

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

Interview with: Reverend A. Rudolph Hendricks
Interviewed by: Chris Weaks
Location: at home of Nancy Beasley, Cartersville, GA
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Biography: Reverend Hendricks was born in Bartow County on August 2, 1936. His household consisted of fourteen children and his two parents. He graduated from Summer Hill in 1957 and left for college. One of his first jobs was at the Coca-Cola Company. He attended Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and then he went to seminary at Jonathon C. Smith Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. Next he went to Princeton University and completed his doctorate degree in ministry.

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[Tape 1, Side A.]

C.W: I just wanted to have you state your name for me.

R.H: Okay, I'm A. Rudolph R.H.

C.W: And when and where were you born?

R.H: In Bartow County the 2nd of August, '36, year. That's it.

C.W: Did you have any siblings?

R.H: Oh, yes. There were fourteen of us in all. There were seven boys and seven girls. My father wasn't prejudiced. And the only scripture he believed in was "be fruitful and multiply." [Laughter.]

C.W: Who else lived in your household besides your father, mother, siblings? Anyone else?

R.H: No. My grandmothers would visit us occasionally. She lived in Knoxville, Tennessee, and she'd come in the summers and visit us, and then I had another grandmother that lived up on Moon Street, so she had her own place, and we would always go there and visit.

C.W: Okay. And what did your family do for a living?

R.H: Oh, many things. My mother was a housekeeper, and my father worked on the railroad and worked in the mines. And they did some farming, a little farming.

C.W: Did they have their own farm?

R.H: Yes, yes, their own property. They were property owners.

C.W: When and how did you come to live in Summer Hill?

R.H: When and how did I come to live at Summer Hill. Well, everything that was important in our life took place at Summer Hill High School, and we started there in the first grade and went all the way through, and we played—a lot of activities at Summer Hill. I was in the dramatic club, I sang in the chorus and played football and did a whole lot of other [unintelligible] I don't want to tell you about! [Laughs.]

C.W: I hear you.

R.H: But it was a very fun, disciplined place. The teachers were very caring and seemed to be concerned about you. They knew your parents, and if you didn't act right, you'd get it from both sides of the fence.

C.W: Were you born in the Summer Hill community in '36?

R.H: No, I was born in—well, they call it Richmond. It's about two miles from here, in the same area.

C.W: And then you moved to Summer Hill?

R.H: Well, I owned property over here and my wife lived over here, so I spent a lot of time courting and playing baseball. They had a stadium down the street here, and we used to play baseball there.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Yes.

C.W: That's great.

R.H: And then I went to church. This is Mt. Zion Baptist Church there. And I spent a great deal of time—all of my religious activity was at Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Alexander Chapel Methodist Church. In the evenings, on Sunday evenings, I got involved in the Presbyterian church Sunday school, where the First Christian Church would come and have Sunday school for children that didn't only go to church, and I got involved in that. I played the piano. I had a very wonderful music teacher and a very dear friend. My mother taught piano for a while, and when she couldn't teach us anything, she'd send us out to somebody else, so Mrs. Fanny Richards Brownley was my music teacher, and she was a very inspiring person in my life.

C.W: Let's talk about the church, if you don't mind, for a minute.

R.H: Okay.

C.W: Because for me, that's an area that I'm concentrating on for the Summer Hill community.

R.H: Okay.

C.W: Well, first of all—now, growing up in Summer Hill, living in Summer Hill, how did the church affect the community.

R.H: Very positively.

C.W: When I say “church,” it’s very generic. It’s very open as to what church are you talking about, so when describing the church, maybe you could just tell me specifically what church or churches that you’re aware of that affected the community.

R.H: My mother, on her side of the family, were Baptists. My grandfather was a Baptist minister, and on my father’s side, they were Methodists, so we attended the Methodist church and the Baptist church, but we were—you know, you generally go where your mother goes most, so I was involved in Mt. Zion, sang in the choir there; I played the piano at Sunday school; I was a junior deacon, which I thought was a grand thing to be. There was a minister that really had an effect on my life, Rev. Dinkins. He was a graduate of Morehouse [College] and had that Morehouse spirit, and he had a son that was my age, so I became affiliated with the church. He was [an] influence in the community, in a very positive way. And then Rev. Bryant was the first minister that I knew at this church. His daughter and wife both had gone to Spelman [College], and they had an influence on my life. And then I got married in the church, and Rev. Mitchell was the minister that married me in the church. And then I felt the call to the ministry in this church.

C.W: That’s Zion.

R.H: At Mt. Zion, right. So the church shadowed the whole community, either the Methodist church or Baptist church or whatever the church is. It sort of had a tremendous respect then that you don’t have now. It’s sort of a more business mega-church thing. The more people I can get in, the better it’ll be. But these people were caring folk, and there’s still some around like that.

C.W: When did you first step foot inside Mt. Zion? How old were you, about?

R.H: Oh, I was carried into Mt. Zion.

C.W: Were you really?

R.H: As a baby. I don't know anything but the church.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: I was either at Mt. Zion or Alexander Chapel. I was at one of those churches every Sunday. You didn't say anything about the preacher preaching too long; you stayed there. And then another thing: You'd go to Sunday school, then you'd go back in the evening. Man, we were church-ed to death. [Laughter.] But there was exciting things going on, and there was friendships made, and then the church would go off to Sunday school conventions. I always made it my business to be one of those delegates [laughs], to go off.

C.W: Where did you guys go?

R.H: The farthest we went was to Augusta, Georgia. We went to a Sunday school convention in Augusta, Georgia, and then others around, in areas, Atlanta all the time. But Augusta was the farthest I think we had gone to. We had design bells, our choir was to sing, and we won. We were competing, and we won at the Sunday school convention.

C.W: That's great.

R.H: So the church has been a very positive part of my life.

C.W: Yes.

Could you kind of give me a brief history, as far as you know, of Mt. Zion? Kind of from what you recollect: how it got started, how people started to come there, why they came there. As far as what you know and what you've heard.

R.H: I understand that the church started from a bush harbor, whatever that means. People just came together and formulated a church. They had some very dynamic leaders in that church. The professor from high school was there. Professor Morgan was a member of the church during my time. Dr. Moore, one of our leading black doctors, was a member of that church. We had dynamic teachers who was involved. They just didn't come to church, they were involved in the life and working of the church. Mt. Zion was a church that you had arrived when you got in Mt. Zion. [Laughs.]

C.W: Really!

R.H: It had an organ in it, one of the pedal organs, re-organs, I think you call them. it was so pretty. And Mrs. Bryant used to play that organ, and that was very impressive to me. An organ broke. Being a person, as I am, I was one to help trying to fix it, so I discovered what was wrong with it. It was the pedals broken. I asked the preacher could I fix it. He said, "Yeah, it's no good. You can fix it." So I fixed it, and the following Sunday we was playing the organ. Everybody was astounded, astounded.

They had deacons. We had some very strong, opinionated deacons in that church.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Oh, yes.

C.W: How so?

R.H: They had their convictions, and they stood up for their convictions. They had their opinions, and they stood to defend them. They were a typical Baptist church.

C.W: Yes.

R.H: Yes. I remember one deacon said at a meeting, “I’m Baptist bred, I’m Baptist born, and when I die, there’ll be a Baptist groan.” [Laughter.] But we had some very fun times there.

C.W: Now, being that they had strong opinions, did they ever take any political stances?

R.H: Yes.

C.W: Did they?

R.H: I remember Rev. Dinkins—he was very political minded and community orientated. Rev. Bryant—I was a young chap when Rev. Bryant was there. I was just holding onto Mama’s hand and going on, but I was an early teenager when Rev. Dinkins was there, and then Rev. Mitchell came, and I went off to college when Rev. Mitchell came, but at the meantime, I was working with the Presbyterian church movement in this area, at the same time. Mr. Al Munz and Mrs. Cummings and—what’s the man’s name? They were very involved in the Presbyterian church, and I got involved in the church. Through that church, I got a scholarship to college.

C.W: Through Mt. Zion?

R.H: Through First Presbyterian Church. But it was a lady at Mt. Zion, Mrs. Morgan, that recommended me to Mrs. Cummings, for some reason or another, and they interviewed me, and next thing I knew, I was getting a scholarship to Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

C.W: That is great.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: That is great.

R.H: So everything—somebody within that church had a part to do in my life. Mrs. [Nancy] Beasley, my English teacher and dramatic coach—she was very instrumental in that church, and she still keeps a Sunday school there. She always said that I was going to be a preacher. I said, “Oh, no, no. If I’m going to be a preacher [unintelligible] the Lord.” “Never mind. Don’t call me; call on somebody else.” But she always said it, and then I felt the call to the ministry, and I’ve been preaching for thirty-six years.

C.W: Wow! That’s amazing.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: That’s amazing.

What sort of things were preached?

R.H: At Mt. Zion?

C.W: Yes. How were the sermons?

R.H: The sermons.

C.W: [unintelligible]?

R.H: Yes, difference.

C.W: Some were real quiet.

R.H: No, no, Mt. Zion wasn’t quiet. They had a very good choir. The choir sometime jumped.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Yes. But the services—Rev. Dinkins’ services were mostly teaching—typical college, seminary-trained fellow. But he got emotional, too. And they would always have revivals. We had revivals. We had a revival in the spring and a revival in the fall, and me and my sisters used to say they got a revival in the spring to give up all the sins they got in the winter. [Laughs.] And the revival in the fall, we used to say, well, they got to

get over the sins for the summer, so they have a revival. So we would always be sitting up there, and we were very devilish chaps.

But the sermons were political; they were teaching; they were emotional, very emotional; they were inspirational and spirit-felt sermons. We had a [unintelligible] ministry.

Sometime we'd have one we'd hope, "Oh, when are you going to sit down?" and then we'd have one we'd like to go on and on.

C.W: It wasn't always the same preacher, right?

R.H: Well, it was the same preacher on Sundays unless he invited a guest speaker, but the revivals were always a guest speaker coming in from someplace else. I find myself doing some of the same things in my church. One minister said, "You must never get a minister to preach that can outdo you," so I better get one that's a little worse. [Laughs.] So this is the thing.

