

Interviewed is a 65 years old retired Railroad employee. He is a father and husband. He has lived in around Savannah for more than half his life. . Interviewed by Twila Haygood.

Question: What is your name?

Answer: Herbert Haygood.

Q: When were you born?

A: June the six 1906.

Q: Where were you born?

A: Melrin, Georgia.

Q: Do you remember staying in Melrin?

A: Yes, quite a bit.

Q: How old were you when you left there?

A: About eight years old.

Q: How far is Meldrin from Savannah?

A: Seventeen miles.

Q: Did you ever come to Savannah went you were living there?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you come to Savannah for?

A: What did I come to Savannah for well we use to haul vegetable and what not here.

Q: To sell them?

A: That is right.

Q: Where did you take them?

A: Around City Market.

Q: Where was that located?

A: Near as I can remember it were near Bay Street over there there some place.

Q: Did you all get a lot of money from that or just enough to get by?

A: Just enough to get by.

Q: Were there a lot of families staying by you.

A: Yes.

Q: Were they farmers?

A: Well it was farm country up there.

Q: Did you work on a farm?

A: I pick cotton.

Q: What kind of experience do you remember about Meldrin?

A: Well, two churches were up there I remember that and we pick cotton for Mr. Schuman and we pick up Irish potatoes and also pick the bugs off the Irish potatoes when they was growing.

Q: Did you go to school in Meldrin, Georgia.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go year round.

A: We wasn't gettin' but four months at that time.

Q: Why was it out down to four months?

A: That's all they was allowing, four months in school.

Q: Do you remember the kind of things you did in school?

A: I do remember we didn't have any heat. The larger boys had to go to the woods and break up arm full of limbs and come back put in the old wood heater on account that's the only kind of heat we had.

Q: Were your clothing sufficient?

A: Yes, we had warm clothes. Our clothing was sufficient.

Q: How far was the school from you?

A: About two and half miles.

Q: An you use to walk it?

A: Walk every moring there and back.

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Q: Were there any white in the school you went to?

A: No whites.

Q: Was the teacher black?

A: yes.

Q: Do you know if she had finished school or not?

A: I don't remember if she had finished school or not.

Q: Went you left Meldrin where did you go?

A: We moved to South Carolina.

Q: Who and you?

A: I and my dad and step-mother and my brother.

Q: About what year was this ?

A: About what time was this, It was 1917.

Q: Do you remember much about the move?

A: About moving up not very much all I know is we move from there to South Carolina.

Q: Do you remember why you moved?

A: We was changing locations, my daddy was going up yo start farming.

Q: He didn't farm in Georgia?

A: No. He didn't farm.

Q: Was he a tenant?

A: He was in public work, a logger.

Q: Was that a preeety good living?

A: Yes. It did.

Q: Good enough to buy a farm in South Carolina.

A: Well, no, he didn't buy the farm to start with he brought it years later.

Q: Was he a tenant farmer?

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A: Well, He was a sharecropper.

Q: Sharecropping.

A: Yes.

Q: What did you grow?

A: We grow cotton, corn, rice, and that's about it.

Q: This was Scotia S.C.?

A: That's right.

Q: How old were you around this time?

A: I image around twevle years old.

Q: Did you like Scotia better than you did Meldrin?

A: No. I didn't like it any better than I did Meldrin.

Q: Did you have a lot of relations (kin folk) why he went to Scotia?

A: Right

Q: Do you know why he came to Meldrin?

A: I image following his job.

Q: You said he was a logger?

A: Right

Q: What did a logger do?

A: It means cut logs for mills he use to cut the logs and timber cars haul them away where they manufactured lumber.

Q: Did you work on the farm in South Carolina?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you like farm work

A: Yes. I liked it.

Q: Can you remember any experience in Scotia that stand out in your mind?

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A: on the farm, well, yes I remember I use to have to get out of school at 12:00 and come in and pick up cotton stalks, corn stalks, didn't have corn stalk croppers plentiful like they have today. Didn't have but four months in school and had to get out 12:00 to crop cotton stalks and corn stalks around fence rows.

