

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

Interviewed with: Perry and Theresa Wilkins
Interviewed by: Melissa Massey
Location:
Date: April 28, 2003
Transcribed by: Diana Godwin, October 2004

THE FOLLOWING ORAL HISTORY HAS NOT BEEN EDITED AND MAY CONTAIN MIS-SPELLINGS OR OTHER ERRORS DUE TO LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH PARTICULAR PLACES OR PEOPLE. USERS ARE ADVISED TO LISTEN TO THE ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS IF A NAME IS IN QUESTION.

(Tape 1, Side A.)

M.M: Can you please state your names for me?

T.W: I am Theresa Wilkins.

P.W: I am Perry Wilkins.

M.M: When and where were you each born?

P.W: Cartersville, Bartow County.

T.W: Cartersville, Georgia.

M.M: And do you have any siblings?

P.W: Yes, I do.

M.M: You have siblings.

P.W: Yes, I've got brothers and sisters still residing in Cartersville. I have two brothers there and three sisters.

M.M: Okay. Who else did your household consists of, just your family?

P.W: Yeah, well I had two other, older brother and older sister who are deceased, and it was just boys and girls and mother and father in the household.

M.M: Okay, and did you have siblings?

T.W: No.

M.M: No siblings.

T.W: Nope.

M.M: Well who did your household consist of?

T.W: My household was, when I was in Cartersville, it consisted of my grandmother, my grandfather, my mother, and my aunt, and when I was at home in Emerson it consisted of my mother, my father, and myself.

M.M: Okay.

T.W: And I forgot I had a cousin (unintelligible) in Cartersville.

M.M: Okay, and what did your family do for a living?

T.W: My mother was a beautician, and my father worked at the Alatoona dam.

M.M: Oh wow, and did your mother have her own shop?

T.W: Yes, it was in the home.

M.M: It was, oh, and would people from the community come to the (unintelligible)

T.W: They'd come and get their hair done and most of the time people would just you know sit around and talk afterwards. It was more or less like relatives, even though some wouldn't be relatives, but it was just like a big family situation. People would come and get their hair done, and they'd eat sometimes, and sometimes they would bring food.

M.M: Oh wow, that's nice. Was this in Summer Hill, the Summer Hill area, or Cartersville?

T.W: It was in the Cartersville area, now we lived on Carters Street and that's away from you know the little area up in Summer Hill.

M.M: Right, well what did your family do for a living?

P.W: My mother was a homemaker, and my daddy worked for the city of Cartersville for I guess my years of knowing him working and prior to that he owned a farm.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah, he had a farm, and he was a grower of all kinds of vegetables.

M.M: Oh...

P.W: He could grow anything in any soil, it didn't matter how bad the soil was he could grow it in it. My oldest brother, my oldest two brothers they owned a cleaning service, and those cleaning services are still there today, after I guess, I think they may have started those in 1965.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: And my oldest brother is deceased, but his children still own his, and my other brother is still running his service.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: And they were pretty much so just public workers of whatever was, I don't even remember really what was the really the businesses that were there then, but my oldest brother was an entrepreneur totally (unintelligible from TW), no his name was Garner Wilkins, Jr., and the service was Cartersville Janitorial Service, and he started off actually working in the school system at Cartersville, the city of Cartersville school, and he went to a seminar and really learned how to do it, and he started his own service with an old buffer that was thrown away, he got it and had it repaired and from that point on he had a successful business, he went into, he owned real estate so he was a successful businessman in Cartersville.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: And most of my family are still, matter of fact, they are still working. They are retired from jobs, but they are still working in other jobs. My father and mother like I said he was a worker, he believed in working, he taught us to work.

M.M: Right.

P.W: And my mother, she didn't have time to work, because she was just having babies, there was nine of us, we had one sister that passed at birth, I mean she died at, just after she was only maybe a day old, and we were a close knit family.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know we all, and some of my brothers and sisters who, well two of my sisters still live there help the brother sometimes in his cleaning service. Then it goes on that I had two sisters who started a mini maid service. When mini maid services became popular, my oldest sister started one, and she worked it for years, and she sold it to the other sister and that sister is still doing it now.

M.M: In Cartersville?

P.W: Yes she's still in Cartersville.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: And so it was just kind of, they were little entrepreneurs there, and they did well.

M.M: Yeah.

P.W: And I was the only one who decided he didn't want to live in Cartersville. (laughing)

M.M: When and how did you each come to live in Summer Hill, or the area around Summer Hill, Cartersville, were you born there or did your family move into the area?

T.W: I was born there.

M.M: Oh were you?

T.W: Yes.

M.M: And you were born there?

P.W: Yes, both of us were born in Bartow County in that area, and Summer Hill was just the school for blacks then, yeah and so that's how we got together.

M.M: Okay, well where exactly, which streets, or which part of the community of Summer Hill did you live in, in Summer Hill? I mean, you said you lived outside on Carters Street, right?

T.W: (agrees)

M.M: But I just...

T.W: Summer Hill was like Jones Street, and what's the name of the street that runs, is it Aubrey Street?

P.W: Aubrey Street.

T.W: And, I lived down off Jones Street, this was Jones Street and this was Carters Street, and I lived on Carters Street, you know when I lived in Cartersville, and my people were there ever since...

M.M: Since you can remember.

T.W: Right.

P.W: Summer Hill was actually just the school name, and I don't know...

T.W: Well it was the community because...

P.W: ...but it entailed more than just that little vicinity that...

T.W: It was like Jones Street, Aubrey Street, Mull Street, Hill Street,...

P.W: Bartow Street.

T.W: No, I don't...

P.W: Bartow Street came right up to...

T.W: Bartow, Carters Street ran (unintelligible), Carters Street, Bartow, Jones, it might of all been considered Summer Hill, but you know...

M.M: It didn't seem like it, or...

T.W: No when you said Summer Hill to me I was always talking about the school.

M.M: The school, okay well let's see, which street did you live on?

P.W: I lived in the county.

M.M: Okay.

P.W: Yeah I lived in the county.

M.M: So you didn't live...

P.W: No I didn't live in that vicinity then.

M.M: Okay well can you...

T.W: But see all, everything that we did was centered around that area.

M.M: Right.

T.W: You know, like activities and I guess you say Summer Hill that was a Della Contessa shop, and there was a barber shop, and there were families that lived around it, and it was...

P.W: It was a ball park.

T.W: Was it?

P.W: It was a ball park on, right where Uncle Max (unintelligible) down from where his store is, I can't think of it, but that was a ball park. The actually had little semi pro teams that came and played baseball there...

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: ...yeah, had bleachers and all.

M.M: And everyone would kind of go see the games and stuff.

P.W: Yeah. I don't know whether she remembers that well, but it was I guess after we were starting in our, I don't even know if whether we went on teams then that place was torn down, and...

T.W: What was it?

P.W: ...projects (unintelligible) build there.

T.W: You said where (unintelligible).

P.W: It's over there where all the projects are over there. That's where...

T.W: See now the only thing that I can remember over in that area was a little store on the corner across from Miss (unintelligible).

P.W: Yeah it was down in that area.

T.W: You know I guess when you think about it, I did live in Summer Hill.

P.W: Yeah, that's what I thought.

M.M: So you lived in the (unintelligible).

T.W: I guess I did, yeah.

M.M: Well can you describe your houses, the way your houses looked?

T.W: Okay, ours was wood house, and it had a A-line roof. We had a front porch and on that front porch was on one end was a, what people would refer to I guess is a deacon's bench, and we had a swing on the other end, and two chairs in the middle and when you opened the door it was a hallway, to the right of the hallway was our living room, to the left was a bedroom, and behind that bedroom was another bedroom then the dining room, and the kitchen. Behind the living room was another bedroom, a bathroom, and where

my mother did her hair the beauty shop. Like I said it was a long hallway and during, I especially loved the Christmas's because at that time they would open up the whole house, and it would be warm all around, and all the cakes and pies. I mean you would just get a chance to walk all through the house, no doors closed, and during the summers we would be on the front porch, and I'd love to sit in the swing with my grandmother, and she'd swing and of course I would go to sleep, and we never locked doors.

M.M: Oh wow, it was a very safe feeling there.

T.W: Left the windows open and sometimes you didn't have the screens in them, but you still slept with them open, and what else can I say about our house, it had two, one set of steps you come up and then another set of steps you go up to the house, and it had a big walnut tree in the back, and my grandmother always had a beautiful flower garden, and behind the flower garden was a garden.

M.M Like a vegetable...

T.W: My grand daddy did a vegetable garden, and then to the left of that garden there was a chicken house.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And a coal yard.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my gosh.

T.W: I am trying to think, we had some pecans too, a pecan tree.

M.M: Oh wow, did you just go out there and pick them, I mean pick them up off the ground and make pies.

