

CO: I'm not recording yet I'm just----

FMM: Ok.

CO: Ok it is November 28----I'm sorry December 28, 2011 and I'm here with Mrs. Frances Miller Mathis at the Holbrooke in Gainesville, Georgia. Mrs. Frances has told me a little bit about her background and now she's going to tell me about her life. Who she is and some of the things that make her who she is. So we'll just get started. My first question for you has to do with your first conscious memory. What's the first thing you recall when you think back? What's the earliest memory you have?

FMM: Right now I think it was when I was six years old. My grandmother passed away and my grandmother-----we lived with her, because my father was the youngest of his family, when his father passed away, somebody needed to be with his mother and look after her. He was sixteen years old at that time. So he cared----that's why he was looking after the country store, and doing those things, and so we lived with----- my dad and mother lived with my grandmother. So, I knew her really well. She was an old person even then ----I remember when she passed away it was in Winter time, I think about January. And that I'm thinking from the weather more than anything else--- -it was cold and there were not any paved roads in the area where we lived and they had to carry the casket to the cemetery on a wagon. It was so muddy and I remember that.

CO: So you remember the ride?

FMM: No I didn't go with them, I remember.

CO: What was that like? Were you close to her?

FMM: Oh yes. Oh yes. She had been ill for a long time. I say a couple of years I guess. And had taken medicine. And yes, I was very close to her. When it was time for her medicine I always made an appearance because she always shared mints with me.

(Both laughing)

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

FMM: I guess that's the first thing I remember.

CO: That's your grandmother sharing mints?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Mm hmm. Was it hard emotionally? Did you----

FMM: I don't remember it being particularly----my aunt told me that she was asleep.

CO: Sure.

(Moving in background with recorder still on)

CO: Actually, I'll say while we've stopped. Oh great! You have a picture. I would like a picture of you if we can get one over the next couple of days. Is this the grandmother?

FMM: No that's my aunt.

CO: Your aunt. Ok.

FMM: She was more of an influence on me than any other one person. You'll understand that in a few minutes.

CO: Ok. Well, that's a question I'll ask you at some point down the way.

FMM: Well, she was the one that told me her mother was asleep.

CO: Because she didn't think you could handle what death mean?

FMM: I guess so.

CO: Ok. What's her name?

FMM: She's **Verdie Frances** (58:37).

CO: So you were named after her.

FMM: Mine's Frances Verdie.

CO: Oh ok.

(Both laughing)

CO: Well you know what, I didn't even ask----did you tell me that?

FMM: I didn't tell you. I didn't put my full name there.

CO: I will write that down.

FMM: V----E----R----D----I----E.

CO: Ok. So the memory is of----that microphone is so sensitive it will pick up that meow.

(cat meowing in the background)

CO: It will be cute, the kids will love it. Yes, darling, I know, it sounds like it might be your supper time or snack time. Ok, could you describe yourself as a child? Physically just what----temperamentally----what kind of child were you?

FMM: I was always plump and easy going, and I had aunt that was two years older than me, and she was thin and trim. (Laughing) I always thought she was so pretty. And I was so slouchy looking because I was plump.

CO: So you compared yourself to her. An Aunt on whose side?

FMM: My mother's side.

CO: Ok. All right. Were you----did you all kind of grow up together?

FMM: We grew up----she's the nearest sister I had.

CO: Ok. All right. Ok. That was your physical appearance. Were you a troubled child? Did you have a troubled childhood or sort of carefree you guess----

FMM: Pretty carefree.

CO: Ok. All right. What about your parents? Can you describe your mother and father?

FMM: They worked very hard. Living where my grandmother had lived made it the place for everybody----for all the brothers and sisters of my father to come back to Christmas, to Homecoming, to whatever or to see their mother when she was sick. So, my mom had a really difficult time with the cooking I'm sure. I remember that. And Daddy had----equally had a hard time because he was having to keep the house warm, and it took fires in three different places and he had to get the wood, cut the wood, and get it in the house for the fire----to keep the fires going.

CO: So when your parents married did they go from----did they move right in to your mother's----

FMM: Oh yes. Mother never knew any different.

CO: So the first six years of their married life are somewhat cheap, it was living with your grandmother?

FMM: That's right. And she loved her and she thought . . . her mother had a different background --- not one of much Church going, and that type thing. And this---my grandmother on my Daddy's side was-----they were very Church oriented and she thought----I remember my Mama used to say that my grandmother said, "There's some good in everybody."

CO: And your mother-----that must have changed your mother.

FMM: It did. Wow. So your mother-----did she sort of think of her mother-in-law as her mother. Sort of easily became?

FMM: Yes. Yes. Yes.

CO: All right. Now do you remember your mother's mother?

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: You did?

FMM: Yes.

CO: Ok.

FMM: Yeah, she didn't pass away until----she was not as old as when well, she was 85 when she died and I can remember her. I remember sitting with her when she was sick. She went to my Mama's house to live because her husband had died, and she came to live with Mama and Daddy and they were living in a different location----different house and everything about that time.

CO: Now, how old were you when she came to live with----

FMM: Oh I had already left home.

CO: So. Ok. You were grown?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Ok. So your mother first took care of her mother-in-law and then her----

FMM: Her mother.

CO: Ok. All right. So your father----they were both hardworking because they sort of had to be the hub for your father's extended family, and then they----sounds like they visited often at least on holidays and special occasions. They got together.

FMM: That's right. This aunt came and stayed a lot of time. She was a teacher. She was Dean of Women at LaGrange College.

CO: Oh. Ok.

FMM: And not at that time but she eventually was. She taught English in the high schools in LaGrange. I don't know how she happened to wind up in LaGrange but that's where she was.

CO: So you went to LaGrange College was she there?

FMM: She was there when I was there.

CO: Ok. All right. So she visited often?

FMM: Oh yes, she came and stayed if my grandmother was having a really hard time. She'd come and stay. She was teaching in high school, I think, at that time at LaGrange.

CO: So she'd come as often as she could get away.

FMM: And she had a car and there weren't many cars. (Chuckling) And---

CO: So was this would have been the '20's the late 20's?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: Ok.

FMM: And she would drive from LaGrange to Blairsville or to Union County, and she would, I guess, come after classes on Sunday, and she wore a man's hat so people would not know it was a woman driving, and she felt safer that way. That made an impression on me. (Chuckling)

CO: I'm sure it did.

FMM: I guess it made one on her too. (Chuckling)

CO: Pretty smart.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Now was she married?

FMM: No.

CO: No?

FMM: Never married.

CO: Never married? Ok.

FMM: She dated, I don't know if you'd call it dated anyway, must have, a person her same age and he wanted to get married and she turned him down and she said, "I will think about this" and such and such years well, he never married either, and he would come back at that time and say, "well, are you ready to get married?" No, she wasn't ready. And just before she passed away, had what been 70 years that they had known each other, and he came back and he----his health was worse than hers we thought, and she still wouldn't marry him.

CO: Oh my.

FMM: But she passed away before he did. She had a heart attack and lived three days.

CO: In LaGrange?

FMM: In LaGrange.

CO: Wow. Now what was the thing about getting married? What do you know----

FMM: I don't know.

CO: You don't know.

FMM: I don't know, I never knew.

CO: All right. So where did he live?

FMM: He lived in Union County.

CO: Oh my goodness!

FMM: 49:55He was the brother----Jack Lance was President of Young Harris College, that was Bertram Lance's father. You remember when he was with Jimmy Carter? And his wife and this man were brother and sister.

CO: My goodness. And so how did they----they just knew each other from childhood?

FMM: Uh huh. They just grew up together, and she would visit with him and he would visit with her.

CO: Now was she older or younger than your father?

FMM: Older.

CO: Older than your father.

FMM: My father was the youngest in the family.

CO: Yeah, you said that.

FMM: And it was strange ---- my father's family was first strange in that his father had ---had two families. Daddy had half sisters and brothers that would have been to me old enough to have been as old as he was or older or they were older than he. There were eight in the first family and his wife died. That was in Cleveland, Georgia, and he moved from Cleveland, Georgia after her death to Choestoe, and he was a school teacher. Somehow he had managed to get an education earlier and he was a school teacher. And so he then----he married my grandmother, and always these people saying why would you want to marry that old man?

CO: With eight children? And were they still at home some of them when they married?

FMM: No.

CO: So she didn't have to mother them?

FMM: No they were most of them married and had families.

CO: So she married and then they had----how many siblings did your father have?

FMM: Seven.

CO: Whoa. That man had 16 children.

FMM: Probably 15 to 16 children.

CO: Wow.

FMM: There was one buried in the cemetery in Choestoe and I don't know about the first family.

CO: So did you know your Aunts and Uncles up from your----from the second family? Did you know them very well?

FMM: Some of them.

CO: Well, this one you did.

FMM: Yeah. But she's a sister to Daddy.

CO: Ok. Yeah.

FMM: And then he had a brother that was had the same birthday that he had and he was the oldest. I always thought that was strange. And then the next son or brother was (46:37) Zell Miller's father.

CO: Oh yeah, I remember. Ok.

FMM: And then there was one that had a hard time. I never knew what was wrong with him quite. He was somewhat ill, but it was hard to get acquainted with him.

CO: Frances, let me just for clarity and because Zell Miller is a name that is so well known. He was your----he was a cousin of yours? So he was your----

FMM: First cousin.

CO: Right. His----

FMM: His father was my uncle.

CO: Ok. What was his father's name?

FMM: Grady.

CO: Grady. Was your father's----in the birth order where was Grady?

FMM: Oh he was second and oldest.

CO: Ok and your father was where?

FMM: Youngest.

CO: The youngest. The baby. Ok.

FMM: There were two girls. This aunt and there was one other girl in the family.

(Long Pause)

CO: Ok. Who was the first born? The oldest child? What was his name? Your father's----

FMM: Frank.

CO: Frank. And then Verdie was where?

FMM: Next----then there was Uncle Grady and there was my Aunt Verd.

CO: And then two others and then your father. Ok. Sometimes it's hard to keep the generations straight.

FMM: Oh yes. Well, it's hard to even remember them.

CO: Right. Well, yeah, I know.

FMM: I remember because if we didn't have pictures about this so I wouldn't remember. But we had a reunion just before Grady Miller passed away. Zell was two weeks old when his father died. He had spinal meningitis and it came from his ear. How that all worked I don't know. But Young Harris didn't have many doctors and they finally took him to Emory but it was too late.

CO: So did his mother never remarry?

FMM: No.

CO: But he stayed in touch with the family? Did he stay in touch with his father's family?

FMM: I'm not following you.

CO: Well, you knew him as a cousin. Did you all have a relationship? If his father died when he was two weeks old?

FMM: Oh yes, his mother was----he had a sister that was two years older than he already, and his mother was something else. She said when Uncle Grady died, I'm not going to move back to South Carolina where my father lives. And he had a plantation and she could have been well taken care of. She said they would never know their history ----they wouldn't know anything about their family if I do that. So she kept them there and she would walk from Young Harris, there was a nearer way than there is around the road like you would have to go in a car now but it wasn't much nearer. But she would walk with Jane and Zell to our house.

CO: To visit?

FMM: To visit.

CO: So they did stay?

FMM: Oh yes. Oh yes.

CO: Sort of like your mother adopting the family, she did as well.

FMM: Yes.

CO: Ok. All right. So you grew up sort of----how much older are you than he?

FMM: Than?

CO: Than Zell?

FMM: Jane is three years younger than me and would be five. So, he is 75.

CO: Did your parents----did they try to encourage you into a particular path of life? A particular----was education a big thing for them and they were----

FMM: Right. Education was a big thing with the whole family. And the grandfather that had two wives and two families was a school teacher. He had that influence very strong on everybody in the whole community. I'll show you or let you read this. And this----that you can carry that. That's a copy. But yes, my family----I changed schools when I was in grammar school three times because they never did quite think they were up to par. And then----when I was a freshman in high school, I had to go to Blairsville, which was ten miles from where I lived, and had to ride a school bus and walk to meet the bus because our----where we lived, here were the roads going this way and the roads going this way, but we were on this road in the middle, so it got very little care. I got sick the first year in high school. And they thought I had tuberculosis, told me to go home, and they put me to bed, and that's what they did years ago. And finally they decided that my aunt would take me to Alto----that was the sanitarium or whatever it was at that time.

CO: Oh yeah, I had an uncle who had to go there.

FMM: And after going there and going through their examination they said this child does not have tuberculosis, she just has a chronic bronchitis. And Mama took me to her doctor and he cleared it up in two weeks. And it was chronic bronchitis and for years I would have that chronic bronchitis. It would come back on but anyway the doctor told us or them that ----I could not go through that much exposure and I couldn't---Young Harris was a boarding school and they had an academy and they had two years of college and my----and aunt Verdie was teaching at Young Harris at that time so my life was rounded with her.

CO: So she took you---- you went to boarding school.

FMM: I went to boarding school at Young Harris when I was 13 years old.

CO: So you got a really good education? It wasn't high school was it?

FMM: It was the academy. One of our leading doctors here, mother were teachers at Young Harris, and he was principal of the high school academy, and this doctor was a little boy about four or five years old I guess, and he had a head full of white curls, I remember. When you'd see that doctor you'd think that every----but I was there three years in high school and then two years in college and my husband James always laughed when he would introduce me to him. "I don't know exactly what happened to her, but she took five years for her to get to finished at Young Harris."

(Both Laughing)

CO: Wow and so you went from there to La Grange?

FMM: From there to La Grange.

CO: Now did you go to La Grange? I got a section just on education but since we're talking on it. Did you go to La Grange because your Aunt Verdie was there?

FMM: I guess I did. And it was a Methodist school. Young Harris was a Methodist school and La Grange was also so. But there was one other reason that I went to La Grange, I wanted----by this time James and I had met at Young Harris. We were in the same class and we were very serious and I thought, well, the thing I would use most to be----to learn how to sew and cook and that kind of stuff so I'll just get a degree in Home-Ec. Well, when I got to La Grange they were just entering the Home-Ec degree in their curriculum. And they would not let a transfer student that was just gonna be there two years get a degree in Home-Ec.

CO: Because it was a full four year curriculum?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Oh my goodness. Wow. So what did you major in?

FMM: I was a science major and there was a reason. I always had difficulties with reading. And history and English had such parallel reading. We knew I would never be able to cover all that so we decided that----and I loved science. That was so interesting to me, after I got into it, so that's what I did.

CO: And of course that was not common either for women to be interested in science. They were but they were discouraged from being----from going into science and math.

FMM: yeah. There weren't many science majors at La Grange.

CO: Yeah. Wow. Ok. Well, we'll get back to education. You've already said something about your----one area of interest to me personally is mother/daughter relationships, and you've already said something about your mother's relationship with her mother. That was not really close, would you say? Not especially close?

FMM: Not especially close.

CO: Now how many siblings in your mother's family? How many brothers and sisters did she have?

FMM: Six I think.

CO: Ok. How many of them were girls?

FMM: Three.

CO: Ok. So how----

FMM: No! Four girls.

CO: Ok. Her and three sisters.

FMM: And then she had a brother Jesse, and a brother Clifford, that's right.

CO: So did she----what was----was her relationship with her mother similar to her sister's relationship with the mother?

FMM: My mother was a----I don't know how to describe her----adventuresome person. She learned to hunt and she could shoot a gun better than my Daddy. And she rode when she married and she would need to go to the grocery she would go on horseback to the grocery store, but we would have to go by wagon if there was enough gas or she had to walk 'cause there weren't cars on those roads. And so she was different----she wasn't a clingy----traditional young lady. She enjoyed the out of doors, she looked after everything in the house and did a good job. She did a lot of sewing, but she would far rather be working out in the garden or the field even as to be in the house.

CO: Now what did----she hunted----she liked to hunt?

FMM: Uh huh. She didn't but she could, and she would at times, go squirrel hunting.

CO: Ok so she was not what you would call all that domestic?