Q: What is a cotton stalk?

A: That is the bush what the cotton grows on.

Q: Did you have to clean them?

A: No. The gin clean the cotton when you finish pickin' it you had to knock now the stalks and burn it.

Q: Was everybody around that section sharecroppers?

A: Most of them. Yes.

Q: Was it for one particular person.

A: Well, different folks, different big farms would have sharecroppers working them.

Q: Was there more than one family on one farm?

A: OH yes some farms had four or five families on it as sharecroppers. The man we was sharecropping with had about five or six sharecroppers.

Q: How many sister and brothers did you have?

A: How many sisters and brother have I? Well, it was five of us all together.

Q: And you all shared in the work.

A: Yes.

Q: Did the girls go in the field, too.

A: Yes. They did their part in the feild, too.

Q: Did they do housework at all.

A: Yes. Every morning at 6 O'Clock they give daddy his cup of coffee he drink one before he got up and drank another cup after he got up.

Q: Well what did they do after this?

A: Well, they got ready and went to school unless it wasn't school season if they was going to school they would go out to the feild and do the work, work in the feild. If it was pickin' cotton time they pick cotton.

Q: If they had to keep someone out of school to work would they more likely keep a girl or boy?

A: Well, mostly the boys stayed.

Q: Well the girls got a chage to get more schooling than boys?

A: Right.

Q: What church did you go to in Scotia?

A: What church? Well uh, you mean what denomination was I or which one I attended?

Q: The denomination and the one you attended.

A: Well, we visited the thankful Baptist Church and later on I joined the sanctitied church.

Q: What was the difference in Thankful Baptist and the Sanctity church?

A: Well, it was a difference in the life living of it. Certain things you did in the baptist church the sanctified church didn't allow it. Smoking, Drinking, and what not they don't call for that.

Q: So they didn't allow those things?

A: Right.

Q: What was the name of the Sanctified church?

A: The House of Prayer for all People.

Q: Who was over this church?

A: Bishop, Bishop C. M. Grace was the founder.

Q: I through that church was located in Savannah?

A: That was all over South Caralina, Georgia all the way back in different parts of the northern states.

Q: Did he visit your church?

A: About once a year.

Q: What kind of building was your church?

A: Just a little old wood frame building at that time.

Q: Was it different from the baptist church.

A: The building was different because the baptist church had floors and what not more costly benches and what not and this church only had shaving on the ground.

Q: Was that because the people were richer in the baptist church or was that what your religion call for.

A: That what they was using at that time.

Q: In Daddy Grace Church?

A: Right.

Q: How much of your money did you put in this church.

A: It required 10% of your earning but you give what you want. 10% the scirpture said that.

Q: Daddy Grace founded this church did he have any special thing besides being bishop like being a saint or anything.

A: Daddy Grace ? No. I don't think they did. To my best knowledge.

Q: He was just somebody that founded this particular church?

A: That's right.

Q: Didn't you become a deacon in this church?

A: That's right.

Q: What age were you then?

A: I was about thrity years old at that time.

Q: Thrity years old you stayed in the church a long time.

A: Right.

Q: Do you know if you all sent money to Daddy Grace?

A: NO. We didn't sent him money. We just paid 10% of your earnings or what you felt was right and they check up every September when they made the report at the mother church which was in Sav'h.

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Q: So Savannah was known as the mother house?

A: That's right.

Q: Did you all make any visits to the Mother House?

A: We did.

Q: What was the differencet between Savannah and Scotia?

A: Scotia was a small town. Savannah was very much larger.

Q: When he came (Daddy Grace) were there any special ceremonies?

A: Yes. They would have the band to meet him and have a special service that's right.

Q: Would they have parades like they do in Savannah?

A: No. No. They wouldn't have parades there. They only paraded in Savannah. We would leave there and come to Savannah for the parade which was convent in September.

Q: So you came to Savannah every September?

A: Yes. Every September. I came to Savannah for the parade.

Q: Was there a difference in the services in the sanctified church and the Baptist church? You said there was a difference in the way you lived outside?