T.W: Oh yeah, pick them up off the ground, and we didn't have the, whenever I wanted to crack them I'd get two bricks.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: Crack them with the brick.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my gosh.

T.W: And there was a lemon tree out there too, but now I didn't ever eat the lemons, but they smelled real good, it was a lemon tree.

M.M: Oh that's nice, well would you like to describe your house?

P.W: Well as a matter of fact the home, Theresa, the home that Theresa's talking about, we started restoring that home about six years ago, and the cost factor got so great that we decided it was not worth it, so we had the city of Cartersville to burn it and use it for a training project, and we had the house burned and keep from you know (unintelligible) expensive for having it torn down.

M.M: Right.

P.W: But anyway my parents' house is still standing today. One of my nieces and her family lives in the house; her husband and her children live in that house today.

M.M: That's nice.

P.W: My father built the house, I guess I was six years old, and we just had just a normal, a normal family house. We had a front porch that was screened in, we had a back porch to it that was screened in, and like I said my mother was a home maker, and she made pies and cakes, and you smelled the aroma of the food cooking every day, because my father believed in eating, you know at a certain time you know, he was ready for his food, and so we had just a basic household, kitchen, dining room, living room, bedrooms, bathroom just a country house, you know, and like I said he loved growing foods, vegetables, watermelons. When I was in the army he saved one in 1970, I got home from Vietnam in

1970, and he had a watermelon that he had won a prize in the fair, he gave it to somebody, and they put it in the county fair. It was the largest watermelon that they had you know evidentially had a prize given on.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: But anyway he saved one, and it was still good in November.

M.M: Really?

P.W: Yeah, my dad made lots of money you know selling vegetables, and he gave a lot of them away.

M.M: Did he keep them in a cool section; I mean how did he keep preserve it?

P.W: He would just put it up in a storage house, (unintelligible) put it there, and when I got home it was still good, yeah in November I was eating home grown watermelon, but that's basically it. We were just a family of you know all of us were not at home at the same time, so I think I had at one point there was four of us there, and my brother he got married, and I had a sister that got married so it just left two of us there, and so I was the last one to leave, and I left right after graduation, but we still you know, we still kept that contact. We would go on the weekends to Cartersville, and everybody would come to mom and dad's house on Sunday you know, and we would all just have a good family time every Sunday, it was just about every Sunday, not every Sunday, every other Sunday, and when we started getting all the kids my dad would kind of disappear (laughing). You know he was a man of few words, he would say what he had to say and he'd disappear, but we just had a good Christian home, you know, nothing more. The only thing that was exciting about it was us, you know, we had our own excitement

around there, and my family still owns the property that I grew up on, you know. My sisters and brother still live in that area...

M.M: Right.

P.W: ...so they still own the property, and they go on.

T.W: Going up on, I lived at 112 West Carter Street...

M.M: 112 West...

T.W: ...West Carter, and it was not like it is now. You really were a product of your community, everybody you had a little hand in what you were doing, and raising, and what have you, if you wanted to go to anybody's house it was always an open door for anybody to come in.

M.M: Oh wow so...

T.W: And I would have a bad habit of walking down the street going to the store, in actuality I would really be trying not to step on the lines on the sidewalk, but there was a lady, her name was Miss Lois Dover, I guess she thought I was just walking with my head down...

M.M: Right.

T.W: ...and every time I passed her house she would yell Theresa, if you don't hold that head up, you know I...(laughing)...so you know people could say what they needed to say to you so far in the form of discipline and when you got home, it met you at home, whatever was said and whatever you were doing, it beat you home.

M.M: Oh my gosh, so it was like a community family.

T.W: Yeah, and as I said it takes a tribe to raise a family, and that's what it was.

P.W: You did wrong you got a spanking, that's what it boiled down to.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah.

M.M: So anyone if they saw you were doing wrong...

P.W: They wouldn't necessarily spank you, but they would call and tell your parents, and your parents were going to believe what they said you know.

M.M: Oh my gosh, you had it waiting on you, well lets see, what was your, well you already said your relationship with the neighbors it was a really good relationship...

T.W: Yep.

M.M: ...like family, well what was each of your roles in your household, and what kind of jobs did you do chore, things like that?

T.W: Well, I was a queen in my household, a little princess lets say it like that. I had in actuality I had what most kids did not have, and that is like I said I was an only child, I had three mothers. Each mother contributed something differently to my upbringing. My mother, Helen was the one who always saw to it that I was always pretty and always dressed pretty. My Aunt Nancy Louis made it a point to saw that I got education, cultural activities, and just knowledge. My grandmother provided me with a whole bunch of love, shelter from them if they were going to get me. My dad apparently wanted a boy, and so he called me Joe, and he would always say, well Joe you are going to have everything that you need, and some of the things that you want. So when it came to like doing dishes, chores I really didn't have any, because I never could do things well enough for my mother, because she would always, I don't care not just me, but if anybody did something for her, she would always go back and redo it, and so I was trying to (unintelligible), well it was going to get redone, why do I need to do it?

M.M: Right.

T.W: So my job was to go to school and to get good grades, and you know prepare for the future, and be active in the community and in church.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And so most people didn't have three mothers...

M.M: Three moms to help them.

T.W: ...yeah, but I did, and all of them like I said brought something differently.

M.M: Right to who you are today.

T.W: Yeah, but they all made sure though that I was molded into being a very proper, nice young lady.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And until I met him (laughing), and my granddad was also a protector of my, and he wouldn't let anybody bother me at all, and there was a cousin there, like I said his name was (unintelligible), and he made sure, not everyday, maybe every other day, we'd walk up the street to the corner store, and I would get a double-decker ice cream cone, strawberry and vanilla, and that's basically you know how my household was, but we had a lot of fun.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And notice I said basically there was females there in the family.

M.M: It was a strong female oriented...

T.W: Background.

M.M: That's wonderful.

T.W: And I was always taught, you know when you are talking to people, don't go with your eyes down you know, when you are hand shaking with somebody don't give limp hand shakes you know just be firm, be bold and strong.

M.M: That's great. Well what would you say your job in the household was or your role in your household?

P.W: I did it all (laughing). No I really did, I just, my mother taught me how to cook, how to clean, how to iron all of the things that a female would do in the household so when I got in the army I already knew what they were going to teach me, I already knew it you know. I helped my dad cut the grass, and I helped working in the flowers with my mother, if she was going out to pick tomatoes, just whatever it took, and I was basically kind of nurtured by my oldest brother, you know he was like the dad figure to me, although my father was there, they were just two different type people. He taught me all the ropes, you know he taught me how to dress growing up, I was possibly one of the best-dressed boys in Cartersville, because all my shopping was done in Atlanta, my brother bought me to Atlanta, bought my clothes and you know, so I would say I was pretty much so a well dressed person, I knew how to dress.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Growing up I knew what a man should have in his closet, what colors he should have and things like that, so I got to drive all of the fancy cars for my brothers, I was the youngest out of all the brothers and sisters so I got to drive all their cars, but just basically I knew how to do it all. I started driving when I was nine years old. I learned how to drive, and I started to actually earn money when I was nine or ten years old.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: So grew up very mature, didn't ask for a whole lot, you know and I was pretty much the same as everybody else. I'd get disciplined for doing wrong, there was just certain things that you didn't say or do in my parents house, because my mother was very, very religious, you know, she had a strong belief in Christ. We kind of had to walk the chalk line, and it was good, all that was good, it just transcended into how we are now, but we had just basically a good family. My youngest sister, who is older than I am, we use to get into little battles you know, but other than that it was just a run of the mill family during that time, which family is a little bit different now.

M.M: Right.

P.W: We had a set time that we would eat dinner, you know, the reason it was, because everybody who was in the household then could be there to eat, I mean if you were out you could eat when you, but once the kitchen was clean, my dad didn't want it messed back up you know he was kind of a stickler for that.

M.M: So everyone got there to eat at the same...

P.W: Yeah, yeah you know it was only two of us at home then and so it wasn't too hard to do it, so I had to really learn how to do it, because my sister didn't like to do it you know so I would kind of go on and do it to keep her out of trouble sometimes.

M.M: That was nice.

P.W: But that was basically, I didn't like Cartersville, I didn't like growing up there, I was the different one, I wanted to see the bright lights, but I enjoyed going back, but once I left I only stayed in Cartersville six months the summer from school two years, and that the last time of my staying there other than just staying over at night, good town, great town, it just didn't have enough to offer me.

M.M: Right, nothing wrong with that. Well did you share supper, dinner with your entire family, and Sunday was it a special time?

T.W: Everyday. My grandmother would have dinner ready everyday, and we all ate together, of course Sundays were extra special, because we would get a chance to have some dressing, chicken and dressing.

P.W: Roast beef.

