

**Kennesaw State University  
Department of History and Philosophy  
Summer Hill Oral History Project**

**Interview with:** Nancy Beasley (2<sup>nd</sup> INTERVIEW)  
**Interviewed by:** Dr. LeeAnn Lands  
**Location:** Summer Hill Complex  
**Date:** March 10, 2005  
**Transcribed by:** Diana Godwin; April 2005

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(Tape 1, Side A.)

LL: It's March 10<sup>th</sup> and we're at the Summer Hill Complex at 129 Aubrey Street with Nancy Beasley and this is LeeAnn Lands. When we start with the library evolution in case we run out of time or anything, and it was Queen Lowe who talked to me about you know the movement of the library throughout the community and how it ended up here at the complex.

N.B: Yes, well now it was started by the Bartow County teachers, these were black teachers, and there was Jeanes curriculum director, Jeanes supervisors as they were called, and they really had no place for, she was, had no place for her to have an office, so they decided that they needed materials that they could put their hands on so they decided to establish this Bartow County Library in 1947, and it's purpose was to maintain and extend public library services to Cartersville and Bartow County, and this building that they purchased was from the army at Chickamauga, Georgia. And it somehow, I'm not very sure how they got

associated with the Faith Cabin Library, and the Faith Cabin person was Mr. I believe Kendall Wizacker. I'm trying to see if I can see his name, but...

L.L: So Faith Cabin wasn't just the library here it was a larger organization?

N.B: It was a larger organization, and somehow they were connected with the Genesis Unit of Philadelphia and New York, or Pennsylvania and New York, and it was through them that the first ten thousands books were received. Now the...

L.L: Genesis?

N.B: Genesis, yes it's like...

L.L: Like the book in the Bible.

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: Right.

N.B: And, I'm trying to find some of this information. The Atlanta University School Library Science came to Cartersville to organize and catalog these books, and the teachers who were permanent residents of this county, opened their homes to them to stay, and they often talked about the good meals that they had during this session, and they were very unhappy having to go back to school they enjoyed that stay here.

L.L: So they were students?

N.B: Students at Atlanta University. Now Dr. W.R. Moore who was a black physician became interested in this library, and he was very good at raising funds so he set out to raise funds for this project, and I'm not sure whether it was he who had Gram Jackson the musician, I don't, maybe he was just a pianist, but, and he may have sung also, I was still in college when this was going on, but I was interested

in library science even as a student in college, so I was very excited about it when I came home for the summer, and...

L.L: So did Gram Jackson hold a concert?

N.B: And Gram Jackson held a concert, they raised what was then considered a tremendous amount of money maybe two or three thousand dollars, which was great at that time, and Dr. Moore had other projects that he sponsored in to help raise this money so they were able to go to Chickamauga and bring this building back, and I think I did give you a picture of it didn't I?

L.L: Uh huh.

N.B: And it was located on Guyton Street, G U Y T O N.

L.L: Okay so the building was moved from Chickamauga?

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: And then this little office on the back became the office of the (unintelligible) supervisor, little room on the backside of the building. There was a white citizen, Pat Wolford, Sr. I guess who was interested in the historical and reference books that were there, because they didn't have them at the Mary Mudford Library, which was downtown, so we had users of both races during that time, and he was constantly there to do some research in the history books, he was just excited about them. So then along came the Urban Renewal in 1961 an agreement was reached between the city fathers that we would give up our library that was located on the corner of Guyton and Mull Street to make way for the Urban Renewal development, and they promised to rebuild a building on Jones Street

next to the St. Luke's AME Church and of course each new administration would endorse it then it finally got down to where they were trying to pretend that they didn't know, that they had forgot, but we still had the letters, I think I have it here that they had written to say that they were going to do this. So that didn't come through at that time, and finally the books were moved, and they were housed at the Summer Hill, the old building the Rosenwald building, and somehow that particular room caught afire and much of the material was destroyed then the books were moved out to the ATCO Village, and they had the community room, and they had had a school out there, so the books were housed there. We worked in and out from that building, and finally...

L.L: Now they're just housed out there, they're not open to the public or anything?

