember when they passed the collection plate, I would always—there was only change in it—and I would drop my nickel into the middle and try to make as much noise as possible with the nickel going in [*laughter*]. But I tell you, of all the things about this church experience, and I did enjoy it, was the music there, which I think soaked into my genes. This piano was sitting about ten feet in front of us there, at an angle, and they had no choir; the whole congregation was the choir. And each song got a little stronger, a little louder, and it really was terrific. I mean, they were shaking the whole church until the last one. They were always in kind of a let-down; they would have the invitation hymn that y'all are all familiar with and they would temper it down a little bit. I always thought they could leave that one off, but at least it wasn't as bad as I remember when we used to have tent meetings of white--, and they would go on. Sometimes they would do those invitation hymns—all twenty-seven verses—over and over and over [*laughter*]. At least Woodson didn't do that. But I often, when I hear Kathleen Battle or some of these gospel singers or Negro spirituals, I thank my grandmother and Preacher Woodson for having introduced me to that. And I really have enjoyed it through the years.

[*Looking at his notes.*] I'm having to skip over, because I'm afraid you're going to call time on me [inaudible phrase]. I wrote all this down and gave Pat a copy, and she just figured well, she'd roped me into this job here, which I didn't know I was going to get into, but I'm enjoying it. I hope y'all are.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Was that bathtub deal a regular thing in Southern small towns?

SK: I don't know. I just know Stone Mountain was in the back of—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: What did it cost to get a bath?

SK: Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to know what you'd pay if you get a bath?

SK: It was in a separate room--

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I know, but—

Several people speak at once; inaudible comments and questions.

SK, *responding to audience member*: As far as I know. Do you remember, [name inaudible]?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Soap and towels—

SK: Soap and towels

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: --It cost twenty-five cents if you brought your own soap and towels. But if they had to, it'd be thirty cents, if they had to furnish it.

SK: How much was it then?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thirty cents

SK: Thirty cents

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thirty cents

SK: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: They still had it as late as--

SK: I started in here telling about the prices of everything, and then I realized I thought maybe some young people would be here, younger than old me [*audience laughter*]. But anyway, I didn't know whether they'd believe me or not anyway. But, you know, those were nice prices, weren't they? But they seemed high at the time. I made a note here, at Mr. Bennett's meat market, that steak was either fifteen or nineteen cents a pound. But most people did streak o'lean. I hope all y'all know what streak o'lean is. It was ten cents a pound. But the best thing about Mr. Bennett's, you could go up there, and he would save the bones for your dog and give them to you. That was the treat that--

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I thought I knew so much about this--

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, how do you know so much about the bathtub? [*Audience laughter drowns out comments*.]

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: The ladies didn't get to go there.

SK: No, I don't think I ever saw a lady go back there.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll tell you how I happen to know. You know, we had a contest, county-wide, for the town that did the most, you know, things. This was brought out during that time. I had never known it before.

SK: You didn't know that?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Not, didn't know it until this time.

SK: You do remember Mr. Gillam and so forth.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: During the time that Lucille is talking about, we never had—oh, what is it? [*Several people talk at once*.] "Stay and See Georgia."

SK: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was with one of the judges, and we went in that place that was [inaudible] baths. They were just shocked that there was such a place in the world.

SK: Were they still there at the time? I mean the bathtub was still there at the time?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: And they had a shower.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, it was about 1960.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think that it stayed there as long as Mr. Gilliam.

SK: Uh-huh

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: What I remember about it was the men coming out from the quarry into town, and you would see them all covered like they'd been in a flour bin and something.

SK: That's right. The quarry was very much a part of the town, and we'll get down the street, if I have time, to the corner where you [inaudible]—I do have time? On the corner, and I'll skip on down there, the big building there on the corner of [inaudible] and Mountain Street was the commissary at the time. It's been several things since then. It was Haynie's store at one time, but back then there was a commissary. In some of you don't know what a commissary was, it was a store that was run—a grocery or general merchandise store—run by a company for its employees, and these were the quarry workers. I don't know whether it's called Stone Mountain Granite or maybe Venable Brothers, I don't know. But they quarried the stone around the mountain. You remember the stone from Stone Mountain is scattered around all over the United States. Practically all the curbstone in Atlanta is from Stone Mountain. The jetties—this is the big stones that break water in Miami to keep the shore from washing away—is from there. Wall Street buildings are made from Stone Mountain granite. One in Washington—it's either the Supreme Court Building or one of the important buildings there in Washington—is of Stone Mountain granite.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: The Lincoln Memorial is Stone Mountain isn't it?

