

**C. Oglesby:** Okay, it is Thursday March the 22<sup>nd</sup>. I am in Ocilla, Georgia on 509 South Eighth Street talking with Mrs. Mattie Ivy and her niece, Ms. Novella Miller, and Ms. Mattie is a 109 years old. She was born in 1903 and she's going to share some stories with me about her life, and we're just going to talk today until she gets too tired. So, my first question for Ms. Mattie is that...she shared with me that her parents, John Prater and her mother Alberta...

**Mattie Ivy:** Marshal.

**CO:** Marshall, were both born into slavery. So, I'm just going to ask her to start with, before she tells me about her own life, if you would just say something about that?

**MI:** About my Mama?

**CO:** Right, uh huh. And your...

**MI:** All I know she was born in slavery in...where was she? She was born in...all I ever heard them say she was born down there on the Flint River. That's all I know now.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** And she married...I don't know...

**CO:** Don't know the date? It's okay.

**MI:** Mmhmm. And her husband, I don't know anything about him, I just know I've always heard them say that he was named Judge Marshall, but I never did...you know he was dead when... He died after she had Julius and Ephraim, Mary, Valley. Let me see...

**CO:** And Lula. Yeah. And then she married your father?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Mr. Prater.

**MI:** She married him around...I think it was 1901.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** 1902.

**CO:** 1902.

**MI:** And so...

**CO:** And then you were born in 1903.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay. Alright. Ms. Mattie, what is the first thing you remember? If you think back to childhood, what's the first thing you recall?

**MI:** What's the first thing I did when?

**CO:** What's the first thing you can remember? When you think about your childhood, what's the first thing you can remember about it?

**MI:** The first thing I can remember is maybe walking on a log stable and fell down and cut my leg.

**CO:** You were walking where?

**MI:** That's the first thing I remember, and I was about three years old, and that's when I cut this leg.

**CO:** Oh, my goodness. You still have the scar.

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** When you were about three?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** That was a hundred years ago.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Yeah, wow. A 106 years ago, actually. Okay, do you remember what happened after that? Did they take you to a doctor or did they just bandage you up?

**MI:** No, it was a long time, and see they was...when we were in Crawford County people didn't know nothing about no doctors.

**CO:** Yeah.

**MI:** And I know that **what** happened, what I remember wasn't much, but I know they were chopping cotton. That's why I know so much about...when they were chopping cotton, we lived up on a hill, and they had to go down, like that, to the field. They got through chopping cotton, and I was walking right on that stable, which my Mama had

told me don't do, and I looked down there and saw them coming, so I don't know whether I fell down or jumped down, but when I jumped down I cut this leg.

**CO:** Wow.

**MI:** I was hollering and rubbing blood, and Mama and them run up the hill, and that's all I...

**CO:** That's plenty, that's more than enough. You remember something back to three years old, that's a pretty vivid memory. That stuck with you.

**MI:** But then I know when Christmas come I was still...my leg was still sore.

**CO:** Wow.

**MI:** Cause ...you see we didn't have no doctors. Mama doctoring on it. And I know my brother...they...I think that's what they was—I don't know whether it was for--- ...cause they ran tar{???) for that on my hand. I've had so many accidents, so I don't know whether they ran tar, and put a plaster on there or whether they ran tar for my hand. See after all that happened, I burned this hand. And ...Mama and them was in the field, and had some bacon in the stove, and I smelled it. I was going to pull it out and all that grease fell down on my hand. So I just ran and stuck my hand down in the well bucket of water...

**CO:** That was smart. How old were you when that happened?

**MI:** Oh, I was about five years old.

**CO:** That's why you became a nurse, because you knew what to do with that burned hand.

**MI:** So that...stayed sick a long time...I mean it stayed where I couldn't use it a long time. I think I had...yeah I had started to school when I couldn't use this hand. So, I don't remember when I started to use it, but I know I ...when I was going to school when we was doing something the teacher was going to whoop us. I told him, "whip me in my hand" [meaning the bandaged one]. I remember that.

**CO:** Because you had a bandage?

**MI:** He wouldn't do it. He said, "I'll whip you in that hand." I said, "Whip me in that hand."

**CO:** Is that because you had a bandage on it?

**MI:** That's right. I thought that wouldn't hurt if it was in that.

**CO:** But he whipped the other hand?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** What a rascal he was. Well, so it sounds like you were pretty smart. Can you describe yourself as a child? What were you like as a little girl?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Can you describe yourself as a child? What were you like as a little girl?

**MI:** When I was a little girl?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Well I remember playing and riding gophers. Do you know what a gopher is?

**CO:** Uh uh.

**Novella Miller:** Kind of like a turtle.

**MI:** It used to be little old things...big old things about that big.

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** And they'd crawl on the...and we used to get them on the top of them, and make them...they wouldn't run fast, they'd run so slow. And we'd jump on them and ride them. You don't see none... you've seen a turtle, haven't you?

**CO:** I haven't.

**MI:** Well they're about that long...

**NM:** You'll see them crossing the road.

**CO:** Oh the turtles. I'm sorry. Yes, of course I've seen a turtle. Yes. You rode a turtle?

**NM:** Well the gopher is much...they're bigger than a turtle.

**CO:** Oh, I got you. So you got on its back?

**MI:** Oh yeah. We used to sit on the back, you know, and they'd go so slow.

**CO:** You weren't scared he would bite you?

**MI:** Well, I wasn't scared then. We weren't scared of nothing.

**CO:** Well see that's describing you. You weren't....you were fearless.

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** You were a fearless child. You weren't afraid of anything.

**MI:** No, I wasn't afraid. It was just three girls, me, Carabelle, and Claudie.

**CO:** Were these friends or cousins?

**MI:** They weren't no kin to me, but we all lived on the same farm, and we played together. It was just three...just those three children. All the rest of the children...we lived over on the highway, and the rest of the children lived back --- I don't know what you call the farm (???52:55.)

**CO:** Were your parents sharecroppers?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Did you have to help with the cotton?

**MI:** Is what?

**CO:** Did you have to help chop cotton? You as a child?

**MI:** Say did I chop cotton?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** You did?

**MI:** Plenty of cotton too.

**CO:** Okay. Did all of your brothers and sisters have to help?

**MI:** My brothers and sisters. No, I was very young when they married.

**CO:** Oh okay, so they left home.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Then we moved off the farm, but we were on the same man's place. They moved over.

**CO:** Do you know whose farm it was?

**MI:** Right next to that little white man's house, because Mama cooked for him.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** And my Daddy, he (???51:48.) All I know...they didn't have nothing but wedge hands. We didn't have no farmers over there, and no... All I can remember...Mr. Carey, no Mr. Tony, and Mr. Van, and it was another one, lived down the road, they was wedge hands.

**CO:** Wedge hands? Is that what you're saying? What is that?

**NM:** Farmer worker. They called them wedge hands back then.

**CO:** The people who worked the farms were called wedge hands? Okay. Whose farm was it Ms. Mattie?

**MI:** Ed Howell.

**CO:** Ed Howell? It was his farm?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** And your father and mother worked for him?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Okay, alright. How long did they stay on his place?

**MI:** They both stayed there until they died.

**CO:** Okay, alright. And that was...your mother died in 19...let's see. You didn't know. You didn't know when your mother died, right? Do you remember when your parents died? Remember roughly what year it was?

**MI:** No, my Daddy died, let me see...I don't know. I was...let me see 1918..19...around 1914, I believe.

**CO:** Okay. Your father?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Do you remember when your mother died?

**MI:** When my Mama?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Mama died in...Mama died in '30.

**CO:** 1930?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** You were very young when your father died, and you were a young woman when your mother died.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Yeah. So did your mother stay on and work for the Howells after your father died?

**MI:** They all moved to town. The Howells moved...they bought there in Ocilla and they moved Mama...me and Mama down too. Cause Mama worked for them right on.

**CO:** So they moved off the farm, and into town?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Here in Ocilla?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay. Alright. Do you remember that?

**MI:** Yeah, I remember that because I was going to school then.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Cause I was about...I can't remember what...oh I was big enough to....I was big enough to work. I mean because I know when I was going to school, I used to work for Ms. Paulk...had nursed her children.

**CO:** Which Ms. Paulk was that? There's a gazillion Paulks around here.

**MI:** That was Melvin Paulk.

**CO:** Okay. And you were...you tended the children?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** This was when you were in high school? You were a teenager? Were a young girl? Or were you a grown woman?

**MI:** I'd say it was in high school.

**CO:** You were in high school when you kept these children?

**MI:** Yes. It was in the afternoon, when I'd get out of school. See I'd go there and nurse the children.

**CO:** But you did go to school?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** How far did you go in school?

**MI:** How far did I go?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Through ninth.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** That's how high we went.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Colored people went through the ninth. White people went...

**CO:** Probably through the 11th.

**MI:** I think they was in the 11<sup>th</sup> or something like that.

**CO:** Yeah.

**MI:** But the whites...I mean the coloreds didn't go high as the whites. Cause coloreds only had five months a year.

**CO:** Right.

**MI:** And the whites had seven.

**CO:** Right. And the other months you were working? You were working right?



**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Working in the fields? Did you continue to work in the cotton fields even after you started keeping those children?

**MI:** Yeah I used to hoe cotton, chop cotton. All except pick. I couldn't pick cotton, cause I never could...I'd get out there and try. I never could pick a hundred.

**CO:** Now how come you couldn't pick cotton?

**MI:** My fingers are too big. You got to have little fingers to pull it out of the burrs.

**CO:** Oh okay.

**MI:** I just couldn't do it, but I'd do everything else.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Pick lima beans, pull corn. I never did pull no fodder (???46:04).

**CO:** Pulling corn is hard. I said pulling corn is hard. It's hard to me.

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** I don't like to pull corn.

**MI:** I didn't either, but I...you had to do it and you did it.

**CO:** I know. I know. I'm...can you talk about...you don't remember much about your father because you were just 11 when he died?

45:30

**MI:** Uh uh, I don't remember too much about him. I just know...all I remember that he, I don't know what was wrong with him, but he had bleeding spells, and I know Mr. Howell and them used to take him to Americus to the hospital.

**CO:** Mmm.

**MI:** And they'd...he'd stay up there sometimes a week and sometimes two weeks, and they'd come back and get him. And if he had another spell they have to take him back up there. All I know is he'd have those bleeding spells, but I don't know what...

**CO:** But, so one day they took him to the hospital and he didn't come home?

**MI:** ???44:44 He took a buggy and he came from here to Americus.

**CO:** In a buggy?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Woah.

**MI:** I didn't know where Americus was...

**CO:** A long way off in a buggy.

**MI:** Yeah, it was a long ways. But they'd go up there one day and come back. Mr. Howell ???44:14. He'd come back the next day. He left my Daddy up there in the hospital. And when Dr. Wise and them said that he could come home, he'd go back and get him. That's all I know...

**CO:** Can you tell me some things about your mother? Can you talk about your mother? What was your mother like?

**MI:** My Mama worked...she stayed there and worked for them. ??? 43:36 She cooked and kept house. Well she did that until she died.

**CO:** Do you know how old she was when she died?

**MI:** Mama was 69 or 70. Something like that when she died.

**CO:** Okay, alright. Okay. Did you and your mother get along? Did you'll get along? Did you and your mother get along okay?