N.B: They were housed.

L.L: Or the school?

N.B: Well, but if there was something that was needed that was still there we could go to get it.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: And finally we decided we're not going to give this up, we had already incorporated it you know, and we would go back to the (unintelligible) and the city councilmen, they would listen and sometimes they had closed ears, and they wouldn't respond, so finally they moved us to Stokley Street to the maintenance building for the housing authority there, and then there was the building that was on Jones Street, and it was during the administration of Mr. Mines, and I think the

federal government at that time was on them about the care of that building, it had been used as a preschool and had kind of deteriorated.

L.L: The Jones Street building?

N.B: Yes, yes, and we asked Mr. Mines if they could repair that building that we could use it for the library. Well they did and of course his statement was, as long as you want it as a library you may have it, so we worked on that. They built the shelving and we were very excited about that, and we opened up a game with our summer program. We had great summer programs for the children. We had an adult forum for the adult citizens...

L.L: What kind of things would you have done in the forum?

N.B: There was discussions of various topics and interest, and then we had, they did ceramics, and crafts, and quilting things, and there were groups of people who would volunteer to be over these things, and then there was a lady who came to serve as librarian, and her name was Jurdi Minor, she did a very excellent job with the, with coordinating the adult population in use of that library.

L.L: Do you know how to spell the name?

N.B: J U R D I.

L.L: Okay, M I N O R?

N.B: Uh huh.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: And we had several, we asked the city to help defray the expense of just simple things, so they agreed to give us fifty dollars per month, we still get that fifty dollars per month (laughing), and Clarence Bennam who was our (unintelligible)

helped us to keep things going, then we asked United Way to come in, and they gave us money. Then we got associated with Tri County, and we were under the umbrella of Tri County Library. We were able to get funds through them to purchase new books, and they help us to (unintelligible) the summer programs.

L.L: What would United Way have helped yall with?

N.B: Funds.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: And then when the main library opened we asked to be under the umbrella of the main library.

L.L: The main library in Cartersville?

N.B: Yes, uh huh. So we were under them for a while, and then the librarian there, well one of the person in leadership decided that we just need to close this thing you know, and we refused to buckle and decided well we're going to ask the Housing Authority to become our sponsor, and this is how we got to the Housing Authority, we still pay our cooperation fee. The county board of education, I guess I should have told you this earlier, they had taken over the library, and we deeded it to them before it was taken down, before it was torn down. So when we wanted to go on our own and just work with it they gave it back to us, and they gave whatever amount of money a thousand and something dollars I don't remember now.

L.L: So the county would have taken over the library before the Urban Renewal in '61?

N.B: Yes, uh huh, well it was deeded to the county because we couldn't pay, we were not a tax based group so that's why we deeded it to the county, so then the county deeded it back to us and gave that money of a thousand and something dollars to us. Well we bought film strip machine, projector, VCR, we got a new librarian's desk, various pieces of furniture and chairs so that made it look that much better. We had a special shelf in there whereby we had books by and about Negro's that's what we were at that time, and Juanita Green a former citizen of this town and a teacher who lived in New York gave several volumes of Encyclopedia about the Negro and some biographies to the library so we had lots of people who gave gifts.

L.L: So would the county have been over you when you were on...

N.B: Guyton Street.

L.L: Guyton Street, okay.

N.B: Yeah we deeded it to the county at that time, but it belonged to the Bartow County teachers, uh huh.

L.L: So when you incorporated or organized as the teachers what was your official name, Bartow County teachers...?

N.B: The Bartow County Library, Incorporated.

L.L: Okay, now that organization still exists?

N.B: Still exists.

L.L: And you still run the library here even though it's held by the Housing Authority?

N.B: Yes, that's right.

L.L: Okay, do you remember when you were incorporated as the library, that would have been the '47, 1947?

N.B: No it was not incorporated until let me see if I can tell you that...August 8, 1961, uh huh. You know we got incorporated you can't throw this away, oh Lord have mercy, Jesus. Let me see what else did I need to tell you about...

L.L: So still you're not officially affiliated with what we'll call the main library?