SK: Yes, and there were some working on the memorial at the time. I don't know when—you know Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor, started this. And he did first the head of Robert E. Lee with a hat on, and we all know that Robert E. Lee always held his hat over his heart. So, when Lukeman was hired—Borglum fell out with the Daughters of the Confederacy and left town, and he later did, started on, Mount Rushmore. His son finished Mount Rushmore, but they hired a sculptor by the name of August Lukeman, who blasted off what Borglum had left on the mountain [Stone Mountain] and started again with this sketch, pretty much as it is now, only I

believe this—later you can tell me the history there—Hancock smoothed it up and gave it sort of an unfinished—[*To audience member*] Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: He changed the design.

SK: Changed it some, mm-hm. The quarry especially was very important to Stone Mountain during this decade that I'm talking about. The commissary was where they would not only get paid but they would get coupons that they could trade there and get some bargain kind of like if you belonged to some of his shopping stores now that you are a member of.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is Haynie's store here? Haynie's?

SK: No, no.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: How long has that been gone?

SK: Oh, twenty years, I guess. Ten years, fifteen, how long? I don't know. Some time. But I have two very vivid memories that concern with the quarry and the commissary there. There was a terrible blast—actually, it was a boiler that blew up there at the quarry, killed nine men, injured a whole lot of them, including one of their dad was—a student, her father--that was in our class—[first name inaudible] Davis, her father was killed. They brought the dead and some of the less-wounded into town on a flat car. This is, you know, a flat railroad car of the little train that ran around the mountain then. It went from the depot and around the front side around to the quarry. And they had sirens, and everybody in town turned out for it. First dead person I guess I'd ever seen. It was very scary and very depressing. Everybody—you know, the whole town had turned out, and there were these dead people, and bloody and so forth and the engine there.

Another thing that happened there, union labor there at the quarry and also non-union labor, evidently the union had called for a strike or whatever, sit-in or stand-down or whatever they had back then. And some of them had not honored this, so they hung a dummy from a telephone pole about where the gazebo is now, by his neck, in overalls. It was stuffed. It looked like somebody. Had the name across there, they had "scab." That's what they called a person who went against the rules of the union. I don't know whether it was a union member or non-union. [*Laughing*] But having seen cowboy movies, I came up upon this "man," hanging by his neck, just like they do in the cowboy movies, it scared the starch out of me. I mean, really. But those two things I do remember about that quarry and the commissary.

Before the commissary was there, that had been a hotel, which--I keep on telling about my granddaddy. He ran a hotel there. In fact, when Haynie's was there, and his son Hugh ran it, we'd go upstairs sometimes and look through some stuff that Hugh had accumulated. And those rooms upstairs, they still got numbers on them. Still had the old metal numbers—room number

12, 14, whatever, not 13, I don't think, because they didn't have a room 13 or a floor 13 back then. But it had been a hotel at one time.