**MI:** Do what?

**CO:** [Repeated question]

**MI:** Me and my Mama?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Yeah, we got along.

**CO:** Some people...some young girls fight with their mothers.

**MI:** No.

**CO:** You didn't have time to fight, did you?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** She was always working.

**MI:** Time you work all day, you go home, get a bath and go to bed, you don't think about no fighting. Well I stayed right there with my Mama...see I was twenty-five, and my Mama was the boss. And I worked and give her the money.

**CO:** You worked keeping the children?

**MI:** She spent it. She spent it like she wanted. Wasn't nobody, just me and her. She worked, didn't work for the cooking and cleaning house. But she worked...then after I was, I think I was eighteen. I think that's what...I won't be sure. When I finished high school...finished ninth grade wasn't no high school, and I remember Mr. Newborn, the Superintendent, I worked for the Paulks right next door to him, and he sure used to come over there and stay with Ms. Paulk's children all the time. So, I remember him asking me, he said, "Mattie." I said, "Yeah." "You took examination this year didn't I?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "What do you take examination for?" I said, "Just because the other children were taking it too," I said. He said, "You made the highest. You made first grade ??? 40:12." Said, "Those with you made third grade." I said, "Yeah, that made them make a higher grade than me ??? 40:00, didn't it?" He said, "No. First grade was the highest." He says...

**CO:** You made the highest grade?

**MI:** First grade I made highest. The rest of them went to the court house with me. They made third grade ??? 39:39 license. So, there was somebody, one of the teachers across the river here, I don't know whether she died or what, but Mr. Newborn sent me out there to finish out her term. So I went out there across the river and that teacher...I reckon I taught two months, because it weren't getting but five months. So I went out there and I taught. Then, the next year he wanted to send me back out there, but I didn't go. I took my job nursing.

**CO:** You became a nurse the next year?

**MI:** I was nursing children.

**CO:** Oh, nursing children.

**MI:** Mmhmm. So then the next day he wanted me to go to I think Pleasant Hill was the next pay out, so I went down there and I taught two years, but I didn't like teaching.

**CO:** You didn't like teaching?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** You'd rather keep children then teach?

**MI:** I just didn't like...I do alright with little children, but I don't like big children.

**CO:** Did it pay more to nurse children than it did to teach?

**MI:** No, you'd get...I'd make about four or five dollars a week for nursing children. And I didn't get much more than that. I got 25 dollars a month for teaching. So, I stayed there. I reckon the next place is ??? Whitley? ???37:41...I taught up there so he moved me to Whitley; Midway; ???37:34... and that's the last place I taught. I was going...

**CO:** So you started teaching, though, as a really young woman? You were just a teenager?

**MI:** So I taught...then when I married, just before I married, Dr. Dismuke ???37:08 finished medical school, and I was working around cleaning up Dr. Willis's office then.

**CO:** Dr. Willis?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** The Superintendent? Or this was a medical doctor?

**MI:** Who? Dr. Willis?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Okay. You cleaned up his office?

**MI:** I cleaned his office.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** So they built...Dr. Dismuke going to build a hospital.

**CO:** Now, this is Dr. Dismuke?

**MI:** They took...Dr. Willis office was right here, well right next to it Dr. Dismuke built...it was about three rooms I think. He didn't have nothing but tonsil patients, and

his Mama would nurse the tonsil patients. They'd come in you know and have the operation and go back home that day. She nursed them.

**CO:** Now is this the white doctor?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** White doctor.

**MI:** Then they built, after that they built one more room. Dr. Dismuke started having operations, he'd take patients who ???35:40, and I think the Paulks had that ???35:34 and then bring them back. I can't think of that woman's name that nursed them. There was the first woman, then the next woman. The next was Ms. Dobbs. I loved going with Dr. Willis. I'd go over there to the hospital, and help Ms. Dobbs. That was first woman I never did go there and help her, cause I didn't like her. So...

**CO:** Why didn't you like here Ms. Mattie?

**MI:** Why didn't like I like her?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** I don't know. I just didn't like her.

**CO:** That's a good enough reason. Was she mean?

**MI:** When I first saw her I didn't like her.

**CO:** Oh, okay. It was an instant dislike.

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** But I liked Ms. Dobbs.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** This first one was too pretty.

**CO:** Hmm.

**MI:** Ms. Dobbs was ugly. And I liked her. So...

**CO:** The woman that was pretty, did she *think* she was pretty?

**MI:** The woman...she thought she was pretty, and she was pretty.

**CO:** Well, yeah.

**MI:** So, I don't know whether they tore that building down. They made one building, it was four or five rooms, and the kitchen was on the back. That's really what made Dr. Dismuke started...make the next...he built some more onto it. Then he moved in...the kitchen was back on the back of that. The colored ward was back there in what I call the alley ???33:34.

**CO:** The colored ward was in the....

**MI:** ??? 33:28 The white ward was on the front. The black ward was on the alley.

**CO:** Right.

**MI:** The colored was back there on the alley.

**CO:** The Alley. Okay.

**MI:** So all of it was hooked up together, but...see the whites went on Irwin Avenue, the front, and the colored was back there on the alley, you know?

**CO:** And were you cleaning at the time? You were cleaning the office? Did you cook also?

**MI:** I never worked in the colored, not often. The first time I worked out there in the colored, I worked out there two days. Ruth was sick. I worked out there two days, and Dr. Dismuke said that yeah I agree to work in the front. So I worked up there in the front and scared. I told them, I said, "Dr. Dismuke come here, I'm scared to work up here." He wanted to know what I was scared of. I told him I was scared of white folks. He said, "Mattie, I've been around here." He says, "I'm in and out of this office all night, cause somebody body be sick all the time." I said...

**CO:** So now what did you do in the front? Did you...were you the receptionist at the front? What did you do? What kind of work did you do at the front?

**MI:** What kind did I do?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Nurse.

**CO:** You nursed.

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** The patients. Were you afraid of the patients or were you afraid of somebody coming in and hurting you.

**MI:** I was just afraid of white folks.

**CO:** Okay. Can you tell me when you became afraid of white people?

**MI:** All my life.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** You know...whites was whites, and blacks was blacks.

**CO:** I'm trying to figure that out.

**MI:** If you go to a white person's house, you couldn't go in their front door. You had to go all around to the back.

**CO:** That's right.

**MI:** Come to the back even if you worked there, you come in that back. So I was scared of white folks.

**CO:** Had you ever been hurt by a white person.

**MI:** Uh uh.

**CO:** No?

**MI:** Uh uh. I ain't never been....they always, when I started nursing, ??30:50 they was really good to me, those whites, but I was scared of them.

**CO:** Were you scared of Dr. Dismuke?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Is it D I S M U K?

**MI:** He told me once, Mattie I said, he said, "well I'm white." No he said, "I'll be here in and out." I said, "Herman," his name was Herman. I said, "Herman." He said, "What?" I said, "Did you know you are white too?" I said, "I'm scared of you too."

**CO:** What did he say?

**MI:** So, but I worked there. Then he died in '70. Dr. Dismuke died in '72... '72 or '73. I worked with him until he died, I even went to Atlanta. I nursed him in Atlanta.

**CO:** Now did you call him Herman?

**MI:** Is what?

**CO:** You called him by his first name?

**MI:** I called him Dr. Dismuke. But if I... ???29:30 I might would said, "Herman," but usually I called him Dr. Dismuke most times.

**CO:** Now did...was this a joke between you and him? That you were scared of him? Or did he believe you?

**MI:** Yeah, I was scared of him. I was scared of white folks.

**CO:** Are you still scared of white folks?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** Okay. When did you become not afraid of white people?

**MI:** After I started nursing and everything.

**CO:** By the time Dr. Dismuke died, had you lost that um...

**MI:** Oh, I reckon it was 37 years or maybe 40. I was nursing the whites and I wasn't...I was...some of them I didn't like. What I mean, I kind of...like we have a patient, a man, and I was kind of scared of going in that room there and give him his medication. I would go in and bathe him. ???28:12 I was scared of them. But I got to the place that man was no more than a woman, I wasn't scared of none of them.

**CO:** How old were you when you got to that point? How old were you when you reached that point where you weren't scared anymore?

**MI:** I reckon I was 50. Cause I nursed down 'til I was 70. Let me see, I was 71.

**CO:** Now did you tell me that you went to Atlanta when Dr. Dismuke was sick in Atlanta? Did you say that?

**MI:** Did I?

**CO:** Did you go up to help take care of him?



**MI:** I took care of him. Me and his son all carried him to Atlanta on Friday put him in the hospital. On Saturday I had to come home, and I was supposed to go back Monday to nurse him. See I came home. He told me to Clerk of Court here, he had to bring me back up there. Said, "bring Mattie, cause I'm scared for Mattie to come up here and drive up here cause Mattie get lost coming to Atlanta." And he was just teasing, you know, cause I might of got lost, but I know how to go to Georgia Baptist Hospital. So, I left Friday. Friday night coming back home, cause I had some work to do Saturday. And I was going back gonna be there Monday morning, they were going to operate on him. So Monday morning I went down to Novella's Mama's house. I went down there, I wanted here to wash my head. So I went on down there, and she washed it. They called here and couldn't find me. Ms. Alice had gone to Atlanta. So Ms. Alice told me, said, told me to call Hoyt's ???25:39 Mama, he said anybody know where Mattie is? So they called Hoyt's Mama ???25:29 and her come down ???25:26 and told me that Dr. Dismuke was dead. Told me to go to the house, that they was bringing him home that afternoon. Told me to go down there and the cook and we'd go there and stay. So then I didn't...that was that last of Dr. Dismuke, I was scared of him then.

**CO:** You were scared of Dr. Dismuke...

**MI:** I'm scared of dead folks.

**CO:** Oh, scared of dead folks.

**MI:** So I stayed around there then and messed around in and out messing with Ms. Alice until '76, then I married.

**CO:** Ms. Alice was the woman that you cleaned up for?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** What did you do after Dr. Dismuke died? Did you still work at the hospital?

**MI:** No, they had, Dr. Dismuke had got me a contract for this hospital up here now, so I needed go there, stayed to the office with him. I didn't ever work out there in the hospital, all I did was private duty nursing.

**CO:** Oh, was that...did that keep you busy? Were you...did you do a lot of private duty nursing?

**MI:** No. I stopped. I didn't nurse no one regular. I didn't work from the time he died until '76. I didn't work.

**CO:** And that's when you married Mr. Ivy, right?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** But you had been married to Mr. Wilcox.

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** Did he have your same fear of white people...Mr. Wilcox?

**MI:** Uh uh.

**CO:** No? Was Mr. Wilcox afraid of white people?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** No?

**MI:** No, cause he...let me see. A.T. **???23:20** and there was another girl. He worked for Mr. Fuller. He and his wife, Mr. Fuller and Ms. Fuller they were young. They'd be gone all the weekend, you know? Those children stayed that with my husband.

