

**University of Texas at San Antonio Archives and Special Collections**

**MS 317. Archives for Research on Women and Gender Oral History Project**

**Julia Gayden Transcript, May 13, 1997**

**Ruthe Winegarten:** Is this on, now?

**Tori Beckman-Wilson:** Mm-hmm. This is.

**RW:** So we're going to do a soundcheck first, O.K.? To make sure our equipment is working. And so, I'm Ruthe Winegarten and it's Tuesday, May thirteenth, nineteen ninety seven, and I'm sitting in the lovely home of Missus Julia Gayden, and her niece is here as well. And we're going to be doing some talking about your remarkable life, so if you would allow us to just check the tape and make sure it's working, I would appreciate it. [pause in tape]

**Julia Gayden:** O.K.

**TBW:** Can you say a few words? Just anything that...

**RW:** Yes, can you tell us your name?

**JG:** My name is Julia Hoyle Gayden.

**RW:** Say a little more. You were born when?

**JG:** You want to know my birthday?

**RW:** Uh-huh.

**JG:** I was born in eighteen ninety-four in Milam County.

**RW:** Where is that?

**JG:** Uh, do you know where Fort Hood is?

**TBW:** Yes.

**Mamie Cavil:** She probably knows where Rockdale is, and Cameron.

**RW:** Cameron?

**TBW:** Oh, yes. That's beautiful there.

**JG:** You know where Cameron is?

**TBW:** Yes. Oh yes.

**JG:** Well, that's the county seat where I was born. I was born in Milam County and Cameron is the county seat of Milam County.

**RW:** O.K. Well, we're going to check and see...[pause in tape] So, I'm glad that we have this paper about your early life, I'm very interested in that, and I'll read all about this, but what I would like to talk about...

**JG:** Maybe you'd like something different from that. Maybe you'd like to talk about something different from my history that Betty wrote.

**RW:** I would.

**JG:** Well, feel free. Talk about it and ask all the questions you want. And if I'm able to answer 'em, I'll do so, and if I'm not, well, I'll say that I don't know.

**RW:** Well, you could just make something up. Just kidding. You were a teacher, weren't you.

**JG:** Yes, I was.

**RW:** Where did you teach?

**JG:** I taught in Milam County, thirty years.

**RW:** Uh-huh. What school did you teach?

**JG:** I taught in O.J. Comers (sp?) High School and then I taught in two other rural schools.

**RW:** What subjects were you teaching?

**JG:** Well, when I was in the high school, I taught uh, elementary subjects, and when I was in the rural I taught from one to the seventh grade, you know how those one teacher schools were at that time.

**RW:** Was it a one-room, one-teacher school?

**JG:** Well, some of it was one school, a one teacher school and the other school was a two-teacher school.

**RW:** What period—when was that, in the thirties and forties?

**JG:** It was, it began in the twenties.

**RW:** You started teaching in the twenties.

**JG:** Yes.

**RW:** Did you, how did you prepare to teach? Did you go to Prairie View or to a...

**JG:** Yes, I went to Prairie View. And finished old Normal School before it was a university.

**RW:** How long did you go to school?

**JG:** Well, at the first, I went to school to get to teach, two years. And then, of course, at that time, when I began teaching, they would issue second-grade certificates, now that was before your time.

**RW:** I know what that is.

**JG:** Uh-huh. And, um, I taught with a second-grade certificate and went to school in the summer time. Until I finished the old Normal course, and when I finished the old Normal course, I was granted a permanent certificate. And then I was able to teach, you know, through high school.

**RW:** And then were you able to make more money?

**JG:** Oh, I didn't make much money when I taught school.

**RW:** Well, how much did you make?

**JG:** Well, the first school I taught, I taught it for fifty dollars a month. [laughs] The first school.

**RW:** Fifty dollars a month. But that might have been pretty good money in terms of—probably it was better than doing domestic work, though, wasn't it?

**JG:** Oh, yes, it was, considered high in those days.

**RW:** And wasn't the teacher a pretty respected member of the community?

**JG:** Beg pardon?

**RW:** Was the teacher a respected member of the community?

**JG:** Very. Yes, she was just looked up to.

**RW:** So when you were teaching were you still living at home, or were you living in a boarding house, or...

**JG:** No, I was married.

**RW:** Oh, you already married.

**JG:** Oh, yes, I married early. I married when I was nineteen years old, and I've been married all ever since. [laughs]

**RW:** Wow. Yes, how long were you married?

**JG:** Well, to my first husband, it was just like a courtship because part of that time, I was in college. I went back to college, you know, in uh, you know, to teach when I got married. And I went one year before I married. And then after I married, uh, I went back another year in able to get a certificate to teach school.

**RW:** And what was your husband's name at that time?

**JG:** My husband's name uh, Harrison Creighton (sp?). That was my first husband.

**RW:** And how long were you all married?

**JG:** Oh, we wasn't married but four years before he passed away.

**RW:** What happened?

**JG:** He was a tubercular.

**RW:** And they didn't have any hospitals for black tubercular patients in those days, did they?

**JG:** No, they didn't. You just got sick and were black, well, you just died. And well, whites as well, because the doctors wasn't very good on those things in those days.

**RW:** And then did you get remarried pretty soon after that?

**JG:** Yes, I stayed single about a year, and then I got married to my, Mister Hoyle, Rector Hoyle. And, of course, after the marriage with Rector Hoyle, I stayed with him forty-five years, before he passed away.

**RW:** Where did you meet him?

**JG:** Well, I met him at Cameron, Texas, in Milam County. While I was teaching school down there.

**RW:** Was he a visiting teacher? I mean, how did it come about that you knew him?

**JG:** Oh, he was just a good Christian man, he wasn't a teacher.

**RW:** I see. What did he do for a living?

**JG:** Just ordinary work, because he didn't have an education, he [unintelligible] about the fifth or sixth grade, because he was deprived of an education because of the fact that he was the only boy in that family and they were tenants on the farm and the man had him drop out of school when he was seventeen years old to work the farm with his mother. His father had passed away.

**RW:** They were tenant farmers?

**JG:** Yes, they were tenant farmers, and of course after he had to stop out at that age, you know, he was deprived of an education.

**RW:** Well, very often, the black men didn't get as much education as the women, because they had to stay and work on the farm.

**JG:** Yeah, that's right, especially if they were tenants.

**RW:** Tenant farmers—his mother was a widow woman, so he, she needed him, I guess, to help.

**JG:** Yes, she had to have him, because the, the man that owned the plantation wouldn't rent to her if she didn't have a, somebody, some man to farm, you know, to plow.

**RW:** Is that right?

**JG:** Because she didn't have any other children, just the girls, and her older children were married and gone, the older boys.