FMM: No.

CO: No. Ok. It sounds like you were very domestic in your own choice to be a home builder--home maker.

FMM: I think by that time I had realized that my Mama didn't take time to teach me to cook 'cause she came in----she had been working outside, and she would come in and in 30 minutes time, she could have dinner or lunch ready for everybody to sit down and eat and she didn't have time to teach us how to make a cake or do anything. So, I realized I didn't know how to do it.

CO: So for you it became----it wasn't so much a chore because you hadn't had to do it. So, now you had one brother, do you know why you didn't have more siblings? Was that on purpose?

FMM: I think it was on purpose. He weighed 12 pounds and in those days they were delivered in the home ----

CO: So she might have been advised not to have anymore?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. So her relationship with her mother was----she was independent from her mother she didn't----

FMM: She was more of a companion to the boys than she was to the girls or her mother. She was more----she did more things like they would be doing, than the girls.

CO: Were her sisters that way also? No, they were more traditional?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. What about your relationship with her? Her relationship with her mother was slightly distant, what about your relationship with your mother? What was that like?

FMM: Got along fine, but I don't know why I----she sang a lot and when she was working, and sometimes she would sing songs that were sad and I would cry, and I would just go away, and get out of the house and get out of her range for some reason. And then she was----she read well, and she would read books a loud to the neighbors. They would come at night and she would sit and read to them. And I would hear her reading sometimes, and I would get sad and go to bed.

CO: Did she sad temperament?

FMM: I don't think so.

CO: No.

FMM: I cannot imagine why I was like this. I'm not like that now, not completely (Chuckles).

CO: But well, ok. Now how old were you when your mother passed away?

FMM: Oh I was already married.

CO: Ok. That's interesting. Did you have----you know----

FMM: Well, this aunt took the place. You see, I was with her more than I was with my mom. Because when I went away at 13 ----she gave me the things that I needed. She had an income, and she had a car and she took me to the movie and she took me if I needed a coat or if she thought I needed a coat we went to Gainesville or Atlanta or somewhere, and she bought me a coat and that last all my life, all her life.

CO: Did your mother resent that?

FMM: No. She just gave her more time to do the active things that she liked to do, I think. But my mother was a great seamstress herself. And she made lots of my clothes.

CO: What was the relationship with your brother like?

FMM: I didn't know my brother very well. See there were three years, two years something, difference in our ages so we weren't in school together. And he was a very smart person. I was slow.

CO: Well, if you were good in science, that's not very slow. At least by the time you got to high school----

FMM: I didn't read well and I always thought, and this is sad---I don't want you to put this down. But I always thought my mom compared me with my brother too much.

CO: Well, that's a common thing. Have you heard about a book----do you listen to NPR often? There's a----well, it's where I heard about it but I also saw or heard on some other programs a man who's published a book called *The Sibling Effect*, and his hypothesis is that our siblings influence us actually more than our parents, or our relationships or lack of relationships with our siblings, has a greater impact on our----

shaping us in our outlook to life, than even our parents do. I don't know how true that is, but it's pretty thought provoking. So, and that's a----I hear that from people often that they think their mother has compares. But do you think that you did that to your sons even if not meaning to?

FMM: I don't think so, no. But the middle son is a middle son. So something had to make a middle son.

CO: Yeah but usually the middle children according to these theories is the best adjusted, because they have to----they don't have the benefits of the older child and they don't get babied, so they supposedly look outward. I was just hearing that today actually on this radio program, and so but who's to know? But you don't know what his relationship was like with your mother?

FMM: Well, my mom said that when I came along, my Daddy gave me his full attention, and I was first girl in both families and everybody was----they called me Cooter.

CO: So you got a lot of attention?

FMM: So I got a lot of attention ----she intended for Bill to get that much attention. And if she had to give it to him that was all right because Daddy wasn't gonna give it to him. He was giving me all the attention.

CO: So there's a dynamic there that explains that. She's trying to compensate maybe for----do you know if your Aunt Verdie was----doted on you even as an infant as a baby and a toddler?

FMM: Yes, I do. When I was three years old she took me to visit her sister right by herself and you know, that was a big thing that I was named for her.

CO: Namesake is very special.

FMM: So that took place of my influence from my mother.

CO: She was more like a mother figure to you?

FMM: Right.

CO: Ok. As a child you know up to that magical age of 12 when you enter adolescence but as a child do you recall what was the most significant event in your life? Can you think of a single thing----we've already talked about the impact of your

grandmother's death. Can you think of something else that may have shaped your childhood? No?

FMM: Mm mm.

CO: Well, what was----you left home at 13, right, to go to school. Did you have----was there----what was becoming a teenager like for you? Was it loaded with tension or conflict or it sounds like you went off with your aunt and you may have had a pretty happy childhood.

FMM: I did. I did not have difficulty getting along with people in Choestoe. But it didn't bother me to go to Young Harris.

CO: That sort of prevented you from having what might have been a tense, conflictual relationship with your mother? Some adolescent girls have as they become teenagers they have conflict. They want to individuate away from the mother, but you didn't have that experience.

FMM: No. Uh uh.

CO: So it sounds like you were----you had to except for this thing with your mother and your brother----you had a pretty trouble free childhood. Would you say that you had any struggles as a child? Do you recall anything other than feeling compared to your brother, do you recall any other struggles? Now you mentioned being sad when you heard your mother sing.

FMM: Why I did that I do not know. I've never been able to figure that out.

CO: That's got something in it though. Sadness. Especially since you still recall the feeling of being sad, and when she would read to neighbors, you would feel a similar feeling?

FMM: Well, if they talked about somebody dying or something of that nature I would just get up and leave and cry.

CO: Did you ever question that? You just didn't think about it.

FMM: No. I just didn't think about it, I guess. I just didn't want people to see me crying and so I would just leave so they wouldn't see me crying.

CO: Did you ever talk to your aunt about that?

FMM: Uh uh. No.

CO: Could you----did you have any heroes as a child?

FMM: No.

CO: Ok.

FMM: Don't think so.

CO: So you don't have a real conscious memory of becoming a teenager. Did you look forward to growing up?

FMM: I don't think I had thoughts about this.

CO: Ok. So you didn't have big dreams about----well, you didn't really have to because your aunt took you----you got that sort of getting away from home out of your system. Was there something significant that happened in your teenage years that you recall, something that happened at Young Harris or just anything that teenagers are supposed to be troubled, you know.

FMM: I don't remember being troubled. I think I worked hard with my classes and then when I got to college I worked----I continued to work hard and I took the Home-Ec classes that I thought were building me up to getting my degree, and I was fortunate enough to have grades that I was in the Alpha Honor Society, so I always was very pleased about that because I wasn't supposed to be very smart.

CO: So you were in an honor society. Well, that's a great deal about that. Now you're parents were both Methodist? Mother and Daddy were both Methodist?

FMM: Right.

CO: Was religion a big----was it important in the household? Did you go to Church?

FMM: We went to Church and we had blessings before we ate, always and that's about as far as it went.

CO: Do you recall ever questioning those values as a young girl?

FMM: No.

CO: Was your family----you become politically connected but were they conscious of the world outside the household when you were growing up as a girl?

FMM: In the community where we lived we were all --- it was so isolated ---that we didn't know there was anything out there other than what we were experiencing.

CO: So the community was kind of your world.

FMM: Yes. And I found that when I went to La Grange College that there were students that had a hard time adjusting, because they had a stigma about what their families may have been like, and in the community that I grew up in we were as well as off as anybody else. So we just meshed together, but no doubt it kind of bothered me when I went to La Grange, and there was a larger variety of students there than I had experienced at Young Harris. I got along fine but I didn't feel like I was a leader. I was in a little club, but I never was president. I was kind of in the background.

CO: Were the people at La Grange College----did they come from a different class background than----were they more elite than your background?

FMM: Yeah. Yeah.

CO: So that made you kind of feel that you didn't fit in?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Now, as a----it sounds like your Aunt Verdie probably helped minimize, and also your mother being a very non-traditional woman maybe helped your----some of the effect of the strong gender traditions women grow up with in the south. It was in your generation that way for women all over the country and many parts of the western world. It was just more pronounced in the south. My question is, when you were growing up, did you feel free to share your ambitions? Would you have been encouraged to do anything that you wanted to do by your family if that had been something non-traditional maybe become a doctor or do something that maybe women weren't really----didn't commonly do?

FMM: I don't think I ever thought about that. I don't know why I didn't but maybe they didn't lead me in that direction.

CO: When you realized that you were going to take a lot of science and major is science, did you ever----you said you met your future husband by then, and knew you were going to marry but did you ever think what you might do with a science degree?

FMM: Mm hmm. I wanted to be a researcher----do research.

CO: Somewhere, you didn't know where, you wanted to do research.

FMM: There was a --- and I can't remember what it was but they were the ones that discovered plastic --- and that kind of stuff and they were big at that time and my

science teacher worked for them. And that's what I thought I would love to do and I still think I would have enjoyed it. Turns out I would have had to read about what different things do for you.

CO: So you did have but did that interest not really develop until you were in college and had the science to stimulate that?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Have you thought much about that since then?

FMM: No. James and I married as soon as----he returned from World War II. When we graduated from Young Harris, he went straight to the University of Georgia and enrolled. And he went one quarter to the University of Georgia and that got him up to Christmas, and he volunteered for the Air Force. So he left but he would not get married----he did not want to get married before he did his duty in the Army, or whatever, and he went to Miami and trained and he discovered he could not be a pilot because his vision----his depth vision was not accurate. And so he couldn't----they didn't want him in the Air Force really, but they kept keeping him busy with night duties, and learning to map things and so on, and I guess he was there maybe an extra year, and he decided that he was just sitting there doing nothing and all these other folks were sitting there doing all the work, and fighting and so on and he volunteered for the Army out of the Air Force. He had been there for three years I think, and they gave him six weeks training at Fort Gordon, and the Battle of the Bulge came up, and they shot him over for the Battle of the Bulge. I didn't even see him again. He left at Christmas time and the only thing that gets next to me is "I'll Be Home for Christmas." I just can't! Now you know how that must just gets me! And I guess that kind of relates to that being sad when I hear [songs like] "Put my Little Shoes Away" and things like that that my Mama would sing about. But anyway, he came home in January of '46 and we married in March of '46. I was working. I graduated in '45. I was working in rehabilitation of blind people.

CO: In Union County?

FMM: No. Atlanta. And I was training people to operate vending stands like in a court house or some public place. They would have a little stand of candy and cigarettes, and that kind of stuff. They would sell and I was working with them when he came back and we got married ----the job he got was proofreading income tax checks. Can you imagine a soldier all nervous anyway, having to do that? Well, we thought we would have to do something different. My father and mother had been operating on

what they called a tourist court up in out close to Vogle State Park and they were ready to leave that. They had a farm and they moved back to the old house, and so James said that would be something we could do. I never had cooked, but I had to start cooking because these people had to be fed if they came and stayed. So with his help I learned how to cook. We were there until I got pregnant.

CO: In that year?

FMM: In that year. And we never went back.

CO: Oh my goodness your son was born in December that year?

FMM: Right. Barely. Barely nine months. He was really premature. He weighed five pounds.

CO: But you didn't have time to really get----experience at this marriage thing before suddenly you were a mother.

FMM: That's right. And then we came to Gainesville, and Mr. Mathis had a friend that had a fish market, and he had a drinking problem too, and he had been drinking too much for some time, and not operating his place well. So Mr. Mathis said, Bill needs some help, why don't you go down there and open that Fish Market up and get it straight down there and work for him. So he did and he met ----one of the employees at the bank. She came to buy fish and he would make sure he had just the right thing and so on. And she said, would you like to come to work at the bank? His comment always, I didn't want to feel too eager but he was so excited and he went to work at the bank and worked there for two years, I guess.

(beeping in background)

FMM: Is that your phone?

CO: (whispers) I forgot to turn my phone off. (Normal voice) So he went from the fish market to the bank. I can see why he was so eager.

FMM: Well, he never had much----there was never much at the fish market, he was just filling in for his father's alcoholic friend. And his father was somewhat of an alcoholic himself.

CO: Was he----did he----was this----you were pregnant and you----

FMM: No I already had Jim.

CO: So did you----

(Long Pause)

CO: So your husband early in your marriage became a banker so that really----your life together was with him as a banker. Did you ever in those, well, you had a baby, and being a mother is full-time and total occupied you. Did you think possibly when you were----because you and he were----were you engaged while he was off in----Ok, so in those years when he was gone, but you were engaged to him, did you think about----were you just simply committed then to being a traditional wife and mother. You didn't think about having some kind of professional life doing research? Once you got engaged you----

FMM: No. No. That was my later years at La Grange College when I thought about doing the research.

CO: You had a brother. Was there ever any awareness on your part of any kind of treatment of you different from your brother because you were a girl, or was it simply other circumstances, other dynamics, your father treated you special because you were the first girl, and you got a lot of attention from his family. Did you sense any of your mother's----the way she treated you because you were a girl?

FMM: No. Not because I was a girl. But I was older than my brother and much mean to him.

CO: Were you? Or did she just think you were?

FMM: Well, she thought I was, I think. If he cried or something than that's something I had done. I went away when I was 13.

CO: Sibling rivalry is a subject I'm real curious about, and interested in right now because of the dynamics in several families I'm connected with, and I see that, and so it's interesting to talk to somebody for whom that never really sounds like it was resolved, you and your brother were never really close.

FMM: No. We never really were close. Well, see we never went to school together, because he was three years younger than I, and the schools I attended when I went to---my mom and dad made sure I went to the best school, and I went to Blairsville and rode the bus for two years. The first year was in grammar school, seventh grade I guess, and then the next year was in high school, first year in high school, and I had a

fabulous teacher in the seventh grade. She was so interested in helping me learn to read and do well that I had never had before.

CO: But it sounds like that put a real value on education in the whole family. What about your mother's family? Sounds like that came largely from your father's side. How about your mother's side of the family?

FMM: Well, no my grandfather Schuller----

CO: He was the one that was the school teacher?

FMM: No, Miller was the school teacher, but Schuller, he sent his children to college.

CO: Ok. Did your mother go?

FMM: Yep.

CO: She went to college?

FMM: That's the reason she could read so well, I guess.

CO: Where did she go?

FMM: Young Harris. Young Harris was established in 18 and 96, I think. I was looking at that.

CO: So her sisters also went?

FMM: Yes and they became school teachers.

CO: Do you think your mother ever wanted to do that?

FMM: I don't think so, that would have tied her down too much.

CO: Did you----this is mostly about your family but did you have friendships that lasted for much of your life? Were there friendships that you had back in your----either elementary school or high school, Young Harris?

FMM: No. Kind of in high school and grammar school but they were more community friends than I guess school friends.

CO: I'm going to stop (End recording)

Frances Mathis 2

CO: This next category has questions is about marriage and children and motherhood and so forth.

FMM: Ok.

CO: It's always interesting to me when someone has a non-traditional role and it sounds like your mother certainly did.

FMM: Oh yes she did.

CO: She was a non-traditional type. Did you----

FMM: Well she was very protective of us. She didn't----when it came to people passing away that lived in the community she would always make flowers out of paper and give them a bouquet of flowers, and she would go to the family or something. How she went I don't know, I guess she walked, she may have ridden a horse, I don't know. But anyway, she would not let us go to funerals 'cause they were sad, and she was protecting.

CO: But there's something about her that made her sing those sad songs.

FMM: I know. She didn't think about them being sad, I don't think.

CO: No. Ok. You just sort of picked up on that?

FMM: Yeah. Well, it talked about putting my little shoes away, and you just think about somebody just died. (Trails off...) That is a moth of some sort.

CO: Did your----was there much of a value placed on romance in your----like when you were growing up did you have ideas about meeting a man and falling in love and----was romance a big part of teenage years of growing up?

FMM: Well, I had lots of friends, yep, at Young Harris, in high school.