I'll skip on down to the brick building that now houses a thrift shop. There's one down there that has dolls now. That was Bill Haynie's grocery store. And I was counting the other day, there was seven or nine grocery stores that Stone Mountain had. Now we don't have a single grocery store. I don't know if that's progress or not. But down where the thrift shop was, there's a little brick building there on the corner of Pool Street and Main Street. That was Ruby Mobley's grocery store. That's where we traded. I would go there with either a list or memorizing sugar, salt, and so forth all the way up there. I remember exactly where everything was in the store there. I knew where the bananas always hanging by the bunch in one place. Back by the backdoor, there was a big wooden icebox that they had soda pops in it. Also, there was a door to the side over there toward where now the welcome station is. And that street, Pool Street, was at a steeper slant than it is now. I don't know when it got leveled up a little bit. They had an old dray truck. They called it a delivery truck or dray, D-R-A-Y, I think, truck, Model T, open, wooden body truck. Never did have any good brakes. Some cousins of mine, either [inaudible names] was usually dray boy or delivery boy, and they were just parking it against the building there, so it wouldn't roll off. And also, this was very handy if had a weak battery, because all you had to do is just turn the steering wheel away from the building and turn the key, and it'd crank up, just like that. Graves had shown me that, but he didn't know I was going to try it at a later date. I was about eight or nine years old, and I thought, well, I'm going to try that. It cranked up, and here I am trying to guide it. Mr. Henderson lived across the road there, had a barn. And I went across the street and was headed to his barn. Luckily he was there in his yard, he jumped on the running board and cut it off and kind of guided it up the hill, and it came to a stop. Needless to say, I didn't try that any more. But most of this stuff that I find is very personal. I can't help that. That's the only reason that I remember that dray truck is for the fact that I did try it one time.

The Henderson house was where the welcome center is now. At one time it was a—before my time—a store and a residence, had a store in the front of it. It, of course, got taken down for the railroad that went through there now. There was no other commercial south of Pool Street at the time, and I'm just wondering if anybody here knows why that's called Pool Street. Do you know, Miss Lucille?

LUCILLE [last name unknown—possibly Lanford?]: Well, maybe, I'm supposing. But at one time there was a pool down in this direction between us and Shermantown, on the Sheppard property. One of us could go down there and play in the pool.

SK: Right. This is--the street itself became a big, wide path down beyond what is Fourth Street now, a path that went all around to what I mentioned as New Lake. But as you went down through the woods, there was a pool, a pond--

LUCILLLE [LANFORD?]: A spring, I think.

SK: --certainly not a pool, a pond. It was dammed up, called Pool Spring, and this was where the Black Baptist church did their baptizing. But in between baptizings, which only happened a few times during the summertime, it was a great swimming hole. It really was. I don't know whether it's—I'm sure it's so grown up you'd never be able to find it. On further along there is another called Rock Pool, that we used to go swimming, and it's still there, it protected itself by the fact that it's in amongst the rocks there. But that's the reason there's a Pool Street. Most of the other streets you can figure out—Second Street is the second street, and Third Street is the third street, and Mountain Street goes to the mountain, and so forth.

Across from Hendersons' house, where that decorator place is now, there was a unique building, certainly different from anything now, it was a ice house. Mr. Laudis Lanford, Ms. Lucille Lanford's husband, ran the ice house, and they brought ice in the big—some of you may remember—big chunks of about four feet by two-and-a-half or three feet, and so yay thick, brought them on the train in boxcars coated with sawdust, and they had a chute. And they would chute them down—the chute went—they'd add a section to it, right up against the boxcar, and they would chute this down, and he would rinse them off and push them into this very heavy-walled little building there. Also, in the summer time, with the ice, Mr. Laudis kept twenty or twenty-five watermelons. You could go up there and get an ice-cold, I mean really cold, watermelon. South of the ice house there was a coal yard that kept him busy in the wintertime. Coal you could buy by the ton delivered or half-ton, or, it being the Depression, you could even buy what they called a tow-sack full. I don't remember the prices, but you could even buy just a burlap bag of coal.

Coming on back on that side of the street, of course, up this way, according to the—next is the depot, and it was the depot back then. More active trains than there are now. There was at least two passenger trains running between Atlanta and Augusta. They had one car [*Recording skips*.] [*To Moderator*] I'm way past the time, have I not? I don't know much y'all want to or how long—I've got that much more, and I'm sure I'm not going to—

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE, *laughing*; *finishing his comment*: --to get into it.

SK: I was going to get—at least get around to what this building—of course, I heard Pat remind me that this was called the car barn back then. The streetcars came with not only passengers but a little bit of freight.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Excuse me, Sam. We have another meeting.