**RW:** So you say he was a good Christian man? Did you all belong to the same church?

**JG:** Yes.

**RW:** What was that?

**JG:** A Methodist church, A-M-E.

**RW:** A-M-E. Do you remember the name?

**JG:** Who?

**RW:** Do you remember the name of the church?

**JG:** What, what we belonged to?

**RW:** Uh-huh.

**JG:** Oh, it was A-M-E, the same church I belong to now.

**RW:** I didn't know if it was the Cameron county, or the Cameron Methodist A-M-E or if it had a special name.

**JG:** Oh. I don't think it had a special name, I don't recall it called anything but just the A-M-E church.

**RW:** Were you active in like the church, were there missionary societies, or...

**JG:** Oh, yes, I was very active. I was active all the time. Lived everywhere.

**RW:** What kinds of things did you do?

**JG:** Beg pardon?

**RW:** What kinds of things did you do in the church, or in the missionary society?

**JG:** Oh, I was a missionary, and then I was a student, a Sunday school teacher, most any assignment that the pastor would give me. I would always try to do that.

**RW:** And did you teach here in San Antonio at Sojourner Truth?

**JG:** Only subbed after I moved here.

**RW:** Why did you move, why did you all move to San Antonio?

**JG:** We moved here during the war. It was better wages and...

**RW:** World War Two?

**JG:** Yeah. You know, when Camp Bullis was built.

**RW:** Did your husband have a job there?

**JG:** No, he didn't, but I did.

**RW:** What did you do there?

**JG:** I worked in the hospital. After I quit teaching.

**RW:** What did you do in the hospital?

**JG:** Huh?

**RW:** What kind of work did you do in the hospital?

**JG:** Well, I was a ward, uh, serving meals on the wards. Kind of like a dietitian, you know, just like that, meals would be cooked at the really, the mess hall, and sent over to the wards to be issued to the patients but I was the one who issued them on the wards.

**RW:** Did you receive any special training to do that, or...

**JG:** No, I didn't, I just, they knew I was already a school teacher, and of course I knew how to do everything that they required.

**RW:** Was that better wages than if you gotten a job as a teacher?

**JG:** Oh, yes. I made three times as much as I made as a teacher.

**RW:** Really?

**JG:** And I was, there I was at Camp Bullis, ground breaking.

**RW:** When was that, do you remember? Nineteen forties, sometime?

**JG:** Uh, let me see. You know, don't you know when Camp Bullis was built? World War Two.

**RW:** We can find out. We'll find out. And so your husband did odd jobs around San Antonio, or...

**JG:** Yeah, he did odd jobs. And when he was in San Antonio, after we moved to San Antonio he was at Fort Sam.

**RW:** At Fort Sam?

**JG:** Mm-hmm.

**RW:** What did he do there?

**JG:** Oh, he was just a janitor for the service.

**RW:** And did you all live in this house?

**JG:** Yes.

**RW:** So you've lived in this house since you moved to San Antonio?

**JG:** I've lived in this house for fifty three years.

**RW:** Wow. Well, this must mean a lot to you.

**JG:** Oh yes. [laughs] This is the only house that I've lived in since I've been here.

**RW:** Did you all buy the house? Or did you rent it in the beginning?

**JG:** We bought. We didn't buy this house, but we bought another house, and later on built this one.

**RW:** You built this house?

**JG:** Mm-hmm.

**RW:** So you made enough wages to build a house.

**JG:** Oh, yes. We felt real good after we built this house.

**RW:** I want to get back for a minute to Prairie View. What was life like being a student at Prairie

View? Was it fun? Did you study all the time, or, what was it like to be a student?

**JG:** Oh, well, it was very hard for me. Because I was reared a orphan. My mother passed away when I was five years old and my father remarried again and I lived with my step-mother and my father.

**RW:** Did your step-mother encourage you to learn, or...

**JG:** My step-mother had five children by my father. And of course, I was kind of like a servant or a maid or something, mostly took care of the children. [laughs]

**RW:** You were already older, a little older.

**JG:** I was eight years old when the oldest child that she had was born.

**RW:** So you had a lot of responsibilities when you...

**JG:** I had a lot.

**RW:** What did you do?

**JG:** Did like anybody else did, take care of the children.

**RW:** That's a lot of work.

**JG:** I should say. She had five little children...

**RW:** So you were glad to get away to college, I guess, weren't you? Or were you?

**JG:** Well, I was glad to get away to college. But it was a hard job because of I had a hard time getting to college because my father had a, he passed away when I was fourteen years old.

**RW:** I see.

**JG:** And he had an insurance policy and it was willed to two older children she had by a previous marriage. The insurance policy was willed to three of us, the two boys and me. And of course, the two boys were grown and they received their share of the policy, because they were grown, and he appointed a administrator over me and I couldn't get mine until I went to college.

**RW:** So you kept staying there with the step-mother for a couple years until you...

**JG:** I stayed there with my step-mother until I finished elementary school and then I went to Prairie View on the little sum that he had left on his insurance. And it didn't last very long, it lasted about a half a term.

**RW:** So how did you survive at Prairie View, financially, I mean, what did you...

**JG:** Well, I worked in the laundry after having made good grades, they gave me a job in the laundry.

**RW:** And that helped pay your tuition and everything?

**JG:** That finished my tuition out for the first year I was in college. I had paid for half a term, paid my tuition, the first year with what my father left.

**RW:** What did you for clothes and stuff?

**JG:** Oh, well, you know, I just had ordinary clothes, didn't have many—my friends helped me, they would let me wear their clothes. I had large feet, and I had only one friend who I could wear her shoes, and she would let me have those shoes until, uh, I could have mine pair sewed. And I had one pair of shoes. And sometimes, one pair of stockings. I'd take my stockings off at night and hang them up to the shade let them dry to wear them to school the next morning.

**RW:** The kids these days don't have any clue about this, do they? They don't know what it's like.

**JG:** They don't know what it's like to go to school, but I was determined to go to school, and that's the experience in my first year of college.

**RW:** What year was that, that you went to college, do you remember the first year?

**JG:** It was in nineteen eighteen. It's somewhere in my diary, the first year.

**RW:** And this diary...

**JG:** I don't know where it is, I have it here somewhere.

**RW:** You have another diary?

**JG:** I have a diary, a lot of books, but I don't know the first year. I do know, I can't remember it to be exact...

**RW:** But you were seventeen or eighteen years old?

**JG:** I was seventeen years old.

**RW:** And you were born in nineteen oh-four so it would have been...

**JG:** Yes. I was born in eighteen ninety-four.

**RW:** So about nineteen thirteen or so.

**JG:** So where did you get this determination to get an education from? Where do you think that came from?

**JG:** My school teacher. She dressed nice and looked nice, and I wanted to be like her. And I thought you had to be a school teacher to wear pretty clothes. [laughs]

**RW:** Did she encourage you? I mean, did she...

**JG:** No, she didn't do too much encouraging, she just was a school teacher and I wanted to look like her and have things like her. And I was just encouraged from her.

**RW:** So you remember what her name was?

**JG:** Her name was Bertha Ragsdale.

**RW:** Well, it seems she had a big influence on your life even though she didn't know it at the time.

**JG:** No, she didn't know nothing about the influence that she had. Because I just looked at her and she looked nice and I thought a lot of her and I wanted to be like her.

**RW:** Well, we're going to skip forward a few years. Once you and your second husband moved to San Antonio and you all got some good jobs and started making some money.

**MC:** Are you too warm?

**RW:** I'm fine.

**TBW:** Fine, thank you.

**MC:** I'm going to turn the air on.

**RW:** Um, I understand that you were the president of the National Council of Negro Women.

**JG:** Yes, I was.

**RW:** I just joined that organization this year.

**JG:** Oh, you did?

**RW:** I did. I have my membership card. But tell me how did that come about that you got active in the National Council of Negro Women?