CO: Did you date much before you met your husband?

FMM: Yeah, at school when we were disciplined very----they didn't dance but you could sit by them in Church.

CO: So you didn't have an opportunity to date a whole lot then? If you were at a boarding school you were being watched at. What about when you got to LaGrange? By the time you got to LaGrange you were engaged, right?

FMM: Yeah and he was already gone.

CO: Oh. Ok. So was that----

FMM: He left the first Christmas, went back the first semester.

CO: So was that difficult? Did you----

FMM: Oh yes! Oh yes!

CO: Did you go out with another boyfriend? Did you----

FMM: Well, I was----La Grange was so close to Fort Benning that the girls would have friends from Fort Benning and they usually would bring somebody else with them. And the girls would lots of times ask me if I'd date their friend, and I would go out with them ----it was casual----

CO: It was casual.

FMM: Yeah. Never thought about it being serious.

CO: Did you tell your----did you tell----

FMM: I don't think I talked about that.

CO: That seems to be a common experience for women with World War II that their fiancés would be off but they would----and it was the soldiers that they would----or air men that they would go and go out with. It was just a fun thing.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. All right. Did you always know from the very beginning that you wanted children?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: You said that you never considered not having children.

FMM: I didn't want children until I had an Aunt that had a little boy and he was so cute and sweet and I got acquainted with him.

CO: That lock back there?

FMM: I'm gonna show you pictures.

CO: Ok.

(the voices are farther away as F.Mathis looks for her pictures)

FMM: I saw it this morning I thought that----He was the first person and you will be shocked that that is him. Sorry.

CO: That was the little boy?

FMM: That was the little boy, and after that I was like I dreamed of having little boys.

CO: And how old were you?

FMM: I had graduated from Young Harris.

CO: But you had----you had your Aunt Verdie as an example of a woman who could be----who could live a life of----apparently she sounded very happy.

FMM: Oh yes, she was.

CO: Completely content not to have a family.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: But she had a suitor.

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: She could have had that if she wanted it.

FMM: That's right. I guess that was----

CO: Well, a lot of women didn't have that----you know that role model.

FMM: He gave her a----not a diamond but a pearl ring. I have it too.

CO: Wow. But after you saw this baby you decided that you wanted a baby?

FMM: Oh yes. Oh yes. And there's some history about this. The reason I didn't want a baby is that in the mountains there was not any running water, no washing machines, in those days. They had to wash in a tub and so on. And I never saw a baby that wasn't dirty, and probably smelled with urine, and they would----to keep from having to wash the diaper every time, they would hang it up in front of the fire, and you could imagine how that smelled. And I said, "I just don't want a baby." In fact, my mom said in speeches at Church and in Sunday School, she said, I'd forgotten this, but that with a baby and they said, well hold your arms like you have a baby in it. And I didn't know how. And then, they said well hold this baby. And my Mama was so scared she would drop that baby.

CO: It was a real baby?

FMM: It was a real baby. (Chuckles), and she was praying I would hang on because I didn't like babies.

CO: Well then, what was it like when you had one?

FMM: Oh I loved it!

CO: Did you learn right away?

FMM: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

CO: Now did you have any relationship with this woman and baby? 48:56

FMM: Yes his mother was my mother's sister.

CO: So he was a first cousin?

FMM: Yes. And this is the one that was nearest my sister. She was the one who was much younger. Madelyn was youngest and mother was the oldest.

CO: So he's considerably younger than you because you were already a teenager.

FMM: I was shocked when they came to see me. I think we were eating at Luna's that day in Gainesville.

CO: You didn't work outside the home. Did you ever have any doubts about that choice to be a full time homemaker, mother, wife?

FMM: No. No.

CO: so it was rewarding?

FMM: Yes. The most rewarding thing that happened to me, I guess, I don't know if it's the "most" but Gainesville was recognizing the outstanding leaders of the town, and they did pictures, and recognitions, and so on, and had meetings to do that. And James and I were together and we were the only ones who had husband and wife together. These other men, it was just the banker, doctor, or something. And James and I were always a pair. And I appreciated that so much. He always included me. Did he ever include me????!! When he was in the banking business, and Jimmy Carter came along. It started earlier than that. But when Jimmy Carter came along he decided he would have a fund-raiser at our house. We fed more than 150 people at our house. And that wasn't the only time I did this. This is when Carter was running

for president. We had not even been for Jimmy Carter when he was governor. We were [for] Carl Sanders.

CO: What caused him to start supporting Carter?

FMM: The main reason was the attorney friend in Atlanta that called him, and we had helped Jimmy Carter when he didn't make it one time. [She asks if it was Lester Maddox who beat Jimmy Carter. CO said it was Carter. They try to remember who beat Carter for Governor. {it was Howard "Bo" Callaway} But James was always involved with politics of that nature. He never was *in* politics, but we helped Jimmy Carter raise funds after he was defeated the first time, and, because James had a really good friend who was governor---no, not governor, but attorney. Jimmy Carter used him. In fact they moved to D.C. when Jimmy Carter was president. But he worked out---it wasn't like Burt Lance. Burt had too much . . . other . . . but we helped to raise money [for his second campaign]. I sat by Rosalyn that night when helping them in Atlanta. She told me about she had just made the dress she was wearing.

CO: What did you think about that?

FMM: I thought that was great. Of course, I'd made a lot of dresses too.

CO: Have you had any more contact with them since they left the White House.

FMM: No

CO: Did your husband remain politically involved after that?

FMM: No, I don't think he was much involved after that. But we went to the White House and had dinner.

CO: What was that like being so involved in a campaign that was in itself very historic. I mean you had ---how long had it been since a southerner was in the White House.

FMM: it was hard to believe.

CO: It was really historic.

FMM: The funniest thing. It was always funny to me. James had, the year that Jimmy Carter was governor, he beat Carl Sanders. Carl Sanders was James's friend. James was his promotional person in Gainesville. He worked so hard for Carl Sanders that then when Jimmy Carter came out and he was going to run for governor and James's friend wanted him to help raise money for it, it was kind of weird, but when James got

down to inviting people to come to our house, they were shocked he was doing this for Jimmy Carter because he'd been such a Carl Sanders' friend. He called one friend who'd been a Boy Scout leader friend of his, and he told him what he was doing. The friend said, "the hell you say." But he came and brought three people with him.

CO: What was it like to go through that primary, and then the election, and to win? Were you in Washington for the inauguration?

FMM: Yes.

CO: What was that like?

FMM: it was great fun. There was a crowd of us. Our son had gotten---he was in college up at North Georgia, Dahlonega at that time. He came home to help us feed all these people. And he got interested to the extent that he went to New Hampshire and other places for Jimmy Carter. So he was called one of the "Peanut Brigade."

CO: Your son was?

FMM: He flew up after we got to Washington. He did not want to miss any school. He climbed in a tree in order to see Jimmy Carter give his address.

CO: What a story. I bet he loves to tell that story.

FMM: He does.

CO: Did he stay in touch with them after they left Washington?

FMM: no, not much. He had other things he was involved in.

CO: So have your sons remained politically active; politically involved?

FMM: No

CO: Was politics a big part of yours and your husband's lives?

FMM: No. Thank goodness he never thought he wanted to run himself.

CO: Well, it does alter life. Did you ever go to Plains to hear Jimmy Carter teach Sunday School?

FMM: No. We did go to Plains, but not for that.

CO: Well I want to hear as much about that as you would like to tell but it's a little bit off subject.

CO: Did you ever want daughters, or were you relieved you only had sons?

FMM: I think I was relieved I didn't have daughters. I got along well with boys. But when I had to carpool, and we had girls in the car, they'd be squealing, it would make me ill. . . they were so hyper.

CO: Now what about grandchildren? You obviously have granddaughters. [Shows pictures of grandchildren.]

FMM: That little boy's name is James. They asked James Mathis if it would be alright if they named him James? And James said oh sure, but nobody thought about James not being here when the child was born. But he was gone by then.

CO: So how old is this child?

FMM: Less than three.

CO: But now two granddaughters. What was it like to have girls. I know grandchildren are different, but you'd never had girls. You'd never had to mother or grandmother girls.

(Starting at 37:00)

FMM: But it was great fun. I loved it.

CO: Yeah.

FMM: I remember especially the oldest granddaughter how we would go places and she would sit in my lap all the way wherever we were going, and I just loved it.

CO: And now how old are they?

FMM: They're in their 30s.

CO: Ok. So is this Kelly's sister or a cousin?

FMM: This is the sister.

CO: Ok.

FMM: James's mother is Katie: Kelly is Caroline----the girl, and there is another girl.

CO: So these are cousins.

FMM: Yeah, they're cousins. And that is Jim, Greg's bunch. Phil's family, that's their children.

CO: Mm mm. My goodness.

(Long pause. Shifting in the background.)

FMM: That's them there too.

(Long pause. Shifting in the background.)

CO: This is James's son?

FMM: Hmm?

CO: Is this your son?

FMM: No. No.

CO: No?

FMM: No. He's Matt Dublic, he's Polish. His family came during the war to Gainesville to work for a family who was in the poultry business. And his wife is expecting another little boy. They're gonna call him Davis.

CO: That child is beautiful.

FMM: Yeah. (Chuckles) We thought he looked like Matt but everybody said she looked like Katie.

CO: Mm mm.

FMM: But they're all girls except James. Phil's wife had twin girls, and Jim had girls, and Holly was Sue's, Phil's wife's daughter, and she has a little girl that was there in the middle. They're here, I was over at their house last night.

CO: Mm. So, grandmothering is different from mothering?

FMM: Yeah. And see how these are all girls except James. (Chuckles)

CO: Mm hmm. So you sort of got it but it is easier----It's much easier being a grandmother than to be a mother?

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: Ok. What role do you think being a mother played in shaping you into the person you became----person people know you to be? Is mothering a big part of that? Do you identify? Yeah. I know that question's crazy. I guess studying motherhood makes me look at it through a microscope but do you remember the book, *The Feminist Mystique*, by Betty Freidan?

FMM: Uh uh.

CO: Came out in '63 and to some extent launched the women's movement. It marks the professional women's movement----women in the professions, but the book was about the difficulties for some women whose only identity was being a mother and a wife. You know, if you wanted something else, and you were confined to the household it was you know, by Betty Freidan's experience----it could be mind-numbing, you know? And so, a lot of women----it resonated for a lot of women, and sounds like you didn't----that was not your experience.

FMM: Well my---- I stayed so busy with doing things that James was promoting, you wouldn't believe the things that----the family would always say, things he thought up to do.

CO: Like what? Besides helping Jimmy Carter, what else?

FMM: Well, in his banking business he bought an old bank, or one of the old banks and remodeled it, and when he had to open house, we had----everybody wore colonial costumes. There was some of them around here somewhere. And of course, somebody had to manage the girl's dresses, well I did that.

CO: You did that.

FMM: And I did----for his directors he always had a breakfast for his directors for their meeting and before 9 o' clock they were out of there and I did their breakfast every time. And if he wanted to have a party at the bank, I would supervise getting the food all done; I bought the groceries,

CO: You enjoyed that it sounds like.

FMM: Oh yes. And I appreciated being included in what he was doing.

CO: Yes. So it sounds like you worked well as a team.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: You didn't feel that your position in that partnership was any---- you didn't feel inferior to him. Sounds like you had a very----

FMM: I'm laughing because he never asked me to do anything like that. He would have me a notebook, and it was all spelled out with what I was supposed to do. And there would be times when I would say, "I didn't know this dad gum notebook got a long all right!"

(Both Laughing)

CO: But it sounds like you did it with your eyes closed practically. You got so experienced.

FMM: (Chuckling) Well I did.

CO: Yeah. But so, sounds like you might have been a good hotel manager.

(Both laughing)

CO: Or a hospitality manager at a hotel or something.

FMM: Yep.

CO: Did you have enough to do that you just never felt that vacuum that some women talk about feeling when they're primary responsibility is just "taking care of a family or the home."

FMM: Mm mm.

CO: Ok.

FMM: When Jim was a baby I might have felt some of that but that was the only time.

CO: Ok.

FMM: Because he was not really involved. He was working at the bank at that time and it wasn't his bank. He after----after he started the savings and loan it was *his* bank and it was a different situation. We tried to do things that would interest people. One time he did for Easter, he gave away baby chicks. He had them and in the lobby he had these boxes of chicks and people would come by to get chickens and a bag of chickens in it, and the funniest thing was when people said when they would get to the bus station in Atlanta, they would hear all these chicks chirping and they had picked them up in Gainesville.

(Both Laughing)

CO: Oh my goodness. I'm sure the Animal Rights people----

FMM: They got onto him for that. He never did that again.

CO: So did they call him, or come visit him?

FMM: Oh I don't know if they came to visit but they put something out in the paper about it. Not what he did, but there was not good to give children baby chicks.

CO: That's cute. Ok. Could you describe what to you----if you had to write a book on being a good mother what would be the chief bit of advice? How would you describe what being a mother is?

FMM: Making sure they're happy, and you are happy with what they're doing, and encouraging them to do the best they can.

CO: Ok.

FMM: James over did that.

CO: Your husband over did it?

FMM: Yep. It never was good enough.

CO: What his sons did was never good enough?

FMM: Mm mm.

CO: How about for you?

FMM: No. I didn't have that problem, but he would encourage them to the extent and he would say, "Well, couldn't you have done better?"

CO: So, a B wasn't good enough for him; he wanted A's? Did they complain to you about that?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: And how did you handle that?

FMM: I would say that this was just his nature, and they were----they knew he was going to be like that.

CO: Mm. Did he ever let up?

FMM: Yeah. By the time Greg came along and he was getting his Ph.D. he didn't have much room to talk.

CO: Not much further you can go from that. Yeah. Ok. All right. Could you give an example of somebody you believe is an ideal mother?

FMM: Uh huh. And wife. Caroline Jacobs. She was a home economics----she studied home economics; then she taught kindergarten ----

CO: When was this? Was this somebody from your past?

FMM: Uh huh. Oh and she is still living.

CO: She was a good mother and good Home-Ec teacher?

FMM: Oh yes. Oh yes.

CO: So she managed to do it all?

FMM: She managed to----after her children got larger, she went to work for James and she handled the Skippy birthday parties. He had a Skippy costume that they have at the parties, and it got so popular that they couldn't handle it.

CO: Oh my goodness.

FMM: But she right now is doing such a fabulous thing with her husband. He is doing neopathy in his feet and a lot of other things. He's had a heart bypass and so on and she doesn't let him drive, and ----she's pretty tied down, but she's doing----she's handling it beautifully.

CO: Wow. So, how many children did she have?

FMM: Three.

CO: So you've----that's amazing. When I ask that question women have a hard time thinking, often times they will say a daughter or you know, but you just popped off with that number like nothing.

FMM: Oh yeah. Oh well I always felt like this.

CO: How old are her children now?

FMM: Her ---- well about the same age as mine.

CO: So you knew her from her working at the bank?

FMM: No, I knew her from the experience at the Church, and the fact our children were the same age.

CO: Oh. Ok. All right.

FMM: And her children are grown up before she worked at the bank.

CO: Oh ok.

FMM: That was just doing something, I think.

CO: She probably would be the kind of woman who wouldn't find much in common with this book I was talking about: *The Feminine Mystique*. It sounds like she was just quite happy being a home maker. Was that because you think it's often so many things or did she continue to teach Home-Ec after she had the children?

FMM: Oh no.

CO: No. But she had the degree.

FMM: She had a degree, and she taught kindergarten.

CO: Oh ok. She taught kindergarten but she had a degree in Home-Ec but did she quit teaching kindergarten when her children were born?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. All right. Do you think it's different today being a mother than it was when you were raising your children?

FMM: It was hard then too. But it doesn't get any easier; more things that pop up, temptations and so on as they get into teenager that you have a hard time.