**CO:** These are white children?

**MI:** Yes, they was white. They stayed there. If Mr. Fuller and them didn't come home til late at night, they'd stay right down there until the next morning. He would take them back. I know A.T. used to tell me all the time, "Esop's my second Daddy." I said, "sure enough?" I said, "Yeah," I said. I'd go down there...see I thought I couldn't stay nowhere but to me Esop's house, his first wife was named Mattie too, and I thought I couldn't stay nowhere but down there. His Mama and them would go off and leave us and **???21:55 then** it was another girl...it was two girls. We stayed down there, see Mattie and Esop put us to bed, get up the next morning and give us breakfast. See and Esop would take us home. They were crazy about Esop. When he had that heart attack he had been visiting A.T., they had gone down to look at some timber down around Berrien County, come on back up to Tift County. They stopped there in Tifton and ate dinner. Come on out on the river between here and Tifton, and they were walking in...out there you know **???20:56** that's where my husband had the heart attack. So...they brought him home, A.T. brought him in...come to town here, he was lucky the State Patrol hadn't of got him. He said that he was just going just as fast as the car would go. Kept on that up there to the hospital. But the police, he passed the police station, he was sitting out there in his car, he had got in the car, went on back behind her. He was going to catch him, you know, so they got to the hospital. He

turned and went in there. So, the police went on in there too. Come to find out Esop had had a heart attack, and that's what A.T. was hurrying him to the doctor.

**CO:** Who was taking who to the doctor now? Your husband had the heart attack?

**MI:** Do what?

**CO:** Did your husband have the heart attack?

**MI:** Yeah he had had the heart attack.

**CO:** And who was driving?

**MI:** He didn't die then.

**CO:** Who was doing all that fast driving?

**MI:** A.T. Fuller.

**CO:** Oh. A white man?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay, so the policeman followed him because he was speeding? He was speeding and then he pulled into the hospital?

**MI:** A.T. was young, and he was scared Esop....

**CO:** A.T. was a child. Was A.T. one of the children Mr. Wilcox kept?

**MI:** A.T. had gotten grown then.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah. But he had been a child that...

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Mr. Wilcox kept.

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** So he had that heart attack out there, white man what they looking at timber on his place, they helped A.T. to get him in the car. So, A.T. said Esop was going couldn't hardly breathe. He said, "I'm not sure I'm going to get him to town before he dies." And he just running just as fast and blowing as hard all the way in to town.

**CO:** But he didn't die then...

**MI:** No, he didn't die then.

**CO:** How long did he live after that?

**MI:** He lived about...I reckon Esop lived five or ten years. He didn't work.

**CO:** But did...did Mr. Wilcox have.....Tell me about meeting him. How did you meet your husband...Mr. Wilcox?

**MI:** The way I met, there was building this mill up here, and I'd work on Irwin Avenue and I'd come right out the back and come down, that's the way I'd come home. So, it was raining one day. Rain caught me right there by the mill, and I ran in a garage so he was sitting right there in his car. He lived in Nashville, but they were building that mill, so he asked me, he said, "Lady, you run out there in the car. You get scared?" I said, "No." He said, "You want to get in my car?" That's when I said, "No, I don't want to get in there."

**CO:** Were you afraid of him?

**MI:** I didn't know nothing about him.

**CO:** Right.

**MI:** So I stayed there in the garage til it stopped raining, then I went on home. The next day or two I come out and he was in his car again, so he asked me, "You want me to take you home?" I said, "No, I can walk." I kept on. But that's the way we met.

**CO:** How many times did he have to ask you before you went in his car?

**MI:** Do what?

**CO:** How many times did he have to ask you before you went with him?

**MI:** Oh, I didn't.

**CO:** You never did?

**MI:** No, I didn't go in that car. I knew good and well if I'd got in that car then nobody...I knew what I'd of got when I got home.

**CO:** Oh. And you were twenty something years old.

**MI:** You know...Mama was very strict. Yes sir.

**CO:** So how long before ya'll started dating?

**MI:** It was about two years.

**CO:** Oh two years. Oh my goodness. So how did he finally convince you to go on a date with him?

**MI:** Well you see...Mr. Newborn sent me to Midway ??? 15:14 school.

**CO:** To the school?

**MI:** Uh huh, sent me ???15:08 to the school.

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** I was teaching out there, and so I'd go out there and stay all week, and come back for one day. One Sunday the people were going to come get me and bring me back out there. They didn't come. So he was down there with this car, and so he carried me home. That's the first time I ever got in his car, and he called himself dating me then but I got...

**CO:** Do you know if Ms. Mattie's got some pictures of her when she was young? Have yall got some anywhere? No? Okay. If we don't get finished today, can I call you and set up another time?

**NM:** Yeah.

**CO:** Alright, I'll go on. I'll just let her tell me when she's too tired. Thank you ma'am.

**NM:** See you later Mattie.

**MI:** Okay.

**CO:** Okay, so then finally you did go out with him.

**MI:** Hmm?

**CO:** You finally, you went on a date with him?

**MI:** Mmhmm. He carried me out to Midway. Lemme see. I'm just trying to think the name of one of them ???13:35 where I was staying go out Monday morning and come back Friday. I stayed with the Grimms then, then on Friday I'd come back.

**CO:** Now was that a black family or a white family?

**MI:** They was black.

**CO:** They were black. Cause you were teaching school for black children?

**MI:** No, they were black.

**CO:** Yeah, you were teaching black students.

**MI:** Yeah that was my last place teaching too.

**CO:** And but, the man you married drove you to Midway, and that's how yall got to know each other?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** And then how long before you married him?

**MI:** About a year.

**CO:** Had you been dating anybody before you started dating him?

**MI:** Yeah. I don't know whether we...the girls had a boyfriend or what. You know we all had to go to church and Sunday school. Every Sunday school and church the boys want...we didn't know who was going to bring us home. We were home walking...before somebody brought me home I can remember...I think that was Roosevelt Jackson. ???11:50 So we walked from our church, I lived about five blocks down here, and ???11:33, so Roosevelt walked me home. George T.??? Hogan walked Alberta home. They'd just walk up to the gate and they go back on. They was going home I reckon. So we'd just leave Sunday school or leave church, they'd walk on down there with us. I reckon that was called our boyfriend.

**CO:** That was called your boyfriend. But, when you met Mr. Wilcox, did you have another boyfriend when you met him?

**MI:** No. Cause Roosevelt had moved to Atlanta.

**CO:** So Roosevelt had been your other boyfriend.

**MI:** He had moved to Atlanta. I don't remember.

**CO:** Were you in love with Roosevelt?

**MI:** I don't think I had cause I was grown then and I know didn't nobody walk me home.

**CO:** Nobody walked you home after you got grown?

**MI:** No. I don't remember. Cause I didn't go to church often like that when I got grown and working. Mostly I worked at night, and I'd come home I'd go to sleep. We worked twelve hours at night, so when I'd get home I'd be so tired and sleepy I didn't go to church much cause I'd be tired.

**CO:** How many days a week did you work?

**MI:** Is what?

**CO:** How many days a week did you work?

**MI:** How many days?

**CO:** Mmhmm. Did you work all seven days?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** You worked seven days a week twelve hours.

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** And this was when you were working at the doctor's office or nursing the children?

**MI:** I was at the hospital then.

**CO:** At the hospital.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Twelve hours a day.

**MI:** Twelve hours a day.

**CO:** Seven days a week.

**MI:** Seven days a week.

**CO:** And how much money did you make for that?

**MI:** Twenty five dollars a month. Twenty five.

**CO:** And you never got a day off?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** Oh my goodness. How long did you do that? How many years did you work like that.

**MI:** I worked like that about fifteen years, and then...you see after Dr. Sams...he came here, so uh...

**CO:** Dr. Sams?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** This was before or after Dr. Dismuke or at the same time?

**MI:** Dr. Dismuke got Dr. Sams to come in. He come to the hospital, he had his office in the hospital like Dr. Dismuke did, but before then it was Dr. Harris, Dr. Wilcox, and Dr....another man...they lived across town here. They just put the patients in the hospital.

**CO:** So did you...

**MI:** Dr. Sams up there **???7:58** one night I called here...somebody come in cut and I called him. So he come in here and sewed them up, and then he said, "Mattie," I said, "yes?" He said, "I didn't know you work at night too. I knew you be around at the first part of the night, see I've never been around at the end of the night. I thought somebody else come on." I said, "No Dr. Sams, I have to work all night." He said, "What do Herman say about it?" I said, "He doesn't say a thing. He said somebody work it or he can."

**CO:** He said what now?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Your husband said what?

**MI:** So he said, "well, I just don't think you ought to work at night by yourself." I said, "You know Dr. Sams..." I said, "ain't never thought about that." I said, "I don't believe I ought to work at night by myself either." I said, "Do you know what?" He said, "What?" I said, "I don't care how many patients you all have here, I got to bathe every one of them **???06:36** myself. So, the next day or two I went into work one night and I left there, he was seven or eight patients were there.....**???06:14**. The next morning I had thirty something patients to bathe and change the beds, so I started to work about 2:00 o'clock, started the bathing patients. One would call me and I'd bathe him, and then I'd wake up another and I'd bathe him. Then 9 o'clock, I wasn't quite through, because I



had to stop and sterilize something. I said, "Lord, I got to sterilize something  
???05:17....I did all the sterilizing so didn't nobody know how to run the sterilizer but  
me, so I stopped, and went on in the supply room, got my pack and had already  
bundled it up, pinned it up ???04:59. I went in there and sterilized it. Come back the  
next morning at 9 o'clock I was just getting through and I walked away the day before  
then, I walked away. Usually I'd drive the car from here down...I lived on the corner  
right there, I'd walk from here to...up here to city hall, not city hall, the police station.  
The hospital was on that building on the front of the police station. So that day, I don't  
know how come, I just got out and said I believe I'll walk. I walked on up there, I was so  
tired coming home, I said, "Mattie..." I said, "Dr. said I'm silly as a fool." I said, "I  
believe I am." I said, "Now I'm not going to work tonight." So when 7:00 o'clock come  
on I said, "I'm gone stay home." So I didn't go to work at seven, so Ms. Grayten, she  
told Dr. Dismuke, she said, "Mattie didn't come to work." Saying, "It's just one of the  
girls that stays here with the patients at night, until Mattie gets here."???03:09 Dr.  
Dismuke said, "What's the matter?" Ms. Grayten said, "I don't know." Say, "She didn't  
call me. I called there, and can't find her." Dr. Dismuke said, "I'll find her." So he come  
on over here. Said, "Mattie, how come you didn't come to work tonight?" I said "Dr.  
Dismuke, I decided I wouldn't work by myself." I said, "I ain't gone stay up there at the  
hospital and work all night by myself." I said, "I have to bathe all those patients." He  
said, "You bathe the patients?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "I bathe every one of them. All  
those other nurses, four..five of them, just walking around there gossiping." I said,  
"When I got to bathe patients." He said, "Mattie, if you come to work, I'll see to it you  
won't have to bathe them patients." I said, "I'm not gone come. I ain't gone work by  
myself." He said, "Well, come tonight." I said, "No, I ain't gone come." So he put on  
Darcy and Marion. Those was two best ones that would see after the patients and  
everything.

**CO:** Now, Ms. Mattie, were they white or black?

**MI:** White.

**CO:** They were white nurses?

**MI:** There ain't but one colored work in the whites.

**CO:** But you did.

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** You were the only colored woman that worked in the white section?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** How much did the white women make? How much money did they make?"