SK: Feel free. I just won't speak to you anymore [*laughter*]. I saw—Alice kept pointing at her watch, but I thought—thanks for coming.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Enjoyed it! Thank you!

SK: Thank you, bye-bye. I will bring this to a timely conclusion here after I get through with this particular building.

The streetcar that came out from Stone Mountain—out to Stone Mountain from Atlanta was a larger streetcar than the ones in Atlanta. They had leather seats, had a compartment in the back, smoking compartment. At one time the [inaudible—ride? route?] would be around here. There was a little waiting room here. This is where you would catch it to go up to Atlanta—a waiting room and steps up and you bought tickets, but that was, I remember pretty soon after that, you did pay the fare—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: What was the fare to come out here from Decatur [sic]?

SK: Thirty-five cents.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: From Atlanta all the way—

SK: From Atlanta here, thirty-five cents at the time. They had a different fare for Clarkston and Avondale and Decatur, you know, each one. This was rather expensive, because you could go from Atlanta to Decatur for a nickel, but that was a deal that Decatur set up with Atlanta. That was the only nickel—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: That wasn't to Stone Mountain, was it?

SK: Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Stone Mountain was ten cents from Decatur.

SK: Only ten cents from Decatur?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: The Stone Mountain car was ten cents—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Twenty-four cents—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: The streetcar was five cents to Atlanta.

SK: Yes

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: It was a separate one.

SK: Yes, right, uh-huh. Right. But the streetcars came—I think the last one went into town about 9:00. The last one out from town—and I remember it very distinctly, because I missed it a couple of times—left at 11:30. So they were still coming out and weren't going back. And they were putting them into a section back here. They would just bring them in and park them for the night, and everybody referred to it as this was the car barn. But the building itself

had a loading dock on the front of it at that time. Mr. Bob Sprayberry—that's Paul's uncle—was a station master, I guess you would call him. He sat in a big wooden chair there. I think we'd call them a courthouse-type chair, kind of like a captain's chair, but he'd sit there. And he'd let us boys—we always wanted to weigh; I don't know why it was such a treat to weigh or push these two-wheeled carts. He said, "Just don't run with it." But he'd always be sitting out there, and he would receive the only streetcar that brought a little bit of a freight. They brought all the newspapers, but they would dump them in front of the drugstore. And we paperboys—I carried all three different papers—they had the *Journal* and *Constitution*, they had *The Georgian* paper, which was an old Hearst paper that only lasted until sometime in the '40s, I think, or maybe—I guess it was in the '40s that it folded. But the *Journal* and *Constitution* were more respected at the time and more costly. They cost twenty cents a week, and *The Georgian* was only fifteen cents a week. But at different times for four or five years I carried papers here. Got to know everybody, and I knew the people that paid their paper bill on time and the ones that didn't. But like I say, I can't cover all this that I've written here, and I know some of you are kind of tired.

I will answer questions if I can if anybody has a particular store or—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: When did they close the school out here?

SK: Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: They used to have a school over here across—

SK: Across the street here. It was called University School for Boys. It was a boarding school. I am told that it later became Riverside Academy, which was in Gainesville, and then down in Hollywood, Florida. I don't know really what—there was a Major King that, if I remember, was the master of the school. Major King?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: [First name inaudible] Beavers, wasn't it?

SK: Was it Beavers? Could've been. Could've been Beavers, right. Later this—it was occupied, the same two three-story brick buildings, as a sanitarium. It was used for alcoholics and dope addicts. We called them "dope fiends" back then, I remember. I used to carry papers there, and there was some of the inmates or what would you call them? Patients, pardon me, there, that were quite lucid and bought the paper then. They were just kind of staying there for a while, but others were in a padded cell. And that was a very scary thing for me to go by in these narrow hallways by these padded cells. I mean, it looked—[inaudible phrase].

But at a later date this was a private hospital. Dr. [inaudible—sounds like "Geese"]—there were several—oh, there was another—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Gardener

SK: What was the name?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Gardener

SK: Gardener? Yes, uh-huh. There was a hospital. Its last use was as a nursing home for elderly. I believe that it had already closed and been condemned possibly when it burned down, probably the biggest fire that ever was in Stone Mountain, because these were--it was a huge, huge building, three stories, two separate buildings. Probably hit all of the floors, like most places did.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: When did it burn down?