CO: But that's interesting that you it's just hard to be a mother; it's just very difficult. No matter when you live or where you live, it's difficult. So you don't think it's necessarily harder now than it was when you were raising your children?

FMM: No. No. I hope it's not going to get any harder because that little girl [the great granddaughter] -- she is such a live wire. And really pretty. Yeah.

CO: Ok. Could you say something--- now this doesn't necessarily have anything to do with---you've been talking about mothering and you've talked about these girls so much---what are the things you admire most about each of your three children? Could you name something you admire most about the three boys now men?

FMM: Well, our oldest son, Jim, I admire his ability to handle difficult situations, and he's always been able to do this. His first wife died, and that was a terrible thing but he did so much, and was so right there. Now, Phil has been not very well. He is as sweet as can be, but he can have a----you almost think he might have symptoms of Bipolar. He can turn the other way so you don't, . . . and I---- you worry and think, what have I done; why did he get like that? And the other two boys said, it wasn't your fault. And Greg has just been so determined that he was gonna either be a veterinarian or something worthwhile. And he couldn't get into vet school in Georgia University because they only have one school, and he couldn't get the grades high enough. So, he said, well I'll go to university and I will study Poultry science, I'll just do that. He doesn't have to get up in the middle of the night and see about someone's cow, horse, or something. Then he can direct it all and that's what he does. He does all his experiments, and he does all his writing and all the programs that he gives when he goes wherever. He's been to the national Poultry convention couple times. He is on the ninth of January he is speaking to the Poultry Science School over at the University of Georgia. Jim is gonna take me to hear him.

CO: And what will he be speaking about?

FMM: Some of this business with the drugs I guess. And he will be at the convention for Georgia----the Atlanta convention is always in January. He will be speaking there four times. So he's just determined to---- I never dreamed that he would be a speaker.

CO: So your oldest son you regard as very wise.

FMM: Yes.

CO: Competent at handling whatever life brings his way and your middle son had struggles with mood issues, and has been a good person, just has a struggle; and then the baby you admire his determination and ambition ----

FMM: Right. When he couldn't be a vetm and was going to Poultry science, and he had to----we had told him, we would get you through college but we don't know if we can pay for your advanced education. So he got a \$5,000 loan, and he said now if I can live in a place where I can have my dog and it won't be in danger, and I can be comfortable by myself, I will make it fine. And this is what he did. He moved two or three times, but the last time he moved to this old house, I bet it was fifty years old, and the water system was awful, I thought he'd get sick for sure. But he didn't and he didn't live there long. And a friend of his, his apartment and Greg needed the time by himself, so he just found another place to live. And he had a barn at this house so this

is when he crossed a Guinea and a chicken, and the thing that he produced he called a "Guitchen." It was ugly and it hardly had any feathers, it was just ugly. But it was immune to Coccidiosis and that is the thing that has sold him ----

CO: Has made his real professional name for him.

FMM: Yeah. He did his thesis on this. He specialized in parasitology.

CO: Mm. Wow. What a story. Did he marry?

FMM: Oh yeah, he's married. But they have no children and they have dogs, they have four dogs, and I don't know how many cats.

CO: Is his wife a professional?

FMM: She was a nurse and she worked for group of bone specialist until she had a back problem and it was her upper back, and she had surgery, and she was lucky she wasn't paralyzed. They told her you can't lift those plates now. So, she----Greg said that's all right you can just come work at the Poultry place, so she picks up the baby chicks at the hatcheries, and reviews all his work, and makes sure he has everything just so, and so it's just worked out beautifully.

CO: Wonderful.

FMM: We were scared about her in the past two or three weeks she had something on her leg, and they found that it had some Melanoma and they went back and they cut out more. But it's already healed up and it's----she got it a good report. And that was good.

CO: Good. Yeah. Yeah.

FMM: And she's six years older than him.

CO: Oh. So when did they marry? When did they meet and marry? Had he already finished his degree?

FMM: He did that, yes ma'am. He wouldn't ask her to marry him until he had a job. That was his philosophy. He would ask her on top of Brasstown Bald.

CO: Oh how romantic. Well, can we get through another couple of categories? One of them pretty easy. Well, actually you pretty much covered education because that kind of came from your early years but can you----did your family even----both your family as a child----when you were a child, and then your family when you and your

husband married your nuclear family. Did you guys do anything for entertainment or recreation? Did you vacation? Did you vacation as a family? Your mother and Daddy go off much?

FMM: We went with our family but not with my family. And not with his family. We saw them, but we didn't go on vacation with them.

CO: did you and your husband you and your boys vacation a lot?

FMM: Yes.

CO: What kinds of vacations?

FMM: We were----we had a camper that would sleep four of us, and we would go camping, and you won't believe this, but I have been, I have rafted five different rivers. And I have been to the North Pole.

CO: Whoa! When did you go to the North Pole?

FMM: '96.

CO: My goodness!

FMM: James had always wanted to go to the North Pole, and we got this letter from the Museum of Natural History out of New York saying that they were gonna send a ship that was atomic powered ice breaker to the North Pole, and he always wanted to go and I said, James, if we're going to go we better do it now or we'll miss this trip. So in '96 we went on this trip.

CO: What in the world was that like?

FMM: It was long.

(Both Laughing)

FMM: It took a week to get up there. It took a week to get back. Then we had to fly home of course, but ----we had a good time.

CO: But the North Pole, for Heaven's sake.

FMM: It wasn't really that cold.

CO: So what made your husband want to go to the North Pole? Did he ever say----

FMM: Because nobody else had been there.

CO: Ok. So it was just novel.

FMM: I'm being honest with you.

CO: But he had retired?

FMM: Uh uh.

CO: No? He hadn't retired by then? Your husband?

FMM: Oh yeah, I guess he had retired. Uh huh.

CO: Well, what was that like for him to retire after being so active----

FMM: Awful.

CO: Awful. For him, or for you or for both?

FMM: Well, it was not fun for me but I could tolerate it but it was just terrible for him. He needed to have something creative to do.

CO: so did he then begin to write?

FMM: He would write some, yes.

CO: So did he retire because he had to?

FMM: Yeah. When he merged with Sun Trust, he was already seventy years old, in Sun Trust then people didn't work after they were 70 years old.

CO: But that also affected your oldest son, the merger?

FMM: Oh yeah. Yeah.

CO: He was working there----

FMM: Yeah. Yeah.

CO: So that merger all around was not good for your family?

FMM: No. But Jim soon left the bank and went to work with his father in law that owned Habersham Hardware, it was a very big hardware store up in Cornelia, and he didn't like that. Mr. Reeves was the owner, and had done just what he wanted to do and he would take his bills home every night, and go over them and he wouldn't depend on a computer and all this stuff. So, Jim couldn't convince him he needed to change. So, he came back and this opening for the history----the community

foundation had an opening, and he applied for that and he has been so very successful.

CO: And this was Jim who was actually gonna come today?

FMM: Yeah. But when he told me he was going to work today I said, no Jim, no need to do that.

CO: Now, your husband was a writer or he at least enjoyed writing. Did he value that? Did he read a lot of fiction?

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: He was a big reader?

FMM: He took classes in rapid reading and he was a rapid reader.

CO: Did he ever take any creative writing classes?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: No.

FMM: Don't think so. But he was all the time taking some class. He went to Georgia State took classes. He didn't have his degree because he left the university when he went in the service and there were all the other classes he took was commuting to Georgia State. I am sure he had enough courses he could have had a degree. But he never----

CO: That was not necessary.

FMM: Uh huh. And it never bothered him.

CO: That would have not made him any difference in the----his position at the bank?

FMM: Oh no. He was it. Banks at that time, you know.

CO: Is it the same now, or do you have to have a degree in a bank?

FMM: No. The person that's in the bank that he was at here in Gainesville doesn't have a degree in banking.

CO: But your family's did they value music? You said your mother sang? Are there any musicians in your family? What about any sports? Where----

FMM: Oh them, yeah. The two younger ones played football, and Phil was a big boy and when he was in middle school they picked him up for the football team 'cause he was so large----and he did a good job, and he got recognized in the Atlanta paper at one time----he was a tackle, and Greg played but Greg was smaller, and Phil, the Coach had to push Phil to get him to play his best, and Greg Mathis was standing there saying Coach "let me go in"!

CO: Sounds like he was ambitious whatever he did.

FMM: He was. And Jim was not an athlete but he played the saxophone in the school band.

CO: Has he done anything with that?

FMM: No. No. But he thought he wanted to be in the Red Coat Band at the University of Georgia, but he went to Mercer instead.

CO: What about dance? Is there any dancers in the family?

FMM: No. They went to dancing lessons but----

CO: The boys did?

FMM: Yeah. One time I thought they needed to.

CO: How about you? Did you like to dance?

FMM: No. James didn't dance.

CO: But you wanted your boys to dance.

FMM: I wanted them to know how.

CO: What kind of dance did they take?

FMM: Ballroom dancing.

CO: Oh. Did they ever use it?

FMM: No. Jim did. He had to escort his girls when they were in the cotillion.

CO: He was probably glad then he had it.

FMM: Oh yeah. I was glad he had.

CO: Yeah. Is there anything about your work as a partner in your husband's professional life----you talked about it but there is anything that you have talked about it that you would like to add? It sounds like you were very satisfied with that?

FMM: I was very satisfied and pleased that he included me and let me be a part of it, and my feeling and Jim may say that's not right but I felt like he -- James -- made me much larger than I would have ever been.

CO: In what way?

FMM: He recognized what I did.

CO: Publicly?

FMM: Publicly he did. I think that's why I was a Girl Scout Mother or Woman of the year, Rotary Woman of the Year, and what else?

CO: Your oldest son says that's not right? He says that it was your merit?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: That and so but you think your husband's public recognition is responsible for that?

FMM: Well, I think he put me in lots of positions that I had to produce, and I would have not done it had it not been to run it. He was pushing me, I don't think.

CO: What do you think you would have done if he had not been----if he had not been the kind of person to include you----what do you think you might have been less satisfied and perhaps maybe wanted to pursue you know a career outside the home?

FMM: I don't know---- I never thought about that. Yeah.

CO: But you also thought about not doing it.

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: So something in you wanted to be involved, and active and so, if you hadn't done that, besides being the researcher you said you were when you were at La Grange College when you took science courses, you thought about being in research, was there anything else you thought about over the course of your life that you might have been good at and enjoyed?

FMM: Don't think so. Don't think I had time to.

CO: Well, right, yeah. The path you took, you didn't. But you clearly had a lot of talent with organizing, like I said it sounds like you would have been a perfect hospitality person at a hotel somewhere, and a big business now I think. So, so but you----that just didn't occur to you.

FMM: No. No. I was always pleased with what I was doing. Very few times I was irritated.

CO: When he retired and in some sense you retired?

FMM: Oh yeah, he wasn't involved anymore.

CO: Yeah. What was that like for you----you said it was hard on him, how did he adjust? Did he take up golf?

FMM: Oh no. He didn't play. He had a crew----he worked about four Black fellas in the backyard and built little buildings. He had wagons, he had tractors, he had plows, and put all his stuff in that in that backyard. And he wasn't supposed to do but nobody ever said anything about it.

CO: Why wasn't he supposed to do it?

FMM: Well, that was the code I guess through the community where we lived.

CO: Ok.

FMM: I'm going to----

CO: Need to take a break?

FMM: No, I mean, I got to go to dinner.

(end of recording)

Frances Mathis 3 (4)

CO: it's Thursday December the 29 and I'm back with Frances Mathis and we are about to complete her interview and she's telling me something. We're beginning with something about her birthdate?

FMM: Well, the reputation that mountain people had from where I lived that they were all so independent and they had to be really. There weren't stores, there weren't

doctors, maybe one doctor that you could locate and they had to do all these things themselves. Everybody worked and became very independent so, it's a reputation that you can take with you as you grow up. "1" Yeah, I know you're independent.

CO: So you have a double----there are double implications for you since you were born on July 4th?

FMM: yeah. Yep.

CO: And of course your Aunt Verdie very much lived into that----has your experience of that been true that people from the mountains are more independent and more self-sufficient?

FMM: I think so. Uh huh. This Choestoe district had the reputation when I was a child of having more college graduates than any other area of Georgia. They had the school superintendent, the state school's superintendent was from Choestoe. Dean of Young Harris College was from Choestoe. There two or three ministers from Choestoe that had educations, and then there were several teachers like my aunt that had education and we just had Byron Herbert Reese, he was a poet from Choestoe.

CO: Frances will you spell Choestoe?

FMM: Choestoe.

CO: And that's Indian. Native American for ---- say that again?

FMM: Dancing Rabbits.

CO: Which you have all over your apartment here.

FMM: right.

CO: And just yesterday you received a gift of----

FMM: Made for me.

CO: It's just darling. With the rabbits carrying cupcakes.

FMM: Yes.

CO: So, tell me, remind me about the cupcakes what----where that comes from. Not real sure?

FMM: Not real sure how that came from them, the cupcakes. But with us, Jim's wife presently is a cupcake fiend and Charlotte, she drives back and forth to see them and she just passed through Greenville, and she always had a place to go and buy and not just one cupcake she will have at least twelve, or two dozen.

CO: A dozen or more. That's great.

FMM: But nobody knew about it. All these cupcakes, I didn't know where they came from.

CO: Now, Choestoe is a name of----it's not an incorporated town is it?

FMM: Oh no. There was a post office in Choestoe.

CO: Choestoe. And is it two words?

FMM: No.

CO: It's one word. Ok. All right.

FMM: And Union County was a rather large county and the----it's broken down into districts and Choestoe was one of the districts.

CO: If I were to look it up on the internet you think I'd find something?

FMM: I would think you would.

CO: I will do that actually.

FMM: Back to Byron Herbert Reese. He lived just down the road from where James and I had that camp when we first married when I learned to cook. And James and he became very close friends ----but he never married he had his family----his family had Tuberculosis and he got Tuberculosis, they sent him to Rome at that time, they had changed from Alto, and he was very unhappy ----

CO: Sanitarium?

FMM: Sanitarium. Yep. And really I think he came home before he was supposed to be well. He came home, his father and mother both passed away and he missed his mother tremendously, but he still he taught English at Young Harris, he took his own life, he was 52.

CO: Do you think perhaps that's when your husband developed a real interest in writing? And the appreciation for writing?

FMM: could be.

CO: Ok. Did you think of anything after last night that you want to add to all the subjects we talked about yesterday?

FMM: I don't think so, I did want that independent----it just depended on what you had. And you didn't have to go out and find what you needed, you made do.

CO: right. I want to talk about southern identity, regional identity and when we get there in your opinion, your perspective on it will be interesting because the people from the mountainous regions always have a different take on whatever the subject is and so that will be interesting to me. But my next sort of category of questions is about money, and of course you husband would have been strongly identified with that as a banker. But are you better off financially than your parents than your siblings even?

FMM: I doubt it with the siblings, but more so than my parents ever were. They didn't have much money; they had everything else but money.

CO: Did your father have much property?

FMM: Yes, he had two farms, but he inherited these farms because he was the one who looked after his mother, and when she passed away he inherited the farms. And he had a lot of territory, more than he could handle by himself but he made a good living and my Mama was the best person to can food and vegetable soup, and all this stuff than anybody. And she was the first person in our area and the only person I think that had a pressure cooker. And so she could can anything she wanted to even corn. And it was for her pressure cooker.

CO: how did she can? Did she cut corn off?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: All right. Did your mother have land?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: No. Her family, were they land owners?

FMM: Yes.

CO: They were but she didn't inherit any?

FMM: No.

CO: What about your Aunt Verdie? Did she----

FMM: No, she never had any property.

CO: So your father inherited it.

FMM: Yeah. And they all inherited things of hers, but it was thought I guess from the beginning that Daddy would get the property because he had looked after her for all these years. And he had been there when his father was still living because he had helped with the store, coming to Gainesville to get merchandise and stuff. It was just hard to realize that if he could be living now, if all this traffic you see and I can't understand----I don't use a computer and he would just be baffled.