**MI:** I don't know. I imagine they made more than I did.

**CO:** But how many hours did they work? Do you know?

**MI:** Twelve.

**CO:** They worked twelve, seven days a week, just like you did?

**MI:** See during the daytime they had two afternoons a week off.

**CO:** Yeah, okay

**MI:** But see the night one didn't have no time off.

**CO:** And so, you must have been really good for Dr. Dismuke to beg you to come back like that.

**MI:** I was the onliest fool there.

**CO:** Did you go back?

**MI:** I was a fool, cause I did have everything.

**CO:** But you stopped bathing the people? Thirty people a night?

**MI:** No, see he hired this other girl. He hired Milfred, and she had had two years training in the Georgia Baptists

**CO:** Uh huh

**MI:** So he told her, he said, "Well bathe these patients too."

**End of Mattie Ivy Part 1 of 3 \*\*\*\*\***

**MI:** See we divided many of the bed up.

**CO:** So you had to help.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** You had only half as many?

**MI:** That's right

**CO:** Was it easier?

**MI:** That's what stopped me from bathing the patients at night. I'd be so tired the next morning, but you knew you had to work.

**CO:** Of course, Did you ever get any time off after that? Did he give you some days off?

**MI:** No, we got – after he come in—(01:00:31), those what got two days a week...two afternoons a week off, I'd get Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday nights off. See those three nights I didn't have to go to work.

**CO:** Did you work in the daytime?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** No. So...

**MI:** I didn't do anything out, see Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday night...those were my time off. I didn't have to go back to the office until Monday night. But then Milfred got...I forget now what nights it was...but she got off. She didn't get but two nights.

**CO:** So you got three and she got two?

**MI:** Uh huh, she got two. So, Milfred told Dr. Dismuke. Dr. Dismuke said, "Mattie can get three nights off." She said, "long as Mattie been here I don't believe I ought to get three." [Dr. Dismuke asked] "So what you want?" [She said] "Well, just let me have two nights off. For one of them nights I won't come to work until late." So that's the way we worked.

**CO:** Did you like working with her? Was she a good person?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** She...

**MI:** Yeah I worked, loved it too.

**CO:** And Ms. Mattie, do you remember when that was? Like what years you worked at the hospital? Like was it 1925 when you started working at the hospital?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** In the middle....

**MI:** I started working to the hospital ...it must have been 1928.

**CO:** '28. Okay, and then you worked there until 1970 something? Did you say?

**MI:** I worked in the hospital until I think they moved the hospital up here in 1968. I think that's when it was.

**CO:** Okay. And then...

**MI:** Then I worked at Dr. Dismuke's office until he died.

**CO:** From 1968 until...when did he die?

**MI:** 1972.

**CO:** Yeah you said '72 or '73.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay, and you enjoyed the hospital after he got you some help?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** And you stopped having to work so many hours, and you got some nights off?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Do you remember when that was? How many years did you work with no help like that?

**MI:** I worked there...I know it was ten years. I know I don't remember how long, but I know I worked ten years without any help.

**CO:** And you really worked seven nights a week?

**MI:** Seven nights a week.

**CO:** Okay. Until probably 'til the late thirties? Maybe 1937 or '38 when he finally got you some help?

**MI:** Say I didn't like surgery?

**CO:** No, I said do you think you worked until the late 1930s, when he finally got you some help? Ms. Milfred.

**MI:** I was just thinking it was 1968.

**CO:** How long did you work...

**MI:** I think I worked there, I think I worked there 'til 1957. That's when Dr. Sams first moved up. You see at first it was just one hospital. Dr. Dismuke got that contract for this hospital up there, but I never did go up there to work. I stayed down to the office.

**CO:** And Dr. Sams came in about 1957?

**MI:** Dr. Sams came in before 1967...

**CO:** No, '57.

**MI:** I know he'd been here that long.

**CO:** So you probably got some help in the late fifties, not the thirties.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** So you might have worked twenty years with no help.

**MI:** I worked a long time, I know that.

**CO:** So, do you remember what Dr. Sams' first name was?

**MI:** What was Dr. Sams name...you know I don't remember.

**CO:** That's okay, that's alright.

**MI:** And it makes me ???55:01, he just died. He's been dead, I reckon, about five or six months now.

**CO:** Oh really. Okay. I can look that up. I can look it up, who he was.

**MI:** But I was just trying to think, you asked me...I don't know Dr. Sams. I'm just old and forgetful.

**CO:** No, your memory is incredible.

**MI:** I remember when I first moved down here. What did I...Mixon. I think it was Mixon told us. Dr. Sams said, "we got a new person in town." Mixon answered...I mean Dr. Sams answered, "who is it?" He said, "Mattie Wilcox." He said, "Mattie done moved back to town?" **Mixon** say, "yeah." He said, "Well, got to go over there and see her." Said, "that was one of my best nurses, and I got to go over there and see her." So he came by one day and I was out there raking some in the yard, and he stopped and talked to me. He said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "Yeah, I know." He said, "Who am I?" See I had been up in **Jersey then** 21 years.

**CO:** In where?

**MI:** Jersey.

**CO:** New Jersey?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** You lived in New Jersey for 21 years?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** When?

**MI:** So, he said, "who am I?" I said, "Dr. Sams." He said, "yeah, last time you saw me I was black headed, now I'm white headed." I said, "Yeah, but I knew who you were." So from then on he'd always stop by and talk to me about once a week, sometime he'd catch me out on the front there and **???52:29**, and talk to me. Sometime he'd come on there on the porch, and he died on a Wednesday night. He was here that Saturday, and we stayed right here and we talked. I was on the back porch there, when he come on, so we sat around there and talked. He come on around there and sat on the back porch with me. He said, "Well Mattie, I really gotta go now." Say, "I just sit here, you know I done stayed with you longer than I've ever stayed." I said, "You sure have." I said, "We both have been sitting here on the back porch and seeing children out there playing." I said, "We're just enjoying each other." That's after Nell had died, that's his wife.

**CO:** Mmhmm. How old was he when he died?

**MI:** Dr. Sams?

**CO:** Dr. Sams. Uh huh. How old?

**MI:** Dr. Sams was 91.

**CO:** And that was not long ago?

**MI:** Last year.

**CO:** Okay. So were you...tell me when you moved to New Jersey. When was that?

**MI:** Hmm?

**CO:** When did you move to New Jersey?

**MI:** I married in '76 and we went on to New Jersey then.

**CO:** Oh, he was from New Jersey?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** I didn't know that. How did you meet Mr. Ivy?

**MI:** We went to school together here. He used to live here.

**CO:** And then he came back and got you and took you to New Jersey?

**MI:** We met again...I went to Connecticut, cause my uncle was sick. I went there and stayed with him, and came back to New York, and I stopped at Annie's, a friend of mine, Annie....she was named Annie something. I stopped there with her. One night I came up from New Jersey well New York. I told her I was going to spend the night with her that night and come on to Georgia the next morning. I mean the next day. So we got...when I got there, she says, "Mattie." I said, "Mmhmm." Said, "we're going out to dinner tonight." I said, "Yeah." I said, "I don't know whether I want to go or not." I said, "you know, I been working pretty hard as my uncle died." Said, "I got everything straightened up. I come on home, I said I'm tired." So I said if I went I'm not gone stay long. She said, "This man works in New York, we're not going to stay long, but he takes me out sometimes." I said, "Okay, I'll go." He came in, carried us to dinner, the next day, I didn't go home. I didn't come home. And he come there. I thought he was the insurance man. Annie was gone up the street there to the hair dresser. So he come down and rang the bell. And I went to the door. He says, "Is Annie at home?" I said, "No, she ought to be home in a little bit." He said, "Well, I'll just wait for her." I said, "Okay, just have a seat there on the porch." I come on in and shut the door. Went on back there in the kitchen. I was cooking. So Annie came up there. She said, "Mattie." I said, "Yeah." Said, "Did that insurance man come and you pay it?" I say, "He didn't tell me he was an insurance man." And I said, "Your money in there. He didn't ask for it and I didn't give it to him. He's sitting out there on the front porch" She went out there

and I heard her bust out with laughing. I said, "What Annie?" And the man, too, laughing. So she told him to come on in the house. Annie said, "Mattie." I said, "Mmhmm?" She said, "Do you know this man here?" I said, "No, I sure don't." She said, "Fred, do you know this woman?" Fred said, "I don't believe I do." And we both had gone to school [together]. Of course he had been up there...lemme see. He went up in twenty...in '27. We both went to school together.

**CO:** He went to New Jersey in the 1920s?

**MI:** He went up there sometime, I forget what year he went, but I know I was in the fourth grade, he was in the third. So...and we hadn't seen each other. So...had got out there. He started calling me. So we talked. And I went on a cruise about six months after being, I went on a cruise. He asked me would I come back to Jersey. I told him I didn't know, I might not come back. I said going on a cruise now. He said, "Well okay, you let me know when you come back, won't you?" I said, "I can tell you." I told him when I was going. I said, "I'm going on a 10 day cruise." So I got back. He called that next night after I got back. He asked me, you know, asked me if I'd marry him. I said, "I don't know." I said, "I had a husband. I had a **good** husband." I said I was my own boss, and everything. I said, "So I might not, if I marry you, you'll be wanting to boss me around." So he said, "Oh no, I'll let you." He says, "I have three boys." I said, "Oh." I said, "If I marry you." I said, "them boys would run me away from there." So, but then we --- I don't remember just exactly when it was, but I decided to marry him. So, those boys was just like my own children. (44:05)

**CO:** Oh, wow.

**MI:** They was so good to me and everything.

**CO:** Do you ever see them now?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Do you see them any now? Do they come see you?

**MI:** Two of them dead.

**CO:** Oh my goodness.

**MI:** They died when I was up there??43:46, and one is living. He calls me at least twice a week.

**CO:** Oh, Ms. Mattie you were 73 years old when you married Mr. Ivy, weren't you?



**MI:** That's what?

**CO:** You were 73 when you married Mr. Ivy?

**MI:** 73 or 71. Something like that.

**CO:** You were married in 1976?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** And you were born in 1903?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** So you would have been about 73 years old when ya'll got married. So you stayed in New Jersey from 1976 until he died in 1994?

**MI:** I stayed there until 2001.

**CO:** Oh, and then you moved back here?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** How did you like New Jersey?

**MI:** I never did.

**CO:** You didn't like it?

**MI:** I liked New Jersey in the summer time, but in the winter time I just didn't like it. It was too cold for me.

**CO:** How different was it living in New Jersey than living in Ocilla, Georgia for a person who's black? Was it different?

**MI:** Wasn't any different for me, because see when I married, his home was on the Boulevard, and that's where I stayed until I moved down here. Those children they'd come in, just like my own children, and I didn't do anything. I kept some children there. Someone wanted me to keep some children, so I just made a little play room down in the basement and I kept some children, but otherwise it was just like home.

**CO:** Were you scared...had you gotten over being scared of white people by the time you moved to New Jersey?

**MI:** Oh no, I stopped being scared of white people before I stopped working at the hospital.

**CO:** Oh, good.

**MI:** That was when I first started working at the hospital that I was scared of white folks. You know, the Ku Klux Klan, you heard talk about the Ku Klux hadn't yah?