N.B: No, we pulled out from it.

L.L: In Cartersville, okay.

N.B: And of course for a long, first it was manned by volunteers, then we hired our first librarian was Mrs. Rosa Cotton Banks.

L.L: Rosa Cotton Banks.

N.B: Rosa Banks Cotton.

L.L: Rosa Banks Cotton, okay.

N.B: She made it a very lively attractive and busy place for young people of the county up at Cartersville, she really loved the position, and the teachers paid her salary, the Bartow County teachers, see there were, I've forgotten what was given, but they paid her salary each month, and...

L.L: Now how would the teacher's have paid her salary, would that have been through PTA or...?

N.B: They made a contribution and paid her salary.

L.L: Generally speaking when do you think Mrs. Cotton would have started as the first librarian, about what year?

N.B: It was in the '50s.

L.L: Okay, now this is Faith, this is the, you gave me this is just a photocopy, the picture you gave us.

N.B: Yes, yes uh huh.

L.L: And so that would have been the building from Chickamauga?

N.B: Yes.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: That was Susie's little office back there.

L.L: Okay, Susie Wheeler?

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: Now as Jean Supervisor she wasn't over the library she just had an office there?

N.B: She had an office there, she was Jean supervisor for the county schools, the black you know she was the black supervisor, so that when they had materials and reports to do they would bring them there to her.

L.L: But she didn't serve as librarian she was just sort of affiliated?

N.B: No, no, no Rosa Cotton was the first librarian that was over there.

L.L: And I think Mr. Moore, Dr. Moore was in this photograph right?

N.B: Yes.

L.L: He was helping...

N.B: Dr. Moore and Reverend Kay.

L.L: Now this is the only photograph that we've received.

N.B: Do you have one of these? That's Dr. Moore.

L.L: No, I would love to have, I will take a picture of it.

N.B: I can't, okay, okay that is he, and then...

L.L: Is this the only known picture of Faith Cabin or is this the only picture that you know about?

N.B: See you know I have told I had all this stuff in this scrapbook and it's almost without. I don't know what I've done with these things, now that's inside.

L.L: That's inside the Faith Cabin?

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: Wow, it looks like a home.

N.B: Uh huh, it was a delightful place you know. Kids would pile in every afternoon they were always there.

L.L: When we finish I'll grab my camera and just shoot these.

N.B: Okay we had lots of activities, see we had Moore's Day, and of course then the community would come out for Moore's Day. We had adults who would do the refreshments, and Mrs. Mary Patton would make the Russian Tea, everybody would talk about the Russian tea, and her little girl from Atlanta Kimberly Gordon, do they still, she's grown now, do you all still have that (unintelligible) the Russian tea, that was, we would all be piled up in there, because there were, it would be so many people who would come.

L.L: Now did you start doing Moore's Day before he passed away or after he passed away?

N.B: Before he passed away.

L.L: Did you?

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: And it was just in celebration of his community commitment.

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: (unintelligible).

N.B: I don't know whether you got, I don't know whether I gave you, whether you got that, that's Professor Morgan's, every time I look I see something else, and I say, I've got so much junk that belongs to everybody else that I don't have much.

L.L: Well listen you've stocked the museum for us.

N.B: Somehow the local library pulled out of Tri County, so then we had gotten to be a branch of the local library see then when we were with Tri County, so that when they pulled out that made us lose our position with Tri County, but Tri County really gave us some very nice materials you know, they'd send in a group and then we would send them back and get you know more materials, and we could send to Tri County for anything that we wanted, and they would bring it over if somebody needed, even if a teacher wanted to...

L.L: So it was like on library loan or something?

N.B: Yes, uh huh. If a teacher wanted to do a project on a certain subject you know they would, you just called and they would bring it the next day.

L.L: Wow.

N.B: Uh huh.

L.L: Okay, Reverend W.L. Buffington, founder of Faith Cabin Library.

N.B: Yes, Buffington, and I told you Kendall Wizacker, didn't, he must have been, so yeah Buffington.

L.L: So Buffington is correct?