**JG:** Oh, when I moved to San Antonio, uh, of course I had been teaching school and things. I followed a mighty nice lady.

**RW:** You followed a mighty nice lady, who was that lady?

**JG:** She was Missus Lister, Pat Lister, who was president when I came here.

**RW:** How did you meet her?

**JG:** Oh, I joined the council.

**MC:** You all had been, knew each other in college.

**RW:** Prairie View, you mean...

**MC:** Pat Lister, didn't you all go to Prairie View together?

**JG:** No ma'am.

**MC:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**RW:** Was she a teacher here?

**JG:** No, Pat Lister was a school teacher, she was married to a dentist and lived here in San Antonio.

And of course, she somehow or another, she got tired of being president, and of course after I moved here and was a member of the council, well they elected me president of the National Council of Negro Women here. And it was a live organization as long as I was president.

**RW:** Can you tell me some of the things you worked on?

**JG:** Oh, we worked on, at that time, they didn't have outreach programs, so when somebody got in need, for food or something, the civic organizations would ask us to help. And of course, we did. Just like, uh, the Salvation Army or anything, any charitable organization. When they would run out and need help, why they would call on us and we would help them.

**RW:** What was the name of your section or your chapter?

**JG:** Hmm?

**RW:** Was there just one branch of the council here?

**JG:** Just one branch here.

**RW:** And was it called the Bexar County...

**JG:** No, the National Council of Negro Women was the name of the...

**RW:** O.K. So how many members did you have at the time you were president?

**JG:** Oh, I had about thirty-five or forty.

**RW:** Were many of them school teachers?

**JG:** Oh, some of them were school teachers, lawyers and everything. Hattie Briscoe was one of my members, some of 'em was undertaker's wives and ordinary women, we took whoever wanted to join.

**RW:** Did you all do any sort of, political work like voter registration or anything like that?

**JG:** Well, some of us would walk the streets for March of Dimes, things like that.

**RW:** You did mainly welfare kinds of things, helping people in need.

**JG:** Yes, we did quite a bit of that, because at that time, when I was president of the National Council of Negro Women, they didn't have all these outreach programs that they have now. They had a few, but not many. And sometimes they would run out of things and need help and they would ask us to help 'em, and we would.

**RW:** Did you ever meet Mary McLeod Bethune, did she ever...

**JG:** Oh, yes, don't talk about her [laughs]. She was the star of my life. She was the organizer of the National Council of Negro Women, she was the founder of it.

**RW:** Did she come here?

**JG:** Oh yes, made many visits here to San Antonio while I was president.

**RW:** Is that right? And you were president for how long?

**JG:** Oh, about twelve years or fifteen, maybe more.

**RW:** Like from the nineteen forties to the fifties?

**JG:** Yes, mm-hmm.

**RW:** And she did come and visit.

**JG:** Oh, yes, she came here several times.

**RW:** And did she get a good crowd out to hear her?

**JG:** Oh, yes. She would have a large crowd everytime she would come.

**RW:** Where did you all have your meetings that, when she would come?

**JG:** We would have our meetings at uh, at that time, it was segregated and we couldn't go to hotels and things like that, but we had nice colored places that we would have our meetings, we'd have 'em at the church sometimes the regular meetings, and then sometimes if we wanted to give a banquet, we'd had it at off Commerce, a nice café with John Griggs, and he would prepare for us and have a [unintelligible] for her at his place. He had a cafeteria, but he ran a very nice one at that time, because of segregated, you know, and we had to get places like that.

**RW:** I know she was real active in recruiting black women for the WACS in World War Two. Mary McLeod Bethune she worked, you know, with Franklin, Eleanor Roosevelt and did you all, were you all involved in recruiting any black women here to go into the armed services, do you remember?

**JG:** No, not that I—I wasn't participating in it, I don't think we did much about that.

**RW:** Where did she stay if she couldn't—I know the hotels were segregated, uh, were there hotels for blacks here? Did she stay in a private home?

**JG:** Oh, she would stay in the—we had a nice little place here, a lady ran a hotel, and she was colored. She would stay down there sometimes and she would stay in a private home anywhere. She wasn't so sedate that she didn't appreciate wherever she stayed.

**RW:** What was the lady's name that ran the hotel? Or what was the name of the hotel?

**JG:** Verdie Taylor.

**RW:** Verdie Taylor? Was that the name of the hotel, too?

**JG:** No, I don't know what the hotel was named, but that was her name.

**RW:** Where was it located, do you...

**JG:** On Commerce Street.

**RW:** Commerce Street. Um, so you went on a world wide tour with the National Council of Negro Women?

**JG:** Yes, we went—Miss Bethune had passed away at that time and we went on this world wide tour with Dorothy Hites (sp?) who followed her as president.

**RW:** She's still president.

**JG:** Yes, she's still president.

**RW:** What was the purpose of the tour, to see how things were after the war, or just educational, or what?

**JG:** Educational tour. We stayed over there thirty-one days.

**RW:** Wow. What kinds of things did you do?

**JG:** In fifty.

**MC:** No, she said, what kinds of things did you do?

**RW:** Did you visit with other women's clubs in Europe?

**JG:** Oh, I didn't understand what you said.

**RW:** I'm sorry. Yeah, what did you all do in Europe while you were there?

**JG:** Just toured. To see what the country was like. And we were highly entertained. And they carried us a lot of places, you know. Dorothy had it well-organized. She had everything, it was a package deal, and then we had places to go every day and things to see. It was great.

**RW:** Now I know that you were active in, I want to say, the NAACP as well.?

**JG:** Yes, I was very active.

**RW:** What kinds of issues did you all work on? What were some of the problems?

**JG:** When people would have, oh, they would have different types of problems, for instance they would lose jobs unfairly. We would work on that.

**RW:** What kinds of things would you do?

**JG:** Just like, like if you were teaching school and maybe you was the principal somewhere, and they would, uh, move you from being the principal and put you down in the lower level and teaching ordinary. And for no reason whatever, well, we would take it up. Why did you do this and why did you do that? And so we won several cases along that line.

**RW:** Did you all have some local lawyers who worked with you?

**JG:** Huh?

**RW:** You had some local lawyers who worked with you?

**JG:** Yes, we had local lawyers here that we worked with.

**RW:** Where they black lawyers or white lawyers?

**JG:** They were white.

**RW:** Do you know who they were?

**JG:** I don't exactly remember their names, offhand.

**RW:** What about when they were trying to integrate the University of Texas with Hamon Swet (sp?) did your group get involved?

**JG:** Beg pardon?

**RW:** When they were trying to integrate the University of Texas, you know, when Hamon Swet (sp?) applied?

**JG:** Oh, yes, I remember that real well.

**RW:** Well, tell me what you remember about that.

**JG:** Well, they wanted to integrate, and they first thing, they built a school in Houston, out from Houston, and said that they were gonna have the same thing at that school, let me see, the name of that school was...