**CO:** Yes Ma'am.

**MI:** There was a man, a colored man coming from out here on John Willis's place. Went out there and got a load of hay, and was carrying it back to Mystic, and the Ku Klux down there on that road...anyway they got this man, hung him up to a tree, and built a fire under him and burnt him up. You know I was always kind of shy on dead folks before, I mean of white people before that, but I was really scared. That's what scared me so bad.

**CO:** Do you remember when that happened? Do you remember when? Was it 1934? [it was January 31, 1930; James Irwin was lynched; written up in Fitzhugh Burndage]

**MI:** Remember what?

**CO:** When that lynching happened? Do you remember *when* the lynching happened?

**MI:** No, but that was back...everybody know about them, the Ku Klux Klan burning up the man.

**CO:** Did you see it?

**MI:** Did I see it?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** No. They burnt him up down here on the...

**CO:** What did they say...what *excuse* did they give?

**MI:** What did they say?

**CO:** Why did they do it?

**MI:** A white girl lived up there...about half a mile up from the river. She claimed that this colored man raped her.

**CO:** But he didn't.

**MI:** After they done burnt him up and everything, they found out this colored man didn't do it. It was some of the people out there, they caught her with a white man. Then she put it on the colored man because he was the one who come by.

**CO:** I read about that.

**MI:** So...

**CO:** So that made you scared. I think that happened in 1934.

**MI:** It might have been. I know it was way back yonder.

**CO:** Yeah.

**MI:** But I got, I was scared...I always was shy around white people, because I wasn't raised around nobody but the Howells. But I was shy of white people, but I wasn't scared of them [until after the lynching]. But when that happened, and they say it was the Ku Klux Klan, I ain't never seen a Ku Klux, but they said this here white woman someway or other they got, it was one man here in Ocilla. They said he was a Ku Klux too. They all come out in their robes, in the white caps and everything on. Couldn't see nothing but his eyes and his mouth.

**CO:** So one of the Klan members actually raped the woman, but she blamed it on the black man?

**MI:** So when they did that, that really scared me.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah.

**MI:** In fact, when I heard it, I didn't know what had all happened. I didn't know it was like that.

**CO:** What did your husband ... How did your husband react?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** How did your husband react? Mr. Wilcox? What did he have to say about that lynching?

**MI:** (36:26) He never did talk about it. We never did say anything about that. I was scared, but he wasn't. He had come by there and seen 'em, but he didn't know what happened. He was out there at John Willis's place to carry a woman and her husband. He come back and saw those cars down there in road, you know. They had him hanging aside the road. They was in the woods. But he saw those cars and things and

men with white robes on and the white caps on, just seeing the eyes and the mouth. So he just drove right on through. He didn't stop. He drove right on through and wondered what was happening. So when he got home, A.T. Fuller was the one to come down there and told him. He come there and said, "Mattie." I said, "yeah." Said, "where's Esop?" I said, "I don't know. Gone down to Lax to carry Mr. Crenshaw and his wife home. He said, "Lord, have mercy." He said, "Let me go out here and go see cause I sure didn't want Esop to go down there. The Ku Klux's done got a colored man and hanging him up there aside the road." (34:51)

**CO:** So Mr. Fuller told you that?

**MI:** And so he got out from home, started up the street, and so he met Esop coming to the house. So he turned around and come on back with him. He said to Esop, "Don't go out nowhere else tonight." He says, "Why?" He told him about the thing up ...the Ku Klux Klan. Esop said, "I seen them." Said, "I come through there and saw all those people down there white." A.T. said, "They didn't bother you?" [Esop] said, "No." Say, "I didn't bother them and they didn't bother me. I just drove right on through." Said, "There was so many cars and things out there. I drove slow cause I didn't want them to run out in the front of me. So I drove slow." He said, "Well don't go back out." And he told me what had happened.

**CO:** So Mr. Fuller knew what happened.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Because he had been out at John Willis's place? Did you say that he had been out to Mr. Willis's place and he knew what happened?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay. Is Mr. Fuller still alive?

**MI:** No, he dead and his Daddy dead and his Mama too.

**CO:** Did you like Mr. Fuller? Did you like him, your husband liked him?

**MI:** Oh yeah.

**CO:** You used to take care of him and his sister?

**MI:** Mmhmm. And when they opened up this mill up here, he was seeing about logging the mill. He'd come track all them logs, you know where they sawed and made timber.

**CO:** Ms. Mattie, do you remember, as a child, when you were a little girl, do you remember when you became aware of what it meant to be black instead of white? Do you remember when you realized?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** You don't?

**MI:** See when I was a child we lived out here two miles, that's where Mr. Howell had a farm out there, and not far from the house, they called it the big house, not far from his house is that second house down there, that's where our house was. Right across the road was Ms. King's house.

**CO:** Ms. Who?

**MI:** King.

**CO:** King. Ms. King.

**MI:** So, Mr. Ira Paulk built a house right above that.

**CO:** Ira Paulk?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** So Ms. King, she cooked for Ira Paulk. Mama cooked for the Howells. All the people that lived back over there on the Lax road, we didn't really know them, but we didn't associate with them.

**CO:** Did you play with white children?

**MI:** They was colored, the people that lived across the river. The whites over on that side of us were but one family that lived over there, well it was two families that lived in one house. But they children, they'd go back to Henson Hill, that's where the southern come....they'd go there and pay a dime and go to Ocilla. So we was out here on the highway, making the walk to town, so those people back over there we didn't associate with them, because they was back that way and we was back this way. So we'd go to town to church, they went out that way to they church. These were all on this side with the overseer, they used to go to church back out this way somewhere. We all didn't associate together.

**CO:** So you didn't really see white people when you were a child.

**MI:** Cause Mr. Howell had...there was Effie, Bubba, and Alvin. Three children. Mr....Ira Paulk, they had Rosco, Lora, Marvin, Tillman, and you know there was another boy but I can't think of his name, cause they was five. I can't think of but four... and then had Rebecca. What was that girl's name...the oldest girl...I can't think of what that oldest girl was named. See that was all **they was (28:33)**. There's me, big baby and little baby. **???28:26**, But we'd call them big baby and little baby. And we all associated together. We played together you know.

**CO:** These are black children?

**MI:** Uh huh. Whites and the blacks.

**CO:** So you did play with white children when you were a little girl?

**MI:** Uh huh. So all Mr. Ira Paulk's children, Mr. Ira's children ... **???28:07**, **Mr. Ira** had a big fish pond down the back of her house.

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** Boats and things was in it. So we'd go down there to that fish pond where the white children would come down there too. So we all played together. All of them would get in that boat, and ride up and down except me! I didn't get in that boat and ride with them cause I was scared of water. But they'd get in that boat and ride and play. I'd play with them on the banks. So those was the onliest white people we knew anything about.

**CO:** Were you scared of them then?

**MI:** No I wasn't scared of them. Cause they was just like coloreds.

**CO:** So it didn't dawn...you didn't think about being black was different when you were a child?

**MI:** That's right. But didn't no other whites live around there, and we just...when I started school, not the first year I went to school, cause the first year I went to school I went down...My sister lived **out to Holt**, and we had...the children had to walk to town to the school. So, I went out there and stayed with her and went to school out there to Holt's **at what we** called Midway. So, after then, Ms. Howell told Mama, said, "Alberta, Sister had to go out there and stay with her Sister." They all called me Sister.

**CO:** They called you Sister?

**MI:** Mama and them called me Sister. “Sister had to go out there and stay? Why don’t you just let her go to school here?” Mama said, “I’m scared for her to go to school  
???25:51 There’s plenty of woods on each side of the road there. Said, “I’m scared she’ll go to school here by herself.” Said I just let her go out there to ??? cause all them children out there go to school together. They go to school to the church. So, Ms. Howell said, “Let Mattie come up here to the school.” She says, “Bubba, Alvin, and Effie.” Says, “They goes to the...they had a hack.” You know what a hack is? A two seated buggy.

**CO:** Oh okay.

**MI:** They had a horse, See they drove it...go to county school. ???24:54, And said, Bubba can carry Sister on by there and “then come on too,” Albert said, “bring ‘em back home.” That’s the way I started the school. I mean here, I had been out to Midway to school one year.

**CO:** Midway is out near Holt, isn’t it?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Midway is near Holt isn’t it?

**MI:** Uh Uh.

**CO:** No?

**MI:** Midway to church, that’s Holt.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Holts is what....we called the place Holt. But the Midway is the church. So...

**CO:** Ms. Mattie, was Mr. Ira Paulk the sheriff?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** He was the sheriff?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** You’re talking about the Ira Paulk that you played with his children?

**MI:** Yeah, see Ira Paulk....now he wasn’t the sheriff, but his son...

**CO:** His son was the sheriff.

**MI:** His son became the sheriff. Tillman

**CO:** Tillman, yeah. Was he the sheriff when they lynched that young black boy? Wasn't Mr. Tillman the sheriff then?

**MI:** When they uh...

**CO:** When the Klan lynched that boy?

**MI:** No, lemme see who... No, it was a man that lived down here on the other side of Holt was the sheriff.

**CO:** Cause the sheriff tried to stop one of the lynchings. One of the sheriffs tried to stop a lynching.

**MI:** He might of. If he did he didn't make no...he was scared too.

**CO:** But Mr. Tillman Paulk became the sheriff when you were a...

**MI:** You see, a long time after then Tillman run for sheriff and he won. But see that first man who was sheriff name was... Wild, I think. I know he had a colored man working with him cause they used to sing...somebody had a song about it. We used to sing, "see Buck Tillman coming up with a colored man." Said, "You better run." Then after he...oh I forget the other man's name, I forget, but it wasn't Ira Paulk. He wasn't sheriff when that happened. There was somebody else, but I can't think of his name.

**CO:** I've read about it. I'll look it up. That's okay. Can you talk about religion? Can you talk about religion for a few minutes?

**MI:** Yeah. All I know is the Free Will.

**CO:** That's what your mother was.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Did you go to church after your mother died?

**MI:** Oh yeah. Yeah, I went to church. I married, still went to the Free Will church, until I went to New Jersey. My husband was a Methodist, and so I joined the Methodist church up there.

**CO:** Did you like the Methodist church?

**MI:** Did I like them? Church was church.



**CO:** Church was church. You didn't see any difference?

**MI:** Uh uh. And then when I moved back here I stayed a Methodist until I moved back here. Then I didn't go to church or nothing, couldn't get about. I told some of them youngin's , I said, "who here go to church? I wants to join somewhere." It don't make no difference to me. I said, "I got to join a church. I don't want to die, and die out of the church." So they told Reverend King...so one second Sunday, Reverend King...lemme see...???19:49....but Reverend King and his wife, some of the ushers, and two of the deacons, they came here and took me in the church and fellowshipped me.

**CO:** What church is that? What church?

**MI:** Baptist.

**CO:** The Baptist church. Can you tell me what you believe about...what are your beliefs?

**MI:** What are what?

**CO:** What do you believe about God?

**MI:** What I believe about dying?

**CO:** No, about God?

**MI:** All I believe is everybody ought to love God, if they don't...

**CO:** Want me to answer your phone?

**MI:** It's not but one God, and if you don't serve that one...if you don't serve that God you know you had to be serving the Devil.