N.B: Yeah, uh huh. Now his picture is in the library down there.

L.L: I saw that.

N.B: Yes, uh huh that's he.

L.L: I didn't know who that was.

N.B: Uh huh, and we're having one done of Dr. Moore to go in there.

L.L: I'd like to get a copy of this too.

N.B: Okay.

L.L: Here's another Moore (unintelligible).

N.B: Yeah...

L.L: Oh it's 2001.

N.B: Yeah, Ann Robinson has all of the copies of the Moore estates programs through the years.

L.L: Okay, this is great.

N.B: And we used to have a monthly book review, and then we had, oh we had a poetry month, and the children...

L.L: I think I saw that.

N.B: Yes, wrote poems, oh they were just delighted over doing that, we had great participation.

L.L: Are yall doing anything like that here now with either the after school students or just in general as part of the complex?

N.B: We are not doing as much as we need to be doing, but we do still have Moore's Day, and we have, we have the summer reading program, and a board member all during the summer when we have the reading program the board members serve refreshments at the end of, on every Friday and then at the end of the reading

program we award certificates and sometimes the board members purchase, I remember the last thing we purchased three years ago was little radios for everybody who had read forty or more books, uh huh, so, and whatever the theme of the program we, we put it in the paper...

L.L: In the after school program that's here now, does that serve a geographic area or just anyone who wants to sign up?

N.B: Well it used to be just for the kids who lives in the Housing Projects, but now its for any person who wants to attend, and those persons who do not live in the Housing Project have to pay a fee, I'm not sure what that fee is.

L.L: Okay, so the Housing Authority residents don't pay any fee to use the after school programs?

N.B: No.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: I don't think they do, I'd better be sure about that.

L.L: Alright.

N.B: Now of course our library board always had our books audited each year too so that we could, whatever money we had you know, that's a copy of one of the audits.

L.L: Do you mind if I copy this?

N.B: No, I don't mind at all.

L.L: This will be great. What sort of things over the years have you guys...

N.B: See like we would have, you know we had story time.

L.L: Uh huh, uh huh, this is great.

N.B: Uh huh, we'd have, we still have somebody to come in on either Wednesday or Thursday to do whatever thing they want, it might be a story, might be a demonstration, might be a game...

L.L: Who comes in a board member?

N.B: Well no, sometimes it's the persons that we select.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: Uh huh, see just like this had you know this was one of the summer programs.

L.L: Uh huh.

N.B: Uh huh, and we'd put it in the paper.

L.L: I see the same names over and over.

N.B: Uh huh, we just don't, we're not as, we don't do as many things as we used to do, and it has changed...I was thinking about something though that was at Noble Year, I'm involved in so many things til I sometimes have to decide which is which, but one time we had a little quiz program that went on for the summer, that created a lot of interest, because we were, I remember the (unintelligible) tree. We gave a clue about that tree for you know several weeks and finally somebody did find it you know, because it would drop down and some roots you know...

L.L: (unintelligible) beautiful.

N.B: Yes, the roots would go, but that was a lot of interest in that, and it's hard to get them to read as much as they used to so we incorporate doing a film strip on Fridays, not, a video on Fridays, but during the week the children have to study they can't just come and not study. Then Mr. Howington provided the two people who were on work from the senior citizens program to come to the library, and he

would find some of them to be too lazy to work you know (laughing), they just wanted that extra money for the summer.

L.L: Oh okay.

N.B: So...

L.L: So they're no longer around.

N.B: They just got so, no, no the last two we sent flying you know. I came up there one day, and I was looking at my story, said looking at your story, this is the last day you'll look at it on this program you know, mean oh Nancy Louis (laughing), but you know I just don't believe in taking advantage of your situation. I'm not a clock-watcher who would come and work and just be ready to run.

L.L: I mentioned to (unintelligible) that we needed to sit down and talk about ways to do other sorts of programming, and she's kind of consumed with the audit and all that right now, so she said that it would probably be March or April before she could sit down with me, but I've talked to other faculty on campus in English and other departments...

(End Tape 1, Side A. Begin Tape 1, Side B.)