**RW:** Became Texas Southern.

**JG:** Texas Southern? Oh, yeah, they said that they were gonna put everything at Texas Southern that they had at University of Texas. Well, NAACP had a lot to do with that, in a way. Because they said how can you do something in a year that's been taking you a hundred years? [laughs]

**RW:** They knew they weren't telling the truth, huh?

**JG:** And so, then, uh, they they couldn't pull the wool over our eyes with that. So they said, I can't recall all the things that Swet did, didn't intend to stay, he just wanted to break the ice. He didn't intend to stay where, he just wanted to break the ice, just wanted to go the University of Texas.

**RW:** Did you all help raise money for all those law cases?

**JG:** We helped, we helped raise money in anything that we had an interest in.

**RW:** Well, at one point in the nineteen fifties, the state attorney general tried to drive the NAACP out of business, you know.

**JG:** Yeah, but we had Thurgood Marshall. Do you know Thurgood Marshall? [laughs]

**RW:** I know about him. Did you know Christa Adair from Houston, or Lilabee White or any of those other NAACP leaders?

**JG:** Oh, yes, I did.

**RW:** What do you remember about Christia Adair?

**JG:** I don't remember anything, just someone—you know, I just can't remember everything.

**RW:** No, I understand. [end of side one] [side two] I certainly am, because that's so unusual. So do you know Juanita Craig from Dallas, she's from my hometown. She was also an NAACP leader.

**JG:** No, I didn't know her personally.

**RW:** Yeah, she organized quite a few NAACP chapters across the state. Well, I understand that you were a Republican, and I was surprised because so many of the, uh, black Texans had been Democrats. So, how did you get involved in the Republican party?

**JG:** Well, I was reared a Republican. My Daddy was a Republican. [laughs]

**RW:** Really? Well, of course after the Civil War most blacks were Republicans because they...

**JG:** Yeah, but I was just born a Republican, in a way.

**RW:** And your daddy, was he, tell me what he...

**JG:** Well, you know, in fact, it would go way back there to about Prohibition. You know anything about Prohibition, places where they worked so hard to keep the whisky out? [laughs]

**RW:** And was he in favor of Prohibition?

**JG:** Uh, yeah. He was one of them that wanted the whisky out, I guess you call that prohibition.

**RW:** Well, did the Republican party work on that, too? Is that...

**JG:** I think they did. But I was kinda young and small at that time, I don't remember too much about it, but I remember some things.

**RW:** What did he do in the Republican party?

**JG:** He didn't do nothing, because, you see he passed away when he was...

**Home Health Assistant:** Hi.

**MC:** Could you come, could you all come back, or is this your only time?

**HHA:** This is my only time.

**RW:** Is this the nurse?

**JG:** Don't come today.

**RW:** Does she need to take her vital signs?

**MC:** Yes.

**RW:** Well, we can talk around that. If that's okay.

**MC:** She can do some of the things.

**RW:** If you don't mind us talking.

**HHA:** No.

**RW:** But don't listen. Just kidding.

**HHA:** How you been doing, Miss Hoyle?

**JG:** Good. You don't have to do nothing but take my vitals.

**HHA:** You're not going to shower today?

**MC:** Oh, no, she's not going to shower, she's already dressed for the day.

**HHA:** This is Julia [about her assistant].

**Julia:** Nice meeting you.

**MC:** Her name is Julia, too.

**HHA:** Julia. And this is Miss Cavill. And I don't know who these ladies are.

**MC:** They're from the University of Texas at Austin and they're interviewing her today.

**RW:** I'm going to close this door because of the noise of the street. So, your daddy was a Republican so it was natural for you to become a Republican.

**JG:** Yeah, but you see, he passed away when he was fifty-seven years old, and of course, I was kind of young and I didn't know too much, but I could remember some things.

**RW:** Like what?

**JG:** Like them voting against the prohibition, you know. That's about all I remember back then, because I wasn't too old and didn't know much.

**RW:** So when you came to San Antonio, how did you get involved with the Republicans?

**JG:** Well, I just found the party here and of course they influenced me and I just got with them.

**RW:** Were you a precinct chairman here for the Republican Party or...

**JG:** Oh, I worked in the Republican party in here, around here.

**RW:** Like what kinds of things did you do?

**JG:** Worked when they had different Republicans running for office, I'd work for them and things like that.

**RW:** Were there any other blacks in the Republican party here?

**JG:** Oh, yes.

**RW:** Really?

**JG:** Yes, really. We had some pretty strong blacks.

**RW:** Is that right? Did they run for office on the Republican party ticket here?

**JG:** No, not that I recall right now.

**RW:** But you all worked in the office like stuffing envelopes and...

**JG:** Oh, yeah, just during the elections and like that, we did.

**RW:** Did any Republicans ever get elected here when you were active in the party?

**JG:** To what?

**RW:** Anything. In San Antonio, because I know it's always been a big Democratic county.

**JG:** Yes, we had all of them, we got a big party here. Yeah, we had a big, you know, party.

**RW:** In the earlier days were there Republicans—I'm not talking about now, but in the early forties and fifties, when you first got involved, they did elect some people here? Not like legislators...

**TBW:** But like city council members or mayor.

**RW:** Those were not political races, those were non-partisan. I read here that you were a delegate to Austin in nineteen sixty-eight that you couldn't get a room in the hotel there with the other Republicans, was that right?

**JG:** Yeah, that's right.

**RW:** Well, what happened?

**JG:** Well, I tell you. The Republicans had a meeting and we first went to eat. And we were thirty minutes in getting the man to feed us at the café. And after we was there, and we got waited on for thirty minutes, there was a long story about that, but the head of the party was thirty minutes in getting the man to take us, there was about seventy-five or eighty of us in the party. We were all there for a meeting.

**RW:** Were those white and black people together?

**JG:** I was the only black. I was the guinea pig.

**RW:** And they wouldn't serve you because you were there?

**JG:** They wouldn't serve because of just one black person there. And, um, well, when they went in the café, to be served, the waiters waited on everybody, but the head of the Republican party, they had two tables, they had a table with just two sitting on it. He and I, he's sitting on the table with me. He took me on his table and just two of us together. They waited on everybody else. And finally the waiter, uh, brought the food in and she gave him his plate, well, he pushed it over to me. [laughs] And he was still without a plate. But they intended to serve 'em all and by the time they all got through eating, I wouldn't have had nothing. That was their intention, you know. After he told them that they would let me in there, but he didn't intend to feed me. But he had a way of getting me food, when they gave him his plate, they pushed it over to me and he still didn't have a plate and that's the way I got in there. Well, we went from there to the hotel. It was integration, now.

**RW:** Yeah, nineteen sixty-eight. It was against the law, right?

**JG:** Yeah, against the law. And they told them that they didn't have no place, no more room, they were filled up. Well, one of the ladies said, "No, you're not filled up, 'cause my roommate's not coming, she can sleep in the room with me."