We would participate—one of the things that they had here with the churches, and I see this today—they would share with one another.

C.W: The different churches.

R.H: The different churches would share with one another.

C.W: Like Luke—

R.H: Mt. Zion would have St. Luke, Alexander Chapel. They would never have a program going on at the same time. Like, they'd have a revival this month; well, the next month, the next church would have one.

C.W: Okay.

R.H: It even went to the point of programs, like Easter programs. Everybody had an Easter program, but it would be on Easter, but at a different time during the day.

C.W: All the churches [cross-talk; unintelligible]?

R.H: Yes, and I don't think nobody made that decision; I think it was just a common thing to do.

C.W: That's very respectable.

R.H: Yes, very fair. They would participate in helping, and particularly when death would come in a family, the churches would come together and carry food and do things of that nature.

C.W: Have you ever heard of Brotherhood Hall?

R.H: Oh, yes.

C.W: Or the Brotherhood Lodge?

R.H: The Brotherhood Hall used to be right here, yes.

C.W: It is on Bartow?

R.H: It was. It's no longer there. The Brotherhood Hall was—

C.W: It is it Hall or Lodge?

R.H: It was a lodge, but they called it—the building was the hall, but the Brotherhood Lodge was in that building, and the Masons, Masonic Masons were also. It was a focal point for meeting places. I remember when someone died, you would always hear this bell ringing. It was ringing at the Brotherhood—if it was a person from the Brotherhood, and that was very strange to hear a bell ringing. “What's that? What's going on?” in a small town like Cartersville, that made everybody wonder. As a child, I wondered. I said, “Oops, somebody's dead; the bell's ringing.”

C.W: Oh, yes.

C.W: What was it like inside?

R.H: It was—

C.W: Was it small?

R.H: No, it was a huge big tall two-story building. A funeral home used to be in that building, I remember, because I remember very vividly, a body was there in the funeral home, in the Brotherhood Hall, and a cat had got into the building some kind of way, and everybody was looking at the corpse and all of a sudden that cat came through, and everybody cleared the building. [Laughs.] I remember that incident by the Brotherhood Hall. And they had steps. You had to get out, go down the steps. And they said one fellow didn't take time—they'd just leap: [makes sound to indicate speed]. And it took the footprint about two years to get out of the dirt because he had much such an impression. That was just something they told. Yes, but the Brotherhood Hall was right on Bartow Street, right in the Summer Hill area.

C.W: And they had ministers at the hall?

R.H: It was sort of a meeting, a gathering place.

C.W: Just meet together, talk about concerns, maybe, or issues?

R.H: Issues, and then the Lodge had that secret order, like the Masons, and they met as a group, a group of persons, and they did various things for the community and for themselves. It was sort of a need, I gathered, for black people to come together and sort of have that thing that only black people can experience and only black people can know about. That was that place. If they didn't get it at the church, they would get it at this hall. They would strategize and plan and do.

C.W: Wow. That's fascinating.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: Did you see the church, Mt. Zion, go through a lot of changes when you were there?

R.H: Well—

C.W: In structure, people—

R.H: Structure, yes, yes.

C.W: Population?

R.H: Yes, they did some remodeling of the church. It used to have a different form. It looked like each minister would come and put his stamp of approval on something. I know Rev. Dinkins came. The back of the church used to be round, sort of like a dome, but he came and tore that off, and they put the choir differently, like it is today. Rev. Mitchell came. They had two steeples on each side that identified with the church. Well, in his administration, they tore those steeples off, and get another [unintelligible].

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BEASLEY: I'm going to go to the cleaner. My husband is around here, so just stay as long as you like.

C.W: Thank you.

R.H: Thank you so much, Mrs. Beasley.

So he pulled off the steeples and got it the way it looking now. And then there were times that ministers would not do what the members wanted to do, and they would push them out. You know how...I remember my mother telling this, when I went to the seminary. We were talking about church politics, and I was telling her that the Baptist church got the Hitchcock Directory, and the Christian church got the Book of Church Orders, and all this kind of stuff. And she said, "Well, let me tell you the difference in the Baptist church." She said, "The power is in the people."

And she told me a story. She said there was a deacon in the church that couldn't read nor write, but he could make a motion, and so they got this little hotshot preacher come in there from somewhere and didn't respect the gentleman. He said, "Reverend, I can't read or write, but I can make a motion." "Sit down, old man, you don't know what you're talking about," she said he said. She found that this minister had done something he didn't have no business doing, and that Sunday the old fellow got up and made a motion that the pulpit would be vacant from this point forward. The people agreed, and on his way out, the deacons motioned him out, so he went to this old man. He said, "You know when I came here, I didn't understand what you meant, but now I do." The power is within the people of the congregation. So Mt. Zion had some of those power structures. We had some of those power structures.

C.W: That's fascinating. I've heard it said before that some people would hop around the different—

R.H: Churches.

C.W: Yes. They'd go to St. Luke's maybe, they'd go to Mt. Zion some.

R.H: Alexander Chapel some, Mt. Olive Church some.

C.W: It wasn't necessarily they were members of one particular church, but they were members of maybe all the churches. You'd kind of visit other churches. Was that a pretty normal thing?

R.H: It was the normal thing with some people, but there were those who were steadfast in their various churches. You had various families who were noted for certain churches. Like, if there was a program somewhere that they had gotten their new frocks they wanted to show off, they'd show them at Mt. Zion and then go down there and show

them off at...We had one lady, Miss Frances Scott. She was a very influential person in the community. When she died, she was 110 years old.

C.W: A hundred and ten??

R.H: A hundred and ten years old, and still had her mind.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: She would dress—oh, she would dress, man. You haven't seen anybody dress. She was wearing ostrich feathers and gold all up her arm, and when she entered the church, she hollered out, "Thank you, Jesus."

C.W: [Laughs.]

R.H: And everybody wonder why was she saying that. She said, "I've been here long enough to know that Jesus has blessed me to be here."

And then we had Miss Bessie Shell. She was 101 when she did. She was a very influential person in the church. She also taught school at Summer Hill High School, first grade.

And we had Miss Pearlie Lay. She taught me in the second grade. She taught Sunday grade, taught me in Sunday school and taught me in the second grade. I was a young adult.

C.W: I've heard that name.

R.H: Miss Pearlie Lay. She was a very kind, quiet but forceful lady.

And then we had Miss Mary Kaye. She was a member of Mt. Zion, but her husband was a preacher in the county, and she was a little thin lady. She graduated from Spelman.

She taught me the third grade. She'd be getting ready to whip you. You know, great big

old strapping dudes, and she wasn't big as a stick. She said, "I'm a little piece of leather, but I'm well put together."

C.W: [Laughs.]

R.H: She'd be able to tear you up. But they all had their influence around Mt. Zion. I left for college out of Mt. Zion. I hold a membership at Mt. Zion, even though I'm a Presbyterian preacher, Presbyterian minister, yes.

C.W: So Mt. Zion would change between Methodist, Baptist, or was it always—

R.H: Mt. Zion was always the Baptist church.

C.W: Always the Baptist.

R.H: Always Baptist. It never—and it's still—it's always Baptist. The people would sort of fall out or something, and then they would go someplace else, but then they'd eventually wend their way back. If there was someone who had—like, an influential person who died in the community and their churches were too small to have their funerals, Mt. Zion would always lend its church for that service.

C.W: I think that's great.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: Just so supportive.

R.H: It was a very supportive type thing.

C.W: I want to switch gears a little bit and talk a little bit about your home life.

R.H: My home life?

C.W: Just growing up. First of all, where did you live when you lived in Summer Hill?

R.H: I lived on 528 East Moon Street. I started off in Collins Alley. They tell me I was born in Collins Alley, which is about two or three blocks from here. And then my people

bought a house, some property in Richmond, on Moon Street, which is MLK [Martin Luther King] now. My grandfathers have always been property owners here in the city. My mother's father owned a farm, and my granddaddy, my father's daddy, owned property.

C.W: Can you describe your house?

R.H: The house I lived in?

C.W: Yes.

R.H: Well, we had a fun house. It had a living room, a dining room and a large kitchen, and it had bedrooms on one side. My mother and father slept in the front bedroom, of course, and my sisters had the middle bedroom, and then the fellows, the boys—we were back—we called it the dungeon. [Laughs.] We were in the dungeon. But they were large rooms, big, large rooms. The living room had a big fire—a stove, I guess you'd call it. For some reason or another, our house was always the house for preachers to come to. Methodist or Baptist, they would always go to Sister and Brother Rudolph Hendrick's house. And I discovered that as I got older, there was always something to eat there.

C.W: Ah!

R.H: You see, because my friends raised hogs and cows and all that sort of stuff, so we would always have to give up one of the rooms, the guest room, for a preacher and his [unintelligible]. I never will forget, my daddy whipped me one time, one Sunday morning. We had got up and made the fire in the living room, which was big enough to heat the whole house eventually. But the preacher had got hisself right in front of the fire, right in front of the heat, and I told my sister, Largie. I said, "Largie, listen, this is

going to be in Hell. We ain't gonna be able to get to the fire for the preacher." [Laughs.]

And my daddy wore me out, wore me out.

C.W: Did he hear you? Did your dad hear you?

R.H: I told him right in front of the preacher. I told him right in front of the preacher. But my mama would always take up for us. Mama would always take up for us. But Papa—he was one who ruled with an iron hand. When he said, "Jump," you'd ask him, "How high?" But he was very loving and caring, in his way, Father.

We had a dining room, and then we had a kitchen. The strangest thing about the kitchen—and I didn't realize this until I got married—we had a long table in the kitchen at one time. Our kitchen was about—maybe a little larger than this room here, because everything went on in the kitchen. We had a table in there. If one of my brothers or sisters got married, his part of the table would be whacked off, so when I was the last one to get married, and my wife said, "Why is y'all's table so small?" And I said, "You know, Barbara, every time someone gets married, Papa cuts off part of the table." I don't know why he did that, but the dining room table was always huge enough, but in the kitchen, that table would be cut off.

C.W: That's neat.