**CO:** Okay. Um, do you believe in an afterlife? Do you believe that you live after you die?

**MI:** I do. I used to didn't, but I do. You know, since my Mama, my husband, my first husband, they have come and visited me so much until I believe there's life after death.

**CO:** How do they come when they come to visit you? How does that happen?

**MI:** They just visit me in my sleep.

**CO:** Okay. They talk to you?

**MI:** My husband told me I was sick. So he came to me, and he'd do all the talking and I don't say nothing. So he says, "Mattie," said, "take your medicine, what the doctor give you," said, "take it now." He said, "I know you ought to take it, I can't do it, but I want you to...." He said, "Did you know I'm a saint?" He left there a saint, he didn't say nothing else. But I took the medicine.

**CO:** Were you...you didn't want to take it?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Did you not want to take your medicine?

**MI:** You know, I've never had to take medicine.

**CO:** But you did after that?

**MI:** I went on and took it. I didn't take that particular medicine. Dr. Dismuke sent a specimen of my blood in to Atlanta and they sent back...they give me another kind of medicine, but I took that. My Mama comes to see me now, often.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** But she hasn't ever given me anything.

**CO:** Does she just come and visit?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** What does she tell you?

**MI:** She just come and don't tell me nothing. She uh...yesterday morning she told me to get up. I stayed in the bed...it was about 9 o'clock. And I know she come and told me to get up and kept going. Sometime she come by and she just talk with me a little bit, but I don't never say anything to her.

**CO:** Now does she come while you're sleeping?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** She comes while you're sleeping.

**MI:** Uh huh, that's the only time she comes to me when I'm sleeping. I just be dreaming bout her.

**CO:** But it feels very real?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** When you wake up you feel like she's been there.

**MI:** That's right.

Begin edit \*\*\*\*\*#2---15:04\*\*\*\*\*

**CO:** Do you feel like she's bringing you a message?

**MI:** I believe that I...she knows about what I'm doing. She really know because one time...when she came, I was in Jersey, I wanted to come home, and I said I don't believe I'll go. I'm gone stay...I say that's all my kin people want. I said they want me to come. I said they always want me to give give give, they don't never give me. I said I don't believe I'll go. I said I'm gone stay here. Well a night or two after that, Mama come to me and she said, "Sister, go ahead on home." She said, "I'm the oldest one of my sisters and brothers." Said now, "I used to have to give them, and you the baby." Said, "You have to give too." Say, "if you want the Lord to give you, say you give them." I got right on out. Two or three days after that I got the bus and come on home. I said well she wanted me to come. Then, the next thing my half-brothers remember what I told you, ???12:58 Julius.

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** He had gone somewhere, we didn't know where he was. When Mama died we don't know where Julius was. I thought he was dead he stayed off so long. So I...He got sick in Florida, and my Daddy's granddaughter, my brother.... Mama's first husband's granddaughter worked in a nursing home there in Ft. Pierce. So she went to ???12:06 nursing home and visiting the patients, she got around to him. She was talking to him so he told her, says, "I got a sister live in Ocilla." She told him she lived in Ocilla. He say, "I got a sister live in Ocilla, and do you know her?" So..."Who is she?" "Do you know Mattie Wilcox and Esop Wilcox?" So she said, "Yea, I know them, Uncle Esop is dead." "I know them, that's my aunt...Mattie's my aunt." So he didn't believe it and she didn't believe it, so she called me from Ft. Pierce that night, Sunday night, and she called me and told me, "Do you have a brother?" I says, "Maggie, you know I have one brother. He died ???11:00" She said, "but there was one in the nursing home said that you was his sister." I said, "I don't know anything about him." I said, "My brother's dead I reckon." I said, "I haven't seen him in about twenty years I reckon. I figure he's dead." So she said, "yeah, but I believe that sure is your brother because he knew too much about you. He knew my Daddy, and he said he knew all about where you was

born at and everything.” I said, “Well Maggie, you know what I’m going to do?” She said, “What?” I said, “I’m going to Miami Friday.” I said, “I’m gone stop in Ft. Pierce.” I said, “Perrie Lee going with me ???10:01; I’m gonna leave [tomorrow] night. I’m gonna go to Ft. Pierce.” I said, “I’m gone come by your house and let you take me to the nursing home, and I want to see *if* it’s my brother.” So sure enough we went on there. Time I walked in the door, he was way back in the back, he looked up, standing right there talking to some men, he looked up and I saw him. He looked up and I saw him. He told them, “see that woman that come in the door? That’s my sister.” So he come up and met me, sure enough it was my brother. And so after I found him, when he was still sick, every month, when I’d come on back to Miami, I stopped in there. Every month I’d go down to see him. Then the last time I was down there he had gotten sicker. I went to the nursing home and they said that he got sick and they sent him to the hospital. ???08:39 so I stayed in Ft. Pierce two or three days and...

**CO:** Where did you stay?

**MI:** Go to see him every day. I came home. I was home here about three or four days and the hospital called me, one night, and told me he was dead. So I told them to, I said, “I’m going to call my niece down there, and she’ll take care of it.” But I said, “I’ll be there tomorrow as quick as I can.” I said, “I can’t leave here till after the bank open.” I said, “But I’ll be there.” So she called Maggie. So Maggie put him in the hospital. And when I got down there, I went on to Maggie’s. Maggie carried me to the undertaker, so I made arrangements to bury him and everything cause he didn’t have nothing, I don’t know whether he had any insurance or anything. He didn’t have no wife, nobody but his self. So I made arrangements and I come back home, and I had to go back down there to bury him.

**CO:** Did you have to pay for his funeral?

**MI:** Did what?

**CO:** Did you have to pay for his funeral?

**MI:** Oh yeah, he didn’t have nothing.

**CO:** Oh.

**MI:** So...

**CO:** You wound up taking care of a lot of your family, didn’t you?

**MI:** Yeah, I went back down there. Perrie Lee???06:35 this girl's Mama. She followed me everywhere I wanted to go, if I wanted to go somewhere. I just called her, told her," Perrie Lee, 06:27??? I'm going to such and such a place, ??? you want to go?" "Yes'm, I'll go with you." And one of my sisters, Thomas Chesterfield?, he was married to one of my sisters so he'd go. So me and him, we got ?????, went on down there I made arrangements for the funeral and everything. And then some of them from up here come. So...when my brother up here died, Novella and them Daddy, he got sick. They carried him to the hospital, and the hospital called me and called me he was up but he had to pay a...at that time they paid twenty-five dollars...no fifty dollars to admit him. So I told them, I said, "Well, admit him. Don't send him back home. Admit him. I'll be up there. I don't know if I'm gone come up there today or tomorrow, but I'll pay his entrance fee." So he stayed there...they dismissed him. His son...he stayed on John C. Paulk's place. And the following year, John C. was supposed to pay the bill, ???04:38, so he didn't pay it. He told...call the hospital and said, "well he didn't work for me." Said, "Just his son worked for me." Hospital called me and told me, "John C. said he wouldn't pay the bill." I said, "Well it looks like in the end I'm going to have to pay everybody's bill." I said, "OK, then, I'll be up there to pay it." So I went on and I paid his hospital bill. I said, "Well now, I ain't gone pay nothing else. They can put him ground if they want to in a box. I done paid enough bills, I done paid his hospital bill, and I've been giving them and giving them. I ain't gone do nothing else." But of course I didn't have to. They didn't ask me to do anything else for him cause he died. I reckon John C. Paulk paid them enough to bury him or something.

**CO:** Was it John C. Paulk? Was it John C. Paulk? P O L K?

**MI:** John C. Harper.

**CO:** Harper. Okay, so but your Mama came and told you to come back here. Did she encourage you to come back to help your brothers and sisters?

**MI:** Mmhmm. She sure did.

**CO:** Have you had to do that since you came back?

**MI:** Yeah. I didn't *have* to do it, but I did it. I did all I could. I was the onliest one of my brothers and sisters that was..you know could afford it then, because the two boys that I married, they were good. I worked and they worked and we both saved. So that's the onliest thing that I felt like I could do. I wasn't rich, but I had more than they did and I helped to do everything. When Novella's brother ...wait...Novella's uncle died, he was in the asylum(???), and when they got ready to bury him, well I paid them...gave

them a hundred dollars on the funeral, and everyone that died...Novella's Mama died now, here the other week. It's been oh, last year now. I gave them fifty dollars, not that I...that they needed it. They had but Novella asked me if I wanted to give anything on her Mama's funeral. I said yeah, cause she barely had enough to bury herself. I said if she didn't Novella had it. I said, "yeah I'll give you fifty dollars." So I give them that. I said I've got to give something for all of them. I said, "I'll do that myself."

**CO:** Does your Mama still come and talk to you like that? And tell you to help?

**MI:** Mama ain't been here...she ain't been here to see me since before Patty and Mama died. I think if I go wrong, I believe she'd come and see me.

### End of Mattie Ivy Part 2 of 3

**CO:** Well now what would it mean to go wrong? What would you do that you think your mother would say was wrong?

**MI:** Get up here and treat people wrong, lie. Everything I try to tell is the truth, and I try to treat everybody like I want them to treat me.

**CO:** Is that true for white and black people?

**MI:** Oh yeah. I have plenty of white friends. Sometimes the whites thinks more of me than the colored, cause more of the whites come to see me.

**CO:** People from Ocilla?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

SSTOP EDIT\*\*\*\*\*48:11\*\*\*\*\*

**CO:** How do you feel? How are you feeling? Your health, how is your health?

**MI:** Well, my health is pretty good, but I can't walk good. I can't hardly walk good. I can't hardly walk, and sitting around here, I don't know when I'll get up???47:57, but it's my knees. See I can't hardly...

**CO:** Is it hurting now?

**MI:** It's really, see how my legs swell.

**CO:** Yeah, yeah.

**MI:** See there?

**CO:** You ready to stop for now?

**MI:** Hmm?

**CO:** Are you tired? You want to go lay down?

**MI:** No.

**CO:** No?

**MI:** I don't hardly want to lay down in the day time.

**CO:** Oh, okay. Well can you tell me if you've ever...you said that your mother comes to talk to you, and your first husband came to talk to you. Have you had anything else happen to you that you consider a miracle?

**MI:** Well the onliest miracle that I know, the onliest miracle is that I live here by myself, I fall, I get up, I ain't broke nothing.

**CO:** That is a miracle.

**MI:** And I fall out there in the yard. I ain't had nobody to come but one time to pick me up in the yard. I got...

**CO:** You got a necklace where you can call people?

**MI:** Uh huh. I...yeah.

**CO:** Have you had to use it?

**MI:** One time I was in the yard. I couldn't get up and I called them, and by the time they got here, Lena Davis had come by, and she was coming here, so I said, "Lena, I called the people, but they ain't got here. If you catch on to me, I can get up." I said, "Get me in the back, you just push a shoulder, and I'll get up myself." I said, "I can hold that post." So time she got me up, they come up, and so...I fell here twice. The first time I fell, I knocked this shoulder here. That's the reason I can't hardly use it. I knocked this shoulder out of place, but I got up myself.