**RW:** Wow.

**JG:** And they said, "No, we're just not ready for this." And they would not let me sleep in the room with her. After she told them, she said, "Now my roommate isn't coming, and see, I've got a vacant bed in my room, and she can sleep in the room with me." And they wouldn't let—and so they had the luggage in the lobby until two o'clock that morning. They wouldn't go up and take no rooms until they got a place for me. And they sent for the relation man, and the man went out the back door and he wouldn't talk to the relation man. And they sent for somebody else, and finally they called the principal

of the school there, and some little place there, a motel, said they would take me. And the head of the party wouldn't let me go. Said, "No, it's too far out. And she had no protection, so she can't go." And he wouldn't let me go to that little place. Well, when they got the principal of the school, he said, "I'll gladly take her." Well, they settled for me staying, the head of the party, settled for me staying with the principal of the black school. And he came for me. And I had to stay there that night, it was two o'clock in the morning before they took the luggage up in the hotel because they didn't want to take it up at all if they didn't give me a place to stay. Because it was integration.

**HHA:** Well, we'll see you tomorrow.

**JG:** Bye. Thank you darlin'.

**Julia:** It was nice meeting you.

**JG:** Uh,huh, nice meeting you.

**RW:** Well that says a lot about the Republican party, that they stood, stuck by you.

**JG:** Yeah, in every instance, and I've been a guinea pig in a lot of places.

**RW:** What was the name of that hotel in Austin? Was it the Driscoll?

**JG:** It was the largest hotel there, whatever it is, but I forgot the name of it.

**RW:** Probably either the Driscoll or the Stephen F. Austin, does it...

**JG:** It was the best hotel there, because the Republicans always reserved the best.

**RW:** It was probably the Driscoll.

**JG:** And since then, I have stayed in that hotel many times. [laughs]

**RW:** And you enjoyed it every time, right?

**JG:** Every time. And I was with the League [unintelligible] here, and I'd been elected delegate, and uh, got me a reservation at the same hotel, I remembered it, you know.

**RW:** Wow.

**MC:** She also attended President Nixon's first inaugural.

**RW:** You went to President Nixon's inauguration, right? Was that exciting?

**JG:** Yes. Oh, very, very. I was the only black in that party, too. [laughs]

**RW:** Well, you have certainly stood out.

**JG:** Yes. But, I was, I didn't know I was black until I passed the glass, they just treated me so nice.

**RW:** They treated you just like everybody else?

**JF:** They treated me just like everybody else, and I didn't know I was black until I passed the glass and looked at myself. You see, I went with the party, and we had reservations everywhere they were, and I went to everything.

**RW:** Well, this is such a fascinating story about these Republican activities. Um, well, do you have any scrapbooks or clippings? [to Mamie Cavil] You said that she'd been interviewed many times.

**MC:** Not really, not really.

**RW:** Does she have any plaques, when she received honors?

**JG:** What, like what?

**RW:** Well, like do you have any scrapbooks of clippings about yourself or when you were in any of these organizations? Were trying to collect the papers...

**MC:** No, I tell you, she had one for the Negro National Council, and she let someone use it, and they never returned it. So she doesn't have that material. And I have, the other ones are more like family pictures, and maybe something would be in with those, but she really doesn't have a scrapbook of events that she has taken part in.

**RW:** But you said other people have interviewed her.

**MC:** Yes, um...

**RW:** Has there been newspaper clippings about her, though, like in...

**MC:** We've never really kept that. The interviews, now one of them we have a tape, a VCR tape of another interview. The only other tape we have of her—we have two. We have a tape of her when she

was, she talked to the social studies club at Roosevelt, we have that tape. And it was someone who interviewed her who was teaching, or I don't know what kind of class, but he was teaching a class at Lackland or Randolph, one of, one of the military bases, and I have a tape of that.

**RW:** Could we borrow those and dub those, make copies and return them to you?

**MC:** Sure. And then we have a tape of her one hundredth birthday, but that's family celebration.

**RW:** But that would still be real important to have because it shows her in her active years here, and we would be very grateful if you would lend them to us...

**MC:** And that's the book of her one hundredth birthday party right there.

**TBW:** This book?

**MC:** Mm-hmm. If you all want to take a look.

**RW:** Did you ever have any children, Missus Gayden?

**JG:** No.

**RW:** Uh-huh, was this, did you all decide not to have any, or did you want some, or how did that...

**JG:** Well, when we decided to have some, it was too late, I was too old. [laughs] When we got prepared to take care of children, I was just a little too old to start the [unintelligible].

**RW:** Are you close at all to any of your step-brothers or sisters or any of their families?

**JG:** Am I close?

**RW:** I mean, do you have contact with them?

**JG:** Oh, yes, I just have two sisters living.

**RW:** You have two?

**JG:** I'm close with them.

**RW:** Where do they live?

**JG:** One lives in Dallas and the other one lives in Cameron. She has a farm out in the country from Cameron.

**RW:** Have you ever got back to Cameron lately?

**JG:** Oh, yeah. When I was mobile and I could drive, I drove down there once, almost every month, all the time, maybe twice a month.

**RW:** Is your church in Cameron have a homecoming every year?

**JG:** Yes, they do, they have homecoming.

**RW:** Did you used to go to those.

**JG:** Mm-hmm, when I could, yeah, when I was able to.

**RW:** Well, I sure am sorry we don't have a scrapbook or anything. Missus Cavil, do you know who the person is who borrowed that scrapbook?

**JG:** Oh she, I tell you I had a scrapbook of when I went overseas with Dorothy, with everything in the world in it, you know while we were over there. But they told me they were compiling Negro history and they wanted some of the events. And they borrowed my things, I had a whole box of stuff.

**RW:** And who was that who borrowed it?

**JG:** Miss Whittier.

**RW:** Is she alive? Can we like ask her if we could borrow it?

**JG:** No, she's, I don't know where she is, even. The last I heard of her she was in Dallas. And she borrowed it and never did return it.

**RW:** Well, I have a good friend in Dallas who's active in the National Council of Negro Women...

**MC:** Who might know is Missus, whose the president here?

**JG:** Sewell (sp?) Joyce Sewell.

**MC:** Who would probably know where Missus Whittier is.

**RW:** Is it alright if we ask Miss Sewell (sp?) to follow up on this?

**MC:** Yes. Yes.

**RW:** Then Missus Whittier would let us borrow the scrapbook back at least to make xeroxes.

**JG:** No, she's in Dallas.

**RW:** Well, I go to Dallas all the time, because I'm from Dallas, so that's no big deal. If one of her family members has it. Maybe the Council of Negro Women in Dallas has it.

**JG:** Because she carried it to Saint Phillip's.

**RW:** I wonder if it could be there, do you all know? Would that be a worthwhile...

**JG:** Well, we tried.

**MC:** I really don't know.

**RW:** Well, if it's O.K. with you, we'll make a few inquiries.

**MC:** You can, I have no objection.

**RW:** And, uh...what would you like to talk about today? What do you consider the most important things that you've ever done?

**JG:** Well, the most important thing that I've done in my life is received a college education. That's my, that's my contributed to all young children. You can get an education if you want to. I got one, and I didn't have any help. So to speak, the only little help I had was a little, a little, measly stuff that my daddy left, and that was a half a year tuition and the rest of my education, I worked and was able to go through college and finish college when it was old Normal, wasn't even a university. And then, when they begin to ask for degrees, I went back and got my degree.