CO: right right. Do you think he would have liked it?

FMM: Uh uh.

CO: No?

FMM: Uh uh. Mama would. She read anything she could get her hands on and catalogs, she digested catalogues.

CO: Your Mama would probably have a website.

FMM: Yes, she would have.

CO: I know your Aunt Verdie would have loved the Internet. She would have made great use of it.

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: Do you have any of her stuff, her papers, because I'm sure as an educator she had you know, she probably wrote and do you have any of her letters she wrote?

FMM: I don't now. There may be some in the storage. The reason I don't have---- there was so much to do when----after James died, for me to get out her that we went through----or he went through everything and he had such a big job to get the house in shape to sell and the yard straightened up and so on----

CO: Now is this your son or your husband?

FMM: My son. Because James really messed up the backyard with those little houses he built to put the tractors and the plows and all that stuff in. And Phil got rid of all of

that, and we gave a lot of it to the Byron Herbert Reese Farm. Because they're making a tourist attraction of that.

CO: Do you know the Lillian E. Smith Art Center? Center for the Arts in----where she had the camp in Dillard? Or actually it's in Clayton, just thinking about the Reese farm. I don't know, do you know if it's on the southern trail. The Southern literary trails there's a number----there are a number of home places of----

FMM: Well, they haven't finished the Reese place to the extent that it's open yet.

CO: It's not open yet but it might get on there. The Lillian E. Smith Center is on there.

FMM: See James was retired at seventy and he never did much. We never traveled much after that because he was just not very happy about----but we did go to the North Pole. But that was something he had looked forward to forever and so----

CO: You didn't travel because he wasn't interested in traveling?

FMM: No. We didn't have a reason to travel. When we traveled we were involved with the Chatahoochee-Oconee Heritage Association that was with the forest service and we had opened the store at Ruby Falls, and we had opened the store on Brasstown Bald. Well we would travel and we would be looking to see what other people were selling and thinking could we sell that in our store and that was one reason I became so interested in pottery I think because we sold a lot of pottery in the Brastown Bald store particularly. So you know, and if you didn't have a reason----if he didn't have a reason to going somewhere, he----that was just wasting time.

CO: So what did he write his stories about----when he wrote his stories? Were they stories or were they essays?

FMM: No they were stories. He would just come up with an idea and every once in a while he said I have an idea of what I want to write a short story about, and soon he would get busy and write the story. But his hand writing got so bad that he was having a hard time with that, and he didn't have a secretary and I was not a very----I didn't pretend to be a secretary.

CO: Your family was, as you described them, very independent as people from the mountains, so they may not have had any ideas about such as class you know, they were from a----they did?

FMM: No they did not. And I think that was the most interesting for me when I went to college particularly the La Grange College, because I ran into students, there were

other students that had a stigma [think the meaning is stigma] terribly bad about what their family did. If they were----and this is from their father that worked in the cotton mill----was a terrible stigma. And in Choctaw everybody was on an equal basis. We had no reason to feel like one was any better than the other. Didn't anybody have any money but they had all they needed to----but they were so neighborly. My dad always had two milk cows, and if one of the neighbor's didn't have one he would let the neighbors borrow his cow, and I always thought that was rather strange.

CO: But it was a code sort of.

FMM: Uh huh. You looked after your neighbor.

CO: Now, so how did you----how do you think you were perceived at La Grange College? Were you perceived like the meal town girls or were you perceived----because land ownership was a mark of class. Did that give you any credibility there do you think?

FMM: I think most of my credibility at La Grange College was sought from Aunt Verd.

CO: well yeah, having an Aunt on the faculty probably was your----

FMM: But it didn't hinder me because I was in the May court----May Day Court and all that----just like everybody else, not like everybody else but some others.

CO: Would you say that you achieved the financial ambitions you had as a girl? Did you have any? Did you worry about that as a child? How you would make your way?

FMM: Don't think so.

CO: Ok.

FMM: I think I felt very secure growing up.

CO: Ok. So what role do you think money has played in shaping the circumstances of your life?

FMM: Well, of course after I married and then the banking business that was talked about a lot. How the bank was doing was. He had the biggest bank in Gainesville at one time, and he wouldn't be as happy if he hadn't. And, but otherwise we had----when we married, we didn't have anything. He came home from service and gave me a ring. I didn't have a ring before and he had some money when they came out of the Army but he spent it pretty quick, and when we married we had very little money. He

was working as I told you reading checks (????50:30??) and we had to watch and we knew what it was not to have anything.

CO: But since then, have you felt secure?

FMM: Very secure.

CO: And not worried about what would happen to----Ok.

FMM: But he was always----he always had got good advice and I think that helped him tremendously.

CO: So by the time you started with your family----When Jim was a baby----well the first two were close together?

FMM: No, the last ones.

CO: The last two were close together.

FMM: Jim was over six years old when Phil was born.

CO: Had you all gained a relative degree of security by the time your second child came?

FMM: Yes.

CO: So you didn't have to----the future of your children wasn't an issue for you? You thought their futures were pretty stable. Anything else about money----did you ever wonder what life would be like if you didn't have that kind of financial security?

FMM: I think I did. I think I was appreciative that James was so successful in what he did. And I know James would see somebody that looked like they were having a hard time, they'd been to the grocery, they were carrying up their groceries, and walking and he would say something, "oh ain't that just terrible don't you know it. All this business." And he would talk about it, and I've been there. Immediately, I would think: I know what they are going through, because there was a time when all the groceries we had were brought home on the back of my stroller, and Jim was in the stroller and he seemed to never relate to that, as he became more [successful]----

CO: So he forgot that he'd been there.

FMM: Well, I reckoned. But he was still very sensitive to those people who didn't have...

CO: Where do you think that came from?

FMM: Probably his background, his father and mother.

CO: His father and mother were like that? Were they?

FMM: Yes, his mother particularly. She lived---- ten miles from Gainesville and there were----Black families lived pretty close by, and there was a Black Church just across the railroad tracks from where they lived, so they had a lot of contact with these folks and James would talk about when the children would walk across the railroad tracks waiting for the bus, Mrs. Mathis would bring them all inside to----so they would be warm, and sometimes they would be wet, and she'd give them a different coat or something, and she was always very sensitive about the fact they didn't have what they needed.

CO: Well, that's a great segue to the next subject because it----you can't really separate this region from----this region meaning the South from its troubled race relations, you know. It's just a part of----not like it's been confined to the South by any means, there's not a place in the country that's not----doesn't have its own you know, tarnished past as well as present, but the south is particularly identified with troubled race relations so, it's become I don't know how in the world I could forget that people don't think about it all the time, because I think about it all the time because it's part of my job. But my family certainly are typical and all I'd have to do is recall that it's not common subject matter for most people is to think about my family, but when you study race relations and when you, you know that's----when you teach history it's----you think about it in a different way and so one of the----one of my aims with this is to try and understand talking to people----try and figure out----because scholars want to know----I mean we don't have to do much to discover how race relations have shaped people in this region and really in the world, but what scholars are interested in is when do we as people in living in a region as so strongly identified with race problems, because of its heritage----when as children or teenagers or whenever it happens, when do we become cognizant of the fact that it means something different if your skin's not white, you know, there are different expectations, and once you've passed that time, that event, whatever, then you probably don't think consciously about it, it just becomes something you're aware of. I mean, I recall vividly my own conscious awareness of it, but people who study race relations are really interested in when that happens for people, whether you're white, black, or Hispanic, or Asian, when do you become conscious that having white skin [or not] matters, it makes a difference in what's expected of you. And then how do you learn what's expected of you----if you've got

light skin, you've got a degree and a privilege, if you've got black skin there's certain behavior that's expected from you, there's certain, some people call etiquette, and most often nobody teaches you, you just somehow or other pick it up and so, do you recall----you explained your husband's mother----he probably learned it very early.

FMM: Oh he did. And there was a school and a Black School and a Black Church that was just across the road from where they lived. So, they were in an area that----Mrs. Mathis appreciated the Blacks, and would go down to the Church and listen to them sing, and James got this feeling, and he talked a lot about that, and I never---- I never saw a Black person until I left Choestoe, and went to Commerce where my Aunt that-- --Aunt Verd's sister lived. She and her husband, he was a dentist there. And I was afraid of them. And I did not----young Harris College did not have any Black students, La Grange College didn't have Black students----

CO: So how old do you think you were when you first saw----

FMM: Oh I think I was probably six years old.

CO: Ok. And so, did you----do you think you were afraid of them because you had just simply because they were different or had you----was there an air of fear in the region?

FMM: Nope. Wasn't an air, it was just the fact that they were different from what I had been accustomed to seeing.

CO: Do you recall----is there any particular----were you aware there were people that weren't white that lived in the----

FMM: I don't think I was aware of that.

CO: You don't think you were aware of it. Ok.

FMM: Not living there. No. And grammar school there weren't any Black people, and we had a doctor here who moved to Blairsville, because he didn't want his children to have to go to school with them.

CO: But they wouldn't have had to go to school with them, you know before the '60's.

FMM: No.

CO: So, has that been since the '60's? Oh I see. But do you remember----you think you were about six when you saw the first Black person, was it a man a woman, another child?

FMM: Don't remember.

CO: Don't remember.

FMM: Because I usually was going with Aunt Verd to visit her sister and I was of course, kind of young to be going----I had already been to visit them when I was about three or four years old, when I had my Aunt look after me, I don't know, but I was afraid of them and I would hide, I would turn, put my face down because I didn't want to see them.

CO: Did your Aunt say anything to you? Did either one of them try to tell you----

FMM: No.

CO: So they didn't comment on it?

FMM: No.

CO: Ok. So, did your family have----did you ever discover an opinion of your family about Black people? Your parents?

FMM: To some extent, but they never knew 'em. They were so----all they knew was that there was a difference and they didn't have to accept them because they weren't there.

CO: Ok. All right. So, at what point did you----were you faced with that issue of whether or not you would accept living co-existing with people who were different?

FMM: Well, I----after I was at Young Harris, my attitude----since I was at college age or high school age----my attitude changed. I remember talking to my dad one time about the fact that Black people look after babies and this kind of stuff. He thought that was terrible.

CO: He thought that was terrible.

FMM: Yeah. See I was changing my attitude.

CO: Yeah. So, he thought it was terrible that Black people worked in domestic work? They worked in white people's houses?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Ok. Because certainly some of the people who were most abusive to Blacks had Blacks in their homes were----

FMM: Oh yes. Oh yes.

CO: It's not like it's a----it's not like it was giving them an elite position by any means. It sounds like your family just were more shaped more by the distance from and so they weren't forced into any kind of decision about how they would feel about it because they simply weren't faced with it, physically faced with it.

FMM: Yeah. I don't think there's any Black people in Choestoee now. Because when we were living----going to the house a lot, we went to Church, the Baptist Church and there weren't any Black people there. There were a lot of Floridians but no one Black.

CO: Ok. Well, So you, you met James and did you all talk about race----I know that once it becomes a public issue you don't have a choice really. You know, it's so much part of the news but before it becomes a you know, an issue of national concern, did your husband talk about----for instance what he experienced as a child with his mother bringing Black children into the home to----

FMM: I think so. I knew Mrs. Mathis, I think he talked about her, the contact she had with them, with the children.

CO: Do you think that shaped his view, not just of them, but of, . . . sounds like he had some kind of sensitivity to people who were less fortunate, no matter what color they were.

FMM: Well he did. He did. The funniest thing that happened----he had a pickup truck, and so he would see somebody that looked like they were going to the Appalachian Trail because the head of the Appalachian Trail was north of us, and he would pick them up. They'd have a pack on their back maybe, and he would give them a ride. And he did this one day, and the Black fellas that he worked were on the back of the truck too and he picked up this person, and they had a pack on their back and they looked like they might be going to the trail but they weren't, they were leaving home. And it was a girl, it was not a boy. He thought he had picked up a young boy. And we took her into the house and made her call her Mama.

CO: Was she Black?

FMM: No, she wasn't Black.

CO: Oh wow.

FMM: Five fellas on the back of that truck thought that was the funniest thing yet.

(Both Laughing)

CO: Did he think twice about picking somebody up?

FMM: I think so.

(Both Laughing).

CO: Ok. Did you ever hear anymore about that young girl?

FMM: Uh uh.

CO: No. Ok. Well, I want to come back to that but have you been aware and this gets to the subject of the difference in Mountain people----they're different wherever they are----they're different because they live isolated from the larger culture----

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: But moving to Gainesville which is not isolated which is pretty well, if not what we think of urban it's certainly not isolated. When did you get a sense of what it means to be southern?

FMM: I guess when I got active in the First Baptist Church I felt different.

CO: You identified as Methodist but when----

FMM: Yeah, but James was Baptist, so I joined the Baptist Church with him.

CO: Oh. Ok. So you identify now as Baptist?

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: Oh. Ok.

FMM: Yes, but we didn't have any Blacks in our Church at that time.

CO: Ok. Now, when I say when did you know what it means to be southern if we had not started talking about race would you have identified southern-ness with race relations?

FMM: No.

CO: No. Ok. Could you tell me----like if someone from another country for instance came over and you were asked to describe what it means, most people in Europe have some sense of this part of the country is different other than that. Most educated

people-- they tell me, but from other regions they might not know that the southern part of the United States is a little bit different from the rest of the country. How would you describe what it means----what that means to be how the south is different from other regions? Have you traveled outside of the south much?

FMM: Not a whole lot. But Gainesville has been so cooperative with the Blacks and the whites. We've had Black mayors, streets named for 'em, bet you rode on John Marlow Highway?

CO: Yes.

FMM: And he was mayor and Black, but our boys, our two young boys were the first that they----the school integrated.

CO: What was that like?

FMM: It was difficult because some reason Greg couldn't get along with them. He had a conflict with them. And I don't know if it was the fact that he was small, and maybe they kind of picked on him or what, but he thought they did. And this didn't bother Phil because he was larger than most people his age. And he never----but he never had any friends. Greg has worked with a Black man that is like family now.

CO: So whatever it was that was difficult in high school----

FMM: But he realizes that (??????) is different. He doesn't know how to spend his money. He gives money to the other folks too much. And----

CO: So he's not a good money manager? Makes yours son----

FMM: Yeah, they look after him though.

CO: Ok. Do you---- if someone called you a southern lady, would that be a compliment to you or would you be a little bit you know, offended by it? What does that mean to you?

FMM: I don't think I would be offended to be a southern lady. In fact, I think it's kind of prestigious.

CO: Ok. So you think it's prestigious. How would you identify southern lady? Who would be a typical southern lady to you?

FMM: I guess Rosalyn Carter was.

CO: Ok. Well, she might----I think she was----

FMM: Right.

CO: But for you she fits that. Ok. What about somebody today like Paula Dean? She's so popular. You don't know her? That's fun to know you don't know who she is. Well, she's known for her cooking. She's got a show and has cook books.

FMM: I think some folks at our table talk about that.

CO: Well, she's----I think people outside the region think of her as a southern lady.

FMM: Well, you see here there's a southern lady not----right next to----from Delaware--
--she thinks she's different from the rest of us.

CO: Really? Does she think that in a----does she think of the southerners----Is that a negative thing for her?

FMM: No, it turns out that it's not----she talks about----she can't comprehend how large everything is here, like the Churches. And she didn't come from an area that had that I guess. But----

CO: Do you go *out* to Church here?

FMM: I do.

CO: You do.

FMM: Yeah. They have Church over on the other side of every Sunday somebody comes in for Church. But I go to my own Church. In fact I have a job there.

CO: Is it near by? Your Church?

FMM: you passed it, up on the hill, it's big, big.

CO: Yeah, well, I saw a big Methodist Church, and since you identified as Methodist, I thought that maybe where you went.

FMM: No. No. Baptist Church is near in town.