T.W: Roast beef, and she would always make something sweet during the week, but she would double that on Sundays sometimes, like we would have a blackberry cobbler and maybe coconut cake, you know, and my granddaddy, well he was a big eater, and sometimes when he had something that he really liked, he'd make sure that we all got some of it right, but then he'd take, and he would either just blow over it so nobody could get in it, or just (unintelligible) so nobody else would want any of it. (laughing) Now we had a lot of fun.

M.M: Right.

T.W: We really did growing up. I tell you what I would like to see, but it would scare me half to death and that's when my grandmother would do chickens, like I said we had chickens, and she would go out in the yard, I thought it was cruel, but it scared me, and she would pick up a chicken, and she'd take the chicken and ring it, pop it.

M.M: Oh my gosh, so you had your chickens at, you didn't go to the store and buy them.

P.W: They had a chicken yard.

T.W: We had a chicken yard, and she'd pop it, and what would scare me was after that neck was broken on that chicken that thing would still jump around.

M.M: Really?

T.W: Yeah.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

T.W: Yeah it would jump, and lets see, if I can remember, she would pluck the hairs from that chicken...

P.W: In hot water.

T.W: ...but sometimes they would do it fire, like singe the stuff down, and cut it open, clean it, and cook it.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my goodness.

T.W: Straight from the yard, and the good vegetables, and I always like to go out and sit in the garden and pull the tomatoes straight from the vine and eat.

M.M: Oh my gosh that is the best.

T.W: They were delicious.

M.M: Oh my gosh, wow.

T.W: So we had fun, and my granddad made coffee look so good, because he would be drinking it and then he'd just pour some in a saucer and just you know...

P.W: Slurp it up.

T.W: ...and I said well that sure is some good looking stuff, and I tasted it, but I didn't like it. After I tasted coffee I didn't like coffee, he just made it look good, and everything was done on a wood stove.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: She had a big black stove, and you know you put the fire in it, burn it, and cook it, cook food that way.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my gosh, that is amazing, I don't think you could do that today, I don't think I could.

P.W: No nobody could.

M.M: Well what about the foods at your dinners on Sunday was it a big day?

P.W: It was always special, everybody was there, and my mother was the typical mother, she could cook, you know and she started preparing her dinner on Saturday for Sunday and after church everybody showed up at our house. Everybody, all of her kids would show up at her house with their kids and have dinner.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

P.W: It was not difficult then, because my father grew all of the foods, the only thing he had to buy was the meat, and some of the times he didn't have to buy that, because some of his brothers may have had a hog killed, or a cow killed, and they would just share the meat with him, so, but it was always plenty of food to eat, you always, you know, by us living in Atlanta, my mother would always asked us if we wanted to carry some food home, and normally we didn't, you know, but it was just a basic, you know, and usually when all the visiting was done it was during the warm months you know that we would, and after we'd eat, we'd go out and sit in the yard just to...

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

M.M: Okay.

P.W: So that was pretty much (unintelligible) when we wanted to discuss some of the in-laws, we'd have a round table when we wanted to talk about the wives or the husbands outside

you know I was only a kid, but that's what (unintelligible). We'd have round table on them you know, we'd discuss things about them.

T.W: They would.

P.W: But we had just, you know, families today aren't that way anymore, you know even today our kids run in and out and eat, you know they'll show up, everybody at one time, but normally even at holidays its hard to get them all together at the same moment.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know, but during those times we were...

T.W: But our kids are basically...

P.W: ...Yeah they are basically the way we were.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah they still have that you know I guess maybe because of the way we taught them and trained them, you know they still family orientate.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know they love, you are okay if you are from the outside, but they really like family around.

M.M: Right.

P.W: We have dinners like we use to, you know we'll have the Sunday dinners sometimes, and we do a lot of cooking and all, but basically you know today everybody's busy, it's a fast food life now.

T.W: I have back there in my guest room the bed that my grandmother had, and when I was a little girl it looked like it was so huge, and I loved to sleep in that bed with her, and it is, its just a full size bed, but it looked like it was huge to me.

M.M: Being little it looked...

T.W: Yeah, and so Perry redid it for me.

M.M: Oh that's nice, oh my gosh.

T.W: I'll let you see it, there's a tall back on it.

M.M: Oh my gosh I'd love to see it, that'd be great. Well which holidays were celebrated at each of your houses?

T.W: All of them.

M.M: All of them?

T.W: Yeah all of them, we had Easter dinner, Mother's day, Father's day, Christmas, Thanksgiving, we did cookouts on Fourth of July, Labor day, and Memorial day, we celebrated everything. The thing that made the holidays special in the summer was that big ole churn of ice cream, and we'd have vanilla ice cream, but you know what, even though they did the hand turning then, my grandmother would make ice cream, you know during the week, and it was the best ice cream, because she made it and put it in the freezer. You know what an ice tray is?

M.M: (Agrees)

T.W: A silver ice tray.

M.M: (Agrees)

T.W: She made it like that.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: In an ice tray, and then like during the winter time, during holidays, if it would snow she would make snow ice cream.

M.M: Oh my gosh, I love that.

T.W: It was delicious, so yeah we celebrated all holidays.

M.M: Did you do the same at your house?

P.W: (unintelligible) Yeah, it was a lot different though. Like on the Fourth of July and days like that we would go to the beach, that's where our activities were at the, what was the George Carver beach, ...

T.W: George Washington.

P.W: George Washington Carver beach there in Cartersville, Alatoona, so that was, other than that it was Christmas, and Thanksgiving, Easter, every Sunday was a holiday.

T.W: See during that time, he's talking about the beach, during that time of course there was a white beach and their was a black beach.

P.W: Right.

T.W: And we were always on the back side.

M.M: Well did you have, so they actually segregated the beach?

P.W: Right.

M.M: So, wow, how far apart was the segregation, I mean was it just like, did somebody...

P.W: No they were apart they weren't just like this, they were same water, the body of water, but it was just different locations.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: You know and even during that time, we didn't even think about that, because we had some much fun, I mean that beach, people from everywhere came to that beach, Atlanta, Macon, everybody came to that beach there so you know it was just a place to hang out.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Just like you hang out now wherever, that's what we did then.

M.M: Well was there a place to do barbecues?

P.W: Yeah we had all of that, we could go out on the water with boats, we had a dance area, we had picnic area, we had the sand boxes, we had all of that.

T.W: It's just that it was in a different location.

P.W: And that beach is still being used today, it's a marina there.

T.W: I haven't been there since I don't know when, so I don't know what it looks like up there at the beaches.

M.M: I saw a playground up there when we went. I took a walking tour and saw a play ground there, so I don't know if that's exactly where, there was a house up there too, so I don't know if that was where your beach was.

P.W: They've probably changed it some now.

T.W: Probably have, because the Benums, now when I was going when I was a little girl, the Benums, Jesse Benum, and (unintelligible), Clarence Benum that was his name I think, they were the operators of it, and they cooked up there too, but like he said we would go there, families would go there and cookout, or either bring your own food and just spread together, and I don't know what they did on the other side, but we had a good time on our side.

M.M: Yeah.

P.W: We had a dance area in there so you could go and dance.

M.M: Dance on the beach.

P.W: Yeah, it was really good, and you never had any problems, you couldn't because if you got into trouble there you could never come back there.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: You could never go back, so everybody (unintelligible), it was really a good place.

M.M: And mostly that was Labor day, any warm holidays?

T.W: During the summer months.

P.W: Yeah, it was really just the summer months.

M.M: Did you go on the weekends up there too?

T.W: We would go anytime.

P.W: Yeah.

M.M: So like Friday nights you'd go?

P.W: Yeah, that was our place to go.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: That's right.

M.M: That is so neat. Well let's see, what was each of your first jobs like where was your first job?

T.W: Mine was here.

M.M: Really?

T.W: Yeah, I worked for the Coca-Cola company.

M.M: Oh wow, when did you start working?

T.W: I worked there in 1971 until about '72, and from there I went to Marta, that's (unintelligible) that started, and I stayed there for twenty-seven years.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my gosh, and...

P.W: When I started working I was young, she was a late bloomer in the working field, but like I said before I started young, but when I was in high school I worked for Steins, that was the department store in Cartersville, and the branch of it who was a brother in law or

sister or somebody owned a store called Irvins, and I worked there. I stocked the store, I put out most of the clothing in there, just whatever they needed me to do around there.

M.M: Like after school?

P.W: Yeah this was after school when I was in high school, and then I worked with my brother in his business, and so after one of the first real jobs that I had, when I got out of the army I worked for a company called Mead packing company, I worked there for three weeks, and I went to the railroad, I worked for North Southern railway, which was formally Southern railway for twenty-five years.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: And I was in a train wreck in '93, and I returned in '95, but my work experience was basically the bulk of it was in the railroad. I worked in the safety department for eight years, and transportation for the other time, and I owned my own cleaning service at one time, and at the present I am an automobile dealer.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

P.W: So I will probably do this until Alzheimer's set in on me. (laughing) But I, you know little different jobs and all, but basically my work career was with (unintelligible) Southern railway, and like I said I'm retired from that, its all history now.