N.B: ...at one time learned to speak better you know, would you like to improve your communication skills or just improve just your grammar, and we had a quite a number of young people who came out who were just really interested in, in doing something so we had some young adults who came through that six weeks program.

L.L: And the history instructor over at Cartersville is interested too, so we could do any sort of combination, you know it could be the history of Summer Hill for six weeks, you know.

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: With the older students or somehow work it out so it would fit the eighth grade curriculum you know, but those are just ideas that you guys whenever you want to talk about that sort of thing and adult programs too.

N.B: Yes.

L.L: The, we talked about Moore's Day some, you guys also did emancipation day programs?

N.B: Now the emancipation programs was not done through the library, that's just an independent committee.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: And on, we have the emancipation program, which is done every year January 1, it used to be alternated between St. Luke's and Mt. Zion, and there's a committee of people who serve as members of the emancipation committee, and we try to bring in a person from each community.

L.L: Okay.

N.B: So now in the later years we've gone to Emerson, and Stilesboro, and New Hope, and Alexander's Chapel Church to have the program. We invite and encourage young people to be on that committee, I no longer will accept an office I just serve as a member of the emancipation board (unintelligible), at one time when you were growing up you were chosen to read the emancipation proclamation,

and we'd sure be glad at that time, I've been chosen (laughing), this long thing it was so unnecessary even as a teenager, I thought well why read it, so we just put it in the program now. I have copies, I have copies of the programs from years back.

L.L: Now do you remember always doing the emancipation day?

N.B: As long as...

L.L: As long as you remember.

N.B: The materials that I have on hand go back to 1923.

L.L: Wow.

N.B: Uh huh, and they used to have a meal after the program, the board members were the only people who shared the meal so finally then they'd have a reception, which included everybody, and there were some outstanding people who spoke. Martin Luther King, Sr., the old man was a speak for it, and so I believe (unintelligible) Jackson's father or grandfather and C.L. Harper was one of the speakers, we've got a list of those speakers, and Cathy Meeks who wrote the book, I want somebody to know my name, she was one of the speakers who came, you had some very interesting things, and once or twice we just had a panel discussion, but the emancipation committee still exists, and it's self supporting. We usually have enough contributions made you know from one year to the other, we select a citizen of the year and for the last six years we've been selecting a mentor of the year, and we give a book scholarship to an outstanding, to a student who writes a little note, a little letter why, why he or she is in need of a book scholarship.

L.L: Is that geared toward college students?

N.B: Yes, uh huh, and the student does not get this scholarship, book scholarship until the second semester, we're not going to give you a scholarship unless you are in school so that's, and the Austin Bennam received our scholarship last year, and we were saying well I guess, he has, his letter was just so good you know, we just said he probably could probably buy those books, but his letter was worthy of receiving it, and sometimes you don't have that many kids to apply, they're lazy about applying, so we were happy to award him that.

L.L: And you do the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, March ...?

N.B: Yes we have a three day...

L.L: Three day.

N.B: ...Martin Luther King celebration. We have the candle light service, which has been held at Mt. Zion, because it's, it seats the largest number of people, and then on the Saturday prior to that there's a forum for young people, and a topic is discussed of which ever is chosen by that committee, and it's well attended, the kids really enjoy that. Then a scholarship is given, maybe three scholarships are given if there are enough, it's given by an essay that's written by students applying and then on the Monday following that, there's the Freedom March, and a wreath is laid at the court house, I guess at the unknown soldiers statue or somewhere there at the court house yard, and then back to the civic center, whereby there is a wrap up program and a speaker, and all of the churches furnish refreshments for that day, very well attended. And there is a committee chosen you can, people are asked to participate, there's a coordinator of the program, the

treasurer and so forth, and you usually have no problem getting people to serve for two years, and then it passes on to someone else.

L.L: Any other kind of memory related celebrations that yall do besides the school reunions?

N.B: Of course you know about (unintelligible), every year we have that fundraiser.

L.L: Like the fashion shows.