CO: Ok. Back for a minute to race. Do you remember how you learned what was popular behavior? Do you remember when----were you ever in a situation where----like it was such a common experience if you were in a small urban area, and certainly in a rural area that a Black person would not come to the front door? You know, that was one rule, and another was that they would never eat at the same table as a white

person? Were you conscious of that? When you grew up you wouldn't have been because you didn't grow up around that----

FMM: that didn't bother me. I didn't know about that as I was growing up. But we had a lady, that she was a German, but she said when she first came to the states, she sat down and she ate with the Blacks. And people said, "you weren't supposed to do that."

CO: When was that----would that have been before the '60's? Would that have been before the Civil Rights Movement?

FMM: Probably.

CO: Oh. Ok. All right. So, she learned it quickly.

FMM: Uh huh. Oh yeah.

CO: But you didn't----it just simply wasn't----

FMM: And James would not have hesitated a minute, and when he worked those men----we worked them of course in the mountains, sometimes too, and we would carry 'em to a restaurant in the mountains where there weren't many Blacks, and we would sit right there at the table with them. Didn't think a first thing about it. But one time I was coming the latter years of James's life I was driving, and I was driving to the mountain house with these fellas sitting in the back of the explorer, and I they stopped me because I had pulled over into an area that was for passing, and I stayed too long, but they were really cautioning but they kept looking at these fellas in the back, the state patrollers----

CO: They wanted to be sure they were back there by your consent.

FMM: Yep, right.

CO: Did you assure them that everything was ok? You weren't being kidnapped and held at gun point?

FMM: Yep. Right. Well, of course James was sitting there beside me, he was all right.

CO: Did you see the movie Driving Miss Daisy?

FMM: Oh yes. We were talking about the conduct and how they were mistreated. There's a new movie The Help.

CO: Have you seen it?

FMM: Yes, I've seen it.

CO: What'd you think about that?

FMM: Well, I thought I could imagine that it was probably true.

CO: Yes, it's talked about, and most people like it you know, but I talked to people on both sides of that, who think----I talked to some people recently who thought it was just not true, it was just over done.

FMM: Well, I thought it was a bit overdone. But I haven't been there.

CO: Well, there are others who think it didn't cover nearly enough of how bad things were, but it was about telling a story, it was about humor, it was about communicating a message that people would come and watch you know.

FMM: You were not aware of, but there is a little town of Cumming, it's in a different county, but they have never let Black people be members of that county. They didn't, but of course they had to now but they would play football----they went to Dawson County to play to be against Dawson County football team and our team had one Black boy on the team and they teased him and said now when you are there, you be sure to keep your helmet on so they won't know you're Black. And we had a man that was Black that worked for James. We had a branch in that town. And he was----stopped on the way back from over there, I think, or something and got lunch and he was Black and they told him to go outside to eat.

CO: Now when was that?

FMM: That was probably 10----15 years ago.

CO: Did you see this?

FMM: Oh I wasn't along. I just heard about it. He just told us about it.

CO: What was his reaction to it?

FMM: Well, he thought it was----he didn't like it of course. But he had a good education and he understood.

CO: So he didn't try to file a lawsuit or anything?

FMM: But there has been terrible troubles in Dawson County about the Blacks, but that was more like 15 years ago or maybe 20 years ago.

CO: How did your husband respond to stuff like that when he would hear that? How did he respond?

FMM: Well, he just accepted it and didn't make a big issue.

CO: Ok. Well, how did he feel about the Civil Rights Movement. Obviously you lived through that because he----sounds like he had a pretty open mind.

FMM: Oh he did. He never had any difficulty with working with the Blacks and then----

CO: If you all supported Jimmy Carter, certainly have an outspoken opinion even from the time he was in the Governor's, so he----

FMM: We thought Lester Maddox was terrible.

CO: He was somewhat of an embarrassment. Well, do you think it has----let's see your husband died three years ago----how did he feel about Obama?

FMM: Don't know.

CO: Do you think that race relations that has had----that having someone Black in the White House has helped or has it hurt race relations in the----

FMM: I don't know. I never thought about race relations. I thought about the inexperience and that's not race.

CO: Yeah. Ok. Well, what do you think about a woman running for president?

FMM: If the right woman, it would be fine.

CO: You didn't have an issue with a woman running.

FMM: No.

CO: Actually I'll come back----

(Chuckling)

CO: It's not really a good segue but next category is about loss and loss through any means, but certainly the most significant loss is through death, loss through death, divorce, separation, health, illness, all of that brings a loss of some kind. What is the most difficult loss you've experienced through death, obviously at this point you've experienced...

FMM: Well, James's mother passed away when she was 52 and that was young and we---it influenced me because it mainly influenced him, and then James's death, I had no other---my father and mother were in there 80s---knew they would pass away at that age, and my Mama said many, many times to me I will need to keep my health as good as possible so I could look after Fletch, that was his name. And so since she was dedicated to that and when he passed away she died three months later because she had finished what she was here for.

CO: So your mom really thought about that as her purpose, to take care of him. Your husband was close to his mother and so her death really affected him.

FMM: Yes. Oh yes. He was very close to his mother and in his education she was the one that encouraged him to do well in school and so on. So they were very close.

CO: Now where do you think her values of being so open minded---where did that come from?

FMM: I really don't know.

CO: Did she strike you that way when you first met her as someone who was---No?

FMM: No. No. Only when James would talk about what she did.

CO: Ok. And well---you think that shaped him? Made him the kind of person he was? His mother had more input---was his father that way too?

FMM: I don't---no---I don't think so.

CO: And when did his father die? How old was he when his father died?

FMM: His father died in 1976.

CO: And his mother died when?

FMM: When she was 52. Jim, my son, was two years old when she died.

CO: So---what about your Aunt Verdie---how old were you when she died?

FMM: When did she die? She died in '68, I think. And that influenced me. I went to her---she had a heart attack ---my family was grown up enough that I could leave, and was with her all the time she was in the hospital and when she died. And yeah, it influenced me terribly.

CO: You were with her when she died?

FMM: Yes.

CO: Have you been with many people as they died?

FMM: No.

CO: No. 'Cause I'm really interested in that experience.

FMM: Well, I was with James when he died.

CO: And you were with your Aunt Verdie when she died.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: So that's two people that you've been with.

FMM: And I had to call everybody and tell them that she passed away and that kind of stuff is not easy.

CO: Right right.

FMM: They wanted to do an autopsy because they wanted to find out what her heart condition was and her doctor was so----that I felt like that if he wants to do something he should have that privilege. But some of the others didn't think that. But I was there and they went ahead and did it.

CO: So you gave permission for that?

FMM: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

CO: Ok. So the question was----what's the most difficult loss through death, would you say your husband?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Have you learned lessons about grieving and bereavement in the process of loss. Because some people have losses and they don't think----they just don't know how to deal with it. Did you learn that over time? Like did you learn from your Aunt's death? Something that helped with your grieving or your husband's loss? Of course every loss is different but there's something about the process of grief that's----

FMM: Well, I think with her death and then with my father and mother -- I was close to them and took them to the doctor, and all the things they needed to do, and so I was---
-grief was not, even with James, was not terribly hard for me. I was shocked really.

My comment was when he passed away was, why leave me now? But I came here soon after he died. He died in July and I came in December. And other people were here and ----they were in the same condition and it made it easier for me.

CO: So the transition from----you didn't wind up living alone for a long time so----how different do you think it would be if you'd kept your home? Stayed in your home?

FMM: I think it would have been by far harder. Because every time ----the king sized bed was there that we slept on, I would sleep by myself on that bed and things of that nature and it was just there. And you couldn't get away from it.

CO: So moving to a different place was helpful?

FMM: Right.

CO: Ok. Did you----was there a period of time----did anyone have to tell you this too shall pass? Or did you----

FMM: Oh yeah they would----we had a minister at the Church that handles grief and he brought me books, and he talked to me and all this and that did help and I always appreciated what his attitude was. But I think the secret is attitude. If you have an attitude that you want to get over something----you can't just let this be----

CO: So you think you have control over your attitude?

FMM: I think so.

CO: Ok. All right.

FMM: I'm independent.

CO: That has served you well. Now, did you pass that on to your sons? Do they see them equally independent? Did they----did your----now your husband wasn't from the mountains.

FMM: No, he was from here.

CO: But that had a mother who was----but he was still independent. He still had a degree of that kind of dogged self-confidence that----did they learn that?

FMM: I think Jim did. I'm not real sure Phil and Greg were as----see we were getting-- --we were more independent----we were more affluent by the time Greg and Phil came along. And we could do the things we needed to do and we carried the children to lots

of things that we felt like was beneficial to them, to plays, to concerts, and things like that----

CO: But you think the oldest one is the most independent minded?

FMM: Yes. And he came through his death with his first wife without too much difficulty though he can't go to funerals now without breaking down, 'cause I went with him about a month ago, and he said, "Mom the funerals just getting me."

CO: So does your middle son have a problem? You said he has a problem with mood related issues. Is death hard for him?

FMM: He just stays away from things. He's very sympathetic. He has a friend that was a person who had worked with him at the bank for years and just recently this person had a son that died and he was in his 40s and this person was 50 something I think, he had worked with and he was so concerned about him and how he was gonna pay for the expenses of his son dying, and so he met with one of the bankers and set up a fund, and so he did something about it----

CO: When he gets down or something he acts. That's how he handles it.

FMM: Right right.

CO: How about his father's death? How was that for him? Did he have a particularly hard time?

FMM: Well, he just stayed in the background. He was the one that didn't say a word at the funeral. Well, Jim didn't because he had just had surgery on his foot and he was in a wheel chair, but Greg did the eulogy, the youngest son, and he was in Washington State when James died, supposed to be speaking to a group of Poultry folks.

CO: And he had to come back.

FMM: And he had to come back on the plane, coming back, he wrote the eulogy. His writing, making the speech, you know, was nothing, so he was the main one, but Morgan, Kelly's husband, had something to say, Matt had something to say, Katie's husband, and the two daughters, both--but they talked together at the funeral, and then of course the minister.

CO: What is your experience with that because used to at funerals individual family members didn't speak. Our preachers----do you mind that in a funeral if family and related people speak?

FMM: I think it makes it sadder because what the minister is saying is not gonna be so personal. And they as the girls, Katie and Kelly, talked about stories James had written. One time he got Kelly, the older one, up in his lap and read his story he had written and it was about a rabbit, and when he finished reading it he said how did you like the story, Kelly? Boring Poppi, boring. Well, she told that at the funeral.

CO: What did he say when she said that to him?

FMM: he just laughed.

(both laughing)

CO: Does she have a copy of that story?

FMM: I imagine so. I don't know.

CO: What about other kinds of losses have you experienced----well, that's death, well, losses other than death, like divorce or health, permanently losing something to help?

FMM: We were very fortunate. We didn't have much----there was no divorces in any of our immediate family, and everything was pretty well organized and easy to adjust to.

CO: Death is the main loss for you. Ok. Aging. How has----do you remember when you were younger----the older we get the younger old people get. You know, do you remember as a young person who you thought an old person was?

FMM: Oh yes. I thought my Aunt Verd, I thought she was old. She was 72.

CO: When you were how old? Did she died she was 72?

FMM: Uh huh. I guess I was in my sixties. But James's mother had passed away and she was 50 something I think and we had----

CO: So your Aunt Verdie wasn't that much older than you? If you were in your 60s and she was 72 when she died----were you in your 60s when she died?

FMM: Jim was in college...No I wasn't that old.

CO: Maybe you were in your 50s?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: how much older was Verdie than you?

FMM: That I don't know. I have never thought about it.

CO: But she was grown?

FMM: Oh yes. She was grown and already away from home teaching and she had her own car that was unusual for a woman to own a car at that age in those days --

CO: But old people were----I'm just really interested now in the whole concept of aging and how we view people who are old. What does that mean? I mean, what does that mean to be *old* now? You know, so what is your----how has aging been for you? Have you gotten to the place where you think you're old?

FMM: Yes, I have.

CO: And why is that?

FMM: Because I don't move around well. Don't have the energy that I used to have and I wonder when I lost it.

CO: So it's mostly about energy?

FMM: Right.

CO: Energy level.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: But in your mind (end recording)

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CO: But in your mind do you----yeah right----short term memory gets to so many people. The loss of that but when you see yourself in the mirror do you think who is that?

FMM: No.

CO: No. Sounds like you've just come to terms with where and who you are right now.

FMM: Yes. Right. After I came here I thought well, maybe this is the time for me to blossom by myself. And I have tried to be helpful a lot of the people here.

CO: Residents. So, here you still feel useful in that relatively speaking you're in good health and you're----you might not have the energy you had but you get along. Are you still driving?

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: That's an incredible amount of independence to be able to drive. So----

FMM: And I didn't learn how to drive until my boys Greg and Phil were little. James's father taught me to drive. It's a good thing because I've surely have needed it.

CO: So, you're eighty?

FMM: 87

CO: 87. How old do you feel?

FMM: I don't know how to answer that. Some days I feel 87.

CO: I'm just trying to figure out what does that mean? I mean----

FMM: What I think it means that I have limitations because my energy level is no----will not let me do all the things that I did say three years ago.

CO: But you could easily live to 100?

FMM: Yes.

CO: And I've interviewed several people that are over.

FMM: That's right.

CO: So what has been the most difficult part of aging?

FMM: Lack of feeling energetic.

CO: That seems to be a common----are there rewards to being this age? Are there benefits to being where you are now?

FMM: Yes, people are so courteous, and I think they think you----they express themselves more than they did, say when I was 70. And how well I've done and how well I'm doing. I get more attention.

CO. So you don't experience, like I'm reading a lot now about ageism and how people----how as a culture we fear aging and we treat who are becoming you know,

infirm because of age, we dismiss them, we don't----we fear it. I think the main thing is we fear it, and we're such a----as a culture we want people to produce, we want them to *do* something, and be useful but when you're not useful you know, people don't have a lot of regard for that. Sounds like you haven't experienced must of that.

FMM: I haven't. No. Besides that I still do what I've been doing at the Church and so.

CO: So you haven't really----except for losing energy----you haven't really been constrained by age?

FMM: Not yet.

CO: What advice would you give people about the best way to age?

FMM: To feel like it's not all over. You're still----we can still talk, we can still relate to people and that you still have a part that you need to fill that's----even if it is older, you still have a reason for being here.

CO: Ok. If you're living you got a purpose.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: All right. What age do you recall most nostalgically or most favorably of your---- what age for you?

FMM: Probably about fifty.

CO: When you were fifty. Where were you then?

FMM: We were here in Gainesville, and I guess in the midst of most of the entertaining and things that I did at home were about then----

CO: So you were really active at 50?

FMM: Right.

CO: On to some historical events in your life. What would you say is the most important historical event that you either lived in or participated or lived through and participated in? 'Cause you lived through the Depression, World War II, Cold War, '60's with all of its turmoil, the...(Long pause) You don't have to answer that.

FMM: Ask me again.

CO: Ok. The most important historical event you've either lived through or participated in?

FMM: I guess they----when James was president of the savings and loan of Georgia is probably the one thing that is the most rewarding to us. And that would have been----I would have been about 60.

CO: So that would have been in the '80's?

FMM: '80's. Yeah.

CO: So that was before the banks had gone all the national----

FMM: Oh yeah. And he changed later from when a savings and loan got in such trouble in California and everywhere, had such reputation and he changed it to a state bank. It was called Trust Company or Trust Bank, I guess, instead of Trust Company. And that was then merged with Sun Trust.

CO: In the '90's. Yeah. Ok. Do you remember the Depression and the effect it had on your family? Was that something you want----No?

FMM: No.

CO: Mountain folk just don't----

FMM: No. No.

CO: They don't bat an eye to something like that.

FMM: No. No. They could hardly tell the difference because they never had any money, they never had any travel, they were not traveling and they were looking after their situation at home and it was not much different.