R.H: He had his—

C.W: And you would get part of the table.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: Okay.

R.H: Yes, yes, that would be your part of the table. You say, "Now, when you come back, you're coming back as head of your house. You're not head of this house no more." But

he'd always say, "I'm still head of this house." He called it "head of his helm," "And whatever I say still goes." And all the boys that would bring these strange wives in, they would always fall in love with my daddy because he would cater to them, cater to them.

C.W: Yes. Did he make, like, the tables and—

R.H: Oh, yes. My daddy was a carpenter, too. He laid brick and stone. That's the reason we all got a little bit of that in our blood. He would always say, "You don't need to buy if you can make it. If you can make it, get out there and make it. Or if you need to repair it, look at how it was and put it back together like that." That's the kind of environment I came out of.

My brother, Buford—if I'd ask for a favor—he was my favorite brother; he always was my favorite brother. Then I have a sister, my older sister, Lila [pronounced LEE-luh].

She was sort of like a mama and a sister. I still call her Sister Mama sometime. She's the oldest sibling that living now.

C.W: What was the outside of the house like?

R.H: Outside, we had a big yard had a big garden, and my friends would always come up on Sundays. I have a friend, Jimmy Patton—he went to St. Luke. We would meet at [the] fork in the road. He'd go to Richmond. He'd go up to be with us because we always had something going on. Me and my brother made us—a fair came to town, and we discovered how we could make the Ferris wheel.

C.W: No way!

R.H: Oh, yes. We got us two two-by-fours and nailed them together, put us an iron rod between the middle of them, got us a thing to brace it up like an A-frame, and he said, "Now, the only thing we gotta do is figure out how to get it to over." [Laughter.] So

what happened, we would start it, and one would get in it and the other one would come jump in it, and we'd kick it to keep it going. Like got killed doing that, though, but we had fun.

We had a bull. We trained it to be like an oxen. We would ride it. Had a wagon. We pulled—

C.W: Are you serious?

R.H: I'm serious. We would pull it. When I was in Africa as a missionary, we had a water buffalo. We had a lot of fun trying to tame this water buffalo like that, but we did get him domesticated to do that, even though he'd have a mind of his own at times. [Take your but off across the field. But we got this bull where he would just—he was just a big pet anyway, because we had raised him from a calf, and plowed with him. We did everything with him.

Then my daddy like to hunt. He loved hunting, but I didn't care for hunting. I'd always have to clean the stuff that they brought back.

We had our ups and downs and our joys.

C.W: Yes.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: What was your relationship like with your neighbors?

R.H: Oh, our neighbors were just like an extended family. When we were doing something wrong and Mama and Papa wasn't there, they said, "I'm gonna come over there and straighten that house out." And they did. We had Mrs. Lillian Graves and Dooley Graves and Miss Marian Long on the other side of us, and we got as many whippings from them as we got from our parents, because when they'd go off, they were in charge.

And Miss Marian didn't have any children of her own, so she just knew that—ours. My mother was a twin, and her father gave them some names, Scrappy and Greedy. She would holler, "Now, you know Greedy don't want you children acting like that down there." She'd come down there and tear us up. [Chuckles.] And then we'd fuss at her, and then we'd say, "Now, Miss Marian, what you want us to do, because we don't want you to tell Mama because Mama's gonna kill us when she come home, too." I lived in a very nice, concerned neighborhood. And they always were grateful and proud of what you were involved in that was positive.

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B

C.W: You said you had a lot of ministers come over. Did you have a lot of neighbors come over and spend time with you guys?

R.H: We always had. We had a man next door, Dewey. He was scary. We would always tease him. He would come over. Particularly [when] someone died, Dewey would be over there all the time, because he was afraid, scary. Mama wouldn't let nobody scare him because she said that's a very awful feeling, to be afraid. But we would still scare him. I remember one time we had a hoot-owl, and me and my brother cut the pillowcase where his wings could come out, and then we let him loose, and he was flying around like a ghost, like to scared the poor man to death. We got beat to death.

But we had neighbors—like, if you ran out of something and you need to borrow it, you'd go borrow a cup of sugar or go borrow this and all, so we had that relationship.

C.W: Now, what was your role in the household?

R.H: Well, out of fourteen children, I was the thirteenth child and the seventh boy, so all of my brothers and sisters were mostly gone when I got... We had a wood stove in the kitchen, and my responsibility was to make sure that wood was in the house for that stove and coal was in the house for the stove and kindling, and get up and make a fire every morning. I used to tell my dad, "I wish you had named me something else because I don't want to here, 'Rudolph!'" We had to get there floor before we could make a fire. Normal things. Keep the house clean. Papa didn't allow us to do too much. He didn't want boys cooking and washing dishes, so that was a joy. But we had enough sisters to do that. We didn't have to wash dishes and cook. We didn't have to do that. Papa didn't allow that. But, now, like, scrub the floors, we had to do that kind of work. But cooking—that's the reason I can't cook today.

C.W: I spoke with someone who was talking about how they would go to the railroad tracks. Sometimes the coal would fall off-

R.H: The truck?

C.W: Yes.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: And they would knock off [cross-talk; unintelligible].

R.H: But, see, I had a lot of friends that used to do that, but we were fortunate. We had woods, the farm, to get wood off of, and my daddy always worked so we always had—we always had the necessities to make life comfortable for us. My older brothers and sisters—they talk of a time when they had it tough, but I didn't have that experience. Things had gotten good when I came along. Yes, but they talk about the times when they had to

sacrifice and do all this and all that kind of stuff, and my grandmother would chip in and do—my grandmother was Alice Carter. We had a time.

C.W: Did y'all share dinner a lot? You talked about the table.

R.H: Yes. Let me tell you something.

R.H: You couldn't ever eat supper until Papa got there. I don't care what time it was. And supper would always start around six o'clock. He would always—[unintelligible]—if he was not there, there would be a reason for him not [to be] there, and we could go on and eat, but we never ate—we always had grace, and everybody had a seat at the table. Mine was up here [demonstrates], right next to Papa, and then they all went on around that way. Mama was down here [demonstrates], and the other son[s] would come down that way, on the other side. And then all the food would be brought in. I get tickled today, the things that people call a feast; that was an everyday meal for us because we were so many of us there.

And then there was always somebody else's child there. We had a young man named Harvey Maxwell. We called him—I called him Boo because they lived next door to us. He would always make it over there at suppertime, and he'd jump out and say, "Boo!" And we started calling him Boo because he would eat, and Mama never did turn a soul away. We always had somebody coming there.

And this is another thing that tickled me about integration. We lived—there were some whites living across the field from us and some living behind us, and Mr. Guyton would always come on in "for suppuh." He said, "I come on ovuh for suppuh." So we always had an integrated relationship with those Guytons, you see.

C.W: They'd come over for dinner.

R.H: They'd come over for dinner. When one got sick, Mama would go over there; when we got sick, they'd come help us out. It was just a good relationship. I know we would go sometime and, you know like boys do, fight together, whoop this neighborhood up and go over to that neighborhood. They'd always say, "Well, [unintelligible] the Hendricks, where they got them white folks with them." But we always had that. We lived in that kind of environment. So it was not like something strange to us.

C.W: Wow. Interesting.

R.H: Yes.

C.W: What types of food did you guys eat? You mentioned—

R.H: We raised our own hogs, we raised our own cows; we had chickens, and we had the basic—like, we always had a vegetable—one of the things that I loved about home, I remember, we always had dessert, and when I'm married, my wife [would say], "We don't need no dessert. That makes you fat." So if I get a dessert, I go out and buy it. But Mama always made [dessert]. And another thing she would always [make], she would always make biscuits. We raised wheat, and we'd go to Rome and get it fixed up, and Mama always had biscuits. And Papa would always take some corn over there to the meal. He'd get half of some of it done in grits and some of it done in meal, so we had a thing going.

C.W: And your mom made pies?

R.H: Oh, yes, man. Cakes and pies. You ain't never had no cake like Mama could make it. She made delicious cakes and pies.

C.W: Ooh!

R.H: You'd go in the kitchen, and you'd think nothing was in there to eat, and all of sudden there would be a feast coming out of there.

C.W: Wow. [Train whistle, at first in the far distance, becomes louder as it gets closer.] Were Sunday dinners any different?

R.H: Oh, yes. Yes, yes, sirree. Yes, sirree. Here again, I was telling a friend of mine, we always had chickens, and Sunday would be the day you'd have friend chicken or roasted chicken of some sort. We had this preacher. I always picked on preachers. The preacher would come, and he'd be set up on eight. The big old stomach would be sitting out like a bear. And we had a little rooster that would—you know, someone would always get out of the chicken yard, and he was running around, so he was crowing, "Cock a doo, cock a doo." The preacher said, "My, that rooster is mighty happy today." And I heard him, and I'd come out and say, "He should be. He got two sons in the ministry." And my daddy said, "What you mean, Root Man?" "The preacher ate up two chickens, Papa." I got another whipping. I got another whipping. My sister said, "Rudolph, you ought to quit talking so much." But I stammered when I talked, too, and they laughed at me a lot. That's the reason I know that God answers prayer. I prayed that he would remove it, and he did. But that chicken. He said, "My, that rooster is happy today." "He ought to be. He got two sons in the ministry." And my daddy said, "What you talkin' about, Root Man?" He called me Root Man. I said, "The preacher ate up two chickens, Papa. Ain't none in there for us to eat." [Laughter.] I got another beating.

C.W: Oh, gosh.

What holidays were celebrated at your house?

R.H: Oh, all of them. Christmas was a big...Mama would start cooking, like, days ahead, cakes and pies. Everybody had a cake. Mama would bake everybody their favorite cake, so you know we had a lot of cake! [Laughs.] We would go to the church Christmas morning. They'd always have church. And everybody would come back home to eat. Whoever you invited there. "C'mon." They'd always know—we'd come up to our house and eat. My brother, George, used to love Christmas morning. He'd get all the food and put it around him.

Sunday meals. Easter was a great time, too. We'd have Easter programs and then Easter egg hunts and all that sort of stuff. That was a good time.