M.M: Right, well where did most people work in Summer Hill, in the community where did most of the people do you remember hearing, I'm going to work here?

T.W: They were, there were lots of school teachers, they were barbers, beauticians, worked at the mines I think, and Good Year, and there was another place like Good Year, what was that place called...

P.W: Union (unintelligible).

T.W: ...Union (unintelligible) and a lot of home makers, a lot of people who did day labor, you know worked for other people, washing and ironing.

P.W: There were entrepreneurs too, there were those who owned their own businesses. The laundry, dry cleaners, was owned by Happy and Sara, and people owned where you got the ice from, yeah...

T.W: I don't remember that.

P.W: ...you don't remember that.

T.W: People owned little restaurants.

P.W: There were a lot of farmers there.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: There were a lot of farmers people owned...

T.W: The barbers and beauticians owned that, that's why I said barbers and beauticians. They were from all walks of life.

M.M: Well I think we may have touched on this, but maybe a little bit more, do you remind describing the entire feel of the Summer Hill neighborhood like a little bit more. How was the neighborhood, what was it like, you know if you were going to just walk down the street, and just remember what it was like?

T.W: Well it was just like a big family, that's really what it was, and there was a lot of love there. Nobody really, well we really didn't know that we were not wealthy, we didn't know that.

M.M: Monetarily wealthy, but you were spiritually wealthy.

T.W: Yeah, and everything was, most of the things that we did were centered around the school, and the church, and it didn't matter if I was on program, or somebody else was on program, everybody came to see.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: To see what you were doing on program, and when we got our report cards, everybody was proud of that you know, they were very concerned, what did you get, what did you get on your card, you know, A's, and we had a season basketball tournament, and people opened up their homes to the teams that came from out of town, like for instance people came from Rome, or Marietta, and from here, and of course there wasn't no hotel for them to stay so the kids stayed at different peoples' homes.

M.M: Oh wow so they actually stayed with their "rivals?"

P.W: Rivals that's right.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: We had a wonderful time, and we had, we learned in that community, I think our knowledge in education was amongst the best, you know for what we had to work with, even though we got the books from Cartersville high school.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And the teachers they were very caring people about us, they made sure that we learned and there were those who were not as swift as others when it came down to learning, but they taught them too, and they made sure that they learned you know what they could. And then a lot of kids were put in different little classes like a "special ed" class that didn't belong there, and the teachers would work with them and eventually they were put into the regular population of school.

M.M: So it was a very caring atmosphere?

T.W: Very, very caring, and no child went untaught, and even though the teachers were there for us, we had people in the community there you know for us too, and the school, the two principals that I remember J.S. Morgan, Sr., and James Stanley Morgan, Jr., even though they were principals, and we respected them they were somewhat like parents too, you know they had their own children, they taught us and dealt with us just like their own, and whenever we had like graduation it was really special you know, because the community would turn out to see everybody graduate.

M.M: Even if they didn't have a (unintelligible).

T.W: Right, they came.

P.W: There were no things, such things as invitations then you know, you probably had them, but it was open.

M.M: Right.

T.W: Everybody, and it was full. We had graduation in the gymnasium, and I think there were bleachers on both sides, and then there were chairs on the main floor, and it was full.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

T.W: During that time, now Perry is a product of two schools, he's Bartow elementary, and during that time when the kids graduated from Bartow eighth grade they came to Summer Hill in ninth grade.

P.W: That was the only high school there, Summer Hill was the only...

T.W: For blacks.

P.W: ...yeah there was a (unintelligible) from every part of Bartow county, the Cartersville area.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And so see that brought together another different community of people.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And when they would graduate that was a big something up there, and then of course we would look forward to these new group of people to come into Summer Hill, you know you'd have to stand and have to look them over you know, and he always thought he was cute when he came down.

P.W: And you did too. (laughing)

T.W: I didn't like him, and he didn't like me, but all in all everybody was, it was just family, and its quite different today, you know everybody knew everybody, and like when I mentioned the Della Contessa shop that was the best ice cream they had up in there.

M.M: Just all flavors?

T.W: I remember the vanilla the strawberry.

P.W: They had different flavors.

T.W: I know they had chocolate, but I remember...

P.W: They had rainbow.

T.W: ...and during that time the roads were not paved.

M.M: Oh wow, so no sidewalks?

T.W: Dirt sidewalk.

P.W: I don't remember that, that was before my time

T.W: Now they were dirt sidewalks when we walked up through there. My aunt, you've probably met her, Nancy Beasley?

M.M: No, but I know she has been interviewed, I know someone had interviewed her.

T.W: Well she was a teacher and librarian, but we would walk to school from Carters street to school.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: And it was just a safe feeling, you know, and the people when they fought, it was nothing, if they ever fought; you know it was nothing like what you hear (unintelligible) now.

M.M: Right.

T.W: The guys would get to fussing about little of something, but just as soon as they said the last words then that was done, over, and the school itself was, we were very proud of our school, and we kept it, I think we kept it very well, and I put the elementary school on there, because that's where I went.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And we always looked forward to going to the big school, that was the school on the hill, the high school, and that school had classroom on the inside, but it also had like little wings to it, and the teachers there in the elementary school, second grade teacher, and the third grade teacher taught my mother, and my aunt.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: And I think Miss Bessie Shells just died maybe two years ago.

M.M: Oh my goodness, so she taught...

T.W: Three, she taught me, and she taught my mother, and she taught my aunt.

M.M: Oh my goodness, oh wow so you really felt, I mean she really...

T.W: Oh yeah, and most of the teachers knew the families.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And so it was...

M.M: So you knew to behave in school, because the teachers would come to your house.

T.W: They'd tell, oh yeah.

M.M: Well when you went to the school did it seem like, when you were in the elementary school did it seem like the high school was just huge and were you nervous to go?

T.W: Oh it was...I wasn't nervous, but I was anxious to get down there, because we would, we would have sometimes assemblies down there, and we'd watch the high school kids do whatever they need to do, and we'd go down for lunch, like I said early if the weather was bad, we always looked forward to riding the bus.

M.M: So there were two buses?

T.W: Yellow bird, and a blue bird, and we'd ride the bus down the hill to the cafeteria, and to go to high school down there it was an experience you know, but the kids were nice, but they just looked so big, and we were so little looking I guess, but it was an experience. You know every, I think everybody that went to school there, and when we got to college, we found that we were just as equipped as anybody else, and we could stand with the best of them, and our class, the class of 1967, that was one of the best classes that went through there, and people still looked to see what the class of '67 will be doing.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And we did something that no other class had done. For our, I believe it was our twentieth class reunion, the class of '68 was the last class that graduated from there, but the class of '67, what we did, we did a graduation ceremony all over again.

M.M: At your reunion?

T.W: Yeah, we actually used the gym. We had (unintelligible), we had everything.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: Yes, and we had a speaker, a graduation speaker, and we even included our teachers.

M.M: How nice.

T.W: And you march in for graduation, and the teachers marched in also.

M.M: Oh that was nice, I bet that was emotional.

T.W: Oh yeah, and people came, they came, they said they was having another graduation.

Class of '67 you all going, and so yeah they came, we graduated all over again.

M.M: That's beautiful, that's amazing.

T.W: And I have pictures of that graduation.

M.M: Oh wow, oh my goodness.

T.W: And you know we didn't have a real big class, but we thought it was big.

M.M: Right.

T.W: Excuse me I think we had thirty something plus, or fifty something students, and when I got down here to college, and people were talking about their classes, I'd say what, one, two, three hundred people graduate.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: But like I said we were very well prepared and very well equipped to go out here and face the world.

P.W: And we still face it.

M.M: Well, lets see, well were you guys known by any nicknames in the community?

P.W: Well not so much in the community, but in the school.

T.W: He was "Puff."

P.W: My name was "Puff," I don't know where, I don't even remember...

T.W: “Sweet Puff.”

P.W: And her name was “Shelly,” and that was it, that was really the only thing that I was called, and I don’t remember where I got that from, I think it was Larry that gave me that name, but anyway...

M.M: And everyone called you that in school.

T.W: “Sweet Puff.”

P.W: Pretty much so yeah, all the kids did, you know.

M.M: Right.

T.W: See we met when he came down from Bartow, what was the ’63?

P.W: I don’t know.

T.W: We met in 1963.

M.M: Were you nervous about going to Summer Hill high school?

P.W: No, it really wasn’t any different to me, because I knew all of the kids, most of the kids anyway, you know, you have to understand that although we were, yeah I did know you, I use to travel through her yard to go see another girl when I was you know, so I knew here...

T.W: My face.

P.W: The way you walked through Cartersville was then, regardless of where you lived everybody was involved in the same things, you know, although you may have gone to a different school...