CO: They continued to be self-sufficient through the whole----

FMM: Of course, Union County got its name from it's----

CO: Self----Sufficient city. And going against the----Oh yeah, it's historically known. Did your family have strong feelings about FDR? Do you remember that at all? Do you remember his----

FMM: Oh yeah, I remember that.

CO: Was your family politically active----was your family of origin politically active?

FMM: My mom and dad were and James always was. I think they went along with FDR because my mom worked for this NYA----

CO: Yes, the youth association.

FMM: Yes, and that was one of his promotions----

CO: Neal Deal.

FMM: Yeah, yeah. And that meant a lot to us.

CO: Did he----did they have opinions about Eleanor? Was that ever subject?

FMM: I don't think that was ever a subject with them. It was with my friends and with James, our generation, but not my parents.

CO: Now it was with your generation because she continued to be active? You talked about Eleanor Roosevelt after his death?

FMM: I was at La Grange College when he passed away, and he was away at Warm Springs and Warm Springs was just over the mountain, and he would come in to La Grange riding every once in a while when we were there, 'course the train went through there with his body.

CO: So what did your friends think about Eleanor Roosevelt?

FMM: Well, we thought she was mighty--I guess independent.

CO: Would that have been an admirable quality?

FMM: We thought she was not doing what she needed to do.

CO: You thought she wasn't doing what she needed to do when he was in the White House?

FMM: right.

CO: Because she certainly was not a typical First Lady.

FMM: Uh uh. But she had a lot of vision.

CO: Did you feel differently about her after he died? She continued to be so active----

FMM: Yes.

CO: Did you all think of her as a good role model for women or was she----

FMM: We thought she was a little bit too active.

CO: A little bit too active. Ok. What about the '40's and '50's, do you----ok you were at La Grange College until '45.

FMM: Married in '46.

CO: Yeah. What do you recall about then? Well, after the war, do you recall anything about the Cold War, was that something----do you remember the fallout shelters, the nuclear threats?

FMM: Oh yeah. Our house had a fallout shelter.

CO: Wow. Ok.

FMM: But ----it didn't affect us much.

CO: You don't remember being afraid about a nuclear attack? Remember the Cuban Missile Crisis?

FMM: Oh yes, I remember. We didn't worry about that, we didn't discuss that much. The house we lived in had this fallout shelter when we bought it, and our comment was that if we're bombed we'll not make it anyway.

CO: Fall out shelter's not gonna make a difference.

FMM: But the house that I left also had a fallout shelter, but they were popular.

CO: But you don't remember being afraid, your children didn't come home talking about afraid because of the bomb drills and that kind of thing?

FMM: Mm mm.

CO: Ok. What do you----what impression do you have is somebody asked you to describe the '50's because you lived through them? What was that decade like for you?

FMM: Well, it was----mine was extremely busy.

CO: You were in your 30s.

FMM: Yeah, business was----there was a branch opening----bank branch of home federal savings and loans was opening somewhere, everywhere and we had to do all the entertaining and we would dress in old costumes ----they were pretty, but all the

ladies had long dresses and the men were----I have pictures of James with his hat on and his vest and his pants. And the boys were about----when we were most active I guess was when Greg was about six years old, I guess. That was about 36. I was about 36.

CO: And Jim would have been an early teenager. Ok. So '50's was an active decade for you.

FMM: Oh my yes!

CO: What about the '60's? 'Cause the boys are getting----

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: Moving into school and the country is really unsettled----

FMM: When was the Integration?

CO: Well, all the controversy starts after 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Do you remember that court case at all?

FMM: I remember talking about it but----

CO: Shortly after that----do you remember Emmett Till, does that name mean anything to do? That young Black boy that was lynched and there were thousands of lynchings then but that was a particularly significant event, because it was so widely publicized in 1955 after the '54 court case, and then of course it was an example of how violent reaction would be. It was sort of an omen of things to come. But really segregation doesn't become----there are threats do desegregate after 1954 but it doesn't really become a reality until the early '60's in '63----'64. And so, your boys would have been-

FMM: In middle school and high school.

CO: Yeah, Jim would have been in high school.

FMM: And he probably was in college ----

CO: Jim was in college?

FMM: No, maybe not.

CO: Because you said Phil didn't have a problem but Greg did have a problem with being relocated. But do you recall----that's the Civil Rights Movement----do you recall

your own family----how your husband responded to that? Did he have concerns about it----about the----

FMM: Yes. And he would talk to Greg about his problem, but Jim was asked to go to Valley Forge to work in the Boy Scout Jamboree, and his best friend at the jamboree was Black, which was strange to us.

CO: He really regarded him as a friend.

FMM: Oh yes. When we went to pick him up he said sorry I got to say good bye to him.

CO: Wow. So, the camp was integrated?

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: Do you remember the year? How old was he?

FMM: I can't remember. He was probably 16.

CO: So a teenager?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: Do you think he had less personal issues with it than the two younger sons?

FMM: I think probably, yeah.

CO: How did the Civil Rights Movement challenge your husband's open mindedness to the issue of race, because he learned some degree of compassion from his mother. But once things heated up, did he get concerned about----

FMM: He was concerned to some extent but he was always proud of the fact that there was no demonstrations in our town that was just terrible. Georgia came through without the difficulties that Alabama and Mississippi had.

CO: Doesn't Ellis Arnall get some sort of credit for that? He sort of enforced----he didn't fight it, he didn't fight desegregation and so----how did your husband feel about that?

FMM: Well, he thought that was great.

CO: Did he believe that was the reason why Georgia didn't have the kind of (45:19) that some places----

FMM: Yeah, he thought the leadership was well, very good, and if we had had Maddox in those years, we would have a different story, I'm sure.

CO: Ok. Do you remember, I mean, this might have something to do with everybody's concerns, the sit ins, Freedom Rides, they got so much publicity and do you remember like in the '60's a lot of the assassinations, JFK, do you remember that?

FMM: Oh my yes. I was thinking about that earlier. I think that influenced us more than most any other thing.

CO: Do you remember so many people talking about where I was when I heard----

FMM: Oh I do too.

CO: How did that affect your family? Were you Kennedy supporters?

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: So that was----Do you remember Malcom X? Do you remember the Black Power Movement?

FMM: Yeah, yeah.

CO: Starting in the mid----'60's? He was acclimated not long after Kennedy, followed after JFK, and then Martin Luther King assassinated after that.

FMM: That's right.

CO: How was that in Gainesville? How did that affect Gainesville race relations? Do you remember that at all? There was so much violence after King's death...

FMM: I don't remember Gainesville having any difficulties. They resented the fact they had to leave their school. They had a school, we had a school. They had to leave theirs and integrate ours.

CO: So you think the Black people didn't want segregation?

FMM: I don't know. I don't guess they did.

CO: Most people perceived it in Gainesville that it was something imposed?

FMM: But they got a long fine.

CO: So they just got along.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Do remember much about the '70's because that's when you really would have been most active because that's Jimmy Carter's tenure in the Governor's office and then in the White House.

FMM: We had to kind of put all the businesses into action by then. But we entertained an awful lot in the '70's.

CO: how did you feed 150 people in your house?

FMM: We----even took a bed down in one of the bedrooms and we had a big porch that was where the swimming pool was and it was enclosed with some kind of ---- secret service was already with him. This impressed Greg----Greg was a freshman in college and he was so impressed with all this. And the secret service heard somebody driving by our house and one of the boys in the cars saying "I think he's protected by secret service ,I can't get him," or something like that. Well, they picked this little boy up, and he was so disturbed because the father lived on down the street, and finally they came to the door----

CO: The secret service came to the door?

FMM: Yeah. And finally they got it worked out ----

CO: But now, 150 people, how much help did you have?

FMM: Well, see I had help from the bank. Women who worked at the bank came and helped me and I had probably two ladies that were always cooking with me.

CO: Did you cook the food?

FMM: Yes.

CO: Oh my gosh.

FMM: It all came out of our kitchen.

CO: What did you have?

FMM: I don't know.

(Both Laughing)

FMM: I imagine we had chicken of some sort.

CO: But everybody ate the same thing?

FMM: Oh yeah. Everybody ate the same thing and the secret service ate down in the basement.

CO: I just can't even imagine it. So, obviously you had a sizeable house?

FMM: I did, yes. And ----each room was large----it had ten rooms. It was just big rooms, bedrooms were big, dining room was big, the living room was huge ----

CO: Was that the house you lived in when you moved here? No?

FMM: No. We downsized after James went to Duke to lose weight and get his blood pressure under control----went to the Rice House. And when we came back home I----we decided we had to downsize because that property had two acres of yard and an old swimming pool and the boys were already out and so we bought the house. Well, first time we had a little new house built, and we tried to move into it, well, moving out of those rooms, and they were so large, and there wasn't any way--- we never used the garage.

CO: Well, before we leave the dinner, the dinner's still blows me away---did you all sit with the Carters? Well you didn't sit but were you actually serving? Did you actually serve?

FMM: I don't think so. I think we----I don't know how we handled it.

CO: So you don't remember who sat with the Carter's?

FMM: No..

CO: No?

FMM: James looked after that. I was looking after the food.

CO: Did you have place names?

FMM: No.

CO: So people sat then where they wanted?

FMM: yeah. And then after that he moved the tables I guess, and he had a sitting arrangement in the living room, and they talked about his campaign ----people gave their money and so and so. But that was his first fundraiser. And then he came back-- --he didn't come back, but his son came one other time but it was nothing like the first

one. And there was one lady that worked for me in the kitchen and wherever, and she was the wife of an engineer at the bank and she----when Jimmy Carter came she kissed his hand, she said she wanted to remember she kissed the president's hand. And I had no idea, I had no confidence in the fact that he would make President----

CO: That he would win?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Yeah, well some people believed it was a long shot.

FMM: Yeah. It was a long shot. Of course, we had been for Carl Sanders so strong. Well, we still are.

CO: But that supper----was that supper kind of a way----making amends for having supported Sanders against Carter?

FMM: I guess so. Yeah. Yeah. We were entertained at the White House, and then we were there for the inauguration and we were invited back to a dinner later.

CO: How was that? Being in Washington for the inauguration----where did you see it? During the inauguration?

FMM: Oh you didn't see it. That was such a crowd you couldn't find a seat. No. But after----Greg came from school and I told you he climbed the tree so he could see the inauguration. But we were doing a lot of hiking in those days, and I wore my---- my hiking shoes and there was snow on the ground and it was cold ----

CO: Where were ya'll when you when they got out of the car and started walking down the street?

FMM: Oh we were in on the stadium, that's yeah, we were scared.

CO: I think everybody was stunned.

FMM: Uh huh. She looked mighty pretty.

CO: Well, I'm skipping all over the place chronologically but did you all have strong feelings about the war in Vietnam? Did you have----

FMM: Not much, no.

CO: Were you worried about your sons?

FMM: Oh yes. We were very afraid. Jim was in college and he took ROTC----he had to be able to stay in college he had to be training ----

CO: Commission.

FMM: Uh huh. Commission and when he graduated he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant but he had to do two years of service, so the first year he was in Augusta----Fort Gordon I guess. And that was fine, there was nothing to worry about that, and then the second year we thought, Oh boy! Vietnam! And then the Korean War had just kind of dwindled out at that time and he was sent to Korea. So, that ---- he managed there really well.

CO: The two younger ones were too young?

FMM: Yeah. They never had to register.

CO: But did you and your husband have strong feelings about the war, against it? For it? Did you have opinions about the war itself?

FMM: We were somewhat against it. But ----it was not talked about a lot.

CO: I think I asked you yesterday about the----do you remember the book the *Feminine Mystique* and the Women's Movement----did you have----

FMM: No.

CO: You didn't have strong feelings about it one way or another?

FMM: No.

CO: Ok. What do you believe is the legacy of the Women's Movement? Did it hurt the cause of equality between the sexes? Did it help the cause? Do you think a beneficial movement?

FMM: I think it was a beneficial movement. I think it was a movement that needed to take place.

CO: Well, you had experienced being independent and you lived in a family where you had a woman role model who was very independent, so you didn't have as much experience in your own personal life of discrimination and being----having significant different expectations of you because you were female. You could do anything that you wanted to do, so you might not have personally felt the need----

FMM: Yeah. Only reading and TV and so----

CO: So in your lifetime you have never experienced any kind of prejudice for being a woman?

FMM: No.

CO: No?

FMM: No. But I was the president's wife.

CO: So people treated you with respect.

FMM: And they were always shocked when I was the one behind the meals. They didn't think I would do that.

CO: They thought that you were just sort of an ornament to your husband and you didn't really serve that----Ok. But philosophically you didn't disagree with the movement?

FMM: No. Just didn't have any needs.

CO: We got two sections left. I want to take just a short break.

FMM: Ok.

(Pause)

CO: Ok, we're back on. The next category is on religion and core values and that kind of thing. The first question is something I heard on NPR, the question itself came from something they did for a few weeks, they ask people to write in essays for what they consider to be their core value that had driven them----we have many values but what would you say is the number one value that has been the foremost in your life?

FMM: The fact that Jesus came and he gave His life for our sins, and was resurrected that gave us eternal life.

CO: So you live with the confidence that----is that the source of your confidence? Was it the source of your family's----was it your family's core value? The belief in afterlife and security, your own?

FMM: I don't know.

CO: And has that been the core value for you your adult life?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: your adult life?

FMM: Mm hmm. And my family was Methodist, and we were very close----you see Young Harris was a Methodist school and so was La Grange.

CO: When you married your husband and he was Baptist, would you have any issues becoming Baptist?

FMM: No. He had a relative that he called Aunt (?????27:21) and she was very influential in getting me into the Baptist Church. And the minister we had at that time apologized almost for the fact he had to Baptize me, and there were two other Baptist women who were in the same service with me.

CO: So you had to be baptized as an adult?

FMM: Uh huh. Uh huh. Yeah.

CO: Was religion important in your family when you were growing up? To your parents and----

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: They went to Church.

FMM: They took part in church. (26:28) My Daddy----we were----the Methodist Church in Union County had a circuit rider and he went to different places, all around and he would come to our church once a month and if he was there at the early hour---- my Daddy would make sure he had somebody's house to go to----to have lunch at.

CO: Was that often yours?

FMM: Yes. It was often us and I even remembered my Mama heating an iron on the stove----wood stove to iron the white table cloth before he got in the house.

CO: Yeah, that circuit rider, that was so prevalent in the mountains because people couldn't afford a pastor. So, did you have----so you didn't have service every Sunday then?

FMM: Mm mm. We had Sunday School but not preaching.

CO: But your parents were----when there was a preaching service, they were there?

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: Did they go to Sunday School?

FMM: Yes. Yes.

CO: So you grew up in a household where religion was sort of----

FMM: Yes. Bryan Herbert Reese was (24:48) my Sunday School teacher. We always thought he was so smart but we couldn't understand him.

CO: So what was his faith? Was he atypical or a----was his Methodist faith pretty traditional Methodist based?

FMM: I think so.

CO: Well, what about your----you gave me a little of a Baptist doctrine. What are your religious beliefs? You just told me----

FMM: Well, that I firmly believe as a----God is so good to us, and God can do anything, there's not anything He can't do, and that's my belief.

CO: And it sounds like you----it has pretty much defined or given you the confidence that you have.

FMM: I think God is involved in an awful lot of things. All things I guess.

CO: And so, do you see God as being imminent and transcendent – these are old theological terms, but is God in as well as above?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. All right.

(Cat meows)

CO: Have you had what you identify as a spiritual experience? Something that you----it's clearly more than a belief it's an experience that you've had? Have you ever had something that you would identify as a purely spiritual? Is it something you can talk about?

FMM: I feel the spirit of the Lord in what I'm doing, and what He has done that's so strong, that you become secure and trusting.

CO: So it affirms your beliefs, the experience affirms the beliefs.

FMM: right.

CO: Is it limited to a feeling? You just feel an assurance about it?