Birthdays. Everybody celebrated. They would always have a special thing for birthdays. And we had this thing, an ice cream freezer. I don't know if you [know about it]. You had to churn the ice cream, you know?

C.W: Oh, yes.

R.H: We used to have that. One would sit on the churn; another one would turn it. And we'd have a ball. We'd have that every Sunday.

C.W: Nice.

R.H: We had frozen ice cream every Sunday.

C.W: Nice.

R.H: In the summers we had watermelon, man. A fellow would come by, selling watermelons. Mama would say, "How many you have?" He'd say, "About twenty-five." Mama say, "Just unload 'em in the yard." [Laughs.] Mama done loved watermelon. We do, too. And we would have a fun time. We'd have a fun time. Yes, that was a good time, good time.

C.W: That's great.

What was your first job?

R.H: My first job was working from home. I was working for Miss Marian Long. I had to go and mop her kitchen and dining room. That was my first job. And then I got a job at Smith Brothers Grocery Store, bagging groceries. I was the first black child down there doing that. My family had known the Smiths for umpteen years, so they gave me a job there. I made twelve dollars a week. Man, I thought I was rich. I made twelve dollars a week, and out of that, I had to give some home, and I was always taught to save. I had to save some, and then I had some, myself, yes.

And then I worked for the Coca-Cola Company.

I worked for the Coles, Dargen Cole, in Cartersville. They were a very fine family. Mrs. Cole was a very sweet lady. She instilled the principles that my family already had: education, a good work ethic, be mannerable, be polite, and I traveled with them every summer to Sea Island, Georgia. I had me a summer vacation for one month in June down in...Working like a clown, but I had a wonderful time, and took care of Lucy and Dougherty, the little boy and little girl. They had a house for other servants, too, but that was my job.

C.W: Nice.

Where did most people work in Summer Hill?

R.H: They worked at the mine, either at Dellinger's Mine or Wyman's Mine. They worked there. Then they had a few people that worked in private homes. A lot of people worked in private homes, for private families. And some worked on the railroad, basically. And then some would drive all the way to Marietta, to Lockheed there, and work down there.

C.W: And commute back and forth?

R.H: Commute back and forth each day.

C.W: Wow.

Well, let's talk about the school a little bit.

R.H: Okay.

C.W: First of all, as you drew on here [refers to a document], I'd like for you to just describe a little bit of the Summer Hill community while we're talking here.

R.H: Professor Morgan was the principal, he and his wife, Mrs. Morgan. They had a son named Stanley Morgan, and they all worked there. Every morning when we first started to school, the bell would ring. We'd line up in a line. All the grades would be there in line. We would go into our various classes. Each teacher would be standing outside of the door to greet you when you came in. Professor Morgan didn't allow no shirkin' and jerkin'. [Chuckles.] You were there for education. The school was a wonderful place. The school started at eight-fifteen—we had to walk to school—and was out at three-fifteen. We had devotions the first part of the morning that started you off right, and then we'd go in the various classes.

Our teachers were caring people, as I indicated earlier. They were concerned about you as an individual. They took an interested in you as an individual. Because I had a learning problem, and my teacher said, "Well, what we're going to do is—Rudolph is smart and intelligent. We're going to work with him to get this done." Mrs. Beasley and Mrs. Richards. Fanny Richards was very instrumental in pushing me and guiding me.

We sang. We had a high school chorus, and we prided ourselves on being good singers, because Mrs. Morgan was in charge of the music. And we had a dramatics club, and Mrs. Beasley was in charge of that, with other teachers.

The football team. I played football, and—

C.W: The Blue Devils?

R.H: The Blue Devils, man, of Summer Hill High. I didn't play basketball because I was too rough from playing football. I never played basketball, but I played football. And track and field. We had track and field. We'd go and compete.

You had a sense of community, family at school. And every year we'd have a play, and that play would be an attraction for the community to come and see and all that sort of stuff. And then you'd have various classes having proms and that sort of thing. You put emphasis on that. You wanted your prom to be better than the class before you and that sort of thing. I never will forget a school we used to play for, Lemon Street, down in Marietta?

C.W: Mm-hm.

R.H: That school football team, if you beat them playing football, you had to whip them physically, and vice versa. If we went there, they beat us, we whipped them.

C.W: You mean fight.

R.H: Fight, yes.

C.W: After the game.

R.H: After the game or during the game. So that was always a...When Lemon Street came to Cartersville, the stadium was full. [Laughs.] But it was that kind of relationship.

It was mostly a sharing type of thing. We were fortunate. I always say this now. We didn't live too far—Cartersville is not too far from the Atlanta community, where the colleges and universities [are], so we always got the better teachers coming and was always exposed to some of the better things, activities. And therefore I think that's one of the reasons that the Cartersville school was outstanding as it basically is.

C.W: Yes.

R.H: As it was.

C.W: What were some of your favorite subjects?

R.H: Recess. [Laughs.] My favorite subject was—I liked mathematics, and music. I liked music, but math was my favorite subject. I did the others, but math was one that didn't come hard.

C.W: Did you have a lot of homework?

R.H: Yes! Every day you had homework, in every one of the classes.

C.W: Really?

R.H: And your parents made sure—two things you had to do: Come in and take off your school clothes, do your work at the house, and then get in your homework. And by that time, once you ate supper and finished your homework, it's time to go to bed.

C.W: Right. And wake up—

R.H: And wake up and the same process all over again. But it was an enj—I loved high school, school, to some degree.

C.W: Who were some of your favorite teachers?

R.H: Oh, my favorite teacher. Mrs. Richards was my favorite teacher. Mrs. Beasley. Miss Pearlle. Miss Pearlle Lay was one of my favorite teachers. Miss Bessie—she always

called everybody “sugar footsy, sugar footsy.” She sold things at recess. I had Alzonna Williams, Miss Williams, was a favorite of mine, too.

C.W: Did you belong to any clubs or organizations?

R.H: I belonged to everything that was cooking.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Whatever would come up, I was in it. I prided myself on being—in fact, my mother said, “You got to get exposed,” so she exposed us to everything.

C.W: Yes?

R.H: Yes.

C.W: Now, how long did you attend Summer Hill? Because at first, it only went to nine grades.

R.H: Yes, but see, when I were going, it started off at the first grade. It went all the way through to twelfth. Here recently, it was the same school, but you’d go from the first to the ninth grade, and then you’d go to high school, which was just right down the hill, right down the hill, but it was the same school. Same set of principals and teachers. Same thing.

C.W: So you went all through—

R.H: All through.

C.W: —first through twelfth.

R.H: First through twelfth.

C.W: And you went on to college.

R.H: I went to college.

C.W: Where’d you go to college?

R.H: I went to Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. There, I had a double major, religion and sociology, with a minor in music. I finished college and got married, and I went to seminary, at Jonathan C. Smith Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. My first church was Shreveport, Louisiana, the Hollywood Heights Presbyterian Church, in Shreveport, Louisiana. I was there for a while, two years, a year and a half to two years, and then I got a call to a church in Charlotte, South Tyron Presbyterian Church, where I was there for fifteen years.

The Presbyterian church had a unique program at that time. I was in Mecklenburg Presbytery. You had a continuing education. You had to somewhere every year to refresh yourself and—you know. So I went to Princeton [University]. I say, *Now, if I'm going to have to come up here every year for continuing education, I'm going to start working toward me something*, so I started working toward the DMIN. And before I knew it, I had gotten eligible for the doctorate degree in ministry, so I went on and completed that.

C.W: Wow. That's amazing.

R.H: And during that time, I went to Africa for a missionary for six months, and that's where I met Haile Sellasie and Jomo Kenyatta and [Joseph] Kasavubu. Them rascals were something then! I had a roommate in college from the Congo. I sort of told him, "I'm coming to see you, Andre. I'm coming to see you." And he said, "Well, brother, you're going to have to learn Chaluba." So we would be talking Chaluba, in the language. When I got an opportunity—the Presbyterian church had short-term mission things. *I'm gonna take me one of these things*. Luckily, I was eligible to get one, and I went over there. Fortunately, I did get to see Andre. Andre was the ambassador to Del May. I was

out in the field, helping plant a crop, and this long Mercedes Benz—I said, “Who is that?” The Africans were looking, and I was looking too. And Andre steps out of the car. “Brother! Get outta that field!” [Laughs.] He was an ambassador then, and he was surprised to see me. You know, it was a delight to see one another.

C.W: Oh, wow. That’s amazing.

R.H: But the First Presbyterian Church here in Cartersville is the cause of me going. Well, actually, through Mrs. Morgan recommended me to Stillman, to get that scholarship, and they supported me.

C.W: The First Presbyterian Church?

R.H: First Presbyterian Church here.

C.W: You weren’t a member, either.

R.H: I was not a member.

C.W: They helped you—

R.H: They helped me, yes.

C.W: That’s great.

R.H: That’s right. You know, as I tell everybody, I’m indebted to that church because those people—Al Mun—there was a man named Al Mun. Him and Miss Sarah Mun—they had a lot of children. They had a boy named Ray, who was one of my favorite ones. Ray was a Down’s syndrome child, and Ray loved “Rodolph.” “I love Rodolph.” And I said, “Ray, I love you, too.” So Ray would always kiss you. “I want to kiss you, Rudolph,” and I’d kiss Ray because it was nothing. So Barbara, my girlfriend, was with me one day, and she was standing...I’d say, “Ray, kiss Barbara, too.” [Laughs.] And Barbara like to died. She like to died.

But the church was very, very influential in my life, the First Presbyterian Church. I hope one day to come and formulate a church here, and the general assembly won't let you, say, formulate a black church, even though you got to build another church. I'm retired now, and I'm leaning very close to that. I'd be to coming back, starting that church, yes.

But when I went to seminary, they supported me, and I spoke there, back here, about a year ago, to the Men's Conference there, and I've spoken there a couple of times.

C.W: That's amazing.

How did education affect your life?

R.H: Oh, man, let me tell you something. I heard "education" from the time I got up to the time I went to bed. My mother always said that the key to success is education. I always preach that, and I do that to my children. I have three children, Paul, Philip and Melissa. Both of those boys have graduated from—my sons graduated from Morehouse, and my daughter graduated from Spelman. Paul is a teacher, and Philip is a veterinarian, and Melissa is working on her PhD in music at the University of Maryland presently.