M.M: So it wasn’t like you were going to strangers, you felt comfortable?

P.W: Yeah.

T.W: But it was like, that was had to be a certain amount of tension there, because you were coming to a new environment and there would be new challenges, its not like you were afraid of the people, not that sort of thing, that was a different level of competition.

M.M: Right.

T.W: You know that you were, would be faced with.

P.W: There were a (unintelligible) that had been placed during those times, if you lived in a certain area you were “this,” but if you lived in another area you were not, you were kind of the outsiders coming in, and I may have been perceived that way, but it wasn’t a difference to me, because I was kind of around a lot, you know I was around people, because of my brothers and all you know I got to circulate and know people and do things that some of the others were not able to do, so it wasn’t a big challenge to me, because most of the teachers that were there I knew them, you know so it wasn’t, it may have been for some of the kids who probably were not able to get in and do a lot of things, but it really wasn’t that big (unintelligible), the difference like the way things are now, you have an area where you go to school.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Then it was no, you had, it was two schools that blacks went to, it was Bartow elementary school, and Summer Hill elementary, and Summer Hill high school, so Summer Hill high school was the feeder school for kids coming into high school you know.

M.M: Right.

P.W: So that was basically how that worked and then you just got in the groove and went on and handled things.

T.W: See we all were escalating to a different level, and we were going into high school, and so that meant different challenges, but it also meant people would be, it would be a different level of competition.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And when you got in high school there were those who were good at home ec, good at band, good with the chorus, good at math, good at English, and so you go into this little thing competing which was a good thing.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And it made us strive harder to be the best at what we were doing.

M.M: Right.

T.W: So it was a little different, and after we all got accustomed to everybody well then the competition was like on a different level, but it was all in keeping with the academics though you know.

M.M: Right.

P.W: They started competing the girls, the girls started competing for the guys then. (laughing)

T.W: Oh well that's socially.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Well that's a part of it.

M.M: Yeah, yeah definitely.

T.W: We had good times though, we really did.

P.W: It was a good experience.

M.M: Well what did you do for fun, as children, as teenagers, I know you mentioned the Della Contessa, and so do you want to...

T.W: Me growing up, like I said I was an only child, and I had, I created my own fun, I did have people who would come and visit me, but I had friends on the dresser. My perfume bottles were my friends.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And they all had names, and I played with them, there was a little section up under that lemon tree that I told you about, it had some very pretty grass, and I would pluck the grasses hair.

M.M: Oh really, oh my gosh.

T.W: Yes, and the little mud pies, I made mud pies and so far as having a whole lot to do in Cartersville you know it just really wasn't, so but my aunt would make sure that I had knowledge of things that were not there, so she carried me on a train ride to Atlanta, and we stayed at (unintelligible) restaurant and hotel. Ate at the restaurant, we did, my mother and my grandmother would do school shopping, and we'd take the bus from Cartersville here, and a lot of times when we did that we'd have to stand from Cartersville to Atlanta.

M.M: All the way, oh my goodness.

T.W: In the back, but sometime they would realize that my grandmother was old, and people would get up and let her have their seats, and we had, any time that the family got together, that was a good time, fun time, and when the Bartow county fair would come we'd go there. We did not have a whole lot to do, we just made our activities, and just made fun you know with each other, and we'd skate, ride bicycles. Now skating, now I don't mean a skating rink.

P.W: Roller skates.

M.M: Oh wow, just in the neighborhood?

T.W: There's the hill that you would come down from Jones street to Carters street, and we'd skate down that big long hill, and I, sometimes you know when you think about that stuff its scary.

M.M: I know, I was thinking about wrecking, I would have toppled over.

T.W: They'd have, I never was this good, some of the kids, and they'd have a broom, and they would, with this broom when they would come off that hill they would skoot down, and they'd have the broom, and they would jump over this broom, and some were even good enough to make a full summer sought with that broom and that skate.

M.M: Oh my gosh, oh wow.

T.W: Yeah, and we did the band, extracurricular activities, I was a girl scout, a brownie, Future Business Leaders of America, SLAG, I was at student leadership of America, student librarian assistant of Georgia, SLAGs that's what they called them, what else did we do, we had plays, and the church programs, so basically we just made our own fun.

M.M: Right.

T.W: Oh we always ate at the...

P.W: Four Way.

T.W: ...it was Four Way cafeteria, it wasn't a cafeteria...

P.W: Café.

T.W: Four Way Café, you know where that is?

M.M: Yeah.

T.W: That was the, what did we call that thing...

(End Tape 1, Side B. Begin Tape 2, Side A.)

M.M: Okay, you were saying about the Dairy Queen.

T.W: The brazier down on north Tennessee street, we ate there and there would be little house parties on the weekends sometimes, and we wash our cars and just ride, just ride, and then there was, was it called Starlight, a drive in movie theatre?

P.W: Yeah.

M.M: Oh wow

T.W: In Cartersville.

M.M: So you guys would go there too?

T.W: (agrees)

M.M: That sounds nice.

T.W: Yeah, it was homemade activities.

M.M: And did you do basically the same thing?

P.W: Yeah, I was a little older, and I was a little more experienced so I got to go out with my brothers a little more, you know I just kind of hung out with them, nothing bad, just you know I could go different places. I used to come to Atlanta with my oldest brother and go in a play that was called, The Royal Peacock, and it was a club type thing, but you know I'd just go in there to sit with them, and you could eat in there so didn't too many kids get to do that so, although I was a teenager then, but we all did the same things you know, because it was just us there you know, the same parties everybody went to, every little hang out place you could go, everybody was there, you know. In growing up our major activities as boys were playing softball and baseball, you know, we loved playing that,

that was a popular sport then, and so that was basically growing up you know, and sometimes you didn't do anything, you just kind of laid back and didn't do anything.

M.M: Right.

P.W: But the main thing when we got to be teenagers, and we got cars we either were able to use a brother or sisters car, we just made sure they was clean, and we would just ride you know, all over Cartersville, like kids are still doing today, you know we did it then.

T.W: We did as girl scouts, we did an annual hike, and we'd hike from Summer Hill to Roland Springs after Miss Minnie Ruth Carter, Miss Smith, (unintelligible) their home.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: Yeah and we would like roast marshmallows and do hotdogs, and we'd also go camping trips and that would be done up at Alatoona girl scouts and every Easter, and we did this until we were big kids, we would leave school and go over to the Witts, Mr. Tommy Witts, was his name Tommy? Our classmate's name was Tommy Witts, (unintelligible) their parents' home they had this beautiful yard, just big yard, and we would hunt Easter eggs over there.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And then the parents would have us hotdogs and potato chips.

M.M: Stuff like that.

T.W: And then we did vacation Bible school, and we had a lot of activities there.

M.M: Oh that's nice.

T.W: So it's just a lot of community oriented and homemade activities that we did.

M.M: Well, lets see, do you recall any areas considered whites only or blacks only in Cartersville?

T.W: Sure.

M.M: Were there ever any signs or things that, and how was it negotiated you can't go here, I mean did anyone just say it or the signs were there?

P.W: Yeah the signs were there, basically in eating places, the bus station, I guess those are two most of the places that you would see those signs, at water fountains they would say white only or black only you know, and that probably, I don't even remember when they started having those.

T.W: I don't remember the signs; I don't, not there.

P.W: You remember in the bus station.

T.W: I just probably didn't pay any attention.

P.W: Yeah, but they were there.

T.W: And like at the Four Way café downtown, now we always ate in the kitchen.

P.W: In the back, yeah.

M.M: So you weren't allowed to go to the front?

T.W: No we ate in the kitchen.

P.W: Those were the, I guess in Cartersville, they would probably be the places that you would see them, at the bus station, and I don't even know whether they have them in like the Four Way, I don't know whether they had the signs in there, you just knew to go to the back around there.

T.W: We could not downstairs in the, what's the name, The Grand...

P.W: Yeah.

T.W: We had to sit upstairs...

P.W: Upstairs in the theatre.

M.M: Really, they would not...

P.W: You couldn't go downstairs.

M.M: ...were there signs saying don't go?

P.W: I don't recall that but,...

M.M: It was just kind of like don't go down there.

P.W: Yeah, I knew that, but I don't recall whether there were signs there.

T.W: I don't remember the signs, where else...well we didn't go to, I really didn't think anything about it, Cartersville high school, I didn't go over there, we didn't go in that school.

P.W: Well I did.

T.W: Your brother worked there.

P.W: My brother worked there.

T.W: That was different, so you know, I don't ever even remember attending any function there, not at all.

P.W: The hospital.

M.M: The hospital was segregated as well?

P.W: I think so let me make sure.

T.W: I remember very little bit about the hospital, but I can't think of the name of the street, but it's the street where the City Hall, on the side of that hospital, not hospital, doctor's office, Dr. Walford, we'd go there, but we didn't sit in the same waiting area, and that was like a house.