FMM: Yes, it's a feeling. Yes.

CO: So, this may sound like a silly question...Do you feel the presence of a spiritual guide within you?

FMM: Most of the time.

CO: Ok. What do you think keeps that from the times you don't feel it?

FMM: I think probably I neglected my prayers in life and----

CO: You have more time for that now. How did you handle a----how did you handle your spiritual life when you were so busy with----

FMM: You didn't think much about it. You just did-things had to be done so you just did 'em. And I think I said that when I came here I felt like right now I have more time and I have more freedom because I don't have to look after anybody and all that. And I can give more to some cause that the Lord would like for me to do.

CO: So what kinds of things are you involved in at Church?

FMM: Well, I'm involved in Sunday School and I'm in----I'm in the hospitality committee and I give out programs at least once a month. They let me be inside the building but it's early Church and that's at 8:30. So that's pretty early that I have to get up, and get to Church. I've continued to do that but I had done that before James died. But James got to the point where James couldn't get up and down, and he did not go to Church because of that. He said----

CO: Did he miss it?

FMM: I think he did.

CO: Did you all share similar spiritual values?

FMM: Mm mm. Mm mm.

CO: When you feel like you've talked about your chief concern over aging----when you get drained how do you renew yourself? Physically or spiritually?

FMM: Spiritually I take time to really be thankful that I have----for a lot of things that have happened to me and that the life I've had, and----but I usually feel replenished after praying.

CO: Have you experienced something you would consider a miracle? Anything that would be classified as a miracle? In your life or just somebody you are close to?

FMM: Well, my mother's death was such. James was going to Cleveland----she was in a Cleveland nursing home. We were going to Cleveland to do a program for the Rotary Club. It was wild flowers and all this stuff that we had put together from our hiking and it became very popular. He was going to talk about that and wanted me to come and go with him. So I said ok, and when we got to Cleveland and I said James I've seen this so many times, I'm just going to go over to the nursing home to visit with Mama. And when I got there she was not in the room and they said she had already gone to lunch, and so I went up to where she was waiting to go to lunch and she was sitting in her chair already gone. Now can you imagine anything more...

CO: So something moved you----

FMM: yeah to be there. And I was there to take care of everything. My brother didn't even have to come to the nursing home. I took care of everything, telephone and such. And I think they all thought I was gonna collapse at one time.

CO: From having so much to do or from grief?

FMM: Grief but there are people who show their emotions so, and I think that's what happened----

(knocking in background)

CO: We were talking about----before the knock you were talking about how people show their emotions differently.

FMM: Oh yes. A lot of people cry aloud and so on. But I've never been that type.

CO: You're grieving in a different way. Have your religious beliefs changed any over time? Are they now what they were when you were baptized or just your religious beliefs?

FMM: I don't think it's changed.

CO: So, this might sound like another silly question but do you believe in an afterlife?

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Ok. What do you think it will be like?

FMM: I think it will be very pleasant. But ----we don't know.

CO: Yeah. Right. Are you sure of anything? You believe in an afterlife but are you certain of anything?

FMM: No.

CO: But you seem to be ok with that.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Ok with living with uncertainty. Well, besides those spiritual or actually religious beliefs that are fairly fundamental doctrines, what do you think is the most important value for people to observe? The most important religious or spiritual value for humans to observe?

FMM: That God is with us. He's so good to us. Are you familiar with the song, "God Is So Good"?

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

FMM: We sing that lots of times. Here we've had study courses in----we would study James, and then we studied, the last one was----

CO: So you like that? You like studying----you like having Bible classes and all that?

FMM: Yeah. Yeah.

CO: Do most people here attend?

FMM: No.

CO: No? But it takes place here? You don't have to go out and go to the Church to go?

FMM: Mm mm.

CO: We're in our last section so this is kind of a hodge podge of wrapping up sorts of things. It's kind of the quest of thinkers to determine the amount of cause and effect in life. To what extent do you think your life as it is now, is more from decisions you've made, or more from----how much of it's been from decisions and actions on your part, and how much of it's been from circumstances? Really that you haven't, you've just kind of been born to a particular set of parents and met a particular man and fell in love with him.

FMM: I really think it's just routine. They----habits of our life were such that they led me to the knowledge I have about religion and Church and----

CO: Sounds like you would lead more to circumstances? Than necessarily –

FMM: Yeah. Yeah. It was not something traumatic that changed my----

CO: I think I started off by saying that I was looking for turning points in your life. And so I will ask that again in a minute but----and I know that we've talked about----at some point I asked you about what was the best----what age did you look back at most nostalgically, but what----would you answer the same way if I asked what period of time, and it doesn't matter what amount of time, to a day, a year, a decade, but what was the happiest time, the most gratifying time of life, the most memorable time for you and why? You can answer the same way you answered when I asked you about what age you look back on.

FMM: Yeah, but I think this is somewhat different. You are talking about the happiest time. I think the last year of Young Harris College was the year I was in love with James, and we were right there together, and we feared what the draft would do and--- -but they let him stay his two years at Young Harris. He was there in '41 and we were graduated in '43. But those were very happy years. I have not experienced a time that I was that –I guess, elated.

CO: So that was late teens early twenties.

FMM: Uh huh. Eighteen or teens I guess.

CO: Yeah. So that is different from what I asked you. Oh I'm glad I asked. So, conversely, what would be the time that would be the unhappiest or the most difficult whichever way you want to describe it? What time would that be?

FMM: I think the year that he was in Germany, and I guess that would have been '44.

CO: So that was the hardest time?

FMM: Hardest time for me. I was at La Grange and you know, there were new people and I somehow just felt pretty alone, even though Aunt Verd was there. Then all the connection I had was correspondence from him. You were so frightened I guess.

CO: So the years at La Grange were really hard for you.

FMM: Hard. Right. I remember making a statement several times that I hope that I would never have to study like I did there again.

CO: But it was unhappy because of James being in Germany?

FMM: I think so. Yeah.

CO: What about the saddest period, you've already talked about you handled that differently----you don't let sadness take root. What was the time it was the most challenge for you?

FMM: Well, I guess Mrs. Mathis lived right with us when she passed away, and James had to do her shots to keep her easy, and we were just right there, and I think observing that was very influential in my life, and to see the way he responded. I thought after the funeral, he would not ever quit crying.

CO: So his sadness made you sad?

FMM: Right.

CO: What do you think has been the most crucial decisions you've made in life?

FMM: Marrying James of course. And what decisions I've made? (Pause)

CO: Did you make any decisions in life when he was alive without----were all of your decisions made with him? Did you make any decisions in life when he was alive that he didn't necessarily----that weren't made jointly with him?

FMM: Well, sometimes we didn't talk about things. He was not one----he had his own thoughts going, and you didn't get into them too much. I think I made my decisions mostly myself. I didn't consult him.

CO: Can you think of any really critical outcome?

FMM: Uh uh. Uh uh.

CO: And now, to the point the questions of turning points, can you name three turning points. Marriage you've already said as a turning point, can you name any other real turning points before or after that?

FMM: Well, our Phil was in a bad accident and this made me so aware of what death could be like with the loss of a son.

CO: how old was he?

FMM: He was driving. He was in a car wreck. It was a cold cold night. It was New Year's Eve, and he was thrown out of the car onto the street, and would have frozen

though he was no completely out of it, but he had not moved to get up. And a couple was coming home from a party----New Year's Eve party, and saw him and I guess they saw the car, and then saw him, and she put her coat around him, and they called the ambulance and he had a bad shoulder, I guess, he had something---- but it was miraculous almost that he made it like he did.

CO: So that was a turning point?

FMM: Oh yes. That was a very----you realize how they could be gone so quick and the other one, I guess when he had to retire.

CO: Phil?

FMM: No. James.

CO: Ok. Yeah. Sure. So are you satisfied with the life choices you've made?

FMM: Yes.

CO: Ok. Have there been mistakes in your life?

FMM: Oh yes. Some things I don't want to dwell on too much so I don't

CO: If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?

FMM: I would spend more time with my boys?

CO: You mean as young boys?

FMM: As young boys.

CO: As children?

FMM: Yeah. Yeah.

CO: In what way? What would you do differently? How would you----what kind of time would you spend with them? Doing more things at school with them?

FMM: I don't think I could have done much more at school with them, but to just be with them when they were growing up and to make them----to make sure that they realized how much I love them. We weren't a family that talked about love a whole lot.

CO: Was there a lot of affection in the family?

FMM: Not a great deal. My mom was not that kind.

CO: What about James's mother?

FMM: She was not either.

CO: But it sounds like he had more affection between his mother.

FMM: Right.

CO: Would you be more affectionate? Is that one thing you would change about it?

FMM: Yes.

CO: Are you more affectionate with your grandchildren?

FMM: Oh yes!

CO: Ok. Has your life been better or not as good as you envisioned it when you were younger?

Mrs.M: I guess it's been better.

CO: Ok. All right. How have you learned from difficulties? You got a lot more than it appears on the surface. Your son's accident, a son's difficulties in midlife and there's so----

FMM: Well, I haven't told you that our oldest son has Parkinson's disease, and they thought he was having an essential(?) tremor, and that he was hereditary but it wasn't, and he's had the brain stimulus to stop the tremor but of course that doesn't cure the disease but it makes him feel better and he's gotten along really well with it. Just pray that he will continue to.

CO: What about his children? Isn't that highly inheritable? Parkinson's?

FMM: They don't seem to have any difficulties but he didn't either. After Cathy died is when it showed up.

CO: So (end recording)

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FMM: He didn't want his bride's wife presently to be married to an invalid.

CO: So when did he marry the second wife?

FMM: About six years ago.

CO: Oh. Did he know then that he had Parkinson's?

FMM: No.

CO: No.

FMM: No. It showed up pretty soon after they married.

CO: Mm.

FMM: And that disturbed him.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. Well, so that's been a turning point in his life, certainly.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: But it sounds like you're handling that with the same sort of resolve,

FMM: Yeah, well.

CO: Yeah. What do you think is the most valuable lesson you've learned in life?

FMM: To try to have a positive attitude about everything and not be critical all the time.

CO: Ok. Glass half full.

FMM: Mm hmm.

CO: Yeah. All right. Now you probably----I can almost guess how you'll answer this but I'm gonna ask you anyway. Who has been the single individual who has had most influence on you or changed your life?

FMM: James.

CO: Ok. Secondly, that might be? Talked about your Aunt Verdie?

FMM: Oh yes! Oh yes! Well, I don't know if there'll be----She would come mighty close to what James did but----

(Simultaneously saying)

CO: She was an early stage in life.

FMM: She was an early stage in life. And a different attitude of----she was a teacher, and she expected so much.

CO: Did she have a strong faith?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: Did she continue to be Methodist throughout her life?

FMM: Uh huh. She taught Sunday School at the Methodist Church in LaGrange and she taught, I think, college age maybe high school seniors, I don't know exactly what the age was but they liked her so much they put that picture that I have----they have a picture of her on the wall in that classroom.

CO: Wow.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: How 'bout that.

FMM: I haven't seen it in years but it used to be there. But she expected you to do the right thing.

CO: So you kind of lived up to it because she . . . ?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: She sounds like she was a very commanding presence.

FMM: Right. Right.

CO: Yeah. What gives your life unity, or meaning, or purpose now----you're in a new relative a new setting----What is it that gives your life most meaning now?

FMM: I think the fact that every day we have some person that is having difficulties [for instance] last night there's the new lady and she didn't know how to get back to her room, and I feel like that it's my duty----my wish is to assist anybody I can in whatever, but this is just one of those. She's having a terrible time. She can't----she didn't know where she was going to sit to eat, and our table is----we've added one chair over already so we can't add anymore. And----but we're----the ones at our table are very close. We call ourselves the Lunch Bunch, and we go usually on Friday. But we've lost one of our Lunch Bunch people because she had to move to Buford because her sister lived in Buford and her health was not real good at all here. And she fell, and she was frightened and she thought she needed to get closer to her sister and this has been a hard thing, and I thought I was gone four days with Christmas and I thought well, I'm glad I wasn't here when she left.

CO: So she very recently left?

FMM: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

CO: Oh my. Sounds like she was a good friend.

FMM: Day before yesterday. Oh she was. She wrote us all a little note and...

CO: Ok so it's your role here is what gives you most----

FMM: Yeah. Yeah.

CO: Ok. What's your biggest worry now?

FMM: That I'll be ill and bed ridden, and have to have assistance, and if I do I have to move over to the nursing home.

CO: Mm. Ok.

FMM: I just hope that----

CO: Yeah.

FMM: I have friends say, "If you just go to sleep." (Chuckling)

CO: Yeah. Yeah. What has been the greatest source of inspiration or motivation whichever one of those words you like best to you throughout your life? Or at anytime in your life?

FMM: Well, I guess observing Aunt Verd would have been one. Then I----this aunt of James's that lead me to join the Baptist Church was very influential.

CO: What was her name?

FMM: Ladia Burke.

CO: Ladia Burke. Ok.

FMM: Who else? And here we have----I have one next door that is----she's the one that teaches the classes, the Beth Moore classes----You're not familiar with her? She writes the books that they teach.

CO: Spiritual books?

FMM: Uh huh.

CO: Ok.

FMM: And I have a tape with it.

CO: Ok.

FMM: And we can see her on the tape and so, and she has been very influential in my life.

CO: What's her name?

FMM: Libby.

CO: Ok.

FMM: Libby is never----we go around and work out for thirty minutes on the bicycle after we have dinner. You're not supposed to do that if you eat a big meal, but we do. We come back upstairs and she never leaves without hugging me, and talking to me and it makes me feel so good.

CO: So that makes this home?

FMM: Oh yeah.

CO: 'Cause you've got genuine friends.

FMM: That's right.

CO: Did you know any of these people before you moved here?

FMM: No.

CO: You just got a whole new life really.

FMM: I do have a whole new life. Yes ma'am.

CO: Of what are you proudest in your life?

FMM: The fact that everything's kind of smooth with me.

CO: Yeah. You have a degree of equanimity.

FMM: Yeah, I guess that's the best word.

CO: Ok. All right.

FMM: I'm not an extreme in either direction.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. What are your greatest----you've already said your greatest thing you worry about----losing independence. What's your greatest hope for your future?

FMM: That I'll be able to do what the Lord wants me to do. That if He has a mission yet for me, that I have the strength to follow through on it.

CO: Ok. Is there----ok how would you want to be remembered? What do you want your legacy to be?

FMM: That I was a sweet lady.

CO: Ok.

FMM: And several people call me, "Sweet Frances."

CO: Aww.

FMM: So----

CO: And that's gratifying?

FMM: Oh yes.

CO: Ok. All right.

FMM: Never until I came here I thought about being sweet but that was just what James----that was just part of life.

CO: Yeah. You were useful and active and involved but now it matters to be sweet and kind and thoughtful. Ok.

FMM: Yeah.

CO: Ok. Is there anything you want your children, grandchildren, your friends, your family, anybody who knows you----is there anything that you would want them to know?

FMM: Uh uh. I don't think so.

CO: Ok. Is there anything we've left out that you would like to talk about or mention?

FMM: Nope.

CO: Ok. Well, the last question people don't like. You don't have to come up with an answer but----If you were to write an autobiography or you had a biographer who was

writing about your life----the story of your life. What would you want the story titled? What would you title the story to your life?

FMM: A Good Life.

CO: Frances Mathis: A Good Life?

FMM: Yeah.

CO: So you've had a good life?

FMM: I've had a good life.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. And you've almost started over at 85, 86 or whatever.

FMM: 85.

CO: Ok. Well, I think we're finished.

FMM: Well.

CO: How does it feel to go through----re-examine?

FMM: Well, it's----I think I've been----I haven't been concerned about this----what I've said, and before you came I thought what is this gonna be like? But I think you've handled it in such a way that----

CO: Well, I hope it felt----I mean before I started interviewing people I did like----