**RW:** At Prairie View.

**JG:** At Prairie View.

**RW:** Prairie View turned out a lot of teachers, didn't it?

**JG:** Yes.

**RW:** It's been a real important school in Texas history.

**JG:** Yes, it's an important school. Important in my life.

**RW:** Well, you're probably one of the oldest alumni that they have, don't you think?

**JG:** I don't know of any older than me.

**RW:** Well, have they ever honored you there, they should.

**JG:** Well, you know, I'm not a person to go after so much publicity.

**RW:** You need to hire me as your public relations agent. Well, I think that would be a really splendid—I was at Prairie View last year, I spoke.

**JG:** At Prairie View?

**RW:** Uh-huh. I have written a lot of books about Texas history, including some books about black Texas women, and so they invited me to speak there. And it's, you should see it. It looks—for a long time the state legislature wouldn't give Prairie View what it should have had. But until Wilhelmina Delco, a black legislator from Austin got elected, she was the chairman of the higher education committee, and she told those white men in the legislature, "Hey, you're not going to get another federal dollar for any of those white universities unless you give Prairie View some money from this permanent university fund." And she got them, she got money, and now it's really, they have new buildings and you would be really proud. But it took political pressure from somebody.

**JG:** It was a long time before they would give them anything.

**RW:** A very long time. I mean, it's one of the oldest universities in the state.

**JG:** Yes, it is.

**RW:** In fact, I think it's older than, practically than the University of Texas, it is. It's two or three years older. And you see the Texas voters passed, you know, a constitutional amendment that there should be a university of the highest order for black Texans, but they would not fund it. And this went on for almost a hundred years. But I'm proud to say now, that they have given it some money. So you're saying now that that was the most important thing you had ever done.

**JG:** Yes, it was college, by myself. By my lone self. And I had a brother that had plenty at the time. He had, you know, years ago, when I went to college, if a negro had ten thousand dollars cash money

and a paid for home, and driving a new Buick, two years, you know, he was considered pretty good. He had all that and didn't give me a quarter.

**RW:** Was this your natural brother, or the step-brother?

**MC:** She has no step-brothers.

**JG:** He was.

**MC:** They're half.

**JG:** We had the same father.

**RW:** Half brothers.

**JG:** But not the same mother.

**RW:** And he wouldn't give you a penny?

**JG:** I didn't, he didn't give me a quarter. I remember having one pair of stockings and I wrote to him to send me some money to get stockings, or to send me some stockings. I didn't get an answer from his letter. At that time, he had ten thousand dollars cash in the bank, riding in a new Buick and had a home paid for, everything and he didn't give me a quarter. And now, the one pair of stockings that I had, I would wear them in the day, and they'd get stiff and dirty, and I'd wash them out at night and pin them to the shade in my room and let the shade up in the window when we went to bed at night and the wind would blow them dry. And they were cotton and they didn't dry some nights.

**RW:** And you had to wear them wet the next day.

**JG:** I had to wear 'em damp the next morning. [laughs] Had that one pair of stockings, without runs. And but I had one pair that didn't have too many holes on them. And I wrote and asked him for one pair of stockings and he didn't, I didn't get an answer from the letter.

**RW:** Where was he living then?

**JG:** Huh?

**RW:** Was he living in Cameron?

**JG:** He was living here in San Antonio, his home was right over there on Nolan Street that he had at that time.

**RW:** And he was younger than you?

**JG:** No, he was older. He was older.

**MC:** He lived to be a hundred and two.

**RW:** So you're father had been married before.

**JG:** Yes, my father was married four times.

**RW:** Well, O.K. Well, how did he get the ten thousand dollars? What did he do for a living?

**JG:** Oh, he worked here in San Antonio, he had a job here. It was during them different wars and things like that.

**RW:** Well, did you ever see him later on in life?

**JG:** I buried him when he died.

**RW:** Did you ever ask him why he was so mean and stingy?

**JG:** I never, I was just as good a friend to him as if he had helped me. And I, the Lord, give me religion and I swore that I would never give him a drink of water when I got out. And when he got busted, he didn't have a quarter when he stayed in the rest home up here, eight years, and I got him on rehabilitation in the rest home. He quit his wife and got busted. And then he went down, down, down, until he didn't have a quarter. And when he was ninety-four years old, he got sick in the hospital and, you know, you stay there so long and then they put you out. I took him here and kept him a month or two months here in my apartment, until I could get him in the rest home up here, Austin, I mean Ella Austin. And then I was able to get him with his pension, social security whatever you want to call it. It wasn't much. And, uh, I got him up there and he stayed up there eight years, and I saw that he had all needs for the eight years. And when he died, he didn't have a quarter to be buried, and I buried him. Now after I buried him, and after I buried him, I put a tombstone on his grave. [laughs]

**RW:** And it said, 'And he wouldn't give me one pair of stockings.'

**JG:** He didn't give me, not a pair of stockings, he wouldn't even give me a quarter. And you get a pair of stockings in those days for fifty cents. He didn't give me a quarter on a pair of stockings.

**RW:** Well, you were a good Christian woman, I'll tell you that, to do that. Because...

**JG:** Now I did that and I got a witness. Mamie's a witness, knows I buried him. And she's a witness knows that I saw after his need when he was in the rest home.

**RW:** Well did he appreciate it, I mean...

**JG:** Oh, he had to appreciate it, he couldn't do nothing else.

**MC:** They were good friends. They, they'd visit each other all the time. That was something that happened many years ago. They were very good friends. They were very close to each other.

**RW:** [to Mamie Cavil] Why do you think he didn't, wouldn't help her?

**MC:** He didn't think she needed it.

**TBW:** Needed an education?

**MC:** At that time, it had no value to him. But he was very crazy about her, they got along very well.

**RW:** So what did he get busted for? I mean, like for drugs?

**MC:** Oh, no.

**JG:** Oh, no, he wasn't in no drugs.

**MC:** He just got broke financially.

**RW:** Got broke, O.K.

**JG:** He wasn't in no drugs, didn't get busted on drugs or nothing, he just liked good times and liked women. Was a playboy, that's the way he got busted.

**MC:** He never was in any kind of trouble or anything. Just, he had a home here.

**JG:** He was just a playboy, that's how he got in trouble, the women got all his money. And then when they got all his money, he didn't have any money, he didn't have no woman.

**RW:** Was he real handsome?

**JG:** Yeah, he was a good-looking man in his day, he was a good-looking guy.

**RW:** So, you had another brother, also.

**JG:** Yeah, he was an alcoholic. He wouldn't work for the king. [laughs] He won't do nothing but just drink alcohol and go to sleep. He never did get in no trouble though. [laughs] And he wandered off to Arizona and that's where he spent his last days.

**RW:** Well, getting back to your career as a teacher in these little schools, what was it like, being a teacher? Did you get good supplies from the school board, what...

**JG:** Oh, we didn't get any supplies of any kind.

**RW:** You didn't?

**JG:** No, we didn't get any supplies of any kind. And the last years that I taught, we didn't have but three books. And they would give the second-hand books from the white school to the coloreds, and buy the white school the new books.

**RW:** So did the teachers have to bring things themselves, like to teach the, like did you bring supplies from home for the students?

**JG:** Oh, I bought and made all my supplies, like charts and flashcards.

**RW:** You had to make them all yourself?

**JG:** I made them all myself, them I didn't buy. I bought, and then some I get sketches and things like that and I'd make 'em. And I had a beautiful room. And then I took the Normal instructor's primary plan magazine and that showed you, taught you just how to do your bulletin board every month and I did buy things to do my bulletin board, all them I couldn't make.