M.M: Oh my goodness, so you could go to the same doctor but not sit with...

T.W: No we didn't sit with them.

P.W: Yeah they were segregated the old hospital was segregated.

T.W: I don't remember, like I said, I don't remember the hospital, I just remember Dr.

Walford's place, and there was something else, when you asked that, like we told you about the beaches, I don't really remember any activities that involved you know blacks and whites clashing, I don't, because I was pretty much so sheltered so I didn't get out a whole lot like that, but I do remember though that sometimes when we would go to the stores I don't care where we were, we would get waited on last.

M.M: Even if you were there first?

T.W: (agrees)

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: I remember that, (unintelligible), just stand there, I remember that.

P.W: (unintelligible) when you were little?

T.W: No I was with my parents, and that's basically it. The water fountains, I don't remember the water fountains, even though I seen signs, I didn't see them there.

M.M: Right.

T.W: Not that I recall, I saw them here a lot because like I said when I came down here in 1967...

M.M: And the signs were...

P.W: You saw them here then?

T.W: I saw them down at like down at Macy's...

P.W: Nah.

T.W: There was a little corner down at Macy's down in the basement and that sign did say white only, it did too.

P.W: (unintelligible)

T.W: It did.

P.W: I can't call that, because I don't remember that.

T.W: I remember that in '67. Yeah I remember that.

P.W: You sure?

T.W: (agrees)

P.W: I'm not going to debate it with you.

T.W: I remember that, because see even though segregation wasn't really over.

P.W: No I know that, but I...

T.W: During those times and remember those were some of the things, in fact during Dr.

King's time you know we were down here and during his time I do remember there was a fight about signs down here during that time that we came there was a fight about signs.

M.M: Oh my goodness.

T.W: Yeah and even though things have sorta like turned to the fact that you might not have seen them...

M.M: Right.

T.W: ...but you still knew.

M.M: Right, right it was still just known not to do certain things.

T.W: Yeah, but I didn't have bad experiences so far as whites growing up, in fact, in fact, we lived together, when I say lived together on Carters street it did not matter.

M.M: Really?

T.W: Because there were, there was a white family that lived down the street from me, and we played together.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: They were in my house; I was in their house.

M.M: So it wasn't an issue with those families?

T.W: Not that I can remember, no issues, no we played, and we had a good time, its just the fact that when it was time to go our separate ways.

M.M: You had to?

T.W: Yeah, we went our separate ways, but yeah they lived on Carters street, oh yeah, and the neighbors to the back of us they were white, and that was a prominent, it was a prominent white family, the Simpsons, Mr. Simpson, you know where the apartments on Irvins street, the corner of Irvin and Carter, all that area belonged to the Simpsons, and they lived right here, and we were right here.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And they talked and all, come down, it like I said, even though it was during those times, it wasn't really, not that I can recall, it wasn't really bad, bad now it could have been, but I don't know, all I know was you know, there were places that we just didn't go.

P.W: That's why it wasn't bad.

M.M: Yep.

T.W: Maybe.

P.W: Yeah, that's why it wasn't bad, you stayed in your place they stayed in theirs, so that's why it wasn't bad, I mean you could come together and do what you had to do, but then you would turn back to your places you know. Cartersville wasn't a bad town you know during our error of growing up, but when I say bad there were not, you know...

T.W: Not racial things.

P.W: ...yeah, I mean there were, racial tension was there, but it wasn't like it is you know in years past, before that and even after that.

M.M: Right.

P.W: The reason was you stayed on your turf, you know and they stayed on their turf, but people still came together, and some of your best friends a different race, you know, but you could only go so far with it, you know I grew up with white friends, in fact I still know them today.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: After all these years we still see each other and talk you know...

M.M: Right.

P.W: ...so it transcended over into a different area of time, you know people do things a little bit differently now.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Cartersville was unique place and that's why its unique now, you know it's a growing place and all, but it still didn't have enough to keep a lot of us there, the growth was so slow that if you wanted to really grow you had to leave there, you know, but it's a good place, great Cartersville, Summer Hill.

T.W: Are you there?

M.M: No I am not, I actually, (unintelligible). Well tell me about the role of church in the community, was that important?

T.W: Focal point, that's where you got a lot of learning, lot of growing, and a lot of, what do I want to say, you gained confidence in church, and I say that because we had, I was in designing bells that's the choir, we had a little choir, then went to the youth choir, then

went to the little older choirs, I am bell number two, they made sure that we spoke well so anytime that they had a program, like Easter program or it didn't matter.

M.M: Right.

T.W: We were always put to the forefront, and we had to speak well, and we learned about the Bible in Sunday school, you know we had to do that too, and it was always, was and still is a focal point or our existence.

M.M: And you went to Mt. Zion?

T.W: Yes.

M.M: And was church important in...

P.W: Definitely so, I guess pretty much so, everybody growing up, that was place you had no where else to go, and so Sunday's were very special, because you got to go to Sunday school, and to church, and then any other programs that was going on in your church that day so you could be around the girls, and the girls would be around the boys so, but yeah there were a lot, even in my learning then, has brought me to where I am now, you know, although I am more (unintelligible) in the Bible now than I was then, but it was just not learning from the Bible it was just learning period.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know you got to be around other people then, like Theresa said you got to, you had to speak out, you know and do different things so it was very important.

T.W: That was one of your first places that you learned etiquette.

P.W: Yeah.

T.W: You did not chew chewing gum in church, you did not talk.

P.W: And see that's in a black church, during that era of time that's where the politics was conducted, you conducted all your politics in the church although it's a separation of state and government, church and government, but you talked to each other, you know, you trusted each other, you'd say well now this person is running for this office, and so everybody agreed to this is who we going to vote for you know the adults did, so we learned about politics in our own way growing up like that, you know, yeah they would have the slate of people that was running for office, and that's how the blacks conducted their, (unintelligible) of how, who they were going to vote for.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: Yeah.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know they didn't get out and campaign, for the people, you know naturally the people would come whoever was running for office, if it was the sheriff, you know he'd come around the community and say well you know I'm running, (unintelligible), and so all the people would go together and say, well what do you think about this person, and that's how it was conducted.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah.

M.M: Did you attend Mt. Zion as well?

P.W: No I went to Pine Grove Church.

M.M: Pine Grove Church.

P.W: Yeah, Pine Grove (unintelligible) church, that church is still in existence today. My father was a member of Theresa's church.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah, that was his actually his church until he joined my mother's church, and those churches are still vital churches in Cartersville today.

M.M: Oh wow, lets see, well we covered a lot of these, okay did you go onto college after graduation?

P.W: Yes.

M.M: And how do you think, well which colleges did you attend?

T.W: I attended Morris Brown College.

P.W: And I went to Fort Valley State and (unintelligible).

M.M: Well, lets see, how do you feel like the education that you have received has affected you life?

T.W: From college or...

M.M: From just your entire educational experience.

P.W: Oh its been, we wouldn't be where we are now, yeah although the education if you are talking about of life, I wouldn't trade it in for a million dollars, because the learning that I got from it they don't get it that way anymore. Now Theresa may be different you know she's a female and I was a male, and I grew up and I learned so much just growing up that it takes men now to be men before they really know, I learned it at a young age.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Yeah, so it was really, the experience was worth you know, it was worth a whole lot. You know I grew up in times when I could only do certain things.

M.M: Right.

P.W: So I had to work through that, then there were only certain colleges that we could go through, so we worked through that, and there were only certain jobs that we could hold so we worked through that and, but then after we get to this point and you look back on it, although we have all these opportunities now you still missing something, the kids are now, because they don't, boys don't have to go in the army anymore.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know, unless they volunteer to go in. I was drafted in, they made me go, I didn't want to go, but it taught me some lessons, that my boys will never know, never. I mean I couldn't teach it to them, you know so it was a great experience, I loved it, I wouldn't take it, I loved growing up in a small town, I loved all of that you know, because I know the experience of living in a small town and living in the city.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know, I take the good out of both of them and put them together and that's how I live, you know.

T.W: Like I said earlier the educational experience from Summer Hill elementary and high school they prepared us, so when I went to Morris Brown I wasn't behind. I was right there with my class, you know you had to take a reading comp exam and there were so many who could not read.

M.M: Oh my gosh.

T.W: But we were taught reading and comprehension.

P.W: They could read, they couldn't comprehend.

T.W: They could not, you know that's all (unintelligible), you know so from day one I was comfortable, and I was knowledgable, because I had learned.

P.W: Cartersville and Summer Hill was unique, it was a unique place you know, there were other places, other towns, small towns like that, they were no where close to being what you could get there.

T.W: When we became integrated we lost a lot.

M.M: Really?