C.W: That's amazing.

R.H: Education has always been the key to—my folks said, "If you get in your head, can't nobody get it from you."

C.W: Right.

R.H: And that's the key, so we've had it all our lives. My parents were not educated—my mother was more educated than my daddy, but my daddy didn't go no further, I don't think, than to the third grade, but he always had a good sense of common sense. That was one of the things.

C.W: Do you think that you received an education equal to that of white schools, growing up in Summer Hill?

R.H: No. One of the reasons I say that is because we always got the old books, the old stuff, but in spite of that, we were taught that, in spite of this, you must excel. And this is one of the things I think that pushed us forward. In fact, I think I was a little better because, you see, we took what they had had and then made it something else, you see. I remember the buses. We had to walk, and the bus would carry the white children to the school. Well, we [unintelligible] anything until later on in life, but our teachers realized that, so they stressed, "You got to do twice as much as that white child to get to succeed in the world." And I've heard that all of my life. And so that's one of the things. But my family didn't allow racial prejudice. They always taught us that God had created everybody. I remember my grandmother used to say, "He just left us in the oven a little longer." [Laughs.] But my grandmother on my mother's side was very fair skinned, and she could pass for white. I remember one time my father and my mother was in a car accident, and Mama was going to see a friend that my daddy had that had died. And Papa turned the car over, and the white people came and got Mama and carried her to their house to help her house, because Papa had gone to get the car out, and Papa was [there?]. My Mama said, "Well, I guess my husband has gotten the car out now, so I'll go back across the field and see." So by that time, he was coming across the field, and Mama and the ladies was going to see the car. [Chuckles.] I shouldn't say this, but I'm gonna tell it anyway. So Mama said, "Well, here come my husband." They said, "Lord, were you in the car with that nigger?" And Mama said, "That's my husband." That lady

turned around and went running back to the house. [Laughs.] I'm serious. They went running back to their house, thinking that Mama was a white lady and Papa was a Negro.

C.W: Oh, boy.

R.H: But we've had some awful tales to tell like that. But that's the truth.

C.W: How were you affected by segregation in Cartersville?

R.H: We lived in Richmond, in that area where, as I told you, everybody was everybody. I didn't really get affected by segregation till I went to college. Well, that sounds like a lie, but it's partly...I didn't get it thrust on me, because we were in our own little environment, doing our own thing, and were quite happy. And then when I went to college, I was in the college during the demonstrations in the sixties, and I said to myself, *Now...* And then at Stillman, the majority of the teachers were white, missionary teachers. I said to myself, *Now, where I'm from, you told everybody what you wanted to do, and you did it.*

And then another thing I discovered. My grandfather was from Barbados, so they always thought that Papa was a little peculiar anyway, so we got away with stuff that the other people didn't get away with. Because I had a brother, man, who used to visit "the free hotel" every weekend for being drunk. And they said, "Aw, that's Bill's boy. Let him out, or either let him work on the trash truck two or three days." So we had that kind of relationship, you see.

But when I went to Stillman, and I saw people just being downright mean, I couldn't understand that. I said, *Man*—you know, I had a problem with that. I remember one time there in Tuscaloosa, this person—we were downtown, and we were in the stores.

You know, in Cartersville, when you come to the store, you were waited on. They waited

on everybody but us. I said, “What are we standing up in here for and them people waiting on everybody else? Our money is just as good as theirs.” And by the time the proprietor said, “Boy, what’d you say?” And I said, “Why are you not waiting on us?” “We gotta wait on those white folk first.” I say, “The hell, you say. My money’s just as good as theirs.” And I walked out and left.

When I got back to college, they called the president and told them that I was down there and starting...And I told Dr. Hay—I said, “Dr. Hay, let me tell you what happened.” And then he—that’s when it really—WHAM! It really hit me then. And then I took an oath that I was going to try to always force the equal justice for all, and preach the fact that God created us all, and everywhere I’ve been, and I’ve been to some hairy places, man—I had a situation in the First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, where, during the demonstrations, they invited me down to speak, so I was there, talking about—as a black minister versus the white minister. They had a white minister.

So this man, who was very unkind and very nutty—he kept asking a stupid question, and I kept ignoring him. He said, “Rudy, why do you all want our girls?” So I said to myself, *Now, I’m not gonna answer that. I’m not going to even cater to that ignorance.* Said that to myself. So I kept talking. I kept talking. And then he went and got the minister who was moderating the thing to ask me the question. And by that time, Hell had rose up in me. And I said, “Excuse me, what’s your question?” He said, “Why do you all want our daughters?” I said, “Sir, we don’t want your daughters, but you got daughters in our neighborhood. We want your wife’s daughters.” You get the point? And I was ushered out of that church. I was ushered out of that church.

That was unkind on my part, but it got a point over, got a point over, you see. And wherever I find people with those type of crutches, I try to help them to realize that we're all the same in the sight of God. If you set us afire, we'll all burn just like everybody else. You tap our blood, it's all the same. I said, "Why do *you* think that you're better than I am? And why do I think that I'm better than you? In some instances, I am. And in some instances, you are, too." But, you see, God created us all for a purpose.

C.W: That's right

R.H: And that purpose is not to fight like cats and dogs among each other.

C.W: Yes.

R.H: So my whole ministry has been sort of fostering good will between the races and when unkindness sticks the head up. Now, I can cut it down. I can cut it down. I got a PhD in putting you in your place. [Laughs.] But I try to do it with love.

C.W: Amen.

R.H: I try to do it with love.

C.W: Let me switch this, put another tape in real quick.

R.H: Okay.

END TAPE 1, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A

C.W: Before desegregation, you told me a little bit about what your family's relationship was like with some of the white families. Was that pretty common? I've heard before, a lot of the different churches, from Zion to St. Luke's, had integration.

R.H: Yes, they did, yes. We were always—now, our high school chorus was always invited to sing at the Rotary Clubs, at high schools and at churches. We had, I think, a very good chorus. They were exchanging ministers long before it got fashionable. It's fashionable now to go to a white church and preach. I remember a fellow named Rev. Clyde Plexico came up and spoke at the school one time. He's a white Presbyterian preacher downtown here.

Now, there was segregation. There was that bigotry. It was here. And it raised its ugly head at times, but, as I said, it all depends on the situation. My daddy was always one who—he preached one thing. All you have in the world is your word. That's the only thing we got. That's what my mammy used to get on me about, your word. And if you let somebody lose confidence in your word, then you done lost out, so your word is your bond. My daddy is one who would say—what he would say he's going to do to you, he had no damn more sense to try to proceed to do anything. So they knew that. They knew Bill was that type, so had no problem.

But it was here. We had the Grand Theater. I never will forget the theater here. The whites sit on the main floor, and we sat up in the balcony, which was the better seats because we could throw things down there and knock hell out of them if we wanted to, but we never did that. It was interesting when I grew up. It was very interesting. You could always tell. When the boys got a little older, they were always shy where they didn't want the boys with the girls, for some reason or another, and you could tell that. You could tell that. Look like the more they kept the boys away from the girls, the more the girls wanted to get with the boys. But it was one of those things that your parents said, "Now, you mustn't do this, you mustn't do that," and you didn't do it. You didn't

do it. But just like everywhere else, there was still stuff slipping going on. There's still stuff going on. There was still stuff going on.

C.W: How did you feel when they destroyed the school?

R.H: Very bad. I thought they should not have done that. I thought they should have converted it into something historically, because there was a lot of good memories of that school. I got my first kiss there at that school. [Laughs.]

C.W: Really?

R.H: I sure did. I didn't know what I was doing, but I got my first kiss at that school. There was a lot of things like that you can remember at the school. Yes. It looked like a part of the...Now, the thing that I didn't understand about any of the school situations, and I was with a group in my fraternity: Why would they close all the black schools and keep all the white schools open? Now, in Charlotte, I was involved in the integration in Charlotte. Being a minister there, I said, "What you got to do is listen." I became the listening minister. "He comin' in now." That's what they tell me. I said, "But you're not listening. You got to listen. I want the same thing for my children that you want for yours. I want the same job for my folk that you want for yours."

We had a judge, that Judge McMillan. He was an elder in the Presbyterian church. And he talked to ministers one day. He said, "You know, if it were not for our black teachers, we wouldn't be accredited. And one man jumped up and said, "Why? Why? Why?" He said, "Because all the black teachers have master's degrees or above, to get a decent salary, and our teachers just got out of high school, and some of them didn't go to high school and you got 'em teaching." Child, that started a stink! That started a good stink.

But then I began to think. I said, “That’s true.” The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system, was accredited as high as it was because of the black academics of the black teachers, you see. That’s when busing started. He said, “Now, I’m a Southerner. I was born and raised right up here in Davidson, and I know every point of view of all of y’all here.” And he said, “If you all are preachers, would do your job, my job would fade out.” [Laughs.] And that’s true. That’s true. But I think it’s true in part if the people believe what the preachers preached, then his job would fade out, or did what the preachers would preach, it would fade out.

Integration is a part of history that we’ll look back on as a stepping stone. There’s always going to be—and I shouldn’t put it like that—some prejudice. I’m prejudiced, and you are, too. If we didn’t, we’d marry the same woman, you see. There’s going to be always some prejudice. But we got to have sense enough to control it and manage it and realize that the things that you work for, you deserve to have, you see.

C.W: Yes. Do you think that there’s a place for an all-black school?

R.H: Oh, yes.

C.W: In an integrated society?

R.H: Yes, yes. I think there’s always going to be a place for a black school. There’s always going to be a place for a black community, because we do things differently. You do things differently from my culture, and I do things differently from yours. The blacks, for some reason or another, have changed their whole attitude in life, trying to fit it into the white man’s world, which we are realizing and whites are realizing, and that’s a detriment.