**RW:** Did you keep up with some of your students after they graduated?

**JG:** Oh yes, I have a bunch that graduated. I have students that I can put my hand on and feel proud of. The extension agents, teachers and with good jobs and things like that. I've got three or four of 'em here in San Antonio.

**RW:** Well, that makes you feel proud, doesn't it, that you taught them. I saw where you got a degree in home economics, or you studied home economics at Prairie View.

**JG:** Yeah, I have a degree in home economics.

**RW:** Well, that was an important profession for women in those days. That was the home extension agents were very important out in the rural areas.

**MC:** She used to do canning, go around canning for people, with her cooker and sealer and teach people how to preserve foods.

**RW:** So you were a home demonstration agent also?

**JG:** Yes.

**RW:** In Cameron, in Milam County?

**JG:** No, I didn't teach demonstration special, but I just taught it in my school that was free. But, see, I was the teacher in the community, and I would do home demonstrations work in my school.

**MC:** Tell how you were helping people can with your cooker and sealer.

**RW:** You would take your cooker and sealer to their houses or maybe to a church and they would bring their food...

**JG:** Oh, I would carry my equipment to their homes and can for them. And teach them how to can, but that was free, I didn't get any pay for that. Only the commodities they would give me, I would can corn, they would give me as much corn as I wanted to can.

**RW:** Like they got government commodities and in return...

**MC:** No, these were people were farmers. They grew it.

**JG:** They would grow this stuff for themselves.

**RW:** Well did you teach them how to do things like make curtains and manage their money too, or did you just do mainly the cooking and canning?

**JG:** Well, I did the cooking and canning.[end of side two] [tape two]

**MC:** She was a home economist.

**RW:** Well, this was a real important profession for black and white women, it was one way they could make a decent living, you know, and, uh...

**JG:** But we made those mattresses, have a home demonstration agent come by, and they'd give us bales of cotton at my school.

**RW:** And they stuffed the mattresses with the cotton.

**JG:** And they'd give us all of the ticking and everything and then the demonstration agent would come out and invite the parents out and bring needles and things and let them help make the mattresses.

**RW:** With the ticking.

**JG:** With the ticking and everything and they would give us that. And what they would have each project at the school.

**RW:** Well, Tori, what are some questions you might have?

**TBW:** I was just thinking of, of, teaching in rural districts, I'm studying to be a teacher myself, and I can't imagine that you'd have multi grades in this classrooms, right? Many different grades, right? Or just one grade.

**JG:** Grades one through seven. In the rural schools, and I would teach the rural schools.

**RW:** And how did you do that? Like the first hour you'd teach the first grade, and the second hour you taught the...

**JG:** Well, this is the way, and I managed very well. Just like, uh, I would have maybe the third and fourth grades to put their mathematics on the board, and while they were putting their mathematics on the board, well, maybe I'd have the reading class of the fifth and sixth grades, and then when the fourth

grade, I'd get through with the reading class and I would shift and have them to recite the lessons that they had on the board, and then I'd have them, who had the reading, go put their lessons on the board when the math class was done. You know, I always had plenty of board work.

**RW:** So the younger ones probably learned by hearing all the lessons of everybody else.

**JG:** Mm-hmm.

**TBW:** How many students did you have, all together?

**JG:** Hmm?

**TBW:** How many students did you have, all together?

**JG:** Oh, I'd have as many as fifty some, all the time mostly. As many as fifty students.

**TBW:** All day long?

**JG:** Yeah.

**RW:** Were they in one room?

**JG:** One room, but it was large, large, plenty large.

**RW:** Well how did you heat the rooms in the winter time?

**JG:** Had a coal heater in the center of the school. Had a large coal heater.

**RW:** Where did you get the coal from?

**JG:** The school board furnished the coal. We never had no heating problem. It would be nice and warm in there.

**RW:** How many months did they start? After cotton picking time?

**JG:** Yeah, it usually begin every six months. But children didn't begin school until October, because they all had to pick cotton in September.

**RW:** And then when did school end, finish up in the spring?

**JG:** I said, we would begin in October...

**RW:** And go through like May, or...

**JG:** Go through until six, we'd never have but six months.

**RW:** And you all got paid for six months, right?

**JG:** Yeah.

**RW:** And the rest of the time, how did you, did you earn some money?

**JG:** Oh, I was married, and of course my husband...

**RW:** Your husband worked.

**JG:** Took care of me. And I would work in summer time in cafes and things.

**RW:** Oh, and make some extra money.

**MC:** Tell them the difference in salaries at that time.

**JG:** I don't know...

**TBW:** Between...

**JG:** The first school I taught, I taught for fifty dollars a month.

**RW:** Between black and white teachers?

**MC:** Yes.

**JG:** Oh. When I was getting fifty dollars, the white teachers would get a hundred.

**RW:** And the bad thing about that was when you retired, your retirement is based on what you earned, so you got cheated at the other end, too.

**JG:** Yeah, that's right.

**RW:** There was a black woman in Dallas named Thelma Page Richardson that filed suit and finally got pay equalization, but that wasn't until the nineteen forties. But that's pretty big cheating. So your first year, you got fifty dollars a month and when you finally retired after thirty years, what were you making?

**JG:** Well, when I was teaching thirty years I was only getting seventy five dollars.

**RW:** A month?

**JG:** A month.

**MC:** She did not retire from the teacher retirement system.

**JG:** But when I was teaching, that was all I was making, seventy-five dollars a month. And then I had a car and would let three little white kids ride around the big schools and the superintendant would give me the same price that they would give the bus drivers, because the bus drivers wouldn't come up to the place for three children. Because he farmed for a living and he wouldn't come up there where those three kids lived to pick 'em up, he drove the bus, but he would go around in the other community and pick up the other white children but he wouldn't come way up there, way up on the highway where those three little children lived to pick 'em up. And I would pass right along by 'em and their parents went to the superintendent and they asked him to pay for their kids to ride with me. And he did. And he gave me twenty five dollars a month to pick up those three little white children.

**RW:** And you dropped them off at the white school.

**JG:** And I dropped them off at the white school.

**RW:** And then you went and taught at the...

**JG:** And that made my salary a hundred dollars a month, but I was only getting seventy five from the school board. [laughs]

**RW:** It sounds funny, but it's not really. It's sad, isn't it.

**JG:** It's sad, but it's the truth.

**RW:** Well, what advice would you give young people today?

**JG:** Get an education and keep going, and not let nobody stop you. Because if you want an education, you can get an education. And don't be in the streets and failing to go to school. Just go to school regardless if you have to have one shoe on and another bare foot, go to school. It pays off in the long run. But having had an education has helped me wonderful, because it taught me how to deal with people. You know, having an education makes you know how to deal with folks. You know you deal

with everybody different. Sometimes you can talk, and you and I can talk and laugh and have a good time, and the same things I said to you, if I said 'em to her, she'd jump naked. [laughs]

**RW:** That would be interesting, let's try that. I'm just kidding.

**JG:** Well, that is true, the difference in people. Now, I could talk to you and make you, and you and I could have a nice time talking, and I go over there and say the same thing to her, and she'd get around my neck with fire. It makes her so mad. You know, but I learned her temperament and the things I talk to you, I wouldn't say those things to her, 'cause I wouldn't want to make her mad. Education helps you in many ways.