T.W: Yeah, and when we lost, when I say we lost a lot, we lost a lot of the nurturing, because people had problems that were just unique to your own race, and by being taught by someone who was of that race they understood you know.

M.M: Right.

T.W: What is it called, I think now, they want to term in ibonics, but people from different areas, you know whites too...

P.W: Spoke a different (unintelligible)

T.W: ...different spoke, and its like dialect differently, but see when we became integrated it wasn't viewed like that, it was viewed as they just can't speak right, you know or they are not as smart, you know.

M.M: Which wasn't true.

T.W: No.

P.W: That's why I said it was unique.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Yeah.

T.W: We lost a lot with in the integration.

M.M: Right.

T.W: On the other hand there were you know there were pluses too, but like I said I never went to school to an integrated school, because when it came about in Cartersville we were the class of '67, the class of '68 was the last class I think, but there were those in our class maybe two or three who took advantage of going to a white school.

M.M: You had that option you could do that?

P.W: Yeah in '60, in our senior year we did, yeah, but we opted to stay, and that's a heritage we will have the others won't have although they came all the way with us, but when we got to be seniors they opted to go to the other high school.

T.W: Cartersville high school.

P.W: Yeah, and they lost that.

M.M: Right.

P.W: But, yeah like I said Cartersville is unique because even today at my age, I've got white friends in Cartersville that were like family, we were like family, you know and it wasn't about because they were white and we were black, it was just the fact that we cared about each other.

M.M: Right.

P.W: And it just transcended over to these years now, that their children know, we have a son who lives there so he knows all of those people and by his name being Wilkins, you know, they tie him into us.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know so its still, that link is still there, and I guess that's what it takes to make the world go around, you come into differences with people and then you connect with them, and I traveled around some, and I have been to some small towns in Georgia, and

Cartersville supercedes a lot of those places in culture and everything else, yeah, its just a unique place to live although we had the tension there, but it was not as great as it was in other places, and you know you could go about Cartersville at night and have no problems, where if you lived in some of the other places, black had to be off the streets at certain times or they would know that you were going to get into trouble, so therefore Cartersville is unique, and I don't think there are any other high schools that would compare to Cartersville, Summer Hill, I don't think you will find any, you know and like Theresa was saying, the teachers cared about you, and we've got some teachers who taught us, that was their first (unintelligible) in teaching, and now we party with them you know at Christmas and different times up there.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: Yeah, so you know they were young, we were seniors coming out so the gap was not that great in age wise, although they taught us, and now, and they taught some of the peoples' children.

M.M: Oh wow.

P.W: You know.

T.W: They just made sure that we learned what was put in front of us.

M.M: Well do you guys think that there is a place for all black schools in society today?

T.W: Sure.

M.M: Yeah.

P.W: Yeah I think there's a place for all schools, and they all are needed, but definitely in some places more than others, black schools are definitely needed just like they were back in the day, you know as the young people say, back in the day, you know they are still

needed, because (unintelligible) a certain type of nurture you'll get, not so much because of the color of the skin, but just...

T.W: Culture.

P.W: ...yeah the culture part of it.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know you need that, you know and if you don't have the school some kind of way to get it, there's churches or whatever, you are going to miss out on it, you know and that's something you can never regain you know if, once you lose it, its you know its over.

T.W: You know kids now can be confused, you know by differences in societies, and sometimes you just have to snap people back to reality.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And that's what's needed with our children to, some kids are (unintelligible) shocked I guess you'd say to, they probably have gone to school with whites, and when they get in the job market or in the world they find that its not the same.

P.W: Right.

T.W: Because you are not treated the same. There are all types of little you know gimmicks and mechanisms to really keep you separate and still not equal, and one of the things now that our children will face going forward is just a simple thing such as a name, and people are beginning to realize who is who just by resume and just by looking at a name, you see a name that might not say Amy or Debbie, but you see that might say Shaniqua or Loquita and you know right then its not a white race, and that's a little tactic that people use you know to say well no we're not going to look at this person.

M.M: Right we'll just take someone...

T.W: Because we know that they are black, maybe not necessarily a black, but we know they are not white.

M.M: Right.

T.W: But then you can run into a problem there too, because sometimes you have mixed marriages, and they might decide to name their child that is not a common name, not a Carole, not a Betty, not a Sue.

M.M: Right.

T.W: You know, so we have a lot of little things that are hidden that still keep us, try to keep us back, and out different things, and keep you down.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And it's a struggle you know, but it all, the beginnings all lies within the family and when we teach the family values we teach you know about your race then we hope that our children will know, and you want to teach the good things, but you have to teach what's fact, and you hope and pray that out of in teaching what's fact that no prejudices will arrive, but sometimes you know people can not help that.

M.M: Right.

T.W: But we would not teach being prejudice.

M.M: Right.

T.W: But sometimes that just happens, you know people will gain that feeling, because I know if I would tell the stories that were told to me about some of my relatives, you know to my children now, then they might not feel so good about the population, where as I can hear the stories, and I know the struggles, and I can separate this is part of my heritage.

M.M: Right.

T.W: But you have the new neo person now out there, they're not going to hear a lot of that, so it's a place for the black school yes.

M.M: Just with out the problems, you want equal books, equal bussing, equal, equal...

P.W: Equal, equal.

M.M: Exactly, equal to the education that's received by others, yeah I see that.

T.W: You know, a lot of times people say you're not treated equally, but you can be treated fairly.

P.W: Right.

T.W: You know, and of course the problem is, it's a lot of problems out there, when it still comes down to our culture and to our race, its just a lot of problems, and its not problems that we create, its problems because of who we are, and once people understand that on the inside everybody's the same.

M.M: Right.

T.W: It's just on the outside that you might just have a different color.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And we all can learn from each other you know because you want to know why, maybe sometimes you say well I sit down and look, why would your hair be red, and my hair be black, why would yours be curly and mine would be straight you know.

M.M: Right.

T.W: So you know there are different little things that you can learn from each other.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And I think as well let me say it just like this, the world is getting smaller...

(End of Tape 2, Side A. Begin Tape 2, Side B.)

M.M: Okay.

T.W: Because some years ago, who would have thought that we needed to learn how to speak Japanese, Chinese even though we had Spanish and French, it was just like a course, it was like something that you took, but now even though we might not travel to the Spanish speaking areas they come to us.

M.M: Right exactly, that's true.

T.W: So we will continue to learn about each other.

M.M: Exactly. Well, how did you both feel when Summer Hill, the old school was destroyed, when they destroyed the old school.

T.W: I really didn't think it was going to happen, you know, I didn't, but it was, to me it's, I really thought there are places that are preserved, so why we couldn't have that preserved?

M.M: Right.

T.W: And I thought I saw a history going and then you think in terms of progress to is something better going to come, so it was mixed feelings about it. I still say we could have had something preserved even though I know what is the Matthew Hill, what is it recreation, no play park?

P.W: Yeah they (unintelligible)

T.W: What is that?

P.W: Where the football field was.

T.W: It's the Matthew Hill something, and when I put down there the football field we had a lot of activities to take place there, but I don't know, I feel like there is something that's lost, because the school is gone, and of course I said to myself why ours?

M.M: Right.

T.W: And why not theirs, that's just how I felt about it.

M.M: How did you feel?

P.W: Well I had, I don't have a whole lot of dealings in Cartersville so certain things happen that really won't affect me personally, I don't put a lot of thought into it, but like Theresa said, you know after they told us that they were going to tear the school down I think they said it had asbestos in it or something, you know you can remove the asbestos and still maintain it and all, but naturally I would have loved to see, have seen the school remain there, the building remain and be used for something, but I think I'm a progressive mover. If something is going to come in and be better for the community, its going to serve a purpose for the community lets go with it, because even today, even the things that we are still missing you still have to move forward, and at some point things are going to come together, I don't know when its going to happen, but we all have to continue to learn and improve the standard of living for everybody.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know when you start, when we go back to the times when we were in school and living in that area, and we look at it now, how much improvement has been done anyway, and this has been almost forty years so you look at that and say, well you know, lets not hold up progress.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Lets move to build the place and make it better, so I think what they are doing with the group of people that's working this event, they are going to oversee it and make sure that some of the heritage is still kept there.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know I know the gym is there and that's being utilized you know, I know every summer with summer league sports and all, and by them doing the football field and all that, we are going to still, we are going to be recognized, and people will remember us you know, the area that we were in and that's going to be good.

M.M: Well tell me about the years of the civil rights movement and did you get involved personally in the movement?

P.W: No not, we were kind of young then, and I, the only thing I got into, I was in my first year of school in college, I think we held you know little rallies on campus and matter of fact, I was in Macon, Georgia, and they had a little riot down there during the time when Martin Luther King, and even with Kennedy and all, but we were kind of young, and now Theresa may have been involved in a little more here, because she was here in Atlanta in school, but me personally I wasn't that involved in it.