We had some culture, coming from Africa, that was good enough to maintain and to emulate. But we don't have any—I have some artifacts that my grandmother had. Her mother was in slavery. I have a dipper, I have a bucket, I have a lamp, and my daughter got married two years ago. She wanted to use those things in her wedding. I said, “We'll do that. We'll have communion.” You know, she wanted communion. “So we'll put the wine in the bucket, and we will serve you communion out of the dipper.” That was very impressive. And it was on the program, why we had those things there. And I had so many people coming up, taking pictures of those things.

There's always going to be a need for each other. I need you, and you need me. And the sooner we realize that, the better we're going to be.

C.W: Absolutely.

I'm going to switch on a little bit to talking about just the community, itself.

R.H: Okay.

C.W: Can you paint me a picture of the Summer Hill community?

R.H: Okay. When I was a boy, this was the place to be. There was a juke joint, and I'm going to use the language that we use here. There was a juke joint right up the street here. Paul Thomas was the godfather. And then there was Dr. Moore's place. He was a black doctor right down the street here. They would kick 'em and kill 'em and cut 'em at Paul's, and Dr. Moore would sew 'em up.

C.W: [Laughs.]

R.H: Then on top of the hill, there was a big old café. We called it the Greasy Spoon, and it was a greasy spoon, where you could go in there and get something to eat. If you didn't have no money, you could pay them later on. There was a stadium right behind the place,

where black baseball was played. Teams came in. And they called it the Slab Stadium because there were slabs all the way around it, for the fence. Saturday—it started Friday night, and Saturday, man, was where—you’ve heard the saying, “You ain’t lived unless you’ve been a black man”?

C.W: Mm-hm.

R.H: You ain’t lived unless you’ve been in Summer Hill at that particular time. Then right down the street here was the undertaker parlor. If you got killed, you stop at Dr. Moore’s and end up down there. Then right up the street was the church, you see. Summer Hill was a place where you had all kinds of happenings. You had a speak-easy, you had your bootleg going on, you had your gambling going on, your prostitution going on, but they did it with a little more dignity than they got now. They weren’t all that loose then. You didn’t know it. You knew it by word of mouth.

C.W: No advertising.

R.H: They didn’t advertise what you was going to get before you got in there like they’re doing today. But Summer Hill was where—sometime if you saw too many whites at Summer Hill, you wonder, *What done happen?* It was certain whites that you would see in this town, up in here, but when you saw too many up here, if it wasn’t a funeral or something going at the church or going at the school, you automatically, “What’s happening, man?” But it was a delightful place to be.

C.W: Now, Slab Stadium. You said that was the place to be on Saturday.

R.H: Oh, yes. They had—

C.W: Games?

R.H: Games, cooking, barbecuing stuff out, music blasting. It was an interesting place to watch, as a child. I had a brother. My oldest brother was the chief advocate up here. [Laughs.] He was the chief person. He would be right in there in the midst of it. That's when he would always get—on Monday mornings he had to work out his time on the trash truck. But it was a fun place, fun place.

C.W: What was it like growing up in Summer Hill, as a youngster?

R.H: As I look back on it, it was dangerous, exciting and appreciative. The things that you was involved in now, man, you wouldn't get yourself involved in that stuff no more. You wouldn't think of it. The old saying that God takes care of old folks and fools, that's the truth, you see. It was a risk taking time. But, as I said about Paul Thomas, he was the fellow that owned all this. He didn't go to church, but he was always helping the churches out. Like, if there was a fund-raiser, you could always count on Paul Thomas.

C.W: He owned a lot of property.

R.H: He owned a *lot* of property. He owned all that over here in here where these projects are. That's where slab stadium was. He owned all that back up that street there, owned all that property.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: Sure did.

C.W: You were telling me about a nickname you were known by.

R.H: Root Man.

C.W: Rude Man?

R.H: Root Man.

C.W: And is that just your dad?

R.H: My dad called me Root Man, then the people started calling me Root Man. They generally called me The Duke. When I played football, they called me The Duke because my friends couldn't understand that here I was, taking piano lessons and could play the piano, but yet and still I was rough enough to be out there playing football, so they called me The Duke. They called me The Duke.

C.W: What position did you play?

R.H: I played center and guard.

C.W: So you were pretty good.

R.H: Yes, I was a big dude.

C.W: You're a big guy.

R.H: Big dude, yes.

C.W: So what are some of the things you did for fun when you were little?

R.H: We didn't have a swimming pool, so we'd find these holes that the mine had dug out and swim in then. We'd go over here to Atco Creek and dam that up and swim in that. As I said, we had this bull, and we'd ride that bull like a horse. We'd go to Webbs Smith's watermelon patch and steal watermelons, steal watermelons and eat them. And then [unintelligible] it was cotton picking time came, he had his cotton—he was a farmer, a local white farmer in the city. He would say, "Well, now, I'm gonna take out the first week for the watermelons y'all ate up." He wouldn't take out that much, but he would always do that.

We would hunt. We had hunting.

C.W: Atco Creek. Did you fish there?

R.H: No, we didn't fish there, we swam in it.

C.W: You swam in it?

R.H: We'd dam it up, and we'd swim in it.

C.W: I saw a picture of some people or a person being baptized.

R.H: Yes, they would bap—

C.W: Did a lot of people get baptized—

R.H: Everybody got baptized in Atco Creek.

C.W: Really?

R.H: The Methodists—the Methodists sprinkled. And the Presbyterians. But all the Baptist—

C.W: From Mt. Zion?

R.H: From Mt. Zion.

C.W: Baptized in—

R.H: Baptized in there. And that was a happy time. The candidates for baptism would be—it would be always early in the morning, for some reason or another. And I can see it right today. It was a beautiful scene. The candidates would always have on white, and the girls would have on a white towel or something on their head, and then men would just have a white robe. The ministers would be out there in the middle of the creek. I remember one time me and Deacon, who was a cousin of mine, was going to check out the water with the other deacons. And there was a snake in the water. You know how you have those snakes. And you talk about somebody running out of the water! But that Sunday morning, we were baptizing in Atco Creek. And they'd hear those old songs, old hymns, and singing out there. That was an interesting time.

C.W: Wow. That's amazing.

R.H: Yes.

[Tape interruption.] [Resumes after repositioning the microphone.]

C.W: What were some of your favorite—we talked about the creek, watermelon patch. Those are some of the places you hung out. Any other places you can remember as fun little hangouts?

R.H: You didn't have a chance to hang out in none of these juke joints until you got older. You had a time to go somewhere and time to get back. All the activities, if you hung out, was around the church or the school, around the church or the school. If you did too much hanging out around there, you got a bad name. My folk made sure that my brother [unintelligible] was enough for the whole family, for the whole family. But it was an interesting...

Summer Hill didn't have a recreation center; it had what you call a community house for the church. They had the activities there at the church, but they were structured, always chaperoned, with several adults, and always you go home, I'm going to call and see if you're at home, that kind of thing.

C.W: Were there any customs or celebrations that were pretty routine for Summer Hill?

R.H: Oh, yes. We had May Day. We had May Day, and we would have sack races, egg roll races, a greasy pig catching.

C.W: Greasy pig?

R.H: Greasy pig. They'd grease this pig up, man, and there'd be a circle around of people, and they'd turn this pig loose, and everybody wanted to participate in the greasy pig would be ready, you know. You never could catch him. The secret of that thing is—and me and my brother discovered—two people could catch it, but one couldn't catch it by himself because he'd be greased down with lard, and when you got him, DJUUMM! It done got

away from you. But me and my brother worked that out. We said, "I'll go catch him, you come over and get him."

And then we'd have, on the Fourth of July we'd have a festivity day. We'd have activities, like that, yes.

C.W: How has the area changed, that you've seen? Economically—

R.H: Economically it has changed tremendously. Some of the old buildings have been torn down; some of the roads have been closed up; better jobs have come into the city, and everybody has been able to get a pretty good job, a pretty good-paying job. Equal opportunity—you see it around. You see people, different races working in places where you didn't see that before. People got better cars; they're buying better homes, property and that sort of thing.

C.W: When you were growing up, were there places that you knew of that you just couldn't go there?

R.H: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Oh, yes. There were a lot of the white places, you couldn't go there. You just knew you couldn't go there, and you didn't go.

C.W: Like what?

R.H: Like the 4-H clubs, [unintelligible] cafes. There was a Four Way Café here.

C.W: Is that right up here?

R.H: Yes, that they would let you in the back. You get something in the back, but you couldn't go in the front door. Now you can go anywhere you want to. And then there were places on Summer Hill that you knew that you couldn't get in. You didn't have no

business in there, you didn't go. Then ladies—they had these houses where—I know one lady had a house right down the street here. It had a screen door on every bedroom, and I never could understand that. I always asked my mother, “Why that lady got all those screen doors in her house?” Well, Mama [said], “I don't know.” She never would know, but she knew. And then after I got older, I discovered that lady was renting them rooms out for special activities, you see, so you didn't go there. If they see you, “What you doin' there?” You see, that sort of thing.

C.W: Right. Wow.

R.H: As I said, they had their thing. This is one of the things that I think in all black communities, there's an undercurrent that goes on that's not spoke of but know it's there. And I'm sure it's in all communities, but I know it's [unintelligible]. And white gets on black. I can talk about that.

C.W: Right

R.H: [Chuckles.]

C.W: Where did people engage with each other in the community. You talked about the church, the Brotherhood Lodge. Were there any restaurants that were really, like, just where people got together?

R.H: No, no. The Greasy Spoon up here.

C.W: That was the one.

R.H: That was the one. And then people would have various activities in their houses, but they would get together that way. But to just go and say, We're going and have dinner or have lunch and just have a fellowship type thing, you'd either meet at the church or at the school, at that particular place.

C.W: Have you heard of Hamburger Bill's?

R.H: Yes, I heard of Hamburger Bill's.

C.W: [unintelligible].

R.H: It was a restaurant type thing. He could make some of the biggest hamburgers.

C.W: That's what I heard.