**TBW:** I couldn't agree more. Couldn't agree more. Do, do you think lack of education is a, one of the major problems today for young people?

**JG:** Yes, it is. You know, the most trouble you have, you have a lot of ignorant people. People of intelligence never have no trouble. You don't have one atom of trouble with educated people. But now, you get ignorant ones, you have something on your hands. Something terrible. Ignorance is hard to deal with. [laughs]

**RW:** Is there anything else? [to Mamie Cavil] How long have you been living here and helping out?

**MC:** I have been living next door to her for thirty something years. I've been living in the house with her for about twelve or thirteen years, twelve years, I'm sure.

**RW:** Your mother was her sister?

**MC:** No, no. This is an unusual situation. My husband was her nephew. And, um, we moved here to be near her thirty years ago, because she and her brother that she was telling you about, which was, how old was he? Twelve years older than you?

**JG:** Eight.

**MC:** He was eight years older. They were the only two in San Antonio and both of them were elderly, and neither one of them had children, we moved here when she was seventy. And she asked my

husband for us to move here, and we did. Well, I lost my husband, and it left me here. Well, she had also lost her brother, so she has no relatives in San Antonio. And I was here, so I'm still here. We had gotten along all of those years and I had retired by that time, so...

**RW:** Were you a teacher, also?

**MC:** Yes.

**RW:** And your name is M-a-m-i-e? C-a-v-i-l.

**MC:** Yes, we call that, we pronounce that Cavil [pronounces it ka-VILL].

**RW:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**MC:** That's alright. We answer to Cavil [pronounces it KA-vill] also.

**RW:** Sounds like, is it French?

**MC:** Yes, French. But that's her, my husband was her sister's son.

**RW:** Well, it sounds like you all are a matched pair and a very good companions.

**MC:** We have gotten along very well, we have survived.

**TBW:** Did you teach here in San Antonio?

**MC:** Yes, at the East Central Independent School District. I worked with East Central for nineteen years. I worked one year in Southside Independent School District. When I lived in Pampa Texas, west Texas. My first teaching experience was in Arkansas.

**RW:** Where were you born?

**MC:** I'm from Tyler.

**RW:** Tyler, East Texas.

**MC:** Yes, Smith County.

**JG:** May I ask a question?

**RW:** Yes, please, ma'am.

**JG:** Uh, what is the objective of this interview.

**RW:** The objective is that, um, the University of Texas at San Antonio has a new center to study women and also their establishing a library where they're collecting the papers of different women like Lila Cockrell, who was the mayor. She has a lot of scrapbooks. She was a Republican, too, you probably know her. And so, we're trying to collect all those so that young people coming up who want to do research and learn about what it was like can go to our library and they can hear your story. You know, a lot of young people never heard of Jim Crow. You ask somebody. Some teenager about Jim Crow, they won't know what you're talking about. They don't know that they had colored drinking fountains and white drinking fountains. And whites had to ride—and if you were a woman riding the train and you wanted to go into the train station and use the bathroom or get a hamburger or a coke, and you couldn't.

**JG:** That's right, riding on the highway couldn't go in the bathroom at the filling station.

**RW:** They let black women cook in the kitchen, but they wouldn't let 'em sit out in front on a green plastic stool and give them a hamburger, does that make any sense? So we're trying to collect as many stories as we can, from people like you who have so much to share, and preserve it for history, and uh, that's what we're doing. And Miss Sowell suggested that you'd be a good person to interview. What we'll do, we'll type up everything that you've said, and we'll send you a copy, and then you can read it, and if we've made any mistakes in spelling, or if we couldn't understand a word, you all can correct it and send it back so it will be right. Does that sound alright?

**JG:** Yes, it sounds good. I just wanted to know, you know. I had a teacher when I went to college always told me, when you didn't know a thing to ask questions.

**RW:** Absolutely.

**JG:** And she said, "And if you never ask any questions, you don't know nothing."

**RW:** You don't know nothing and you'll never know nothing.

**JG:** And he would teach our class and ask us, “Are there any questions?” And we would all sit there. And we wouldn’t nobody say nothing. And he’d say, “Now, I know you don’t know everything I taught you about.” Then say, “So and so, what did I say about so and so?” And we couldn’t tell him. Or else, when we heard him, we couldn’t understand exactly what he meant.

**RW:** Couldn’t tell him diddly-squat, huh?

**JG:** Couldn’t understand him. Then he’d say, “Well, if you couldn’t understand me, why didn’t you ask the question?” And so Mamie gets on me, when I ask her a questions, I say, Mamie, so and so and so and so. “Aunt, don’t ask so many questions.” I say, “Well, I was taught to ask questions.” [laughs]

**RW:** Well, we have an interview agreement, mainly it just says that you have, you have agreed to be interviewed and that the tape and transcript will be put in our library for people to use who are doing research. We’re not going to sell this, and we’re not going to make a profit on it, it’s for educational purposes. So if you feel comfortable signing this today, it would be great, otherwise we can leave it with you and you could read it later, whatever you feel comfortable with is what we’ll do.

**JG:** Well, I don’t mind signing today, because I don’t know nothing about any of it.

**RW:** Alright.

**TBW:** We’ll be able to send the transcript probably within two weeks.

**RW:** O.K., it’s right here.

**TBW:** I’ve got a few more to do.

**TBW:** I just know that, it’s very possible that when I’m transcribing this tape that I’m gonna have some more questions. ‘Cause that always happens, it seems like.

**MC:** If any time you would like to ask—do you live here?

**TBW:** Yes, I do.

**MC:** Well, if you would like to call or come back by, if you’d like to come back by sometime, just call me, we’re usually here.

**TBW:** O.K.

**MC:** I can always arrange to be here.

**JG:** You want my signature over here? Where?

**MC:** Show her where to sign.

**JG:** Where you want me to sign.

**TBW:** Here's the place, but do you want to restrict any of this? As I was listening, I didn't hear anything I thought was very controversial.

**JG:** Right here?

**TBW:** Yes, in that little tiny spot, right here.

**MC:** Look at her finger.

**JG:** Right here.

**TBW:** I know it's a very small space.

**MC:** Her sight is very, that's the most that's wrong with her is her sight.

**TBW:** Well, I've been very, very pleased to meet you today. This has been very interesting. This is my first day on interviews, I was a journalist for a number of years, so I'm used to talking to people.

**MC:** Now you're going to teach history?

**TBW:** Yes.

**MC:** High school, college?

**TBW:** High school. And I had a wonderful time doing student teaching, I feel like this is where I'm supposed to be. I couldn't be happier.

**MC:** Teaching is a good experience. I loved teaching. I don't know if I'd like to be teaching now or not.

**TBW:** The funny thing is...

**MC:** Is that thing still on?

**TBW:** Yes. The funny thing is that the problems the students have now seem to be a little different from twenty years ago when I was in high school but, it's still quite the same.

**RW:** So, you're going to lend us the tapes, and what else?