T.W: During that time we did things, so far as, we participated in the what was that, there was a march, and there was a march down town that we participated in, and I can't remember exactly what it was about, during Martin Luther King's death we marched with a group about that, we attended his funeral, I went to see him in his casket, and he was, I thought he was a big, big man, but he was not a big, big man.

M.M: Oh my goodness, I always imagined him to be tall and just really...

P.W: No he wasn't.

T.W: I thought he was, but he was not a big, big man. They had the full length view of his coffin, and he was in black, and he didn't have no big old feet either, and I've been to Ebenezer, the church where he grew up and preached there, and I was in the play that was, listen to my stomach, that was titled, The Life of a King, and it was written by Arthur Langford, and I narrated that play.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And it, I think it's gone I think just about around the world, but it has taken on different authors you know of it, and what else did we do, Reverend Dr. Joseph Lowry was very active political person, I have been in his presence, and in his company, Reverend Orange, Reverend Joe Boone, and I think one of the things that will always stand out in my mind is Reverend Boone came over to Morris Brown, and we were freshman, and he told us, he said, "If you don't bring A's around here, we are going to boycott you." And I just couldn't believe he said that, and that always stood out, and he said, "Now if you ever want to see a march," he said, "we will put it together and we will march."

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: Yes he did, and during, not just during Civil Rights, that was a time 19.., between '69, '68 through '70 that's when the say it louds, you know I'm black and I'm proud, and to be young gifted and black, that was a new even though we knew that we were negros, we knew that's what we were called negros, and we were called colored, during that time we became black Americans or black, James Brown helped a lot you know, and that was a point in which people began to really be proud of who we were, and I say that because a lot of people were just because of the color of their skins, thought that well we are not accepted, and we can not do this, and we can not do that, but we as a race really began to,

really, really began to be proud of who we were, and who we are, because it said by leaders standing up and speaking out, it said to us we can be anything that we want to be, and we were often taught that in school in Summer Hill.

M.M: Really?

T.W: You can be who you want to be, and it was nothing new to us, but to a lot of people that was well like they said, so I guess we can. So you know the movement helped a lot, because it did open doors that were closed to us.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And even though we knew in the back of our minds that we could do these things, this just was our ticket to go right ahead on.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And be the best that you can be, whoever you are and always to be proud of who you are, you know, because we were created by God, and He was proud of us, and He is proud of us.

M.M: Right.

T.W: So we should be.

M.M: Exactly.

T.W: Yeah, proud of who we are.

M.M: Exactly, well I am so sorry.

T.W: Just so it doesn't show up on that.

M.M: We are almost done I promise.

T.W: That's okay.

M.M: Well lets see how did you feel when you heard about the things going on in the Civil Rights movement, the things that were happening, how did it make you feel?

T.W: I hated it, when I would look at the television, and even today.

M.M: Exactly.

T.W: I do not like to see it. I was listening this morning, early this morning, and I missed a great portion of it, but I was listening and looking at South Africa, it was just really termed Africa, and you know just to think about (unintelligible) and to see how those people were uprooted from their town, and they were built little huts and were told this is where you are going to live this is where you have to go, you know I think its awful, but today there are places that are still (unintelligible), and they still have some of these same things going on. People are still being beat down verbally not allowed to progress, and when I see how the dogs were let loose on human beings, the water pressure from the hydrants out there, when I listen to Bernice King, you know when they talk about they just want to know why they couldn't eat couldn't go to the park, you know its sad, but it's a part of history.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And nobody has the right to try and take your life away from you and make you live their life, so I don't like it you know when I see it, but like I said, I know that that's a part of history, and each year, each day, each month when we learn more about our heritage it's a whole lot out there to learn, about us as a race, because we did a lot of inventions, you know but which we are not given credit for.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And those are the type things that our children need to know, you know like Africans sit down, and they have what's called a guru, and the guru tells the story, and he tells the story from 1850 on up to now and there is a guru in each generation that the story will get told to, and each generation is added to.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: You know, what happened during your great, great, great, great grandfathers time, and it comes on up to your generation now.

M.M: Oh wow.

T.W: And, but like I said I realize that was a part of history that happened.

M.M: Right.

T.W: And it's a story.

M.M: Terrible (unintelligible)

T.W: Yeah, that you tell but you tell, and our children, a lot of our children are not aware or the story.

M.M: Exactly.

T.W: And its up to us as parents and you know guardians to tell that story.

M.M: Exactly.

T.W: Because in some instances, you know in some areas slavery still hadn't fully gone away.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: But I learned some things Theresa didn't experience, the war. That's when it all came together, here we are in a foreign land fighting for the same cause, and you see the mistreating still going on, and what it did to us as race, it bonded us together, I mean we were so bonded that we didn't want to come home, we loved each other so much that we

wanted to stay together, you know we had to sleep together, eat together, shower together, fight together, pray together, cry together, everything that you could do you had to do it together, so we formed a bond there and then you started to look back from childhood up to that point, and you say why are we here, because we were catching it before we came here, and we're catching in this man's land, and we shouldn't be doing that.

T.W: Yeah, because there were some of them...

P.W: Yeah they told the story that we were monkeys, we had tails, and they were looking for our tails in Vietnam you know, but they soon realized what it was all about, and we were in areas that you know we were fighting that they wouldn't shoot at us, because they say black man this is not your war, simple as that.

T.W: Then when they got home, the veterans got home.

P.W: Then we come back into the same type things, but everybody's different.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Some people carry hatred, and they will have it until they die. Some people learn how to excel, use that as a stepping stone...

M.M: Right.

P.W: ...to overcome whatever they were in, so my thing was sure, I was angry you know to a point when I got home I couldn't find a job, I had a family, you know I said, what am you, what is, so then I realized that it's just not me, it's a black person not being able to get a job, the job market was bad but then I got a job, and I was able to move and go on it, but then and even in the work force you started to see things you know, you had to be twenty times better to be able, to even be thought of for having a job, so you learned

through all of these things and all, but as a race of people, one thing that I have realized that we as a race that we don't have a lot of hate in us, we have a lot of hurt, but not a lot of hate, you know it's a difference in hate and hurt.

M.M: And hurt.

P.W: So we are able to go through situations and come out still loving people, where not all whites, and not all Asians, have that same hate, some of them may, some of them may not, but one of the things that I look at that if there is a God, who I believe there is because my faith is in Him, there is no color to Him.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: You know so in the end who wins, its all about winning, who wins, those who carry the hate in them are those who just carry the hate and (unintelligible).

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: You know, and we know things are not the way they should be, we don't know the end of time, the Bible say the first will be last, and the last would be first, now you can take that and turn it however you wanted to, you know you can use it to fit your situation, I can use it fit my situation, but the ultimate is that we have to love everybody.

M.M: Right.

P.W: Even though we are treated badly, but I still teach my children, you know, this is your culture...

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: ...this is how you have to live, you know you have to live with everybody, you know I don't separate them. Our kids went to some of the highest rated private schools in Atlanta, but they still knew who they were, they had their identity, you know, and now

they have their identity, you know they know they are black, but they went to this school here, this is their church, and you know so they don't have the problems, you know, their problems are different now than our problems were, its economics now.

M.M: Right.

P.W: You know it's totally about the buck now.

M.M: I know.

P.W: You know when we were coming along it was just your area where you lived, you know you had to live in a certain area, that's not so now, if the dollar say you can afford then you live there.

M.M: Right.

P.W: But in the end its all going to come out to one thing, just one thing, whoever can make it in, simple as that, that's the way I look at it, you know and you grow out of it, you can't carry that hate around, because if you carry the hatred around you can never grow.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: Yeah, so I think all people are equal, now we may not think each other, but I know God created all of us equal and in time we may not know when that time is going to be, but everybody's going to be equal then.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: Yeah, that's how I look at all of this, it had to be, it was ordained to be like it is, you know and Adam and Eve started the sin of the world, and we just perpetuated it by continuing to sin.

M.M: Exactly.

P.W: It just got worse.

M.M: Well my last question for both of you is, and I know you are hungry, so...

T.W: I ate a cookie. (laughing)

M.M: ...who were your heroes?

T.W: That's a tough one, heroes so far as...

M.M: Just anybody that you looked up to.

P.W: My brother, my oldest brother, yeah, I kind of patterned my life from him, I mean I had others, but no athletes, nobody like that it was my brother, yeah he taught me.

M.M: And you?

T.W: My three mothers.

M.M: That's very good.

T.W: Helen Banks, Nancy Louis, and Nancy Louis Robinson, and Ellen Price.

P.W: Robinson.

T.W: The (unintelligible)

P.W: (unintelligible)

M.M: Well thank you for letting me come to your home...

P.W: Thank you so much.

M.M: ...and thank you for the interview it was wonderful, and I appreciate all the time and thank you for helping us.

P.W & T.W: Thank you.

(End of Interview.)