A: Well it was a difference in the service at that time. I don't know what happening now. It's difference because they would have music in the House of Prayer and they didn't have it in the Baptist Church.

Q: What kind of house did you live in Scotia?

A: Well, we had a frame house. A pretty nice house I would consider at that time.

Q: I did it look was it out of wood or what?

A: Board, wood, Board.

Q: Was there an out house or was there in-door plumbing.

A: Out.

Q: This wasn't unusal was it everyboby had an out house.

A: Everybody.

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Q: As you got older what kind of recreation did you have in that area?

A: Ball games and going to the show.

Q: You had movie houses in Socktia?

A: Not in Socktia . We had to go five miles ro ESstill.

Q: How did you get there?

A: We had an automobile at that time.

Q: Went did you come to Savannah?

A: 1946.

Q: To live

A: That's right.

Q: What brough you to Savannah?

A: Changing of jobs.

Q: What kind of job did you have at first?

A: In Savannah?

Q: In Scotia?

A: I work with the railroad.

Q: You change jobs to what?

A: I changed jobs to travel with the bridge inspector. In Scotia I worked on sectioning. I come down to Savannah an got on with the bridge inspector it was very much lighter work and so that's why I came.

Q: Went you came to Savannah to travel with the bridge inspector did you have a lot of traveling to do?

A: We had 11,000 miles to look after we went from Savannah to North Carolina by way of Charleston. Came from Hamlet N.C. back to Columbia to Savannah and from Savannah to Jacksonville south and also Frendeana Beach line and also Balwin cut off we also went to Baldwin, Fla. We went from costen S.C. through Florence S.C. Dalling to Hartsville down Macebee down to Sumner S.C. That's just how much we had to travel 11,000 miles.

Q: In all your travel did you see any place where the racial relations were ideal, where black and white got along?

A: In my travel they got along fairly, I didn't get in any thing to see discrimination.

Q: You came to Savannah in '46 you said, where did you stay?

A: Where did I live. I start living on Kline Street.

Q: What kind of building was this.

A: It was a frame building of wood.

Q: Were you staying with someone or by yourself?

A: I was staying with someone.

Q: Rooming?

A: Right.

Q: So you weren't in town in Savannah so much since you traveled?

A: I would be in maybe two days a week and the rest on the road.

Q: Did you spent week ends in Savannah?

A: Week-ends in Savannah(Yes).

Q: Were you still active in the House of Prayer during this time.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you find it any different from the one in Scotia?

A: No. It wasn't any different. It was conducted under the same rules and regulations.

Q: Just because it was a big city it wasn't different?

A: No. It was the same.

Q: It was the same with the rule of drinking and smoking?

A: Right.

Q: Where did you have you entertainment in Savannah on week-ends.

A: I went to the show occasionally and ballgames.

Q: What kind of ball game.

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A: Baseball games.

Q: What kind of people when to the baseball games. Middle class, lower class, what class.

A: All classes were there just who liked it.

Q: You said you stayed on Kline Street did most of the people have money who stayed around that side.

A: A lot of them had a little money, I believe but probably like me they didn't have much but they did have some.

Q: They had enough to get by?

A: Right.

Q: Did most of the people in the House of Prayer have money?

A: It's just like anything else, the House of Prayer, some in there needed money them self some that is just the way it is.

Q: You said you worked on the railroad did you work most of your life on the R.R.

A: I spent most of my life working on the railroad.

Q: Where did you work before you work on the railroad?

A: I was working for a farmer in the country \$8.00 a month, \$8.00 and dinner for a months work.

Q: Was that a good livelyhood.

A: I figured that was good pay.

Q: That was good?

Q: Was that what most people did work for farmers.

A: Yeph. There was a saw mill work and what not going on but being a younger why I didn't do any of it.

Q: Was the saw mill around Scotia.

A: Yes. It was one around there, too.

Q: Do you remember went Union Camp came to Savannah?

A: No. I can say I do because before moved here. I knew a lot of guys working to Union Bag and I think its Union Camp now. But how long it has been here ahead of that I just don't know.

Q: But that was considered a good means of work?

A: Right.

Q: Went you came to Savannah how did you get around?