**CO:** You don't want to go to a nursing home?

**MI:** I don't think a nursing home would want me.

**CO:** Why is that?

**MI:** They want somebody that they got to wait on.

**CO:** Oh, so you wouldn't let them wait on you?

**MI:** If I can wait on myself here at home, I can wait on myself in a nursing home.

**CO:** But if you fell, there would be somebody to help you.

**MI:** These people help me.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** They come and get me.

**CO:** Yeah.

**MI:** I let my door stay open, unlocked, in case if I have to have somebody they can come in.

**CO:** Can I ask you some questions about the 1930s and 40s and 50s---and 60s?

**MI:** If I can remember.

**CO:** That's okay. It's okay.

**MI:** Back yonder when I first was a child, I can remember that a whole lots better than I can things done forty or fifty years ago.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** And things done last week. Don't never ask me nothing about that, cause I don't think about it.

**CO:** That's alright, but do you remember the Depression? The Great Depression? When everybody was...when the Stock Market crashed and everybody was poor and some people hungry?

**MI:** Do I remember the Depression?

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** I remember hearing talk about the Depression, but I've always had plenty to eat. Cornbread, butter, milk, and sweet potatoes. Always have had a plenty to eat. If it wasn't what I wanted. I remember one time during the Depression, the peoples had wheat fields, and when they used to get their wheat ???? and carried them somewhere?? **42:53** the white people, they carried them off somewhere, and had it made into flour, into dark flour. And I remember that, but where they carried it, I don't



know, but they put all that grain in bags. They hitch a two horse wagon, that's how they carried it cause they didn't have cars much. It was just now and then that somebody had a car.

**CO:** Mmhmm.

**MI:** They carried it off in a gray bag. And that's what they sold to the people for flour. And it was dark flour. I remember then, but I remember all we ever had. We raised our own meat, and mostly we ate at Mr. Howell's, ate at the white peoples' house cause Mama cooked it there.

**CO:** So did ya'll go up there and eat at the house?

**MI:** Did we go up there and eat?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** Eat on the back porch.

**CO:** But they let her cook enough food for ya'll?

**MI:** Oh yeah.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Yeah, and they had a table on their back porch. It was screened in though. She'd fix up me and my Daddy's plates out there. I ate in the kitchen and anywhere else in the house I wanted to, cause me and Effie ???41:08 we was, I was born in January and Effie was born in February. So we came up just like two sisters. I'd eat anywhere I wanted. I'd eat anywhere she ate at. That's where I'd eat.

**CO:** Effie was a little white girl?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** And ya'll ate together.

**MI:** Oh yeah.

**CO:** So her parents didn't mind if you ate together.

**MI:** They didn't care because if it was Sister, Sister could eat anywhere she wanted to cause I was Alberta's daughter.

**CO:** Oh. So they treated you better?

**MI:** My Daddy would eat on the back porch. He had his plates fixed on the back porch. It was a screened in porch and that's where he'd eat at.

**CO:** So do you remember...so you had enough to eat during the Depression? You don't remember being hungry? You and your family had plenty to eat in the Depression?

**MI:** Well by then...

**CO:** By then you were married.

**MI:** Me and my Mama and Daddy, and we had plenty at night. We'd have cornbread, buttermilk, and syrup...cornbread. [Ms. Mattie sneezed]

**CO:** Bless you.

**MI:** We'd eat at night. But all the other meals we ate at Mr. Howell's.

**CO:** Yeah. Even when you were...when you got grown? Would you still go to the Howell's to eat because your mother was cooking?

**MI:** Oh no, when I got grown I ate at home. I always have had a plenty to eat.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Since I got grown.

**CO:** But when you went up to the Howell's to eat, and you and Effie ate together, ya'll were children?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Okay. Well do you remember much about World War II?

**MI:** Uh uh.

**CO:** No, you don't remember that?

**MI:** I might know something about it, but I heard them talk about World War II. The First World War that I...

**CO:** That's right, you were alive in the First World War.

**MI:** World War...

**CO:** 1917 is when the United States entered.

**MI:** That might have been World War II, I don't know what it was.

**CO:** World War II was in the 40s.

**MI:** I know two colored mens went to that war, I can remember that. One of them World Wars, two colored mens from here, they went. That's about all I can remember. I remember back to the War.

**CO:** Do you remember the *Brown v. Board of Education* court case?

**MI:** The what?

**CO:** *Brown v. Board of Education*? The court case that ended desegregation...I mean that ended segregation? No? Okay. Well do you remember the Civil Rights movement?

**MI:** The Civil Rights? Yeah I remember a little about the Civil Rights. That Dr. Luther King.

**CO:** Did you ever see him?

**MI:** I remember about that cause I was working, I was working at the hospital here.

**CO:** What did you think about that whole movement?

**MI:** Well I don't think --- it was pretty good.

**CO:** How did people in Ocilla react to the Civil Rights movement? Do you remember?

**MI:** They reacts pretty good. I think about one...because they brought it mostly Irwin County ..???36:28 Democrats won in Irwin County, but mostly this other election...what's that colored man's name?

**CO:** Barack Obama?

**MI:** Now, Irwin County didn't win that. So I don't think they cared too much about a colored man getting in.

**CO:** Did you get to vote? Did you vote?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** Did you vote for him?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** That's none of my business is it?

**MI:** I didn't know nobody. I hadn't talking nobody ???35:41.

**CO:** Well so, so you do remember Dr. Martin Luther King?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** And you remember all the things he did to try and change...try and integrate the schools.

**MI:** And I remember during that time the white people, they thought a lot of Dr. Martin Luther King too.

**CO:** Some people in Ocilla?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** They did?

**MI:** They sure did. They got ???34:54 hadn't gotten like it used to be ???34:50 some of the white people, I hear them talk around the hospital, they say they wished he'd get to be president, but they'd be talking and they'd ask me, "Who you gonna vote for?" I said, "I don't know." I said, "He ain't running no how." I said, "I like him, but I don't know." I said, "He ain't running for nothing." They say, "I wish he'd run for president, I'd sure vote for him."

**CO:** Was that somebody that worked at the hospital?

**MI:** Mmhmm. There was some of the people that come and had patients in there. They'd talk with me and I'd say, "Well, I don't know who I'd vote for."

**CO:** These were the patients or the doctors?

**MI:** No, the doctors never said anything, these were the patients and the people that come to see the patients.

**CO:** Oh, I see. Well do you remember when Dr. King was killed? When he was assassinated?

**MI:** Oh yeah.

**CO:** What happened in Ocilla when that happened? Did anything...what was the reaction here?

**MI:** Just a dead man. I didn't know no reaction. We heard it, and it was on the radios or T.V.s or something. But if anything else happened about it, cause some people...I did hear say Dr. Dismuke said that ...they were talking about...said he was a good man. Say I wish they'd do something with the one what did it. ???32:55 I heard that, but it wasn't too much said about it. But most of the colored people, most of the well-off colored people or white people, they really liked him. But the ones who didn't have nothing, they the ones who talked against him??? 32:24.

**CO:** So the well-off white people, the white people with money liked Dr. King and the people, the poor people, you think, didn't like him.

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** Why do you think that was?

**MI:** Cause they just didn't know no better. If they had of gotten him, they'd have liked him, but didn't no law...it wasn't segregated. And they didn't want a colored man to have nothing. But not a matter that they hated him, because they didn't know him.

**CO:** So you think it was more about ignorance than it was about meanness? You think they were more just ignorant?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** So do you remember right after Martin Luther King died, Robert Kennedy, do you remember Robert Kennedy?

**MI:** uh huh.

**CO:** He died. He was shot.

**MI:** Uh, he got...let me see. Now which one of them...Robert or the other one got killed...

**CO:** Both, yes John Kennedy was killed in '63 and Robert was killed in '68, right after Martin Luther King. But a lot of black people loved Robert Kennedy, and were really, really disillusioned when he died.

**MI:** Well there's lots of people that liked John F. Kennedy, but did you know Irwin County didn't go for him?

**CO:** Yes.

**MI:** Georgia didn't go for him.

**CO:** Yeah. Yeah. I do know that. So you remember the Civil Rights movement as kind of quiet in Ocilla. It wasn't...

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** Well what about when the schools integrated. Do you remember that?

**MI:** When they integrated?

**CO:** The Schools. Uh huh.

**MI:** It was, the schools was integrated quietly.

**CO:** Quietly? Why do you think that was? Cause in some places it wasn't all that quiet.

**MI:** Well, I just think that the all of the officials that knew something and was doing something **???29:33** all of them liked him [Dr. King] I reckon.

**CO:** So do you think that it was...integration took place quietly in Ocilla because it was handled well? Do you think the people who handled it did a good job?

**MI:** That's right.

**CO:** Okay. Alright. Do you remember when you quit being scared of white people? Was the Civil Rights movement over with or had it...had you gotten over your fear of white people before that?

**MI:** **???28:51-28:29???** Didn't nobody know anything about no movement or civil rights.

**CO:** This was...so your fear was a long time ago.

**MI:** Oh yes.

**CO:** Okay. Alright

**MI:** I think the fear started back in slavery times.

**CO:** Yeah, okay. Do you, did you have anybody in your family who went to Vietnam? The Vietnam War?

**MI:** Yes, I had two nephews, if I...that's this last World War?

**CO:** Well it was in the sixties, in the 1960s. Are you talking about the Persian Gulf or Iraq or Afghanistan? That's much more recent.

**MI:** That's **???**27:36 I heard them talking about Afghanistan. But I know I had two nephews to go, and I know some more than those two nephews. Now they stay right around here. I might have had some more, yeah. That boy what you see up there...

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** Now he went up there, he was over there three years. It was one of these wars, I couldn't tell you which one.

**CO:** That's okay, I've just got a few more questions, and we'll stop. Okay?

**MI:** Okay.

**CO:** Can you take a few more?

**MI:** Yeah.

**CO:** You too tired?

**MI:** Oh no I'm not.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** As long as I'm sitting down, I'm alright.

**CO:** Okay, well can you tell me what period of your life, when in your life was the happiest time?

**MI:** What what?

**CO:** When in your life was the happiest time of your life? When were you the happiest?

**MI:** **I think I'm just as happy now as I've ever been.**

**CO:** Really?!!! That's wonderful. That's great. So what was the saddest or the hardest time for you?

**MI:** You see as long as everybody treat me good, and I treat peoples good, white and colored, be nice to me, I don't want any better.

**CO:** Right, but was there a time in your life that was really, really hard for you? Sometime in your past?

**MI:** **???25:22** You know I believe in...when I was about, oh before I was 20 years old, I thought it was hard, you know. My Daddy was sick, and wasn't nobody to work but me and Mama, and it just other children's parents was living, they had something, and I didn't have nothing. And I thought that was hard times, but I had plenty to eat, but I just didn't have clothes or nothing like other children had. So, I think that was about the hardest times that I ever knew anything about.

**CO:** Okay, what gives you joy? What makes you feel joyful?

**MI:** What made me joy?

**CO:** What gives you joy?

**MI:** When I first...the first time I looked like I enjoyed myself was when I started teaching. You know I'd give Mama my money, but then she'd give me money to buy me things. She wanted me to buy me clothes and like the other teachers did and she would take part of that. But all she didn't give her children, she'd take that to buy me clothes and things. That was about my best time.