R.H: Yes. And he was a just a tall, tall fellow, brown-skinned fellow. He was just a happy-go-lucky guy. He'd wait on you, and you'd get going, yes. Everybody tried to get a hamburger from Hamburger Bill.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Yes. It was the gravy around the hamburger, I think was the thing, you see. I was always the child that tried to find out, "Why is that like"—I always asked, "Why?" I said, "This hamburger is nothing, but just the hamburger we have at home." But he always had a lot of gravy with it. He had some secret of making gravy, I guess. But it was an interesting hamburger.

C.W: Who were some of the prominent or recognized community members that you knew of that were the leaders?

R.H: We had all the preachers. Then we had Mr. [Robert] Cotton. He was a guy here. And Professor Morgan. My daddy was one, I guess you could call, because he was always involved in something. Miss Sue Wheeler. I don't know if you know Sue Wheeler. And then her father-in-law, I think it was. My daddy—somehow or another, there was not a black paper when I came along, but Mr. Wheeler had some kind of way of getting the *Pittsburgh Courier* and what was another black paper? And every Saturday, my father would buy two papers, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and there was another. I can't think of the

other one. It was another black paper. And he was instrumental in getting that paper in here.

C.W: In the community.

R.H: In the community. I think it went to the Atlanta—ah, I can't think of the name of it.

That's unusual, because I read it many a day. We had it. One was white, and one was sort of an orange color, but we got that paper every—my father got that paper for the family every week, every week.

And then Miss Ann Nina Copeland. She was an insurance lady, and she was very active in the community.

Rev. Rosemond Kaye was an active fellow in the community.

C.W: How did they lead the community? What sort of things did they do?

R.H: Well, mostly they—sometime I thought they was just keeping us under control. They would expose you to church activity. The Masons were very active here. The group came out of Atlanta and that sort of thing. Wesley Clement and my father were very good friends, and they set up the Mason lodge here in the city. They were just mediators, I think, sometime. You look out. It was just mediators. They didn't rock the boat too much.

I remember one fellow they had here, still didn't change him, the superintendent of schools, Aiken. I think his name was Aiken. He was the most embarrassing thing to education, I thought. He would always call us—at graduation—now, I know when you're studying a foreign language, it's "Negro" and "Negress." And he would get up and say that word every graduation, and my daddy told him that "if you come and say that word again, we're gonna see can we turn you the color of a Negress."

C.W: [Laughs.]

R.H: So that year, he retired. He retired.

C.W: After that?

R.H: Well, he didn't come back, so I assume that he retired. But I say to myself now, *All of these black people in this building, and you're getting up here and calling them niggers?* I say, *That man has a nerve.* That's what I said to myself, sitting there and listening to that. *He has a tremendous nerve.* But that was bad.

C.W: On the "blacks only," "whites only," were there signs posted anywhere that you knew?

R.H: Oh, yes. Man, there was "black" water and "white" water and "colored"—it was "colored."

C.W: [unintelligible].

R.H: "Colored." They didn't say "black"; it was "colored." I remember me and my sister—even at the courthouse they had "colored" water and "white" water. And my sister and I said, "Let's take some of this 'white' water and see how it tastes." The water was the same.

And I never will forget one lady, Miss Henson. Miss Henson was a white lady who was very, very influential in the city of Cartersville. She didn't take no trash. She was before her time. Summer Hill High School used to have a trash pile right down the side of it, burning. Miss Henson preached constantly that "you don't need those children inhaling that smoke from the trash pile." And everybody thought Miss Henson was nutty, but I knew that lady was before her time because she had a husband that was a lawyer. She spoke out against a lot of the injustices that were here, Miss Henson. And you'd see her walking around. Everybody knew Miss Henson. Everybody knew Miss Henson. If

anybody done anything to Miss Henson, they had somebody to pay for it. But she was before her time. She'd come up to the schools and speak about things. And, you know, we had people coming in here and talking about stuff I had never heard of or dreamed of. And that perked my appetite about some knowledge of things. But Miss Henson—

C.W: Had dreamed of?

R.H: I had never dreamed of some of the stuff. Miss Henson, we're talking about?

C.W: Yes.

R.H: She said one time that the world was more water than there was land. And I said to myself, *What that old lady talkin' about?* And I discovered that she was telling the truth, you see. She'd come, and Professor Morgan would allow her to have her freedom. She'd come in various classrooms and talk, and then leave and come...She live right here on—Miss Henson had money. She had money, too, I believe. She lived right here—not too far from here. But Miss Henson was a white lady that was before her time. She was before her time.

C.W: This trash pile. How did that come to be there?

R.H: I don't know. When I went to school—

C.W: Who put this—

R.H: I don't know. When I went to school, that smoke was there. What make me remember it, we had a boy name Leonard Godhigh. We called him Buddy Godhigh. And Buddy—when recess come, Buddy would head to the trash pile, to go digging in that junk. He caught fire one time, caught fire, and Zach Kennedy put him out.

C.W: Are you serious?

R.H: I am serious. I said, “Lord, he’s on fire!” And Zach Kennedy put him out. He’s out there, and it smoked all the time, just burned all the time. Thank God—where the tennis courts are now, that’s where the trash pile was. It was all that bank. It was there.

C.W: I was going to ask you a couple of questions just about some of the larger historical trends that were going on at the time, and sort of novelties and inventions. Did you guys have a TV, growing up?

R.H: I remember we got our first television. We listened to the radio. We had a radio. I remember the radio. “Grand Ol’ Opry.” That’s the reason I can listen to hillbilly music you enjoy because we listened to the “Grand Ol’ Opry” on radio, and the fights, when Joe Louis was fighting and that sort of thing. But we got our television—I guess I was in the tenth grade. We got our first television. It was about as big as this [apparently demonstrates small-size screen] Didn’t very many people in our community have a television, so people would come in.

I never will forget one fellow would come, Mr. Sloans, Mr. Will Sloans. He would come. He’d always be dressed up, and Mama said, “Listen, Mr. Willy why you got on your Sunday best?” “Oh, I wanted to see a program on the news.” I said, *Now, does he think that folk is looking at him, too?* And, you know, that’s what he thought.

C.W: Did he, really?

R.H: He thought that people could see him as well as he could see them.

C.W: On the television.

R.H: On the television. And he would be dressed up every time he’d come, just sitting up there dressed up. [Laughs heartily.] I get tickled when I think about it.

C.W: That’s funny.

R.H: But he would be dressed up. But he would watch the news, and then eventually they got a television, too.

C.W: That's hilarious. Let me put this over—just a couple of more questions.

R.H: Okay.

END TAPE 2, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE B

C.W: —the telephone. Do you remember when you first got one?

R.H: Yes, I remember when we first got a telephone, too, yes. It was a party line, where a whole lot of people was on the line, and if you picked up the telephone, you had to give the number to the operator, and the operator would dial it up for you. And when you'd pick up the phone and someone was talking, you had to hang up.

C.W: Really?

R.H: You had to wait for that person. I think it was four or five persons on the line, and you had to wait for those people got off before you could use it. And then it was very respectable because my mother never did allow you to—you know how children are: Let's see what they're talking about. They didn't allow that. But I remember getting the first tel[ephone]. I even remember the first lights came into our house, and I remember when the first bathtub, toilet came in the house. And my daddy was [laughs]—my daddy was a terrible one to get a bathroom indoors. Mama preached and preached and preached, so we did finally get a bathroom in the house, and my daddy was so upset. We were barbecuing. You know how you barbecue?

C.W: Mm-hm.

R.H: Papa say, “Lord, they done quit cooking in the house and started cooking outdoors, and then quit shitting outdoors and shitting in the house.” I said, “Papa, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.” But I remember us getting that. I remember when all that took place.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: Yes. That was a time.

C.W: And before that, it was an outhouse.

R.H: Outhouse, yes. You dig a hole and—we had an outhouse that you could move from one hole to the other hole.

C.W: Really?

R.H: Yes. My father was a carpenter, too, on the side, so he said we could move that outhouse from that hole to another hole. And I remember helping dig them holes, yes. [Laughs.]
Yes.

C.W: How did the telephone or television impact your life? Did it change the way you lived?

R.H: Oh, yes. It brought the world into the home. You could see how other people were living. One of the things that—my daddy worked on the railroad, so we had a chance to travel. My mother’s folks were out in California, so we was able to go to California. And had a brother that lived in Detroit. We visited. You thought you went somewhere when you went to Chattanooga, Tennessee. And my grandmother on my daddy’s side lived in Knoxville, so we had sort of seen some of this before it got here to us. But the television really is a sign of education. You don’t have to be ignorant anymore. The television, and I hope you understand what I’m saying, is like the computer today. In my time, when the television came, it was like the computer today. It just brought a whole

new world into your life. Yes, yes. And there were certain times that you could look at the television in our house. You didn't sit up and look at television all day; you had a time to look at it. Everybody looked at the news. But you just didn't sit up and look at television all day long.

C.W: Right.

You talked about this a little bit more, but could you tell me how the years in the civil rights movement—how did that affect you? Did you become involved?

R.H: Yes, I was very much involved in the civil rights movement. I was in Stillman College at the time, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, had just gone through that Arthurine Lucy situation. Everybody—my daddy was always frightful. He said, “Root Man, don't go down there and get to doing like you do here.” So me and a girl named Eva Carter—we'd always leave and go to Atlanta to the movements.

I remember one Saturday we were marching, and my sister had gotten lost from the group. My mother had freckles, and all of us got freckles, somewhere on our body, but my sister got a freckle mask here. And they had hemmed her up, and the only thing that saved her was I had got—I said to myself, *I ain't gonna go for this nonviolence*. I had found me a two by four, and my sister went on calling. She said, “Lord have mercy, here's a nigger with freckles.” And they were so astounded that my sister had freckles, they just let her—I went and got her hand and pulled her on out. But if they had done something, I would probably not be here today.

C.W: They hemmed her up?

R.H: They hemmed her up.

C.W: Tied her up?

R.H: No, no, no, they just surrounded her. And when they saw she had freckles, that astounded them.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: Yes. The nonviolent was the key, but I had—Dr. Martin Luther King [Jr.]—I was marching with him one time, and they say, “Hendricks, you go type. Your temper won’t mess us up.” But I said, “Now, Doctor, they don’t bother me, I’m not going to bother them.” He said, “But they’re going to bother you, and you’re going to bother them.”