A: I had an automobile.

Q: Was that considered unusual or did a lot of people have automobile.

A: Automobile were scare even cab service was scare. There weren't but five saftey cabs in Savannah. Went I came in Savannah five that all it were.

Q: Where was the railroad station?

A: The railroad station was located on West Broad Street near Jones.

Q: What kind of work did you do working with the brige inspector what was it called?

A: That was called crankhand, is what it was called at that time.

Q: What other kind of jobs did the railroad have available?

A: They had section labors and lot of other jobs.

Q: All these were considered pretty good jobs?

Q: I have heard of a tin city where the black R.R. workers lived in Savannah did you know of it?

A: Twin city

Q: Tin city T*I*N.

A: I didn't know anything about tin city.

Q: Do you know anything about Voodoo and Roots people in Savannah or famous for this?

A: No. I don't. I never had faith in roots and I don't know anything about it.

Q: Ther were a lot of people who believe in it though.

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- A: I hear folks talking about it. I just don't follow up on it because I just didn't believe in roots.
- Q: Were there a lot of people who felt like you they just didn't believe in it.
- A: Well, I image there is a lot who felt like me. Just don't know I am just one who don't believe in roots. I think if somebody go give you something and you eat it, it can do something to you but I don't believe they can set down roots and do anything to you.
- Q: In roots don't they have chants, use the Bible and putting a cruse on someone.
- A: Yes they say they can take r oots and make a person do what they want him to do. I never have believe in it.
- Q: Do you know the other kind of trans port ation they had in Savannah you said you used an automobile?
- A: Well, they just had gotten rid of the old street cars. They were the size of a bus but they ride on rails like a train and they got rid of them not long before I came down her e that's all they use to have in Savannah those street cars they operated like the city buses they had tracks to run on instead of rubber tires.
- Q: Did you ever ride the street car.
- A: I have rode it but that was before we moved to Savannah coming down to visit an Aunt. Got the street car then . They also had what you call hacks, they were horses hooked t o a buggy and and they would take you where you wanted to go just like a cab will take you now.
- Q: Did you pay them?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Was it a lot of money?
- A: You had to pay them the fair just as if it were a taxi of course it wasn't as high. Even the taxi back there didn't charge but a dime.
- Q: WHat do you thik of the 1960's went they had the demonstrations you saw it on television a lot. I know do you think it wes greater in Savannah than other place else.

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A: No. I don't it wasn't greater in Savannah than any place else. It was a lot of places it was worst than Savannah.

Q: Did you have any particular tragic incidence of people getting killed?

A: In Savannah not that I can remember.

Q: Can you think of anything that trickered it?

A: Well, no not right off hand.

Q: The thing that trickered it in Mongertowny Ala. was that a black woman refuse so someone white could sit down because she was tired Did that happen here?

A: I think they were just following suit from my understanding.

Q: But the buses were seggrated.

A: Oh, yeph.

Q: Everything was seggrated.

A: Right

Q: Did the people in Savannah followed Martin Luther King.

A: I t think they did.

Q: Do you know if the church is where they organized?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember any pastors that led the movement?

A: No. I don't.

Q: Do you thik the demonstrations were a good thing?

A: I just feel they hoped out.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: I just feel they hoped it. hop for help

Q: Do you see where it help your life in particular?

A: Well, no I don't a lot of things that happen it doesn't metter with me like sittin' in the back of the bus all I want is a seat to sit down.

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Q: You don't care about sitting in restaurants either?

A: It is a little embarrassing if you go a place to eat and there is no place to sit in the back.

Q: Other wise it didn't bother you?

A: No.

Q: Do you think police are more brutal in the black areas than any place else.

A: Well, I just don't know they maybe.

Q: Have you seen any change in the younger people

A: No. I don't see any but I do know one thing the young folks don't go for the jive that we older folks will go for. They will do their job and what not, but they are going to be more considered than we were. A lot of things we older fellows would do they are going to get some information on it. They want you to talk to them as if they was a man, too

Q: So you think the demonstrations were for the young people because they wanted a change.

A: Yes. I do.