**CO:** So that made you feel good to get new clothes?

**MI:** That's right.

**\*\*\*\*\*START edit # 3 23:31\*\*\*\*\***

**CO:** Okay, alright. Ms. Mattie, can you name three times in your life when things changed very dramatically? Three times when something happened and it was very different for you afterwards? We call them turning points, can you name three times that you've had a real significant turning point?

**MI:** I don't know but one.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** For the last eight or ten years, it's been a brief turning point with me because ever since I moved back down here, I've been right here. People would say it was lonely, but I don't feel that lonely. But I've been here. Nobody to do nothing for me. Everything I get done, like I go to Fitzgerald to the doctor, it's **???21:55** ten dollars every time I'd go up there. I had to go to Douglas. I had to pay \$20. I had to go Tifton. I paid \$25. Well that looked like it was kind of a turning point with me. I didn't been like



that. I had never, all time I was in **??21:30** Jersey, course I had my car. But then all the...I never had the...I didn't never have to pay nobody, or I'd give them something. I ain't never wanted nobody to do nothing for me for nothing. If I wanted to go to the doctor, there would be two or three different women who wanted to take me. They'd say, "want me to take you?" "But we ain't got no gas, can you pay \$10?" But see all the times I had a car. Live here, I used to take peoples to Florida. I'd take them everywhere, I ain't never charged nobody nothing. And now having to pay everything, that worries me.

**CO:** So when you go to Tifton you have to pay somebody \$25?

**MI:** Twenty. \$20 to go to Tifton. \$10 to go to Douglas. \$10 to go to Fitzgerald. Now, this child here...she's a...I like her and everything, and she is over everything that I have. I pay her \$10 every time I go to Fitzgerald, \$20 to go to Douglas, \$25 to go to Tifton. And other places...I don't get a chance to go nowhere. I have...she has promised me and promised me she's gonna take me to church, but I haven't been to church since I've been down here.

**CO:** In ten years?

**MI:** And then she'd tell people, "Oh I see after her," or something. The last...this last month I've been seeing her more often than I ever have. And she is the one gonna. She got everything, everything I own. She empty everything in that, cause when I had it willed to her and my niece in Jersey. She changed it from one way to another one. See I had my nieces' name on it, about four years I happened to thinking about it...found out, she took my nieces name off, and just had another name on there. So that made me feel bad, you know, cause...

**CO:** Did you sign it?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Did you sign it?

**MI:** Say did I sign it?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** She had the lawyer to come here. Oh yeah I signed it, but I didn't...I don't remember her telling me...I don't remember nothing about it...about that. I know her name, but I thought my niece's name had to stay there too. I don't remember, but I know she had it all since she brought the lawyer here.

**CO:** Where was he from?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Where was the lawyer from?

**MI:** Where the lawyer's from?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** Here.

**CO:** Oh.

**MI:** He was from here. The lawyer makes...but I know it was all my property and my property was signed over to Perrie Lee ???16:51, but my...all my money it was signed over to Perrie Lee ???16:37 and one of my nieces in Jersey. So when I come down here, she says I ought to take my money, what I have on checking, on savings, says, "Aunt Mattie, things ain't like it used to be. Anybody could get it." I said, "My niece in Jersey would get it." "No, no. Anybody could ???15:56. The one down here gonna see about you, they could take everything." I said, "Well, they might." So she went and got Mixon ???15:41, and brought him over here. So I didn't hear nothing about that, but she just rode over here and told me that she wanted to change my house and all my business over to her name from her Mama's to her name. Mixon ???15:15 asked me, "Is that what you want to do, Mattie?" I said, "Yeah, Her Mama in the nursing home, and I want to take...turn it over to her." So he said, "Well, what about your checking account and everything in Jersey." I said, "I reckon it have to be turned over to her just like this," but I wasn't thinking it was going to take those children names in Jersey off. But it stayed right like that about four years. Then I got to thinking about it. But Mama kept worrying me. I got to...but she didn't say nothing about that. She just would come to me and tell me, "Sister, you better see about your business. See about your business." That didn't worry me, ??? 14:11??? I ain't got no business. But when I went down there, I found out everything was willed to her.

**CO:** You didn't know that?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** You didn't know that when Mr. Mixon came here, you didn't realize it?

**MI:** Uh uh, so that's when we changed it. My will, everything willed to her now, except I got both the names on it.

**CO:** Are you worried about it now?

**MI:** No. I don't worry now.

**CO:** Cause...did you get it fixed?

**MI:** It's one thing that worried me. I just felt like her name ought to be or her son's name ought to be where hers is, because he does everything for me.

**CO:** Her son?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Did you tell Mr. Mixon that?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Did you tell Mr. Mixon that?

**MI:** Oh, no. That's just in the last two or three years he's been having to do everything for me. Say I just said that, I ain't never changed it.

**CO:** Would Mr. Mixon come to see you if you called him?

**MI:** Oh yeah.

**CO:** So do you feel like you ought to call him and change things?

**MI:** No, if I change it...if I called him and changed it...I want the whole thing to stay like it is, but I'm just talking about that's what it ought to be, but I don't think I'm gone change it.

**CO:** Okay. So for you the turning point was moving back down here?

**MI:** Say, how come I moved back?

**CO:** No, I said for you the turning point for you was moving back down here?

**MI:** Uh huh.

**CO:** Do you wish you had stayed in New Jersey?

**MI:** Well sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. I have...if I was in New Jersey, I'd have somebody to do something for me all the time. See I got nieces up there and they do. The woman that stayed with me from the time that she married until I moved down here, now that...she stayed with me from the time I went up there. She moved there

about second or third month I was up there. She moved with me. And right now every...she used to come down here twice a year, and then she started coming three times a year. Then she hasn't been down here now since November, but she calls me every day.

**CO:** Could she move down here?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Could she move down here?

**MI:** No, she live in Jersey.

**CO:** Would you feel better if somebody could take you to church?

**MI:** Well, she wanted me to come up there and stay with her. I said, "No, I don't like up there." I stayed up there 37 years. I don't like it.

**CO:** It wouldn't be worth it to have somebody to help you? To take care of you?

**MI:** I guess it would be, but I don't like up there in the winter time. I see too much snow in the winter.

**CO:** Oh I know. I used to live in Michigan.

**MI:** Lived there winter and summer. I did alright in the summer up there, Lord have mercy, up there. I can be sitting here, I couldn't see across the streets there. I lived on the Boulevard on a four lane. I couldn't see nobody across the streets there, unless I stood up, be so much ice.

**CO:** Yeah. Well Ms. Mattie do you have any regrets? Do you regret moving back to Georgia?

**MI:** No, that's the onliest regret that I have living back here is whenever I want to go somewhere, I want to...was it yesterday? Yeah, you see last week I had to go to the doctor and they run some tests on me, and they sent one of them off. They called me yesterday morning and wanted me to come up there, come to the office. So, I couldn't go. You see all day yesterday I didn't have nobody to take me.

**CO:** So when will you go?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** When will you go to the doctor?

**MI:** I don't know, I'm going to try to go Monday.

**CO:** Can Novella's son take you?

**MI:** He's not here.

**CO:** Oh.

**MI:** See he went off for the weekend. If he'd of been her yesterday, he'd a carried me. But Novella said she couldn't take me, and then she told me Reggie can't take you either. I said, "Well, I know, cause Reggie gone."

**CO:** So will you get a ride Monday?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** Will you get a ride Monday?

**MI:** Yeah, she said she gone take me, but if she doesn't I'm gone get somebody to take me. Say I'm gone get...I found out before then, the day before yesterday until ???06:44 I'm supposed to have gone yesterday, I didn't have no ???06:36 dial system on my phone. I couldn't call nobody.

**CO:** Oh goodness.

**MI:** That's why I couldn't go, cause I couldn't call nobody to come and take me, but I'll have somebody by Monday.

**CO:** Who fixed your telephone? You got your telephone fixed.

**MI:** No, I can't call out now.

**CO:** Don't you need your phone?

**MI:** Somebody can call me.

**CO:** But don't you need to get it fixed?

**MI:** I reckon I might get somebody. I don't know who'll fix it. If Reggie was here, Reggie always... he'd get somebody to do everything for me.

**CO:** Well who...may I ask you some more questions?

**MI:** Mmhmm.

\*\*\*\*\*STOP EDIT\*\*\*\*\*#3 05:36\*\*\*

**CO:** What do you consider the most important thing you've learned in life?

**MI:** Most important thing to do what?

**CO:** What's the most important thing you have learned in your life?

**MI:** Important thing that I've learned? Treat everybody like you want them to treat you. That's the most important thing that I've learned.

**CO:** Okay. And so what are you the proudest of?

**MI:** What am I the proudest of anything I've ever done?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** Well, my proudest one...taking care of my Mama.

**CO:** Okay. What's the most important thing to you today. Right now.

**MI:** Nothing.

START edit \*\*\*\*\* #3 4:20\*\*\*\*\*

**CO:** Having somebody to help you?

**MI:** Well, since I don't have it, so it ain't nothing. I have a girl come here though, now, two days a week, and she works two hours each day. So she comes and vacuum ???03:48. She come and vacuum, and if I have some dishes, she was dishes for me. So that's all that she can do in two hours, you know, she's just two hours each day.

**CO:** Could she call the phone company to get your phone fixed?

**MI:** I guess I could, but I can't get nowhere to call nobody.

**CO:** No, I mean the girl that comes in to help you, could she call for you on her cell phone?

**MI:** But she hadn't been here yet.

**CO:** Oh okay. Next time she comes maybe she can do that.

**MI:** Uh huh.

\*\*\*\*\*STOP EDIT #3 02:59\*\*\*\*\*

**CO:** Okay, Ms. Mattie, how do you want people to remember you? What do you want your legacy to be when you're not here anymore?

**MI:** I want them to remember I always have been nice to them, tried not to say nothing to insult nobody.

**CO:** Okay.

**MI:** Well, I don't talk that much, so I try not to say nothing to insult nobody. People come in and get to talking about somebody else, I just keep my mouth shut. I don't say nothing. Sometime I might tell them, "Well I don't know anything about that."

**CO:** So you don't like gossip?

**MI:** Uh uh.

**CO:** Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to talk about?

**MI:** No, not that I know of.

**CO:** Well if you could title the story of your life, what would it be?

**MI:** Huh?

**CO:** The title to the story of your life, what would the title be?

**MI:** *Be Good.*

**CO:** *Be Good.*

**MI:** Mmhmm. Not much of a title, but that's what I want up there in big letters. *Be Good to Everybody.*

**CO:** I think that's a beautiful title.

**MI:** You was asking about Dr. Sam's name?

**CO:** Uh huh.

**MI:** William.

**CO:** William Sams.

**MI:** Willy, or William or something.

**CO:** You remembered.

**MI:** I can remember things, but not all at once. It'll come back on me.

**CO:** But see, when we got started talking you started remembering.

**MI:** Mmhmm.

**CO:** Ms. Mattie, who...has there been somebody in your life who has had a big influence on you?

**MI:** Have I do what?

**CO:** I said has there been any one person in your life, one or two people who have had a major influence on you.

**MI:** I got my thing.

**CO:** No it's my phone. It's mine...

**End of Mattie Ivy Interview**