N.B: Yes, uh huh, and we give three scholarships, we give one scholarship in memory of Fanny R. Green, because she is the one who stated very strongly that we needed to do a fundraiser so every time we think about scholarship after she passed away we say we'll just have to give this scholarship in memory of Fanny, because she was very, very vocal about our doing that scholarship. We have something that will interest the community for this fundraiser, and we used to have the fashion show. For the last two years, we've had the American, the Bartow County American Idol, that was really a drawing (unintelligible), and of course we had that fashion show at the Grand Theatre, and every seat was filled you know we had...

L.L: That's the one we have on the panel.

N.B: Yes, uh huh, and we have what we call our Fall Affair, and everybody does something different for the Fall Affair, you know if you're one of those five people you'd brainstorm to get something that's outstanding, we always have great audiences for that. We recently had our Heart Affair at the Kellogg Estate whereby we had a band, not a band we had a disc jockey, and we danced and we ate, then we gave every lady a flower you know so that everybody just really

enjoyed that, said you all need to do this every year. We've had some outstanding programs, and we had one lady who works at the mental health department, she said she wants do more things than everybody I've ever seen do in a small community, and how do you do them, and she says I don't know that we could have ever had an emancipation program that would not have been acceptable in the community, I understand I guess people have just never been afraid, and we do a lot of things that lots of people don't do with communities of this size.

L.L: In fact it's funny that you mention that, because one of, I've always been struck by the fact that when the Housing Authority did the grant and everything they of course are using Housing Authority language, and they talk about revitalization, and Melissa and I always we talk about the fact that we're not sure the community needs revitalization, it seems rather vital as it is.

N.B: Yes, uh huh.

L.L: And it sort of, even the, the reporter was asking these kinds of questions, because it doesn't look like a community that needs revitalization, when you hear about the memory making activities and a library, and all this I wonder sometimes why it's couched in those terms.

N.B: Yes.

L.L: Because its, you know and you wonder if its just a racism element or what is it that gets that word associated with the black community when it's clearly not in need of enrichment, its already rich.

N.B: That's right, see when I was growing up there was always the mother and daughter's banquet each year and that was really, that was sponsored by Mt. Zion.

You had the mothers and daughter's banquet, oh it was just a regal affair, you dressed in the long dresses you know, it was a banquet with tables of food of all distinction and you just felt real good about going, and then there was Mrs. Annie Young. She lived on Fight Street, and she had been one of the persons who cooked for the late Same Jones, and she would invite you to her house for a graduation party, and you didn't think you really belonged unless Mrs. Annie Young invited you to her graduation party at her house, and you would dress up in your Sunday dress to go to her party, and she would have chicken salad and all kinds of different cheese dishes, cheese balls and then she had the co colas with the little skirts on the bottom so that if you got invited to Mrs. Annie Young's you really belonged so you'd just be wondering if I'm gonna get an invitation, so you would go to her house, and she had the little pedifores the little cakes oh it was just something to be, you felt good about it. And now very few people remember the Ethiopian Park that was on Main Street, and the Emanuel family had the Ethiopian Park and you could go out there and have picnics, I think they charged a little fee for you to use the park. It was private, uh huh, but it was on Main Street there, and I guess my Aunt Anna was one of the Emanuels she was married to my daddy's brother, so I guess that's how we got to know about the Ethiopian Park, but the Emanuels just had lots of, they had been owners of land in the Mission community, and there were the Emanuels, the Glenns, the Robinsons, the Saxons, who owned land in that Mission community, it was Bennam, the Bennams, and ...

L.L: Didn't Mrs. O'Hara have a place out there?

N.B: Now they lived in Rolling Springs.

L.L: Oh, right, right.

N.B: Yes, and see but all of those people lost that land except the Robinsons, except my family (laughing), and we just divided our hundred acres about six years ago, they were still an heir property, and then of course I've been where Ann lives, that's the Robinson loop, because all those families still live there, and we have six acres within there that we rent out, but that was really something.

L.L: Now I'm about running up your time, do you, can I copy some of your stuff and then run it back to the house, if you're going to be there?

N.B: Sure, yes, uh huh, yes uh huh, I'm going to be there.

(Abrupt end of Interview.)