C.W: King said that?

R.H: Dr. Martin Luther King said that—

C.W: Oh, wow.

R.H: —directly to me.

C.W: Wow.

R.H: And Eva said, “Yeah, Rudy, let’s go over here. We can help fold some booklets.” And we did. Then, on our way back to Tuscaloosa, we said, “We should bring this to Tuscaloosa.” We had staged a march down in Tuscaloosa, and the president found out about it, and he called us in. He said, “Nobody’s going to come on this campus, be they white or black or any other color, for unsavory matters. And you all aren’t going to need to go bring them here.” Because our college was integrated, because the white folks lived on the campus, and most of our teachers were white.

The [Ku Klux] Klan came to the campus. [Laughs.] The Klan came to the campus. This boy had been downtown, and he had ran over—hit a white child on a motor scooter. And anyhow, he lived in the community, but he didn’t go to college, so the motor scooter zoomed right through the campus. I guess they thought that boy was a student. Man, the

Klan came outside the campus, and I said to myself—now, I was president of the student body. I said, *I'm going to see what Dr. Haywood is gonna do*, Dr. Haywood, a tall, tall, bald-headed white man. He said, “You all are not coming on this private school’s yard.”

C.W: To the Klan.

R.H: To the Klan. And I said, *Damn, Dr. Haywood got a lot of nerve*. By that time, all the students had got out. Those Klans took their coat and went down that road, and Dr. Haywood never allowed anything like that to go on. If he found out a teacher was being unkind, he called you and that teacher in and said, “Now, what did she say to you?” You see, he was a very fair man. He had been the chaplain at Auburn University before he became president of Stillman College. He was a very fine man.

Then I had a professor named Dr. Albert Kerr Winn. He taught the New Testament.

Then I had a lady named Miss O’Rourke, who was from Tuscaloosa. She was another Miss Henson. She was before her time, too. And then I had to take some classes out at the University of Alabama, because when you went into the ministry, in the Presbyterian church then, they would send all the blacks up to the university to be psychoanalyzed.

[Chuckles.] I said, “I can see why they sent us out there.” They would recommend you going in or you not going in and all that sort of stuff, from the tests they gave you.

That time—you know, if somebody had taken the time to listen to one another and feel what each person was talking about, we wouldn’t have that time. Because the thing that astounded me was how can this white man dislike me so and my mama is cooking his dinners and suppers and taking care of his children? How can he not allow me to go in the same door he going in, when at his house, I’m changing his beds and seeing all of the family secrets and all that kind of stuff? It was a real stupid sickness, you see.

I came, as a minister—one of my things in the ministry was to teach the fact that God loves us all, and there was no difference, preach the fact that you do what you want to do as long as you don't step on me, and if it's my rights to have it, then I must have it, you see?

C.W: Yes.

R.H: One of the other things, we were the only black Republicans around. That gave us a fit, too. But it's a sadness that has held America back. But at the same time, it's a sadness that it pushed the black man forward because if you get things too easy, you don't enjoy them. You don't accept them. You don't appreciate them. If you work for what you get, you have a tendency to take care of it a little bit better, to appreciate it, you see. A lot of talent has gone untapped because of segregation, a lot of talent. A lot of ability has gone unnoticed because of segregation, you see.

And at the same time, the blacks were getting even. The blacks were doing just as much dirty as the whites were doing. They were doing just as much evil as the whites, in their own way, you see. That wasn't good. That wasn't good, either. Because you dislike me, I don't got to dislike you, you see.

But there was always somebody—the scripture go, “There was always a ram in the bush.” We would not be where we are today if it hadn't been for some caring white person that would come back and tell us this, [chat at?] with us, or tell us how to do this or how to do this and how to do the other. I own some apartments, these apartments over here. There were some white people in time who were supposed to be racists personified, they say, the Vaughanses. I've heard it all my life, but we never had no run-in with them.

I had borrowed money to get these apartment built. I made arrangements that the tenants would just go pay the bank and then the bank would take the money monthly.

And all of a sudden, I get this statement I got eighty-some thousand dollars. I want to say, *Damn, I'm rich. Where I get eighty-some thousand dollars from?* Barbara said, "You ought to look into that." So when I look into it, they had sent me a note here, saying that they were getting ready to take my apartments because I hadn't paid the bill. And I said, "Now, we made arrangements that you would take it out of my account, and now you're trying to take my place," you see.

C.W: When was this?

R.H: This was, like, maybe five years ago, five years ago, right here in Cartersville. Wachovia Bank. That's the reason I don't have no trust for Wachovia Bank today. If I got a dime that you put in Wachovia Bank, I'm going to go get it. I said, "This is not fair." Mr. Bourne—he was a lawyer, a judge or something. I went in there, and a friend told me to go see him. And when I went in there, he said, "You're Bill's boy, ain't you?" I said, "Yes, sir, how you know?" "You look just like your daddy." And I told him what was going on. He said, "Let me tell you something, Little Bill, they're gonna take your damn place if you don't go over yonder and get it stopped." He tells me where to go in Rome, and how to do. And that's the only reason I was able to save that place there. My family has always tried to have something, and it looked like some people would throw monkey wrenches in the game. We've always been property owners. But that was nothing but racial prejudice. That was nothing but prejudice.

C.W: Recently. That's five years ago.

R.H: That's right. But I know the culprit over there at the bank that brought all this about. I know the fellow, and I went and told that rascal. I said, "Could I have a meeting with you?" "Oh, yes, come on in, Rudy." I closed the door [chuckles], and I stood up. I said, "I want to tell you one damn thing. You're trying to undo what I'm working hard to do, and if you undo what I'm working hard to do, that would be a good day for us to die." And I left. Now I don't go there, because the Bible says, "Shun the friends of evil." I don't go there because that was just evil. That was just unadulterated evil, and I don't have no place in my heart for that kind of stuff.

C.W: Did you get your property?

R.H: Yes. They didn't get it. Thanks to this man down here that everybody said was racist. He was racist, but he was fair. You know, you can be anything you want to, as long as you be fair. You can be anything you want to, but be fair.

C.W: Yes.

R.H: He told me exactly who to go see in Rome, how to go about doing it, and I did it click click click. Put the shit on Wachovia.

C.W: Wow. Man, that's amazing.

How about some of the global events that were going on when you were living in Summer Hill? so many things: World War II; you had—

R.H: I had all of my brothers were in the Army but two. What really brought World War II to my mind was Mrs. Morgan [and] Professor Morgan had a son who was a pilot. He went to Tuskegee, and he was killed in the Army [sic; Army Air Corps] in World War II. I don't remember World War II all that well, but that was one of the things they let me know.

And then rations of foods was one of the problems there, because you had to get coupons to do certain things. We always raised a lot of our food, so we had that. We would go get the coupon booklet. We needed them. And then my mama and I would let other people have them, you see. Or exchange this booklet for something else, like that, that sort of thing. It was a cooperation of things.

One of the things that really impacted my life was the bomber plant. They call it Lockheed now. It was a bomber plant. All the women had a chance to go down there and get jobs, better jobs to do. I had a sister that worked there, and a sister-in-law that worked there, too. That was an impact upon my life.

Another thing that happened to me that impacted upon my life: I know you're going to think this is a nut. My wife thinks it's a nut, too. The king of England died. I was able to see that on television, see how the people lived and how they did, and then this girl [Elizabeth], twenty-five years old, becoming the queen. That was an impact upon my life. And I like to follow the royal family presently. My grandfather, as I told you, was from Barbados, so they were ruled by the English people for a while.

Then when John Glenn went up in the air? I never will forget, the old folks said, "He ain't goin' up there. He ain't goin' nowhere. They ain't goin' to no moon." That was those things. You'd hear those kind of comments.

C.W: They didn't believe it.

R.H: They didn't believe it. They didn't believe they'd to no moon and going up in there like that. They didn't believe it. I met John Glenn. As Miss Beasley indicated, I met three of our presidents.

C.W: Really?

R.H: I met the queen of England.

C.W: Really!

R.H: And I met Haile Selassie.

C.W: How did you get to meet them?

R.H: As a missionary, we would go on R&R. We were coming back, and they were just giving us some things to do. One of my stations was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and that's where Haile Selassie lived. So I was able to meet him there. He had horses, and I have always been an enthusiast of horses. My daddy used to shoe horses. And I met him there, and his daughter.

The queen of England—we were there, going to Scotland, and I was in her audience. Americans were here, so we went in the audience that way, yes. She's just like everybody else. But very impressive, very impressive. You know, it tickle you. It tickled me. They'll tell you how you're supposed to act, as if you don't know how to act. "You're not to touch the queen unless she reaches out to touch you." Somebody said, "I don't want to touch her no-how." But she was very, very receptive, because there was only two of us in the part that we were in. I guess it was amazing for her to see this black man going to Africa to be a missionary. One of those things, yes.

C.W: Just a couple of more questions. When did you leave Summer Hill?

R.H: Fifty-seven. I graduated in '57.

C.W: Fifty-seven?

R.H: Fifty-seven.

C.W: And you left to go to college?

R.H: To go to college, and I went to college, and I graduated. Finished college, I got married, went to seminary, and really the only time after I left Summer Hill has been coming back visiting and working on my apartments and doing things like that.

C.W: And one last question: Who was the person who had the most positive influence in your life you can think of?

R.H: My mother, of course. My mother, of course. My mother. My mother and my sister, Lila.

C.W: Are they your heroines?

R.H: Yes, they're my heroines. Then we had Miss Richards, my music teacher. And the saddest thing about it, she died about nineteen years ago now, but those was the ones. My mother always encouraged me. Regardless of what difficulty you got into, she always said, "This too will pass." And another thing she used to say, "Let misery age a while. You'll look at it differently after it's done aged." [Laughs heartily.] "You'll look at it differently after it age awhile. Let misery age a while." That has always helped me to realize that things are not always as bad as they seem. They're not as bad. And what you're going through, somebody's done been through something worse than you, so just get in line. That's life.

That's the last question?

C.W: That's it.

R.H: Very good. Thank you.

[End of interview.]