SK: Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: When did it burn down?

SK: When? I would guess about, like, twenty-five years ago. I'm not sure. Does anybody remember how long it's been since it's burned down, been vacant there?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'd say thirty-five years.

SK: Thirty-five? You know how time flies, but somewhere probably between twenty-five and—you remember?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, but I have another question.

SK: OK

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you remember any of the controversy with the Daughters of the American Confederacy [sic] and Gutzon Borglum?

SK: Yes, a little bit. I was told most of this; I'm not a firsthand information. But Borglum was a very, shall we say, arrogant or temperamental-type person.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: He destroyed all of his models, didn't he?

SK: Yes, he did. He was quite a character here in the town when—I think he left about 1925, and I was only five years old, so I really—I don't know that I ever saw him. But seems that he was a—wore, you know, riding britches and this type of person. I don't know what the argument was about, why he broke off with them. I do know that the next one, Lukeman, they just ran out of money. But with Borglum, he was so irritated that— He had made plaster casts. That studio, right in front of the monument there, a big airplane hangar-type building, he made plaster casts of everything. If he was going to do a thumbnail, he would do a plaster cast of it before he would ever decide how large it was to be and how it was to be done up there. And he blew up just about all. Some has been salvaged. They did have a museum over here on Memorial Drive for a short time, and I was told that a few of his—pieces of his plaster casts. I don't know what the fallout was about. I'm sure that some members of the Daughters of the Confederacy—it's still an active organization—they could tell you why they fell out. But the next

thing we hear from him, he did have the commission to do Mount Rushmore, and he died before this was finished, and I'm told that his son finished that up there.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

SK: I would like to tell you about one more thing—I'm mentioning fires. We had a—may I?

MODERATOR: Yes, why don't you do this one thing?

SK: One more time, and then I'll let you go. We had a volunteer fire department. Mr. Fred Miller was fire chief, and everybody was a member of it. They called some of the better citizens and braver young people by phone, or they'd get a siren, and everybody would turn out for a fire. They told the tale that before we had this volunteer fire department, that if a house caught on fire, everybody just gathered around and watched it burn—lasted an hour or two, and it was gone. But the volunteer fire department would make one house last all night, they said [*laughter*]. This is unfair to them, because they did do some good jobs. And one character that I meant to mention, but I won't have time, was Elius [spelling?] Miller. Elius always braver than the rest of us. He was a couple of years older than I am, but I always thought I was either too little to go into a burning house and carry out furniture, but Elius and some of the other older boys were quite brave, and they would sometimes only salvage what furniture these young men would drag out, because a lot of times—even with this fabulous volunteer fire department, the houses did burn all the way down. Any other questions?

I will bring it to a timely conclusion. I have enjoyed this. Every time I think about some of this stuff, it's funny how much fun you can have just letting your mind run back. And I hope this has caused some of y'all to think a little more deeply.

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Have you any comments on the Stone Mountain stamp commemoration?

SK: On the what?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Stone Mountain stamp commemoration, first-day issue?

SK: The Stone Mountain stamp?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, first-day issue. Postage stamp.

SK: Postage stamp?

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Or were you not here at the time?

SK: You mean one that has been or one that's to be or what? I'm not—

UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: One that was.

SK: I remember the coins. I have some somewhere if I could find them—I think in our attic. But the beautiful coin—memorial coin—was a dollar or half-dollar, I forget now, silver coin. I don't remember—

[*Various simultaneous comments among audience*]

SK: I do appreciate the help I had. Thank y'all for being patient with me.

[*Audience applause*]

MODERATOR: Again, I say thank you for coming, and hopefully we can do this again with Suellen Mears from the Historical Society. I hope you enjoyed it today. We still have some refreshments here, if you would like something else, and maybe Sam will answer some questions out here while we kind of get ready to wind it up for the day. Thank you for coming.

[*Audience applause*]

END OF RECORDIING

Transcribed by CS